



LLESA
Children's
Center

Parent Handbook



*When I play I learn. all the things
I need to know before I go to school:*

- ◆ *that the teacher helps you, and is nice;*
- ◆ *that children are friends;*
- ◆ *that we have to help each other;*
- ◆ *that books will open up a whole new world;*
- ◆ *that I like learning and going to school - a
feeling worth having throughout life.*

llesa

Livermore Laboratory
Employee Services Association

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LLESA Children's Center
Parent Handbook

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Welcome to the *LLESA Children's Center*! This handbook is designed to help familiarize parents with our Center's program. Although we've tried to present a comprehensive overview of the program, you may have questions that are not covered in this handbook. If this happens, please ask us! We are excited to begin caring for your child, and we welcome your cooperation, flexibility, positive attitude, enthusiasm, and sense of humor. We look forward to working with you in the future – again, welcome to the Children's Center "family!"

History & Eligibility

The *LLESA Children's Center* opened in 1986 serving children of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratory, and LLNL contract employees. Livermore Laboratory Employee Services Association, Inc. (LLESA) is a local association of employees serving two co-located sites; Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) and Sandia National Laboratory, California (SNL). Association members include active employees of Lawrence Livermore National Security (LLNS), SNL, on-site contractors, and on-site consultants; and retired employees of LLNS and SNL.

When filling openings, the *LLESA Children's Center* will give first priority to siblings currently in our program; second to LLNS employees; and third to other LLESA members as outlined above. If openings are not available, applicants will be placed on the waiting list of the priority group to which they belong.

Priority is considered in admissions only. Once children are enrolled in the *LLESA Children's Center* program, they will not be displaced for the purposes of accommodating higher priority children on the waiting list.

“High-Tech industries such as NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory have found that their best overall problem solvers were master tinkerers in their youth. They have even altered their hiring policy to give high priority to this play background information.”

- Stuart Brown MD, The Wisdom of Play © 2009 Community Playthings

Purpose of Parent Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the policies and procedures for the *LLESA Children's Center*. Please familiarize yourself with this handbook. ***It is your responsibility to read and follow the policies outlined.*** If you have any questions, please ask for clarification.

“When we appreciate the important role play serves in a child’s learning about self and world, we give children the time and opportunity to engage in the self-initiated play that is the surest way for them to fully realize all of their intellectual, emotional and social potential.”

- David Elkind PhD, The Wisdom of Play © 2009 Community Playthings

Program Philosophy

Our program follows a research-based philosophy that children learn best in a child-directed, play environment allowing them to develop intellect through hands-on, sensory experiences. The program is designed to meet the individual and group needs of the children through age-appropriate activities. Our program focuses on the development of the whole child promoting social/emotional, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, and language skills. We stress the importance of open-ended, process-oriented activities that allow children to fully explore and develop their own creativity.

We also believe in providing a loving, supportive environment where well-trained, nurturing staff appreciates the uniqueness of each child. The staff strives to help the child feel empowerment over her or his life. We believe that the program should be centered on research-based Early Childhood Education and Child Development practices that are developmentally appropriate.

“Research suggests that four and five year-olds given 15 minutes of free play will spend a third of this time engaged in spatial, mathematical, and architectural activities! Studies also show that this kind of play, especially with blocks, helps children discover principles such as symmetry and geometry and sets the stage for more advanced skills used later in mathematics and geography.”

*-Katrina Ferrara BA, Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek PhD, & Roberta M. Golinkoff PhD,
The Wisdom of Play © 2009 Community Playthings*

Our Goals for the Children

Social Emotional

- Being with other children in a setting conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships
- Having play experiences that contribute to the developmental needs of each child
- Participating in play that is based on the child's individual needs, interests, and abilities
- Getting along in groups
- Learning responsible behavior (e.g. sharing, cooperation)
- Respecting ethnic, cultural, and age differences
- Expressing feelings appropriately
- Gaining positive self-image
- Developing independence, initiative, and trust



Cognitive

- Acquiring early language and literacy skills, including pre-reading and early writing skills for older children, and fine tuning these skills in school age children
- Learning numeracy (pre-math) and science concepts
- Increasing curiosity about the world through observation, exploration, and experimentation
- Promoting experimentation, inquiry, observation, and exploration through play

Language

- Acquiring early language and literacy skills, including pre-reading and early writing skills for older children, and fine tuning these skills in school age children
- Enhancing language skills and self expression through music, movement, and interactive dialogue between peers and adults

Physical Development

- Developing large and small muscle skills
- Improving eye-hand coordination and perceptual skills
- Increasing body awareness
- Exploring and participating in rhythm and movement activities

Health and Safety

- Modeling good eating habits and nutrition
- Practicing good hygiene habits (including hand washing)
- Learning to balance adequate rest periods with activity times
- Sharing healthy, nutritious food throughout the day

The Difference between Day Care and Child Development

We value the importance of Early Childhood Education in our programs. The *LLESA Children's Center* teaching staff is trained in Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) for children. This means that the children are engaged in learning throughout the day, including lunch time, rest time, outside play, free play, and group times. In order for children to learn and be ready for school and life, teachers must provide a safe, nurturing environment in which children have opportunities to learn daily through sharing, exploring, hypothesizing, experimenting, and building social relationships.



Center Information

The *LLESA Children's Center* provides a full day Child Development program. It provides full and part time care for children 6 weeks to 5.5 years of age, as well as providing an After School program for Kindergarten to 12 years of age. The program operates year-round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am to 6:00pm (except in School Age where the program is open after school hours and full days when the children don't attend school).

The Children's Center hours are as follows:

Infant and Toddler Classrooms:	7:00 am – 5:30 pm
2's, Preschool Classrooms:	7:00 am – 5:45 pm
School Age Classroom (School Days)	
Kindergartners:	11:30 pm – 5:55 pm
1 st grade -12 yrs old:	1:30 pm – 5:55 pm (MTTHF)
	1:00 pm – 5:55 pm (W)
School Age Classroom (Release Days/Summer)	7:00 am – 5:45 pm

The latest pickup time is 5:30 for the Infant and Toddler Classrooms, 5:45 for the Preschool Classrooms & School Age Classrooms on Release Days and Summer, 5:55 p.m. for School Age Classrooms on School Days, allowing some time for families to gather their child's belongings and our staff to prepare for the next morning free of distraction and lock the doors and be out of the buildings by 6:00 p.m. (5:45 for the Infant and Toddler Classrooms).

Children's Center Staff

Teachers are hired based on their education, experience, creativity, warmth, and caring nature. We want to assure the highest quality care and education for your child. Our teaching staff is composed of experienced and qualified Team Teachers for each age group and a Program Director to oversee specific program areas. Each member of the career teaching staff is fully teacher-qualified as specified under state licensing regulations. Most teachers hold Child Development Permits from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and have 2-year and 4-year degrees. We encourage all staff to continue their professional development through college coursework, conferences, and in-service professional development opportunities.

The Children's Center maintains an average teacher-to-child ratio of 1:3 for infants and toddlers, 1:5 for 2 year olds, 1:8 for 3 year olds, 1:10 for 4-5 year olds and 1:14 for school age children. These ratios are maintained for the majority of the day and in most cases exceed state licensing standards.

For the safety of your child, each staff's references, physical health report (including T.B. clearance), and criminal record check are gathered before entering the classroom as required by law.

Program Specific Information

Each program area – Infants, Toddlers, Two's, Preschool, Pre Kindergarten, and School Age has specific information available for parents of children who are enrolled in their programs. This information may include:

- Classroom Schedules and Routines
- Items needed for the Classroom
- Assessments and Conferences
- Toileting Independency Guidelines
- Weekly Activity and Snack Information
- Birthdays and Special Events
- Developmental Guidelines



Daily Program Routine

Children thrive in a program environment that offers a variety of activities in a rich, well-equipped classroom with a consistent, but flexible daily schedule. They depend on predictable routines and look forward to different parts of the day. Learning opportunities are available to them in unstructured and structured formats including free choice, small or large group activities, group time, and routines such as eating, dressing and toileting/washing. Throughout all types of activities, the interactions between teachers and children are critical to children's learning, social, self-image and communication skills. Teachers strive to get to know each child's unique

strengths and needs so they can provide individualized learning opportunities and guidance in a caring, supportive atmosphere.

During free choice periods, children may select one or more activities in one of the many learning centers prepared for them, such as block building, dramatic play, arts, music, books, manipulatives (like puzzles, building sets), science and nature study, outdoor activities and much more. They may play alone, with a friend or in a small group, and with a teacher's guidance or independently. As they finish, they may choose another activity after putting away their materials or toys.

Group time is conducted by the teacher with the whole class and may consist of planning or discussing the day's activities or special events in school or the community, sharing experiences and belongings from home, singing songs and sharing an interactive story. Children have opportunities to get to know all their classmates as they learn new concepts and practice communication and social skills, such as taking turns. Music and movement activities may also be conducted during group/circle time.

Small group learning activities are planned and directed by teachers related to curriculum topics in the areas of language arts (e.g. letter recognition and sounds), mathematics (e.g. counting and sorting objects, measuring liquids), science (e.g. properties of magnets), art projects, cooking projects and sensory exploration for younger children.

Outdoor play is an essential part of children's day and an extension of the classroom learning environment, where children can get vigorous exercise and gain physical strength, coordination and skill through running, climbing, ball play and cooperative games. For younger children this would include walks, exploring the environment, and taking activities outside.

Infants and young toddlers are cared for in a nurturing and stimulating environment using the **PITC (Program for Infant and Toddler Care)** model of responsive care giving. This model incorporates observation, documentation and interpretation of a child's experiences. Their needs are attended to throughout the day, providing food, sleep, comfort and play as needed according to their temperament and comfort level. As children grow, more activities are added to provide stimulation and fun for children's developmental growth. Infants and toddlers learn through exploring their environment, interacting with peers and adults, and expression of wants and needs through verbal and nonverbal cues. Our infant programs provide rich learning

“Many of our greatest thinkers locate their capacity for original and profound thought in their imaginative abilities, first developed through creative play in early childhood.”

- Sharna Olfman, *The Wisdom of Play* © 2009 Community Playthings

environments with nurturing staff who are in tune with the individual needs of each infant in their care.

All of the types of activities described above are planned during the children's day. Below is a **typical classroom routine** (schedule times may vary between rooms):

Infant Room Routine

- 7:00-9:00 Children arriving / Informal conversations with families
- 9:00-5:00 Teachers follow individual children's routines to meet their needs including feeding, sleeping, diapering, holding, rocking, playing, etc.
- 5:00-5:30 Children departing / Informal conversations with families



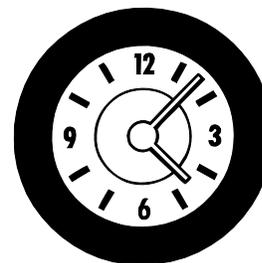
Toddler and 2's Routines

- 7:00-9:00 Children arriving / Inside-Outside free play
- 9:00-9:20 Snack, Diapering/Toileting/Clean-Up
- 9:20-10:00 Outside Play
- 10:00-10:50 Inside Play
- 10:50-11:00 Clean-Up Diapering/Toileting
- 11:00-11:50 Outside Play; Neighborhood Walks
- 11:50-12:20 Lunch
- 12:20-1:00 Clean-Up / Diapering/Toileting
- 1:00-3:00 Nap / Rest Time
- 3:00-3:45 Wake Up / Diapering / Quiet Activities
- 3:45-4:15 Snack
- 4:15-4:25 Clean-Up
- 4:25-5:15 Outside Free Play
- 5:15-5:45 Inside Stories / Children Departing



Preschool and Pre Kindergarten Routine

- 7:00-8:30 Children arriving / Indoor Free Play
- 8:30-9:15 Outside Play
- 9:15-9:40 Snack
- 9:40-10:00 Morning Meeting
- 10:00-11:15 Inside Play
- 11:15-11:30 Clean-Up / Toileting
- 11:30-12:10 Outside Play
- 12:10-12:30 Group Time
- 12:30-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:15 Clean-Up / Toileting
- 1:15-3:00 Rest Time
- 3:00-4:00 Indoor Play / Snack
- 4:00-4:15 Clean-Up / Toileting
- 4:15-5:15 Outside Play
- 5:15-5:45 Indoor Free Play



****Please note that we do not recommend for Toddler through Pre K children to be dropped off during naptime. Naptime is a difficult time to expect a young child to enter the classroom and can also be too disruptive for those who are napping. Thank you!**

After School Program Routine

11:30-12:45	Kindergarten arrivals and lunchtime
12:45-2:45	Activity / Free play
2:45-3:00	Clean-up
3:00-3:55	Outside/Snack
3:55-4:25	Story / Quiet reading time
4:25-5:40	Choices (Free play/Undirected activity)
5:40-5:45	Clean-up
5:45-6:00	Group activity/Children Departing



What to Bring

Please bring items to leave in your child's cubby. Labeling is critical!!!! Get a permanent laundry marker and label ALL your child's belongings!

For Infants, Toddlers, and Two's Bring:

- ✓ Disposable diapers
- ✓ Blanket and Sheet for Toddler and 2's rest time
- ✓ Two-three changes of clothing, including socks
- ✓ Jacket
- ✓ Hat for sun protection
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Comfort object, such as a doll or bear, if this is important for your child



For Preschoolers and School-Aged Bring:

- ✓ One-two changes of clothing, including socks
- ✓ One-two underpants
- ✓ Jacket
- ✓ Hat for sun protection
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ A comfort object, blanket or pillow, if your child uses one
- ✓ If your child's clothing becomes wet during the day, you will find their wet clothes in a plastic bag in their cubbie. Be sure to replace them with dry clothes for the next day.

Please dress your child in clothes for active play! We plan and carry out many activities that encourage active, messy play! Please send your child in play clothes that are comfortable to wear and easy to wash at home. Shoes should be safe for climbing and running. Tennis shoes or sandals which have a heel, strap and a covered toe are best. Flip-flop sandals are not safe in a childcare setting. A suggestion for families with children who are learning to use the toilet, pants with

elastic tops that children can pull down themselves are best and help promote a child's sense of independence.

Lost and Found

Each classroom has a place for lost items. **LABEL LABEL LABEL!** Please check regularly for missing items. If unlabeled items remain unclaimed for a long period, they will be cleaned and donated to an agency that will distribute the items to the needy.

Saying Good Bye

Separations are sometimes difficult, especially in the first week or two. Starting the day in a positive manner will assure a good day for the child, the teachers, and the families. Here are some suggestions that may help. Develop a reassuring separation routine to follow each day. For example, find a favorite teacher to say "good morning" to or a favorite activity your child likes to begin the day with, then a warm hug good-bye. Having a *consistent* routine for children is a very important. Children feel better if they can predict what is going to happen during the day. Talk with your child before you arrive about where he is going and the teachers and children who will be there.



We encourage families to try and keep changes in the school and drop-off routine to a minimum as much as possible. When changes in routine are unavoidable, please keep the staff informed in order to help minimize frustration for the child and the other children in their classroom. Leaving abruptly is not a good idea, as children are usually reassured most when families are confident, warm, and fairly brief about good-byes. Let teachers help you by taking your child in their arms if this will help. Please don't hesitate to call your classroom later to see how your child is doing.

Transition from One Classroom to the Next

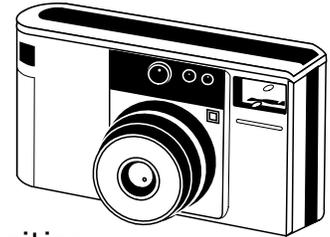
When it is time for your child to transition to the next classroom, you will receive a packet of information introducing you to your child's new classroom. We also recommend that you set a date to visit the new classroom and receive an orientation from one of the classroom teachers.

Infants typically move to the Toddler Program between the 12th to 16th month. Toddlers move to the 2's Classroom after they are 24 months and sometimes beyond. 2's move to Preschool during their 35th to 38th month. Many factors are considered when children graduate to the next classroom including developmental readiness and space availability. We allow appropriate transition time to help each child and their family get used to the new environment at their own pace. If you

have any questions about transitions, be sure and talk them over with your child's teacher and program supervisor.

Photo Policy

It is the policy of the LLESA Children's Center to allow photographs and video footage of students to be used in Center produced materials including, but not limited to the website, brochures, posters, other printed materials, newsletters, newspaper articles, classroom display, and television programming. Students will only be identified by first and last name to provide them with recognition opportunities when appropriate (e.g. a class yearbook).



1. Any photos taken by the staff for display purposes will only show the children's first name.
2. Photos may be taken by the staff for inclusion in children's individual files.
3. The Children's Center may allow photos to be published in the newspapers, but no names of the children unless prior permission has been obtained.
4. The Children's Center may distribute video or photo images of group events such as Halloween, the Multicultural Luncheon, Classroom events, etc., to Center families, for private family use only.**
5. Photos / video taken by parents are only for family use and will never be passed on to the media without prior permission from the Children's Center.**
6. Children's Center photos cannot be sold or published.
7. Tripods or monopods are not allowed in any indoor buildings to block classroom pathways.
8. Families are not permitted to interfere with the daily classroom routine in order to take the photos and are asked to minimize photo taking to occasional visits.
9. Families may not disrupt the children or staff or in any way while taking personal photos.

**Please be aware that Children's Center families do take pictures of their children and classmates, and while we do not give permission to distribute these photos, we cannot monitor what families do with them – this includes social media and distribution via email.

No Smoking Policy



Per law, this entire site is a non-smoking facility. No smoking is permitted inside the building at any time. Smoking is also prohibited on any of the outside areas of our center.

Behavior Guidance and Discipline

An important aspect of learning in early childhood is how to interact appropriately with others, control one's own behavior, and understand social rules. As children learn about the world and acquire social interaction skills, such as how to approach others and join play, they may try a strategy that's not suitable. At other times, children may act inappropriately to gain attention or to meet other needs. In any case, we will not allow a child's behavior to continue if it appears that a child will hurt him/herself or someone else, or that property will be damaged.

We believe that children learn acceptable behaviors by modeling the actions of those around them, including families, teachers and other children.

Our teachers will implement this policy with techniques that help children learn positive strategies for interaction and problem-solving, understand the perspectives of others, discover why certain behaviors are not acceptable, and to help a child gain self-control. Discipline used by the Children's Center teachers includes a variety of constructive techniques such as creating a preventative learning environment, redirecting children to other activities, counseling the child in a calm but firm voice about the situation, offering positive alternatives for behavior, or gently separating the child from the group for a brief time with adult support. Physical punishment and humiliation are never permitted at our school, by staff, children, or families.

Children with significant behavior difficulties that are developmentally atypical, such as repeated hitting or biting other children or staff, will be observed and their behavior documented by staff. We will do our best to work with you and your child to improve those behaviors. Usually, a conference will be requested with families to discuss possible ways to help that child succeed once staff has made several observations. Working with a child's behavior consistently at home and school is essential for successful improvement. Families and staff must have shared understanding of the reasons for the behavior and strategies for managing it in positive ways.

Referrals to support services may be made by the teaching staff if developmentally atypical behaviors continue to occur. Parents may be asked to seek counseling or attend parenting classes as a condition for their child to continue in the child development program. However, we do consider it in everyone's best interest to exclude a child or parent who exhibits a continuing atypical behavior that threatens the safety of other children, staff or the child. Classroom settings and group activities are not always appropriate for all children. If we determine that our program is not appropriate for your child, or that you or your child constitutes a safety or legal hazard, we reserve the right to withdraw services.

¹ Discipline in our classrooms must "be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature including but not limited to: interference with the

daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning." This represents the policy of the *LLESA Children's Center* and California law.

Child Assessments

All children are assessed using a revised edition of the Creative Curriculum Assessment system. Children under 2 years of age are assessed quarterly using a Service Needs Plan which includes parent and teacher goal setting for each individual child. The 2's, Preschool, and Pre K classroom assessments take place twice a year. After each assessment, the results are shared with the family during a conference. Families are encouraged to continue the children's learning activities in the home with stories, outings, songs, and helping around the house to teach important skills. Assessments are then used by the teachers in program planning to assure optimum developmental growth of each individual child.

Family Conferences

Conferences with your child's teacher are available quarterly for infants and toddlers and twice a year for 2's through Pre K. Teachers are also available to meet with you more often at your convenience to discuss your child's progress or address a concern that may arise. We encourage ongoing communication between the staff and families. Please feel free to ask questions about our program, or make suggestions which you feel would enrich your child's experience at school. The conference is a time to learn more about your child's activities in school, developmental progress, and ways you can support your child's learning and healthy development. Personal matters discussed at conferences are held in strict confidence.



Family Participation and Involvement

The *LLESA Children's Center* has an open door policy to encourage families to participate in the daily activities whenever possible. Please offer your time, your talents and donations to the classroom, and attend evening or weekend activities with other families. We also require that families maintain standards of confidentiality towards staff, other families, and children enrolled in the program, respecting individual differences and working to help provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

While the Children's Center recognizes the limited amount of time families may have to become involved in their child's life at school, parent/teacher communication and/or participation can be a very important part of the program. It enhances a feeling of partnership in the education of the children. The staff is

dedicated to working with families to provide a positive learning environment, both at home and at school, which most clearly matches each child's developmental needs.

We value family input tremendously, and urge families to speak with their child's Classroom Team Teachers, Program Director, and/or the Children's Center Director often with any suggestions they might have or important information the program should know to help in caring for their child. Program staff are more than happy to discuss children's progress with their families whenever possible.

Families are encouraged to share any concerns they may have, i.e., changes that occur in the family, a grandparent's visit, a new baby, a family crisis, etc. Staff will also share any concerns with families. The Children's Center staff looks forward to getting to know each family. All information shared between staff and families is held in strict confidence.

Responsibilities of Our Families

Families of the Children's Center are expected to interact with the Children's Center staff, other families, and children in a responsible and courteous manner. This includes respecting Children's Center property and supplies, as well as the personal property of staff and other families. The Children's Center will not tolerate harassment or threatening, intimidating or coercing behavior toward any child, family, or staff member.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

The *LLESA Children's Center* Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is a group of parent volunteers who, as representatives of the Children's Center parent population, provide parent input to the Children's Center program. The PAC also provides a mechanism to facilitate parent involvement in the successful operation of the Children's Center.

The PAC meets monthly. The date and agenda for all meetings are posted in each classroom and emailed to families. All families are welcome to attend these meetings.

The PAC also oversees several fundraising events annually. Parent participation in these activities is strictly voluntary. The generated revenue is used to purchase additional supplies and equipment for the classrooms as determined by the teaching staff. The PAC keeps families informed of Children's Center activities in a variety of ways including memos, calendars, and parent meetings.

Employment of Staff by Private Arrangement

It is the policy of the *LLESA Children's Center* that Children's Center staff is not to arrange or accept employment privately with families using Children's Center services; this includes childcare, education and/or transportation of children to or

from the Children's Center. Although such arrangements between Children's Center families and staff may seem like a natural "fit", this policy has been designed to protect you, our employees, and the program from liability.

Admission

The *LLESA Children's Center* is open to children of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), children of Sandia National Laboratory (SNL), children of LLNL contract employees, and children of families who work and live in Livermore. Priority is given to clients as listed above.

The Children's Center maintains a waiting list when enrollment is full. Families are encouraged to apply for the waiting list as soon as possible for timely consideration for openings. Application forms are also accepted for families who learn they are pregnant or have made the decision to adopt.

In order to be placed on the waiting list, families submit a completed Application for Enrollment and Waiting List form and pays a \$100 registration fee. In general, registration fees are non-refundable unless the Children's Center is unable to meet the client's needs as assessed by the center. It is the family's responsibility to call the Children's Center when any changes occur in their childcare needs and they no longer wish to remain on the waiting list.

Please keep in mind the Children's Center has no way of knowing how long it will be until an opening occurs in any classroom. Historically, openings may occur each year in September, February, and June when the majority of children transition through the program.

When space becomes available, we call the first eligible family on the waiting list and offer an opening. If the opening is declined, the child's application moves to the end of the list and the next family is called until the opening is filled. If a family declines an opening a second time, the child's application is removed from the waiting list. We will make every reasonable effort to personally contact families when openings occur but due to time constraints, families we have not been able to reach may be moved to the end of the waiting list (or off the list if they have already declined a previous opening) and the next family contacted. If a family plans to be away from work and home for vacation or other extended periods of time, we suggest they call our office to check their status and leave an alternative phone contact in case a space becomes available during that time.

At the time an opening is offered and accepted, the first month's tuition must be paid to secure the opening. The remaining enrollment forms must be submitted and an classroom orientation visit scheduled prior to the child's first day of attendance.

All potential clients will be screened during an initial interview and program tour with the Children's Center Director to determine along with families if the Children's Center is able to meet the child's needs within a group care environment.

Each family will then be required to participate in the following orientation procedure prior to their child's first day of school:

- Spend a minimum of one hour in the program with their child to receive an orientation with the Classroom Teachers. Due to state licensing requirements, families must remain with their child during classroom visits prior to official first day of enrollment. Submit all required enrollment paperwork, including the Physician's Pre-Admission Report, prior to their child's first day. No child may attend the Children's Center until all paperwork is complete and received.

Enrollment Paperwork includes:

- Application for Enrollment and Waiting List
- Admission Agreement
- Service Agreement
- Permission to Participate in Center Activities
- Permission to Receive Emergency Medical Care
- Financial Agreement
- Automatic Debit Authorization Form
- Identification and Emergency Information
- Personal Child History
- Physician's Pre-Admission Report
- Personal Rights
- Parent's Rights



Contract Times

The Children's Center will be open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. for the Infant and Toddler Classrooms, 7:00 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. for the Preschool Classrooms & School Age Classroom on Release Days and Summer, and 5:55 p.m. for the School Age Classroom on School Days. Your child may participate in the program for a maximum of 9 1/2 hours per day. If your child needs to be with us longer, prior approval needs to be obtained from the Center Director to make sure having an extra child will meet teacher to child ratios. Families may request to be at the Children's Center up to 10 hours for an additional fee (Extended hours are not available in the Infant and Toddler Classrooms). Families will be asked to establish a regular time of arrival and pick up for their children. Families are also asked to keep within these hours, unless special arrangements are made. This will enable the child to establish a general routine, and allow us to schedule staff in order to maintain reasonable ratios. This information will also assist the staff with the overall planning of the daily activities.

The Children's Center closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. for the Infant and Toddler Classrooms, 5:45 p.m. for the Preschool Classrooms & School Age Classrooms on Release Days and Summer, and 5:55 p.m. for the School Age Classrooms on School Days. In an emergency, please call the Children's Center classrooms immediately, so that families and staff can work out a safe pick-up arrangement.

Beyond Contract Hours Fees

An early drop off or late pick up beyond a family's contract hours may result in an assessment of additional fees. For example, if a child is scheduled to go home at 4:30, but is not picked up until 5:00, the teaching staff submits a "Beyond Contract Hours" form to the office staff. Families will be sent a courtesy notice the first time a child attends beyond their contract times. Each time thereafter, families will be charged a \$25.00 fee for the first 15 minutes or fraction thereof and \$1.00 per minute thereafter regardless of whether or not the Children's Center has been notified in advance. Families will be billed for payment along with the regular monthly tuition. If contract violations persist, families may be asked to withdraw from the program.

In the event that a child is not picked up by closing time and the staff has not been notified of an emergency, we will make every attempt to notify someone designated on the child's emergency form to arrange for the child to be picked up. If the staff is unsuccessful in reaching someone within a reasonable time frame, it may be necessary to contact the Livermore Police Department for assistance.

Child Arrival and Pick-up

Families are required to record their child's arrival and departure times accurately at the facility each day and to ***sign in and out using legal signatures (initials are not sufficient unless they are a person's legal signature)***. Please notify the classroom directly if your child is going to be absent or brought to the Children's Center late.

Remember to update your
Emergency Form!

***Persons not listed on your
child's emergency form as
authorized to pick your child up
will not be permitted to take
your child from the center.***

Photo I.D. will be requested of
adults not familiar to our staff.

A parent or parent's designee must bring all children into the classroom to the child's teacher. For school age children who walk from school to the Children's Center, the center is not responsible until the child reports to a teacher to be signed in. Teachers will release a child only to the parent/guardian or someone authorized by the parent/guardian. All persons authorized to pick up children at the

Children's Center must be at least 18 years of age. If pick up is to be by someone other than those on the authorization form, please notify the classroom. Children's Center staff will ask for a photo ID of anyone picking up a child who is not known to staff.

Absences

We request that all families call us when their child is absent. This helps the teachers plan for the day. We also ask that families to let us know the specific illness or symptoms in case we need to notify other families of possible exposure.

Payments

Payment of tuition fees for all families is made via an automatic payment plan from the family's primary bank account. Tuition payment transactions are made on the first day of each month and required in advance of your child's attendance. Family vacation time or other extended leaves of absence taken during the year are nonrefundable.

Part-time rates are prorated according to the full-time monthly rate plus an additional 20% surcharge (Part-time is Two or Three full days per week).

Our Tuition Schedule typically changes yearly in January.

The monthly School Age fee is averaged out for the entire year. This fee includes full day childcare on district-wide Livermore Public School Release Days during the school year and full day childcare during the summer months. We will consider opening for other school release days with a minimum of 5 children in attendance. The School Age Summer Only rate is for those children who attend for the summer months only.

Termination of Care

Families wishing to withdraw their child/ren from the *LLESA Children's Center* must notify the Center in writing one month in advance of withdrawal or payment in lieu of notice will be required.

Termination of care can also occur for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to pay fees in a timely manner.
- Repeated late pick-ups.
- Inappropriate or threatening conduct on the part of the family member or child.
- Failure to adhere to the LLESA Children's Center policies.

Licensing

The *LLESA Children's Center* is licensed to operate under the California State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. The licensing agency has basic health and safety requirements regarding staff qualifications, student/teacher ratios, facility specifications, and program parameters. Two

licensing documents, the Parent's Rights and the Children's Personal Rights are attached at the end of this handbook. The philosophy of the LLESA Children's Center is designed to exceed these basic standards wherever possible to assure the highest quality child care program possible.

The local licensing agency may be contacted at the following:
Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing Child Care Office
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1102
Oakland, CA 94612-1403
(510) 622-2602



Grievance Procedure

Families who have a complaint or concern regarding the *LLESA Children's Center* should follow the following procedure:

- Attempt to meet with the concerned staff directly to initially resolve a specific conflict.
- If you are uncomfortable or unable to resolve the issue with the staff, contact the Program Supervisor or Center Director, whoever is appropriate.
- Finally, if the Center Director is unable to resolve the grievance, the family may submit their concerns in writing to the LLESA Board of Directors.

Confidentiality

Families should not discuss any confidential information about the Children's Center's staff, children, or families. Confidential information includes addresses and phone numbers, potentially embarrassing non-work related personal activities or other sensitive personal information.

Any special concerns or issues (outside of normal classroom issues) should be brought to the attention of the Center Director. Families are asked to refrain from propagating negative rumors and unsubstantiated information about the Children's Center, its staff, children, or their families.

Pro-Diversity Philosophy

Enrollment to the *LLESA Children's Center* will be granted without discrimination in regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race,

ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental disability, physical disability, or political belief. Our program also refrains from religious instruction and worship.

We will also make reasonable accommodations as required by the American Disabilities Act in order to serve children with special needs and their families. Children with special needs are encouraged to integrate into our classrooms. Please provide us with your child's IFSP or IEP or other documentation regarding his/her special needs to help us provide the best services possible.



Emergencies

In the event of an unforeseen closure of the national laboratories, the Children's Center will remain open as long as necessary until the children are picked up by their families or designated family representatives. This determination will be left to the discretion of the Children's Center Director. If the Children's Center remains open, an attendance assessment will be made by 10:00 a.m. and staffing may be adjusted for that day.

If a child becomes sick or is injured while at the center, families will be notified immediately by telephone and first aid will be administered as needed. If your child needs immediate medical attention and you cannot be reached by phone, a staff person will call 911 and continue to contact the family or an adult designated on the child's emergency form. It is important that you provide us with an up-to-date list of contacts for people who are available to pick up your child in case of emergency, listed on a current emergency form. For your child's health and safety, it is important that you notify us immediately if there are changes during the year in your work or home phone numbers, or in contact information for others listed on the emergency form.

In the event of an earthquake or other major disaster, families may not be able to contact the center by phone. Staff will remain with the children at the center until they are picked by an adult designated on the emergency card unless they have been evacuated from the center. A Center Disaster Plan is posted in each classroom, and fire and earthquake drills are conducted regularly with the children so they will know how to respond and follow instructions in emergency situations. Please become familiar with the evacuation location listed in your classroom in case of relocation of the center.

Illness

Children should be kept at home when ill. Should a child become ill during the school day, the staff will contact the family or family designee, so arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up from the Children's Center.

We understand that many children in a group setting do have frequent colds. If the symptoms are mild (no fever, serious congestion, or respiratory infections) the child may be brought to the Children's Center. Children with a fever of 100 degrees or higher need to be kept at home and must be fever-free, without medicine, for at least a full day before returning to the Children's Center.

When children contract a contagious illness, they must be isolated at home until they are no longer contagious to others and are well enough to participate in group care. Here's a list of some of the more common contagious illnesses children may be exposed to in a group care setting and when children may return the Children's Center:

1. Head Lice: Child's hair must be nit free before returning to the Center.
2. Fever: Children should remain at home if they have a fever (100 degrees) and the fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Children may return after being fever free for at least a full day.
3. Eye Infection/Conjunctivitis: Pink eye or any other eye infection can be highly contagious. Children may return after being on medication for 24 hours.
4. Rashes: Unidentified rashes must be diagnosed by a health care professional and the child may return when no longer contagious.
5. Chickenpox: All blisters have crusted over
6. Hand, Foot, & Mouth Disease: After being fever free for at least a full day and all blisters have crusted over
7. Ringworm: Once child is on medication and affected area is well covered.
8. Scarlet Fever (strep with associated rash): After a full day on medication and fever free.
9. Slap Face Measles (Fifth Disease): After being fever free for at least a full day
10. Strep Throat: After being on medication and fever free for at least a full day
11. Other Contagious Conditions: Diarrhea, Vomiting, Measles, Mumps, and Whooping Cough, will require a child to remain at home. They must remain at home for at least 24 hours if they exhibit any contagious conditions which may put other children and staff at risk for illness.
12. Any unusual discomfort on the part of the child: Pain such as earache or other discomfort. Children can return if pain is gone without the aid of over-the-counter pain medication (such as Tylenol).

Children who are well enough to attend the Children's Center are well enough to participate in all Children's Center activities. Assessments of whether a child is well enough to participate in our program are left to the discretion of the Children's Center Staff.

Prevention of Illness

Young children in group settings tend to be exposed to colds and other contagious illnesses since they haven't developed immunities yet and are still learning good health habits. Most illnesses are spread by hand contact, not from cold weather. Hand washing has been shown to be the most effective means of keeping children and adults healthy. We help children to practice good habits of hand washing, using and disposing properly of tissues, covering the mouth when sneezing, etc. Families can assist by doing the same at home as well as by keeping the child home if showing symptoms of illness.

Medication Forms

Orally and topically prescribed medication administered to your child only if the following steps are taken:



1. Families need to bring in the ORIGINAL prescription with directions about dosage and when to administer OR a note from the pediatrician with directions if families wish to bring in single dosages for their child each day.
2. Families need to fill out and sign the Medication Authorization Form within their child's classroom on a per medication basis.

It is essential that families inform teachers in the morning if their child has had any recent injections or medications, so teachers can watch for any changes in a child's behavior that may occur during the day. Even if those medications are only given at home, they could affect the child's day at the Children's Center, and so is important information to be provided to the teaching staff.

Non Prescription Medications

On occasion it may be helpful for the staff to have the authorization to administer non prescription over the counter (OTC) pain reliever/fever reducer type medications, such as Tylenol, to your child. Such an occasion may include teething, braces, shots, or sudden onset of fever in which there is a danger of the fever rising too quickly before the parents can come to pick up their child. Our policy requires that we have prior written authorization from the parent in order to administer OTC medications. OTC medications administered by staff are fever reducers only for infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds and fever reducers, some cold medications, and eye drops for preschool and school age children.

EXCEPTION: Sunscreen and diaper creams can be administered with the advance written permission of parent/guardian.

Allergies

Please make certain that the classroom teachers and the office are fully informed about any allergies a child may have (an accurate list of these foods or substances will be noted in the classrooms and lunch areas).

In cases where children have severe allergies to common foods, we may ask families to provide suitable foods for their child's snacks. ***In our Infant – PreKindergarten classes, we have Peanut Free Environments.*** In our School Age Program, we do not provide any snacks with peanuts, but the children may bring peanut items after which they will wash their hands and we will disinfect their table.



Child Abuse Reporting

Our staff is required to report any unusual marks or injuries on a child, and statements made by, or behavior of, a child that may indicate abuse and neglect. Please understand that this is not an option for our staff. It is our obligation as mandated reporters (per California Penal Code Section 11166), and all staff must sign forms indicating their understanding of this requirement. We take this responsibility seriously and contact authorities responsibly and professionally when no other options are determined.

Holiday Schedule

The *LLESA Children's Center* generally follows the LLNL holiday schedule, except for one Teacher Work Day usually scheduled on the Friday before Labor Day weekend. We are typically closed the following days:

- New Year's Day (plus one day)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Spring Holiday (the Monday after Easter)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Day (plus one day)





This concludes the LLESA Children's Center Parent Handbook. All other information will be in your child's classroom Introduction Packet. Please contact us if you have additional questions, and again, welcome to the Children's Center family!

"Studies of Germany's experiment with academic kindergartens showed that play-based early education produced better results in reading and math, social and emotional adjustment, creativity, intelligence, oral expression, and "industry."

-Joan Almon & Edward Miller, The Wisdom of Play © 2009 Community Playthings