**Little Scholars Daycare and Preschool**

**Parent Handbook**

**2018-2019**

This handbook outlines the policies under which Little Scholars Daycare & Preschool operates.

Parents will be notified in writing of policy changes.

The provider reserves the right to waive policies at her discretion without voiding the contract.

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**Enrollment**

**Admissions**

Before a child is considered enrolled and can attend care, the following items must be completed and returned.

* Medical clearance
* Emergency form (blue card)
* Contract
* Permission to administer medication
* Permission to photograph
* Authorized release form
* Full payment for first week of care
* Deposit (last two weeks of care) *does not apply to children enrolled prior to Fall 2017*

**Trial Period**

The first three weeks are considered a trial period.

Either party can withdraw without written notice during the trial period without written notice.

Your deposit (last two weeks of care) will be fully refunded.

No refunds for services already provided will be given.

**Supplies**

The following supplies are required. Please clearly label all items.

* A complete change of clothes
* Appropriate outdoor clothing
* Good walking/running shoes (**no sandals**)
* A package of wipes
* A package of diapers (if not toilet trained)
* A fitted sheet and blanket
* A tote bag or backpack
* Sunscreen

If your child is not prepared with proper clothing or toileting items, you will be asked to return home with your child to get them.

Please dress your child in play clothes each day. We get messy!

Cloth diapering is not currently offered.

**Hours, Services, and Fees**

**Contracted Times**

The program is open from **7:30am-5:00pm**; however, all families will receive care based upon contracted times.

If you do not plan to arrive within approximately 10 minutes of your contracted time, please text the provider. This helps the provider plan activities, bathroom breaks, and the location of drop off and pick up. **Additionally, after hour appointments are made based on contracted times. If you need to change drop-off or pick-up times, please speak with the provider.**

Families are asked to arrive by **8:45** unless other plans have been made with the provider. We do not begin group activities until all children arrive, so repeated late and unplanned arrivals may result in the need to change contracted times.

**Late Pick Up**

If your child is picked up after 5:00 pm, there will be a late charge assessed of $**5.00 for every 15 minutes or portion thereof**. Late fees are automatically added to your next invoice.

Upon three or more late pick-ups (after 5:00), a penalty of $30 will be billed in addition to the applicable per minute fees. Frequent late pick-ups may result in termination of care.

If earlier or extended care is needed, you may request this at least 48 hours in advance. An as-needed extended care fee of $10/half hour will be added to your balance for before or after-hours care. **Extended care is never guaranteed without the provider’s approval. Please plan accordingly.**

**Breakfast**

Children that arrive before **7:55** are offered breakfast each morning. Children arriving after that time are required to eat at home.

**Payment Due Date**

Payment is due by the morning of the first day of care each week/month.

**Late Payments**

If payment is not made by drop-off, a late fee of $10/day will automatically be added to your invoice.

The late fee and full payment will be required to be paid in full by the next day of care. **If full payment and late fees remain unpaid, your child will not be permitted into care that day.** Normal rates will still apply days your child is absent due to non-payment.

**Forms of Payment**

Payments made by cash, check, or direct bank payment do not incur a fee.

Payments made via Brightwheel will incur a $1.25/invoice processing charge. Monthly or bi-weekly payments may be made.

There is a $35 fee for all returned or cancelled checks. This will be applied to your invoice, as well as any additional fees that are incurred.

**Refunds**

In the event that a refund is due for an unplanned program closure or unpaid child absence, a refund will be credited to your next invoice. **No refunds are made via cash or check.**

**Rates**

Rates are dependent on care provided.

All rate information will be reviewed each summer or as changes occur.

**Absences and Closures**

**Child Vacation/Sick Days**

Full-time children receive **5** sick/vacation days annually. These do not roll over.

Please indicate if you would like to use a vacation day to cover a provider paid day; otherwise, your normal rate will apply.

**School-Age (AM/PM 5):** 5 days/year (am and/or pm care); no charge for not attending during school breaks/scheduled closings.

**Part-Time Summer Schedules**

**Summer 2018:** Families must request part-time summer care at enrollment, and must remain enrolled for no less than two days a week in order for spaces to be guaranteed in the fall.

The provider will determine which days are available for reduced care.

**Summer 2019:** Beginning summer 2019, the program will switch to an alternate schedule during July/August. In order to hold fall spaces, all children attending the regularly scheduled program 4+ days a week must attend for 2 full days a week to maintain our routine. Exceptions may be made if a substitute is found for a child, but all children are encouraged to attend at least one full day a week. Substitutes must be a deemed a good fit for the program and meet all requirements.

Summer schedules will be released as soon as possible to aid in planning.

**Back-Up Care**

Parents are responsible for finding back-up care for their children during provider vacation days and paid holidays.

**Holidays & Professional Development**

The program is closed on the following **paid** holidays:

* New Year’s Day
* President’s Day
* Memorial Day
* July 4th
* Labor Day
* Columbus Day
* Veteran’s Day
* Thanksgiving Day
* The Day After Thanksgiving
* Christmas Eve
* Christmas Day

If one of these holidays falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we will be closed the Friday before or Monday after unless otherwise noted. The observance of these holidays may be also be scheduled on another day more aligned to the school calendar.

Your normal tuition applies on these days.

**Provider Vacation**

The provider takes vacation annually; however, I strive to disrupt our schedule as little as possible.

At least two weeks notice is given for planned vacation days, and all planned days can be found on the newsletter calendar. These dates are subject to change, although I make every attempt to avoid last minute changes.

The provider may take additional unplanned vacation days as-needed.

**Sick Days/Emergency Closing**

The provider may take unpaid sick or emergency days as-needed. Your next invoice will be credited for closures due to illness. If the program is closed for a partial day, you will receive a pro-rated credit.

The provider will send a group text by 6:30 am if there is an emergency closing. Please check your texts before arrival.

**Snow Days**

The daycare is closed if a state of emergency or travel ban is put in place. Normal rate applies to these days.

Unless otherwise communicated, the program is open during inclement weather and your normal weekly rate will apply. Children receiving before/after school care may receive full day care at your request.

**Provider Appointments**

To the extent possible, these events will be covered by a state-certified substitute. If the program must open late/close early for provider appointments, you will receive a pro-rated credit on your next bill.

**Maternity Leave**

The program is closed 6-8 weeks from the date of delivery, barring any complications that require extended closing. It is recommended you secure flexible back-up care. Maternity leave is unpaid for the provider.

**General Information**

**Drop Off/Pick Ups**

This can be a uniquely difficult time for children. Please keep drop-offs brief and positive. Years of working with young children have taught me big smiles come as soon as we jump into our routine. Please help signal positivity and avoid reassuring anxiety.

At pick-up, parents arriving before 4:50 are welcome to join us for an extended good-bye. We love the opportunity to get to know your family better. Please be advised that you assume responsibility for your child’s behavior and safety once you are present. If challenging behavior presents during this time, you will be asked to keep pick-ups brief, as well.

Please take extra while using the side entrance. Please always carefully escort your child down the basement stairs and to your car.

**Car Seats**

For liability reasons, I am unable to store car seats on the premises. Please plan in advance if another adult needs to pick-up your child.

**Parking**

In the winter months, every effort will be made to clear snow prior to arrival. In the event you arrive and snow is not cleared, please park on the road unless the provider has indicated otherwise.

**Nap/Rest Policy**

All children in attendance are required to participate in afternoon rest time from approximately 12:00-2:00pm.

Audio books/soft music will be played. Children may bring a lovey and/or pacifier that will be left in his/her cubby until rest time.

Older children that are unable to sleep after one hour may read quietly on their mats.

Well-rested children, are happy children. Please avoid pick-ups during nap time unless absolutely necessary. Continued nap pick ups will result in a review of contracted times.

Children ages 12 months and over sleep on mats and are transitioned to one nap. Children under 12 months sleep in provider provided pack n’ plays.

**Items from Home**

Your child may bring toys/personal items in clean, working condition from home; however, please be advised that the provider assumes no responsibility for these once they enter the program. Some loved items have been lost, and we do not invest time searching for them.

In an effort to baby-proof our space, no small items such as legos, beads, or batteries will be permitted into the program. If I notice these items at drop-off I’ll return them to the parent.

The expectation with home toys is that they are shared. If your child does not wish to share the toy, please keep it home. If an issue arises around a home toy, it is placed in your child’s bag for the remainder of the day. If toys continue to be an issue home toy privileges will be revoked.

**Meals and Snacks**

**Food Program**

Little Scholars participates in the NYS Food Program. The program ensures daycares provide healthy meals that meet or exceed nutritional guidelines.

Children are expected to sit and use proper table manners. Meal time is also an excellent time to develop communication and social skills.

**Outside Food/Drink**

The food program strictly prohibits outside food unless it is approved for a celebration. Any unwrapped food that enters the program will be thrown away. All wrapped food will be placed in your child’s bag.

Your child **is** encouraged to bring clean water bottle each day.

**Allergies and Special Diets**

Any child with allergies or food restrictions must have a special diet statement on file at the child care. This form requires a doctor’s signature as well as specific substitutions listed.

All children will be served the same foods. Alternate foods will not be served when children simply do not like what is on the menu. The menu is carefully designed to ensure children are exposed to a wide variety of healthy foods, while also being offered foods he/she finds familiar. During meal times, your child is never forced to eat anything; however, he/she will be encouraged to try new foods and make healthy choices.

**Health and Safety**

Little Scholar’s Daycare is a well-child facility. This means the occasional cough or cold is not grounds for exclusion, however if your child experiences any of the symptoms or illnesses outlined, he/she will not be allowed to attend care.  
  
If a child becomes seriously ill during childcare hours the parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Parents need to pick up their children within **one hour** of being notified. If parents are not available, the emergency contact person will be notified.  
  
**Exclusions:**

* The child is too ill to participate in program activities
* An acute change in behavior—this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or having a quickly spread rash
* Diarrhea – children with confirmed cases of E. Coli, salmonella, or Shigella infection may not return to the program until cleared by a doctor (note must be provided)
* Vomiting more than 2 times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-infectious condition and the child remains adequately hydrated
* Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness
* Mouth sores with drooling, unless the child’s health care provider states in writing the child is not infectious
* Active tuberculosis until the child’s doctor confirms the child is on appropriate treatment and can return
* Streptococcal pharyngitis (*strep throat or other streptococcal infection),* until 24 hours after treatment has started
* Head lice until after the **third** treatment (head must be visibly clear of lice and nits)
* Scabies until treatment has been given
* Chickenpox (varicella), until all lesions have dried or crusted *(usually 6 days after onset of rash)*
* Rubella until 6 days after rash appears
* Pertussis until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment
* Mumps until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling
* Hepatitis A virus infection, until the child is approved by the health care provider to return to program
* Any child determined by local health department to be contributing to transmission during an outbreak
* Impetigo until treatment has started
* Pink eye until clear
* Fever 100.1 or over
* Flu until 4 days after start of medication or 5-7 days if no medication is given. Child must be free of cough and sneezing prior to admittance, as the flu can continue to spread even after fevers break.

Children must be symptom free for a **full** 24 hours without the use of OTC medications before re-admittance to care.  
  
Please do not mask symptoms with medication. Doing so puts all children at risk and is grounds for termination. If you suspect your child is ill, please keep him/her home. A day of rest can prevent spread of illness, longer absences and daycare closures.  
  
**Contagious Illness**  
You will be notified if your child comes in contact with a contagious illness; however, personal information about the ill child will not be shared.  
  
Families are required to notify the provider if anyone in the household has a contagious illness.  Depending on the nature of the ailment, the child (whether actually ill or not) may be excluded due to risk of exposure.  
  
**Doctor’s Note**  
In certain situations, a medical note must be obtained before your child can be re-admitted to care. Based on the physician’s diagnosis, the provider will determine if your child will be allowed to return to care. **A doctor’s note does not guarantee admittance into the program.**

**Medication Administration**

The program **will** administer over-the-counter topical ointments and cream sprays, including sunscreen products and topically applied insect repellant. The program **must** have written permission for the application each topical medication.

The program **will** administer epinephrine auto-injectors, diphenhydramine in combination with the epinephrine auto-injector, asthma inhalers and nebulizers.

The program **will** administer medications that require MAT training and approval by a health care consultant.

If your child requires administration of a new medication, it is recommended you arrive 5-10 minutes early. Medication can only be administered once properly checked into the program. If the labeling or consent for is not properly completed, the medication will not be administered.

The program **requires** consent to apply sunscreen before going outside **and** sunscreen provider by parents **OR** the child must be spent with long pants, shirt, hat, and enclosed shoes. The child will be kept out of the sun as must as possible. If the child does not meet these requirements, the child will be excluded from care that day.

Substitute providers will administer **no** medication other than sunscreen. When a substitute is present, you may choose to keep your child home or provide written permission for your child to be present without access to medication.

**Medical Statements and Immunizations**

Upon enrollment, a written statement must be provided signed by a health care provider verifying that the child is able to participate in child day care and currently appears to be free from contagious and communicable diseases. A child in care medical statement (provided by OCFS) must be completed within the 12 months preceding the date of enrollment.

The program will **only** accept children that are up-to-date on all vaccines. Documentation of vaccines must be provided, and vaccines must remain current. Updated documentation will be required when a new vaccine(s) is received.

**Emergency Contacts**

Each child must have on file a list of names and numbers of emergency contacts. The emergency contacts are persons in the area who are authorized by the parent to pick-up and drop-off the child in case of illness or emergencies when the parent cannot be reached.

Please be sure all contacts are over the age of 18 and are aware that they have been listed. Identification will be required if the provider is unfamiliar with an individual.

If a parent cannot be reached by their regular number, an alternative number must be left with the provider.

It is the responsibility of the parent to update information within five days of changes.

**Daily Health Check**

As a licensed daycare provider, I am **required** to complete daily health checks upon arrival and before parents leave. If a child is sleeping upon arrival I am required to wake the child and complete a daily health check. The morning health check is an opportunity to ensure the child is well enough to participate in the program and to gather any important information from parents.

Children will be monitored throughout the day, and parents will be notified immediately of any change of if the child’s condition in care exceeds what the program can safely provide.

**Universal Health Precautions**

Staff and children’s hands are washed before preparing, handling or eating food, after toileting or diapering, after contact with bodily fluids, and any time they are soiled.

Tissues and hand sanitizer are available upon arrival.

Please refrain from bringing ill siblings and other family members into the child care home during drop-off or pick-up.

**Minor Injuries**

Bumps and scratches are inevitable even though every effort is made to keep the children safe through adult supervision and child-proofing. Please expect that children may experience a minor scrape or bruise during regular play.

An incident report will be issued for any injury that draws blood and a copy will be given to you.

**Medical and Dental Emergencies**

If an emergency injury occurs, emergency personnel (911) will be called first and the parent called next. When appropriate, the provider will administer first aid to the child.

If necessary a child may be transported by ambulance to the hospital. If you indicated a hospital preference on your blue card, we will try to go to your hospital of choice. If available, a substitute may be called to stay with the children while the provider accompanies the child until the parent or emergency contact arrives.

An incident report will be completed and a copy will be given to the parent. The provider will immediately report the incident to the licensing office.

**The parent is responsible for any costs involved in medical treatment, including any transportation required.**

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Little Scholars view cleaning as a team effort. We make BIG messes, and we all do our part to clean up. Please reinforce this standard at pick-up.

All toys, surfaces, and floors will be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis and in accordance to licensing standards.

We set aside a short time each Friday to deep clean the program in addition to daily cleaning and disinfecting.

**Behavior and Guidance**

**Child Care Rules**

The following rules are to be followed by everyone at the daycare:

* Helping hands
* Listening ears
* Respectful words
* Walking feet (inside)

There are three principles our daycare rules are based on:

* You may not hurt yourself
* You may not hurt others
* You may not hurt things

I will teach all of the children that we use our hands constructively to help each other and use gentle touches.

We listen to each other and respect personal space.

We speak respectfully to one another and ask politely for things.

Our feet are used for walking, not kicking or running indoors.

**Positive Discipline**

The provider will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

* Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior
* Reminding a child of behavior daily using clear, positive statements
* Redirection of negative behavior using positive statements
* Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development.

**Repeated Unwanted Behavior**

If the negative behavior becomes a consistent problem, the parent will be notified of the situation. In some cases, a written plan of action will be created.

If a child remains unruly, parents may be called for pick up. No refunds or credits will be given for that day.

The provider is responsible for the safety and well-being of all children present, and at no time will a child be allowed to present a risk to others.

**Intentional Damages**

We cherish our home and we welcome your family into it. Please respect the provider, her business, home and family.

A certain amount of wear and tear in the child care area is expected where children are concerned.

I believe children are responsible for their actions and we teach them to respect people’s property. If a child intentionally damages the home, toys, furnishings, equipment, or other property the parent will be responsible for paying and replacing the damaged item(s).

**Toilet Training**

When your child is showing signs of readiness, the provider will discuss toilet training with the parents. When parents are ready to commit to training, the provider will take a large role in training. Toilet training takes a tremendous amount of time, which we are willing to invest if toileting is also being worked on at home.

**Signs of Readiness**

A few things that could indicate your child is ready to begin training are:

* Is able to communicate words like “wet,” “dry,” “potty,” “go”
* Is able to stay dry for at least two hours at a time
* Is having regular solid bowel movements
* Is able to follow simple two-step directions
* Is uncomfortable with dirty diapers and wants them changed
* Understands the association between dry pants and using the potty
* Asking to use the toilet
* Asking to wear regular underwear
* Is able to get on and off the toilet independently
* Can dress and undress simple clothing items

**Daycare Rules**

The following toilet training rules are strictly followed:

* Children will only begin training when parents provide pull-ups. Diapers are simply to hard to pull up/down frequently in group care.
* Children can **only** wear underwear without a protective barrier (pull up) after they are **completely** accident free **at care** for **two weeks (**or three weeks for children attending part-time)**.** If the child has any accidents at care, the two-week period begins again.
* If a child wearing underwear has more than two accidents, the two-week period begins again.

**Required Clothing**

Please be sure to work on dressing and undressing, and to send your child in clothing that is easily removed while toilet training. If your child is in clothing that is difficult to remove during this period, the provider will change your child into his/her spare outfit.

Please do not dress your child in the following while training:

* Restrictive clothing
* Tights
* Overalls
* Jeans
* Pants that have difficult snaps or zippers

**Withdrawal and Termination**

Although it’s sad to see a child leave my daycare, sometimes it is necessary. Families move, home situations change, and children grow.

**Parent Withdrawal**

In the event that a family needs to withdraw from child care and cancel the child care services agreement, a two-week written notice will be required. If two weeks written notice is not provided, your deposit is forfeited.

**Provider Termination**

Generally, I will give written notice if for any reason I am unable to continue providing care for your child(ren).

In some cases, immediate termination will occur if actions on the parent or child’s part interferes with the safety or overall quality of care of children/families enrolled.

Immediate termination can occur for the following reasons:

* Disrespectful, physical and/or verbal abuse to others, property and/or to provider
* Failure to pay in a timely manner
* Repeated late pick up/drop off
* Lack of compliance with handbook policies
* Failure to disclose contagious illness that puts children/provider at risk
* Failure to complete required forms by deadlines
* Lack of parental cooperation
* Failure of child to adjust to care
* My inability to meet the child’s needs
* Serious illness of child or provider
* Disregarding privacy of provider or other children/families

**Withdrawal and Termination**

**Substitutes**

Sometimes a substitute for the daycare may be required. All substitutes working with children will follow and meet all requirements set forth by licensing and have he same responsibilities as the daycare provider.

If at any time the provider needs to physically leave the property and use a substitute, notification will be provided as far in advance as possible. These dates are listed on the newsletter calendar or you will be notified via text. This does not include situations of urgent nature.

**Policy Revisions**

Revision to policies in the handbook or contract will be made a minimum of two weeks before they take effect unless it is a new state regulation. State regulations take effect immediately.

In the case of situations not covered in the handbook, individual consideration will be made dependent on the circumstances and the ability of the provider to accommodate.

The provider reserves the right to waive policies without voiding the contract at her discretion.

**Curriculum**

From September-May, the program will use a preschool program with all children enrolled in the program. The program is modified for toddlers. Data will be collected on children over the age of three to track school-readiness.