



Family Handbook 2018



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OUR PHILOSOPHIES



Mission Statement

At My Little Hearts Learning Center, we understand the difficult decision in selecting a quality child care for your child. We understand that you are entrusting us with the most valuable thing in your life, your child. It is our commitment to provide quality care and peace of mind to all of our families. We strive to provide the best possible environment for our families by meeting the needs of each child through individual care plans, warm and nurturing classrooms, trained and caring teachers, exciting and engaging activities, and most of all, a safe, secure, and comfortable setting. We view our relationship with our families as a partnership.

We encourage you to share with us insights about your child and value your input, comments, concerns, and questions. You are invited to share in your child's experiences during our center hours by visiting, observing, and participating in daily activities. We look forward to creating wonderful experiences and happy memories for both of you. Welcome to My Little Hearts Learning Center.

We believe that communication between staff, parents and children is essential in providing quality care. It is important to define our policies as well as your responsibilities as we begin our

relationship. These policies exist for the safety and well-being of all children and families. Please feel free to discuss any questions with your Center Director.



Non-Discrimination

Our program is designed for children from six weeks to twelve years of age. Our center offers a variety of schedules and options including

part-time, before and after school, and summer programs. My Little Hearts accepts all children regardless of race, gender, religion, or national origin.



Student Confidentiality

Much of the information you provide us is confidential or sensitive in nature, and we want to assure you it is treated as such. Our records are made available for review by regulatory agencies for information that may be pertinent to a child's well-being or requested by a legal subpoena. Otherwise, student files are confidential and monitored only by the administrative staff at My Little Hearts and Child Care Licensing representatives. When necessary, we will share information with employees who need to know, so they can safely and appropriately care for your child.

Employees cannot discuss any information with you concerning other children who attend the school. Likewise, employees will not discuss your child with other

families. Federal Law prohibits My Little Hearts from testing children who bite for HIV and Hepatitis B.

already have siblings enrolled in My Little Hearts.

ENROLLMENT & TUITION GUIDELINES



When you enroll your child with us, prior to the first date of care:

- Children must be at least six weeks old.
- Children must submit completed medical forms including up to date shot records, TB screening (where required by law), a signed doctor's statement, and any other state requirements.
- All registration materials in your My Little Hearts **Enrollment Packet** must be completed.
- Registration fee and/or tuition deposit must be received.



Due to the increasing demand for quality child care, we may not have immediate space available for your child. You may be placed on the waiting list by paying a registration fee. Once the registration fee is paid, as openings become available in the classrooms, families are called in the order of their position on the waiting list. Priority will be given to families who



Tuition is due and payable weekly on the first scheduled day of attendance for the current week. A late fee will apply if tuition is not paid according to your **Enrollment Agreement**.

If you choose to keep your child at home for any reason, you are required to pay your full tuition for that period of time. Tuition must be current for your child to return to school. If your child is out for more than two weeks, written arrangements must be made with the Center Director. If no written arrangements are made, your child will be withdrawn and you will be required to re-enroll and pay the registration fee to return. If you withdraw your child, no tuition credit or refund will be given.

A family tuition discount of 5% is given for each additional child enrolled in My Little Hearts. This discount will only apply to accounts that are paid in full and on time. Discount applies to the lowest tuition and does not apply to any other fees or services and cannot be combined with any other discount or promotion. For your convenience, payment is accepted in the form of check, money order, cash, and credit card. Payments by credit card do include a \$7.00 service fee.

We are also able to automatically transfer funds from a checking account or credit card. If you are interested, please fill out the ACH form enclosed in your My Little Hearts **Enrollment Packet**. If there are

circumstances that would prevent you from paying tuition in a timely manner, please discuss this confidentially with the Center Director to avoid dis-enrollment.

Please give two weeks written notice if you plan to withdraw your child from My Little Hearts. You will be responsible for tuition payments two weeks after notice is given.



Additional Fees

Any checks returned due to non-sufficient funds will be assessed a return check fee stated in your **Enrollment Agreement**. If more than two checks are returned in a calendar year, future payments must be made by money order or credit card.

An annual, non-refundable registration/activity fee must be paid in advance to enroll your child. This fee is payable according to the terms in your **Enrollment Agreement**.

Each child, 18 months and older, will be charged a monthly supply fee as outlined in your **Enrollment Agreement**. This supply fee covers equipment and materials needed to implement Creative Curriculum.

Parents of school age children are required to notify us when their child does not need a ride from elementary school. If you do not notify us at least 45 minutes prior to pick up time, you will be charged a no call fee outlined in your **Enrollment Agreement**.

Charges will be assessed to families that arrive after closing time to pick up their child. Please notify the center if you are unable to pick up your child prior to the

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regular scheduled closing time. Specific fees are outlined in your **Enrollment Agreement**.



Absences/Vacation

My Little Hearts encourages families to take advantage of **Vacation Credits** if your child is going to be out for an entire week. **Vacation Credits** reduce your weekly tuition payment by 50%. The maximum number of annual **Vacation Credits** is detailed in your **Enrollment Agreement**. The **Vacation Credits** must be taken in full week increments. There is no credit given for single days. Regular tuition must be paid when your child attends any part of the week. **Vacation Credit** requests must be submitted in writing to the Center Director two weeks prior to use.

If your child is going to be absent, please notify us as soon as possible. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious.

Few of the operating costs are eliminated when a child is absent, so tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absences. Staffing and other operational expenses are based on fixed enrollment levels. We know you will understand our position and appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES



Hours of Operation

Our schools are open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, year round. Please see your **Enrollment Agreement** for additional hours. All centers are closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If any of the above holidays fall on a Saturday, we will be closed the preceding Friday. If holiday falls on a Sunday, we will be closed on the following Monday.



Family Communication, Involvement & Policy Changes

Enrolled families are welcome and encouraged to participate in center activities. We are here to build a partnership and provide the best possible experience for your family. Our open door policy allows you to observe your child through observation windows, closed circuit cameras, or participate in the classroom activities at any time. We understand that it is important to have an understanding of your child's activities through shared experiences and open communication. We will provide you with a monthly activity calendar, lessons, and newsletters to keep you informed.

Any information that requires your immediate attention will be posted on the

Family Communication Board and sent home with your child's daily report.

When policies or practices require updating or changing, you will be notified in writing as soon as practicable, and asked to sign the updated policy. Any questions or concerns about the policies should be directed to the Center Director

When your personal information changes such as, address or phone number please notify the front office as soon as possible so that we can have the most current information to contact you in case of emergency. If an administrator is not available to take your updated information, feel free to send an email through our school website www.MyLittleHearts.com.

. Administrative staff members are happy to make themselves available for informal conferences to address any aspect of My Little Hearts's program. Contact information is available on the **Family Communication Board**. We offer family/teacher conferences twice a year to allow you the opportunity to formally discuss your child's program, progress and any other issues you may have. Informal conferences may be scheduled at any time for any reason.

Daily communication is a critical part of our program. It gives parents the opportunity to participate in their child's day by asking questions. It also allows parents to know about each part of the child's day. Our daily reports include diaper changes, potty training information, what children ate and what time, nap times, behavior, activities, etc. Each classroom has an individual format to suit the needs of the age group

and parents are provided a written report daily.



Children and staff are required to adhere to all safety standards set forth by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Transportation is only provided for children in our school age programs and pre-k classes, ages 4 years and older for field trips.

Our vehicles are equipped with all required items including:

- A list of all children being transported
- Emergency medical transport and treatment authorization forms for each child being transported.
- The name of the school, Director and Coordinator, and the telephone number inside the passenger compartment or on the outside of the vehicle.
- Parent names, telephone numbers and emergency telephone numbers for each child being transported.
- A fire extinguisher approved by the local or state fire marshal, secured in the passenger compartment and accessible to the adult occupants.
- A first aid kit.
- Driver has a current driver's license as well as a clear driving record.

Center Administrators are in contact with the drivers using a communication device, and each vehicle follows a strict route and schedule.

To ensure the safety of our child's transportation, vehicles receive regular maintenance and records are kept on file and our drivers are trained to handle transportation emergencies.



Field trips are a fun and exciting part of our curriculum for children ages 4 years and older, including our summer and school age programs. Our goal is to make such trips a positive and safe experience for you and your child. We invite parent participation in all aspects of our program and encourage you to join us on field trips whenever possible. Children may be required to ride in booster seats. If this is the case, parents are asked to provide an approved child seat for the field trip.

You will be asked to sign a separate authorization form to include the date, time, location, and special instructions or items to bring. Some field trips may require additional fees. We ensure the safety of all children on field trips or excursions by strictly adhering to the following requirements: Notification is posted at least 48 hours in advance indicating when and where the child will be going, and when the child is expected to return to the center. The notice is posted until all children have returned to the center.

- Each child must have a signed permission form from the parent to take a child on a field trip, including permission to transport the child.
- One or more caregivers carry emergency medical consent

forms and emergency contact information for each child on the field trip.

- Teachers have a written list of all children and check the list frequently to account for the presence of all children.
- A first aid kit is immediately available at all times
- Each child must wear a shirt and nametag identifying our center and our center's telephone number.
- Each teacher is easily identifiable by wearing an My Little Hearts staff shirt and nametag.
- Each teacher supervising a field trip has a communication device and alternate transportation available in case of emergency.
- Teachers with CPR and First Aid training are present on each field trip.
- Children are not released to parents while on a field trip. All children must return to the center before being released to their parents.



Water Activities

During the warmer summer months, younger children may participate in "Splash Days." We allow the children to play in sprinklers and use water toys; however, we do NOT allow the use of wading pools or vinyl slide toys. Please see your classroom schedule to know when to send a swimming suit, towel, and sunscreen on these days. We do require a signed

authorization to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent.

School age children may be provided the opportunity to attend public swimming facilities or water parks as part of the summer activity programs provided the facility meets all requirements outlined in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services standards.

My Little Hearts follows the lower staff/child ratio outlined in these standards as well. Staff members attending these outings are capable swimmers and trained in CPR and First Aid. Water tables are used in the classrooms as closely monitored activities as part of the curriculum.



Fire and Emergency Drills

My Little Hearts conducts fire and emergency evacuation drills on a monthly basis and as part of the orientation process for new teachers. The most effective way to assess the success of our fire and emergency/evacuation plans is through unannounced drills.

If you arrive to pick up your child during a drill, please follow our instructions and procedures to evacuate the building with your child's class.



Actual Emergencies

In the event of a real fire, or other emergency situation, the Center Director or Facility Coordinator will notify families of the situation as soon as possible.



Emergency School Closing

It is our intention to be open every scheduled day, however, in rare circumstances the center may be required to close due to severe weather conditions, natural/national disaster, or major building issue that would deem the center unsafe. If you are in question, please contact the center to ensure we are open. **Any weather related closings will be posted on our website and will also be televised through NBC News channel 5 and Fox News channel 4.** We now offer text messaging updates, please refer to your **Enrollment Agreement** for additional information. If the center is required to be closed for more than three days, tuition would be suspended until the center can be reopened.



Animals at School

Your child may have a class pet or have the opportunity to interact with animals as part of a special program or event. We follow the strict regulations outlined in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. All parents are notified in writing when animals are or will be present. We ensure animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions or show any signs of illness. Teachers and students practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in contact with an animal and items used by an animal. Children will not have contact with animals such as chickens, ducks, or reptiles such as snakes, turtles, lizards,

iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads. Other exotic animals or animals that are potentially dangerous are not allowed.



Discipline and Guidance

The ultimate goal of positive guidance is to instill self-discipline, self-control, and self-esteem in children. My Little Hearts works hard to help ensure your child learns to use these important tools. We believe that children are likely to develop these skills when positive methods of discipline and guidance are used. Discipline must be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Our policies and classroom management techniques are designed around the following guidelines:

My Little Hearts Staff will:

- Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
- Remind children of behavior expectations by using clear, positive statements.
- Redirect behavior using positive statements
- Use brief supervised separation from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of child's age.
- Help children learn to set their own limits and understand the consequences of their actions and

the rationale behind rules and behavior expectations.

The following types of discipline are considered harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of children and absolutely prohibited by My Little Hearts and The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age

When a child persistently or progressively does not respond to the discipline techniques used by My Little Hearts staff members, we will begin recording notes of inappropriate behavior as well as document what staff have tried to change the behavior. It may become necessary to collaborate with the family and staff to develop a specific guidance plan to address the behavior.

Our goal is to work together with families towards acceptable and appropriate behavior, however, any behaviors that cause a significant risk to the health or

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safety of other children or staff will result in immediate disenrollment. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, physical assault which results in serious bodily injury; attempted physical assault which if completed would result in serious bodily injury, setting or attempting to set a fire, bringing in weapons to the school, or substantial damage to real or personal property.

EDUCATION & CLASSROOM GUIDELINES



Personal Items to Bring to School

All personal items must be labeled with permanent ink. Permanent ink pens are available at the reception desk or your child's classroom teacher can lend you one if needed.

Although we cannot be responsible for lost items, we do keep a lost and found. Please inquire with your child's teacher or the receptionist if your child is missing anything. We will be happy to help you locate the item. It is much easier to return lost items if they are labeled with the owner's name.



Pre-School & Pre-K

Your child may bring a crib size pillow, a small blanket (must fit in a gallon size zipper bag), and a small personal item

such as a stuffed animal for nap time. Please keep in mind the size of your child's cubby, which keeps us from allowing larger bedding items. Please also bring at least one complete change of clothing for your child. Accidents and spills can happen at any age and we want your child to be comfortable and clean while in our care.



Infants & Toddlers

Infants and Toddlers need to bring at least 3 complete changes of clothing, especially if potty training.

Families are required to provide a nutritional diet for their infant. All foods, including formula, must be supplied and labeled by the parent. Food will be stored in the appropriate location in the child's room. All bottles should be prepared by the parent, covered, and labeled with the child's first and last names, contents, and date. Please do not leave any bottles, open food or formula at the school at the end of the day. Any leftover, open food items will be discarded at the end of the day.

Please supply a full un-opened package of disposable diapers/pull-ups and a box of baby wipes (labeled) to accommodate your child's needs.

Parents are asked to complete an **Individual Care Plan** for their infant upon enrollment and update on the first day of care each month or as needed. This will allow us to keep your child's schedule consistent and avoid any confusion as your child's needs change.

Infant Safe Sleep

My Little Hearts policy for Infant safety and safe sleep is in accordance with all state licensing requirements. All staff and parents are required to adhere to the following requirements while your infant is in our care.

Infants not yet able to turn over on their own are placed in a face-

up sleeping position in the infant's own crib, unless parents have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary.

Our staff cannot allow an infant to sleep in a restrictive device, such as a swing or bouncer. If an infant falls asleep in a restrictive device, the infant is removed from the device and placed in a crib as soon as possible. Infants may sleep in a restrictive device if parents have completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health care professional stating that the child sleeping in a restrictive device is medically necessary.

In our Infant classrooms, our cribs are bare except for a tight fitting sheet for all infant younger than 12 months of age. The mattress cannot be supplemented with additional foam material or pads to prop infants at any time.

Our staff do not lay a swaddled infant down to sleep or rest on any surface at any time unless parents have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that swaddling the child for sleeping purposes is medically necessary.

Our goal is to provide your child with a comfortable and safe environment at all times.



Personal Items to Leave at Home

Please do not allow your child to bring valuable personal items that you or your child may treasure. This includes toys, jewelry, electronic games, cell phones, CD's and DVD's, etc. Our classrooms are filled with age appropriate equipment and materials that are available to children at all times.

For the safety of all, children should not bring items such as candy, gum, money, balloons, play guns and other pretend weapons to school. These items and any others the staff sees as a potential danger to others will be removed from the child and returned to the parent at the end of the day.



Appropriate Dress for

School



Please dress your child for school in washable, comfortable play clothes so that they can enjoy all aspects of play including painting, arts and crafts, water table and outdoor play. Families should plan for

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unexpected weather changes by keeping a jacket or sweater at school or dressing your child in layers.

Children who walk must wear closed toe shoes rather than boots, flip-flops, sandals, or open-toed shoes. This is for your child's safety. Young children are very active and need supportive, sturdy shoes to ensure their safety.



Naps and Quiet Time

Our daily schedule provides an opportunity for all children to nap or rest quietly each day. This time is important to our children. During this time children are encouraged to rest, but not required to sleep. Each child is assigned his/her own individual cot or crib.

After one hour of rest time, children are allowed to participate in quiet activities while still respecting the quiet time so others can nap.



Outdoor Play

Outdoor activities and fresh air are an important part of your child's day. My Little Hearts schedules daily outdoor play for all age groups. Your child's health and well-being are our primary concern; therefore we monitor the conditions outdoors and ensure your child is not subject to inclement weather or conditions that are too hot or cold. Please make sure your child has weather-appropriate clothing such as a hat, mittens, and coat.

Children who are well enough to attend school must be well enough to participate

in all activities, including outdoor play. If there are medical reasons why your child cannot play outdoors but is well enough to be at the center, we will make every attempt to comply with your request when presented with a physician's written instructions.



For children able to eat table food, we supply an AM snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Menus are posted on the Family Communication Board, noting substitutions when necessary. My Little Hearts follows local and state guidelines when preparing food and menus to ensure they met or exceed your child's daily nutritional needs. When handling and serving meals our staff ensure that liquids and hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of children's reach.

We encourage children to sample new foods and taste what is being served, however we do not require children to eat nor use food as a reward or punishment.

We ask that families do not send in special food unless required by a special diet due to allergies or other medical condition. In this case, we require a physician's written instructions. Any approved lunches brought from home need to be labeled with the child's name and be refrigerated or be stored in a proper lunch box container to keep meals at appropriate serving temperature.

When packing homemade lunches we encourage sending your child with nutritious options to encourage healthy

eating habits. The following link is a great resource for lunch ideas and gives information about proper nutrition as it relates to health child growth and development.

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids-parents-educators>

For any holiday events at the center or a child's birthday we ask that if families bring in food they bring commercially prepared products only to share with other children on campus.

Due to increased allergies in young children, we do not include nuts of any kind, including peanuts, peanut butter and peanut oil in our menus. We ask that our families do not bring any type of nut products to school.



School Age Programs

Our center provides nutritious AM snack and PM snack for our before/after school program as well as assistance with homework. In order to ensure a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for all of our children, school age children are allowed to attend during official school breaks, emergency closures, and before and after school. Care will NOT be provided due to suspension or expulsion from school, illness and /or any other time when school is regularly in session, but the child is not in school.



Education at My Little Hearts

At My Little Hearts we believe it is important to involve our families in their child's education. The early years are the most critical and impressionable time in a child's life. It is important to ensure the experiences during this time have a positive lasting impression on both the child and family. Our programs are designed to promote creativity and learning with enthusiasm and encouragement. Our goal is to provide families and children with tools they need to make this time of their life memorable and meaningful.

We use a combination of ***Learning Games, The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos***, and ***The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*** as resources to plan lessons and family involvement.

Learning Games provide an "at home" connection and are a simple way to introduce age appropriate activities to children and families. They are a wonderful way to help families and teachers evaluate child's play and focus on the skills that they are working on. These games focus on early literacy and oral language, but also cover other developmental themes such as social and emotional, cognitive and creative, and space and action.

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos and ***The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*** focus on specific goals and objectives involving social and emotional development, physical development, cognitive development and language development. Teachers plan lessons on an individual basis and track information to share with parents through observation. The following

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link is a sample of Creative Curriculums objectives and development of learning.

<http://shop.teachingstrategies.com/content/pageDocs/Head-Start-ODL-Volume-5-Alignment-2011.pdf>

Older children, ages 3-5, are also taught beginning math and reading skills.

Screen Time Policy

My Little Hearts follows all screen time state guidelines. We do not offer screen time to children younger than 2 years of age. All children 2 years and up are allowed 30 minutes of screen time in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. Any additional screen time given is scheduled on the classes weekly lesson plan and will not exceed 2 hours a day.

HEALTH & MEDICAL ISSUES



Keeping a Clean and Healthy Environment

My Little Hearts is committed to providing a healthy, safe and clean environment. We take extra precautions to ensure we do our part in preventing the spread of communicable diseases. Our schools are designed to be easily cleaned and sanitized by our staff. We expect and maintain high standards for our facilities. We implement and post a daily cleaning and sanitizing schedule in each classroom.

We ensure children are taught and practice cleanliness and good hygiene. Children and staff are required to wash their hands frequently throughout the day, and are always required before and after eating, after using the bathroom or changing their diaper, when coming in from outside, or any other activity that can spread germs.

Teachers and cooks are all trained and hold valid food handler permits to ensure the preparation and service of our meals and snacks is sanitary.



Immunization Requirements

All children are required to be up-to-date on their immunizations. The Texas Department of Health requires certain immunization requirements be met for children to attend school. This includes early care from birth through school-age. Documentation must be provided and validated by a physician or other health care professional. You have been provided a current copy of the required immunizations, included in your **Enrollment Packet** obtained from the Texas Department of State Health Services internet website www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize. Any exemption from immunization requirements must meet the criteria specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services rules in 25 TAC 97.62 (relating to Exclusions from Compliance).

Employee Immunization Requirements

Our school requires all staff to receive

TB testing every two years. We maintain a copy of all current TB test results in our employee records. We track all test due dates to ensure that employees are notified when they need to be retested. We suggest but do not require that our employees receive any additional preventable disease vaccinations such as influenza, HEP A, or pertussis.

All staff who show signs of illness such as fever, are not allowed to returned to work unless 24 hours symptom free or cleared by a doctor. Furthermore, staff are required to always wear gloves and practice regular hand washing per minimum standard specifications.



Health Statement

Every child must have a written health statement on file from a physician or other health professional who has examined the child within the last year indicating that the child is able to take part in the child care program.



Tuberculosis Screening

TB screening and testing requirements vary across the state. If the regional or local health authority where the center is located requires TB testing for children, then your Center Director will ask for documentation that your child is free from active TB.



Vision and Hearing Screening

Children ages 4 years and older by September 1st must have a valid hearing and vision screening on file.



Dispensing Medication

Prescription and over the counter medication can be administered to your child at your request under the following guidelines:

- Parent or guardian signs an authorization form, including times for administration of medication according to label direction.
- Parents must give the medication directly to the Administrative Assistant, Center Director, or Facility Coordinator who will ensure proper storage and proper administration.
- Medication must not be sent in your child's bag or pockets and must not be left in their cubby or storage space.
The medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to the center.
- We will only administer medication in amounts according to label directions or as amended by a physician.
- Medication is administered only to the child intended.

- Medication that has expired will not be administered.
- Medications that can be administered at home prior to care or after care should not be sent to the center.
- If a child has periodic or recurring medical problems, such as headaches, asthma attacks, or allergic reactions, the parent or the child's health care professional may sign a medication authorization allowing the center to administer the medication "as needed," or when symptoms occur. The authorization must include information on symptoms to watch for. This authorization must be completed every six months.
- All medication is stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerator inaccessible to children.
- We do not administer Benadryl or its generic form. If your child is in need of Benadryl, you are welcome to administer it personally.

Over the counter topical lotions (diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent) will be administered with written consent from the parent. All containers must be clearly labeled with the child's name. If you choose not to provide sunscreen to My Little Hearts, we may have to exclude your child from certain activities if we determine it is unsafe.



Please make alternate arrangements for your child's care if they are ill. We ask that you notify us to the nature of the illness so

that we can take additional precautions if necessary. Children will be excluded from participation in our programs if they exhibit signs or symptoms of any communicable disease. They will be allowed to return when they are no longer contagious. If your child becomes ill while in our care, we ask that he/she is picked up within one hour.

If you are unable to pick your child up within that time frame, please arrange for an alternate pick up with someone listed on your child's emergency contact list.



Criteria for Excluding a Child for Illness

For the health and well-being of your child and others, if a child develops any of the following contagious symptoms, they must be kept home until symptom free for 24 hours or until the child's physician indicates the child can return to the school:

- Uncontrolled diarrhea
- Severe Coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellow skin or eyes
- Tears, redness of eyelids with discharge
- Mouth sores with or without drooling
- A fever of 100 degrees or above
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin patches
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Unusually cranky, less active behavior
- Vomiting
- Infestation or parasite (ex. Head lice, scabies, pinworms)

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- Any other contagious or communicable disease

In certain cases, it may become necessary to require a physician's written release stating the child is no longer contagious.



Children with Allergies

If your child suffers from severe and/or life threatening allergies, we ask that you notify us immediately as to the specifics of the allergy. Our staff is educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure that children are protected. We will post the child's picture in the kitchen and classroom in accordance with state and local licensing, as this helps the staff to recognize any child with allergies or restrictions. Our school also requires a written allergy action plan provided by a doctor that given specific instructions of what to do in case of an allergic reaction for every child with known allergies.

If a child requires medication, it may be kept on-site and administered as necessary. Parents will be notified immediately when any allergic reaction occurs. Please see the Center Director for the additional necessary forms.



Children with Special Needs

My Little Hearts will accept children with special needs when reasonable accommodations are possible. Our staff will work with your child's therapist, physician, and other professionals to assist in providing the best possible environment

for your child's individual needs. We may also make referrals or suggestions to more appropriate settings when necessary. To better assist your child, it is critical that we receive written Individual Education Plans (IEP's) that list specific goals and resources your child requires. All of our locations provide handicap spaces for your convenience. We ask that all of our families and visitors only use the designated spaces if they obtain the appropriate tags.



Student Accidents or Injuries

If your child incurs a minor injury while at school, such as a skinned knee, slight cut, bump or bruise (situations that are not an emergency), you will be asked to sign and will receive a copy of a **Minor Injury Report**. The report will describe how the injury occurred and the action taken by a qualified staff member.

In the event of an emergency or an accident requiring more than basic first aid we will make every attempt to contact you as soon as possible. We will ensure your child receives the necessary emergency treatment until we can reach you. All staff members are trained and have certification in CPR and First Aid. In any case of perceived emergency, we will call an ambulance. If a child does not respond, is having trouble breathing or is having a seizure, we must call 911. Until the arrival of a parent/guardian or medical professionals, a staff member in an administrative capacity will take charge of

your child. If medical transport becomes necessary we will have your child transported to the nearest medical facility. Please ensure you have completed the necessary sections of your enrollment packet to authorize My Little Hearts to act on your behalf if there is an emergency. We will complete the state required **Incident Report**, and you will be asked to sign and given a copy upon picking up your child, or as soon as possible within 24 hours of the injury.

SAFETY & SECURITY



Security Entrance

Our entrance is secured by a key code and/or fingerprint. Each family member and authorized pick up person has their own individual code used to enter the secured area of the building. Please do not share this code with others who are not authorized to enter the center. Your key code and/or fingerprint is used as an entrance code and as a sign in and sign out code. Although holding the door is considered a polite gesture, we cannot ensure children are appropriately signed in or out, and have difficulty enforcing security if families enter more than one at a time. Our families have free access to the center during regular business hours and visitors are welcome to tour or visit the center when accompanied by authorized staff members.



Sign In/Sign Out

Each family member and authorized pick up is assigned an individual code to be used in our attendance and security system. Your child must be signed in and out each day using the centers computer touch screen attendance program. We are required to keep accurate attendance records by Child Care Licensing. Please do not allow children to use this system as it also works with our security system to unlock the door.



Arrival at School

Please keep your child with you at all times, especially when exiting your vehicle. Children should not be left unattended in vehicles, regardless of age, when dropping off or picking up your child. We advise all families to lock their car, as we cannot be held responsible for any personal belongings taken from your vehicle while on My Little Hearts property.

Upon entering the school, please sign in your child using the computer sign in system. Please take your older children to class first, as it is unsafe for older children to be in infant and young toddler classrooms. When dropping your child in the classroom, please allow the teacher to open the door. This helps to ensure that the teacher knows your child has arrived and allows you to interact with the teacher, sharing any important information. Before you leave, please make sure to complete any necessary medical authorization or any other forms that may need completed, and drop off any medication with the Administrative Assistant, Center Director. Also be sure to update any information or

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give special instructions if applicable. Administrators are available from 7:00am - 6:30pm to assist you with updating your file information when needed. If you need to update your file information outside of these hours, please feel free to send an email through our website or leave a note in our Parent request binder.



Releasing your Child

My Little Hearts will only release children to the parents or authorized persons listed on your child's Admission Form. Families will use the computer attendance tracking system to access the secured area and to sign their child out. We will require photo identification for any unfamiliar person who comes for your child. Once identification is given we will photocopy it for our records and escort the individual to your child's classroom. We will not release any child to anyone not listed on the authorized pick-up list. If you need to make a change to your child's pick-up list you will be asked to do so in person. We will not release any child to anyone (other than a parent) under the age of 18, including siblings.

When picking up your child, please allow him/her to finish the activity they are involved in. Having a few moments to allow your child to transition from school back to your care can relieve some stress and will provide you the opportunity to share in some of your child's experiences of the day.

ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

Professionalism

Please remember that we have many children listening to and observing our actions. We want to ensure children feel safe and secure while at school. A child seeing a parent yelling at a teacher or another child or using inappropriate language, may not understand what is happening. Keep in mind that as adults it is our responsibility to teach our children by example. We welcome the opportunity to address any concerns you may have in a professional manner

Social Media Conduct - In an effort to ensure professionalism is maintained at all times, we ask that families refrain from “friending” or adding members of our staff to their social media page while their child is enrolled in our program.

It is against school policy for our staff to babysit for families enrolled in our program. Please keep in mind that My Little Hearts reserves the right to disenroll at anytime for any reason.

If we feel that proper conduct is not being shown on your behalf you will be withdrawn from the program.



Smoke Free

We maintain a smoke free environment at My Little Hearts and ask that you do not

smoke or dispose of cigarettes on our property.

LICENSING & LEGAL REGULATIONS



Custody and Visitation Issues

Please provide My Little Hearts with appropriate, valid court papers regarding custody and parenting times. We will always follow the direction of the courts regarding release of children. If the courts have not determined that a parent should have restricted access, we cannot deny a parent access to their child because another parent requests it.

Financial responsibility lies with the parent who signs the enrollment agreement or with whom the courts deem responsible.

Subpoenas or other requests regarding custody issues – Any and all costs that we incur for copies, employee time, or any legal fees that we incur will be passed on to requesting parties. Payable immediately



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Our centers are all licensed by state and local authorities. We meet or exceed all

guidelines set forth in Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers and any local licensing authorities. These standards relate to our facility, staff, training, health and safety procedures, nutrition, teacher/child ratios and record keeping. They are designed in the best interest of our children. All of our schools are subject to inspection by state, county and city health, fire and licensing officials.

Review our most recent inspection reports and a copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers on-line at www.dfps.state.tx.us or on the Family Information Board and Administrative Offices within the center. Families may contact the local licensing office listed in your enrollment packet or you may view and contact the local licensing office on line at www.dfps.state.tx.us.



Our Responsibility in Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

My Little Hearts staff takes the responsibility of reporting suspected child abuse and neglect very seriously. **The law requires us as child care providers to report any type of suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.** Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child can result in staff being charged with a misdemeanor and can subject them to criminal penalties or civil litigation. Abuse can happen in all types of families, from all walks of life and in varying

degrees. When abuse occurs, both children and families need support, understanding and help. Our staff receives annual training to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect.

We encourage open communication. Feel free to speak with the Center Director if you have any concerns or would like a confidential referral for outside resources. More information is available on-line at www.dfps.state.tx.us. To report suspected abuse or neglect, please contact 1-800-252-5400 or on-line at www.txabusehotline.org.



Breastfeeding

You are welcome to come and breastfeed your child at any time in the Infant Classroom. You may use the Glider Rocker for your comfort and convenience.

Emergency Preparedness

In addition to our monthly fire drills, we have a complete Emergency Preparedness Plan on File and available for your review at any time.

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In the event of an actual emergency that causes us to evacuate the building and relocate we will transport the children to Family Video – 815 Mayfield – Grand Prairie, TX 75052. Their telephone number is (972) 264-5193.

In the event of an area emergency evacuation we will relocate to our Mansfield location located at 1151 Walnut

Creek Dr. Mansfield, TX 76063. Their telephone number is (817) 453-0013.

In the event of relocation you will be notified as soon as everyone is safely relocated. You will be given specific pick up instructions at that time. We will transport all of the children in our mini buses as well as staff vehicles as needed.

Gang Free Zone

My Little Hearts Learning Center, as well as all daycares, is a gang free zone. Gang activity within 1000 feet of this center is strictly prohibited and subject to increased penalty under Texas Law.

Please see the flyer about Gang Free Zones posted on the parent board for more information.