



1320 S. 6th St.
Terre Haute, IN 47802

Student Handbook

Childcare Center

LittleStepTH@gmail.com

Welcome to Little Steps!

Thank you for choosing our school. We warmly invite you to visit us often for informal drop-ins, as we believe it's important to get to know not just your child, but your entire family. This connection allows us to create the best possible learning environment for your child's growth.

At Little Steps, our doors are always open to you. We offer a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere with a purposeful approach to learning that's tailored to meet the unique needs and interests of each child and family. We celebrate individual differences, special abilities, and honor the rich cultural patterns that make each family unique.

The Little Step's Mission Statement is: partnering with parents to nourish the natural curiosity in the youngest learners with our hands-on learning environment.

Learning Outcomes at Little Steps

At Little Steps, our focus is on nurturing well-rounded development for every child. Our key learning outcomes are:

- **Social Skills & Respect for Diversity:** Students will cultivate positive social skills, learning to appreciate and respect differences in backgrounds, physical characteristics, developmental stages, and family structures.
- **Collaboration & Group Interaction:** Students will learn how to work, play, and cooperate with others, gaining the skills to function confidently within a group beyond their family environment.
- **Physical Development & Spatial Awareness:** Students will demonstrate increased control, coordination, and imagination in their movements, becoming more aware of space and those around them.
- **Motor, Cognitive, & Creative Skills:** Students will acquire fine and gross motor skills alongside cognitive and creative abilities in literacy, language, math, science, art, and social studies, all aligned with their developmental stage.
- **Independence & Confidence:** Students will develop independence, self-discipline, self-esteem, and confidence in their decision-making processes.

Additionally, we will keep parents informed about developmental milestones for different age groups and share local screening options to support each child's progress.

We encourage you to visit often, so you can see firsthand that Little Steps is a place where your child will thrive. Thank you for trusting us to be part of your child's growth and learning journey. We look forward to an exciting school year ahead!

Warm regards,
Director and Team

Little Steps Philosophy and Goals

At Little Steps, we believe children learn best through play, hands-on experiences, and meaningful interactions with their environment, peers, and adults. Our approach incorporates individual, small group, and whole group activities designed to nurture each child's development to their fullest potential. Our teachers create a curriculum and activities that aim to:

- Foster independence and self-discipline.
- Build self-esteem and confidence in every child.
- Develop fine and gross motor, cognitive, and creative skills across literacy, language, math, science, art, and social studies.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle habits through physical activity, personal hygiene, safety awareness, and nutrition education.
- Cultivate strong communication skills.
- Nurture positive social skills, along with an appreciation and respect for diversity in cultural backgrounds, physical characteristics, developmental levels, and family structures.

Our goal is to create an environment that supports every aspect of a child's growth, allowing them to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

General Information

- **Immunization Records:** All children must have their immunization records on file within the first week of attendance. These records must be updated annually. If current immunization records are not submitted within one week of registration, your child will not be able to attend. Families choosing not to vaccinate may complete a "Refusal to Vaccinate" form.
- **Birth Certificate Verification:** We are required to verify each child's birthdate. Please provide your child's original birth certificate (or a certified transcript) for photocopying.
- **Emergency Contact Information:** Each year, we require updated emergency contact information in case we need to reach you.
- **Teacher Substitutes:** If a teacher is sick or takes time off, another qualified staff member will substitute for them.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Children are grouped flexibly and are encouraged to interact freely throughout the day, based on their capabilities, interests, and individual needs.
- **Staff Training and Certification:** All staff members are certified in CPR and first aid. They undergo comprehensive FBI background checks and drug screening upon hiring. Staff are also trained in child abuse prevention, neglect awareness, and safe sleep practices. Continuous professional development through workshops ensures our team stays updated on current research and the evolving needs of today's families. Little Steps is proud to be a member of NECPA and HighScope.

- **Inclusive Environment:** Our program is open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, or creed, as long as they can benefit from our curriculum. We accept children from 6 weeks old through preschool age.
- **Expectations for Children and Parents:** We ask that children come to our childcare with respect for others and simply be themselves. For parents and guardians, we expect you to review and adhere to the guidelines outlined in this handbook, as well as in any notes or newsletters we send home. We welcome your involvement, feedback, and suggestions, and appreciate your support both morally and financially.
- **Behavioral Policy:** In the event of disruptive behavior, parents will first be notified verbally. If the issue persists, a written warning will be issued. Continued issues may result in dismissal from the facility, with the child placed on probationary status. If behavior problems occur again, the child may be dismissed permanently.

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for your child and look forward to partnering with you throughout their time at Little Steps.

Open Door Policy

At Little Steps Childcare, we proudly offer an "Open Door" policy. You are welcome to stop by at any time, unannounced, to observe your child, share a meal, or simply visit our facility. We highly value your suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the care your child receives and encourage open communication.

If a more in-depth discussion is needed, we offer parent-teacher conferences in both the spring and fall, with the teacher and director present. We also engage in daily conversations and love to share your child's successes and milestones with you in real-time!

Enrollment

Enrollment at Little Steps is conducted on a first-come, first-served basis whenever a spot becomes available. We maintain a waiting list and prioritize filling spots from that list. To enroll your child, you can request a registration form from our office or download it from our website at vipkindercollege.com.

Priority is given to children with siblings currently enrolled in our program. We welcome all children, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, national origin, or special needs. When enrolling your child, please inform us of any special needs so we can ensure the appropriate accommodations are made. We treat all new enrollments equally, without preference to any specific group.

Ages Served

We welcome children from 6 weeks old through preschool age.

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday: 7:00 a.m. – 5:25 p.m.

Holiday Closures

Little Steps Childcare will be closed on the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Veterans Day (November 11th)
- Thanksgiving Break (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Break (Dates between Christmas and New Year's will be provided annually)
- Spring Break (Aligned with Vigo County Schools)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

Weather Closures

Little Steps reserves the right to close in the event of severe weather. We will notify families promptly in such cases.

Financial Arrangements

Registration Fee (Non-refundable Deposit)

- Per Child: \$100.00
- Families with 2 or more children: \$120.00

Weekly Fee

- Per Child: \$225.00
(*Due every Monday morning before care is provided*)

Tuition Payment Policy

Little Steps Childcare requires full tuition payment on Monday mornings, prior to care being provided. Payments must be received promptly, and any remaining balances will be posted at the facility. Payments can be made online through your bank's bill pay system, but they must arrive by Monday each week. You may also choose to pay bi-weekly or monthly, based on your preference. Consistent late payments may result in your child's withdrawal from the program. If an account reaches a negative balance, childcare services will be suspended, and legal action may be taken until the balance is cleared.

You are required to pre-pay for your child's hours at Little Steps. Weekly account balances will be available the following Monday upon request in the office. Services will be suspended for any unpaid balances until full payment is received. Please make checks payable to "Little Steps" and include your child's name on the check to ensure correct account crediting.

Attendance and Fees Fees are due for all registered days, regardless of absence. No refunds will be issued once payment is made. If you choose to pay to retain your child's spot without attending, this is at your discretion, and no reimbursement will be given for non-attendance. If a

spot goes unused for more than 4 weeks without communication, your admission may be revoked.

Confidentiality Policy All information related to current, potential, or previously enrolled children and their families is kept strictly confidential. Staff members are trained to respect privacy, and all written records will be securely stored, accessible only to the director and your child's teacher. Information about a child will not be shared without written consent from the parent or legal guardian, except when required by law, such as in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect as mandated reporters in Indiana, or when subpoenaed by the court.

Authorization to Pick Up Child

For the safety of all children, no child will be released to anyone not listed as an authorized pick-up person on the child's registration form. Any changes to the authorized pick-up list must be submitted in writing. Any adult picking up a child must show a valid photo ID and must either be listed on the registration form or have prior written authorization from the parent/guardian. Little Steps Childcare will not release a child to anyone without written authorization or to individuals not listed on the registration form.

Custody

In cases where custody arrangements are a concern, a copy of the legal court document verifying custody must be on file with our office. Little Steps Childcare cannot intervene in custody disputes or act as a mediator regarding a child's departure or a parent's visitation rights.

Medications

In accordance with state regulations, we require a written order or prescription from your physician before administering any prescribed medications to your child. Additionally, all prescription medications must be delivered in their original container, clearly labeled with your child's name, prescription number, the date filled, and usage instructions. Parents must complete and sign a medication permission form, either daily or weekly, to authorize staff to administer the medication. Once the medication is no longer needed, please ensure that it is taken home. Any unused or expired medications not claimed within 30 days of your child's last day of attendance will be disposed of.

Over-the-counter medications, such as pain relievers, may be administered with written instructions from parents and must be stored in their original container in our cabinet.

Toilet Training

A child is considered potty trained when they can recognize the need to use the restroom and take responsibility for going independently. A potty-trained child can ask to use the restroom and stays dry throughout the day. We incorporate regular bathroom breaks and handwashing opportunities into Little Step's daily schedule to support this process.

Field Trips

For insurance purposes, we are unable to transport children on field trips. Parents will be notified well in advance to arrange for transportation. We strive to make field trips enjoyable and

affordable, exploring the abundant opportunities in the Wabash Valley for families to engage in together.

Nutrition

At Little Step Childcare, we prioritize healthy eating by serving a catered, nutritious lunch, along with morning and afternoon snacks, all in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Children who arrive before 8 AM are provided with a simple breakfast. Our daily schedule includes:

- **Morning Snack:** Served between 8:30 - 9:30 AM
- **Lunch:** Served from 12:00 - 1:00 PM
- **Supper:** Served between 4:00 - 5:00 PM

If your child requires dietary modifications due to allergies or medical reasons, please provide written instructions from your child's physician. For changes based on religious or personal beliefs, a written statement from a parent is required. In some cases, the Center may ask families to supplement food provided. Families may also request to bring food from home for their child, and we will collaborate with you on the following guidelines:

- Foods must meet CACFP guidelines.
- Foods and beverages should be clearly labeled with your child's name and date.
- Foods must be transported and stored at safe temperatures.
- A Safe Transportation form must be signed and kept in your child's file.
- A note from your child's doctor must be provided.

When foods are brought from home, we commit to:

- Ensuring that food requiring refrigeration stays cold until serving.
- Providing supplemental food if necessary.
- Not permitting homemade treats for birthday celebrations. If you wish to share food in the classroom, please consult with the teachers first. All shared food must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged items in factory-sealed containers.

During snack and meal times, children are encouraged to try everything on their plate, but they are not required to eat items they do not prefer. Our desserts typically consist of fresh fruit or yogurt and are always available, regardless of the amount consumed during the meal.

Due to the presence of severe allergies among some enrolled children, food from home should not be shared with others. If your family plans to conduct a cooking activity in the classroom, the teachers will purchase the necessary ingredients.

If you notice any unusual or concerning eating habits in your child, one of the teachers will inform you. For specific nutritional concerns, please consult with your child's teacher or the Director.

Cleanliness

- All staff receive annual training in universal precautions to maintain a safe environment.
- Sanitation and hygiene requirements, including handwashing policies, are posted in the bathrooms, along with procedures for children.
- Diaper changing and toilet policies are prominently displayed in the changing areas of each classroom.

- **Quiet/Rest Time**

At Little Step Childcare, we understand that after a busy morning filled with high-energy interactions, rest is crucial for every child, regardless of age. Each classroom includes a Quiet/Rest Time lasting approximately two hours. During the first 30 to 45 minutes, children lie on cots and are encouraged to rest. While some may fall asleep, others might choose to remain awake. Teachers and rest-time aides are available to provide back rubs if requested. To foster a calming atmosphere, gentle music or stories are often played during this time. After the initial 30 minutes, children who are still awake can engage in books, puzzles, journals, and other quiet activities. We encourage parents to discuss their child's sleep needs, habits, and the classroom procedures with the teacher.

- **Parties and Celebrations**

We recognize that birthdays are special occasions for children, and we strive to help celebrate them in meaningful ways. If you wish to bring in treats for your child's birthday, we recommend small items such as cookies or miniature cupcakes. While we welcome these additions, please keep in mind that, according to CACFP guidelines, we provide nutritious snacks and meals, so any treats brought in would be considered extra.

- **Your Child's Day**

In alignment with our Philosophy of Education, we structure the day at Little Step Childcare to provide children with opportunities to initiate activities based on their interests. A significant portion of the day is dedicated to free choice time, allowing children to learn through play. Each classroom features a daily schedule that is posted, along with curriculum plans designed by the teachers based on their observations of the children and their interests.

- To keep learning engaging, classroom items are rotated and rearranged monthly, ensuring that students remain excited about their educational experiences.

What to Bring

Your child should come each day dressed to play, as a variety of activities take place at our center. We recommend clothing that allows for freedom of movement and full participation in messy activities. All belongings should be labeled. Please provide the following items for your child while at the center:

- At least one seasonal change of clothes
- Safe footwear for children at all times
- Disposable diapers in unopened packages; teachers will notify you when supplies are low
- Plenty of extra underwear in the early stages of toilet training
- Comfort items for resting and to ease the transition to school

- Warm weather gear: boots, mittens, hats, warm coats, and snow pants or snowsuits during cold months (scarves pose a choking hazard and are not recommended for young children)
- Swimwear, hats, and water shoes for outdoor water play in warm weather

What to Leave at Home

Please leave candy, money, food, gum, electronic games, and similar items at home or in the car. Show and Tell on Fridays is the designated time for Preschoolers to share these items.

Children with Special Needs

Working Collaboratively with Families of Children with Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Little Step Childcare welcomes all children, including those with pre-determined disabilities or special learning needs. It is also possible that disabilities or special learning needs may be identified while a child is in our care. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families and other service providers, including therapists and teachers.

- When children enroll with IFSPs or IEPs, a primary teacher will be assigned for communication and to follow through on the child's goals and objectives, while the other full-time teacher will also be involved in the child's education and care.
- Upon enrollment, teachers will meet with family members and therapists to discuss the child's goals and objectives, designing plans that support the child within our educational philosophy and practices. Therapy is preferred to occur in the classroom, within the child's natural context, although one-on-one pull-out sessions may also be necessary for skill development or assessment.
- Since much of the support a child receives occurs in the classroom, it is vital for teachers to be integral in planning. Both teachers will attend move-in conferences, case conference meetings, and team meetings (for IEPs and IFSPs as applicable). They are available for meetings and conferences between 12:30 and 2:30 PM, and each center can provide a space for these discussions.
- To ensure clear communication, a notebook will be maintained for each child with an IFSP or IEP for team members to document observations regarding progress on goals. This notebook will always be accessible for family members to review.
- The service team for each child, including family members, teachers, and therapists, will regularly review progress on goals, making necessary adjustments.
- Occasionally, methods recommended by therapists or families may conflict with the center's philosophy and practices. If this occurs, the service team will meet to discuss potential alternatives.
- When a child displays challenges that suggest a potential disability or special learning need not previously identified, teachers will communicate their observations to the family and may recommend evaluation if necessary.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In accordance with Indiana State Law, Little Step Childcare is required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. Staff have reviewed the guidelines provided

by Child Welfare Information Gateway, which outline the roles and responsibilities of childcare providers in supporting families and preventing and responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect. The topics addressed include:

- Recognizing physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological maltreatment, and neglect
- Reporting child abuse and neglect
- Minimizing the risk of maltreatment in childcare programs
- Preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect
- Responding to allegations of child abuse or neglect perpetrated by childcare providers
- Caring for maltreated children and those at risk for maltreatment
- Supporting parents

Assessment

Assessing children's progress requires an objective, systematic approach, with results communicated to families, as parents are the children's first teachers. We utilize authentic assessment methods that measure growth within the natural context of children's everyday lives. The main tools we use include:

- Samples of children's work (e.g., drawings)
- Notes from informal observations and communication with families
- Indiana Standards to Alternate Reporting Kindergarten Ready (ISTAR-KR)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Milestone Moments: Learn the Signs. Act Early.

ISTAR-KR is developed by the Indiana Department of Education and serves as the measure of accountability for tracking individual children's progress within the state's assessment system.

We offer conference times with your child's teacher in the spring and fall. If you believe you need additional conference times at any point, please call your teacher during office hours, and they will do their best to schedule a time that works for you to address your concerns.

For more information about our assessment process, please consult your child's teachers or the office to obtain a copy of the Little Step Assessment Plan. After discussing with the family, we will review possible corrective plans and advise on appropriate therapy.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

In the event of an evacuation of the Little Step building, staff will evacuate the children and first meet at the Next Step Main Building to account for all teachers. A binder containing emergency contact information for all children and staff, along with a cell phone, will be carried by the Director or, in her absence, by the person in charge or a member of the Emergency Control Committee. Once the children and teachers arrive at the evacuation location, the Director or person in charge will notify families and provide instructions for picking up their child or children.

- **Tornado Drill:** In the case of a tornado, children will move to the interior classrooms, away from windows, and center walls. The infant classroom will evacuate with medications stored in a mobile safe pack 'n play.
- **Intruder:** In the event of an intruder entering the facility, staff will lock all doors and call 911 immediately. If an intruder gains access to the building, staff will evacuate all children to our safe location at Devaney Elementary School, where an armed police officer is present at our East location. For our South location, evacuation will proceed to Subway.
- **Flood:** In case of a flood, we will contact parents when the weather report indicates a risk and request immediate child pick-up.

All emergency plans are posted on the children's classroom bulletin board, and each teacher is trained annually, with refresher courses provided to ensure preparedness.

Outdoor Play

Regular outdoor play is an essential component of your child's growth and development. At Little Step Childcare, we adhere to the guidelines and accreditation criteria established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). All age groups engage in outdoor play, except when weather severity or air quality poses a safety hazard.

- **Cold Weather:** Children will remain indoors when the wind chill temperature is 25 degrees Fahrenheit or below. The duration of outdoor play will be determined by the comfort level of the children. Parents are encouraged to provide appropriate outerwear for seasonal conditions, including snow pants and boots on snowy days, and rain boots to allow exploration of puddles.
- **Hot Weather:** We will continue outdoor activities unless otherwise advised by the National Weather Service. Teachers will ensure that children have access to plenty of drinking water. Parents should send hats, swimwear, and towels for water play. Throughout the summer and beyond, we apply sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher with UVB and UVA protection before each outdoor session. This sunscreen is provided by the center unless parents opt to provide their own.
- **Insect Repellent:** If families prefer insect repellent for children over the age of 2 months, staff will apply the repellent provided by the family once daily. Due to health concerns associated with DEET, all insect repellents must be DEET-free and in lotion form, not spray.

When weather or air quality conditions prevent outdoor play, we utilize the preschool classroom for gross motor activities. This space is equipped with low, soft climbing materials that meet indoor equipment safety standards, as well as ample room for movement and materials conducive to gross motor play (balls, music, etc.). Each classroom schedules at least 30 minutes of gross motor time twice a day, as weather permits.

Behavior Management

Encouraging positive behavior is achieved through a well-planned environment that offers various activities for the children. Our management methods include:

- Reinforcement through verbal praise, smiles, and positive attention for appropriate behavior.
- Providing positively stated alternatives during conflict situations.

In cases of inappropriate behavior, we address it immediately per our discipline policy. If a child exhibits repeated inappropriate behavior and shows minimal progress toward change, we may request a parent conference to collaboratively develop strategies that meet the child's needs.

Biting

Biting is a common behavior among one- and two-year-olds, often stemming from limited language skills. If you have concerns regarding biting, please speak with your child's teacher. We have established methods for addressing this behavior and will communicate with parents should it arise.

Discipline Policy

The health, safety, and emotional well-being of the children at Little Step Childcare are our highest priorities. We view discipline as a skill that must be developed, and we aim to help children learn to play, settle disputes, and interact peacefully and non-aggressively.

Inappropriate behaviors often occur when children's needs are unmet, as they may lack the verbal skills to express themselves appropriately. Our approach includes:

- Determining the function of a child's actions.
- Creating a planned environment that provides diverse activities and meets children's basic needs.
- Regularly reviewing classroom rules, modeling conflict resolution, and remaining attentive to situations in the classroom.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher communicates the behavior's unacceptability and explains why it is not acceptable. The teacher then suggests an alternative way to handle the situation, such as: "The rule in our room is that blocks are for building. If a block is thrown, it could hurt someone. Let's build with the blocks instead." If the inappropriate behavior continues, the teacher explains the consequences, emphasizing that it is the behavior, not the child, that is unacceptable.

Prohibited Actions: Physical punishment (e.g., shaking, hitting, biting, spanking), psychological abuse, coercion, intimidation, or humiliation are strictly prohibited. Staff members must not use threats, derogatory remarks, or withhold food or outdoor time as discipline. Such actions are grounds for immediate termination.

In instances where a child is destructive or harmful to others, the child will be redirected to a different activity. In extreme cases, a child may need to be separated from the group to regain control; however, this should not be interpreted as a “time out.”

Teachers will observe and document challenging behaviors to identify patterns and contextual factors. For children with persistent, serious behavioral challenges, a team approach involving teachers, family members, and other professionals will be employed to develop and implement strategies supporting the child’s inclusion and success.

Any inappropriate behavior that harms another person will be documented, and copies will be provided to the parent/legal guardian and kept in the child’s file. If a child repeatedly exhibits problem behavior not resolved through behavior management strategies, the staff and Center Director will initiate Steps for Addressing Problem Behaviors, including family meetings, increased communication, and written documentation of incidents. Further assistance or evaluation from an outside party may be requested with parental consent.

Safe Sleep Policy

At Little Step Childcare, we adhere to safe sleep recommendations for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), other sleep-related infant deaths, and the spread of contagious diseases. Our guidelines include:

1. **Back Sleeping:** Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs until they reach one year of age.
2. **Safe Crib Setup:** Infants will be placed on a firm mattress with a fitted crib sheet, in a crib that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.
3. **No Soft Objects:** No toys, mobiles, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, positioning devices, or extra bedding will be in or draped over the crib.
4. **Comfortable Environment:** Sleeping areas will be ventilated and maintained at a temperature comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Infants will not be dressed in more than one extra layer than an adult, and sleep sacks with arms out are allowed before four months.
5. **Uncovered Head:** The infant’s head will remain uncovered during sleep. Bibs and hoods will be removed.
6. **Active Monitoring:** Infants will be actively observed by sight and sound.
7. **Safe Sleep Locations:** Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a sofa, couch, chair cushion, bed, pillow, or in a car seat, stroller, swing, or bouncy chair. If an infant falls asleep in any location other than a crib, they will be moved to a crib immediately.
8. **Car Seat Transition:** An infant who arrives asleep in a car seat will be moved to a crib.
9. **Individual Cribs:** Infants will not share cribs, and cribs will be spaced three feet apart.
10. **Pacifier Use:** Infants may be offered a pacifier for sleep if provided by the parent.
11. **Pacifier Safety:** Pacifiers will not be attached by a string to the infant’s clothing and will not be reinserted if they fall out after the infant is asleep.
12. **Rolling Infants:** When able to roll from back to front, the infant will be put to sleep on their back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
13. **Smoke-Free Environment:** Our childcare program is a smoke-free environment.

14. **Support for Breastfeeding:** We support breastfeeding within our program.
15. **Tummy Time:** Awake infants will have supervised “Tummy Time.”

Parental Responsibilities

Upon enrolling your child and while they attend Little Step Childcare, parents are responsible for the following:

- **Enrollment Forms:** Completing all necessary enrollment and registration forms.
- **Daily Sign-In/Out:** Signing your child in and out each day.
- **Pick-Up:** Picking your child up before the center closes. The latest pick-up time is 5:30 PM. A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for late pickups. If your child is not picked up by 5:45 PM and we have not been contacted, we will call Child Protective Services.
- **Timely Payment:** Making timely payments in accordance with Little Step Payment Policies.
- **Communication:** Informing the center of illnesses, vacations, other absences, and late arrivals.
- **Home Changes:** Notifying teachers of any changes at home that may affect your child.
- **Health Consideration:** Keeping your child home when they are not fully well, in accordance with Health Policies.
- **Emergency Pick-Up:** Picking up your child immediately if contacted by the center due to illness or injury.
- **Attendance Notification:** Communicating with the teacher if your child has a doctor's appointment and will not be present in the classroom before the 9:30 cut-off.
- **Daily Communication:** Checking and maintaining communication via the Remind app or through daily phone calls to the facility.
- **Emergency Information:** Keeping emergency telephone numbers and other information up to date.
- **Immunization Records:** Updating immunization records at the center as necessary.
- **Cubby Maintenance:** Cleaning out your child's cubby every Friday for sanitization.
- **Clothing and Diapers:** Providing a change of clothing and disposable diapers as needed.
- **Authorized Pick-Up Notification:** Notifying the center if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child.
- **Emergency Pick-Up Policy:** Ensuring you can pick up your child within one hour if they are found with an illness or if the facility needs a pick-up. The emergency backup on the authorization list will be exhausted, but you will ensure a timely pick-up.
- **Progress Communication:** Engaging in weekly and daily conversations about your child's progress. If more time is needed to address issues, a conference will be scheduled in the spring and fall.
- **Hygiene Maintenance:** Keeping your child's fingernails clean and trimmed.
- **Addressing Concerns:** If a parent has a complaint or concern, they may address it with the Director or the State Licensing Consultant for the area.

Enrollment Packet Requirements

To best serve your child, the following information must be included in your enrollment packet:

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of parents or guardians
- Emergency contact information
- Emergency medical treatment authorization/permission form
- Physician's name and phone number
- Allergies
- Authorization release to other than parent/guardian(s)
- Immunizations or immunization exemptions
- Developmental history
- Health status, which includes results of health exams and screenings indicating typical or atypical results and any necessary follow-up documented
- Instructions for any special needs or chronic illness
- Progress report
- Parent/guardian(s) conference reports

Dropping Off and Picking Up Children

Your child's safety is a major concern, and our drop-off and pick-up procedures are designed with this in mind:

- You must deliver your child to his/her classroom each day before **9:30 a.m.**
- If someone else will be picking up your child, you will be asked to fill out an **Authorization to Pick-Up** form available at the office.
- Inform the person picking up your child that he/she must bring **photo identification**. We will not release your child without prior written authorization or to anyone not listed on the **Emergency Form**.
- For safety reasons, please do not send older siblings to pick up and sign out your child. We will not release your child to an older sibling unless he/she is **18 years of age or older** and we have your written permission.
- A child should never be dropped off in front of the building, left at the front door, or in the parking lot to find his/her own way into the center.
- A child must never be left unattended in the center for any reason. Please make contact with an adult before you leave your child in their classroom.
- At the beginning of the day, take time to help your child put his/her belongings away and assimilate into the group. This is an important transition time for the child and helps develop a routine and trust.
- Don't start your child's day off by rushing out of the center without saying goodbye in an attempt to avoid tears. If your child needs help separating from you, the staff is trained and willing to assist.
- At the end of the day, please ensure that the teacher or staff member in the classroom knows you are taking your child out of the classroom or from the playground. The staff does routine headcounts to ensure the whereabouts of all the children. If you take your child and the teacher is not aware of it, this could lead to a search for a "missing" child who is not actually missing.
- If a parent or other adult comes to pick up the child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, we will suggest that we can call a cab to ensure that both the adult and the child arrive safely at their destination. If the person refuses the offer of a cab and

leaves the center with the child, the police will be contacted regarding a possible impaired driver.

- In the interest of safety, children are not to run in the building and are expected to be with their parent when dropping off or picking up. Please hold your child's hand to keep them from running inside the building.

Program Evaluations

Little Steps utilizes the NECPA family survey every spring as an annual evaluation tool. This survey evaluates the program quality in the following areas:

- **Relationships**
- **Curriculum**
- **Teachers**
- **Assessment of Child Progress**
- **Health**
- **Families**
- **Community Relationships**
- **Physical Environment**
- **Leadership & Management** (including policies and procedures)

The center uses the results of this evaluation to develop goals and objectives for the following year. Professional development opportunities for the teaching staff are also guided by these results. Families receive the results of the evaluation and the Center's plan of action after the survey is completed.

Exit surveys are also provided to families whose children are leaving the program to gather information about possible improvements.

Health Policy

Exclusion Policy for Sick Children and Center Staff

When a child or staff member is known to have a communicable illness as outlined below, the child or staff member will be excluded from attendance at the center for such time as prescribed by the center's consulting physician. Any child or staff member who becomes ill while at the center will be sent home as soon as possible. Ill children will be cared for in the center office by the Director or Program Assistant until a parent/guardian can come to pick him/her up.

Exclusion Policy for Under-immunized Children Because of a Medical Condition or Religious Beliefs

Children who may be under-immunized are at the highest risk for illness. The center will exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the program. The child may return after all risk of exposure is eliminated, as per consultation with the CCC consulting physician, health care consultant, and if necessary, the child's physician.

Symptoms That Indicate the Need for Exclusion

The following symptoms and illnesses indicate the need for a child or staff member to be excluded from the program temporarily:

1. Fever of **100 degrees** or above (taken under the arm) — the lack of fever does not necessarily mean the child is well enough to attend.
2. Vomiting within the last **24 hours**.
3. Diarrhea within the last **24 hours**.
4. Persistent cough and/or sore, reddened throat.
5. Red, weeping eye(s) indicating potential conjunctivitis.
6. Unexplained skin eruptions or rash causing discomfort.
7. Extreme fatigue and/or malaise.
8. Presence of head lice and/or nits.

To be readmitted to the program, any symptoms listed above must be gone for at least **24 hours**, without the aid of over-the-counter medication. Medication for bacterial illnesses should be administered for at least **24 hours** before readmittance.

Control Measures

The center will make every effort to control the spread of communicable illnesses among children and has established health policies and precautions. Whenever exposure to illness occurs in the center, prompt notice will be given to all parents and staff members. The center's physician will be consulted, and ensuing instructions will be followed concerning control measures. This includes disinfecting toilet facilities, furnishings, toys, or other articles used by a child diagnosed with a communicable illness and the effective disinfection and disposal of bodily discharges containing infectious materials. No other person will be allowed to use the mentioned facilities or articles until they have been disinfected or it has been established that the child does not have a communicable illness.

Toxic Material

All materials are stored out of reach or locked behind cabinet or closet doors in each classroom.

Termination Policy

The center may terminate your child's enrollment under the following circumstances:

1. Non-payment for childcare services and/or lack of adherence to tuition payment policies.
2. Parents who falsify information on enrollment forms or otherwise knowingly.
3. Parents not agreeing to or not following the policies set forth in this handbook.
4. Lack of parental cooperation with the center's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
5. Inappropriate or abusive behavior and/or verbal abuse or threats by parents, relatives, guardians, or other parties toward center staff, other parents, or children.
6. Inability of parents to interact professionally with center personnel or other parents and children at the center.

7. Continued enrollment of the child poses a risk to the health and/or safety of other children, parents, or center staff members or constitutes an undue burden on the center's resources.

Little Step