



Learning Ladders Child Development Center



PARENT HANDBOOK 2020

v.12

(Post COVID-19 - Phase I)

Our Mission

It is our mission to make a difference in the lives of children by being a leader in the implementation and modeling of a high quality, innovative and creative early childhood program; and to respond to the broader, contemporary family needs of the target group families. "Some of the best years in life are the time spent as a child and later our collegiate years..." As working adults in a fast-paced society, we sometimes forget just how precious and fleeting those years are. With that in mind, imagine an alternative to traditional infant, day and after school care that not only met your childcare needs, but also provided an activity-based learning environment. Learning Ladders has a strong commitment to accessibility and diversity. We believe that children learn the most through self-discovery. At Learning Ladders, the environment is structured to provide children the opportunities to explore, discover, and apply skills that will promote their development in all learning domains. Our open door policy embraces all who desire to provide a better quality of care, preparedness, and education for their children. Learning Ladders works to provide affordable, first-class care giving and innovative learning approaches.

We offer programs in the following age groups:

Infants/Toddlers (6 weeks - 23 months) \$285 per week;
Preschool (2 year olds) *\$205 per week;
Preschool (3, 4, & 5 year olds) *\$195 per week; and
School Age (4 - 12 year olds - Before & After) \$150/week
(*Potty Training Additional \$20.00*)

We are a member of the Maryland EXCELS Program. We will apply for memberships to the NAEYC, MSCCA, Program Administration Scale of Maryland and maintain accreditation through the Maryland Department of Education.

Our History

Learning Ladders, Inc., DBA/Learning Ladders Child Development Center (LLCDC), and DBA/CLK Entertainment (pronounced CLICK) is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt organization, and a model program for early childhood and family support. This child care business was founded in February 2012 by Amber Thacker and La'Nese Wright, with over 16 years of combined child care experience. The target customers are dual-income, single, and teen parent families, who value the quality of education and childcare we provide for their children, infants (ages 6-weeks -18 months), toddlers (ages 18 - 23 months), preschool (2, 3, & 4 years), and school age (4 years - 12 years) before and after (B&A) care.

Both full-time and B&A enrollment will be available for the primary target audience in our new locations in both the State of Maryland and the Hampton Roads area of the Commonwealth of Virginia. LLCDC, expansion project business will still serve children 6 weeks to 3 years and school age children up to 12 years-old in our B&A care program. We are in collaboration with the Maryland Workforce Development Program. LLCDC offers an outstanding environment with developmental attention provided to infants, small groups, and routines of care.

Developmentally appropriate tools and curriculum help the children achieve success at every age

from birth to 5 years Learning Ladders Child Development Center (LLCDC) follows the goal of our curriculum, which is based on the Maryland Model for School Readiness and approved by Maryland State Department of Education, encourages children to develop socially physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Each class follows a daily schedule including reading time, music and singing, indoor and outdoor play, daily walks (weather permitting), and meal time. Classroom materials and tools for learning are accessible to each child throughout the day. The Maryland Model for School Readiness provides not only a guide for lesson planning but allows the teachers to plan daily activities based on developmental assessments for each child.

We try to make sure that staff and families are communicating regularly, to ensure the highest level of education and care for your child. We hope that your years with us will be satisfying, enjoyable and filled with the most positive "LLCDC" memories. Our goal is to welcome you into our family and foster your child's growth and development at each stage of their early childhood.

Our center provides an inclusive setting for all children. Children gain a better understanding and knowledge of our diverse culture by working with one another regardless of their individual needs. The parents and teachers can provide reasonable accommodations to children with special health care needs and disabilities based on the following:

1. A written plan of care that is signed by the lead teacher and the parent. We request that IEP or IFSP forms be shared with us, if possible, to support your child's needs.
2. A plan that includes instructions for any procedures necessary for the health of the child.
3. The plan will be modified and revised as often as deemed necessary to meet the changing needs of the individual.
4. If necessary, the parents will cover the cost for additional staff needed to meet the individual's goals.

School Age Children

Our before and after school program provides a safe and healthy environment for children 4 through 12 years of age each day before school and after school including days when schools are closed (they are allotted no more than 6 hours on these days). We encourage caring, honesty, respect, friendship and responsibility. Homework assistance is provided, if requested, each day except for Friday. In Prince Fredrick, the students attend Barstow.

LLCDC Summer Escapades begins when school lets out in June and continues until school resumes in September. It is for school age children ages 4 - 12 years old. The hours are 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday. **(Snacks and Lunch provided) *Note: \$5/Hr DAILY each additional hour Before and/or After Camp Hours.** We provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities led by trained leaders to give the children an unforgettable experience. Children will form a sense of community and lasting friendships. Activities range from weekly outings and craft projects to organized games/challenges. Registration Packets will available by the end of March. Early registration is encouraged to reserve your weeks, as the spots fill up quickly and spaces are limited.

The following pages provide guidelines for care. We hope they are clear and easy to understand. These guidelines were put into place to ensure the safety, security, and consistency of the environment. We ask that you make sure that you are completely familiar with the rules so if the staff has to enforce them, you will already be aware of the policies and be ready to abide by them.

They are in place for the protection of all of our families, yours included! LLCDC does reserve the right to refuse service or dismiss a child or family if the policies stated within the handbook are not adhered to.

Our goal at LLCDC is to provide a caring and nurturing environment that is safe and healthy for everyone enrolled.

Our Staff

LLCDC understands that it is our staff that maintains the quality level of our center. Understanding this, we strive to hire top quality professionals who believe in the uniqueness of children as set forth in our philosophy. Each staff member is credentialed through the Maryland State Dept. of Education.

Our staff members understand that they too are continuing to learn each day and with each challenge. Ongoing professional development provides continuing education and other opportunities for staff to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field, including: new programs and practices, routines, pending policy, legislation and regulatory changes. In addition to staff training, all staff working directly with the children are adequately acquainted with the program philosophy, goals, emergency health and safety procedures, child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, and expectations for ethical conduct. Their performance is assessed informally at ninety (90) days and the annual performance review is completed once a year. Consistency of care is very important for young children and it is also important to our team effort. Staff longevity is our goal. It is our sincerest hope that through open communication and effective teamwork we will keep staff turnover to a minimum.

Our employees go through appropriate screening techniques, including state and federal background checks. Our directors observe the teachers in their classrooms on an on-going basis and security cameras are running 24 hours a day inside and out for extra protection.

Our center has a director to assist you. La'Nese Wright is one of the founders and the Director of this center. La'Nese is normally on site and can always be contacted by calling the center at (443) 968-9452 or (443) 699-2978 (cell) or by email at info@learningladdersinc.org.

Classroom Classification

Baby Beehive (INFANTS) 6 weeks to 18 months* (6 maximum)

***Infants are not combined with other ages.**

The Purple Pandas (INFANTS/TODDLERS) 12 months to 23 months (9 maximum)

The Twinkle Stars (PRESCHOOL) 2, 3, & 4 year olds (12 maximum)

Before & After (SCHOOL AGE) 4 - 12 year olds (13 maximum)

Discipline and Guidance

The most asked about part of our program is always discipline. Our goal is to provide your child with a positive and consistent approach to guidance. Safety is our foremost concern. A variety of

methods are used to promote learning and exploration each day. Each child should arrive in comfortable clothing in order to participate in the activities of their choice.

These activities include sand and water play, painting and playdoh, running and jumping and moving around on the floor. Rules are introduced to promote a healthy and safe learning environment for everyone to work and play. Socialization is a large part of our experience here.

If an undesirable behavior occurs, your child will be walked away from the group and talked to about the consequences of his or her behavior. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to clean up his/her area and try another activity. If the problem involves another child, both children will be helped to talk through the dispute. The goal is that sooner rather than later the child will be responsible for his or her own problem solving. The "peace corner" is time spent away from the group with supervision and does not exceed, 2 minutes for a 2-year-old, 3 minutes for a 3-year-old, etc...

Our staff promotes positive behavior by praising the children with "Good job!" and "I love that!" By providing activities that the children enjoy participating in, positive traits can be observed like smiles, giggles, and interaction. We begin and end each day with reflection time where the children have the opportunity to share their thoughts out loud in the group.

Persistent behavioral issues, unusual and/or dangerous aggression to self or others needs to be resolved to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Staff will be in close contact with the family during these times. If a conference is requested and the family refuses to meet, the center reserves the right to deny service temporarily or permanently for that child or all family members attending the center. If the behavior persists, the family will be called to pick up the child for the remainder of the day.

Conferences are held twice per year in the spring and fall for teachers to share their observances with the parents and to provide information from the developmental checklist used to guide each child' s progress.

Parent to Child Discipline

As young children learn skills to enable them to handle social interactions with their peers, we know that there could be upsetting incidents that happen between children. Please, at no time undertake the responsibility of verbally or physically correcting the other child. You must tell a teacher about the incident especially if it is an ongoing or serious occurrence. A staff member must always be present or involved when parents are speaking to the children.

Biting

Biting is a release of frustration. It is a natural behavior frequently exhibited by young children. These children are still discovering orally and do not have the processing skills to properly understand their range of emotions. It is important to understand that when children bite, they are sending a signal for help. It is important to understand that there is nothing caregivers or you as parents can do to stop the behavior.

Each case is treated individually and meeting with staff tends to help where all sides will be

considered. We do, however, take cases of biting seriously. An accident report is prepared and signed by the parent of the biter. The child that has been bitten is given lots of hugs while the bite mark is cleaned with soap and water and ice is applied. An accident report is written for the bite and the parents are informed. As in the case with all disputes between children, no names are given.

Food Allergies

We make every effort to consider all food allergies when planning our menu. If your child has a food allergy to a food being served, we ask that parents supply snacks/meals from home. If there is a food item that your child cannot have, the teacher can substitute the item with a snack /meal from home. Menus are posted in each class for parents to view.

Children with allergies to cow's milk will not be served the 1% milk we are required by state regulations to serve. Parents can supply milk as needed and it can be stored in the main refrigerator labeled with the child's name.

Allergies are noted on the emergency form by the parent completed at the time of enrollment, however, parents are asked to speak to the teacher in person so that everyone in contact with the child is well informed about the allergy. We do our best to accommodate everyone's needs.

Nutrition

LLCDC provides morning/afternoon snack as well as hot lunches. Fresh fruit and vegetables are provided daily with lunch. Fresh fruit and veggies are also served at least once a week with snack. We serve 100% juice or 1% milk at meal times. 1% milk is served with lunch.

Drinks with added sweeteners and caffeine are not allowed to be served to children. Children have access to water throughout the day. We encourage meals and snacks from home to be healthy. Sugary/processed foods should be limited. Children get to choose which of their sugary snacks to eat at one sitting. Teachers have children eat healthy items first before desserts.

Tuition and Expenses

Tuition is due for the upcoming week by close of business on Friday. Care will be denied if there is a 1 week lapse in payment. A 10% late fee is applied to each day the payment is not received. Tuition can be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. In order to return to care, you may be required to re-register your child, in which case all registration fees will apply. No records will be provided while any account balance is outstanding.

We make every effort to stay open for your convenience. On holidays, snow days and sick days, tuition will not be reduced.

Records - A 2- day notice must be given for records to be reproduced and given to the family.

Registration Fee - A \$75.00 non-refundable registration fee is due per child upon submission of your application for enrollment. A \$40.00 non-refundable registration fee per child is due with your enrollment for the Summer Escapades.

Sibling Discount - LLCDC offers a 15% sibling discount for **full time** enrolled families only.

Public Safety, Military, & Teacher Discount - LLCDC offers a 10% discount to EMT, Firefighters, Law Enforcement, Military & Teachers.

Security Deposit - A deposit equal to one week's tuition is due upon enrollment. The deposit will be credited toward the final week of attendance upon withdrawal of the family from the center provided that you give the required two week notice in advance of withdrawal. Deposits will be forfeited if you fail to utilize a space once a child has been registered or upon withdrawal from the center without notice.

Late Pick Up Fees - Due to the COVID-19 crisis to allow daily CDC sanitation of our facility our center closes promptly at 5:45 p.m. If you are late, you will be charged \$20.00 for the first 15 minutes or fraction thereof. A charge of \$10.00 for each additional five-minute interval will be added. Please call the center to inform us that you will be late. Calling will not necessarily eliminate the late fee. Arriving late on several evenings is cause for dismissal from the program. If we have not heard from you by 5:45 p.m., we will begin to call contacts listed on your emergency card. It is important to understand that the staff of LLCDC is not required to stay past 5:45 p.m., unless it is an emergency situation.

Withdrawal - You may withdraw from LLCDC at any time of the year. However, your required deposit will not be refunded or applied to your tuition unless two week's written notice is presented to the Director regardless of the circumstances. Written notices may be sent via e-mail to info@learningladdersinc.org. Though LLCDC is a non-profit organization we can and do reserve the right to refuse care under certain conditions. The following are only examples and are not intended to limit our rights:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Consistent communication difficulties between parents and LLCDC
- Repeated failure to abide by the regulations set forth in this handbook
- Exhaustion of all reasonable efforts regarding child or adult behavior concerns;
- Harmful behavior from children requiring medical attention
- For any other reason which, in the opinion of the management, is in the best interest of the center.

Returned Checks - A \$45.00 charge applies to all returned checks/payments (NSF). Payment in the form of cash, certified check or money order must be provided within 24 hours of notification of the returned check in order to bring your account current. If payment is not received, service to your family will be discontinued. If your account incurs 2 NSF charges within any 12-month period, all future payments will be due in cash, certified check or money order until management approves the resumption of payment by check.

Additional Charges - LLCDC will charge additional fees as follows: i.e. for supplies, special trips, damaged/broken property, etc.

State Scholarship Program - LLCDC does accept vouchers and participate in the Child Care Scholarship Program. Families using the state subsidy program are responsible for paying any

and all amounts not covered by the Child Care Subsidy Program.

Tuition Prices (Effective 02/01/2020)

Infants/Toddlers.....	\$285 per week
2 year olds... ..	\$205 per week*
3, 4, & 5 year olds.....	\$195 per week*
4 - 12 year olds Before & After Care	\$150 per week
Summer Escapades (4 years - 12 Years).....	\$See Summer Brochure (Snacks & Lunch Provided) (B&A \$5/hour)
Before Care Only or After Care Only.....	\$ 75 per week
(*Potty Training Additional \$20 per week*)	

Part Time Care is limited but available to children 2 years old and older so parents should register early.

We do not offer part time care in our infant room due to crib use.

2 years old... ..	\$195 for Monday, Wednesday & Friday
3 years old and up... ..	\$175 for Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Activity Fees - There is a non-refundable activity fee for each child attending LLCDC. Activity fees are paid annually at the time of enrollment and every September after that. This fee pays for field trips and special activities, assessment booklets, and assessment materials. A **separate weekly security deposit** fee applies to the summer program which runs from June through August for School Age (4 years - 12 years).

Regular Activity fees are paid by September 15th. Part time enrollment is limited to activities offered on those days only.

18 months to 23 months.....	\$ 75.00/year
2 and 3 year old.....	\$150.00/year
4 and 5 year olds.....	\$180.00/year
School Age Children... ..	\$100.00/year

Summer Escapades Fee for School Age Children Only: \$30, \$40, or \$50 weekly deposit due in April, May, June, or July depending on your number of weeks chosen and catching our Early Bird Special.

Collection Fees - In the event it becomes necessary for LLCDC to institute an action to collect any fees owed for tuition, activities, and other fees, you agree that LLCDC also shall be entitled to collect reasonable attorney's fees and court cost in said successful collection action of twenty-percent (20%) of the outstanding fees owed.

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

*Prices are subject to change. Advance Notification will be given.

Health Records

Parents are required to submit an initial immunization record when registering. Records are updated annually according to Maryland Child Care Regulations. Parents are responsible for providing LLCDC with an updated copy of immunization records as shots are administered by the doctor and to update the contact information form. Failure to provide these records upon request will lead to a child's exclusion from care. Payment for child care will be required during this exclusion.

Your First Day

Please understand that even the most organized parents find the first morning at a new center to be hectic and often something gets forgotten. It is for this reason that we have prepared this checklist to help during last minute preparations.

What to bring:

1. **Backpack** - A backpack is required for every child to hold bedding and personal items while in your child's cubby. Space is very limited in child care centers and keeping bedding isolated helps prevent the spread of germs. These bedding items for naptime include: a crib size sheet, a small blanket, and a small pillow or an all-in-one nap sack.
2. **Extra Clothes** - It is very important that you pack two extra seasonal complete sets of clothes each day. If your child does not have extra clothes and an accident should occur, you will be contacted by phone to bring an extra set of clothes.
3. **Lunch from Home** - If you choose to bring lunch from home all lunch boxes must be placed in your child's cubby with all perishables being put in the fridge. We also serve milk or juice at all meals. The children are allowed to make choices as to how much of an item they will eat and in what order it will be eaten.
4. **Microwaves** - Microwave ovens cannot be used to heat up children's food from home unless a special diet is necessary for that child and accommodations will be made here. We encourage parents to take advantage of the hot lunch service provided.
5. **The Paperwork** - Please understand that this is the most important part of your start to childcare. WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ADMIT YOUR CHILD TO CARE UNLESS THE FOLLOWING ARE COMPLETED AND RETURNED:
 - Medication Administration Form (As Needed)
 - OCC Form 1215 - Health Inventory & Immunization Record (both parent and doctor completed), including lead reports for all children under 5.
 - LLCDC Enrollment Agreement, Parent Handbook, and the Maryland Guide to Regulated Child Care (OCC 1524) - completed, initialed, and signed
 - OCC 1214 Form - Emergency Form (every line completed)
 - Infant Activity Plan (under 2)
 - Hand carry, mail, or e-mail to info@learningladdersinc.org

Plan to spend at least 30 minutes that first day helping to acclimate your child (and yourself) to the

center and to make sure the paperwork is in order. Your last stop before leaving should be the front desk to ensure that all needed monies and paperwork are completed.

Infant Deposit - Due to the high demand for infant care, there will be a non-refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition due upon registration in order to hold your slot. Money will not be refunded on any infant slot that is then not used.

Activities - From time to time LLCDC will offer a la carte activities on our premises such as gymnastics and pictures. These activities are offered for your convenience and are not covered by your tuition or activity fee. Payment for these services should be made directly to the company providing the service.

Accounting Information - All of your accounting questions can only be answered by the Director. For both clarity and consistent information, we ask that you direct all of your account questions to the front desk. No questions regarding charges or credits can be answered by anyone other than the Director.

Account Statements - If you need a receipt notify the Director so that a statement can be printed and handed to you at the end of the day. Year-end receipts are printed and kept in the office from January 25th to April 15th. Please stop by the front desk in order to pick up a copy of your yearly charges.

Health and Safety

Should your child take ill while at the center you will be notified and asked to pick up the child within one hour of notification. If every attempt has been made to notify you, we reserve the right to notify people listed as emergency contacts on your Emergency Form. Continued lack of response to our request that you remove your ill child is cause for termination of services. If a child is sent home, the child may not return to care on that day. They may only return if they are symptom free for 24 hours and behavior is normal. A good rule of thumb is that if your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities, then they are not well enough to return to school.

While controlling illness in a child care center is never easy, we are obligated to keep the children's environment safe and healthy. Children with any of these diseases/illnesses must be excluded from care in order not to communicate the disease/illness to the other children. Many working parents are affected when their children become sick. Here are some of the definitions and guidelines that will be used to determine if a child must go home and when he/she can return to care:

- Temperature of 100.0 or higher
- Rash - Child may not return without a doctor's note or if rash is open, oozing or itching; open skin has to be healed before returning to care
- Vomiting - Child may not return until 24 hours after symptoms have ceased and has resumed eating normally
- Diarrhea - Child may not return until symptom free and is eating normally
- Red and runny eyes - Child may not return until they have been on medication for at least 24 hours and there is no goop or drainage in or around the eye. If the child is documented to have a medical reason (clogged tear duct or allergies) the child may return

- the next day if "pink eye" is not present in the center.
- Noticeable change in behavior
 - Virus - Child may not return until all symptoms have disappeared and the child is medication free for at least 24 hours
 - Coxsackie's (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease) - Child may not return to the center until all blisters have disappeared and the child is eating normally.
 - Strep Throat - Child may not return until she/he has been on medication for at least 24 hours and have been fever-free and Tylenol free for at least 24 hours.
 - Chicken Pox - Child may not return until all blisters have had the scabs fall off.
 - Thrush - Child may not return to the center until the child has been on medication for at least 24 hours and has resumed normal eating patterns.

We do alert parents when there is an outbreak of an illness when 2 or more children have the same symptoms and/or diagnosis.

Medication - LLCDC believes strongly in the communication of parent and doctor. With that in mind: We will not dispense any medication as specifically prescribed unless a medication form accompanies the medication and is signed by the physician. Medication orders must be specific, for example, we will not follow instructions that read "as needed". State regulations prohibit our staff to dispense medicine unless the form is complete.

The form must be filled out completely and signed by both parent and physician. The parent must administer at least one dose of the medication at home; all doses will not be given at the center. The application of over-the-counter topical ointments or lotions, such as diaper rash ointment or sunscreen, can be applied per the parents' instruction with a parent signed medication form unless the rash involves open sores.

Medication must arrive in its original container. Medication brought in secondary containers will be promptly returned. For safety reasons, please deliver all medications to your child's teacher and do not allow medicines to stay in the child's lunchbox or bag. Medications have to be taken home at the end of the day:

1. Over-the-counter medication will only be given to children with a medication form signed by the doctor.
2. Topical products such as diaper ointment, sunscreen and lotion may be used with a parent - signed medication form unless the rash has produced open sores and then the child must be seen by the doctor to return to care.

Accidents - While all efforts are made to protect your child from injury, occasionally accidents do occur. First Aid will be provided to minor accidents such as a scrapes, bumps or small cuts. If a more serious injury such as a wound to the head, sprain, or allergic reaction should occur, parents will be notified immediately.

Face or Head Injury - If a minor visible mark is on the face or a staff member witnessed a minor bump to the head and is not a medical emergency, the parents will be notified immediately. More serious injuries would require a call to the parents to pick up the child and decide if further medical attention is needed. In an emergency situation, the center will call 911, requesting a paramedic on

the ambulance and have a staff member accompany the injured child to the closest hospital (Calvert Memorial).

Poisons - All poisonous materials will be kept out of reach. However, should your child ingest a poisonous substance, we will follow the instructions of the Poison Control Center.

1-800-222-1222

LLCDC requires of the Lead Teachers and most assistants and aides to be qualified and current in Infant and Child CPR and First Aid at all times. We ask you to remember that we are not physicians but will attempt to help sick and injured children to the best of our ability.

Screen Time

Our program offers a variety of activities to keep children engaged and moving. Special media programs are shown ONLY when they support the curriculum for children up to 5 years of age and does not exceed **25 minutes per week**. Children 2 and under do not participate in any screen time. Screen time also means "TV Time" and/or Video Game playing. Advertising of sugary/unhealthy snacks is prohibited.

The school age program allows video games to be played as long as they are interactive for a limited time while not in school. The children are able to play Just Dance, Zumba, etc. as long as they are moving.

Family Involvement

Parent participation is encouraged by each family. This can be done through a variety of activities and opportunities including but not limited to newsletter input, chaperoning field trips, parent/teacher conferences, classroom volunteering, and reading at story time. A visitor's log is kept in the front office to record visitors at the center. We thank you in advance for your support of the program.

Newsletter Input - We are always listening to comments and suggestions from parents concerned about the children's environment. Send comments to info@learningladdersinc.org.

Field Trip Chaperones - When we take class trips it is necessary to have chaperones. We ask that if you decide to take on this responsibility that you remember to use a respectful approach when interacting with the children. Keep in mind that chaperones are needed to make trips run smoothly, you are responsible not only for your child but for the safety of the other children.

Classroom Volunteers - You might find opportunities for guest reading, helping with a cooking project, leading a special activity or bringing odds and ends into the classroom for the children's use.

Parent Teacher Conferences - Conferences are conducted in March and November.

Family Fun Night - Each year we host a family night full of fun for our LLCDC families including a moon bounce and other fun activities for families to enjoy together.

Halloween Parade - The children dress in costume for a parade and Trunk-A-Treat. Parents are asked to provide candy or treats in their trunk for the children.

Holiday Parties - Parents are asked to volunteer to provide food and goodies for the classroom parties throughout the year. Please provide enough food and drinks for the amount of children in that class. Games and favors are permitted but supplied at the parent's discretion. We celebrate the following holidays with a party: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter.

Picture Day - We ask a couple of available parents each year to assist with pictures by working with the staff to ensure the children are "Picture Perfect".

Grandparents Day is every spring. We invite all grandparents to join us in the classroom for a special morning.

Muffins with Mom and Donuts with Dad precedes Mother's Day and Father's Day in May and June when parents can enjoy a snack with their child before going into work.

Communication

Parent Wall/Table - As you walk into the center there is a parent communications area set up in the foyer. This will update you on illness alerts, monthly menu, calendar of upcoming events/fundraisers, and schedule of public school closures, community events and special happenings throughout the center.

Newsletters - Monthly newsletters will be distributed at the end of each month notifying you of important information. If you lose your newsletter you can go to our website, learningladdersinc.org, and download another.

Assessments/Conferences - Developmental assessments about your child will be done throughout the year. (March and November) Annual conferences are scheduled for March and November for parents and teachers to discuss developmental goals for their child and readiness for the next class. Conference dates will be put in the center and classroom newsletters. Sign-up sheets will be posted in each classroom two weeks prior to conference week.

The Staff and the Office - The most important communication will be through your daily interactions with the teachers and the office. We cannot address your questions and concerns unless they are brought to our attention. Please feel free to inform us as they arise. This will make for a productive team between the office, the staff and you.

Telephone - Please keep in mind that our teachers are responsible for your child as well as others. They may only take phone calls from parents during the day for emergencies. Please identify yourself when calling and give your child's name and classroom so we can better serve you.

Website - LLCDC has a website where most of your questions can be answered. You will find the monthly newsletter and activity calendar, this handbook, special announcements, and weather related closings. We also provide links to important information you may be interested in.

To reach us by email:

Calvert County Industrial Park, Prince Frederick - info@learningladdersinc.org

On your Enrollment Agreement/ Contract Section 6 gives LLCDC permission to put your child's picture on our website and in the classroom. If we do not receive permission from you, your child's picture will not be posted. <https://learningladdersinc.org>

Inclement Weather and Vacation Policies

Vacation - Children who are enrolled for one consecutive year on a **full time basis** receive one vacation week tuition free. You must give a two week notice to receive your vacation credit. Vacation weeks do not accumulate. Vacation credit may only be used for full weeks (5 consecutive days). No partial credit will be granted. No vacation credit will be granted if your account is not current. Unused vacation time is not carried over from year to year.

Inclement Weather - Inclement weather does affect the opening of the center. We will follow the Calvert County Public School District closing schedule unless the Director states otherwise. Closings, late openings, and early dismissals are posted on our website within a reasonable amount of time during bad weather. Our information is (443) 968-9452 Cell: (443) 699-2978
<https://learningladdersinc.org>

Holiday Closings

Note: LLCDC follows the Federal Government Holiday Schedule and the center is closed on the following days and Good Friday (the Friday before Easter Sunday), the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas:

Holiday
New Year's Day
Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
Washington's Birthday*
Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day & Day After Thanksgiving

Holiday
Christmas Day & Day After Christmas

**This holiday is designated as "Washington's Birthday" in section 6103(a) of title 5 of the United States Code, which is the law that specifies holidays for Federal employees. Though other institutions such as state and local governments and private businesses may use other names, it is our policy to always refer to holidays by the names designated in the law.*

***December 24th Christmas Eve Closing at 2:00 p.m. and December 31st New Years' Eve Closing at 2:00 p.m.*

Unforeseen Closures

If for some reason the center is closed for unforeseen reasons, no discount in tuition will be available. Some examples of this might be:

- Hurricane or Tornado Damage
- Flood or Electrical Outage
- Government Request
- Emergency Plan in Effect

Emergency Preparedness

We conduct fire drills monthly throughout the year with three "emergency scenarios" conducted per year. This ensures that staff and children are familiar with the location and operation should we experience fire, tornado, flooding, earthquake, power outage, or acts of terrorism. Parents are required to submit a working telephone number at all times for the staff to reach you while the children are in our care.

Center Gatherings & Field Trips

Birthday Parties - Your child's birthday is a special day. As such we are happy to participate in the celebration. We ask that you confer with the classroom teacher as to scheduling, allergies or special concerns that might alter your plans. We also ask that balloons, gifts and special visitors (Barney, Dora, etc.) be excluded from your plans because of health and child comfort concerns.

Holiday Parties - Certain times throughout the year the center will celebrate with center-wide parties. Parents are asked at times to contribute party food items.

Field Trips - Our center takes 3 to 4 field trips per year. No outings to water parks or pools are offered at any time due to safety concerns. Permission slips will be put out in each parent's mailbox for parents to review and sign allowing their child to attend a field trip. We use a private bus company to travel to and from our destination. Chaperones are asked to follow the bus in their own vehicle due to bus capacity.

Transition to School Day - The children who will attend kindergarten the following year are invited to the local elementary school for an hour in May of each year. The children travel by bus to Barstow Elementary. (To be scheduled).

Preschool Graduation - This ceremony marks the end of preschool for children who will be starting pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in the fall. All families are welcome to join us.

Other Important Information

Parent Information Area - The table and/or wall and parent mail boxes at the front entrance or

your child's class will address important information requiring parent's attention. Parents are asked to take a moment to read the information posted on the parent information wall, table or mail box.

Visiting - LLCDC has a complete open door policy. We welcome you, the parent, unannounced visits. If there is a custodial arrangement in place, a copy of the custody agreement or court order must be included in your child's file so that we can comply with your visitation and pick up needs. All other visitors must show ID to enter the center.

Front Door - The front doors will be locked for the entire day to prevent strangers from accessing the building. Parents and visitors have to ring the buzzer to gain entrance. Each parent who enters the building is required to sign in and/or check in.

Parking Lot Safety - Children are not permitted to roam inside or outside the center without supervision. Parents are required to escort children to and from the center responsibly by holding their child's hand. Children are not to be left unattended in cars or in the center at any time. For everyone's safety parents are asked to watch children closely and hold their hand arriving and departing. The speed limit is 10 mph in the parking lot.

Dropping Off and Picking Up - It is important for your child's safety that you drop off and pick up within your child's assigned classroom or the opening/closing classroom. Do not allow children to "find their own way" to their group. The child will be released to either parent listed on the emergency card unless a copy of a custody agreement or court order is in your child's file.

If within 60 minutes after the official closing time (6:00) of the center we have not heard from either parent or guardian and we have not been able to reach anyone authorized to pick up the child, we will call child protective services. A message as to the whereabouts, phone number and instructions will be left taped to the front door.

Absenteeism - Parents are required to report all illnesses to their child's teacher. Please call the center when your child is sick to help us protect the other children in our care. If your child has not arrived by 9:15 a.m. the teachers will assume they are absent for the day. Please notify the center if your child will be arriving late.

Clothing - Remember that we are in a constant state of discovery. Discovery is messy business. Do not dress your child in something that would inhibit their movement or their ability to explore. Please remember to dress them appropriately for the season and as if every day they will be outside. Shoes are very important and should not be worn carelessly. Our playground is grounded with sand, gravel, or large wood chips that find their way into sandals and flip flops. It is best to wear tennis shoes, if possible, while at the center.

Toys - We have gone to great lengths to select toys that are appropriate and promote discovery through safe and positive messages. On certain days throughout the year we will have show-and-tell days where children may bring an item from home to share and discuss with their friends in class in order to expand classroom learning. Otherwise, please leave all toys at home.

Class Pictures - Pictures are taken one day in March and September of every year for individual and

class pictures. Details will be announced prior to picture day.

Jump Bunch comes to the center once per month to provide fun, athletic games to children 2 to 5 years old. Parents must sign up individually using the JB forms displayed on the table. Payments are \$____per month and made directly to Jump Bunch. (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Babysitting - We understand that from time to time parents may want to hire staff members to baby sit for their families outside the center. Please maintain a professional respect between yourself and your child's teacher for this practice to continue.

Summer Camp Field Trips

Our "Summer Escapades" program for school age children ages 4 to 12 during the summer months offers field trips and fun activities that are age appropriate. We do not participate in water parks or trips to wading pools. All forms and permission slips are included in our Mandatory Summer Escapades (Camp) Packet and must be completed and returned before any child can participate. The children must follow all rules and regulations that are in our Summer Escapades Policies Handbook in order to attend each trip. The weekly deposit (\$30, \$40, or \$50) for Summer Escapades is due by April 15th, May 31st, June 15th, or July 15th each year depending on the weeks chosen for attendance.

Physical Fitness- Our goal is to have children be as active as possible throughout the day while in our care. Children ages 1-2 are provided with at least 30 minutes of structured and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day. Children ages 3-5 are provided with at least 60 minutes of structured and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day. Children of all ages are provided with indoor and outdoor areas for performing large muscle activities. Children are provided with outdoor play at least twice a day. Physical fitness is incorporated in our program in various ways. Themes such as All About Me, My Body, 5 Senses, Dental Health, and Nutrition help promote healthy lifestyles. Age appropriate lessons and activities are provided to allow the children to have a better understanding of healthy lifestyles. We have a variety of physical activities offered at the center on a daily basis to help develop large gross motor skills. Items provided, but are not limited to: tires for balancing, tricycles, slides with steps, push toys, large building blocks, balls, plastic hoops, and outside games such as Hide & Go Seek, Red Light, Green Light, Simon Says, and Hopscotch. Music and Movement is provided daily as well as daily walks (weather permitting).