

# Family Handbook





The Learning Garden; Childcare and Preschool

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Welcome to The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool! We are a Faith based childcare and preschool with Christian ideals, values, and morals implemented into both the curriculum and environment of our program. We are very excited to begin the extremely valuable partnership between family and care provider, in hopes to provide your family with the best childcare and early education program possible.

**Mission Statement:** It is our mission to nurture our children in a safe and loving environment and help them grow in their relationship with Christ and in their love for learning; while supporting the family unit through education, communication and notification of local services and programs.

We are dedicated to providing a safe, loving and fun environment where all children and families feel comfortable and encouraged during this pivotal stage of life. We promise to keep open communication with families and respect every family's individual lifestyle and approach to parenting and teaching. We will make it our priority to be partners with families and support them in any way we can. Communication, honesty, and mutual support are the fundamentals for a great working relationship that will promote the best learning environment for our children. We are committed to creating and maintaining a non-discriminatory, judgement free, and inclusive environment at all times, for all people of all races, genders, economic standing, religions and backgrounds.

**Christian Curriculum Statement:** Our Christian Curriculum is based on the following Christian Character Qualities: Forgiveness, Gentleness, Compassion, Thankfulness, Responsibility, Love, Humility, Initiative, Contentment, Obedience, Patience, Generosity, Joyfulness, Orderliness, Discernment, Reverence, Diligence, Perseverance, Christian Example, Respectfulness, and Self Control. Our Christian Curriculum includes, but is not limited to, using the Bible, "Mother Goose", "Orange " and "Little K" materials and themes. These curriculums serve as a foundation for the lessons taught throughout the year. Each classroom adds its own unique activities to implement these themes.

In addition to our Mission Statement, we promise to uphold the Rights of Children as described in the 2021 Maine Childcare Licensing Rule:

Rights of Children:

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
3. Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each Child must be provided Child care services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
6. Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility
7. Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

**Communication:** Good communication is of the utmost importance. When a new family is accepted into our center, we like to be sure that we can share openly about any concerns or questions that may arise. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive issues will be discussed in private, at a mutually beneficial time and will be held with the utmost confidentiality.

\*\* Please see Family Etiquette Agreement

**Enrollment Policy:** There are numerous forms required by the Department of Health and Human Services that must be received by the Childcare Director before a child can be left in the responsibility of our facility. These forms are found in the Family Enrollment Packet and will be reviewed and updated annually. Please notify the Director immediately if any changes to these forms need to be made throughout the year. If there are any questions regarding the Family Enrollment Packet, or if support is needed in the completion of any or all of the forms, please feel free to contact the Director for assistance. Along with the completed Enrollment Packet there is a onetime, non-refundable registration fee of \$50. If a spot is held longer than two weeks, the registration fee is equal to the amount of your first weeks tuition, and in

addition a weekly 50% tuition fee will be required via ACH transfer; from when the spot becomes available to the date of enrollment. Then the first full week of tuition is to be paid in full before the child's first day of care. The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool also requires the child and parent/guardian visit the center before their first day of care. This policy ensures an ease of transition for the family and helps the child feel more comfortable on their first day.

### **Tuition and Payments:**

"Full- Time" consists of more than 3 pre-determined SET days in care. "Part- Time" consists of 2 or 3 pre-determined SET days in care. PT enrollment options are M/W/F or T/TH. The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool does not offer "Drop-in" care and does require a set schedule be pre-determined at enrollment for scheduling purposes.

#### **Full and Part Time Tuition Rates :**

Infant/Waddler - FT/week: \$305.00 PT/Day: \$70.00

Toddler - FT/week: \$295.00 PT/Day: \$70.00

Jr. Pre/T3 - FT/week: \$285.00 PT/Day: \$65.00

Pre-K - FT/week: \$275.00 PT/Day: \$65.00

**Breakfast is included in tuition for all children**

**School Food Program (Lunch and afternoon snack) = \$5/day OR \$20/wk - per child**

10% discount off oldest child's tuition for families with two or more child enrolled on a Full Time basis · The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool's hours of operation are from 7:00 am-5:30pm. · There will be a \$2.00 per minute late fee charged if child is picked up after 5:30pm and previous arrangements have not been made with director. · **Tuition is due PRIOR to services rendered; Payment is to be received no later than Friday at the close of business, for the next weeks tuition due.** Any payments received after this time will be subject to a \$25 late fee, per child, added to the following week's tuition payment.

Any account that is in arrears 2 weeks will be suspended until payment is made in full and Childcare services will no longer be available until arrangements are made or payment is received in full. If the amount is not paid in full by the end of the month services will be terminated completely. Payment is expected even if the child is absent. This includes family vacations and maternity leave. This payment is required to hold the spot for the child while they are away.

TLG does accept multiple forms of subsidized tuition payments. At this time we will accept collaborations with the H.O.P.E program, A.S.P.I.R.E program, TANIF, and FedCap. We are not able to accept Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) through the department of Health and Human Services this time. Please reach out to any of our management team for additional information.

## Holiday Closings

Presidents Day (for Staff development training/Parent Teacher conferences)

Memorial Day

**Week of Independence Day** (July 1, 2024 - July 5, 2024)

Labor Day

Staff Workshop Day: Annual Childcare Conference (This year: October 27, 2024)

Thanksgiving AND Black Friday

Christmas Eve CLOSED at Noon

**Week of Christmas** (December 25, 2023 - January 1, 2024)

We will be closed in observance of these holidays.

Payment is still expected for these days.

\* The observance or date of actual center closing, may vary based on the day of the week the holiday falls on or the needs of the center.

**Arrival and Departure:** It is very typical behavior for a child to cry or become upset at drop off. There are a few things you can do to make this transition easier on everyone:

1. Visit the child's teacher and classroom at least one time before leaving them.
2. Talk with the child about where you will be while you are away from them and continuously reassure them you will be back.
3. Make your drop off short! Say "good bye", give hugs and kisses, reassure again that you will be back, and exit. Children have proven to adjust much faster when the drop off is not drawn-out. Trust us; it is harder on you than them!

Children will ONLY be released to parents or legal guardian unless written or verbal consent is given by the parents/guardian in advance. If there are people that should be preauthorized to be able to pick-up the child, then they should be listed on the Authorized Pick-up list in the Family Enrollment Packet, or BrightWheel. Anyone picking up the child will be required to provide a photo ID before leaving with the child.

**Drug and Alcohol policies:** It is our dedicated intent to keep all children safe at all times while in our care. This being said; we can not refuse a parent from retrieving their child regardless of their emotional or physical state. Should we believe, beyond reasonable doubt, that a parent or guardian is intoxicated or emotionally unstable enough to make safe and detrimental decisions for their child; we will; to the best of our ability; attempt to reason with and make alternate pick-up accommodations for the child. HOWEVER; should the parent/guardian refuse our attempts; we must allow the child to go with them. We will then immediately contact the authorities with make/model of the the vehicle, and have the police make further determinations. The other parent/guardian will be contacted immediately as well.

\*\* Please see Family Etiquette Agreement

**Sign-In and Sign-Out:** It is a state requirement that all children be signed in and out of the program each day to maintain complete records of the number of children in the building at all times. This record is also taken out of the building in the case of a fire or other emergency, so emergency personnel are able to ensure all children are accounted for. PLEASE make sure you sign your child in and out of the program each day. Your assistance with this is appreciated!

**Clothing and Attire:** Please dress your child for play. We love to have fun and sometimes this may include getting messy! We will do our best with smocks and bibs but it is very challenging to keep children spotless. Any questions or concerns please feel free to contact a Director. We also ask that a pair of shoes or slippers be provided for winter wear inside the building to minimize the amount of mud, salt, and snow tracking in. This will help in maintaining a safe, clean environment for our children. Maine has extremely varying seasons, so we must be ready for anything!

**For Winter:** hats, (2 pairs) water-proof mittens, boots, snow pants and jacket.

**For Summer:** water clothes or bathing suit, shoes to "run" in (e.g. sandals with backs, crocs with backs, sneakers). Flip flops are ok for inside, but can cause unnecessary trips and falls on the playground.

**Personal Belongings:** Though most children love to showcase their favorite things and want to bring them along each day, it can cause some problems. Children tend to be more protective of their belongings from home, and are less likely to share. Other children are very excited about their friend's things from home as well, and want to touch them and play with them. As a rule, we do not recommend bringing toys or objects from home. Putting this rule in place and enforcing it consistently makes it easier for the children to abide by it.

\*Rest time snuggle item, or personal comfort item is not included in this category.

**Supplies:** Parents are responsible for the providing the following supplies:

INFANTS~

Diapers/Wipes

2 Full changes of clothes (replaced when soiled)

Bottles (Minimum 4 per child to be left at the center for washing and sanitizing.)

Diaper creams/ointments\*

Formula

Pain Relievers/Fever Reducers\*

"Binkie" (w/ string or clip attachment)

Pureed solid Foods

Fitted Pack-n-Play sheet

Arm-free sleep sac

(bedding will be sent home each Friday to be laundered and returned to the center on Monday)

## TODDLERS~

Diapers/Wipes

Inside shoes

Blanket/Fitted crib sheet

Diaper creams/ointments\*

Pain Relievers/Fever Reducers\*

2 Full change of clothes (replaced when soiled) / 4 if toilet training

## JR.PRE/PRESCHOOL ~

Inside shoes

Blanket/Fitted crib sheet

Pain Relievers/Fever Reducers\*

2 Full change of clothes (replaced when soiled)/ 4 if toilet training.

Durable pocket folder (replaced mid-year if needed)

\*\* If any of these items are difficult to obtain please contact the Director for assistance. Diaper creams and ointments require a "Topical Application Form" to be completed upon receipt of the item, and are required before use.

## **Program Offerings:**

INFANTS/WADDLERS – (6wks-12 mos.) In our infant room the goal of our staff is to nurture each individual child with personal care. The emphasis is on that child's development, focusing activities for that child around their age and developmental level. By keeping each child's day focused on their individual needs, schedules, and development we are able to create strong bonds, build quality relationships, and foster each infant's growth at their own pace. Our infant classroom is equipped with developmentally appropriate materials and equipment to enable the children to learn and grow. It is critical that the learning environment is physically safe and clean so that infants can safely explore and interact with the other children, adults and materials in the classroom. Infants benefit most from individualized care and should be allowed to follow their own schedule for eating, sleeping and playing. Infants are dependent on close, nurturing relationships as the source of positive physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth. Infants learn about their world through interactions. They develop best when they are provided a trusted caregiver who can read their cues and respond to their needs and behavior.

TODDLERS – (12 mos. – 2.5yrs) In our toddler rooms, our teachers have a strong understanding of the growing toddler. Each day is spent fostering development of the individual child as they learn and grow together. Because toddlers are learning at such a fast pace, teachers are intentional when planning activities in all developmental areas; making them exciting, fun, and hands on. Our teachers also know and understand that a toddlers needs may change quickly and are ready to adapt and accommodate the needs of the children. Our toddler classroom is equipped with developmentally appropriate materials and equipment to enable children to learn and grow through play and positive social/emotional interactions with peers and adults.

JR. PRE/PRESCHOOL - (2 ½ - 4) Jr. Preschool is our early PreK program. Because each child develops at a slightly different rate, the teachers in this classroom are prepared to provide group activities, yet still foster the development of each child individually. The classroom keeps early preschool learning activities fun, exciting, and hands on through play. Our Jr. Preschool classroom is equipped with developmentally appropriate materials and equipment to enable the children to learn and grow. This age group will begin to practice preschool concepts, experience somewhat more predictable schedules and begin slightly more structured exposure to early letter and number concepts. Though we begin introducing more traditional preschool expectations and routines, our focus is still that of a play based approach to learning.

PRESCHOOL - (4yo's who become eligible for public K the following year) The goal in our preschool classroom is to promote the healthy growth of each child as they continue to grow as an independent human, and begin to prepare for kindergarten. Our teachers focus their daily activities on both individual growth and quality group experiences for the children with a fun, exciting, and hands on approach. Prekindergarten skills are incorporated into this classroom, preparing each child to move on to the next level. Our preschool classroom is equipped with developmentally appropriate materials and equipment to enable the children to learn and grow. This age group is encouraged to explore their developing independence and autonomy. Educators will provide multiple opportunities for exploration in Science, Math, Early Literacy, Social Studies, Art, Music and social/emotional curricula. We feel children still learn best through play; even at this age, and will offer a comprehensive learning-through-play and exploration environment.

**Schedule:** Each classroom teacher will be responsible for determining their own classroom schedule to streamline the predictability of their curriculum. Though children are spontaneous and should be allowed to explore their environment or continue with an activity that is currently "piquing their interest," the schedule is designed to provide children with consistency and structure. Please see their individual teacher for a copy of this schedule, or you may review the one that is displayed in the classroom. Access to your child's daily activities will be available each day through our family communication app - Brightwheel. The daily activities feature outlines the highlights of your child's day and the important events we want to make sure you are aware of. For example: what/how much they ate, if/how long they slept, if they used the toilet or had an accident, if they are in need of supplies or even just their favorite part of the day.

**Meals:** TLG will provide all children breakfast each day, and the cost is included in weekly tuition. Families may send lunch and afternoon snack from home, or utilize our school food program. Each school meal offered will consist of healthy food choices, and milk will be provided twice per day. Infants will be fed according to their schedule, which will be determined with the parents and modified as necessary. We will encourage children to try new foods and eat until they are full; however, we will never force a child to eat, nor will we withhold food from a child as punishment.



**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** Cleanliness and good hygiene is of the utmost importance to us. In order to maintain the most sanitary environment possible children will be required to wash their hands before and after every meal/snack, as well as after toileting and diapering. Staff will be required to wash their own hands before and after meals, after using the bathroom, after wiping a child's nose or face, and any other time teacher's hands become contaminated.

Each child will be provided a rest mat each day that is sanitized with bleach after each use. They will use their own sheets and blankets from home, and these items will be sent home to be washed every Friday. Full time Infants will be assigned their own crib/pack-n-play for sleeping used only by them. Part-time infants will share a with another child who attends on opposite days. The crib will be sanitized between uses and new bedding will be provided.

Children will use separate cups, plates, bowls, and utensils that will be thoroughly washed after each use. Bathrooms, tables, high chairs and any other surface or item requiring it, will be cleaned regularly, and on an as needed basis.

## **Emergency Procedures:**

### **Fire Drills:**

As per state requirement, we will conduct one fire drill per month at varying times of the day. We will alternate between using the main and secondary routes to ensure staff and children are fully prepared in the case of a real fire or emergency. Infants and non-walking toddlers will be evacuated using evacuation cribs on wheels to the emergency meeting area.

### **Shelter in Place Protocol:**

In the event of a threatening situation that may pose a health or safety hazard to the children enrolled at TLG, we will implement a shelter in place plan. Each classroom will have a pre-determined, designated area in which to relocate children to, until the hazard has passed, or emergency personal have been contacted and advised all clear.

When an emergency/threat arises, children will be immediately moved to their individual locations, and a "Code Red" will be announced on our center wide notification system. This will notify all classrooms to also relocate children to their classrooms determined "shelter in place" location. Once children are secure, management will call 911 and request emergency services.

If we are unable to make phone calls, an emergency text message will be sent to all parents indicating "CODE RED" and parents should immediately come to pick up their children. More information regarding the situation will be provided to families in writing after the situation has been resolved, or it is safe to do so.

### **Emergency Evacuation Protocol:**

In the event of a natural disaster, or other threatening situation that may pose a health or safety hazard to children at TLG, we will conduct a full building evacuation. Children will be escorted out of the building, with their teacher and classmates to their designated "safe space" out back of our building. Each class will have a backpack with emergency items such as first aid kits, snacks, water and blankets. Infant teachers will be equipped with generic infant formula and bottles, diapers and wipes. Our packs will be sufficient for 1 hour of care.

Once children have been safely evacuated from the building, we will contact emergency services, and families. A "CODE YELLOW" will be sent via text through BrightWheel to families cell phones.

In the event the rear parking lot is not a sufficient distance away from the building, we will escort children to Bangor High School until picked up by parents.

BOTH OF THESE EMERGENCY PLANS MUST BE PRACTICED AS ***SIMULATED*** DRILLS TWICE PER YEAR. Notices will go home in advance when we will be conducting each drill.

Each teacher will be aware of the needs of their classroom, and ensure there are plans in place to meet any special needs necessary.

Staff will be trained on these procedures in their new hire training, and reviewed annually.

### **Death/Serious Injury Reporting:**

In the event of a serious injury or death at TLG; we will contact Emergency Medical services immediately. One Staff member will contact 911 and one will notify the Manger on Duty. We will then follow the instructions of the emergency medical professional on the phone, until the paramedics arrive. Management staff will contact the parent/legal guardian of the child, simultaneously. Once the child has been attended to by EMTs, and the parent/guardian is present, DHHS must be notified of the event. We will complete a "severe accident/emergency" form and follow-up with the family, licensing and staff.

**Toilet Learning:** Each child will be ready for this stage at a different time. Just because your child is turning 2 does not mean they should be "toilet trained." We will follow the cues of the child and discuss together when is the best time for the child to begin this process. It has been our experience that children succeed best when the decision is made and then committed to. Once the child is showing signs of being ready and you as the parents have decided the time is right, they should begin at home over a long weekend or vacation; this way, the majority of the hiccups will happen where the child feels most comfortable and in their own home. We will continue the practice at school; however, your child will need MULTIPLE changes of clothes and underwear. It is our goal to support the family and the child, however need to keep the environment clean and sanitary for all children enrolled at TLG. Please see a Director or Head Teacher for a handout on tips and tricks for making this a successful training experience for everyone.

**Nap/Rest Time:** We will have a designated rest time each day. All children will be required to rest during this time. "Rest" consists of: quiet time on a rest mat (or designated crib/pack-n-play for children up to 18 mos.), reading books; an independent, quiet activity at a table, or sleeping. If a child should fall asleep they will be allowed to sleep as per their own sleep patterns. Infants will be encouraged to sleep on their own schedule, and as necessary.

**Special Needs:** TLG will do our utmost best to accommodate a varying array of special needs; however, our space, layout, staff training and preparedness will restrict what we can SAFELY accommodate. It is our goal to provide the best possible environment and education for all of our children. If we are unable to provide that level of care; within reasonable accommodations; for a child with a specific need, we may suggest a program that might be better suited for the child and family's needs. We first and foremost want what is best for your child.

\*\* See Collaborative Behavior Management Agreement

**Parent Involvement:** We at TLG encourage all parents to be as involved as possible in their child's education. We maintain an open-door policy and encourage you to feel free to stop in at any time to view your child "in action!" Please keep in mind that if you stop in and do not plan to take your child with you, we would prefer the child does not see you. Separation is very difficult on many children, and the emotional stress of doing it more than once per day would be very hard on them and their teachers. There are many other ways you can be involved as well: Parent story time -Special projects or experiments - cooking/baking projects -volunteer to chaperone outings/field trips - participate in holiday parties/celebrations - attend parent teacher conferences - reinforce current teaching concepts at home - donations of toys, seasonal attire, craft supplies, etc. - make suggestions and provide feedback to the Director to better the program and environment.

**Mandated Reporting Requirements:** As a Childcare Center, all teachers and staff are Mandated Reporters to the Department of Health and Human Services. This means that if we suspect abuse or neglect in any form we will contact the Department immediately. Please notify the child's teacher if the child is dropped off with any cuts, bruises, or bumps. Though we realize all children get the occasional bump or bruise in this stage of life, we must document accordingly. If you ever feel that The Learning Garden is not operating in a safe manner, please bring the matter to our attention. If you desire a copy of the state licensing guidelines, we will be happy to supply you one. We are proud to say we do our best to follow state licensing guidelines to the letter. Our staff is highly trained in knowing and complying with all applicable state and local laws. If you observe something that you know is a violation of state licensing laws, you can report the incident by calling the Department of Human Services at 287-9300 or 1-800-791- 4080.

### **Outdoor Play:**

We will play outside every day the weather permits. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately and has the required outdoor attire as outlined previously in the handbook. We will **not** go outside if weather conditions are not safe for us to do so. (Note: cold temperatures, rain and snow are still safe; as long as we are dressed appropriately!) State regulation mandates us to take ALL children outside, including infants, each day that falls within the parameters listed above. If you feel your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, please keep them home until they are well enough to participate in all activities of their day. Curriculum themes and activities continue outside to our play space in addition to activities like: swinging, running, climbing, rock digging, water play (in summer months) and multiple large group games and activities. Outdoor play is pivotal for the well-rounded development of all children. We will spend as much time outside as possible! All state minimum child/staff ratios and maximum group sizes are followed even when on our playground or utilizing outdoor space. Children are monitored at all times. All staff are trained in this area upon hire, and reviewed annually.

**Discipline:** The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool is dedicated to teaching the children in our care about the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus. We will use Biblical principles to encourage children to make good choices: Matthew 22:37-39(NIV) 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'[a] 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' In the case that a child does need correction, we will never UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE use physical punishment, spanking, verbal abuse, or isolation as a means of discipline. We will never withhold food or force sleep as a means of punishment, either. We will use prevention, positive redirection, discussions, and positive reinforcement as our first response techniques to behavior issues. There may be rare situations that require a cool-down period. If this is the case the time will be determined by the child, and will NEVER be used as a form of humiliation or public embarrassment. It will be simply a tactic used if the child needs time to compose themselves and rejoin the group. It is imperative we keep all children and staff safe at all times. We would NEVER want a child to feel threatened or unsafe in our care. In order to ensure your child never feels this way, we will STRICTLY ENFORCE a no physical harm rule.

If a child seems to have a consistent pattern of physical aggression, we will have a family meeting ASAP. We will work to determine what is causing the behavior, and collaboratively construct an intervention plan to stop the behavior from continuing. If all parties are not participating in the plan, the behavior will not change. Children need consistent rules and expectations at home as well as at school, and we MUST work as a team in order to fix it. A commitment to our mandatory family/school collaboration agreement is detrimental to success in this area. In the event you are not able, or willing to collaborate with our efforts for behavior management plans or IEP's, we reserve the right to terminate care.

We will do our best to aid in finding alternate placement but our first responsibility is to keep everyone, staff and peers alike, safe. If damage is caused to the building because of willful destruction by a child, the cost of repair will be the responsibility of the parent.

Our facility is a "Plan-B: Collaborative and Proactive Solutions" program. Please review information at the link below for more information on this approach.

<https://www.livesinthebalance.org/walking-tour-parents>

\*\* See Collaborative Behavior Management Agreement

**Illness/Sick Child Policy:** TLG is a Well-Child program. We do not provide sick-care at our facility. **If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness, or is unable to participate in daily activities please keep them home.** We do not want other children/staff exposed to the illness and spreading it through the facility. If a child becomes sick while in our care the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. We will require the child be picked up within 30 minutes of call placed. If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian we will begin calling people listed on the emergency/alternate pick-up form. If it becomes a habit of no one available to pick-up the child within the 30 minutes time frame, we reserve the right to terminate care. It is imperative we take any and all precautions to keep our children and staff as healthy as possible and ensure disease or illness is not transmitted to others. All children will be visually screened in the morning at drop-off. If the child exhibits red eyes, flushed skin tone, a cough, green or yellow mucus/snot, or warm to the touch (feverish) they will NOT be permitted to stay. Please do not give the teachers a hard time about this. They will use their discretion and judgment and will be careful to maintain the health and wellbeing of the entire classroom. If there is a question or concern PLEASE SEE A DIRECTOR.

In the event a situation arises that requires us to amend or add to our health policy; it will be provided to you in writing separately from this handbook.

**Children will not be permitted to return to the facility until they are fever free (without fever reducing medications) or symptom free for 24 hours.**

**IF A CHILD IS SENT HOME WITH ANY COVID-19 RELATED SYMPTOMS WE WILL REQUIRE A DOCTORS NOTE CLEARING THEM OF COVID-19, TO RETURN.**

Symptoms/illnesses requiring removal/exclusion from care:

FEVER – "Fever" is defined as having a temperature of 100.4° F or higher.

DIARRHEA – Runny, watery, or bloody stools, or 2 loose stools in 4 hours.

VOMITING – if a child vomits while in our care they will be sent home immediately. PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE VOMITED IN THE NIGHT. Child must not have vomited for 24 hours before returning to school.

MIXED SYMPTOMS – Sore throat and coughing; green/brown fluids from nose mouth, ears or eyes. Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases; including ringworm, yeast over growth or undiagnosable skin lesions. Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without jeopardizing the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.

HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH VIRUS - This is the most challenging and equally frustrating of childhood illnesses. It spreads quickly and causes multiple symptoms varying in seriousness per child. Because HFM has a large communicable time frame, up to 7 -10 days according to the CDC's website; we will require a FULL 4 DAYS waiting period between presence of fever (low grade or otherwise) and return to childcare; to ensure no other symptoms surface. Should lesions on hands or feet or in mouth or throat present within the 4 days, child may not return to school until ALL lesions are scabbed over and clearly dissipating. This can potentially be 10-14 days. Please understand, this is the best and most effective way to eliminate the presence and spread of this very uncomfortable childhood virus. During HFM "season" we will not assume drooling or low grade fevers are teething; or red spots around mouth are from soothers or other potential reasons for mouth redness or spots. Our best defense from HFM is proactivity.

Some providers no longer treat or consider some childhood illness such as conjunctivitis, hand/foot/mouth or lice as cause for an absence from childcare; however we at TLG still hold true to our policy; regardless of provider recommendation.

Please make this a priority. If you suspect your child is ill, please do not try to bring them to TLG. We cannot provide the best care for your child if our staff is sick.

Please think: How you would feel if someone else contaminated your child?

We will do our best at screening children at drop off, but please make it easy for our staff and keep your child home if they display any symptoms of being ill.

All staff at TLG will conduct routine sanitation and cleaning procedures of all surfaces, and toys throughout the day. Any soiled (with snot, spit or any bodily fluids) clothing will be changed immediately and hands washed frequently.

**Medications:** Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is needed for us to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the-counter.

\*NOTE: All medicines must be in their original container with pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.

\* If intended medication dosing is different from the package dosing information, you will be required to provide a doctors note indicating the doctor recommended dosing instructions that differ from the box directions based on the child's weight and age.

\* Over the counter medications will require an "OTC permission" form to be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian before we are able to administer the medication.

**Medical Emergencies:** Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergent injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, emergency medical professionals will be contacted and your child will be transported by ambulance to your indicated hospital of preference. You will be notified immediately to meet us there. If you are not going to be at your usual place of employment, or at home, please make sure that we have a number where you can be reached. Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

**The owners of The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool LLC or Richard Kelley (The lessor of our space) will not be held liable for any sickness or injury of either parent/guardian, child, family member, visitor, outside vendor or staff while on these premises.**

**Termination Policies:** We reserve the right to terminate a child for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- *Failure to pay*
- *Routinely late pick-up*
- *Failure to complete required forms*
- *Lack of parental cooperation*
- *Continued and irresolvable physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by child or parent/guardian.*
- *Lack of compliance with handbook regulations*
- *An inability to meet the child's needs, after sufficient attempts have been made to accommodate the needs of the child and family within the limits of reasonable accommodation*
- *Lack of compliance with handbook regulations*

We do require a two week notice when terminating care, and payment will be required for the entire two-week time period, whether the child attends or not. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination if there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance. We will give the most notice possible in the event termination is necessary. Anyone who terminates daycare and has a balance that is outstanding will need to have the account settled within 30 days. All accounts not settled within 30 days will be turned over to a collections agency regardless of amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$20 per week late fee plus 35% collections fee added to amount due.

## FAMILY ETIQUETTE AGREEMENT

We can not reiterate enough that we believe a child's family is the most influential voice a child has in their life. We trust that every decision you make for your child(ren), and your family, is with everyone's best interest at heart. However, some times situations arise that may complicate otherwise typically copasetic scenarios. Even the most innocent of intentions can lead to catastrophic outcomes. We want to ensure everyone is on the same page as far as our expectations at pick-up, and during all communication between TLG staff and management. As well as the expectations of local law enforcement and the Department of Health and Human Services Child Protective Services division.

### **PICK-UP:**

When a child is being picked-up at TLG by the typical parent or guardian, or someone previously agreed upon by a parent or guardian and our staff; it is expected this individual **MUST** be of sound mind and body. Should we determine through a two-step vetting process the individual is **NOT** of sound mind or body; we will ask that an alternate pick-up person be contacted to retrieve the child. Should we receive push-back or the situation become escalated; we reserve the right to contact the Bangor Police Department to come help defuse the situation and provide an expert assessment of the drivers ability to safely transport the child. Please do not put us in this situation.

### **SEPARATION/DIVORCE SCENARIOS:**

We are not legally allowed to withhold a child from a biological parent **UNLESS** we have the appropriate paperwork from a **COURT ORDER** or Order of Temporary Guardianship from the Department of Health and Human Services (OCFS) in a foster care or adoption situation. Please do not include us in your marital disputes. Our only focus is your child, and eliminating as much conflict as possible while in our care. We will do whatever we can to support every family the best we can, and this includes never forcing us to "take a side". We will equally include and support both parents regardless of marital or relationship status. If the unfortunate scenario arises that does require a protection from abuse order, we will need to see the original order from the judge, so that we may make a copy. We will not be able to do anything without that order in our hands. A custody agreement **IS NOT** sufficient documentation to withhold a child. If it is not a specific parents "day" and they pick-up; we are not legally allowed to stop them. These disputes may be worked-out off of TLG's premisses and pursued in civil court.

**We will NOT testify on either parents behalf, or be subject to summons in divorce or custody hearings. Should you cause us to be put in a position of creating a school environment that is no longer neutral or conflict free for your child, we will no longer be able to provide care.**



## COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE AGREEMENT

While enrolled in care at TLG we will have many opportunities for a wide range of communication and conversation. While most will be casual and informative; there may come a time where we do not see eye to eye. Should you have concerns, or are not in agreement with how we are conducting business, a classroom, or have specific concerns about your child and the care they are receiving; we want to hear from you!

We can not grow or learn if we do not know what we could be doing better! We rely on families input to fill in the blanks, and help us be the best early childhood education center we can be.

- There may also be times; as early childhood education professionals, we may have concerns, recommendations or observations we would like to share with you on a wide range of topics. Please keep in mind it is always our 100% goal to work along side you as parents/guardians, and would never make a diagnosis or assumption about clinical topics, or personal ideals. We may however, request additional assistance from outside services such as Maine Roads to Quality; our professional education consultation team, Child Development Services, or other outside licensed consultation services; or your child's Pediatrician. We would never do this without your full permission and collaboration. During this process we expect mutual respect in our communication, and have found that open, honest and respectful conversation makes the biggest impact in ensuring a child receives the best care possible and all of their educational and developmental needs are being met. While we are not a Special Education Facility; we will do our best to meet the needs of all children. That being said, we require a 100% collaborative approach to behavior management. When a child presents a challenging behavior that is atypical in nature, or exceeds the average amount of care or intervention that an individual teacher can provide, while caring for the multiple other children in the class; we may require your permission to request additional assistance or information to ensure all children receive the best care and education possible.

These conversations can, at times, be sensitive in nature; and we understand that.

What we will not tolerate is aggressive, rude, threatening, unkind, or misplaced confrontations. If you have a concern that can not positively be worked out with your child's teacher directly, please contact a member of the management team to set up a time to meet and work out a solution together.

Should a member of our staff or enrolled family, ever feel threatened, uncomfortable due to comments or advancements sexual in nature, or unsafe in any way; you may be asked to find alternate pick-up/drop-off arrangements OR your relationship with us may be terminated.

## COLLABORATIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT FAMILY/PROVIDER AGREEMENT

The Learning Garden is a whole-family focused learning center. We feel that the best way to care for your children, is in collaboration with you! You are the most impactful example in their lives and we are honored you trust them to us for the moments you are unable to be with them. That being said, we want to partner with you, not be a substitute for you! Because that is not only impossible, but not our role as Early Education providers.

Because we understand there is no comparison to the bond you share with your children, we must provide correction and positive guidance in a different way than you as parents may at home. Our learning environments must be predictable and cohesive throughout the classrooms and age groups. In order to do that, while also complying with state licensing regulations, and honoring the diverse approaches to discipline our families present; we have adopted the Collaborative, Proactive Solutions Model developed by Dr. Ross Greene. The CPS behavior management profile focuses on three approaches (or plans) to modify negative behaviors. Plan A- Is the need for authoritative behavior management. We would "plan A" safety concerns, such as stopping immediately unsafe scenarios, that could be detrimental to the child's well-being. Plan B - Is the "collaborative and proactive" piece. This is the main focus of the approach. When we "plan B" a behavior, we are identifying a "lagging skill" or challenge, a child may have. Then we have an open ended conversation with the child; asking questions to better understand why they may be having a hard time during a specific time of day or in certain scenarios. If a child is unable to communicate effectively in this step; we will do an "observational collaboration". This just means, we will track behaviors for patterns: in time of day, interactions with peers or teachers, physiological need or activity. Once we are able to identify a pattern, we can then work collaboratively with the child to formulate a plan to teach the lagging skill, in an attempt to proactively eliminate the negative outcome; or behavior. This is a broad way of saying: WE BELIEVE CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEY CAN; and we want to help them do well!

The third and final step is Plan C. This is the one that is hard to grasp for many people. Educators, parents and caregivers alike. This is where we 'ignore' a less pressing behavior, and 'shelf it' for a later time. The idea is that all children have things they are working on. This is what childhood is all about! However, we can not work on everything at once. We are far more productive in minimizing lagging skills when we are intentional and work on one or two goals at a time. Then we would "Plan C" the rest until progress is made. This is not in any way "ignoring a child's needs" like the mindset of ignoring negative behaviors and rewarding positive ones. This would insinuate children WANT to act poorly for attention; and we do not believe that is true. We believe children do the best they can with the skill-set they have available to them. It is our goal to give them a broader range of skills to pull from in less than ideal situations.

We believe the best way to do this is:

Plan A when a child's safety is at risk.

Plan B when we feel a child is lagging a skill necessary for them to do well.

Plan C any behavior that is not detrimental to their safety or an intentionally determined lagging skill we are focusing on.

All other conflict resolution and behavior management will be addressed with in the moment conversations, positive peer relationship modeling, communication guidance and emotional awareness identification techniques.

We will never use public humiliation, isolation, revocation of personal items, remove or limit outside time, or shaming. We are also not permitted to use food of any kind as a source of reward or punishment. We are committed to providing a positive and supportive environment for all children and feel this model is the best way to facilitate that. We also believe this is the best way to support all families individually.

**Changes/Revisions of Hand Book or Policies:**

The Learning Garden Childcare and Preschool reserves the right to make revisions to its policies or handbook at any time. In the event of a revision you will be notified IN WRITING of the change and given two weeks notice of the change. Any and all changes will require a signed understanding and notification of the change in order for care to continue. If signature is not received before the two weeks notice period is over, the child may not return to care until it is received.

Jan.2023