



Parent Handbook

Mission

Learning Ladder strives to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment that enhances physical, social and emotional development, values, and the cognitive skills needed to climb the ladder from infancy to preschool and onward to elementary school.

Philosophy

A child's work is play.

Play Leads to Learning & Learning Leads to Play

Our Goals

- To provide children with an appealing assortment of play-based activities and areas of interests in order to provide optimal enjoyment and learning opportunities.
- To provide children with a solid foundation and fond childhood memories.
- To share information with parents and work as partners concerning their child's development.
- To provide ongoing professional development opportunities for our staff.
- To provide nutritious and delicious meals.
- To be united within our local community.
- To regularly assess the program for effectiveness.

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Welcome

Welcome to Learning Ladder Preschool & Childcare. You are now a member of *our* family. This is how we grew into one of the best preschools in the area.

Our building was built in 1990 as one of the original Gingerbread Preschools. It was purchased in 1994 by Linda Kudrna and renamed Learning Ladder. At that time another building called Tiny Tots, located a few blocks away on Main Street, was also being occupied by young Learning Ladder students (2 and 3-year-olds).

In 1998 an addition was added to the Cottage Grove Road location, doubling the size of the building to over 11,000 square feet. The Tiny Tot building was sold and the children were moved to this location.

Due to the growing demand for infant and toddler care, in 2005 our former Butterfly Room classroom (preschool room) was remodeled and divided into 2 classrooms. The new infant and toddler rooms have been renamed the Inchworms and Grasshoppers. The Butterfly Room was moved to the lower level.

In the fall of 2008 we partnered with Monona Grove School District to include T4K (Together 4 Kids) in our building. This is a universal preschool program that is available to all 4-year-olds residing in the district. Children outside the district may apply for open enrollment to attend.

During this time frame we also operated an after-school program in the Cottage Grove Elementary School buildings.

Many of our staff are family members and we consider our additional staff extensions of our own family. We are often reminded how long we have been in business when 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of families continue to enroll children or become part of our educational team. We couldn't ask for a more heartwarming career!

Our staff is very important to our program and we believe that providing them with professional development opportunities and instilling a positive work ethic has kept many of them in our program for long periods of time.

Our preschool program was Nationally Accredited 1998-2008 by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. Due to the recent implementation of Wisconsin's **YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System** we currently are proceeding with **YoungStar** and **National Accreditation Commission (NAC)** to achieve our goal of a 5-star rating.

The following pages describe our curriculum and policies. They are designed to ensure that your child and all of the children in our program receive the best education and care possible.

Most of our policies are uniform throughout the program. However, our infant & toddler, preschool program and school-aged program, vary slightly due to the developmental stages of children. Please refer to the Summer Camp brochure for additional policies and information about the school-age program.

If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to contact us personally, by phone or email. Maintaining a high quality program involves open and frequent communication with our families. For families that do not speak or read English we will assist in contacting an interpreter.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Orientation

In order to provide a great beginning for your child a Learning Ladder representative will provide families with the following information during the orientation process. We will assist families that need an interpreter.

- Tour of the campus that includes classrooms and grounds.

- Introduction to teaching staff.
- Plan parent and child visit with teacher.
- Overview of parent handbook.
- Discuss your family's expectations for your child.
- Overview of family support resources and activities.
- Plan extended visits for children who need additional time to become comfortable with their surroundings.
- Review required forms and operating procedures.

Family Communication

The success of our school is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication between parents, teachers and administrators will help each child to experience a positive early learning experience. We want family members to feel at ease communicating to their child's teacher and the administrative team. Special considerations for privacy will be made for matters that are considered confidential.

We use the following tools to build a solid communication partnership;

- **Verbal Communication**—Teachers will greet parents every morning in an effort to exchange information about the child's night and early morning. Teachers also greet parents each afternoon in an effort to exchange information about the child's day at school.
- **Pro Care Messaging**—Personal messages about the program or reminders may appear when you sign your child into the computer attendance program.
- **Bulletin Boards**-Parent informational boards are located outside each classroom. These boards provide important information regarding lesson plans, menus, curriculum news, office news, and the daily classroom photos. There is also a central parent information bulletin board located outside the offices. Here you will find our licensing information, contagious disease notification, sunscreen and insect repellent information and community news.
- **The Daily Buzz**-This centralized area is located near the attendance computer. The classroom clipboards will provide parents with field trip information, reminders, special events, newsletters, child development articles and other important program news.
- **Staffing Educational Achievements**-Located outside the office is where photos and educational achievements are posted for each teacher and staff member.
- **Newsletters**-Monthly newsletters will include program news, child development articles, and health & safety information.
- **E-Mail**-Newsletters, statements, and parent surveys will be distributed by email.
- **Learning Ladder Website**-Our website has general information about the school as well as the parent policy manual. There are many child forms available for you to conveniently download. Check the website often as it is managed on-site and is frequently updated.
- **Facebook**-We are on Facebook. Please join us and be our friend.
- **Daily Sheets/Notebooks**- "Daily Notes" will go home with parents of children under two. Detailed information will include meals, diaper changes, learning experiences, and their disposition.
- **Parent Conferences and Assessments**-Scheduled phone conferences will be held in November and May. The conferences will focus on past individual achievements and future goals. Additional conferences may be scheduled

either by the parent or the teacher. For children under the age of 24 months there will be 2 additional progress reports each year. Our T4K children will be assessed according to the Monona Grove School District calendar.

- **Portfolios**-Teachers will develop individual portfolios for each child as a way to keep track of their learning and development and to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. This keepsake will include observations of your child's learning, writing and work samples, photographs and memorabilia.
- **Parent Surveys**-Surveys are periodically distributed to families. We truly value your insight and use the information in our goal planning sessions.
- **Suggestion Box**-Parent suggestions are very useful for us to determine how we are doing. Please let us know how we have "Wowed" you or child or what we can change to "Wow" you over. A suggestion form is located in the parent area and may be dropped off in the tuition mail box.

Parent Outreach

Parents of children that get involved and show interest in their child's growth and education will instill a sense of well-being, self-worth, and promote confidence in their child's emotional development.

We are certain that the parents belonging to the children in our program have special talents, unique cultural traditions, musical talents, storytelling capabilities, collections, interesting jobs, or life experiences to share. We welcome any and all parents willing to reveal their talents to our program!

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in our field trips & special events. A sample of our family events include the Fireman's Festival Parade, the Pumpkin Patch, Trick-or-Treating, and the Winter Night Parade & Holiday Tree Lighting sponsored by the local 'Christmas in the Grove' celebration. Frequently new events are added as opportunities arise. Please watch for information.

Parent Visits

Parents and family members are welcome to observe or visit their child's classroom. We believe it strengthens the bond between teacher, child, and parent. "Surprise" stops are welcome, but to ensure that you will get the most out of your visit it is recommended that the child's teacher is given prior notice. This will allow the children to stay on their predictable daily routine and give the teacher time to prepare the children and adapt the classroom schedule for your visit.

Parent Responsibilities

In order to help us provide the best care possible and maintain high standards we ask for the following support from our families.

- **Turn in all necessary paperwork on time.** Even before your child attends their first day of school you'll need to submit documents such as immunization records, medical health release forms, and enrollment forms. These records are mandated by the state of Wisconsin. Some forms need to be updated periodically after your child is enrolled.
- **Read all parent notices and e-mails.** Missing this information may affect your child being prepared for the day. You are your child's most valuable asset and advocate. Keep yourself informed.
- **Bring your security card/tag to get in the security locked door, sign your child in and out each day and make contact with the teacher.** This is for the safety of your child and the best way to stay connected with the teachers.
- **Keep your child on a consistent schedule.** Children need a schedule and routine to function well. It is important to maintain a consistent and bedtime schedule. Children that regularly arrive late or at varying times will be "out of sync" with the group and the daily routine.

- **Start your child's day by allowing them to be prepared for the day.** Wake your child early enough to allow him/her time to get dressed. Do not allow children to bring in food/drinks or toys from home. (See *Toy Day* and *Items from Home* policies for more clarification).
- **Let your child's teacher know if your child needs extra care on a particular day.** If your little one didn't sleep well last night or your partner is away on business and your little one misses him/her, let the teacher know so that we can give them extra TLC.
- **Let us know if your child's arrival or departure times will change on any given day.** If grandma is in town and wants to pick up your child early contact the office and we will pass the information on to the child's teacher.
- **Contact Learning Ladder when your child is going to be absent.** This will alleviate taking up precious classroom time from teachers who will contact you if your child does not arrive 2 hours after your regular arrival time.
- **Accurately inform teachers regarding the health of your child and respect and follow our health policy.** It is common for children new to the program become ill as their immune systems adjust to a new environment. This is both normal and beneficial to the long term development of your child's immune system.
- **Make sure your child has all the supplies he/she needs.** Provide all the necessary supplies and clothing required for your child's care.
- **And pay your fees on time.**

Making Your Child's First Day Comfortable

All children are unique and will react differently to a new program or classroom. Some children are very outgoing and seem not to need any adjusting time. Others are very shy and may need more time. Most children fall somewhere in between. Parents are welcome to call anytime during the day to ask how their child is adjusting.

- Whenever possible, we encourage parents to bring their child in before their first day of enrollment to tour the campus and meet their teacher and some of their new classmates.
- We suggest that you join in with your child during an activity and familiarize yourself with the daily schedule.
- At home talk about your child's teacher using her/his name and an activity that your child took an interest in. Remind your child of any friends they may already know or that they met on their first visit.
- Reassure your child that you will always return for them at the end of the day.
- If possible, a shortened first few days is suggested.

Grievance & Conflict Resolution

Parents are requested to raise any concerns they may have regarding their child's care with the teacher in the first instance. This should be followed up by speaking to the Director if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved. If you have any suggestions please do not hesitate to contact the Director, so that appropriate action can be taken.

All concerns will be dealt with in the following manner:

- With confidentiality.
- Meet with the staff members in the group (if appropriate) to discuss the issue.
- The administrator will be informed of the grievance and discuss with the director possible strategies to resolve the grievance.
- Meet with the parents to discuss the grievance and document outcomes.
- Outside agencies or community resource programs may be accessed.

In the event that there is a conflict that arises we suggest that you speak directly to the person with whom you are having a conflict. It is best if you can bring ideas for possible solutions as well. Working in a spirit of cooperation and compromise is the key for resolution.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Licensing Status

Learning Ladder is a State of Wisconsin licensed group daycare program for children ages 6-weeks to 11-years-old. We are licensed for 100 children. It is owned and operated by Linda K's Inc. In 2008 our program has partnered with Monona Grove School District to offer T4K (Together 4 Kids) on site. Specialists have inspected, evaluated and recognized our program for meeting or exceeding standards set forth by the Department of Children and Families and the Monona Grove School District. We are working on NAC Accreditation and plan to meet the requirements for a 5-star rating in 2012.

A copy of the Learning Ladder Policy Manual and the Wisconsin Administrative Code are available at the main entrance and on our website.

Delegation of Authority

Learning Ladder Child Care follows a chain of command for the delegation of authority. The administrator is responsible to carry out the policies and the day-to-day operations of the program. In the absence of the administrator, the delegation of duties will be carried out by the director and/administrative assistant/or office manager. In the absence of the administrative authority, the school-age coordinator or a teacher will be appointed to make leadership decisions. Emergency phone numbers are included on the *Chain of Command* that is posted in each classroom.

For safety purposes Learning Ladder schedule's at least 2 staff members to be present in the building during open hours of operation.

In case of an emergency;

- staff will assess the situation;
- contact an administrator and/or dial 911. (Administrator will contact additional help when needed so that the working staff members can stay focused on the emergency)
- Parents will be notified as soon possible/safe to do so.

There are staff members and local authorities located within 5 minutes from the program. Their phone numbers are posted on the Chain of Command located near each phones.

In the unlikely event that an emergency situation where it is not possible to contact help or the designated person in charge, all employees are expected to take charge of the situation and provide safety for the children.

Staff will program the emergency phone numbers into their cell phones for field trips and/or use when a land line is not readily available.

Registration/Tuition/Additional Fees/Miscellaneous Information

- Parents must return all necessary and required forms prior to the first day of enrollment.
- There is an annual registration fee.
- All tuition is due in advance. Fees for children are due by Friday for the following week. Payments should be placed in the tuition mailbox.

- Parents may elect to have payments automatically withdrawn from a bank account or charged to a credit card. These transactions will be processed on Monday each week.
- A late payment fee will be applied when tuition is late.
- There will be a fee for all returned checks or electronic payments.
- Children will not be admitted to the program if fees are delinquent.
- Refunds are not given for severe weather closings, holidays or when your child is absent.
- Parents arriving after closing time will be assessed a late fee on a per minute basis.
- A fee will be charged to families who run out of diapers or wipes.
- Enrichment programs and field trip costs will be posted individually and payments should be placed in the tuition mailbox or will be added to the following automatic payment.
- Adding extra days to part-time schedules is possible, but is based upon the daily availability of open spaces and must be authorized in advance by the office.
- When a permanent change of hours, days or payment is needed, a new contract is required.

Wait List Policy

If there are no positions currently available your child will be placed on our wait list after we receive your completed application form and the application fee.

Openings will be filled in the following order:

- Families with other children currently enrolled
- Children of Learning Ladder staff
- Children with full-time schedules
- Chronological order of the date the application was received

Once an enrollment opportunity becomes available, families will have 5 business days to accept the position at which time payment for the first week's tuition is due to hold the spot.

If you are unable to accept the first position, you may keep your status on the wait list for the next available opening. If you are unable to accept the second position offered, you will be removed from the list unless you elect to maintain your current position on the wait-list with an additional application fee.

School-Aged Transportation

School-age children will be transported to and from Learning Ladder by the Monona Grove School District bus or a Learning Ladder vehicle. Busing assignments are determined by the Monona Grove School District. Parents must notify Learning Ladder if busing assignments change.

Walking or Biking to/from Learning Ladder or to/from Home or Other Activity

Learning Ladder participants that are at least 8-years-old will be permitted to walk or ride their bikes unsupervised to or from Learning Ladder if a parent submits a School-Aged Daily Transportation Release and Waiver of Liability.

Vacation Days

Each child may receive up to one vacation credit per contract year. The contract year begins the first week of September and ends the last week of August. In order to receive a vacation credit, each of the following criteria must be met:

- A Vacation Request Form must be turned into the office a minimum of two weeks in advance.
- The office must authorize all requests.
- The vacation must encompass one full contract week (Monday through Friday)
- Vacations may not be taken during the last two weeks of your child's scheduled attendance.

- Vacation credits must be used before the end of the contract year and do not carry over.
- Any outstanding balance must be paid in full before a credit will be issued.
- Children that enroll after December 31st are not eligible for vacation until the next contracted year.
- Children that withdraw from the program will lose remaining vacation time.

Multiple Child Discount

A discount is available to families with two or more enrolled children. The discount will be applied to the oldest child's tuition.

Ratios

The ratio standards set by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children & Families appear in the chart below. The first number is always a 1 and stands for the teacher. The number that follows represents the number of children. The last column is the maximum group size with the first number representing the teacher. When there is a mixed age group the staff-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a prorated basis, according to age.

Ages	Staff to Children Maximum	
	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6-weeks to 2-years	1:4	2:8
2-years to 2 ½-years	1:6	2:12
2 ½-years to 3-years	1:8	2:16
3-years to 4-years	1:10	2:20
4-years to 5-years	1:13	2:24
5-years to 6-years	1:17	2:34
6-years and older	1:18	2:36

Non-Discrimination

We accept and cherish all children and families regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ancestry, or religion

Inclusion Policy

Learning Ladder's goal is to remove barriers that exclude people with disabilities. We support the belief that children with disabilities, like all children, have a need to be welcomed, cherished, and embraced in our community. We carefully consider each child's individual needs in order to determine how our program can accommodate a child's special needs in collaboration with community resources. In order to determine if we can support the needs of a child with special needs our program will use a Specialized Educational Plan (SEP). This plan will define the following:

- Identifying typical development patterns and common health problems;
- Identifying community supports and resources such as; Family physician or pediatrician, Medical Specialists, Mental Health Professional, Dane County Human Services, Birth to Three, Rainbow Project or local school districts;
- Availability of supportive resources to the program;
- The extent and/or scope of the special need in relation to the resources available;
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, community resource staff, and parents;
- Discuss strategies for modifying and adapting curriculum, schedules, materials, and instruction to meet individual needs;
- Refer to IDEA and other applicable laws;
- Identify the need for funding or additional costs.
- Willingness of the parents to work with the program in meeting the needs of the child.

- The ability of the child to benefit and participate in the school's activities.

Release of information

Learning Ladder requires a parent or guardian to sign a "release of information" form to allow to communicate with agencies concerning your child.

Hours of Operation

Learning Ladder is open Monday through Friday. The day begins at 6:00 AM. and closes promptly at 6:00 P.M.

Holidays

The program will be closed in recognition of our specified traditional holidays throughout the year in addition to one day each year for a Teacher Training day. A list of the closing days will be provided and available no later than January 31st each year.

Severe Weather Closings

Learning Ladder follows the advice of the Monona Grove School District system when making decisions on school closings or delays due to inclement weather conditions. When the Monona Grove schools are closed or delayed, we will also be closed or delayed. Please watch one of the local television stations for reports of closings. When school is not in session Learning Ladder will make an independent decision to close after assessing local forecast information. There is no reduction in tuition as a result of such closings.

Children's Arrival and Departure

All children, regardless of age must be escorted by their parent, guardian, or designated adult directly to and from the premise. For safety reasons and state regulations children may not walk through the building without an adult.

When dropping off and picking up your child, always sign your child into the attendance computer. It is important that the person picking up or dropping off makes sure that the teacher is aware that your child has arrived or is leaving. This procedure is for your child's safety.

Parents will be asked to supply Learning Ladder with their child's estimated arrival and departure times. Parents are required to contact the office or their child's teacher if the child will be absent or tardy. A staff member will attempt to contact the parents if a child has not arrived on a scheduled day.

Parents are required to enter and exit through the east door. Due to safety regulations parents are not permitted to drop off or pick up children through the playground gate.

Children will not be allowed to leave the program with a minor (including siblings) or alone unless a signed Release and Waiver of Liability is on file.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up Child/Emergency Contact Person

At the time of enrollment, the state regulation's requires parents to provide our school with an emergency contact of person/s (who live in close proximity) authorized to pick up your child. We will release children to authorized persons only (as indicated on the enrollment form). Emergency pick-up contacts will be called if your child becomes ill or you do not arrive before closing time and we cannot contact you.

Parents must call or provide written permission each time that someone other than a parent is picking up their child. In addition, the person picking up, including authorized persons must show identification.

Children Listing More than One Residence

If your family needs more than one copy of information from Learning Ladder please let us know. We will be happy to send multiple copies of information to all parents/guardians of enrolled children. Families who wish to share the cost of tuition may contact the office for options to split payments.

Custody Discrepancy

Children of parents who are divorced or separated must be legally released to the non-custodial parents according to the Wisconsin statutes. That also means that both parents have access to the child's records. In order to prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up or accessing a child's records, a signed court document stating the circumstances is required. If you anticipate any problems in this area please contact the Learning Ladder office.

Children's Records

Copies of children's records are available to parents/guardians upon request while the child is actively enrolled at Learning Ladder. Requests should be made in writing and allow up to two weeks to process. There is a small processing fee of \$5.00 or \$0.10 per page, whichever is higher.

Daily Closing Time Procedure/Late Fee

Learning Ladder has a specific closing time. Parents arriving after closing time will be assessed a late fee on a per minute basis.

If an emergency arises which may cause you to be late in picking up your child, please call the program before the closing time. We suggest that you carry the program number with you at all times. (Calling does not waive the late fee.)

In the event that your child is still at the program after closing and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps:

- Attempt to reach you at all of the phone numbers that you have provided us.
- Call the emergency contacts listed on your child's enrollment form;
- Call Dane County Child Protective Service or local police.

Supplies for Infant and Toddlers

Parents of infants or toddlers are required to supply the following items for their child. Please label items.

- Diapers or pull-ups
- Wipes
- Formula/breast milk and infant food that are labeled with your child's name and date
- Pacifier (optional)
- Lightweight blanket (required to be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Extra clothing; socks, undergarments, pants, shirts (3 of each)
- Winter gear; coat, snow pants, hat, boots, mittens
- Small beanie-baby sized snuggly for naptime (Toddlers only)

*Families are required to keep their supply of diapers and wipes replenished. If your child's supply runs out before you are able to replenish them, Learning Ladder will purchase a package for you and charge it to your account in addition to a small convenience fee.

Supplies for Preschool

Parents of preschool children are required to supply the following items for their child;

- Diapers or pull-ups (if needed)
- Wipes (if needed)

- Lightweight blanket and small pillow (required to be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Small beanie-baby sized snuggly for nap-time (optional)
- Extra clothing; socks, undergarments, pants, shirt (replenish as needed)
- Winter gear; coat, snow pants, boots, hat, 2 pairs of mittens
- Additional classroom items may be needed at the beginning of the academic year or for the summer program

Supplies for School-Age Children

Parents of school-age children are required to supply the following items for their child:

- Extra clothing; socks, undergarments, pants, shirt;
- Winter gear; coat, snow pants, boots, hat, 2 pairs of mittens;
- Additional classroom items may be needed at the beginning of the academic year or for the summer program.

Appropriate Dress

Casual clothing is recommended so that your child doesn't need to worry about getting "special clothes" messy. Comfortable shoes or sneakers give children the freedom to run, jump and climb without unpleasant mishaps.

Children will need a variety of clothing to get the most out of their recess times during the ever changing Wisconsin weather. Please label ALL removable clothing such as jackets, hats, gloves, snow pants, boots, etc. Both boots and gloves need to be labeled. You cannot imagine how many clothing items look alike, get lost, and end up in the "lost and found or mistakenly go home with another child.

Personal Belongings

We ask that you do not allow your child to bring items from home to school. Personal items from home such as toys, lip gloss, nail polish, action figures or purses require special planning and supervision by your child's teacher. It is difficult for children to forget about items that are stored in their backpack or cubbies. However, if your child wants to bring something from home; a small, beanie baby sized stuffed animal can be brought in for rest time.

Please support us in encouraging children to be responsible for their own belongings. Please label your child's belongings to help prevent loss. Check our lost and found regularly. Unclaimed items will be donated to local charities. Learning Ladder is not responsible for lost or broken personal items.

Pets, Houseplants & Gardening

Currently we have a turtle named Franklin in our program. He is a long time resident and resides in the Dragonfly Room. We also have a pet frog named Kermit who resides in the Firefly Room, 4-underwater frogs that live in the Butterfly Room and a salamander named Sal that resides in the Caterpillar Room. Pets will be housed in a secure contained environment for viewing.

- Classroom pets may be added or leave the program at any time. A current list of pets will be posted on the parent board.
- Pets from home should not be brought into the building without authorization. Concerns of allergies, safety, state regulations and insurance liability will be reviewed prior to visits.
- Classroom plants are a natural teaching tool for young children. We choose non-toxic plants that offer oxygen purifying elements to the inside air.
- Summer gardens are planted each year on our playgrounds. The children will care for and learn about vegetables and flowers throughout the summer.

Volunteers

A volunteer is defined as a person who agrees to give time, without compensation, to work with children at Learning Ladder. It is our goal to properly acclimate all volunteers to the policies, rules, and regulations of our program and

DCF Licensing Rules prior to assuming their position. This acclimation will take place in the form of a full and complete orientation of all policies as outlined in the personnel policies.

Volunteers will not be considered or included in meeting the center's staff to child ratios. Volunteers will always work under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Volunteers must complete the following criteria prior to assuming the position;

- Complete and submit background information disclosure form.
- Consent to a criminal background check and no offenses that would ban the volunteer from working with children.
- Fill out a volunteer application and emergency form.
- Complete orientation process.

Babysitting

Families who seek Learning Ladder employees for the purpose of caring for children outside of the school hours must do so at their own discretion. We do not assume any responsibility for any individual who cares for a child outside the program.

Withdrawal and Termination

A two-week written notice to the office is required to withdraw from the school.

Parents are responsible for the contracted rate for those two weeks whether our services are used or not. Vacation may not be used for these two weeks.

These policies are in no way intended to be punitive. However, in order to meet expenses and offer adequate staff to child ratios, we must ask your cooperation in these matters.

Termination of Care by the Program

As stated above, Learning Ladder strives to promote harmony within our community and families, but when this cannot be attained, we reserve the right to terminate care. Reasons that may include, but are not limited to, the result in the termination of a specific care arrangement is as follows:

- Non-payment for child service and/or lack of adherence to our policies,
- Lack of cooperation from parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parents/staff meetings or conferences,
- Abusive behavior and/or threats by parents towards program staff or other parents,
- Parents disciplining children (other than their own) in any way while at the program.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Learning Ladder shall protect children from abuse and neglect while enrolled in the school. All personnel are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will receive child abuse and neglect training bi-annually. Staff will follow the listed procedures for reporting any suspected incidents of abuse or neglect.

- All staff members are mandated to report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.
- Staff should report concerns to the director.
- The director, administrator, and reporting staff will objectively discuss concerns relating to observable criteria.

- If deemed necessary, assistant director or director will place call to the Department of Social Services and report findings. They will follow up with a written report to Wisconsin Department of Children & Families.
- The director/administrator will also contact Wisconsin Department of Children & Families with a written report.
- Learning Ladder shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect.

If it is alleged that a staff member was abusive or neglectful, that person will be removed from working with children. Pending the outcome of an investigation, and any such further time determined by Wisconsin Department of Children & Families, the director and administrator will determine to reinstate, suspend with or without pay, or terminate the staff member.

YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Employee Qualifications and Annual Background Checks

Each new employee is screened at the time of hire. Their references and educational documents are validated, background checks are submitted, and the new employee is required to submit proof of good health and a TB test signed by their health care provider. Educational status is submitted to *The Registry* upon hire. Photo's of our teaching and support staff along with their Registry Certificate is displayed in the entryway. Information is reviewed periodically in accordance with Department of Children & Families (DCF) and National Accreditation Requirements (NAC) requirements. Performance Reviews are held annually.

Guiding Principles

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Steering Committee has established ***Guiding Principles*** to inform the development and application of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) in Wisconsin. These guiding principles reflect the knowledge base in scientific research, our values, and our commitment to young children and families.

All children are capable and competent.

Development and learning begins at birth, for all children and in all settings. The WMELS support practices that promote development and protect young children from the harm that results from inappropriate expectations. In this, they are aligned with ethical principles of the early childhood profession.

Early relationships matter.

Beginning at birth, children form positive relationships with adults who will guide their learning and development. Especially during the earliest years of a child's life from birth to age 3, a child's growth and development is shaped within the context of those relationships. Positive relationships are essential for the development of personal responsibility, capacity for self-regulation, for constructive interactions with others, and for fostering academic functioning and mastery. Warm, sensitive, and responsive interactions help children develop a secure, positive sense of self and encourage them to respect and cooperate with others.

A child's early learning and development is multidimensional.

Developmental domains are highly interrelated. The WMELS reflect the interconnectedness of the domains of children's development: social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development and communication, health and physical development, and cognition and general knowledge.

Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development.

The WMELS are based on research about the processes and sequences of young children's learning and development, and the conditions under which children develop to their fullest potential.

Children are individuals who develop at various rates.

The WMELS recognize that there are individual rates of development and learning across any age range.

Children are members of cultural groups that share developmental patterns.

The WMEELS acknowledges that children keep development and learning opportunities reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of children, families and environments.

Children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain of development.

The WMEELS support the development of optimal learning experiences that can be adapted for individual developmental patterns.

Children learn through play and the active exploration of their environment.

The WMEELS reflect the belief that children should be provided with opportunities to explore and apply new skills through child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities, and through interactions with peers, adults and materials. Teachers and families can best guide learning by providing these opportunities in natural, authentic contexts. Positive relationships help children gain the benefits of instructional experiences and resources.

Parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators.

Families, communities and schools all have significant roles to play in terms of what opportunities are available to children, and how well a child is able to take advantage of those learning opportunities.

Developmental Domains

Wisconsin Model of Early Learning Standards specifies developmental expectations for children supported by practice-based evidence and scientific research. These standards recognize that children are individuals who, typically develop in similar stages and sequences, have diverse patterns for behavior and learning that emerge as a result of the interaction of several factors. These factors include:

- Genetic predisposition including individual temperament, inclination, talents and physical characteristics.
- Socio-economic status including access to educational opportunities, health, and nutrition.
- Values, beliefs, cultural and political practices of their families and communities.

Because the brain development and social-emotional development are most active in the early years of a child's life, all of the child's experiences are of critical importance to the child and our society. As such, these standards support the developmental patterns of children. **The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards** are divided into five areas of development.

- **Health and Physical Development:** This includes physical health and well being and motor development.
- **Social and Emotional Development:** This includes emotional development, self-concept, and social competence.
- **Language Development and Communication:** This includes listening and understanding, speaking, and communicating, and early literacy.
- **Approaches to Learning (Create and Imagine):** This includes curiosity, engagement and persistence, invention and imagination, and cognitive skills.
- **Cognition and General Knowledge:** This includes mathematical and logical thinking, scientific thinking and problem solving, and social systems understanding.

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards reflect expectations for a typically developing child; adapting and individualizing learning experiences and accommodates optimal development for all children. The standards can be found on-line at.

Standard I: Health and Physical Development-Children's future health and well being are directly related to the development and strengthening of their large and small muscles, sensory experiences, and practicing healthy behavior. Good physical health and motor development allow for full participation in learning experiences. When children take an active role in caring for their bodies, make healthy food choices, maintaining a clean and healthy environment, and participate in physical activity, they feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in their independence and develop a sound foundation for healthy growth in all other areas of development.

Standard II: Social and Emotional Development-This standard includes children's feelings about themselves and others, their ability to form relationships with peers and adults, ability to understand the perspective and feelings of others, and skills needed to succeed in a group setting. There is a direct relationship between a child's social and emotional well-being and overall success in childcare, preschool, higher school, and life. Emotional development is a complex process, involving a range of intensity of emotional reactions, perceptions of emotions in self and others, emotional self-regulation and behavioral expressions of emotions. Healthy social and emotional competence is developed from infancy, continues through the toddler and preschool years, and beyond. Children's early relationships are the foundation for social and emotional competence and cognitive development.

Standard III: Language Development and Communication-Language has an essential impact on the rapid development of a child's brain that occurs during the first years of life. Children increase their language and communication skills by engaging in meaningful experiences with adults and peers that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen, and understand others. Children learn to communicate in a variety of ways, such as using symbols; by combining oral language, pictures, print, and play into a coherent mixed medium; and creating and communicating meanings in a variety of ways. Early experiences define children's assumption and expectations about becoming literate as they learn that reading and writing are valuable understandings of concepts about literacy and its functions. Regular and active interactions with print, is essential for later development in reading and writing.

Standard IV: Approaches to Learning (Create and Imagine)-All children can and do acquire knowledge. Children's approaches to learning are often determined by their openness to curiosity about new tasks and challenges, task persistence and attentiveness, reflection and interpretation of experiences, imagination, and individual temperament.

Standard V: Cognition and General Knowledge-Children acquire knowledge by linking prior experiences to new learning situations. As a child applies and extends prior knowledge to new experiences, he or she refines concepts or forms new ones. In this area, children develop the ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways to satisfy their curiosity. Cognition is an ongoing process by which children use thinking skills to conceptually develop a construct of the world, which in turn enables active learning. General knowledge is a product of cognition, which expands and grows through learning and self-expression.

Infant, Toddler and Two's Curriculum (Ages 6 weeks – 36 months)

Infants and toddlers require a considerable amount of nurturing and basic care. According to research on brain development a highly significant amount of learning takes place from birth to age 3. Young children require consistent, positive interactions with nurturing adults in order to develop the complex networks of brain connections they will need to form healthy relationships. These early relationships are vital to the child's ability to learn to trust others, to love, and to feel safe, and secure.

Typical Daily Schedule for Infants

The infant curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is responsive to the infant's basic needs and grows into a toddler's more predictable, yet flexible daily routine. The infant and toddler schedules will provide nurturing physical contact and attention such as being cuddled, rocked, spoken to, sung to, and taken on walks outside in strollers. Scheduling routines relating to activities such as taking a nap, eating, diapering will also be used as opportunities for language development and additional nurturing tender moments.

Preschool Curriculum (3-year-olds - 4-year-olds)

The preschool curriculum combines themes and children's interest into a play-based learning environment. Learning domains and standards reflect common developmental patterns. Lesson plans will be modified based on child observations, areas of interest, and the agreed-upon teacher/parent goals. Classroom environments are arranged for the children to be successful in the investigation and discovery of his or her world. Activities will include opportunities for social interaction, and peacefully solving problems.

Typical Daily Schedule for Toddlers, Twos, & Preschool Children

Children will spend the majority of the day in their specified classroom following their predictable daily schedule. Classroom groups are organized by birth dates, individual child needs, and enrollment obligations.

Classrooms will be combined in the early mornings and late afternoons when there are low numbers of children in the building. As teachers arrive, the children will go to their classroom to begin their day.

A morning snack is served to children who arrive early in the day and after breakfast the daily anticipation of new activities will include circle time, a variety of learning activities and an outside playtime. Lunch and rest time will be next on the schedule. Snack will be served shortly after nap-time, followed by the afternoon activities. These activities are often an extension of the morning activities.

Daily activities will include a thematic curriculum with play-based learning centers. Learning centers will include reading areas, block areas, creative art, dramatic play, science, sensory, quiet areas. Music, math and literacy activities will be supported in the learning centers. In addition you will see teacher lead activities and daily physical education.

As the number of children decreases at the end of the day children will gather in one classroom where there will be activities available to choose from until parents arrive.

T4K Program (Together for Kids) (4-year-olds)

Learning Ladder has partnered with the Monona Grove School District to provide 4-year-old preschool as part of district wide community collaboration. The program is located on-site and wrap around care is provided daily. The program is taught by a DPI certified teacher who is employed by Learning Ladder.

School-Age Curriculum (Kindergarten - 5th grade)

The school-age curriculum is designed to provide an atmosphere that builds confidence, self-esteem, personal achievement, while promoting respect for other people and the environment. Children's natural curiosity and interests will be used as the motivation for development of group and individual situations. Homework assistance will be provided during the academic year and the summer camp will include field trips and community outreach activities.

Typical Daily Schedule for School-Age Children

The school-age children will be transported to our school on the Monona Grove School bus or via Learning Ladder vehicle. Attendance, snack, homework, recess and a variety of activities will be made available each day. There will be plenty of time for friendships to blossom. Additional activities will be added on days that they attend 'full day'. Summer Camp provides an environment for children to continue to learn and grow through the summer months. See the summer camp brochure for more details. The children will be served an early morning snack, breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack on full days of attendance.

Enrichment Programs

Enrichment Programs are offered periodically. Gymnastics, ballet, swimming lessons, karate, and Spanish have been offered in the past. Programs will be offered based on interest and availability.

Creative Art

Art provides many opportunities for your child to expand learning in literacy, math, science, social studies, technology, music, and of course creativity. It is a hands-on sensory experience that most children love to participate in. Our weekly lessons will include process art, product art, and three dimensional art activities.

- **Process Art**

“Process Art” is allowing your child the freedom to experiment with art materials. *Process Art* means that your child can explore art materials and enjoy what naturally happens. *Process art* is an open ended activity that emphasizes the process of discovery rather than the finished product. Your child will not be instructed to copy what an adult or classmate has made. There is no right or wrong; only the joy of discovery. This type of art will be available most often in the program because it is the foundation for future artists.

- **Product Art**

“Product Art” is an activity where your child is given an idea, simple directions or some guidelines on how to create a finished product. *Product art* is similar to a craft project and all of the children’s finished products will look similar when completed. *Product art* activities are planned occasionally for children when art is used to enhance a learning activity, to practice following simple directions, or when making a special gift. Children will not be required to participate.

- **Three-Dimensional Art**

Three-Dimensional art means that the final project has height, depth, and width. Typical materials such as play-dough, paper mache, wood for sanding, gluing, or carpentry; pipe cleaners, clay, or collage material will be accessible to children in both process and product art projects. These lessons are the foundation for children as they begin to understand geometry and spatial sense.

Physical Fitness

Physical Activity is a vital component to a child's overall development and health. Our program schedules a minimum of 60 minutes per day for a moderate level of physical activities.

Weather permitting; children will go outside in the morning and in the afternoon. Children will also be provided with physical activity during transition times such as hopping from one activity to another or follow the leader to another area in the classroom. When the weather prohibits outdoor play, equivalent time indoors will be provided for moderate level physical fitness. Physical Fitness Activities will be a combination of teacher-led and free play each day. Often times when the activities are indoors they will include music in the form of dance, yoga, marching, rhythm or chanting.

Technology

- Technology such as video or Internet may be used to support and enhance curriculum learning.
- All video programs and Internet will be previewed by a reliable adult to determine age-appropriateness.
- An alternative activity will be available for children who do not want to watch.
- Videos *will not* be used to *fill* time at arrivals, departures or any other part of the day.
- TV programming is not available for use in our program.

Toilet Training

Reminders, praise and patience are the most effective tools in helping children through this process. Children tend to learn this skill by observing their friends and with ample practice time available. Children will not be forced into toilet training. Every child will learn this skill when they are emotionally, physically and cognitively ready. Staff members will support efforts that begin at home.

Children under the age of 18 months will not be toilet trained. Toilet training in our program will generally begin after 24 months. Children will never be humiliated or punished for lapses in toilet training; instead they will be praised for their successes.

Soiled clothing will be changed promptly and placed into a labeled plastic bag. It will be kept separate from clean clothing. Solid matter will be dumped into the toilet before storage for take home laundering.

Child Assessments, Progress Reports & Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers will systematically organize a confidential system for observing and recording children's development, both formally and informally, that integrates the curriculum objectives, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and developmental milestones. This collected information will include evidence of progress towards identified learning and developmental goals, and will be gathered in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, observational data, examples of children's work over time, anecdotes, performance during authentic experiences, photographs, and input from parents.

- Infant and Toddler teachers will complete progress reports four times each per year.
- Preschool teachers will complete a written assessment twice a year for each child.
- Parent/Teacher phone conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring for all groups with the exception of T4K who will schedule parent/teacher conferences in the spring, winter and fall.
- Our T4K program may require an assessment that differs from our other program requirements.
- In addition to this documentation, an "Infant/Toddler Daily Report" is used to communicate essential information to families.
- School-age teachers will complete progress report twice each year.

Portfolio Keepsake

Each classroom will provide families with a portfolio of their child's development. The portfolio is a collection of accomplishments that your child will master. It will include antidotes, projects and photographs of your child actively involved with friends in their learning environment. By observing and documenting children's development each portfolio becomes a tool for teachers to use as they write lesson plans and set individualized goals. In addition, portfolios provide a sentimental keepsake for your family. Children attending T4K or off-site schooling will not be included due to the complexity of the portfolio process.

Confidentiality

Learning Ladder regards all information either received or observed regarding enrolled children and families to be confidential. The following measures are taken to ensure the above mentioned:

- Only Learning Ladder Staff and the parent or legal guardian of the child have access to all individual child records including but not limited to all required enrollment information as well as assessments and results.
- If a child is referred to an outside agency, a signed parent authorization form will be required before any information regarding the child will be shared.
- Staff will not discuss children or families with anyone except fellow staff members who are inclusive in the care of the child and family.
- A special awareness of confidentiality will be maintained by staff members who may live in the same neighborhood as, or who may be socially connected with, any enrolled children and their family.
- Any person requesting observation of the program will adhere to our confidentiality policy.

Touch and Nurturing

Physical touching has a vital role in the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted, and supported through the sensation of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Physical touch will be respectful of children's body cues and only occur with their permission. Staff members are sensitive to children's responses and requests for physical interactions, and model appropriate nurturing touches.

Establishing a nurturing touch routine into the morning greetings and afternoon goodbyes will establish a sense of belonging and build bonds with children. The most common way to acknowledge arrivals and departures is with a “high five,” hug, or a gentle touch on the shoulder.

Except for safety or cleansing, children will always have the right to refuse touch. Children are also taught to respect adults and other children’s touch preferences. It is our policy to inform parents of the nature and type of routine physical contacts that are discussed in this document.

Nurturing touch includes: hugging, holding on lap, rocking, carrying, rubbing or patting backs, cuddling, and hand holding. Children always have the right to refuse these touches. While tickling may be an appropriate form of playful touch, it is kept to a minimum because of its potential for getting out of control.

Personal care touch includes: cleaning, dressing, and nap time routines; and is done in a gentle and respectful manner. It will also include: face and hand washing, assisting with toileting, examining rashes and unusual marks, nose blowing, and assisting with necessary clothing changes.

Holiday Philosophy

Holidays are an opportunity for learning about the traditions and values of our families and community. We strive to provide a learning environment that is non-sexist and reflective of our community’s ethnic, cultural and economic diversity. Exposing the children to the valued traditions of others will encourage the respect and understanding of individuality and uniqueness; as well as discovering the commonalities that unite our families and communities collectively. We encourage family participation in teaching the children the important values and traditions of individual family culture, by entering the classroom and participating in an interactive celebration and observance in relation to your family’s ethnic and cultural history.

Part-time families wishing to attend holiday celebrations that occur on their off days may do so ***if space is available*** and may be required to accompany their child as a chaperon. If a child attends an extra day (and the parent does not chaperon) the daily tuition charges will apply. Due to teacher to child ratio requirements families may not switch days of the week for upcoming celebrations or special events.

Diversity Philosophy

We embrace and encourage cultural diversity in our teaching techniques and recognize that our efforts now will instill values that will carry forward as our children grow into young adults faced with the challenges that our society presents. Thus, we have made the commitment to create a program that reflects the varied lifestyles of the children, their families, our staff, and our community.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor playtime, physical education, and nature appreciation and exploring are important components to the development of young children. Our unique park like playgrounds and campus provide seasonal learning experiences. Sidewalks surround our neighborhood and strollers are available for the infants and toddlers. There is a variety of community parks located within walking distance. Water play is included in our summer physical fitness program as is our sledding hill in the winter. Outside playtime is scheduled daily weather permitting.

“Inclement weather” means stormy or severe weather such as any of the following:

- Heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F.
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below for children age 2 and above
- Wind chills of 20 degrees F. or below for children under the age of 2
- Air pollution advisories

Please supply appropriate clothing for the weather extremes found in Wisconsin.

Field Trips/Transportation

Field trips are a fun and educational part of our programming and are planned regularly. Parents are notified in advance of an upcoming field trip and are always welcomed and encouraged to join us.

Part-time families wishing to attend field trips that occur on their off days may do so when space is available and may be required to accompany their child as a chaperon. If a child attends a field trip on a non-scheduled day (and the parent does not chaperon) the daily tuition charges will apply. Families may not switch days of the week for upcoming field trips or special events.

A local busing company will be used to provide transportation for field trips or one of the Learning Ladder vehicles.

Classroom Assignments

Children are most often scheduled to move to the next classroom in the fall when the academic school year begins but there are opportunities for small groups of children may move during the year. Moving children to a new classroom is based on the child's birth date, developmental needs, teacher/parent recommendations, schedule, and current program enrollment obligations. Families will be consulted prior to finalizing a change in classrooms. The director and classroom teachers collaborate to provide visits and prepare children and parents to ensure a smooth transition.

Child/Staff Attendance Fluctuations

Learning for children is optimal when the daily schedule is predictable and the teaching staff is familiar. It is our priority to provide this consistency throughout the program. Occasionally there will be days when the classroom attendance fluctuates or the regular teacher is not available to be in the classroom. This may result in reassigning children to another group or scheduling a substitute. When attendance fluctuates and the children join another group it is used as an opportunity for children to meet new friends, see new play spaces, learn new things, and gain a broader view of the school. The following considerations will be used to assure a positive learning experience for each child.

- Teachers will be notified in advance to give them time to adjust daily activities.
- Children will be given notice of the change to give them time to adjust.
- Teachers who have children joining their classroom will welcome and include them in the daily lessons.
- Attendance will not exceed maximum requirements.
- Attendance sheets will reflect the classroom changes.

Guidance Policy

Our goal is to provide the children with opportunities throughout the day to make good choices, self-regulate, learn to interact socially with confidence, and gain a respect for others. A variety of techniques and strategies will be used to help gently guide children's behavior. Positive social skills are modeled and supported by teachers. Picture boards, clear rules, preplanned organized transitions and a reasonable balance of teacher-lead and play-based activities will be used. Natural consequences may be used in situations where it is safe to do so. Some children respond well to charts where they can visually see their progress. For the younger children, redirection is often used. The classroom learning areas will be arranged to support positive learning.

Frequent opportunities will be made for infants and toddlers to socialize with teachers and each other and to be gently rocked, comforted, fed, napped, burped and repositioned.

Prevention measures and redirection does not help every child make the right choices or problem solve in an acceptable way. In these cases a reflection time will be used. In some cases an Individual Guidance Plan will be implemented.

Reflection/Time-Out

When a child's behaviors are persistently inconsistent with the rules they may need to be move a safe distance away from the other children or removed from a play area. ***This reflection time will not be use as a punitive time-out.*** The supervised time away will be used as time for the child to compose himself and reflect on the situation. Teachers will provide support and guidance to ease the child back into the group. This reflection time will not exceed five minutes. The child will be located within the site and sound of the teacher. If a child needs more assistance to self-regulate he/she may be taken into the office where they will be supervised by a director until they are ready to re-join their group. If a child is not able to compose themselves or begins to show a pattern of causing harm to himself, the other children, the teachers, or the environment the parents will be contacted.

Reflection is prohibited for children under the age of 3 and may not be used for more than one minute for every year the child is old.

The staff will explore all other aspects of guidance including redirection and reminders before utilizing "reflection". Reflection will only be used when all other appropriate guidance techniques have been tried and have failed.

Individual Guidance Plan

An Individual Guidance Plan (IGP) will be put into action when there is a child with a behavior that requires additional support and/or close supervision. The child's parents, teachers, director, and administrator will be included in the process. Strategies for conducting a problem-solving session will include the following.

- **Identifying the problem or behavior.**
- **Identify possible causes.**
- **Agree on goals for the child.**
- **Discuss strategies for achieving goals.**
- **Assess need for support from outside agencies.**
- **Agree on strategies and plan to stay in touch with parents and staff.**

If, after reasonable attempts by the school and support agencies, the child continues to demonstrate behavior deemed unsafe or inappropriate the administration will regrettably proceed to the the procedures noted in the suspension/termination policy.

Annual Special Events

Traditions are what makes us unique and bonds our friends and family together. This is a sample list of some of our established traditions;

Birthdays

We will recognize your child's birthday by singing "Happy Birthday" and providing a birthday crown. Children may bring in a favorite book to read or share a birthday snack. If you chose to provide a snack please contact your child's teacher in advance so that we can assure the treat meets our healthy guidelines or refer to our ***Approved Healthy Snack List.***

Water Days

During the warm, sunny days of summer the children will have many opportunities to run through the sprinkler, slide down the "slip and slide" and get wet and wild with water fun.

Sledding Hill

Our sledding hill is the perfect way for children to release energy during the winter season. It is located on the southeast side of the building and is a well-liked and memorable activity.

Brown Bag Lunch

Brown Bag lunch days are scheduled once a month. This is a fun day for the children to learn about nutrition by packing their own lunch. We recommend using the user friendly My Plate icon as a guide for packing a healthy lunch. Copies are available upon request.

Summer Garden

Over the course of the summer the children will plant, water, observe and taste vegetables that they will grow in their own classroom gardens.

Scholastic Book Club

Each month during the academic year, inexpensive books are offered for sale through the Scholastic Book Club. Our program will earn bonus points from your purchases to use for free books and materials to enrich the classrooms.

Gingerbread Boy

In December, the children will bake a gingerbread boy cake that will mysteriously run away. We never know where he will hide so the children may need to search the whole building before they find him.

Portraits

Individual and class photographs are scheduled in the fall and generally arrive before the Christmas Holiday.

National Week of the Young Child

In April, one week is set aside to celebrate *The Week of the Young Child*. It is a time to recognize that children's opportunities are our responsibilities, and to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early environment--at home, at child care, at school, and in the community--that will promote their early learning.

National Teacher Appreciation

The first week in May is nationally designated as a time to say "thank-you" to the teachers who make children's education an exciting and rewarding experience.

Fireman's Festival Parade

The annual Fireman's Festival Parade is a local event that is held summer in June. The parade route proceeds directly in front of our building. Families are invited to join us to enjoy the show!

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Wellness Policy

Learning Ladder promotes child well-being and academic learning by supporting quality nutrition and physical activity as part of the daily learning environment.

Healthy eating patterns and physical activity are essential for young children to develop strong bodies, healthy bodies and mental capacity.

We recognize that collaborating with parents, students, health professionals, and community members is the most effective method of creating a healthy environment where children can learn sensible choices towards healthy lifestyle habits.

Nutrition

Children's nutritional needs must be met for them to reach their highest potential of growth and brain development. All meals and snacks provided by the program will meet or exceed the healthy requirements established by The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Breakfast and lunch are served family style, thus creating additional opportunities for the children's social and language development.

Menus are posted monthly and reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the children in our program.

Breakfast, lunch, and two snacks are served daily.

One day each month will be designated Brown Bag Day. Children may bring in their own lunches this day. Learning Ladder will provide a lunch for children who do not bring one in. Lunches from home will be refrigerated. Please clearly label on the outside of the bag/box with your child's name.

Parents of infants and toddlers will provide formula or breast milk, and baby food until the child is ready to eat what is on Learning Ladder's menu. This is a gradual process as *some* of the foods from the menu are introduced.

School-aged children attending Learning Ladder have a choice of bringing their own lunch from home or enjoying a Learning Ladder lunch. Lunches from home must meet our same healthy nutritional standards.

Learning Ladder will supplement meals or snacks brought in from home to meet the USDA & CACFP guidelines.

Breakfast will consist of the following:

- 1 vegetable or 1 fruit, or 1 protein source; such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- Cereal, or whole grain or enriched bread products
- Milk

Lunch will consist of the components listed in the following categories:

- 1 protein source such as; meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- 2 vegetables or 1 vegetable and 1 fruit, or 2 fruits
- Cereal, or whole grain, or enriched bread products
- Milk

Snack will consist of at least two of the following items:

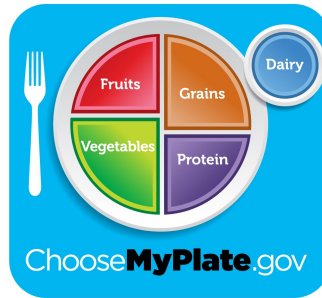
- Milk or milk product
- 1 protein source such as meat; poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- 2 vegetables or 1 vegetable and 1 fruit, or 2 fruits
- Cereal, or whole grain, or enriched bread products

Milk will be always available for children at breakfast and lunch.

Children requiring specific food substitutions for their meals such as soy milk must be regularly provided by the family. All food and beverages are required to be labeled with the child's name and dated. **Refer to the Restrictive Diet policy.**

My Plate

The Food Pyramid has retired. **My Plate** was introduced in 2011 by Mrs. Obama as the USDA Dietary icon.



Healthy Snack Policy

Instilling nutritional concepts at an early age can influence a lifetime of healthy food choices and balance. Learning Ladder promotes healthy food choice by offering nutritional food choices for meals, snacks, and special events. Families are always welcome to bring a healthy snack for birthdays, special events, or to share family traditions. Please refer to the following snack guidelines.

- Although children can be allergic to any kind of food, most food allergies are caused by tree nuts, peanuts, cow's milk, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish.
- Additional safety considerations for infants and toddlers will be considered.
- ***All food must be prepackaged, unopened and have a complete ingredient list.***
- ***All snacks will be opened and washed and prepared at school to reduce cross-contamination.***
- Additional healthy, prepackaged and labeled toppings or dips may be added to the snack to make them more festive.
- Please refer to the ***Approved Healthy Snack List*** for a list of approved snacks.
- If you have a nutritional snack item that you would like to share that is not listed or would like to prepare a traditional family recipe in our kitchen, contact the director for assistance.

Food Allergies & Restrictive Diets

Parent of children who require a restrictive diet are required to submit a ***Written Emergency Plan in addition to meeting with the cook and child's teacher prior to their first day of enrollment.*** This confidential information will be accessible to the staff.

Please indicate any food allergies or special food needs of your child on the dietary restriction form. Families may provide substitutions for religious or cultural reasons. Children who require additional cross contamination safety measures will be seated separately but in close proximity to other children during mealtimes.

The following guidelines must be met for families choosing to supplement or replace meals.

- Families must substitute foods from a like category such as a protein for a protein item, a grain product for a grain product and so on.
- All foods and beverages brought from home must be labeled with the child's first and last name, date and what the food is.

- All food must be prepared and ready to serve. Infants food is required to be cut into small pieces, no larger than ¼-inch square.
- Toddlers and preschool children are required to have their food cut into ½ -inch square sized pieces.
- Foods containing peanut butter or tree nuts are restricted.

As required by the USDA Food Program, if the allergy is life threatening, Learning Ladder will substitute similar menu items for substantiated life threatening food allergies only if a Child Health Report, signed by a physician that clearly defines and details the child's restrictions is on file. Learning Ladder reserves the right to decline substituting food in extreme situations.

A child with a life threatening food allergy is required to have an Epi-pen or equivalent medication in the school with a signed *Medicine Authorization* form. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the expiration date of their child's Epi-pen and replace as needed.

Dental Health

Brushing and flossing properly twice each day, along with regular dental checkups, can help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Proper nutrition is also important in maintaining good dental health. Eating sugar and frequent exposure to acid (from soda and juice) damages the enamel that protects teeth. Our school will support good oral health by offering healthy snacks and meals, and encouraging children to drink water after eating. In addition, dental health is in our curriculum and dental brochures are made available for families in our parent resource area.

Hand Washing

Adults and children must wash their hands following the 7-step standard procedure; upon arrival at the program, before and after handling food, after changing diapers or toileting, after playing in the sensory materials, and after handling bodily fluids (even when gloves are used).

Universal Precautions

Learning Ladder provides training and will observe universal precautions when exposed to blood and blood-containing body fluids and injury discharges of all children. All persons exposed to blood or blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges will wash their hands immediately with soap and warm running water. Single use disposable gloves will be worn if there is contact with blood-containing body fluids or tissue discharges. For spills of vomit, urine, feces, blood or other body fluids, staff will clean and disinfect the floors, walls, bathrooms, tabletops, toys and kitchen counter tops.

Healthy Child Policy

Please note that some children will have frequent illnesses when they first enter a childcare or school environment. Once the child's immune system becomes more resistant, those illnesses usually decrease in frequency.

Proper nutrition, adequate sleep and keeping children on predictable routines will help children through this process.

Children need to be in good health to get the most out of their school day. It is Learning Ladder's policy that if children are well enough to attend, they must be well enough to participate in all of the daily programming, including outdoor activities.

Learning Ladder follows the recommended guidelines established by the Dane County Public Health Department. The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk or spread of disease. Listed below are some of the most common illnesses. Please note that this may not be a complete list.

Observation of the Child

Upon arrival at the center, and periodically throughout the day, each child will be observed for symptoms of illness or injury.

Any evidence of unusual contusions, lacerations or burns in and out of care will be documented in a log book and reported to the director for review.

Ill Child

If a child appears ill, an area will be provided for the child to rest with their cot and blanket. If the area is not in a separate room the space will be separated from other children by the use of a partition, screen or other means. Parents or contact person will be notified to pick up their child within the hour.

Communicable Diseases

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. If a staff member suspects a child of having a reportable communicable disease as defined by Dane County Public Health Department the staff member shall contact their director. Some diseases will require a statement from a physician before a child may return to the program. Parents are required to report any communicable disease to office. Learning Ladder is required to report some diseases to the Dane County Health Department.

Parent Notification

When a child shows symptoms of an illness, a teacher will contact the parent(s) by telephone or, as necessary will phone other individuals listed on the child's enrollment form for pick up. Parents are required to pick up their child within 1 hour of notification. Learning Ladder does not have the mandated resources to provide isolated and sustained individual attention for children who are ill or unable to participate in classroom activities.

When a communicable disease has been confirmed by a medical professional, and the parent has notified the Learning Ladder office, a notice will be posted on the central parent board. These notices will not contain personally identifying information, but will indicate the name of the condition and the number of program participants known to have contacted the illness. If there is a concern that the infectious disease may cause harm to a pregnant staff member or parent, additional preventive safety measures will be applied.

Exclusion Period

Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms *for 24 hours without medication* or return to the center with a note from the doctor stating that the child is not contagious.

NOTE: In forming of this exclusion policy, the focus of concern is on the needs and behavior of the ill child and the ability of the staff to meet those needs without compromising the care of all other children in the group and to prevent the spread of illness.

Auxiliary Temperature

Learning Ladder staff will use the auxiliary (armpit) method to check a child's temperature when a fever or illness is suspected. If a child's temperature reads normal or low grade, and the child is systematic, an additional check will be done periodically in 15-30 minute intervals until the health status of a child can be sufficiently determined.

When reporting the child's temperature to the doctor it is advised to note the temperature reading and the method (auxiliary) rather than adding or subtracting a degree.

Fevers

Elevated body temperatures may or may not be an indicator of an illness. The following policy will be used to determine whether a child with a fever shall be excluded from school.

A child's temperature will be taken by a staff member if they observe one or more the indicators of an illness listed below. An auxiliary temperature will be taken. Staff members will give careful consideration to factors that might affect body temperature, such as strong emotional upset, high activity level, warm clothing or coverings.

For children 6-weeks to 6-months of age:

If the child auxiliary temperature is read at 99.8 degrees or greater, the child's temperature will be rechecked after an interval of not less than 15 minutes and not more than 30 minutes. If a second or subsequent readings are 100.6 degrees or greater, the child's parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted, and exclusion from the center will be required. No other indications are necessary for exclusion. Young infants are not able to show other symptoms as readily as an older child. It is recommended that infants remain under the close supervision of a parent if a fever is present.

For children over 6-months-of-age:

For fevers 99.8 degrees up to and including 100.5 degrees:

If the child's auxiliary temperature is read at 99.8 degrees or greater, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be alerted that there is a fever concern.

If a child's temperature reads low or normal, and the child is symptomatic, an additional check will be done periodically in 15-30 minute intervals until the health status of a child can be sufficiently determined.

During this time, the child will be observed for the following signs or symptoms of illness. Considerations will be given to each child's own typical individual habits. If one or more of these signs are observed in conjunction with a fever of 99.8 up to and including 100.5 degrees, exclusion from the center is required:

- Child shows a need for more sleep than usual; very drowsy, sleeps a long time or often, difficult to wake up.
- Child's behavior changes significantly; persistent or uncontrollable crying, excessive clinging to caregivers, refusal to play or participate normally.
- Child has difficulty breathing; uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, etc.
- Child's appetite changes significantly; refuses to eat or drink normally, drinks excessively.
- Child's appearance is abnormally flushed or pallid.
- Child's comments or complaints indicate illness.

For fevers of 100.6 degrees or higher:

If the child's temperature is measured at 100.6 degrees or higher, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted and the child will be excluded from the center.

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours without medication.

Diarrhea Illness

A diarrhea illness is characterized by an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, or an increase in stool water and /or lack of formed stool consistency.

The parent will be informed after the first incident of diarrhea is observed. The child will be observed for other symptoms of illness. If the child is observed to have two diarrhea stools within an 8-hour period (including incidents at home), or the

diarrhea cannot be contained, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted, to remove the child from the center promptly.

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24-hours without medication.

Vomiting Illness

Caregivers will be careful not to mistake “spitting up” or other mild digestive disturbance for vomiting. The parent will be informed after the incidence of vomiting is observed. The child will be observed carefully for other signs of illness.

A vomiting illness requires that children be excluded from the center after one or more episodes of vomiting in a 24-hour period (including incidents that occur at home.)

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24-hours without medication.

Ear infections

Some children are symptomatic when they have ear infections. Others complain of, or show one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain
- Pulling on ear
- Unable to nurse or take bottle comfortably
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fever
- Inability to attend to play
- Need to be held or comforted constantly
- Excessive crying

Infant, toddlers or young children exhibiting one or more of the listed symptoms may be excluded from the center and will be most comfortable at home with family members during this time.

Exclusion Period:

- **If the child is diagnosed with an ear infection and exhibits one or more of the above symptoms, the child must be on medication for 24-hours before returning to the center. If the diagnosed child is not treated with medication, s/he must be fever-free and symptom free for 24-hours before returning.**
- **If the child has green or bloody drainage from the ear, s/he must be excluded for 24-hours after the antibiotic has been started-this policy includes children with ventilating tubes in the ears as well as those having a ruptured eardrum. If the child with drainage from the ear is not treated with antibiotics, exclusion from the center is necessary until the green or bloody drainage has stopped.**
- **If a child has been diagnosed with an ear infection, does not have any drainage from the ear and exhibits none of the symptoms listed above, the child may attend the center. If any of the above symptoms occur, the parents will be called to pick up the child.**

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) is a contagious eye infection often caused by either bacteria or viruses. It spreads from direct contact with an infected person, or with their secretions. First symptoms occur 1 to 3 days after exposure.

Exclusion Period: An infected child will be excluded from the program until 24-hours after being placed on antibiotic and the eye no longer produces pus, or if no treatment is prescribed, the child should stay at home until the eye no longer produces pus and the child is able to participate in activities.

Rashes

There are many types of rashes from heat rash to streptococcal infection. Many go away without intervention, but some do not. If a rash of unknown origin remains present for more than 24-hours, Learning Ladder reserves the right to request that a child be seen by a physician to rule out any serious illness.

Lice

Head Lice is not a serious health threat. They are unpleasant, cause itching, and are sometimes difficult to extinguish. They are highly communicable and are not a sign of poor hygiene.

Prevention is the best way to deal with head lice. Children will be discouraged from sharing combs, brushes, hats, or other headgear. If a case is confirmed Learning Ladder will take the necessary precautions to prevent spreading.

While it is the parent's responsibility to monitor their children for all communicable conditions, including head lice, the Learning Ladder staff will also watch for signs and symptoms, and will periodically check for head lice. If head lice are discovered at home, parents are asked to inform the office immediately. Learning Ladder will post notification of possible exposure, but will not share personally identifying information. If a staff member finds nits (eggs) or lice in a child's hair, the child's parent will be notified immediately. Parents should contact the child's physician, treat the child's hair with a medicated shampoo, and remove the nits from the child's hair (haircut's may be helpful).

Exclusion Period: Children with head lice will be excluded from the program until they are treated and s/he is nit free. Children must be checked by a trained Learning Ladder staff member before returning to the classroom.

Exclusion Required for Other Illnesses

The diseases listed below are a partial list of common illnesses. Exclusion will be required for the following if they are identified by a health provider.

- o Blood in the stools that not explained by dietary change, medications or hard stools.
- o Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms.
- o Mouth sores with drooling.
- o Rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- o Rosella
- o Influenza
- o Measles
- o Shingles
- o Tuberculosis, until the child's physician or local health department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- o Impetigo
- o Streptococcal pharyngitis
- o Bacterial meningitis
- o Fifth's disease
- o Scabies, until after the first treatment has been given.
- o Chicken Pox
- o Pertussis,
- o Mumps
- o Hepatitis A and B
- o Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Health Precautions

- Children's hands will be washed with soap and running water upon entry into the program.

- Children's hands will be washed before eating and after toileting; their hands and faces will be washed after meals.
- Bodily secretions such as runny noses, eye drainage and coughed-up matter will be wiped with a disposable tissue used only once and placed in a plastic-lined container. Whoever does the wiping will wash his or her hands.
- Bodily secretions on surfaces will be washed with soap and water and disinfected. Hands will be washed.
- Individual washcloths, combs, and toothbrushes will be kept in a sanitary condition when used.
- Wet or soiled clothing will be changed promptly from a supply of clean clothing provided by parents for their child's use. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag.

Physical Examination

- Each child shall have a record of a health examination prior to enrollment in accordance with licensing rule DCF 251.07(6) (k) 3.
- Evidence of the child's most recent physical examination shall be provided by a Child Health report signed and dated by a physician.
- Except for school age children, each child two years of age and older shall have a subsequent physical examination by a physician at least once every two years.
- Each child under 2 years shall have a subsequent physical examination every 6 months.

Immunizations

A record of immunizations for each child shall be maintained and updated to document compliance with state regulations.

Sunscreen/Insect Repellent

Learning Ladder will supply and apply sunscreen and insect repellent as needed on a daily basis. The product information will be posted on our main parent board throughout the season. Sunscreen & Insect Repellent forms will be available at the time of enrollment and renewed annually. Families may provide their own products but must follow the Medication Protocol.

Medication Procedure

Learning Ladder staff will give prescription or non-prescription medication, such as aspirin or cough medicine, to a child or apply parent-provided and labeled sunscreen or insect repellent, to a child under the following conditions:

- **Parents are required to give their child the first dose of a new medicine to ensure that he/she child does not have an allergic reaction to it.**
- A **Medication Authorization form** (available in your child's classroom) is accurately filled out prior to staff administering medication.
- The medication is in the **original container** and labeled with the **child's first & last name**. **Staff may not administer a higher dosage** than what is recommended on the medication bottle unless parents provide a written authorization from the child's physician giving specific instructions for the discrepancy.
- **Please give all medications to your child's teacher for proper storage.** Do not send or store medications or vitamins in your child's backpack.
- Medications are stored in a child proof locked upper cabinet and/or in the refrigerator.
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent forms will be available at the time of enrollment and renewed annually.

Pain Relievers and Fever Reducers

Pain relievers such as, Tylenol or Motrin, will only be administered to children with a physician's note and only for symptoms that do not require exclusion from the center based on the criteria and guidelines set by the Department of Public Health. Such incidents where it is appropriate to give a pain reliever would be for immunizations that were received, diagnosed ear infection, and seizure prevention. We will not give pain relievers for suspected illness or fever.

- Pain relievers will only be given within the guidelines of the medication manufacturer as prescribed on the bottle. This includes directions of dosage, medication intervals and length of medication.
- *We reserve the right to limit or not administer any medication that is not considered life saving by medical professionals*

SAFETY & EMERGENCY STANDARDS

Emergency Preparedness

All personnel are trained annually on Emergency Preparedness. CPR & Basic First Aid training is required to be completed within 6 months of hire and kept up to date. In addition teachers are trained on Medication Administration, Child Abuse & Neglect, Shaken Baby Syndrome, & Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. First aid kits, evacuation routes, and emergency phone numbers are located in each classroom. Emergency provisions are located in the designated safe areas. Fire Drills and Tornado drills are practiced monthly. A professional security system is wired in to the building with smoke detectors. Criminal Background checks are submitted annually for all staff. Licensing Standards are met. Fire Inspection standards are met. Access to the building is controlled. Diving records are submitted annually for staff members who transport children. In addition the following policies are part of our safety and emergency standards.

Injuries

In the case of an emergency, staff will assess the situation to determine what kind of care is needed; *professional emergency care* or on-site *basic first aid*.

- *If professional emergency care is needed, we will contact 911 and notify parents.*
- *If routine, basic first aid is needed, staff will proceed with needed care, and notify parents by filling out a Mishap Form.*
- *In the event of a bee sting or bump to the head, or questionable injury, staff will notify parents by phone as well as the written documentation.*

Emergency Transportation

Parents will provide written permission for emergency transportation along with their child's health information, child's physician, and hospital choice. When transportation for an emergency is necessary, Learning Ladder will contact 911 to request an ambulance. Staff will provide the child's health information to the attending Emergency Medical personnel.

- Parent will be notified as soon as possible.
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital when it is deemed necessary.

Designated Safe Areas Located in the Building

The middle classroom located on the lower level is a designated safe area that is used for inclement weather conditions or an extended lock down. A first aid kit, blankets, and emergency backpack is stored in the adjacent storage room.

In case of an emergency where there was not time to relocate a group to the lower level room teachers should take shelter in a centrally located upper level bathroom. Emergency provisions, attendance sheets and enrollment information will be collected from classroom during the evacuation process.

Notification of parents would begin as it becomes safe to do so. Mass e-mail and text messages will be sent by administration as soon as it safely possible. Land line phones, TV and radio will be used if cell and Internet power is lost.

Emergency Relocation and Parent Notification

In the case of an emergency requiring the children to evacuate the premises, a neighborhood relocation shelter will be determined, at the time of the event, after all considerations for safety have been evaluated. Authorized nearby evacuation sites are; Black Bear Restaurant, UW Clinic, Kindred Hearts, or Taylor Ridge Retirement home.

In the event that children need to be relocated to a nearby building for shelter;

- Administration will coordinate a safe route for children to the designated relocation site and transport the children's emergency, and parent contact information.
- Staff will keep children safe and calm while gathering the following items: Daily Attendance Sheet, Enrollment Forms, and First Aid Backpacks.
- Teachers will keep detailed attendance records.

Emergency relocation may require moving a greater distance away. This destination will be determined by the local Emergency Government and would most likely be Glacier Drumlin Middle School, Monona Grove High School, or other school district building.

- If this should occur Learning Ladder vehicles or school district busing would be assigned. *All safety measures will be followed*, but if the relocation is determined by The Emergency Government Incident Command Officer to be immediate; vehicle capacity, safety belts, and car seats rules may possibly be disregarded if abiding hinders the safety and timeliness of the evacuation.
- Parents will be instructed to reunite with their child at the relocation site rather than during the evacuation process. Abiding by this will allow the Learning Ladder staff to devote all of their attention to safely implementing the emergency plan.
- Once the children have been moved and settled into a safe location the Administration/or designated person-in-charge will determine how to best notify families with instructions on how to safely reunite with their child
- Mass text messages, email, land line phones, Internet, radio, or television will be utilized if needed.

Child Biting

Biting is perhaps one of the most distressing behaviors that parents and caregivers confront. At the same time, it is a normal behavior for older infants and toddlers. Reasons for biting are much different for infants and toddlers than for preschool children. For infants and toddlers, some of the reasons are:

Exploration: A toddler doesn't make a distinction between a stick on the ground, a rubber toy, or a person's body. All are fair game for this natural form of exploration.

Teething: This could be a cause for periodic biting, as the pressure on the mouth and gums relieves the pain and discomfort of teething.

Affection: The toddler also hasn't learned to distinguish between their own feelings and those of others. He or she experiences relief from their own discomfort, and they are not able to understand that this experience isn't as pleasant for others as it is for them.

Lack of skills for expressing needs: Young children don't have words to express feelings of frustration and anger. They may use physical actions (biting, hitting, grabbing) if they want a toy, if they are angry, or if another child takes something from them.

Experimenting for cause and effect: A lot of interesting things will happen when a child bites. The other child gets upset, and the caregiver often responds very strongly. There may be an internal rush of adrenaline that comes as a result of the fear, anger, or excitement that follows the biting.

Attention: Biting often results in lots of attention! The more powerful the attention (even if it's negative) the more likely the child is to continue biting.

Over-stimulation: The child may respond to noise and confusion by feeling frustrated and tense. Some of these same reasons apply to older children who bite. Between the ages of two and three, new skills are emerging:

- The ability to manage words or cues to and get what they want.
- The ability to understand the feelings and needs of others.
- The ability to control their own actions.

When a child is past the age of two and a half or three, biting is more likely to be an act of aggression. The child may use biting to get what he needs, or to threaten other children. This puts biting more in the category of hitting, pushing, and other forms of physically asserting power and influence. Older children who bite probably haven't learned more effective ways to express anger. (Aarons Lorna, 2002)

We will explore various methods dealing with biting including looking at our environment and patterns of behaviors for the biter. Our staff will respond promptly and appropriately to biting and will provide the necessary guidance, prevention and comfort as needed.

If a child is bitten and it does not break the skin, the bite will be washed with soap and water and an ice pack applied for swelling. Parents will be called or informed through the mishap form at pick-up time.

If a child is bitten and the skin is broken the following procedure will be followed:

- We will let the wound bleed gently.
- We will clean the wound carefully with soap and water.
- We will check whether the child has been vaccinated against tetanus and make sure that the shot is up to date.
- Parents will be called immediately to be informed of the following information:
 - o Call and talk with your child's physician about whether the child needs any additional preventative care
 - o To observe the wound over the next few days
 - o And if the wound begins to swell or turns red, call the child's physician

SIDS Policy

Learning Ladder staff members understand that it is important for babies to sleep on their backs. The brochure "[Back to Sleep: Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome](#)" (SIDS) is available for families.

Although scientists still do not know what causes SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, research has revealed some ideas that can help reduce the risk of SIDS. Staff will follow the research suggestions.

- Healthy babies should sleep on their backs. A few babies with special health conditions might need to sleep on their tummies. Teachers will follow any special health needs if written orders are received from a child's physician.
- Babies need to sleep on a firm mattress or other firm surface. They will not be put on fluffy blankets, comforters, sheepskins, pillows or other soft materials for sleeping purposes. Stuffed toys or pillows will not be placed in the crib with infants.
- The temperature will be kept moderate. Air conditioning is provided during the warm summer months.
- Records will be checked to make sure infants and toddlers are up-to-date on immunizations. Suspected illnesses will be reported to parents promptly so they can make a decision whether or not to make a visit to their child's pediatrician.
- Breast milk is believed to keep babies healthy. Mothers will be encouraged to continue breast feeding for as long as possible and will be encouraged to breast feed if they so desire.

Nap & Rest Time

All children under the age of five are required to rest for at least 30 minutes. Infants will rest according to their own schedules, while toddlers will be encouraged to rest according to a routine but will always be allowed to sleep and wake as determined by the individual child. Older children will be allowed to sleep from 1-2 hours; however, if a child has not fallen asleep within 30 minutes of restful lying down, that child will be allowed to pursue quiet activities that do not disturb the other children. Infants will sleep in cribs; toddlers and older children will be provided with cots/cribs. Toddlers and older children will bring a blanket, pillow, and "cuddly" from home.

All infants/toddlers up to the age of two, will be placed "Back to Sleep" while in the care of Learning Ladder unless parents provide a written statement from the infant's physician that states otherwise. The "Back to Sleep" initiative has lowered the accounts of SIDS by more than 40%.

The school provides cots and sheets. Children should bring in a small blanket and a pillow labeled with their name. Blankets and pillows will be sent home on Fridays for laundering.

Missing Child 251.06 (3)(c)

- Many attendance & safety procedures are used to ensure the whereabouts of children throughout the day.
- When groups of children leave the classroom or playground, one teacher will lead the children, and the other will follow the last child.
- Attendance sheets referenced throughout the day and taken to the playground and on field trips.
- Teachers will count their group of children periodically throughout the day.
- If a child cannot be located, the director will be notified and a search will be conducted. If the child is not found the police department will be notified, in addition to notifying the child's parent(s).

Run Away Child Procedure

In the event that a school-aged child runs away or threatens to leave the group or premises, the following procedures have been established:

- Every effort, short of physically restraining the child shall be made to keep the child from leaving the group or premises.
- A teacher may follow the child if the other children are adequately supervised.
- Teachers will not pursue a run-away child if it results in the the rest of the group being left inadequately supervised.
- The teacher will notify the director. Parents and/or police will be notified.
- A child that runs away may be terminated from the program.

Smoke Free Environment

The use of any and all tobacco products is strictly prohibited on or in Learning Ladder's property.

Prohibition of Firearms, Weapons, Drugs, & Alcohol

Firearms, weapons, drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited within the building and grounds.

Parking

Ample parking is available in the front of the building. Staff will use the parking stalls closest to the road and parents may use the stalls near the building. Handicap parking is available. **Unattended vehicles should not be left running and children should not be left in unattended vehicles. Young children can be unpredictable so please hold your child's hand to and from your vehicle whenever possible.** Please use caution and drive slowly.

Thank-you for sharing your child with us!