



Parent Handbook

Revised 12/2021

A Licensed Child Care Provider
207 Park Ave, Guthrie Center, Iowa
641-332-2028

Mission Statement

Little Charger Learning Center will strive to enrich the lives of young children in our community through a facility full of dedicated teachers and caregivers who focus on a positive learning and nurturing environment by:

1. Instructing, facilitating and modeling to the uniqueness of each individual child.
2. Bringing about a positive, loving, and nurturing environment that develops children's full potential as creative lifelong learners.
3. Promoting positive communication and working relationships with parents.
4. Meeting the highest health and safety standards.
5. Continually questioning, evaluating and upgrading established procedures and systems that are already in place.

Our Philosophy

We believe that our programs should be designed to gently stimulate children to reach their full potential. Each child should have numerous successful experiences every day and approach each developmental milestone with enthusiasm, persistence and confidence. We believe this will encourage a positive self-concept and ensure a lifelong love of learning.

We believe that our teachers and our caregivers need to be knowledgeable about how children grow and learn. It is important that they understand developmental growth patterns and can anticipate developmental needs and create environments and activities that encourage emerging skills in a safe and non-threatening manner.

Non-Discrimination

The Little Charger Early Learning Center will admit children beginning at six weeks of age. The before and after school program will be available to school-age children. All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis and we will not discriminate due to national origin, race, color, sex, age, marital status, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental/physical disability or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws.

Enrollment & Fees

The following must be understood, agreed upon and all required paperwork returned before the child(ren)'s start date:

1. The informational, medical, and activity forms must be completely filled out and returned before beginning childcare. In these forms a preferred doctor and dentist as well as preferred hospital must be listed for each child.
2. The registration fee of \$50 per child is to be paid at the time of enrollment. With receipt of registration fee, it ensures Little Charger Early Learning Center your commitment on enrolling and this will hold your spot. Registration fees will be credited to the amount due the first week your child attends. This registration fee is non-refundable if you find alternate care and do not end up attending.
3. Annual Supply Fee: this supply fee will aid in the purchase of new materials including crayons, markers, paint, toys, paper, art and craft supplies, books, cots, equipment.,etc. annual supply fees will be due August 1st. Supply fees will be \$50 for one child, \$75 for two children and \$100 for three or more children.
4. Should a family remove their child from the center during the summer months, they will need to pay a \$50 weekly fee per family to hold their spots for the following fall. This fee is non-refundable.
5. The parent/guardian understands that medicine forms must be filled out before any medication will be administered. Only medication prescribed by a doctor and in the original container can be administered. This includes over the counter medications. Specific times must be listed to give medication - no "as needed."
6. The parent agrees to submit a copy of each child's current physical and immunization record at the time of enrollment and this must be updated yearly.
7. Parents will be asked yearly to update your child's file on hand at the center and will sign off on the information. Please notify the center of any address and phone number changes.
8. Small field trip fees may be charged to cover expenses outside the center.
9. A two week notice must be given if a parent/guardian decides to terminate their contract with Little Charger Early Learning Center.

Payments

Payments are to be paid Monday morning of each week for that week of service. For children who do not attend Mondays, payment is due on the first scheduled day of care during the week. You have the option of paying by check or via ACH. No cash payment for childcare tuition. Certified funds such as cashier's checks or money orders can be accepted. If payment is not received by Friday, the children may not attend the center until the balance owed is paid.

1. All rates include any days that children are not at the center due to illness, vacation (see vacation policy for additional details), preschool, etc.
2. All rates include any days that the center is closed due to holidays or inclement weather.
3. There will be no places reserved without a registration fee.
4. We cannot accept postdated checks. Please date the check for the day services are being paid.
5. Returned checks will be assessed fees payable in cash or money order for the full amount of the check, a \$30 NSF fee and any additional fees incurred as a result of your check not clearing.
6. If two (2) checks are returned, you must pay with certified funds (cashier's check or money order) for a minimum of six months. If you make timely payments during this six month period, Little Charger Early Learning Center will accept personal checks again.

Late Payment & Bad Debt Policy

Late Fees

Tuition is considered late if not received by end of day Friday of the week that care is provided, and a \$10.00 late fee will be applied to the client's account. The \$10 late fee will continue to accrue each Friday that payment is not received. Children may not attend the center until the balance owed is paid.

Delinquent Accounts

Accounts are considered delinquent 14 days after payment was due. Families whose accounts are delinquent will be given a two week written notice to have their child care services terminated, and a payment plan will be put into place to collect tuition for care that has already been given. Reasonable attempts to recoup past due tuition will be made, but if a family ceases to make payments, the account will be sent to collections and you will be responsible for all court costs/filing fees.

Arrangements for payment plan must be agreed upon by the director and family in writing to allow child care services to continue. Director will inform the Board of Directors of any payment arrangement for their approval.

Hours and Days

The opening time for The Little Charger Early Learning Center is 6:30 a.m. Pickup time is no later than 5:30 p.m. If you are late picking up your child, you will be charged a late pickup fee of \$10.00 every 5 minutes past closing time.

Rates

While we strive to keep our rates as affordable as we can, rates will change from time to time in order to keep up with the costs of doing business and to be able to attract and retain high quality staff. Please

refer to the most current rate sheet at the back of this packet. All rate changes will be given to you in writing. A few notes about rates:

- Full time enrollment status is any child who will be present at the center 4-5 days a week.
- Part time enrollment status is any child who will be present at the center for 3 days a week or less.
- Full time enrollment is given priority over part time; part time families will be given the option of changing schedules, paying for a full time spot, or by giving their two week notice when a spot is needed for a full time child.

Family Discount

A family discount is given when two family members attend the center full time. This discount is 10% off the oldest child's tuition. The discount does not apply to part time child care including before and/or after school care or daily care.

Vacation

Each child who is enrolled full time will receive one week of vacation during a calendar year. The child must be gone the entire week, and no payment is due for that week. Vacation days may not be taken as single days throughout the year. Parents must notify the director two weeks prior if their child is going to be gone for vacation. Vacation does not accrue and must be used within the calendar year.

Holidays

The center will be closed for the following holidays (weekly fees are the same regardless of whether the center is closed for a holiday as these are paid days off for our employees):

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day

A 50% attendance will be needed for the center to be open the day after Thanksgiving. On this day the center will be open 6:30a.m. to 2:30 p.m. unless the 50% attendance is not met. If it is not met, then the center will be closed.

Meals

Little Charger Early Learning Center provides morning snacks*, lunch and afternoon snacks. The meals are nutritious and well-balanced. You will be aware of meal times to ensure that your child/children are fed. A schedule is posted and can be provided to each parent upon request. It is extremely important that you keep Little Charger Early Learning Center informed of any allergies or suspected allergies that your child/children might have.

Snacks may be brought into the center for special occasions such as birthdays and holidays on a limited basis. Please check with the director to see if there are any allergies, and make staff aware if the snack/treat you are providing may contain that ingredient(s).

*No food or drink brought into the center after 7:30 am. We serve morning snack by 8:15 am

Absences

If your child is absent for any reason, you will still be charged the normal daily/weekly rate. There are NO exceptions! It is expected for parents to call if they are going to be late or if their children's schedule should change for whatever reason.

Drop Off/Pick up Procedures

Parents or designated persons must BRING THE CHILD INTO THE CENTER. Your child will be released only to the person(s) you have authorized as a pickup person for your child(ren). An authorized person must be 16 years of age or older and have a Photo ID. If a minor is picking up children, written parental consent is required. If the staff does not know the person, the staff will ask for identification. We will use the identification to confirm authorization. If the person attempting to pick-up your child(ren) is not an authorized individual, we will not release your child to them and will contact you.

If at any time, changes need to be made regarding those who may pick up your child, you must contact the Director or an on-site supervisor.

If only one parent has custody of the child, the custodial parent must instruct and provide the director with a certified copy of the court order showing that the other parent does not have visitation rights. These custody papers are confidential and will be kept in the child's file. In the event of change in custody, a certified copy of the court-order must be given to the director. Custodial parents will be notified if the non-custodial parent attempts to pick up the child.

Health Policy for Center

If your child is contagiously sick or ill, we ask that you keep your child at home or find alternative arrangements for childcare. This helps us to protect the health and well-being of all the children and staff at the center and enables us to provide the best possible environment for the children. These are some signs and/or symptoms to help you determine whether to keep your child home::

Covid symptoms	Colored discharged from nose
A sore throat (with fever or swollen glands)	Discharge from eyes and/or ears
Diarrhea (3 or more watery stools in 24 hrs)	Vomiting (within the past 24 hours)
Fever (temp of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more)	An eye infection
Rash (especially with fever & itching)	Head Lice: NO admittance until all eggs and nit are removed.

Current prescribed medication only can be given if it is in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and a parent has signed an authorization form for the medication. No over the counter medications will be given. All medication is kept in a locked, secure storage area away from children and ONLY full time employees may dispense medication. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

Children will not be permitted at the center until they have been fever-free without medication, and no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours. All other infectious illnesses need to be treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours before returning to the center.

Field Trips/Transportation

Little Charge Early Learning Center may include walking field trips in their daily class schedules. The instructor will notify the director of their travels and route. If there is a major field trip that requires vehicle transportation, a permission slip will be given to parents prior to participating.

Clothing and Supplies

Parents need to supply a change of weather appropriate clothing each day for their child, even if your child is fully potty trained. These clothes may be left at Little Charger Early Learning Center for your convenience. Children's belongings must have their name written on it somewhere. We cannot be responsible for lost items. Parents are fully responsible for diapers/pull ups, wipes, diaper cream, formula/breast milk, baby food and special needs foods.

Playground/Outdoor

Little Charger Early Learning Center will not take the children (aged two and older) outside if the temperature or wind chill is less than 20 degrees. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. We will not take the children outside if the heat index is above 90 degrees.

It will be the parent's responsibility to provide sunscreen for their child for the months of May through September. One bottle per family will be sufficient. All parents will be asked to sign a permission form allowing us to apply sunscreen.

During months when mosquito counts are high, parents may be asked to bring bug spray for their children. All parents will be asked to sign a permission form allowing us to apply bug spray.

Reporting Injuries and Accidents

Incidents involving a child, including minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns, shall be reported to the parent/guardian on the day of the incident. Incidents resulting in a serious injury to a child or a significant change in health status shall be reported immediately to the parent/guardian. A written incident report shall be provided to the parent/guardian or authorized pickup person from the center. The staff member who observes the incident will be responsible for preparing the report. This report must be signed by the staff member writing the report. A staff member also must get a parent/guardian signature on the report. A copy of the report shall be given to the parent/guardian and a copy of the same report shall be retained in the child's file.

*** If a significant health change occurs at the center, we will call the child's doctor, dentist, or ambulance, as needed, using the information on the enrollment packet. The parent will be notified immediately!!

Mandatory Reports for Child Abuse

All Little Charger Early Learning Center Employees are Mandatory Abuse Reporters by law. Each employee is required to take a Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse Training every five years. This means that employees must report any suspicion that someone may have purposely hurt your child. Any suspicions must be reported to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Then, trained investigators decide whether or not abuse actually took place. We know that all children get bumps, bruises, and scrapes as part of growing up. Therefore, it is important that you tell your child's teacher about any unusual injuries or conditions.

Emergency Procedures

The Little Charger Early Learning Center has developed procedures for the following emergencies:

- Intruders within the center
 - If an unidentified person(s) enters the center without just cause, staff members will ask the person to leave the premises. If the person(s) refuses to leave, the staff will notify the police department. Any information they have will be given to the police when they arrive. While the person(s) is in the center, employees will do their best to try to keep them away from the area where the children are located. A designated person will help evacuate the children to the basement until the police arrive and the person(s) have been removed from the center.

- Intoxicated parent or pick up person
 - If a staff member observes a parent having an odor of alcohol on their breath, bloodshot or glossy eyes, slurred speech and/or unsteady gait the staff will call the other parent or an emergency contact to come pick up the child. If the intoxicated person is a designated pick up person, staff will call the parent to come pick up their child and report the incident. If the intoxicated person in the center refuses to leave, they will be considered an intruder.

- Lost or abducted child
 - Staff will be aware of the location of each child in the classroom at all times. If an incident arises where they cannot locate the child, the director and all other staff members will be notified. All staff will aid in the search for the child. If unable to locate the child, staff will notify the police department, giving them an in-depth description of the child, including facial features, hair color, clothing worn that day, etc. A picture will also be shown to the police to help with the description. Staff will then notify the parent(s) or emergency contact person if the parent(s) cannot be reached to be notified of the situation.

- Bomb Threat
 - If a bomb threat is received by phone, our employees have been instructed DO NOT HANG UP! The staff member will make note of the time of the call. They will determine whether it is a male or female voice and estimate the age of the caller if possible. The staff will write down any significant information given by the caller and report all such information to the police at (641-747-2214 or 911) right away. Staff members are directed to contact police first then the Director.

- Chemical spills/Evacuations
 - In the event that the building needs to be evacuated, all staff members will walk the children to the Guthrie Center Elementary school for safety. The Director or On-Site Supervisor will take along all emergency information as well as a first aid kit.

- Fire
 - Fire routes are posted by each exit in the center. We are required by law to have monthly fire drills to practice our safety route to ensure the children can demonstrate properly. In case of a fire, we will exit to the closest door in a single file line, counting to make sure each child is accounted for. The Little Charger Early Learning Center will exit out the door and head to the staff parking lot and gather next to the storage shed. Staff will notify the police (911) and parents of each child. Emergency information and their first aid kit must be taken when exiting the building.

- Tornado or severe weather warning
 - Tornado routes are posted in the classroom at the center. In case of a tornado, all children will be escorted down the stairway to the basement. Once in the basement, we will move into the windowless, north central room. Here the children will be reminded of the appropriate and safe way to position themselves during a tornado. The children will remain in this position until it is safe to re-enter the classroom. If the building suffered structural damage we will relocate to a safe building (Guthrie Center Elementary school). We will take a first aid kit as well as emergency information for each child. The parents will be notified of the new location to pick up the children.

- Blizzard policy
 - In the case of a blizzard during center hours, The Little Charger Early Learning Center will notify all parents that they must pick up their child(ren). If a parent is unable to be reached, the staff will contact the person(s) listed on the emergency consent form. Should no one be able to be reached, a staff member will stay at the center until all children have been picked up from the center.

- Flood policy
 - In a case of a flood, we will prepare to evacuate and seek shelter at our predetermined location of the Guthrie Center Elementary School. We will listen to the radio for information and instructions from the local emergency officials. If we are advised to evacuate, we will inform officials of where we will be seeking shelter and go to the designated area. We will take a first aid kit with us and emergency contact information for each child. We will then wait until the children are released to their parents or when officials provide further instruction.

- Power Failure
 - In case of a power failure, we will remain at the center. The center is equipped with flashlights to help with the lack of light. Staff will call the power company and will notify them of the interruption of services. If the outage is short term, staff will do their best to keep the children as comfortable as possible. If however the outage will be long term (more

than 2 hours) the center will determine if closing is necessary, and call parents to come and pick up their children if needed.

- Earthquake Evacuation
 - In a case of an earthquake incident, staff will move children to a safe area of the building until the quake has stopped. We will listen to the radio for information and instructions from the local emergency officials. If we are advised to evacuate, we will inform officials of where we will be seeking shelter and go to the designated area. We will take a first aid kit with us and emergency contact information for each child. We will then wait until the children are released to their parents or when officials provide further instruction.

- Nuclear Evacuation
 - In a case of an incident, staff will contact local officials at the Guthrie County Sheriff's office at 641-747-2214 or 911. We will listen to the radio for information and instructions from the local emergency officials. If we are advised to evacuate, we will inform officials of where we will be seeking shelter and go to the designated area at Guthrie Center Elementary School. We will take a first aid kit with us and emergency contact information for each child. We will then wait until the children are released to their parents or when officials provide further instruction.

Curriculum/Activities

The classroom teachers will provide daily/weekly lesson plans for their classroom. These lesson plans will be out and easily accessible at all times. They will also be posted on the bulletin board by the sign in sheet so that parents and visitors may also access the lesson plans. The lesson plans will follow a thematic unit that corresponds with the entire center.

Little Charger Early Learning Center will follow the guidelines that are teacher inspired, child directed and based on the child's individual needs. Individual children's needs are based on the developmental Ages and Stages screening conducted by the staff and families of the children who attend Little Charger Early Learning Center. The Little Charger Early Learning Center Director and staff will provide the parents with newsletters about activities within the center. This newsletter should include themes for the month.

Open Door Policy

Little Charger Early Learning Center doors are always open to parents of enrolled children. Parents are welcome at any time without prior notice to teachers and staff. This does not include, however, those parents with restricted rights by court order. Relatives are permitted to visit upon the notification of the director or the on-site supervisor. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitors to our center.

A parent, guardian or authorized pick up person who is on the Iowa Sex Offender Registry cannot be on the property of Little Charger Early Learning Center without written permission from the Executive Director and approval from the DHS licensing consultant. If permission is granted, the offender will only be allowed on the property for the time (no longer than 10 minutes) required to transport their own child to and from the center. If the offender needs a conference with the director or on-site supervisor that will last more than 10 minutes, arrangements will be made prior to the meeting.

Behavior Management

We believe that it is important to deal with the child as an individual in a manner that is appropriate to the child's development, activity, and general well-being. Positive behavior will be reinforced, choices will be given, and children will be given an opportunity to be responsible for the consequences of their actions. It is important that the child feels good about him/herself. We will attempt to redirect inappropriate behavior.

1. Methods for managing the child's behavior will be time-out/taking a break, redirecting the child, removal from the situation, and/or loss of privileges.
2. Parents will receive a written incident report of any inappropriate behavior. Copies of the Incident Report will be kept in the child's file; and a copy may be made for the parent at any time to have.
3. Tragedies will be discussed with the parent to work through any behavioral issues.
4. In the event that the behavior management methods and disciplinary consequences described are ineffective and all resources have been exhausted, dismissal may occur.

Corporal punishment is forbidden by any staff member of the Little Charger Early Learning Center. Corporal punishment includes: spanking, shaking, slapping, humiliating or frightening, causing pain or discomfort to the child; name-calling, belittling, locking a child in a room, closet, box or other devices. No form of punishment may be associated with food or mealtime. No mechanical restraints shall ever be used as a form of discipline. No child shall be subject to verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child and child's family.

Biting Policy

The Little Charger Early Learning Center understands that biting is developmentally normal for young children. Some children are unable to use their language skills to communicate effectively. Therefore, many young children bite to show they are upset.

We will attempt to avoid any situations by carefully watching children to ensure that they are not getting overly frustrated. We will also attempt to encourage them to play productively by distracting them with a variety of toys or activities.

Despite our diligence, biting does happen at the center. When it occurs, we will address the issue as follows:

- Remove the child that has been bitten from the situation. Staff will clean the area and administer first aid. We will also attempt to calm the bitten child through distraction and a lot of TLC.
- Firmly say to the offending child “No biting” and remove him/her from the group. This child will be in time out one minute per year of age. We will not reinforce the behavior by giving the child any attention immediately after the bite.
- Before the offending child returns to the play area, we will discuss why they had to sit down and that they need only use nice touches or their words.
- Depending on developmental levels, the offending child may apologize to the bitten child or may try to help them feel better by getting a wet towel or ice pack.
- If a child bites severely (a severe bite is defined as a bite that breaks the skin) 2 times in one day, the parent of that child will be called and be required to pick the child up and take them out of the center for the day.

Accident/ incident forms will be filled out and signed by the caregiver and will be presented to the parents at the end of the day. Parents will be asked to sign a copy to keep in the child’s file.

The staff will evaluate the situation that led up to the biting incident, looking at possible ways to avoid another incident. They may include restructuring how an activity is done, redirecting the child to a new activity, limiting the contact the child has with other children over a period of time, or making an extra effort to have staff members in the general vicinity of the child who is prone to biting.

Should the biting be an ongoing issue, administration will observe the classrooms routine and caregiver to child interaction. Necessary changes will be made if the director feels that the room routine or the caregiver to child interaction is the possible cause of the continuous biting. The Director and On-Site Supervisor will determine if the incidents warrant a meeting with the child’s parents. If at this time it is agreed upon to meet with the child’s parents a meeting will be set up between the children’s parents and staff.

At this meeting a plan of action will be developed to help with the issue of biting. If, after implementing the plan, outside help is needed, the center will work with professionals to address the issue.

Termination

The Little Charger Early Learning Center reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time for any sufficient reason, including but not limited to late payment, misbehavior or unruliness of the child. The staff will make every effort to give reasonable notice to allow parents time to obtain alternate childcare provider arrangement. You also have the right to withdraw your child from our learning center. However, you must give the center a written two-week notice when canceling our services for your child.

Policy Handbook Agreement Form

I have received and read the Little Charger Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. If there are any questions regarding these policies and procedures, I will contact the Director.

I am aware that new policies and procedures may be introduced or current policies and procedures can be amended through the year. These changes will be provided to me at the time they are board approved. It is my responsibility to place these updates with this handbook.

This agreement form will be kept with your child’s records.

Child(ren)’s Name: _____

Father/Guardian’s Signature Date

Mother/Guardian’s Signature Date

Director’s Signature Date

*Please return signed with completed paperwork