

## Little Hokie™ Hangout Family Handbook

Little Hokie™ Hangout  
A Graduate School Child Care Center  
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## **Welcome to Little Hokie™ Hangout**

Dear Little Hokie™ Families

The staff and administration at Little Hokie™ Hangout (LHH) would like to extend a warm welcome to our program and to our community. This handbook will give you some general information about our program's philosophy and policies, and will be a good reference throughout your enrollment.

After countless graduate students over the years consistently expressed a need for access to quality, affordable child care, Dean Karen DePauw took action and hired a coordinator for Child and Family Initiatives. In this role as Child Care Coordinator, Marin Riegger helped facilitate the opening of Little Hokie™ Hangout in January of 2015.

It is the goal of LHH to provide as many graduate students as possible with access to high-quality, affordable, accessible child care that is available when they need it. Our aim is to provide care for enrolled children for the days and times each semester when it is needed, as opposed to enrolling children full-day regardless of need. We embrace all cultures and nationalities, and recognize the importance of building connections across boundaries.

Professional development is a high priority for our teachers at LHH. Our goal is to keep our teaching practices aligned with the latest research and best practices in early childhood education. We provide our teachers and staff with many opportunities throughout the year to develop their skills even further, and they are given access to mentors and programs across the New River Valley that bring different ideas together and lift the collective quality across the area.

The foundation of our philosophy is our image of the child as competent, powerful, and full of resources. We allow children to show us all that they know, as they explore in our beautiful, developmentally appropriate, intentional environment. We view our environment as a third teacher. We understand the importance of families and seek to include them in all aspects of our program. Our unique parent cooperative program allows us to nurture the role of families in our program. Families, teachers, and children together form the integral team of high quality care. Caregiving routines, which are a large part of a very young child's day, are treated with responsive, respectful, and caring interactions. Our community is also rich with resources, and we believe in forming community connections as we explore and work in it. We believe in the rights of all children and are honored to work with children during this important time of growth and development.

## **OUR PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY**

At LHH, we believe in the child centered learning philosophies of the Reggio Emilia preschools of Italy and the revered child psychologists Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget, who all agree that the best way for children to make life-long learning connections is through play, especially when children are engaged in activities of their own choosing. Therefore, we believe the best approach is to focus on each individual child and their interests to help them develop their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social skills. We use developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) with an emergent curriculum and play based learning to accomplish those goals.

### **Highlights of our philosophy include:**

- Image of the Child: Children are strong, capable, and have the potential to construct their own learning.
- Student Interest: Value is placed on the interests of the children so that they drive the lesson planning and setup of the classroom environment.
- 100 Languages of Children: Children learn through varied styles, tempos, materials, and styles. All developmental domains are addressed in ways that honor the unique perspective of each child.
- Learning Environment: Spaces are designed with young children in mind. They are clean, organized, inviting, authentic, and beautiful.
- Collaboration: Teachers work together with the children as partner, nurturer, and guide.

### **The Purpose of Documentation**

“Documentation is not about what we do, but what we are searching for”-Carla Rinaldi  
Thoughtful and respectful displays of children’s work communicates to children that their work is valued, and that this is their space. Documentation is displayed to provide a record of the learning process, make learning visible to children and families, review past experiences, plan future experiences, honor children’s words, and honor children’s families.  
Families will have access to our Brightwheel app which allows teachers to document the events of the day and communicate daily with families.

### **The Purpose of Curriculum**

Our curriculum aims to be child-centered, emergent, and supportive. Children learn through play and are able to naturally choose activities, based on their interests, that stimulate their development. Our curriculum allows for adaptations and modifications to ensure access for all children. We embrace Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) by meeting the children where they are in their development across all domains.

## **Enrollment Information**

### **Admission**

Admission to Little Hokie Hangout will be granted in the following order:

1. All returning and former students will be given priority
2. All new students will be given placement in the order that applications are received
3. When slots fill up, we will then look through graduate student applications to fill holes in the schedule with those whose desired days and times meet the vacancies in the program
4. After all graduate student applications have been received and places either accepted or declined, all other applications will be considered.

Some helpful information as you apply:

- We strongly recommend that families arrange a time to come through LHH, see our facility, meet our staff, and ask any questions they might have.
- All forms must be complete. Incomplete forms will not be considered
- There is a one-time non-refundable application fee that will be assessed at the time the application is received. This fee is charged to your Virginia Tech account.
- All application information is kept strictly confidential and will be accessed only by LHH and Grad School personnel as required, unless written permission given by parents
- Faculty/staff permitted to enroll children at an increased rate if space available

### **Payment of Fees**

All fees and charges for LHH are billed directly to the parents' VT account. You can log into Hokie Spa to view and pay these charges. Charges for things like late pick-up, early drop-off, etc. (see Attendance section) will also be posted to your VT account. Tuition is billed twice per semester. Application fees are non-refundable, and once enrolled in our program your child's tuition can only be adjusted up to accommodate an increased amount of enrollment. Once you enroll in LHH, if you have a need to discontinue or need to reduce your hours, refunds will only be processed if we are able to completely fill your child's seat in our program **and** our program is at operational capacity.

Our tuition increases slightly at least once each year to accommodate rising costs of operation. Each semester's application will detail the tuition costs for that term only. Late fees will apply to late payments.

### **Hours and Days of Operation**

Little Hokie™ Hangout operates from 8:30am-6:00pm M-F on days that Virginia Tech is open. If Virginia Tech is closed for a holiday, weather, or other event, LHH will also be closed. When Virginia Tech has an early closing or late opening for any reason, LHH will follow that schedule and parents will be notified. Summer session may operate at a reduced schedule from 9am-12pm or later depending on demand.

Children MAY NOT be dropped off before their scheduled time. They also MAY NOT stay past their scheduled time. Fees for dropping off and picking up at times outside of your child's scheduled

times will apply and will be charged to your VT account at a rate of \$1.00 per minute after the first 10 minutes.

### **Daily Schedule**

Below is a sample schedule for our day, however this is only a framework for the day, and it is often adjusted to make room for the children to spend as much time as possible on activities that really capture their interest.

8:30am Morning session children arrive  
8:30- 9:45 Morning free play/investigations  
9:45-10:00 Clean up, bathroom  
10:00-10:30 Morning snack offered  
10:30-11:30 Outside play  
11:30-12:30 Session pick up/drop off, Lunch, clean up, bathroom/diapering  
12:30-2:00 Rest, quiet choices/free play  
2:00-2:45 Session pick up/drop off, bathroom, afternoon snack  
2:45-4:00 Outside play  
4:00-6:00 Free play/investigations, evening dismissal

### **Family Communication and Involvement**

We feel that families are our most valuable resource. Your input and communication with us are vital. Along with our commitment to communicating with you, we encourage families get involved in the classroom. Sharing about your profession or hobby, going on a field trip, reading a book or eating lunch with your child are just a few ways for families to be involved. We are very grateful for your time and your child will feel special, too. Families can also watch their child's daily activities by playing in the classroom and by checking Brightwheel. Anytime you have thoughts, suggestions or ideas, please feel free to express them to your child's teacher or to the Director or Child Care Coordinator by emailing [childcare@vt.edu](mailto:childcare@vt.edu).

If you need to get a message to your child's teacher during the day, please use the Brightwheel app to do so. For less urgent matters, please email [childcare@vt.edu](mailto:childcare@vt.edu) and we will be happy to pass information along as quickly as possible. Families who have a personal relationship with teachers outside of LHH should not call or text their cell phones during the work day. All work-related conversations with teachers must be kept within the work day and through the outlined methods of communication.

Immediate family members are welcome to visit our program at all times. Extended family members are welcome to schedule a visit to enjoy our program with their related Little Hokie™. Custodial parents or guardians are allowed to be at the Center unless a court order is on file at the Center. We hope you will feel comfortable in sharing any information with us about issues affecting your home life (moving, new sibling soon to be born, death in the family, etc.) When we are informed, we can better understand and care for your child.

We hope to build strong, trusting relationships with our families as we know this leads to a more successful experience for your child. The teachers and administration are always available to listen to concerns or to answer questions. We will make every effort to resolve any problems that may occur. We are committed to respecting your family and will keep your child's records and issues pertaining to your child and family confidential. As part of this effort, we will offer the opportunity to have a parent-teacher conference each December and May.

### **Organizational Structure**

LHH is operated by the Graduate School at Virginia Tech under supervision of the Dean, and is administered by the Child Care Coordinator. Finances, enrollment and record management are handled by the Child Care Coordinator. Curriculum, Professional Development and Communications are managed by the Program Director. The Program Leaders are the primary caregivers and educators of the children enrolled. Some Program Leaders may serve in a Director's capacity, if qualified, at certain times of the day. The Aides hired by LHH and the Parent Workers assist the Program Leaders in whatever capacity is requested. Aides and Parent Workers who have received the mandatory training and orientation are counted in ratio, but should not be left alone with children for any extended period of time.

### **Annual Survey**

Each year the LHH will send out an online survey to gather information from families about how we can improve our program. Your input is valuable, and your comments matter. Please take a few minutes to help us better serve the Graduate community!

### **When Difficulties or Differences Arise**

While we do our best to operate in a way that we hope is a positive addition to your family's life, we understand that we will never please everyone, and we are always open to your comments and concerns. A fundamental aspect of improvement is refinement, which requires an open mind and listening ears. We hope you will find that we have both. If you have a concern, please first mention it to your child's teacher. Sometimes it's hard for the teacher to step away from the other children to have a conversation with parents, especially first thing in the morning. If possible, please let the teacher know you have something to talk with them about, and ask when the best time would be.

The teacher may choose to document your concern, and ask you to make sure they have accurately captured the issue in writing, and to sign the complaint. This documentation is then passed along to both the Program Director and the Child Care Coordinator for follow-up and, whenever possible, resolution. If you ever feel that you are not getting the answers you need, please don't hesitate to email [childcare@vt.edu](mailto:childcare@vt.edu) and let us know exactly how we can help you.

### **Absences/Arrival**

Please let us know via Brightwheel if and when your child will be absent on their regularly scheduled day/time. Please include a reason for your child's absence. This helps our teachers to know when they might need to adjust their plans for the day, or if they need to alert other families to an illness. For example, if your child has a stomach flu, it is helpful for our teachers to know so

that they can arrive early and sanitize certain parts of the room. They can also let other families know that a stomach bug is going around, so that they can be extra diligent about things like hand washing. Likewise, please let our staff know via Brightwheel if your child is going to be late or need to leave early, so that adjustments to the Daily Schedule can be made if needed. Our teachers will check your child "IN" on Brightwheel upon arrival.

Children MAY NOT be dropped off before their scheduled time. They also MAY NOT stay past their scheduled time. Fees for dropping off and picking up at times outside of your child's scheduled times will apply and will be charged to your VT account at a rate of \$1.00 per minute after the first 10 minutes.

### **Handwashing**

Upon arrival to LHH, all children must wash their hands before entering the classroom. Please enter, walk straight to the bathrooms to wash hands, and then come in and help your child get settled. Handwashing at drop-off dramatically reduces the spread of many illnesses that we all want to avoid.

### **Parking**

Families may use the parking lot at the Luther Memorial Lutheran Church briefly while dropping off and picking up, but may NOT leave their cars there for extended periods while going to campus or elsewhere. When you are working as a Parent Worker, you may use a parking pass and park in the parking lot during that time only. The parking pass must be returned to the teacher at the end of your block of time. Please do not abuse this parking lot, or you will be towed.

Some general parking safety:

- Please drive *very* slowly in the parking lot
- Please do NOT idle your car while you come inside of the building
- Please double-check behind and around your car for children before backing out
- Please HOLD HANDS with your child until they are on the access ramp

### **Pick-up**

At the end of each day, you must tell the teacher that you are picking up your child. Only a custodial parent OR persons listed on their "Authorized Pick-Up Form" will be allowed to remove a child from LHH. Please notify our teachers via Brightwheel if you need to pick your child up early, so that they can adjust activities and their schedule as needed. When picked up, our teachers will check your child "OUT" on Brightwheel.

We are required to release your child to a legal guardian unless a court order is in place. If this is the case, please make sure to provide LHH with a copy of the court order, and to complete the appropriate portion of the "Authorized Pick-Up Form" as well.

Children MAY NOT be dropped off before their scheduled time. They also MAY NOT stay past their scheduled time. Fees for dropping off and picking up at times outside of your child's scheduled

times will apply and will be charged to your VT account at a rate of \$1.00 per minute after the first 10 minutes.

### **Weather**

As stated previously, we operate on the same calendar as Virginia Tech. If Virginia Tech closes for any reason, including inclement weather, LHH will also close. In addition, if our staff feels that current or impending weather could pose a real threat to the safety of the children and families traveling to and/or from our program on any given day, we may elect to close early or open late.

Please check Brightwheel and your email on these days, as we will send messages about such closures both ways. Also, please bear in mind that if we need to close early, you will need to collect your child as soon as possible. This is very rare, but if it does happen, we will need to close the facility and get our staff home safely as well. When the calendar permits, we try to add on an extra day at the end of the semester if we have had to close for weather more than once.

### **Reggio Emilia Philosophy**

LHH is largely guided by the Reggio Emilia approach to learning and teaching. The Reggio approach is based on several characteristics, including the collaboration and engagement of the child; the participation of families and community in the child's learning; the role of the educator as documentaries, advocates, and co-constructors; the environment as the third teacher; an emergent curriculum; the availability of rich, open-ended materials; and the hundred languages of children.

The Reggio approach allows children to explore and discover in natural, unaltered forms. LHH is highly influenced by both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines for developmentally appropriate teaching practices and the philosophy of Reggio Emilia.

### **Program Activities**

The daily schedule will be posted in the classroom for your convenience. Please keep in mind that this schedule is always subject to change based on the needs of the children as perceived by the teacher, or the event of special activities.

### **Indoor safety rules**

- Children will not be permitted to run in the classroom, or to climb on furniture.
- Children are not permitted to stand on chairs or to tip them while seated.
- Please use the RAMP when arriving and leaving LHH to reinforce what our teachers are doing each day as we play outdoors.

### **Outdoor Play**

We WILL go outside every day whenever it is possible. The only times we will not go outside to play are when it is actively raining or if it is below freezing. If it is wet or cold we will still go outside. Children MUST bring appropriate outdoor clothing when the weather is cold



In warm weather children should wear sunscreen. You may apply this yourself at home (please notify teachers upon arrival if you have done so) or you may complete a Sunscreen Permission Form and leave a labeled container of sunscreen in its original packaging for your child to be applied by LHH staff on days when sunburn is a risk. Please make sure your child has a water cup or bottle as these will be taken outside.

Your child WILL get dirty and/or wet during the day at LHH. This is wonderful! Playing outside and with water are critical components to the philosophy at LHH, and we absolutely encourage children to dive right in! Please plan for this, and make sure you replace any extra clothing that is used at the start of each new day.

### **Playground Rules**

Outside there is NO running allowed on the concrete portion of the play yard, and children are only to climb on designated play structures. Traveling from the classroom to and from the play yard the class will walk along the grassy hill (as long as it is not icy or snowy) and when that is unavailable, they will use the stairs and hold onto the railing. Only one child at a time may be on the slide.

### **Food Policy**

LHH does not prepare and serve meals. If your child is only staying for one 3-hour block, they will have a snack. This is generally provided by the Parent Worker, but we always have extra food on hand. ALL children and staff will be seated whenever eating or drinking. This is a firm rule, and it is very helpful if you help us by asking your children to sit when eating and drinking at home as well. This greatly reduces choking incidents and other injuries.

If your child stays for more than one session, please pack them a meal. We have a refrigerator and microwave, so we can store and warm food as needed for your child. All food must be labeled with your child's name and the day of the week.

Please let us know if your child has specific dietary guidelines or allergies, i.e. a nut allergy, Halal or Kosher, etc.

**ALLERGENS:** LHH is a nut-free program. If your child consumes a nut product immediately before arrival at LHH, please wash their hands very thoroughly.

PLEASE do NOT pack ANY of the following food items for your child:

- Peanuts or tree nuts in any form
- Shell fish (no shrimp, please!)
- Carrots (raw)
- Whole grapes (cut in half is okay!)
- popcorn

### **Rest/Quiet Time**

Because our day is broken up into three small blocks of time, we do not have a time when we require all children to rest. However, children who stay for more than one block of time will have a Quiet Time near the midpoint of their day. In addition, our staff will inquire as to which children need to have a nap, and will see to it that those children do have a designated Rest Time.

If a child falls asleep at LHH, they will not be woken up by our staff. We will make them as comfortable as possible, hopefully getting them settled onto a nap mat, and allow them to rest. It is not lawful for us to wake a sleeping child until it is time for them to go home and their legal guardian has arrived to pick them up. Also, if a child refuses to have a rest after 30 minutes of our staff working with them, the child will be allowed to play quietly for the duration of their normal nap time.

All children who may nap will be separated from those who do not, and will be provided with a mat and a sheet, but must provide their own top cover. This must be washed each weekend, so please take it home with you at the conclusion of your child's last session each week. Your child may bring a small lovey, if it helps them to fall asleep, but they will only be allowed to have it with them during this time.

### **Clothing**

Please keep at least one complete seasonally-appropriate change of clothes in your child's cubby at all times. This means shirt, pants/shorts, socks, underwear. In the winter they must have a coat, gloves/mittens, hat and appropriate shoes. When clothing is soiled, it will be placed in your child's cubby in a plastic bag. Please launder and return it (or other clothing) every day. If your child ever comes home in clothing that is not yours, it is clothing that belongs to LHH that has been donated by other families. Please wash and return this clothing as quickly as possible.

### **Toys from Home (and other objects)**

Please leave toys at home. Please do not bring your child's personal toys and other items into the classroom. If they are brought, teachers will put them away until the end of the day. The only exception to this is when a child brings in a book to share with the class at story time, or when a teacher requests children bring in items for a special occasion such as show-and-tell.

Toys or items that represent or may give the appearance of a weapon are not to be brought to LHH under any conditions.

### **Field Trips**

LHH will go on a few walking field trips during the year. We will notify parents in advance, and appreciate any additional help on these trips. There is a permission form in the Registration Packet that covers all such trips.

### **Birthdays**

Please let our staff know ahead of time if you would like to bring in a treat for your child's birthday. Please remember that our students are very little, as are their portions. Please check with the teacher about allergies and food restrictions when planning a birthday celebration at LHH for your child.

### **Inclusion of Children with Disabilities**

Little Hokie Hangout includes children with diverse abilities in the program. Children with identified special needs are welcome to bring an outside aide who works directly with them and/or may receive therapy or special services in the classroom. LHH fully supports inclusion as it benefits the child with special needs as well as the whole classroom community. The children learn a great deal from each other as they grow and learn together.

When concerns about children's development or behavior are identified, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that developmental screenings and assessments are arranged. Families will be involved throughout the process, beginning with informal conversations and meetings to discuss observations, concerns, goals and strategies. All information remains confidential with the exception of the professionals that are involved in the process. If it is determined that a developmental screening is needed, the family is given information about the local services and contacts. Those may include starting with the child's pediatrician, an assessment by Montgomery County Public Schools for children over three, and Community Services (Early Intervention for children under three). Teachers may share information with designated professionals/ agencies after written consent is given from the family. Based on observations and assessments, teachers, in cooperation with the family and appropriate professionals, will develop an individualized plan to best meet the child's needs.

### **Suspected Abuse or Neglect**

All childcare personnel are required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Any suspicions will be reported through the Child Care Coordinator as the administrator of the program, and the proper steps will be taken to protect the children in our care.

Please note that while children may not be interviewed without the presence of a parent in most circumstances, where there is suspected abuse or neglect, representatives of VCFS (Social Services) may conduct an interview with a child without permission from or the presence of a legal guardian.

### **Firearms/Weapons**

No firearms or weapons shall ever be brought into the LHH classrooms or other spaces, nor in personal vehicles in our parking areas. The only exception is when they are properly worn or carried by law-enforcement officials.

### **Medical Reports**

The State of Virginia requires that documentation of physical examinations and all immunizations that children have received be obtained prior to each child's admission to a childcare center. The schedules for examination prior to admission for different age groups are listed below:

1. Within two months prior to admission for children six months of age or younger.
2. Within three months prior to admission for children aged seven to 18 months.
3. Within six months prior to admission for children aged 19-24 months.
4. Within 12 months prior to admission for children aged two to five years.

Please provide updated information after each immunization/physical examination. We will remind you when updates are overdue. When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents or legal guardians must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program. Any missing or delayed immunizations require documentation from a doctor explaining why the shot was missed or delayed and if/ when it will be scheduled. The exception to this rule is allowed for any immunization for which parents are using a religious exemption and must be documented in the child's file.

Health examinations that indicate abnormal results will require a follow-up appointment. Please keep LHH informed about the results and if measures are to be taken in the Program to best meet your child's needs. If a child becomes sick with a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible in the program, the child will be excluded promptly and until doctors give written notification that they may return to a group setting. Families exposed will be notified immediately with signs posted on room doors.

### **Infection Control Policy**

It is inevitable that children will get sick, no matter where they are. As children begin to have contact with the world outside that of their own families, they come in contact with germs and bacteria that are foreign to their bodies. This is the way that they build immunities. We cannot, nor would we want to shield a child completely from the outside world. If we did, the natural immunities a child gains through contact with others would not develop and a simple cold could become a serious illness. We do, however, want to protect children from an unusually high exposure to germs all at once. In a childcare setting, the illness of one child can spread rapidly through the group to other children and staff members if stringent measures are not taken. For this reason, the staff at LHH will take constant precautions to prevent the spread of disease. Many common childhood diseases are contagious and can be spread quickly, but prevented easily. Careful hand washing by staff and children can eliminate approximately 75% of the risk of spreading illnesses. Other precautions include separating sick children from those who are well while awaiting pick-up, taking extra precautions with diapered or toilet training children and working to maintain sanitary conditions throughout the Center.

Your family can help us in our efforts to keep your children healthy. We ask your cooperation in the following ways:

1. Upon return to LHH after an illness, children will be screened for symptoms of communicable disease upon entering the classroom each morning. The screening will be a brief check done by staff based upon symptoms as outlined by several local physicians. Parents should remain with their child during the check.
2. Any time a parent questions whether or not their child is well enough to attend the Center they should call.
3. Anytime a child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease the family should notify the Center so that we can take measures against further spread of the disease.
4. Each family will be asked to submit a detailed medical update on their child with specific information related to the care of their child while he or she is at LHH. This must be updated throughout your child's enrollment as immunizations are given and physical exams are performed.
5. State regulations require that families notify the center within 24 hours or the next business day after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health\*, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately. The list of communicable diseases according to the State Board of Health is located in your registration packet, and a chart version of this list will be on display in the classroom.

If a child has signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, arrangements will be made for your child to leave the Center as soon as possible. You are responsible for picking up your sick child as soon as possible once the Center has called to alert you of an illness. Sick children will be separated from the classroom and will stay in the office with a member of administration. A child will be sent home if they have the following symptoms indicating an illness may be present:

1. A fever of 100° F or higher.
2. Two occurrences of diarrhea within one hour.
3. One occurrence of vomiting.
4. Unusual spots or rashes or infected skin patches.
5. Severe coughing – child becomes red or blue in the face.
6. High pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing.
7. Difficult or rapid breathing especially in infants.
8. Yellowish skin or eyes.
9. Pink eye – tears, redness of eyelid lining, followed by swelling and discharge.
10. Sore throat or trouble swallowing.
11. Presence of lice or nits in the hair.

There may be times that children are not considered contagious but require additional supervision or attention beyond what is typical in the classroom. Families will be contacted to pick up your child from the Center, if it is determined that the attention your child needs exceeds what teachers are able to provide in group care.

If Your Child Has Been Sent Home From LHH they may NOT return until:

1. He or she has been vomit, diarrhea and fever free for at least 24 hours without medication.
2. He or she has been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours or has a written statement from the doctor stating that the child is not contagious or when it is appropriate to return.
3. With chickenpox, he or she may not return to the Center until all pox have dried and no new pox have erupted (usually seven to ten days).
4. With head lice, he or she may not return to the Center until they have had one medicated shampoo and is found to be "nit free" by a member of administration, meaning the Program Director or Child Care Coordinator.
5. With pink eye (conjunctivitis), he or she may not return until 24 hours after the first medical treatment.

### **Medication**

LHH does NOT administer medication. If your child is given a prescription medication, whether short- or long-term, you must administer the medication yourself before and/or after your child attends LHH. You are always welcome to come to LHH, and administer medication yourself during your child's day with us.

The only exception to this policy is the use of an Epi-Pen device. If your child has been prescribed one of these, please let us know as soon as possible. This information must be included on your Medical forms.

### **Emergency Medical Care**

All children must have an Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization form on file. This form can be found in the registration packet.

### **Crisis Plan**

In the event of an emergency, LHH follows the Crisis Plan procedures as outlined in the Employee Handbook or follows the direction of appropriate law enforcement officials. Families may view the policy by request. Monthly, fire drills are practiced in accordance with Virginia Licensing Standards. Shelter-in-place drills are also conducted semi-annually with the children. These drills give teachers and children an opportunity to be familiar with the procedures in case of an emergency situation.

If an emergency requires children to be transported away from the center, designated evacuation sites will be determined by local law enforcement officials. If another off-site location is deemed necessary, a message will be left on the answering machines, an email/text communication will be provided for families, or families can contact Blacksburg Police Department at 540-961-1150.

### **Parent Workers**

All Parent Workers must have a completed registration packet on file, including a tuberculosis screening. In addition, all Parent Workers must complete a mandatory 4-hour training module and submit to a background check.

## **How Do Children Learn?**

**Children Learn Through Play.** Play is what they do best and enjoy most. For children, play is their work. Play fosters total development and should be integrated into everything they do.

**Children Learn By Doing.** Children learn through active involvement with concrete objects. They need many firsthand experiences with real things, such as science experiments, construction, art projects, dramatic play, and fieldtrips.

**Children Learn Through Their Senses.** Children learn by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. Think of each of the senses as a pathway to the brain: the more senses or pathways involved, the more likely learning will occur. Sensory learning also emphasizes the need for a variety of media and materials to stimulate children's senses.

**Children Learn Through Language.** Children need to talk about their experiences and to verbalize what they are thinking. Teachers can foster language by describing what they are doing, labeling objects, clarifying children's thoughts, asking questions, and answering the child's questions.

**Children Learn By Moving.** Children seem to be in constant motion. They have a limited attention span and cannot learn by sitting quietly pushing a pencil. Direct their energy with whole body experiences where they can move and use their hands, feet, heads and bodies to learn.

**Children Learn By Being Motivated.** Motivation is the key ingredient to learning. Interesting materials and a stimulating environment will spark children's curiosity and inspire them to learn. Pleasing families, teachers, praise and other personal reasons further motivate children to learn.

**Children Learn On Their Own Level.** Assess each child's background and skills so you build on their past experiences. If activities are too easy, children will be bored, but if they are too difficult, children will be frustrated. Break down difficult activities into small steps so each child can succeed and move from simple to more complex activities.

**Children Learn Through Encouragement and Reinforcement.** "Nothing succeeds like success." Positive experiences and praise encourage children to learn more while building their confidence. Give children constant reinforcement with smiles, pats, and verbal encouragement.

**Children Learn Through Imitation.** Children learn by observing others and then imitating what they see and hear. Children also imitate values and attitudes that they see in families, teachers, and peers.

**Children Learn Through Repetition.** Children build knowledge through repetition and through accumulated experience. The amount of time that is spent on activities is another significant factor in learning.

Children Learn By Experimenting. Children need the freedom to experiment, explore, try things out, and to make choices. Since they learn through trial and error, accept their mistakes and offer feedback and support.

Children Learn Through Exposure. Children are like sponges, learning more in the preschool years than any other period. They need to be stimulated with a wide variety of materials, activities, and subject matter.

Children Learn Through Interacting With Friends. It is amazing how much children learn through talking, watching, and playing with friends, siblings, and others. Peer teaching is a meaningful way of learning that should not be overlooked.

Children Learn In a Positive Environment. Children need to feel loved, safe, and secure in order to learn. An atmosphere of warmth and acceptance is much more conducive than one that is competitive and threatening.

Children Learn When Their Physical Needs Are Met. Children who are hungry, sleepy, or under stress will have a difficult time learning. Make sure children receive good nutrition, proper rest, and emotional support.

Children Learn Through Wholeness. Learning is not isolated, but should be connected and integrated in all areas of the curriculum. Learning should also focus on the whole child by meeting their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.

When the above guidelines are followed, children will become independent learners who are excited about school and are enthusiastic about learning. They will have a strong foundation, confidence in their abilities, and lifelong skills that will help them continue to learn.

Jean R. Feldman, Ph.D. (1991) *A Survival Guide for the Preschool Teacher*. West Nyack, New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education (pages 11-12).



## **Teachable Moments: A Healthy Foundation for Young Children's Learning About Bodies, Babies and Birth**

### **WE BELIEVE THAT SEXUALITY:**

- Is a positive and fundamental part of human existence and affects all aspects of our lives
- Is basic to who we are as male or female persons
- Is a natural part of us from birth to death

### **WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN:**

- Begin learning about sexuality as soon as they are born and will continue to learn throughout their lives
- Learn about sexuality through their interactions with the total environment
- Learn from how people touch them and talk with them, and perceive societal expectations
- Learn early attitudes and values about sexuality that affect future feelings and behaviors
- Are naturally curious about how their bodies look and work, about how male and female bodies differ, and about where babies come from
- Trust and communicate with adults who are open and honest with them
- Are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse when they do not have age-appropriate information about sexuality

**WE BELIEVE THAT FAMILIES** are their children's most important teachers.

**WE BELIEVE THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS** can be a positive influence in children's learning about sexuality, assisting families in their role as their child's most important caregivers and teachers.

### **It is our GOAL that YOUNG CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAM WILL:**

- Learn that it's okay to talk about sexuality and ask questions about it
- Develop positive feelings about their own bodies, including the sexual parts
- Feel good about themselves as male or female persons and be aware of their full human potential regardless of their gender
- Understand their body has rights and responsibilities, i.e., that each person has the right to determine who will touch his/her body, particularly the sexual parts

"Teachable moments" are situations that naturally arise where an adult may take the opportunity to address a particular issue.

### **TOUCHING**

- Provide good nurturing touch when appropriate for a child's growth, through hugs, shoulder squeezes, handholding, etc.
- Discourage inappropriate touching of staff by a child through gently interrupting such touch and calmly explaining guidelines for touching others, using accurate terminology

- Discourage inappropriate touching of children by other children through gently interrupting such touch and calmly explaining guidelines for touching others, using accurate terminology
- Prohibit staff from inappropriate touching of children
- Teach children that their bodies belong to them and each person has the right to decide who can touch their body
- Teach children that the sexual parts of their body are private

#### BOY/GIRL EQUITY

- Give boys and girls equal access and equal encouragement to use every resource in the classroom (books, toys, equipment, games, dolls, dress-up)
- Offer boys and girls equal opportunities to participate in all activities (helping “tasks”, teams, groupings)
- Adopt a no-tolerance policy regarding “bullying” or teasing especially on the basis of gender
- Respond to behaviors, emotions, and language in the same way regardless of the sex of the child
- Use gender as the basis for grouping children no more frequently than other categories for grouping
- Emphasize the potential for any person to fulfill any occupational or family role
- Use gender inclusive language (“firefighter” vs. “fireman”, “people do” vs. “girls don’t,” “boys do...”)
- Use posters, books, songs, pictures that are both non-traditional and traditional in their portrayal of males and females, and provide equal representation of males and females in the resources available to the children
- Provide equivalent time to boys and girls, including attention, touch, praise and criticism
- Encourage integration of boys and girls in play/work groupings if same sex grouping becomes the sole pattern children choose

#### RESOURCES

Provide an assortment of resources for children on bodies, babies, families, feelings, and relationships such as: anatomically correct dolls, puzzles, books, song tapes/ records, pictures, videos, dress-ups for both gender roles, and baby care equipment for dolls or pretend play. These materials should be available, accessible, and discussed when teachable moments arise. An assortment of resources for families and teachers on early childhood development are available.

#### DIAPERING

- May change diapers in an area where other children can see
- Use accurate terms if referring to the genital parts
- Acknowledge bowel movements as a natural process (everybody poops!). Avoid facial or verbal expressions of disgust, dirtiness, or odor; discourage those expressions by children as well
- Avoid forcefully pulling children’s hands from own genitals
- Allow child to touch own genitals while changing diapers when area is clean

- Address other children’s questions/comments about genital parts matter-of-factly using accurate terms

#### TOILETING SKILLS AND BATHROOM USE

- Communicate with families regarding child’s readiness to learn toileting skills
- Encourage child with reminders, trips to the toilet and praise
- Clean up “accidents” matter-of-factly without drawing any undue attention
- Discourage facial or verbal expressions of disgust, dirtiness or odor from children
- Supervise children in the bathroom, but allow them to do as much as they can on their own
- Have both genders use the same facility
- Explain to all children that they have a right to privacy if desired and that they should not “peek” at another child who wishes privacy
- Use formal words along with informal words related to toileting (i.e., formal words: urination, bowel movement, toilet; informal words: pee, poop, potty.)
- Respect individual children’s need for privacy

#### CLOTHING

- Ensure that children of both sexes always have “tops” and “bottoms” covered
- At rest time children may be allowed to wear only underpants at the teacher’s discretion

EVALUATION AND REVISION OF POLICY In order to keep the policy current, the Center will solicit feedback from families annually with the Family Questionnaires, and work with families and teachers to revise the policy annually or as responses deemed necessary.