

The Neighborhood Learning Center



St Andrew Presbyterian Church
711 West Main Street
Purcellville, VA 20132
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Parent Handbook

Effective October 30, 2015

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Dear Parents,

We welcome you to our family at The Neighborhood Learning Center! We thank you for entrusting us with the care of your child. Your child's well-being is our primary concern.

We want you to feel comfortable and confident as you combine your life as parents with your career and responsibilities outside of the home. We want the time your child is in our care to be as free from worry to you as possible. We do this by adhering at all times to strict operational policies which govern, for example, discipline, administration of medications, and release of children to others. We will call you immediately if any emergencies arise.

Perhaps most importantly, we will share your child's day with you when you arrive to pick up your child. Because consistency in child-rearing philosophy between the childcare center and the home is best for the child, we seek to honor parents' concerns and wishes.

The Neighborhood Learning Center is a ministry of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. The pastors and ministry staff of the NLC are here for the families of our community. It is our privilege to invite you and your family to worship and live out our faith together:

Worship Services

Blended Traditional & Contemporary Service 10:00am Sunday mornings
"The Ark" Sunday School 10:15am Sunday mornings

Children begin the worship service sitting with their families, then are called to the front of the sanctuary for a children's moment led by one of our pastors. They are then released to Sunday School while parents remain in the service. Children are released into the sanctuary towards the end of the service to rejoin their families.

"The Gathering" 5:00pm Saturday evening

Wednesday Afternoons

Wednesday Afterschool Café 3:00pm – 7:00pm during the fall and winter
Activities for Grade 1 – High School including Recreation, Study, Music and a Shared Meal at 6:15pm

This handbook provides detailed information about our facility and programs. Please feel free to talk with staff members if you have any further questions about the NLC and what we have to offer to you and your child.

God's Blessings,

Marcie Peterson

*Neighborhood Learning
Center Director*

Jessica McClure Archer

St. Andrew Associate Pastor

David Milam

St. Andrew Senior Pastor

Overview of The Neighborhood Learning Center

Mission Statement

The Neighborhood Learning Center strives to provide a loving Christian environment in which children can grow and mature spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically. We know that a child's early years provide a critical foundation for growth and development for the rest of that child's life.

The NLC serves children from six weeks of age through the fifth grade with age-appropriate programs and activities. Children will be challenged to achieve their full potential through an academic curriculum and structured activities. The preschool program will emphasize academic preparedness while keeping in mind that children learn better when they are happy and having fun. The after school program will maintain the same high academic expectations with tutoring and enrichment activities available.

The NLC's programs are all based on a belief that the seeds for creativity, tolerance, neighborliness and acceptance are all planted early and must be nurtured through a program that continually models these values. All of the NLC staff recognizes that they are not just teachers, they are models.

Handbook Purpose

This handbook provides general guidelines and information about the NLC. We hope that it will be useful to you as a reference while your child is enrolled here. The handbook is updated on a regular basis and while we do not redistribute the handbook with every minor revision, you will be notified two weeks in advance of any changes affecting tuition, fees, or schedule changes including holidays. The most current version of the handbook is also available on the NLC website, www.tnlcenter.com.

History

The NLC is a childcare center in western Loudoun County and was established in 2011 as an outreach ministry of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. The NLC offers services for infants (6 weeks and older), toddlers, preschoolers, kindergarten enrichment, and before and after school care for Kindergarten – 5th grade. The NLC strives to provide excellent care in a nurturing environment as well as preparatory and enrichment learning. We invite families to visit us to see how the NLC is a place for hospitality, faith, community and learning. Enrollment is ongoing.

Ownership & Governance

The NLC is a mission of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. The Board of Directors of the NLC is made up of three members of the church congregation and two parents of children enrolled at the NLC. The Board meets on a monthly basis. The ministers, Session, and church congregation are actively involved in the operation of the NLC, and we welcome and encourage parent involvement. (Additional information is provided in the Policies of Operation section of this handbook.)

Staff

The majority of our staff members are CPR and first aid trained and we ensure that there is at least one staff member on duty at all time with these certifications. Our lead teachers are professionally trained and qualified in early childhood education and are experienced in working in the early childhood school setting. Staff members are required to continue their professional development by attending continuing education classes and seminars throughout the year. Each staff member has on file a criminal history records check

conducted by the Virginia State Police, a sworn disclosure statement, a central registry search conducted by Virginia Child Protective Services, and current health screenings.

Programs

Objectives

Our ultimate goal is to assist children in developing into happy, healthy, self-confident Christian individuals.

Additional goals include:

1. To provide safe, adequate and supervised facilities for each child.
2. To offer loving care in a developmentally appropriate environment for the whole child, thus nurturing children's physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual development.
3. To facilitate the development of a positive self-concept by helping the child make use of his or her abilities and talents in accordance with basic knowledge of principles of child development.
4. To help each child become aware of God's love and to grow in an understanding of Christian principles and ethics.
5. To supplement the home experiences of each child in order to help him or her develop into a well-rounded individual through group experiences.
6. To provide age-appropriate opportunities for cognitive development through a child-centered curriculum that emphasizes learning as an interactive process.
7. To provide an environment for children that will serve to enrich their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.
8. To help children develop self-reliance and self-discipline.
9. To provide effective and open communication between parents and staff concerning the welfare and development of the child.
10. To provide well-balanced and nourishing food for the child, adequate for the day spent at the NLC.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is centered on Christian principles and based on current child development research. The key is allowing the children to explore, play and learn new things through trial and error, guided activities and instruction.

Teachers use a theme-based curriculum to break the academics down into smaller units to help make things easiest for the children to learn. The children's developmental levels are then matched by the teacher to the provided curriculum.

Monthly themes are broken down by the week so that teachers can focus their lessons, stories, academics, crafts and activities around that theme. These themes can be seasonal or related to upcoming celebrations, Christian holidays, or things that are generally interesting to children such as community helpers, transportation, animals, etc.

The themed-based curriculum threads throughout the day, giving children plenty of time to absorb the lessons.

Program Details

INFANTS (6 WEEKS TO 12 MONTHS)

Dedicated, warm and loving staff is the reason why parents can depend on our infant program. Toys are sterilized frequently and the changing table is sterilized after each diaper change. The changing table faces out so staff members never have their backs to children. For the protection of each baby, street shoes are not allowed. Your baby will have a personal crib and cubby where food and bottles can be stored. Play is based on exploration, stimulation and sensory experience. Soothing music, tummy time and story time are a big part of their day. **Their schedule is on demand as dictated by you.**

TODDLERS (12 TO 24 MONTHS, BROKEN INTO MULTIPLE CLASSES BASED ON AGE)

When you are a toddler, investigating the world around you is what life is all about! At the NLC, our caring, high-energy teachers encourage and gently guide each toddler through discovery and exploration. Their day is filled with many hands-on experiences, art, music, movement, toys and equipment that encourage their discovery and exploration. The toddler classes are divided into 12-16 months and 16-24 months to better accommodate the children's developmental states.

Our large Fellowship Hall as well as an age-appropriate outside playground offer plenty of opportunity for running and jumping. Soothing music and gentle back rubbing during naptime on toddler size cots give just the right ambiance for sleeping.

TWO'S (24 TO 36 MONTHS)

This is a major time of discovery! The development of language skills is a major focus for this age group and is highlighted through story, song and rhythmic activities. We help two's use their motor and sensory skills to explore the world around them using trial and error methods, play, interactions with peers and teachers, and planned learning centers.

PRESCHOOL (THREE TO FIVE YEAR OLDS)

Preschoolers have endless opportunity to enjoy classrooms that are overflowing with challenging toys and manipulatives that offer a colorful, stimulating environment. In this setting, children learn to be independent and exercise a variety of personal, social and emotional skills. Problem solving, cognitive thinking and math concepts are encouraged. Blocks and other building tools promote problem solving and critical thinking.

Art is used to promote self-expression and creativity. Music helps preschoolers learn concepts through finger play, songs, games, rhythm and instruments. Movement and playground time promote physical fitness and coordination. Preschoolers must be potty trained to attend.

KINDERGARTEN ENRICHMENT (KINDERGARTEN ENROLLED)

The Kindergarten Enrichment program not only provides your child with a creative and fun learning environment, but also goes a step further by offering an academic-based curriculum; the curriculum focuses on the Loudoun County benchmark goals for the public school Kindergarten programs and is enhanced with Abeka phonics. Art, literacy, language arts, math and science are parts of our program as well as music, chapel, field trips and outside activities. Our teachers are each well-rounded and have teaching/training certifications in the early childhood education field as well as a large amount of experience working with school aged children in the school system.

An all-day school-aged program will be available for registered children on school holidays, school vacation weeks and snow days (Please refer to the Inclement Weather and Tuition sections of this handbook for additional details.)

AFTER SCHOOL CARE (KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH GRADE)

We offer an after school program to children in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Transportation will be available from most of the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) to the NLC within the driving radius of our school. Transportation is only available on days when LCPS are in session. We provide a nutritional snack, homework time and age-appropriate activities in a safe and secure environment. The children play games, Wii, do experiments and craft-based activities that enable them to explore and learn. If your child is in the Kindergarten Enrichment program, they will be provided with a hot lunch, as well as an afternoon snack. Outdoor activities will take place, weather permitting, as well as both organized and free choice activities such as arts and crafts, music, science and nature studies. There will be no regular TV viewing.

An all-day school-aged program will be available for registered children on school holidays, school vacation weeks and snow days. (Please refer to the Inclement Weather and Tuition sections of this handbook for additional details.)

We also offer before school care and transportation to school.

Summer camp for students entering 1st - 6th grades is also available.

Specials

CHAPEL

Once per week our Associate Pastor, Jessica McClure-Archer, leads each class through an exploration of Bible stories and lessons via Chapels. During Chapel each class is led in for their own time with Pastor Jessica in the Sanctuary where they can explore the weekly story using Godly Play curriculum. Children have an innate sense of the presence of God. The Godly Play approach helps them to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language and to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. Based on Montessori principles and developed using a spiritual curriculum, the Godly Play method serves children of all ages.

MOVEMENT & MUSIC

Ms. Nancy Prestipino (Ms. P to her friends!) leads each class in music and movement classes weekly. Through the use of song, instruments, puppets and whatever other creative devices Ms. P brings that week, the children are encouraged and led to engage in rhythm, singing and dancing. Through music children are encouraged to take an inner experience and turn it into a shared creative experience, releasing energy in creative and explorative ways.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Occasionally the NLC will invite various outside groups or instructors in for either one-time special shows or a few weeks of added instruction. For example, musical groups, puppet shows, wildlife ambassadors (who bring live animals!) and musicians are some of our guests. Instructors of activities such as ballet, yoga or even crafts like weaving are occasionally invited in to share their gifts with the children in either a one-time hands-on demonstration or over the course of several weeks for several

visits. Notice of these special events is provided on the monthly calendar. Parents are encouraged to attend to share the experience with their children!

FIELD TRIPS

Occasional field trips are offered for classes aged preschool and up, ranging from trips to the library for Story Time or special programs such as magicians and musical acts, a local museum, a farm, or even a park. Field trips enrich the children's experience of the world by moving them out of the classroom and into locales where they can touch, smell and truly engage with new experiences. Participation in field trips requires a completed permission slip which will be provided to the parent prior to the event.

Should a child arrive after an off-site scheduled activity or field trip has begun, the child will join the classroom nearest to his/her age with available space until the class returns. Alternately, the parent/guardian may drive the child to the off-site location and deliver the child to the staff member in charge. Call the center before taking your child to the field trip destination to ensure that you know exactly where to meet them.

The NLC will transport children on field trips. Parents must complete the transportation or field trip permission form prior to the date of the field trip; this form will be available for your signature at pickup/drop-off time, or occasionally sent home with your child. Children are always accompanied by their teachers, and the proper staff to child ratio will be maintained at all times.

Children preschool age and up will ride in our NLC bus and are expected to follow all of our safety rules. These rules include using quiet voices, following teacher directions, remaining in their seats while the vehicle is moving, and always keeping their seat belts fastened until the vehicle is stopped. We ask that parents talk to their children before all field trips and remind them of our Center's bus safety rules. If a child is continually disruptive on the bus during field trips, which causes a hazard to the safe operation of the vehicle by the driver, that child may not be allowed to participate on future trips.

PICTURE DAYS

School pictures are taken in the fall by a professional photographer. Parents will be notified in advance of the day along with instructions for ordering photographs. Group photographs of each class are taken in the Spring. If you prefer not to have your child photographed, please notify the Director or the administrative staff.

Policies of Operation

Parent Information & Involvement

The NLC has an open door policy. You are welcome to stop by anytime or even volunteer. We make every effort to keep parents informed and involved. Our methods of communication include:

- **Monthly newsletters** will be posted on the NLC website (www.tnlcenter.com) and emailed to parents at the beginning of each month. The newsletter contains information about on activities both at the NLC as well as the church.
- A brief **weekly email** describing upcoming points of interest for the next week is sent on Fridays.
- **Communication bulletin boards** are located outside of each classroom. Teachers keep these updated with information related to daily activities and announcements including the school calendar, menu, classroom schedules, etc.

- A **parent information board** is located next to the front desk and has information posted including menus, calendars, etc. If you have information you would like to share with other parents, please see the Director before posting.

Volunteer work from parents and members of the St. Andrew congregation plays a key role in the operation of the NLC. We encourage parents to volunteer at the NLC, whether in a classroom, assisting with office work, reading to the children, sharing a special skill, etc. Please contact the NLC Director for more information about volunteering at the NLC.

Progress Reports

We urge parents to communicate with teachers and caregivers on a regular basis. Both the NLC Director and your child's classroom teachers are available to discuss your child's progress; they will bring necessary matters to your attention on a regular basis.

For children up to 36 months we will provide you with a daily, written progress report summarizing your child's activities. In addition to reporting nap times, diaper changes (and replenishing needs), and eating/drinking times and amounts, these reports may include developmental milestones, current themes of study, and special events. They are intended to convey developmental progress, and to provide information on activities that may be reinforced at home.

Parent-teacher conferences are offered once a year for all preschool aged children (three years and older). Additional conferences with teachers and/or the NLC Director may be arranged on an as-needed basis. Please keep us informed of significant events or changes at home. This will allow us to better care for your child. Any questions which may arise should be discussed first with your child's teacher. If satisfaction is not reached through such interaction, please speak with the NLC Director.

Transitioning To Older Classes

As children grow and develop, they will transition into new classrooms based on their age and development. As each child approaches this transition their current teacher will ensure that they have achieved the skills needed to succeed in the older classroom. They work together with the teacher of the older room to ensure that the transition will go smoothly. Parents will be kept informed throughout the entire process so that they can help support their child through these important, exciting, but sometimes stressful moves.

Children will be kept with their age cohort. So as an infant passes the 12 month mark and is developmentally ready they will move from the infant room to the toddler room. The same holds true for the toddlers. For the 2 year olds and preschoolers some children might benefit from transitioning as they pass developmental milestones, however we have found that children continue to grow and learn best when the entire class moves together. This move is made at the beginning of the school year. It allows all of the children in the class to learn and master the same skill sets, allowing focus to be on continuing to move forward rather than trying to "catch up" a child who might have transitioned into the class at a later date.

Hours of Operation

The NLC is open Monday through Friday, from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Holidays Observed

The NLC will be closed for the following Holidays during the upcoming school years:

Holiday	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
TEACHER WORK DAY	N/A	***	***
Labor Day	Monday, September 7	Monday, September 5	Monday, September 4
Columbus Day	Monday, October 12	Monday, October 10	Monday, October 9
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 26	Thursday, November 24	Thursday, November 23
Day After Thanksgiving	Friday, November 27	Friday, November 25	Friday, November 24
Christmas Eve, NLC closes @ 2pm	Thursday, December 24	Friday, December 23	Friday, December 22
Christmas Day	Friday, December 25	Monday, December 26	Monday, December 25
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1	Monday, January 2	Monday, January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr Day	Monday, January 18	Monday, January 16	Monday, January 15
President's Day	Monday, February 15	Monday, February 20	Monday, February 19
Good Friday, NLC closes @ 2pm	Friday, March 25	Friday, April 14	Friday, March 30
Memorial Day	Monday, May 30	Monday, May 29	Monday, May 28

Registration Policy

The NLC is open to any child between the ages of 6 weeks and 12 years of age regardless of race, sex, or creed. Enrollment application forms, accompanied by the registration fee, will be received on a first-come basis. To enroll your child, you must complete the registration form and pay the non-refundable registration fee. The registration fee is reduced for each additional child in the same family. The registration fee is due at the time of enrollment.

Tuition Policy

An annual re-registration fee of \$50 is due on September 1st of each year. Failure to pay re-registration fees in a timely manner may jeopardize ongoing enrollment at The NLC. These fees are non-refundable.

Tuition is paid by automatic withdrawal only. If there is an extenuating circumstance you may pay by check, with preapproval from the NLC Director. Tuition invoices are received via email on the Monday of the tuition week. The funds associated with that invoice are withdrawn the following Monday.

A child may be terminated from the NLC for nonpayment of tuition. The NLC bases its operating costs and staff ratios on current enrollment; therefore **full tuition is due even if your child is not in attendance. Exceptions to the full tuition payment policy are NOT made for illness, vacations, holidays, inclement weather or anything that prohibits operation of the NLC (i.e loss of power).**

If a family has more than one child enrolled at the NLC, the lower tuition rate(s) will be reduced by 10%.

For both the Kindergarten Enrichment and the After School Care programs an additional fee is added to the weekly tuition should your child attend the NLC during LCPS holidays and closures. In the case of children enrolled in the Kindergarten Enrichment class, this nominal fee applies to those children who arrive at the NLC

prior to their normal daily start time (11:00am). Current fee amounts may be obtained from the Director or administrative staff.

A full tuition schedule may be obtained from the NLC Director or administrative staff.

VACATION CREDITS

If your family is enrolled in a year-round full time (meaning that your child attends the NLC every week) 2 day, 3 day, or 5 day program, and your child has been attending for at least 6 months, your family will receive:

- 1 week of vacation credit (1/2 tuition per week) between January 1st through June 30th
- 1 week of vacation credit (1/2 tuition per week) between July 1st through December 31st

This only applies if your account is current. Vacation credit is a 50% discount on the weekly tuition amount and must be used within the 6 month period it occurs (as described above) only. If you do not take vacation credit for the current 6 months, you lose them. Please be aware that your child cannot attend the NLC during any portion of the week the vacation credit is being used. The vacation credit does NOT apply to students who have a portion of their school year attendance interrupted. We request 2 weeks advance notification to verify eligibility.

Security

Security is of the utmost importance at The NLC. There is a keypad both at the front door to the building and at the entrance to the classroom area. Parents will be provided with a code to access each area. Please do not share this code with anyone. If you forget the code or if another authorized person is dropping off or picking up your child, please ring the doorbell at the church entrance for assistance, or ask a staff member for assistance.

Do not hold the front door open for any other person who is not in your immediate party. We have all been taught that it is rude not to hold the door for others, however with security being as important as it is we must revisit this habit in the school environment. We must make it a cultural norm at the NLC to allow the door to close between parties so that each person/group must enter the door code. This ensures that only the people who are in fact authorized to enter the building are allowed to do so.

Policies for Arrival & Departure of Children

- Whenever a parent is picking up or dropping off a child, other children must not be left in unattended vehicles. This is a violation of state law.
- Vehicles cannot be left running while unattended in the parking lot.
- It is a violation of state law to leave a pet in an unattended car when the temperature is over 70 degrees.
- If a parent or other authorized person needs to drop off a child's medication, food, or written permission for alternate child pick-up, he or she should report to the NLC office.

The NLC places great importance on communication between the NLC staff and parents. However, parents should keep in mind that pick-up and drop-off times are not the best times for conferences. Parents should always feel free to schedule a special meeting with the child's teacher and/or the NLC Director.

CHECK IN/OUT TABLET

When arriving with your child at the center, your first stop should be at the front desk to check your child in on the electronic tablet using your unique PIN. If you do not know your PIN please speak with a member of the administrative staff. Only take your child back to the classroom once they have been checked in on the tablet.

When arriving to pick your child up from the center, your first stop should again be at the front desk to check your child out on the electronic tablet using your unique PIN. Then proceed to your child's classroom to pick them up.

Under **no circumstances** are children allowed to use the tablet, even under the supervision of an adult.

On rare occasions the tablet might not be working. In this case a paper sign-in/out sheet will be located on the front desk. Please use this paper form instead.

LATE ARRIVAL

If you arrive at school later than normal, please check in your child as normal and walk them back to their classroom. If the class is not in their room, check the whiteboard located outside their door for a note about their current location. Leave your child's belongings in the room and then escort them to the class location.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP

Children are only released to the custodial parent, guardian, or other authorized persons. Written, not oral, authorization for persons other than those already authorized is required for pick up; proper photo identification must be provided at time of pickup. On the NLC enrollment form, parents/guardians may list the names of individuals other than parents who are authorized to pick up a child. It is the parent's responsibility to keep this information current. No exceptions will be made to this rule unless the parent submits such a request in writing to the NLC Director or other administrative staff. Any time a child is being picked up by someone other than the parent, s/he will be required to provide identification before being authorized to continue to the child's classroom.

LATE PICK-UP

Children should arrive at the NLC no earlier than 6:30am and be picked up no later than 6:30pm. Late pickup is not only unfair to your child, but it is problematic for the teachers and staff of the NLC who have end-of-the day duties to perform as well as personal responsibilities outside of the NLC. If a child is not picked up at the appropriate time, a staff member will call the parent five minutes after the scheduled time.

A late fee will be charged for children left after 6:30pm.

The late fee is \$15 for the first 15 minutes. An additional \$15 will be added for every 15 minutes thereafter. This fee is assessed per child and will be added to your next tuition bill. If late pick-up occurrences become frequent, you will be asked to make other pick-up arrangements for your child/children or your child may be terminated from the NLC.

Attendance

Please call the school at 540-338-3956 to report absences or schedule changes.

PRE-SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

The NLC requires that parents notify the NLC by **10:00am** if a child will be absent for the day unless prior arrangements have been made. For children attending fewer than 5 days per week, prior authorization from the Director is required for any schedule changes.

SCHOOL-AGE SCHEDULE CHANGES

Parents of school-age children are responsible for notifying the NLC if their child's schedule changes, including if he or she is out sick. You must notify the NLC by **1:00pm** if a child will not be attending that day (**7:00am** for morning Kindergarten). If the NLC has not had prior notification from the parent, the staff member who is picking up the child at the school will wait at the school until the school confirms the child's absence or that the child took an alternative mode of transportation. **Families who fail to notify the NLC that their child will not be attending on a scheduled day of attendance can be charged a \$20 fee;** this will be added to your account balance. Again we ask families to please consider the staff and children on the bus pick-up route. The NLC bus will only run on days when Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) are in session.

Meals

Meals and snacks are included in your child's tuition.

- Breakfast is available from 7:00am-8:00am.
- Lunch is provided to all children scheduled to be at the NLC between 11:30 and noon.
- Afternoon snack is also served.

Please ensure that your child is at the center at the specified mealtimes if you want them to eat here. For example, if you would like your child to have breakfast at the NLC, they need to be here prior to 8am.

All meals and snacks meet the nutritional standards as set forth by the Child Care Food Program of the USDA. Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) guidelines are followed to promote optimal growth and development. Children under the age of two years are given whole milk with lunch; older children are given 2% milk. Food is provided by Schenk Foods Co. More information is available at www.SchenkFoods.com.

A weekly menu is provided the Friday prior to the new week. These menus are posted outside of the classroom, on the parent information board near the front desk, and are also available online at the NLC website (tnlcenter.com). Every effort is made to indicate which foods have allergens such as milk, wheat and soy, but if you have a concern about specific ingredients please speak with our cook.

We do not provide infant foods – i.e. baby food, cereals, formula, or bottles. Please label these items with the infant's name and date. We encourage nursing mothers to continue as their individual schedules permit. Nursing mothers may bring a day's supply of fresh breast milk labeled with the child's name and the date. Each infant should have a written daily feeding schedule including the amounts and times to be fed. Around the age of 10-11 months, or at an age you specify, we are happy to help introduce your baby to table foods. Speak with your child's teacher regarding this process as your baby approaches this milestone.

Children are given as much time as needed to eat. They are encouraged to be interested in the food before them, and assisted when needed. No child is ever forced to eat any food. Eating problems or changes in mealtime behavior will be reported promptly to the parent.

Food from Home

Children should not bring food to the NLC. Adequate meals and snacks are provided. Food exceptions are not made for individual children except in the case of allergies or a special written diet prescribed by a physician. Please send the necessary food your child must have in these cases to the NLC, ensuring that all containers are clearly labeled with your child's name. Please feel free to discuss any specific concerns with you're the Director.

If your child requires an alternative to cow's milk, you will be required to provide this option by supplying the alternative product labeled with your child's name and date. A current allergy form must be on file.

The NLC is a **peanut-safe center**, meaning that no products containing peanuts may be brought to the center, but items made in the vicinity of peanuts may, at times, be present. NO nut milks are acceptable (almond milk, etc.).

Discipline

Children are not expected to immediately understand or fully comply with all of the rules; rather they are to be gently taught, reminded, and when necessary, redirected. The NLC's staff members are responsible for setting up an environment that encourages cooperation and sharing, rather than aggressive behavior.

There are times when children may actually endanger themselves or others by their actions. Due to these possibilities, specific behavior guidance steps have been set up. Logical consequences will be established for problematic behavior. For example, a child who throws or damages a toy may be prohibited from the use of that toy for the rest of the play period in question. Verbal reprimands, which are brief statements of the problem behavior, are used to explain to a child that his/her behavior is unacceptable and what the acceptable alternative behavior is. At times, a child may just require a little time away from the other children to calm down.

The NLC believes that parents and teachers must work together to address persistent behavioral issues such as biting, unusual or dangerous aggression, or other issues. Parents will be contacted for a conference when a child appears to be unusually stressed, anxious, or otherwise motivated to engage in negative behaviors. Children who cannot adjust to the group environment, benefit from the programs offered, or who endanger the safety and well-being of others may be dismissed from the NLC after the Director and teachers have made every effort to work with the child and the parents to eliminate the problematic behaviors.

Childcare services at the NLC may be discontinued if the Director determines that a child's behavior:

- 1. Poses a safety or health risk to NLC staff and/or other children.**
- 2. Repeatedly disrupts normal classroom activities with inappropriate behavior, despite efforts by teachers to correct the behavior.**

If the above behaviors occur, the NLC Director will first attempt to meet with the child's parents or guardians to alert them to the problem, discuss methods of correcting the behavior, and notify the parents that the child will be terminated from the NLC if the behavior is not promptly corrected. If the disruptive or inappropriate behavior endangers the safety and well-being of NLC children, staff or visitors, the Director may take all actions necessary to immediately in order to protect other children, staff and visitors. **The NLC has a no-tolerance policy for any type of bullying behavior.** Any and all incidents will be immediately reported to the NLC Director and the parents of children involved.

The NLC complies with all federal, state, and other relevant laws that prohibit corporal or abusive punishment in a preschool. Additionally, staff is expressly prohibited from using unproductive, shaming methods of punishment.

BITING

Biting is not uncommon, especially among babies and younger toddlers who are learning about the world in all sorts of ways – even through their mouths! If a child bites another child the teacher will speak with the biter and remind them that teeth are not for biting our friends and will redirect the child appropriately. A “Biting Report” will be completed, both for the child who was bitten and for the biter. The parent of the child who did the biting will be provided with a copy of the Biting Report and will be asked to sign in acknowledgement. This notification ensures that appropriate steps can be taken at home as well as at school to emphasize to the child that we do not bite others.

Termination Policy

If a family desires to terminate their contract with the NLC, they must give the NLC two weeks’ notice in writing prior to the date of termination.

The NLC’s staff will make every effort to work with the family to prevent situations in which the NLC must initiate termination of a child from the program. However, the NLC has the right to immediately terminate a student for aggressive or violent behavior towards an instructor or another student as described above.

Health Policies

Records

An immunization form must be in the child’s record by the date of the child’s admission to the NLC. In addition, a School Entrance Health Form (obtainable at the front desk) is required within 30 days of attendance. Immunizations must be recorded on either a Health Department form or a physician’s form, have the child’s name, and be signed or stamped by a licensed physician, the physician’s designee, or an official of a local health department.

You are required to submit updated immunization forms at the following ages:

- Every 6 months for children under the age of 2
- Once between 4-6 years old

Families who fail to provide required records in accordance with these licensing standards may be un-enrolled at any time.

Illness

REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

A child showing any of the following signs/symptoms **must be excluded** from the NLC:

- Temperature of 101 degrees F or higher within the last 24 hours
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Yellow/green nasal discharge accompanied by fever
- Diarrhea – If a child has three diarrhea stools, the parents will be called to pick up their child.
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- General discomfort
- Coughing so that the child cannot play, cry, sleep or eat
- Ear ache
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – this is generally a viral infection that is spread via the hands. It is highly contagious for the first 3 to 5 days after symptoms appear. Symptoms include red, draining or crusty eyes.
- Strep throat
- Lice
- Any communicable disease (ex// Chickenpox, Fifth Disease, Influenza, Norovirus, Ringworm, Scabies)

If we observe any of these symptoms in your child while they are in our care we will isolate them from the other children and will call you immediately so that you can make arrangements for early pick-up. Exclusion from the NLC is required when the teachers and the Director feel that a child is in a contagious phase of an illness, if they require more care and observation than can be offered at the NLC, or if a child can no longer be comfortable at the NLC.

If your child exhibits any of the above listed symptoms while in your care, please follow the exclusion/inclusion regulations, even if their symptoms have resolved by drop-off time. We understand that it can be inconvenient to stay home with a child who no longer appears to be ill, however bringing a child who has had symptoms like those listed above into contact with other children often spreads illness. Please be considerate of other children and families and – if in doubt – keep your child home.

INCLUSION/RETURNING AFTER ILLNESS

A child may attend/return to the NLC:

- After 24 hours fever, vomiting and diarrhea free
- 24 hours after treatment with antibiotics for infections such as pink eye, ear ache, and strept throat
- After treatment with lice shampoo and removing nits with a nit comb. Recheck your child after 7-10 days.
- Common cold without a fever
- Skin rashes with a doctor's note
- After coughing/wheezing/sneezing has stopped or lessened or if the child is on an antibiotic
- Nasal discharge is clear
- Doctor's release for communicable diseases

Children may attend the NLC with a slight cold, as long as their temperature is less than 101 degrees and none of the symptoms mentioned in the Exclusion section above are present. We cannot allow Tylenol or any other pain reliever to be given to mask a fever if a child is ill.

Some illnesses/conditions such as Hand, Foot and Mouth, or lice, are easily spread in a community such as a child care center. If a child is diagnosed with such an illness, every effort will be made to notify families whose children might have come in contact with either the ill child or other opportunities to be exposed to the disease. Notification will be made via email, flyers, postings at the front desk, etc.

Please Note: Some communicable diseases must be reported to the Public Health authorities so that control measures can be implemented. Parents and staff are asked to notify the NLC within 24 hours after a child, a person in that child's immediate family, and/or staff member, have developed a known or suspected communicable disease. If a communicable disease is diagnosed within the NLC community a notification email will be sent to all families regarding the specific symptoms, what to watch for, steps to take to avoid/treat, etc.

Medication

The NLC will only administer medications that are prescribed by a physician and that are required more than twice per day. All medications must be in the original containers and must be clearly marked with the child's name and dosage to be given. Expired medication will not be administered or kept at the NLC. So that you don't forget to take your child's medication home with you, it may be helpful to ask your pharmacist to put your child's prescription medication in two labeled containers, one for the NLC and one for home.

All prescription medications will be administered by a staff member who has received Medication Administration Training (MAT).

If a child is to receive any type of medication while at the NLC, a "**Medication Consent Form**" must be completed by the parent and possibly the child's physician (see below). This form is available at the front desk. Once completed the form needs to be returned to the office, along with the medication to be administered.

Please note: A separate form must be completed for each type of medication that is to be administered.

- If the medication is a Prescription – the Medication Consent Form must be signed by the child's physician.
- If the medication is Over-the-Counter – the Medication Consent Form must be signed by the child's physician if stated in the dosage information for the child's age, otherwise the parent/guardian signature is sufficient.

Emergency Medication (including Epi-Pen)

- For an **Epi-Pen**, a "**Food Allergy Action Plan**" (available at the front desk) must be filled out in addition to the "**Medication Consent Form**". Only the name brand "Epi-Pen Jr." or "Epi-Pen" may be used at the NLC. Generic epinephrine dispensers are not permitted by Virginia Medication Administration Training.
- For children who require emergency medication, all medication and accompanying forms must be complete and current. Failure to provide current medication or forms will prevent your child from attending the NLC until all requirements are met.

Topical Medications (Sunscreens, Insect Repellent, Diaper Ointment, etc.)

Non-prescription, topical medications do not require a MAT certified staff member to administer them. The procedure for the application of sunscreen, diaper cream, moisturizer, or insect repellent is:

1. The parent of each child must have a completed "O.T.C. Topical Medication form" on file. This form is valid only through December 31st of each year. You will be asked to complete a new form each year.
2. The parent must supply the teacher with the appropriate sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.
3. The teacher will match the Topical Medication form to the type of medication provided.
4. The teacher will apply (or assist in the application of, for school-aged children) the medication.
5. The teacher will check the children after application to ensure that there is no reaction to the medication.

Daily Health Check

To help minimize the spread of disease and to ensure that the children in our care are as healthy and comfortable as possible, our teachers will perform a simple daily health check on each child. The teachers attend a training course taught by a registered nurse, the purpose of which is to teach them signs/symptoms to look for in a child that might indicate a health concern.

A Daily Health Check is performed each day as part of the greeting, and is completed before the parent leaves. The goal is to observe the child for changes in their appearance or behavior, NOT to diagnose an illness.

Teachers will:

- Listen – to answers to questions such as, "How are you today? Did you sleep alright? Was everything ok with breakfast?"
- Look – Is the hair well-kept and free of lice? Are eyes clear or are they red, draining, itchy or crusty? Is the child complaining of pain in the ears or tugging at them? Is there any nasal discharge or is the skin red/inflamed above the lip? Is there excessive drooling, sores around the mouth, chapped lips or a cough? Is the skin unusually cold or warm, clammy, pale, or rash-like?
- Smell – Are there any unusual odors?
- Feel – Does the back of the child's neck feel warm?

If any signs/symptoms are noted, the parents are notified immediately.

Accidents

In the event a child needs emergency care and we cannot reach the parents, the child will be taken to the INOVA Loudoun Hospital Center at Lansdowne or a previously requested emergency facility. If a child has a life-threatening problem, emergency care will be provided even if the NLC cannot reach the parents.

Parents will be immediately notified if their child sustains any sort of injury to the head, no matter how minor.

INCIDENT REPORT

In the event of an accident/injury, appropriate procedures will be followed and parents will be notified. Incident reports are kept on all accidents and copies are available to the parents at the end of the day when they come to pick-up their child. These incident report forms are completed by the teacher at the time of the accident/incident and is reviewed and signed by an administrative staff member. You will also be asked to sign the form, allowing you the opportunity to review what happened and the steps that were taken afterwards.

Inclement Weather/School Closings

The NLC will follow the Federal Government's schedule for closing due to inclement weather and late opening, NOT the Loudoun County Public Schools.

- If Loudoun County Public Schools have an early dismissal, the NLC bus will immediately pick the children up from school.
- If the Federal Government has an early dismissal, parents are required to pick their children up immediately from the center.
- If the Federal Government has a delayed opening, the NLC have the same delay.

You will receive a text from the NLC and an email no later than 6:00am should a closure or delay be in effect for the NLC on a particular day. You may also check the www.opm.gov/status website for closure and delay information.

When Loudoun County Public Schools are closed due to holidays or teacher workdays and the NLC is open, school age children may attend for an extra fee. The extra fee is applied if the child arrives before their normal time i.e. 11:00am for kindergarten or 2:45pm for 1st – 5th grade. See the Tuition section of this document for detailed information.

Your Child's Personal Items

Toys from Home

We discourage children from bringing toys from home because the NLC cannot be responsible for these items. There may be exceptions to this guideline such as "show & tell" days. We will keep you informed of these events. We understand that sometimes bringing a "piece of home" is important to children and it is possible to work out an arrangement with your child's teacher to have a "special toy" that travels from home to the NLC. Please be sure to label your child's toys as best as possible and inform his/her teacher.

Clothing

Please have your child wear play clothes to school that are comfortable and easy for your child to manage as we encourage children to do as much for themselves as possible. This is part of the learning process and helps to build self-esteem as children learn independence. It is important that your child be allowed to get dirty and to get wet when the situation calls for it. Therefore, we require that your child have a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing (including underwear and socks) at the NLC at all times. Any soiled clothing from the day will be placed in your child's cubby or sent home in his/her diaper bag. Each item of clothing, including jackets & sweaters should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Other Personal Items

Students who have "rest time" or naps each day are allowed to bring pillow/pillow pets (**ages 2 and up only**), blankets, stuffed animals and teething relief toys from home; these items may only be used during "rest time." A single bed sheet should also be sent to the NLC with your child for use with a cot. Parents are responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of such items. **Blankets, pillows, and sheets must be taken home every Friday to be washed and returned the following Monday. All personal items MUST BE LABELED with your child's name.**

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found basket can be found next to the front desk. If you are missing an item and have checked with the teacher, please check this basket. Once or twice a year we will have a "Lost and Found Adoption Day" when all items are left out on a table inside the main entry for a last chance at redemption before they are discarded.

Records

Your child's records include the following and must be kept current and accurate:

- Your child's identifying information (name, birthdate, etc.)
- Parent(s) name, address, home and business phone numbers
- Name, address, and telephone numbers of persons, including the child's physician, to contact in case of emergency
- A signed statement by the parent regarding any allergies and other known health problems (medical, mental, emotional, developmental) and any special procedures that should be used in caring for the child
- Parental agreements for obtaining emergency medical care for the child when the parent is not available
- Current Physical and Immunization Records
- Center agreements and releases

Information pertaining to your child will not be disclosed to persons other than the NLC staff or other authorized personnel, unless you have granted written permission to do so.

All records must be complete and up-to-date in order for your child to attend the NLC. Students with incomplete files will not be permitted to attend until the record is brought up to date.

Recognizing Child Abuse & Neglect

If any staff member suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, the law (VA Code S63.2-1509) mandates that the staff member immediately reports the suspected abuse or neglect. All reports must be made directly to the child abuse hotline at 800-552-7096. If a staff member is uncertain about making such a reporting, s/he should immediately discuss the matter with the Director, who will take prompt action to investigate and make a determination as to whether a report is necessary.

Furthermore, each staff member must take the "Child Abuse and Neglect: Recognizing, Reporting, and Responding for Educators" online course which is provided through Virginia Commonwealth University. A certificate of completion from each staff member is kept in the office.

Child Find

The NLC participates with Child Find. Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening and evaluation designed to *locate, identify, and refer as early as possible* all young children with disabilities and their families who are in need of Early Intervention Program (Part C) or Preschool Special Education (Part B/619) services of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In addition to children with disabilities, some states have elected to provide early intervention services for infants and toddlers who are at **risk of developmental delay** and their families. To receive Early Intervention Program or Special Education, children must meet eligibility guidelines according to the IDEA.

If the NLC teachers and/or Director feel that there may be a need for screening by Child Find, you will be notified prior to any action being taken.

Please visit www.childfindidea.org for more information. The Child Find services are provided without cost to parents.

Licensing

This center is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services as a religiously exempt childcare facility. They can be contacted at www.dss.va.gov.

Contact Information

Phone: 540-338-3956

Email: Marcie Peterson – marcie@theneighborhoodlearningcenter.com

Website: www.tnlcenter.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and read the attached Neighborhood Learning Center Parent Handbook dated October 30, 2015. I agree to comply with the policies described.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (Please print.) _____

Child/Children's name(s) _____

Date _____

Please return this signed form to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Thank you.