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**Parent Handbook**

**&**

**Operational Policies and Procedures**

**1521 Jacaman RD.**

**Laredo, TX 78041**

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**2024-2025**

**School Year**

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**Mission Statement and Our Philosophy**

Little Hearts Child Development Center began its mission of providing childcare services on February 14,2012, a day significant for being Valentine’s Day in line with the heart related theme of the school. The name also represents Pediatric Cardiologist Dr. Roberto Villarreal who was the founder of Little Hearts Child Development Center. His mission was to focus on cardiac related issues in children and the education of young children which both are centered on the Little Hearts of our Laredo families. We strive to continue Dr R. Villarreal’s Loving Hearts Legacy in the education field!

The mission of the school year is to give every child entrusted to our care an unsurpassed experience such that neither the child nor the parents will forget their entire lives., impacting significantly and positively in their educational, physically, and emotional development. Little Hearts Child Development Center is always expected to reflect the school excellence and quality of service. With you, the staff, directors, and owner Little Hearts intends to meet and exceed the standards set forth by the Texas State Licensing that regulates our performance.

Our handbook provides you with an overview of our policies, procedures, and rules to help you understand how Little Hearts Child Development Center manages their facility. We want to assure you that we provide an “open door” policy if ever needed. Communication is a key element for us to be able to educate, provide, and meet your child’s individual needs. We strongly encourage parents to participate in the childcare’s operation and activities throughout the year. We believe in creating a strong bond and partnership with our families to create a fun and loving environment.

**Hours and Days of Operation**

Our Center’s **days** of operation are **Monday through Friday** and **hours** of operation are **7:00AM-6:30PM.** The center’s hours will remain the same as we are permitted through Texas Child Care and Licensing. The only time the center’s hours may change will be during the following: severe weather days, interruption of water, or light services or during required repairs of the center’s facilities. Normally the center will advise you in a timely manner (as permitted).

**Observed Holidays**

The center will operate year-round except for the following:

**January 1,2024 April 1,2024**

**May 27,2024 July 4,2024**

**September2,2024 November 28,2024**

**November 29,2024 December 24,2024**

**December 25,2024 December 26,2024**

**December 27,2024 December 31,2024**

If one of the major holidays is on a weekend, the center will notify you on the monthly calendar which days we will be closed in observance of those holidays.

* **Please note that schedules are subject to change at any time of the year.**

**Administration**

**Owner/ Director** Issa Guerra **email** teacherissa@outlook.com

**Little Hearts Child Development Center**

 **email** littlehearts.developmentcenter@yahoo.com

**Our Staff**

**Director/Owner: Issa J Guerra**

**Lead Staff: Sandra Sanchez**

**Office Administrator: Amanda Stallings**

**Staff Training**

At Little Hearts Child Development Center all staff members are required to obtain 30 hours of child-care related training to the age group in their care. Our staff targets 30 hours yearly but may exceed in more, if possible, so that we remain well updated with any important changes and/or new information. Our staff will strive to meet the qualifications to meet your child’s social and educational needs. All staff members must be CPR/ First Aid certified and must pass a TCCL background check and an FBI fingerprint analysis. The Texas Childcare Licensing program assures that these procedures are thorough, and that we guarantee that all staff members who are hired are eligible to be around your children.

 **Curriculum**

Little Hearts Child Development Center uses research-based curriculums throughout the year to provide a well-rounded educational experience for your child. Our center provides well-developed lessons that provide them with the enrichment that is needed for them to succeed in our yearly developmental and educational program.

Our yearly goal for each student is for them to reach their developmental milestones according to their age and that they complete the structured educational program provided during the school year.

Our Teddy Care Curriculum is used for Infants up to our 3-year-old classrooms. Each class will provide a lesson plan that is structured around age-appropriate learning activities. For our students between the ages of 3–5-year old’s we provide them with the Big Day Scholastic Curriculum. This curriculum provides them with educational activities that will prepare them and be used when they depart from Little Hearts Child Development Center to the school district.

**Texas Rising star**

The Texas Rising Star program is a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for childcare programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission’s (TWC) Child Care Services program.

**Physical Outdoor/Indoor Activity**

Little Hearts Child Development Center strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day. When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk of developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain’s physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler-age children will participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool children will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

School-age children who are in attendance for a full day will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. School-age children who are only in attendance after-school will participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when the weather permits.

LHCDC will promote all children’s active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

* Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
* Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
* Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground when the weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children’s clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

* Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
* Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

* Footwear that can come off while running or that provides insufficient support for climbing.
* Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned for “rainy days”.

 LHCDC students will have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoor physical activity at our center 2 times a day if the weather permits. Each age group has their own designated time for outdoor play. Our center counts 2 outdoor playground settings depending on the child’s age group. Duration of outdoor physical activity depends on weather:

Heat Index less than 90 30 minutes 90-95 15 minutes in the sun, then up to 15 minutes of shade play 95-100 5 minutes in sun, then up to 25 minutes of shade play over 100 Shade play only, limited to 10 minutes Wind Chill Over 55 30 minutes 50-55 15 minutes 45-50 5 minutes under 45 no outside time when raining, snowing, misting, etc.

The staff members in charge will use The Weather Channel application on their phone to check the weather daily and advise the staff of any changes that may need to be made to the planned outdoor activity.

**Classrooms**

Our center is split into several classrooms divided by age with each complying with the standard student-teacher ratio as published by the state. Students ages 0-11 months can have a 4:1 ratio of babies to caregivers. Ages 12 -18 months, the ratio is 9:1. Ages 2-3 years old 12:1, 3-4 years old 15:1, 4-5 years old 18:1 and 6-12 years old 22:1. As per Texas State Licensing depending on ratios and ages, the classes may be permitted to have a mixture of students depending on their numbers present on-site. Although this is a possibility, our priority will always be the safety of our children and we can assure you that this will only be done as needed. The school will always strive to maintain as highly a structured format as possible that permits us the utmost efficiency in the management of our students.

**Enrollment, Registration and Building Maintenance Fees and Fees**

To enroll your child, there is a non-refundable **Registration Fee** of $50.00 per family. Once the enrollment fee is paid, your child’s spot will be reserved, and a complete enrollment package will be provided for each of your children. A l **Building Maintenance** **Fee** of $200.00 per familywill then be due in **September and February** and a summer fee of $100.00 per family in **June**. This Building Maintenance fee will be used for all repairs and maintenance required for the indoor and/or outdoor facilities. **ALL** Building and Maintenance Fees are **MANDATORTY** and must be paid on time or a $20 late fee will be added, and you will have accumulated a balance. **All Private Pay and CCS families** will be responsible for these fees**.** There is a $50.00 discount if the entire year’s fees are paid in advance amounting to a one-time payment of $450.00. Uniforms will be sold at the following prices: School Polo with Logo $25 and Friday T shirts $15.00. (**Uniforms are mandatory**) LHCDC blankets $10 (no other blankets will be accepted). Once all the paperwork has been completed, all required fees paid and the needed uniforms purchased, your child will be input into our system and will be ready to start. Tuition or fees are subject to change at any time but will be advised a month in advance if changes are made. Notes, phone calls, emails, or messages in the group will be sent out to notify the change. Forms should be signed and returned so we know that you have read and received the changes.

**Tuition Fees**

**Private Tuition** is due on Monday at the beginning of the week for the month. On Tuesday we will add a $20.00 late fee and if payment is not rendered services will be suspended on Wednesday. The child may resume when payments are submitted in full. **CCS/FEEA Copays** are due on the 1st of the month on the 2nd a $20 late fee will be added. Payment must be made on time regardless of if the 1st falls on a weekend. Any payment given after the 2nd will have a **$20.00 late fee will be added for any student on the 2nd and $5.00 daily until payment is made.** Please keep in mind that after the 5th we must provide a list to CCS of those who have not submitted payments. If either Private Pay or CCS families require some assistance in complying with their school financial obligations, please feel free to contact Ms. Issa Guerra to make appropriate arrangements to avoid service interruption. Please know that even if arrangements are made late fees will still be applied. The following table provides the schedule of fees listed by the age of the student.

Payment arrangements are as per the owners’ discretion.

**Rates**

**All tuition fees are collected at the beginning of each month according to scheduled dates**

**Ages 0-17 Months**

**Full Time**

$160.00 Weekly **x’s** the number of weeks

**Part Time** – 30 hours weekly

$145 Weekly **x’s** the number of weeks

 **Ages 18 Months and Up**

**Full Time**

$145 weekly **x’s** the number of weeks

**Part Time** – 30 hours weekly

$130.00 **x’s** the number of weeks

 **Drop-in Service**

$50.00 per day

**After School Services**

3:00 PM – 6:30PM

$85.00 per week x’s the number of weeks

Tuition Prices are subject to change in the accordingly manner.

**Late Payment Fees**

As noted above, all late fees will be applied the second day after the payment should be paid for all students. Every payment should be made on Monday the week of the service needed. The late payment fee that will be added is $20.00. For CCS customers you MUST pay on the 1st of the month. Payment should still be made even if the dates land on weekends or holidays. On the 2nd a late payment fee of $20.00. After the second day payment is due $5.00 will be added to each day until payment is made. After the 5th, a list of pending clients will be sent to CCS for further action. Please know that even if arrangements are made late fees will still be applied. A $20 late Fee will be added to the amount of payments that are made for any arrangements that may be approved by Ms. Guerra. Any pending balances that are 15 days late from date owed/billed will be sent to collections. If the balance is not paid in full services will be suspended until payment is received. This includes tuition, copays, Building Maintenance Fees, Uniforms, Fundraisers etc.... Anyone needing payment plans or arrangements should contact Mrs. Guerra at (956)334-9082. Even though such arrangements are made, a corresponding late fee will still be applied to your account.

**Payment arrangements are as per the owners’ discretion.**

**Refunds**

Under **NO** circumstances will refunds be provided. Children may continue with our program for the remainder of the payments provided for tuition costs.

**Building Maintenance Fee**

All families are responsible for Building Maintenance fees (including CCS). They will be due in **September** (Fall Semester), **February** (Spring semester) for **$200.00**, and **June** (Summer semester) **$100.00.** There is an option to pay all the yearly fees in advance for a discount with a payment total.

of $450.00.

**Late Drop off & Late Pick-Up Fees**

Our center is very structured and follows an extremely strict scheduling guideline. Because we do follow a curriculum our morning arrival cut off time is **8:50 AM**. Any student arriving in class after that time will cause substantial distraction and interruptions in the learning and instructional time available for the rest of the class. A late arrival will only be justified by presenting written proof that the student was in the care of either a physician or a dentist during that time. It is imperative that they return with a doctor/dentist excuse. Please let us know two hours in advance that your child will be out for a few hours but will return. If your child is late with **no doctor’s excuse**, we will charge $2.00 per minute after 8:50 AM to the time your child arrives. Closing time is **6:30PM** and if any child is picked up late, they will also incur a charge of $2.00 per minute per child if your child’s pick up is delayed. Late pick up fees will be assessed regardless of the cause. Please be sure and communicate with the center if you are late picking up your child.

**Returned Checks and Delinquent Accounts**

Any checks or charged card transactions that are returned will have a $35.00 return check or returned card transactions fee added to your account. Following an initial returned check or returned card transaction event, the school will only take cash payments. Any unpaid balances or delinquent accounts will be referred to the Webb County Court for collections and your services will be suspended. You will be responsible for any court fees or costs.

**General, Absence, Health, Safety Policies**

**Vacation/Illness Policy** If your child is out whether due to illness, vacation or for any other reason, the payment of the full tuition is still required. If your child is out, please note that you are paying the full tuition fee to keep your child’s spot secured and reserved, if not, the vacancy may otherwise be filled. Please keep in mind that this reserved spot policy applies to severe weather days, emergency center closing and holidays as well. All students paying their full tuition obligations will have spots available for when they return.

**Absences Policy** Every absence is monitored daily. If your child is absent for two days your child’s teacher will refer the absence to the director who will follow up with you to assure that everything is ok. CCS parents are still required to report the absences to the Texas Workforce Commission. If your child is out or late, be sure to contact the director at the center and let her know so we know if we should be expecting them or not to come in. Reporting absences or late arrivals thus helps the director maintain appropriate staff ratios.

**Parent Communication Procedure**

Relationships between staff and parents are the key to a successful school year and here at Little Hearts Child Development Center we are always looking forward to communicating with each parent to reassure them that their child is having a good experience with us. Because we intend to provide a solid foundation for them, we want you to know that we will work our hardest to communicate with you as much as possible. One way that we will accomplish this will be that each child will receive some form of a note sent home indicating how their day went. Some will provide more detailed information depending on the age of your child. Another way we can communicate will be in setting up a phone conference with your child’s teacher during their planning period. If you would like to schedule a phone conference, please contact your center Director so you may schedule during the teachers planning period. Parents may have the opportunity to stop by to observe their children at the center during any time of the day if it does not interrupt the other children’s learning or at the time of your departure from your child. If you have any concerns, we always ask you to communicate first directly with the teacher and voice your concern, then, secondly with the Director and lastly, if the issue has not yet been resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact the owner. We have an “open door” policy and will gladly fix any issue that needs resolving.

**PARENT PLEASE NO CELL PHONES** during arrival and dismissal times.

**Parent Conference**

Parent conferences can be requested at any time that you feel is needed. We will set up a time and date that your child’s teacher is available. Staff may also request conferences if there are any issues that have been persistent in child behaviors, child development or if there are any other concerns with your child. Please note that if students or parents do not follow LHCDC Parent Handbook and Operational Policies and Procedures or Parent Code of Conduct may also be called to schedule a meeting to discuss any issues.

**Emergency Contact Information**

Keeping all information updated is crucial. If there is an emergency and unable to contact anyone the center will have to take matters into their own hands for the child’s health and safety purposes. If any information changes, please be sure that you inform the director to update any information. If no one is available, please feel free to bring a Student Contact Information Sheet from our lobby. You can then place it in your child’s backpack and the teacher will remove it from students’ belongings and file it.

**Health Checks**

Our center always wants to make sure that our students are healthy and safe while in our care. Every morning they will go through a morning routine check to assure them they do not have any visible marks or any signs or symptoms of being ill. Any marks, bug bites, scratches, bruising etc. will be noted daily until they are non-visible. Staff will also document any consistent illness, diaper rash, or poor hygiene. Please note that we will continue screening all students and if anyone shows any signs or symptoms of being ill will not be accepted.

**Hygiene** All students should come in daily with proper hygiene. This includes showered, clean/trimmed nails, hair groomed, teeth brushed, washed uniforms, clean socks, clean underwear, and proper shoes. Infants should come in bathed, wearing a fresh diaper, clean clothes, clean bibs, clean bottles and or sippy cups.

Any student that is showing neglect of this matter staff will have all proper documentation on our daily Health Check Logs. If we see consistency with these types of issues will directly contact, you to try and solve the problem. If we continue to see no progress it is our duty to contact the Child Protective Services and report the neglect of the child.

**Withdrawal of Services**

Little Hearts Child Development Services requires two weeks’ written notice prior to withdrawing your children. Tuition is still due, and services will be rendered for the two weeks that have been paid. CCS parents must also give two weeks’ notice and have a zero balance before CCS releases you from our facility. If LHCDC feels that our center is not the right fit for your family, we will give you two weeks’ notice so that you are able to find the right center for your children. Under extreme circumstances services may be terminated immediately. There are no refunds.

**Parent and Child Code of Conduct**

As a parent or adult that is responsible for a child, they are the role models that look up to us. We must always be aware of our behavior because they are always watching. While on Little Hearts Child Development Center property/facility or any event away from our center but is an LHCDC event we must assure that we always conduct ourselves in a proper manner. We must respect all other parents, staff, and students. We must ensure that we never behave in a manner that puts others in harm, danger or a behavior that would make others uncomfortable. Threating will not be tolerated or any physical abuse. If the staff or students feel threatened or in danger at any time local law enforcement will be called immediately and if necessary, charges can be pressed against the individual. Any of the following WILL result in immediate removal from our program and will never return or be a part of LHCDC under any circumstances:

* Harassment or threats to students, staff, or parents
* Verbal or physical abuse to staff, students, or other parents
* Violence
* Abuse of children, staff, parents, or property
* Profanity
* Any lewd acts or comments directed to students, staff, or parents.

Please refrain from using any profanity around other parents, staff, or students. If you feel that you must use such negativity refrain yourself until you are away from our property or event. Any such thing will result in your child’s termination from our facility.

**Transportation, Water Activities and Field Trips**

 In an emergency your child will be transported only if you consent that we take your child to the destination needed. Field Trips will be planned accordingly and will have a permission slip sent home. Parents will have to transport their child on the planned trip. Any child going on a field trip must show that they are mature enough to be in a different setting and be in their best behavior and student **MUST** be potty trained. Water activities will be during summertime and only if weather is permittable. Activities such as water slides, sprinklers etc. will be used. All water activities will be planned accordingly. Students with their parents’ permission will only be allowed to participate.

**Daily Arrival and Pick Up**

As per Texas State Licensing and Regulations all students must be accompanied by an adult that is 18 years or older when being dropped off and picked up. Your child must be signed in and out **DAILY.** The teacher MUST acknowledge that the child is already in their care and aware that you have already signed them in or out.

**Failure to sign your child in or out daily will result in a $2 fee per missing signature per child.**

Please be sure that your child is dropped off no later than **8:50 AM**. The Little Hearts Child Development Center curriculum activities will start immediately at that hour, and we must eliminate any possible disruption of the student’s learning activities. The only exceptions will be students with excuses from a medical doctor or dentist.

During departure please be sure to contact the Director if anyone picking up your child that is not on the assigned pick-up contacts will be picking them up and please be sure they bring an ID for us to have a copy and document for future pick-up. If we do not get a call from a parent, we will not release the student to anyone.

**Food and Nutrition**

Little Hearts Child Development Center serves children with warm nutritious meals that provide all necessary components that will help our children grow healthy and happy. Our center serves home cooked meals daily to avoid serving our children processed food. As a center, we are enrolled in a state program that assists us with knowledge on nutrition for children and provides staff training. The food program does require us to serve all the components of a balanced diet and milk required to be provided for each child. If your child is allergic to any food or milk, such information is required in a note from their physician. No outside food will be permitted at the center unless for any reason such as religion, special diets etc. parents must make special arrangements with the director. For meals to be allowed all meal components should be part of the home meal provided. Meals must be brought in an adequate container and the meal must be fully cooked. The center will only be able to reheat any meals provided. It is the parents’ responsibility to indicate to staff proper storage for food, for example if refrigeration is needed. If the parent does not provide all meal components the meal will not be served, and the student will be provided with the planned meal. All meals served will be served at a temperature that will not cause the students to burn themselves. Any liquids or foods more than 110 degrees will remain out of the reach of children. There will be occasions when food may be served family style, which allows our children to learn independence. Staff will always be present to assist during this period. Home food is not allowed in the center unless you are able to document that all the required components are included in your child’s meal for acceptance. Our center is a peanut butter free zone and cannot allow any candy into our facility.

Our center is also required to pass health inspections by the City of Laredo Health Department. The schedule of provided meals that are served is as follows:

**Breakfast** 8:10AM-8:50 AM

**Lunch** 11:30AM-12:30PM

**Snack** 2:30PM-3:30PM After School 3:00PM-4:00PM

**Supper** 4:30PM-5:30PM After School 5:00PM-6:00PM

**Infants**

**Breast Milk** will only be stored for 24 hours or if frozen we can store for 3 months. Although we can store for long periods of time we do ask that you please switch out or follow up with the teacher periodically to make sure that your child is not running low on breast milk.

**Breastfeeding** is supported and welcomed at Little Hearts Child Development Center. If you desire to breastfeed, the center will provide an area that is discreet with privacy to enable bonding with your child.

**Sippy Cups** or other cups are not allowed during the stage of your child crawling or walking. We want to make sure that your child reaches their developmental milestones and will work with them to make sure they meet each one. When your child is training to drink from a regular cup the child’s teacher will advise you so that you are aware that your child is in training. We as a team will make sure that we communicate with you on your child’s progress.

**Immunization and Medical Records**

As per Texas State Licensing and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services immunization records must be brought in upon enrollment and must be updated every time that your child gets immunized. An updated copy will be kept in your child’s records.

**Nap Time**

All students under the age of 12 months will sleep in a crib. All crib sheets must be tightly fitted and may not fit loose to avoid an infant from suffocating. Absolutely no blankets will be allowed in the infant classroom. Infants must sleep on their backs. No blankets, toys, bibs etc. are allowed in infant cribs.

Children 1 year and over will sleep on a nap mat and can bring a small blanket to fit the size of their body. During nap time if your child does not want to sleep, they may utilize the time for quiet activities.

**Vision and Hearing**

All children should have their vision and hearing tests done and provide documentation to Little Hearts Child Development Center.

**Illness Criteria**

When a child becomes ill at Little Hearts Child Development Center the director will contact the main parent and let them know that their child has become ill and needs to be picked up within 30 minutes of the phone call. It is important that you always update any important contact information in the case that we are unable to reach you we have updated home, work, and emergency phone numbers. If your child has fever, runny nose, cough, congestion, vomiting or diarrhea your child will **NOT** be accepted and must have a doctor’s note to clear them to return safely to the facility. The note **MUST** state that your child is well enough to be around other children and is well enough to participate in **ALL** daily activities. If your child becomes ill in our facility with a fever of 100 or above, diarrhea or vomiting your child will need to be picked up within 30 minutes from the time that you are called.

**Vomiting and Diarrhea** If your child has diarrhea or vomiting, we will contact you on the first episode to advise you and after the second we will contact you again for the child to be picked up within 30 minutes. If your child has been sent home with any of these symptoms, they must return with a doctor’s excuse and must be free of symptoms for 24 hours without medication.

**Rash/Ringworms/Parasites** If your child has a rash, we strongly encourage that your child is seen by a doctor in case it may be contagious. A note will be required to clear them to return.

**Lice** If your child has lice, they will not be allowed into the center because they are highly contagious. If your child is sent home with lice or we notice they have been scratching, they can only return when they are cleared completely. A staff member will check the students when returning to assure they are clear and free from any lice.

**Diaper Rash** If your child has a diaper rash for more than two weeks, we will need a doctor’s note to be able to allow your child to return to the center.

Little Hearts Child Development Center cares for each student’s health. It is our priority to make sure that we keep each child safe and as healthy as possible. We consider everyone’s situation, but as parents, we do need to be self-conscious about each other’s children and work together to keep everyone safe. If the Owner/Director thinks that your child is not well enough t be present around other children, she will turn your child away until he/she gets better even if they are released by a physician.

Please note that if your child is constantly ill and sees no improvements for a long period of time the child will **NOT** be allowed back to the facility until they are completely free of all symptoms. If children are persistent in being ill and may think your child is being neglected, we will contact The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

**Biting Policy**

As we know, biting is quite common in young children. There could be a few factors as to why a child could be biting. When a child has been bitten, we thoroughly wash the affected area with soap and water and then icepack the area. The parent will be advised within 30 minutes of the incident and an incident report will be prepared for the parent to sign at the time of pickup. If your child is the one who did the biting, a concern form will be given to the parent as well. Transparency is considered inviolable, and we never forego communicating with both parties since both families should be fully aware of the occurrence. We intend to work with the child and with the parents to help the child clear the biting phase, but if we see that there is no progress or help from the parents and the child continues with their biting behavior, this would be possible grounds for termination of services.

**Potty Training**

Potty training is a milestone that will require full participation from the combination of parents and of the school staff members. For this to be successful, we will have to make an assessment that the child is ready and that we establish a have full communication and the participation of the parent(s). If we feel your child is not ready for potty training, we will inform you of that impression to avoid scaring or traumatizing them with activities that they are not ready for. If your child’s teacher thinks that the child is ready and fully communicating, she will let you know so we may attempt to start them. While undertaking the potty training, you will need to bring enough extra clean clothing and footwear for the day. For your child’s teacher to properly potty train we must have complete cooperation from parents while here at our center and when home during this process. If the teacher does not have full support, we will completely stop the process.

**Birthday and Parties**

**Birthdays** are always special days and can be celebrated with us. If you would like to bring cake, cupcakes, candies, pizzas, etc. You may do so, but it must be store bought and age appropriate. All parties will be held during snack time (3:00) unless you speak to the director and decide to have it at a different time it must be approved by the Director. Birthday candles are permitted but must be given to the director so that she is the one responsible for turning them on and off. Pinatas are also permitted but with the prior knowledge and authorization of the school director before such planning for your child’s party at Little Hearts Child Development Center.

**Parties** are held for the exciting holidays that children typically celebrate throughout the year! Such events as Valentine’s Day, Easter, Halloween, Christmas, etc. are the times that parties are commonly held. Party supply lists will be put up for families to sign up for. Be sure that the items you sign up to bring are always age appropriate for your child’s class.

**Our center is a peanut free zone so NO items with peanuts can be brought in.**

**Medical Emergencies**

Medical emergencies may arise in our facility. In the event of an emergency, we will communicate with the main contact that is provided in the admission forms filled out upon enrollment. If parents are not available, we will reach out to the emergency contacts provided to us on enrollment forms. If we are then unable to reach the listed emergency contacts, the next step would be to contact 911 depending on severity of emergency. At that point, If the medical emergency appears to require a higher level of care, the Owner or the Director will be responsible for making the decision that is felt to best suit the child and the medical emergency present in calling for an ambulance while the parents or emergency contacts are unable to be notified directly. If CPR/First Aid is needed, all staff members are certified to perform those procedures while medical professionals have yet to arrive.

Please be sure to always keep ALL emergency contact information up to date. Student Contact Information sheets are available in our lobby for any updates.

**Medication Policies**

Little Hearts Child Development Center staff can administer medication under the following circumstances:

* Medications must be prescribed.
* The prescribed medication must clearly be in the name of the child taking the medications.
* Prescribed medication must NOT be expired.
* Prescribed medication must be in the original bottle.
* Prescribed medications must be from the U.S.
* No foreign medications
* The medication form **MUST** be filled out completely and signed.

All first doses **MUST** be given at home before coming to the center. After the first dose the staff may continue to administer as needed by doctor’s order. **NO** medication will be administered for more than two weeks, unless you provide a doctor’s note stating that the medication needs to be given longer. If your child’s dose is between 12:00PM-2:30PM we would need to administer before or after those times due to nap time.

Nebulizers may be administered with a doctor’s note and will also only be administered for a period of 14 days unless the doctor states with a note that it needs to be given for a longer period.

Please be sure to send all medications and syringes in a Ziplock bag and with everything labeled.

Insect repellent and sunscreen may be applied at parent’s request, but medication log **MUST** be filled out properly before applying.

**Discipline, Guidance and Student Referral**

Upon the event that your child needs to be redirected, the staff member will redirect the child by letting the child know what they did wrong. By no means that a will the child be placed in “timeout”, but they will be given time with their teacher to reflect on what happened. All students will be taught right from wrong, and all behavior will be redirected in the proper way. Every student’s emotional state is particularly important to us, and we always want to make sure that we get to understand why they are acting in such behavior. If needed, when behavior has become an issue, we will give a Student Concern Form out to parents. If this behavior continues, we will proceed with a Student Referral and if needed we can always sit down for a parent conference to communicate about the child’s behavior and concerns. If behavior does continue to raise concerns depending on the situation the student can be suspended and/or expelled.

**Addressing Child Behavior**

1. **Verbal Warning**
2. **Staff observations will be documented.**
3. **Parent/Director Notification – 1st referral (possible 1–3-day suspension)**
4. **2nd referral (possible 1–3-day suspension)**
5. **Parent/Teacher/Director conference to discuss observations and or concerns + Action Plan**
6. **Teacher communicates daily through take home communication log and/or verbally daily.**
7. **3rd Referral – Termination**

**Positive Guidance**

Little Hearts Child Development Center focal point is positive behaviors. All staff are trained to guide each student in a positive and well-behaved manner. When the staff invariably provides positive guidance, love, and consistency the children will feel comfortable and secure enough to be able to follow direction and understand that the staff is there to teach and care for them. When the child and teacher connect it is much better for them to be able to learn, grow, and become responsible for themselves. It is important that we praise our children daily so that they can build high self-esteem and become confident in their daily routine and education.

**Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is particularly important to us, and we feel that communication is the only way that our children’s education will be successful. We encourage all parents to be involved as much as possible so that their children have the sense that we are working together for a better future.

Daily notes are a critical way to present important information about what happens throughout your child’s day. Any information should be noted by your child’s teacher. Staff may also include what supplies your child might be missing that could potentially interfere with their day-to-day care such as formula, diapers, wipes etc. Communication may also be sent to though the Little Hearts CDC group. All important dates are also shared through our monthly calendars and newsletter so please be sure and always keep a copy visible to you daily, so you don’t miss out on any important dates for your child.

**CELLPHONES ARE NOT ALLOWED WHEN PICKING UP OR DROPPING OFF YOUR CHILD**.

**Parent Orientation/Parent Meetings/ Special Events**

Parent orientation is done at the beginning of each school year in August. We encourage all parents to attend so they are aware of our Parent Handbook and Operational Policies and Procedures. The handbook will be covered page by page and explained thoroughly. The center will also have parent meetings every three months just to follow up with anything that is going on. The monthly calendars will specify the time and days for the meetings. If you are unable to attend, you may always speak to the director, and we will gladly share the agenda and information with you. We encourage parents to attend events such as Open house, family festivals, holiday events such as mothers/Father’s Day, Christmas posadas etc.., awards day and graduations. Parent involvement plays a very important role, so children feel supported in their educational endeavors.

**Cameras**

Cameras observe the common areas of the school and are used for administrative purposes. We do keep a close eye on the cameras throughout the day as well as rounding through the classrooms. Cameras are for emergency purposes. If there is an incident, staff will advise the director and we will check the cameras if needed. All surveillance cameras are on continuously and checked periodically for proper function. Cameras will NOT be shown to any parents for security purposes and safety of the other students. They are for office use ONLY.

**Transitioning**

Transitioning is done in August and January. Unless a child’s age changes and is showing signs of maturity, better communication skills and their social skills have become more mature. If your child is between the ages of 0-12 months, they must stay in the infant class as per regulations. There may be times that we will have the opportunity to grow and that may also give us the opportunity to open new classrooms so there maybe be a possibility that your child will transition to a new classroom. When this may occur, we will provide you with a transition letter that will have the new staff members’ name and the classroom’s welcome letter.

**Uniforms**

Uniforms are mandatory Monday through Friday. If your child is over 12 months, they are required to wear uniforms as well. Monday through Thursday blue polos are to be worn with khaki, navy blue, or black bottoms. Friday’s students will wear the Little Hearts CDC spirit shirt and can wear jeans. The cost for uniforms is $25 per polo and spirit shirts are $15.00. Please see the director to place your order. Uniforms must be paid for in full to receive them. All students must wear tennis shoes, (preferably Velcro) **NO SANDALS**. **Jewelry is not allowed**. We will not be responsible for any damaged or lost jewelry.

**Fundraisers**

Fundraisers will be twice a year, once per semester (fall and spring). Fundraisers are mandatory for everyone. (CCS/FEEA and Private Pay) When fundraisers are planned parents will be notified in a timely fashion so everyone is aware they will be receiving tickets on a certain date. Tickets will not be given from one day to the next without proper notice. Fundraiser information will always be provided on the monthly calendar while they will be taking place. All fundraising proceeds will benefit the center and the children. If you are unable to sell the tickets, the full amount shall still be due regardless, so we do encourage you to sell as many as possible to avoid you having to pay out of your own pocket. Please be sure to meet all deadlines to turn in any fundraiser money to avoid the late fees of $20.00.

**Screen Time/Technology Use**

Our center does provide technology for our students but with only limited use. TV time is only used for 30 minutes at arrival and dismissal time. TV can also be used specifically to substitute a weather day with exercise, music/dance, or yoga time. Under no circumstances students are not allowed to bring cellular phones, smart phones, iPad, tablets, game electronics etc. We will not be responsible for any damaged or lost items. If at any time students needed to go back to virtual learning, we would have to request the permission of Childcare Regulations to be able to accept and permit the use of these devices.

**Custodial/Non – Custodial Parents/ Legal Guardianship**

For Little Hearts Child Development Center to be able to comply with non-custodial agreements or judgements, proper documentation must be provided documentation that clearly identifies who may interact with the students. This will be necessary for the school to follow the request from a parent. If one of the parents is asking for staff not to allow the other parent to pick up the student, we will need a copy of the court order possession papers.

Little Hearts Child Development Center does accept children who are in custody of CPS cases. For us to accept them, foster parents must provide CPS placement papers and all mandated documents from the state. Without exception, we require all children’s immunization records as well. Foster children may need an extra questionnaire to ensure that the staff can accommodate their physical and emotional needs depending on each case. Little Hearts staff will make sure that each foster child gets the attention and love they need.

**Animals or Pets**

No animals or pets are allowed in our premises of Little Hearts Child Development Center

**Home Language**

Little Hearts Child Development Center supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, including home language, special needs abilities and cultural backgrounds.

**Community Resources**

Our lobby provides community resources to our parents by our Parent Corner. We hope to provide as much information as needed to help with any information that you may need for your children. If there is a source unavailable, please contact our office so we ca better help you as a parent to serve your child’s needs. We will provide any information from our community to allow you to access resources closer to you.

Breast Feeding information can also be found in our Parent Corner/ Resource Center or you can access the link: https://www.lactationtraining.com/.

**TDFPS Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers and Parent Rights**

Every parent is entitled to have access to all rules and regulations for childcare centers set forth by the Texas Department of family and Protective Services, referred to as Minimum Standards Rules for Childcare Centers. Parents may access the website at hhs.texas.gov. The center has a copy on hand if anyone would like to review it. Little Hearts CDC will have the latest inspections posted in our lobby for parent access to view.

**Child abuse**

All staff members will conduct daily body checks and will be aware of changes in the children. If we do suspect any signs of abuse or neglect, we will immediately report it to CPS for the protection and wellbeing of our students. The staff will have documentation on the students prepared for the investigation. Our staff will continue to increase their knowledge of child abuse or neglect and apply it to their everyday use with the children. Staff members will help parents to learn the importance of these topics so that they are also aware of the importance it is to protect the students. As a center we will have information if needed to share with the parents/guardians in our Community Resource Center. Other possible resources available in our community that could be a possible assistance are:

**SCAN (956)724-3177 1605 Saldana Ave Laredo, TX 78041**

**Childrens Advocacy Center (956)712-1840 111 N. Merida Laredo, TX 78043**

**Child Protective Services (956)728-7383 1500 N. Arkansas Suite 3 Laredo, TX 7803**

The Texas State Law requires owners, directors, and staff to report any suspected neglect or abuse to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or local law enforcement.

**Reports of suspected child abuse and neglect can be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400**

**Gang Free Zone**

It is mandated by the law to let all parents know of the new gang free zone designation which includes daycare centers. Any gang related activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our facility is a violation of the law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

For more information regarding what constitutes a gang free zone, [please consult with sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

**Emergency Preparedness Plan**

Little Hearts Child Development Center is prepared for and practices monthly for fires, natural disasters security and severe weather emergencies. The center is equipped with fire extinguishers and is prepared with an escape plan for any situation. We also have a relocation plan if we need to remove ourselves from the facility. If there is severe weather, natural disasters, or security emergencies we encourage families to stay tuned to the media to be notified of what is going on. Staff have a folder with all contacts and a bag ready to go in case of emergency. The priority will always be the safety of our children.

**Inclement Weather**

In a situation that our weather may affect our area we have a plan of action that is practiced with all students and staff monthly and is provided on our Emergency Preparedness Plan that can be provided to any parent or it is also available in our Community Resources.

**Child Care Services**

If you or anyone you know would like to apply for childcare assistance, you may stop by:

**Workforce Solution for South Texas Child Care Services**

1406 Jacaman RD. #A

Laredo, Texas 78041

(956)794-6500

**Filing Complaints**

If you have any concerns, you may contact the local licensing office:

Childcare Licensing in Laredo

1500 N. Arkansas

Laredo, Texas 78043

(956)794-6332

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

* **Policies are reviewed as needed and are always updated when necessary.**
* **Little Hearts Child Development Center has the right to refuse services at any time.**

**Welcome to**



**Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook and Operational Policies and Procedures**

**I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood all Little Hearts Child Development Center’s Parent Handbook and Operational Policies and Procedures. I acknowledge that this form must be signed and returned on or before my child’s first day of attendance. By signing this form, I understand that it is my responsibility to read the handbook and abide by all policies set forth by Little Hearts Child Development Center. I understand that I may contact the owner or director of the facility for any questions regarding the Parent Handbook and Operational Policies and Procedures.**

**Child(ren) Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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 **Parent Signature Date**

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 **Owner/ Director Signature Date**