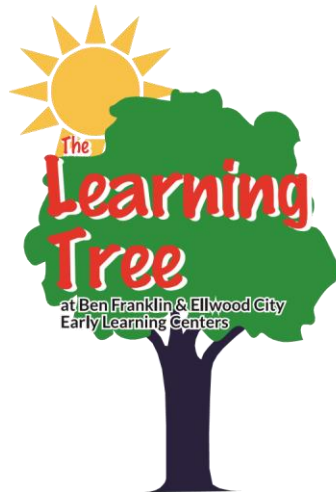


LCCAP Early Childhood Education Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-25

School Year



LCCAP Early Learning Program’s Family Commitment

“A Child needs to be well to do well”

Our goal is to equip your family for success. All parents/guardians of LCCAP Early Learning children are automatically participants in our program! We are required to support families in the following categories of life:

Family Well Being	Positive Parent-Child Relationships
Families as Lifelong Educators	Families as Learners
Family Engagement in Transitions	Family Connections to Peers and Community
Families as Advocates and Leaders	

Involved and committed families, along with LCCAP staff, will work as a team to meet these goals. Each family has a responsibility to participate in their child’s education. This is a partnership.

If you...	LCCAP will...
Identify your family needs	Develop a plan together to accomplish your family goals
Share your parenting challenges	Support your parenting needs
Seek to learn and try new things	Share information
Commit to participate	Link you to resources
Support your child’s transitions	Coordinate services into and out of LCCAP Early Learning Programs
Explore possibilities	Provide community connections

The agreed upon responsibilities for each party in the partnership are as follows:

Complete two Home Visits	Participate in Family Engagement Opportunities
Complete two Child Conferences	Support classroom learning at home
Complete two Family Conferences	Discuss my child’s screening and assessment results and progress
Participate in the Goal Setting Process	Support my child’s medical and oral health
Maintain open communication with all program staff	Receive program services and education related to my child’s nutrition
Support my child’s transitions	

WELCOME TO LCCAP EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS!

LCCAP welcomes you and your family to our “family” of Early Learning Programs: The Learning Tree Preschool and Child Care program, Early Head Start, Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts. We recognize that **you have been and will continue to be your child’s first and most important teacher.** Our role is to partner with you in that process. We thank you for the trust you are placing in us to help you as your child grows and develops, headed towards becoming “school ready.”

We recognize that every child and family is unique, with different abilities and needs. Our program is ready to objectively assess each child’s abilities and needs, and work with you to advance their learning, as well as your confidence as the child’s most important influence. Our goal for families is to understand their role in their child’s school readiness, from infancy forward, and to learn new tips and strategies about how to best help your child and family develop to their fullest potential.

It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy, as it will answer many of the questions that you may have. As you review and reference the guidance and protocols laid out in this handbook, please know that the content is subject to change based on our need to keep children, families, and staff safe. You will receive written notification of any changes that occur should they become necessary. If you cannot find an answer in this handbook, please contact any staff member, who will be happy to help you find the information you need.

We ask you to share your time and talents by volunteering in the classroom, participating in events, joining a committee, attending a workshop, and reading to your child at home. It is our goal and promise to help you, your child and whole family feel strong, confident, and ready to move forward! Join us as a full and active partner in your child’s growth and learning. Together we can be a great team for school success!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

Contact Information		
Ben Franklin Early Learning Center and The Learning Tree Child Care Center	815 Cunningham Avenue New Castle, PA 16101	724-658-7671
Ellwood City Early Learning Center and The Learning Tree Child Care Center	924 Crescent Avenue Ellwood City, PA 16117	724-752-0239
Frew Mill Campus and The Learning Tree Child Care Center	1745 Frew Mill Rd. New Castle, PA 16101	724-202-6775
Laurel Elementary School	223 McCaslin Rd. New Castle, PA 16101	724-598-4513
Mohawk Elementary School	351 Mohawk School Rd. Bessemer, PA 16112	724-667-7782 Room 1: ext. 1112 Room 2: ext. 1110
Neshannock Memorial Elementary School	3834 Mitchell Rd. New Castle, PA 16105	724-652-8709, ext. 4102
Shenango Elementary School	2501 Old Pittsburgh Rd. New Castle, PA 16101	724-658-5566, ask for preschool
Wilmington Area Elementary School	450 Wood Street New Wilmington, PA 16142	724-656-8866, ext. 3342

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

LCCAP Early Learning Programs believes that a child's social skill is the gateway to school readiness. Our goal is to help children become effective in dealing with both their present environment and other responsibilities in their early education and life, so that they become both socially competent and ready for school. LCCAP offers comprehensive services, including high quality early childhood education, to all children enrolled in our programs.

The programs have a strong family focus, by asking you to be engaged in support of the curriculum and our approach to child development and education. We build trust with families by effective communication and involvement through home visits, parent conferences, and the inclusion of families as classroom participants/volunteers. YOU are your child's first and most important teacher. If your child is going to succeed in school and life, families and educators MUST work together as partners.

Our program is developmentally appropriate, and we recognize and respect that individual children grow and learn at different rates. We use information about children's individual interests, temperaments, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles to help them succeed.

Mission

LCCAP is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life within Lawrence County by eliminating and preventing the causes and effects of poverty by mobilizing and directing resources to assist, educate, and promote self-sufficiency.

Certifications

Some classrooms (Learning Tree classrooms) and public spaces within our Ben Franklin and Ellwood City Early Learning Centers and at Frew Mill Campus are ***certified to offer childcare services*** through the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)/PA Department of Human Services.

LCCAP early learning programs participate in ***Keystone STARS***, Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A QRIS is a continuous quality improvement system approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Keystone STARS is a program of OCDEL. All our programs are currently rated STAR 4, the highest rating.

LCCAP receives state and federal grants to operate the ***Head Start, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships*** and ***PA Pre-K Counts programs***. These programs are monitored regularly and frequently by the funders to assure that high quality services are being provided.

Definition of Family

For application and enrollment purposes, we define “family” as the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) legally assigned to make decisions for the child.

For family engagement purposes, the parent(s), legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best interest, and responsibility of the child in our care is welcome to participate in our activities.

Calendars, Hours of Operation, Holidays and Flexible Instruction

You will receive a calendar for your child’s classroom before the new school year starts. Post this calendar somewhere that you will see it each day, and please ask for another copy should you misplace it. The calendars are also available on our website at <https://lccap.org/programs-services/education/parent-resources/>. You will be notified by phone call, email, text, and written memo when any updates to your child’s classroom calendar have been made.

Learning Tree Child Care services (select classrooms) at Ben Franklin and Ellwood City Early Learning Centers and at Frew Mill Campus operate from 7 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday, year-round. The Learning Tree is closed for 10 holidays and 6 staff in-service days each school year.

Classrooms that offer “preschool-only” services operate on different schedules and calendars based on a variety of factors. You will be notified of your child’s schedule prior to the start of school.

There may be situations that would call for a Flexible Instruction Plan to be implemented. Some calendars already have pre-planned flexible instruction days noted. These modified plans will be clearly communicated with families when being activated. Your teacher and family service worker will share more information with you about flexible instruction days.

Admission & Enrollment

Enrollment in LCCAP Early Learning Programs begins with the completion of an application and intake appointment. We accept applications for enrollment throughout the year, with active waiting lists for services maintained. The parent/legal guardian who completed the application and intake will be notified by letter if their child has been accepted into the program. Should a legal shared custody agreement exist, we must always abide by its’ orders, and both parties must agree on enrolling the child in our programs.

Required documents such as birth certificate, social security card, insurance card, current immunizations, physical and dental exam, proof of residency, photo ID, household income and legal documents such custody orders, if any, are required to be provided at the time

of intake. The information obtained at intake is used to complete the selection criteria, which ensures that enrollment slots are filled without bias or preference, and that the enrollment of the child follows any legal orders currently in place.

Children are admitted to LCCAP Early Learning Programs without regard to race, color, creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency) or sex, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

LCCAP Early Learning Programs believe that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging. Parents and staff will work together to make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program, appropriate to his/her individual capabilities and needs.

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed prior to your child's first day of attendance. Our process for introducing children and families to our program will include a home visit and/or "meet and greet" session prior to your child's first day of attendance, as well. We use these experiences to get to know you and your child better and for you to get to know your child's Teachers and Family Service Worker. These activities are designed to form a warm and welcoming relationship with your family—an important part of helping your child make a smooth transition into our program.

Early Head Start serves children beginning at six weeks of age. Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts serve children who are at least three years of age (most often one or two years away from their home school district's Kindergarten eligibility). The Learning Tree Child Care services are available to children ages six weeks through kindergarten eligibility.

In-Kind

Many of LCCAP's programs operate on funds that come directly from the state and federal government. However, they do not provide all the funds needed to operate the programs. Some of our funders expect that 20% of our funds come from "in-kind" donations. In-Kind donations are considered a "matching" source of funds generated through donations of time, space, or materials that the programs would otherwise purchase. Volunteer time is "valued" at the rate the program would have to pay for the services. For example, a dollar amount for a parent helping in a classroom or working on an assigned activity at home would be equal to the hourly rate of an Assistant Teacher.

Volunteering and other donations are critical to the successful operation of our programs. Some categories of volunteers have specific health and background/clearance requirements. Talk to your Teacher or Family Service Worker for more information about

these requirements, and how you can help us meet our In-Kind requirements and document your contributions.

Complaint Procedure

Your confidence in our service is important. Please feel free to discuss with any staff member any dispute, disagreement, or complaint that you may have so that we may properly resolve the issue. We encourage you to feel free to raise questions to your teacher or Family Service Worker, but all staff members have received training on our program's complaint policy and can assist you if you have any concerns. At the time of intake, families are asked to sign a "statement of receipt," acknowledging that they have been provided with information related to our formal grievance procedure.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Child/Family Records

Your privacy is important to us! LCCAP Early Learning programs use a variety of data systems to maintain child and family records and to collect information that is used to design, plan, and improve our programs. Please be assured that LCCAP monitors the security of all data collected. All staff members are trained in and required to comply with policies related to data privacy and general confidentiality.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) contains certain confidentiality provisions. The primary rights of parents under FERPA include: the right to inspect and review education records; the right to seek to amend education records; and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from education records. In the case of FERPA, "parent" is defined as a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual legally acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. FERPA affords full rights to either parent unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statutes or legally binding document that specifically revokes these rights. "Education Records" are records that contain information related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

The only way information about you and/or your family is shared with an outside source is by you giving us written consent to do so. You may choose to revoke your consent at any time, in writing. The only way information is shared without your consent is in the event of a legal issue or emergency that has placed your child or family member in danger.

Parents are allowed to see their family's records but are not allowed to see the records of other families, or to discuss other families' situations with staff or other individuals.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate/volunteer in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program

hours. The infant room welcomes mothers who are breastfeeding to nurse their infants by prior arrangement.

Our “Open Door” policy, however, does not mean the doors will be unlocked, or kept open. For the safety and protection of children, all external doors--at every facility--will be closed and locked at all times. Doors to individual classrooms are most often kept closed and locked from the outside for this same reason.

Our staff will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since classroom staff days are devoted to caring for and supervising children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion either in person or by phone during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, staff will ask you to kindly work to arrange for mutually agreeable time to speak by phone or meet in person.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff are hired in compliance with the state and federal requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff qualifications/certifications are as follows:

<i>Position Title</i>	<i>Education/Certification</i>
<i>Preschool Teacher</i>	<i>Associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education, or a related field with preschool experience</i>
<i>Preschool Assistant Teacher</i>	<i>HS Diploma with preschool experience, or Preschool Child Development Associate Credential</i>
<i>Infant/Toddler Teacher</i>	<i>Associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field with coursework focusing on Infants and Toddlers, or Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate Credential</i>
<i>Infant/Toddler Aide</i>	<i>HS Diploma with childcare experience</i>
<i>Family Service Worker</i>	<i>Bachelor's degree in social work or related field, or a credential/certification meeting the same standards</i>

Staff participate in orientation and ongoing training and professional development in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Active Supervision and Child to Staff Ratios

Active supervision always requires focused attention and intentional observation of children. Staff position themselves so that they can observe all the children: watching, counting, and always listening. During transitions, staff account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child. We use a child ID badge/tag system to reinforce this practice. Staff also use their knowledge of each child’s development and abilities to anticipate what they will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

To support the methods of active supervision, we maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
<i>6 weeks-35 months</i>	<i>4 to 1</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>3- to 5-year-olds (In preschool rooms)</i>	<i>10 to 1</i>	<i>20</i>

While in our facilities, we require that you also practice active supervision of your own children, whether it be in the parking lot or buildings at drop off/pick up times, during family engagement events, etc. You can do this by keeping children physically close to you, taking their hand, being able to always see them, etc. Young children like to test limits. It only takes a moment for accidents to happen, and it takes everyone to help keep all children safe!

Methods of Communication

Ongoing Communication. Regular phone calls, texts and/or notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child’s activities and experiences at the center.

Bulletin Boards/White Boards. Located at classroom doors and throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Regular newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, helpful information related to child growth and development, etc.

Electronic communication systems. The School Messenger system is used to make phone calls and/or send text messages and emails to families on a regular basis to stay up to date about events and opportunities for additional services. School Messenger is also used to alert families and staff of critical situations, such as emergencies, weather closures, early dismissals, etc. The primary enrolling parent/guardian’s contact information is automatically added to our system. If you have more than one adult in your home/family or

share custody, be sure to ask us to add the additional person's contact information. Please be sure to keep your phone numbers and email address and theirs up to date to ensure that you receive all critical information of this nature. *You must "opt in" to receive text messages and will receive instructions about how to do so at your first home visit.* Do not hesitate to contact us if you have more questions about how this system works to help keep you informed.

- When you receive *calls* from this system, you will see the number "724-658-7258".
- When you receive *texts* from this system, you will see the number "67587".
- When you receive *emails* from this system, the sender will show as "Lccap Offices."

We recommend that you save this information in your cell phone contacts as "School Messenger," so you never mistakenly overlook an important message.

Class Dojo is a school communication platform that teachers and families use every day to share what is being learned and happening at school and home through photos, videos, and messages. The platform works on any iOS or Android device, Kindle Fire, or on any computer. Your child's teacher will share information with you about how to join.

The **LCCAP Website** (www.lccap.org) shares a wealth of information that will be helpful to you about many beneficial programs in addition to early learning that may assist you and your family. Your Family Service Worker can assist in helping you learn more about them. The early learning/childcare section of the website contains electronic versions of many of the resources, tools, and forms that you may need to access while you have a child enrolled with us, including this handbook (in English and Spanish), the calendar for your child's classroom, and much more.

Social Media outlets including Facebook (@LawrenceCountyCAP), Twitter (@LawCountyCAP) and Instagram (lawcountycap) are used to regularly communicate updates about current happenings, special events and important notices. When social media is used, it is only to supplement our other forms of communication like School Messenger and Class Dojo. Please follow us on these accounts, and "share" and "like" our posts with your friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family. Help spread the word about us!

Family Visits Family participation is encouraged! Consider visiting the classroom, volunteering, or eating a meal with your child. Signing in at the main office is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on the premises and sign-out upon leaving. Some facilities (school district buildings) require that additional security measures be taken. Please cooperate with all these precautions. Failure to follow these procedures may lead to restrictions of visitation privileges.

Accuracy of Contact and Other Information

There are several pieces of information that need to be kept up to date so that we can communicate with you on a regular basis, or in an emergency. Before your child's first day of care, an emergency card is completed. This information is required to identify adult family/guardians and friends (age 16 or older) who, with proper photo identification, are permitted to drop off and/or pick your child up from school or the bus stop (if applicable). This emergency card information must be kept up to date. The classroom staff or Family Service Worker should be ***notified in writing*** of any changes in phone numbers, addresses or emergency contact names as soon as possible. There is a minimum of 48 hours required before any change to an emergency card can take effect.

Next, please make sure to notify us of any change to your mailing address, telephone number(s) or email address. We use these to support the sending of important messages to you from our School Messenger system.

At a minimum, we will ask you to review your contact information and the list of those that you have named as alternate contact and/or emergency release persons for your child, as well as those that you give us permission to communicate with, at every home visit and parent conference. ***Please do not wait until these times to notify us of any changes to help ensure that we can keep your child safe and contact you immediately if necessary.***

Publicity/Photos/Video

Occasionally, photos or videos will be taken of the children for use within the program or on our agency website or social media outlets. Written permission will be obtained prior to taking/use of photographs or videos and kept on file.

Unless the family indicates that they permit us to do so, we will not use pictures or videos and names of children for publicity. A family may choose to revoke permission at any time, in writing.

Transitions

"Transition" means change. Families and children go through many changes. The changes that are planned for are the most positive ones. We view transitions as opportunities for continuous learning and growth. Transition addresses all changes that occur as a family moves from one setting to another, from home to a center-based program, within a program or between programs. You will become aware of just how important you are when planning for the many transitions you, your child, and family will experience. You have firsthand knowledge about your children and family to provide staff. This information will be useful in guiding your family's next steps.

As your child's first teacher, you are the key to successful early transitions when you:

- *Advocate for your own child and other children.*
- *Prepare and support your child before and during transitions.*
- *Understand the importance of effective transitions in the lives of your child and family.*
- *Learn from others about the new settings by forming supportive and ongoing alliances with other parents/guardians and staff.*

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- *Work with your child at home.*
- *Learn about new settings and new experiences.*
- *Stay involved with the program.*
- *Network with other parents/guardians.*
- *Communicate regularly with staff.*
- *Share what you know about your child.*

Your child's transitions in an early learning program should be positive, exciting and an opportunity to grow. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Examples of Transitions

From home to center

When entering LCCAP Early Learning programs, you will be provided with several opportunities to visit with the staff, who will work with you and your child, **through activities such as an orientation, first home visit and/or meet and greet meeting.** We will consult with you to make an individualized plan that meets both your child's needs, as well as yours, whenever possible.

Between early learning programs or classrooms

Once enrolled, transfers between classrooms, as a child gets older (Infant to Toddler room to Preschool room) and sometimes even between facilities (in the event of a family moving) are necessary. Again, keeping the comfort of both you and your child in mind, we will make transition activities available to you and your child to ensure that services continue to be delivered effectively. These activities are also designed to help a child/family feel comfortable and confident as these changes occur.

To Kindergarten

Finally, when your family is leaving an LCCAP Early Learning program, we offer services ranging from assistance with kindergarten registration, the transfer of a child's records to a new program or school district, kindergarten visits and much more. All staff members are trained to facilitate each of these transition procedures and will offer to be of assistance in any of these instances.

Electronic Media

Best practice and expert recommendations are what LCCAP early learning programs used to develop our policy on electronic media/screen time, which includes TV, videos, and computers. While at our centers, children under 2 will have no screen time, with very specific and limited exceptions involving strengthening family-child relationships when interaction is otherwise unavailable. Over 2 years of age, children will be limited to 30 minutes a week used to support active play and exploration. No screen time happens during our meals or snacks. All media use at our centers is to be reviewed for appropriateness by teachers, prior to any viewing.

Multiculturalism

We strive to create a welcoming environment for all children and families, including those from a variety of cultures and who speak different languages. Together, with all children and families, we will learn about and encourage you to share with us what makes your child and family special. We will work with each family to develop strategies and find/use resources that make everyone feel valued, and a part of our early learning community.

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the world that we live in. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. We encourage you to ask your child's teacher how you might share a hobby or skill that you have, or a family custom or tradition with your child's classroom.

Celebrations and Holidays

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for diverse cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community. Our philosophy is to recognize and respect the unique identity of each child and family. Therefore, we do not assume that all families share in the celebrations of holidays and other special events in the same way. Staff will work together with families who would like to share their special customs and traditions with their child's classmates.

To be respectful of all children and families, what we celebrate throughout the year is children and their growth, in ways that are simple, developmentally appropriate, fun, and stress-free. Examples of these celebrations are the change of seasons, the conclusion of special learning "studies" or projects, a new baby in a family, or a new child enrolled into a classroom, etc.

In addition, a fun birthday snack is provided by the program once each month, so that children whose birthdays fall within that month can enjoy a treat with their friends. When we celebrate birthdays, we do so simply, but help children feel special with class activities like a special song or cheer, and/or a birthday story or hat for the birthday child to wear for the day.

Rest Time

Infants and young toddlers sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times, and check on sleeping infants and young toddlers frequently.

After lunch, all older toddlers and preschoolers participate in a quiet rest time, and may sleep if they choose to, or, need to. However, children are not required to sleep and will be given quiet activities during this period if not sleeping after an appropriate length of time has gone by.

Additionally, the center will furnish all crib and cot sheets/blankets, which will be laundered frequently--at least once per week or more often if needed.

Appropriate spacing will be maintained between children to prevent the spread of communicable illness.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles.

Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions, and, when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

We will provide regular diapers, pull-up type training diapers and wipes for your child during the hours in our care. If medical necessity requires a specific brand, please provide a doctor's note so that we can accommodate.

Health Services (Health, Mental Health, Disabilities, Nutrition) LCCAP Partnerships for Well Children

We strongly believe that a child needs to BE well to DO well. LCCAP is proud of the partnerships we have established with local educational, behavioral health, mental

health, and health care providers to meet the needs of our children and families. These partners consult, advise, and collaborate to help us provide the greatest quality of care possible, with wellness in mind.

Our goal is to ensure that each child is healthy and ready to learn! The Health Services Office will monitor and implement screens related to each child's overall health and development. The Health Services Office may communicate and partner with families to:

- Obtain a well-child/physical exam and maintain routine exams according to the Early Periodicity Schedule
- Understand the importance of immunizations and stay on schedule
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html>
- Understand the importance of developmental milestones
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- Obtain a dental exam and maintain routine exams
- Obtain regular fluoride treatments
- Communicate and request information from providers
- Establish an ongoing source of continuous care with doctors and dentists
- Provide screening outcomes for health, development, and behavior
- Provide height and weight measurements
- Assist with lice treatment care
- Provide educational materials related to health and wellness
- Learn how to prevent unsafe behaviors and encourage appropriate behavior and respect for others and property.
- Complete a social emotional screen, provide insight on how to individualize for successful adjustment into programming
- Implement a transition plan and/or modified attendance plan
- Provide referral information for outside services
- Recommend changes in classroom placement to better meet the needs of a child
- Case management of identified needs
- Partner with outside agencies for delivery of services
- Track progress of therapies and goals

Physical Health

A complete physical is required PRIOR to entry/first day of attendance. Certain circumstances will be considered for families that need immediate childcare. These families will have 60 days to provide the required documents.

Well-Child/Physical Exam (current within the last 12 months).

Exams MUST include:

- Immunizations
- State free and clear of communicable disease

- Signed by a licensed health care provider and include license number
- Chronic Health Conditions

Well-Child/Physical Exam (current within the last 12 months).

Exams SHOULD include:

- Screening results noted (lead, hemoglobin, BMI, vision, and hearing).
- Referral Information (speech/language, behavioral health, psychological evaluation, Early Intervention, OT, etc.)

Submit all health information to your Family Service Worker, child’s teacher, or the Health Services Office.

**ATTN: Health Services Office
Ben Franklin Early Learning Center
815 Cunningham Ave.
New Castle, PA 16101
Fax: 724-658-7389
Email: healthoffice@lccap.org**

LCCAP child health forms (physical, dental, and follow-up forms) can be located online at: <https://lccap.org/programs-services/education/parent-resources/>

Specialized Care

If your child requires any type of specialized care and/or administration of medication while in our care, you must contact the Health Services Office, as noted above, PRIOR to entry/first day of attendance or re-entry into the program. The Health Services Office will work to create a health alert. You will be required to provide the following information:

- A doctor’s note and/or school emergency action plan from the doctor
- Medication in original box with child’s name, date, and dosage information

After the information is provided, the Health Services Office will work to create a health alert. This alert may take 24-48 hours to complete. Health Services staff will review health alerts with the parent and/or guardian prior to implementation of the alert to include written physician’s orders. The parent/guardian will sign both the alert and medication log (when applicable) thus ensuring all information is accurate. No medication can be dispensed or provided without a written order from a physician. The parent/guardian is responsible for obtaining written orders so that an alert can be implemented. Please note that health alerts are ONLY written if there is a rescue medication involved OR a need for specialized accommodation or care. **Medication will be given by non-medical staff.** All LCCAP Early Learning staff will be trained in First Aid and CPR.

For children enrolled in childcare, non-rescue oral medications may be administered in circumstances where the medication cannot be administered before or after school. These medications will follow the same requirements noted above for rescue medication. Topical medications may also be permitted if they are provided in the original box, not expired, and a medication log is signed by the parent/guardian.

Families are permitted to provide sunscreen for their child. The sunscreen must be a new bottle (never used) of SPF 30 or above, labeled with the child's first and last name, and have an expiration date on the bottle. A parent/guardian will be required to sign a Medication log before staff can apply the sunscreen. Sunscreen should not be sent to school in a child's backpack.

Accident and Injury

Unfortunately, minor accidents do happen, even in the most secure and child safe areas. Should your child ever receive an injury while at the center, first aid will be administered by a trained care giver and an accident / injury report will be completed. The accident report will outline the incident and course of action taken.

If the injury requires medical attention or occurs from the neck up, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit along with staff that are trained and certified in CPR and First Aid.

In the event of a suspected broken bone, sprain, or other injuries that may warrant medical treatment, we will try to contact you or your designated emergency contact person(s). If no one is available to pick up the child in a timely manner, we will utilize the severe accident method noted below.

In the case of a severe accident, medical emergency, or illness, we contact 911 immediately and the parent/guardian. Staff will provide emergency care until medical services arrive on-site. Should you not be able to arrive at the center before the ambulance leaves for the hospital, a staff member will accompany your child to the emergency room. It is important that you keep all phone numbers and parental consent forms up to date and inform us of all medical conditions. Any accommodation or restrictions following an accident or illness that need to be made for school hours should be in place prior to the child's return. Please refer to the specialized care section above.

Short Term Exclusion Policy

Staff monitor all children daily regarding their health and wellbeing. Staff will continually demonstrate, teach, and model self-help skills and health habits such as hand washing, healthy eating habits, covering a sneeze or cough, etc. Your child may at any time be

excluded for one of the following reasons listed below. All short-term exclusions for our Certified Child Care Classrooms will require authorization from the Health Services Office or a Manager PRIOR to implementing. The program reserves the right to restrict attendance for instances other than described below, at the recommendation and/or request of the PA Department of Health.

If your child has any of the following conditions listed below, he/she will be excluded from class for a brief time. A short-term exclusion form will be completed, and a copy provided to you at time of pick up. It is your responsibility as the parent/guardian to pick up your child, in a timely manner, when a short-term exclusion is implemented. In some situations, a sick child may be moved to a location away from other children until a parent/guardian arrives.

If your child was prescribed an antibiotic due to illness, the child may NOT return until 24 hours after the first dose was received. Exceptions may be made if there is a note from your child's doctor.

**Requires a note from health care provider stating
child can return to school**

CONJUNCTIVITIS: (pink eye)

Bacterial Conjunctivitis: Red eyes and green/yellow discharge requires exclusion until a physician has been contacted and medication administered for 12-24 hours

Viral Conjunctivitis: Does not require exclusion unless a child has a fever (temperature of 101°F or greater). Child can return after being fever free for 12-24 hours (w/o the use of a fever reducing medication)

Difficulty Breathing:

Shortness of breath or severe wheezing, difficulty breathing

UNDIAGNOSED RASH:

The parent will be asked to have the rash evaluated by a health care provider. A Doctor's note is required for the child to return to school. The short-term exclusion form is to be provided to the doctor and then returned to the school with the Physician section completed on the first day the child returns.

PIN WORMS:

Until after the treatment has been started

Does NOT require a note from health care provider to return to school

ILLNESS / LACK OF PARTICIPATION Any illness that prevents a child from participating comfortably in activities results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide or poses a risk of the spread of harmful diseases to others.

FEVER:

Unexplained fever greater than 100.4° F with no additional symptoms will be sent home. Children may return 12-24 hours after being fever free without medication.

VOMITING:

A child who vomits twice in 24 hours will be sent home and will be unable to return for 24 hours.

DIARRHEA: (stools that are more frequent or less formed than usual for the child)

Non-toilet trained children: Requires exclusion if the stool frequency exceeds two stools in one hour above normal for the child during programming OR it cannot be contained by the diaper or pull-up. A child may return 24 hours after the last episode.

Toilet trained children: Requires exclusion if stool frequency exceeds two stools in one hour above normal for the child during programming OR if a child soils their pants or clothing

NOTE: Diarrhea can sometimes be caused by specific infections (E. coli, Shigella, or Salmonella). When there is **cause to suspect these infections** (fever, abdominal cramps, blood in stool), a child will be excluded, and stool samples may be requested by a physician and have a negative result for program readmission.

Cold Symptoms

A child who exhibits two or more signs and symptoms of a cold will be sent home. To include: stuffy nose, sore throat, cough, congestion, etc.

HEAD LICE/NITS

ONLY live lice will require exclusion. For a child to return, a parent/guardian must accompany them and be evaluated by a staff member to ensure free of live lice. Most insurances pay for treatment – **please contact health care provider.**

If a child is found to have only nits, the parent/guardian will be notified, asked to treat the child, and will then be monitored regularly by teaching staff to ensure no live lice. Children with ongoing recurrences may be excluded from in-person programming until no nits are present.

If your child was diagnosed with an illness BUT not excluded by us from programming, please use the chart below for recommendations. However, if you have a doctor's note with specific return to school guidance, your child is permitted to return.

Illness	Timeline
Chickenpox	Until the last cluster of blisters have dried into scabs. Usually about 6 days after onset of symptoms. Need doctor's note to return.
Fifth Disease	May return after rash appears as no longer contagious.
Hand Foot Mouth Disease	Until rash or blisters disappear, and child is free of fever.
Impetigo	May return 24 hours after treatment is begun. Need doctor's note to return.
MRSA	May return when cleared by doctor. If dry treated lesion persists, it should be covered with a bandage, if not clothing, until area is resolved.
Measles	May return 6 days after rash appears. Need doctor's note to return.
Mumps	May return 9 days after onset of swelling. Need doctor's note to return.
Pertussis	May return 5 days after antibiotic treatment was begun. Need doctor's not to return.
Scabies	May return 24 hours after confirmed treatment was begun.
Strep Throat / Scarlet Fever	May return 24 hours after treatment has begun, are fever free for 24 hours and can participate in classroom activities.

Oral Health

Dental Exam (current within the last 12 months) are recommended to begin by first tooth/age 1 year. It is important that all follow-up treatment (fillings, caps, extractions, etc.) be completed by a dentist and the results shared with the Health Services Office.

A complete dental exam is required within the first 90 days of attendance. Mobile Dental exams will be offered yearly to ensure that families are able to meet this requirement.

Oral health is an important part of a child's overall wellbeing. Children with dental pain may have trouble speaking clearly, eating, and learning. LCCAP strives to help families prevent tooth decay by educating families on the importance of oral health. LCCAP utilizes outside agencies to provide family training, mobile dentist visits, and more to enrolled families. Staff will encourage families to take their child to the dentist by age 1, or by the time their first tooth erupts. LCCAP Health Services Office will provide educational

materials and tooth brushing supplies to families to practice tooth brushing at home. Classroom staff help children with tooth brushing using fluoride toothpaste or another age-appropriate oral care routine, at least once each school day.

Behavioral and Mental Health

Philosophy and Approach to Guidance

LCCAP is committed to each student's success in learning with a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination and violence. Our programs work to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community. Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving helps children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Social Emotional Well-Being

Teachers encourage self-control by providing activities and a daily schedule that is interesting and developmentally appropriate for the attention span of each child. This limits the possibility of negative behavior. Guidance is an important part of the educational process and children need and expect rules to feel safe. Teachers and children write age-appropriate rules together for successful behaviors in the classroom. They post the rules, along with picture reminders, and review them frequently. Our Early Learning classrooms support children, families, and staff with best practices. For infants and toddlers, we promote the use of an approach called responsive caregiving, which is a teaching practice that promotes their social and emotional health. For preschoolers, we use a curriculum called **PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)**. LCCAP also utilizes the Conscious Discipline approach to help staff and families address the social and emotional issues the children may be facing.

At LCCAP, guidance is always given in a positive and supportive manner. No form of physical discipline is utilized by LCCAP staff. Teachers use redirection as their first and major form of class management. During home visits and conferences, teachers discuss the supportive management techniques used in the classroom. Families will also be informed of LCCAP's Intervention and Inclusion policy, and sign that it was reviewed, and that you agree to the written policy. The policy was created to ensure that all children enrolled in our program can learn in a safe, positive, and nurturing classroom environment.

If/when a behavior presents a safety challenge for the individual student, other children, or staff, a BIR (Behavior Incident Report) is completed and submitted to the Education Department's supervisory team for review. Parent communication will be made by the teaching staff when a BIR is completed. When several BIRs are submitted and supportive practices are not being effective, a parent meeting may be scheduled. The goal of this meeting is to allow LCCAP Early Learning staff and families to partner together to meet each student's needs. Staff and parents will meet to discuss strategies to be used both at school and home to improve a child's ability to control their behavior. Referral options will also be shared with families, when necessary. Staff will support families through the referral process and participate by sharing documentation and communicating the needs present at school to the necessary outside agency providers (e.g. pediatrician, psychologists, behavioral health agencies), if parent permission is provided,

Families may also complete a survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/PAExpulsionHelp to request assistance from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) if their child's severe behaviors are impeding their learning. When families are already connected to the Early Learning Resource Center (ERLC) or Early Intervention (EI), LCCAP will, with parent permission, reach out directly to those agencies for assistance.

Disabilities

LCCAP Early Learning assist families in accessing services for children with disabilities to ensure their needs are met. Developmental and social emotional screens will be completed with the parent/guardian and child on or before the first home visit, after obtaining parent/guardian consent. If the screening results show an area of concern, education staff will discuss the results and next steps with the family, obtain consent for a referral and develop Interim Service Plan goals. These are the goals that will be worked on while we wait to see if your child qualifies for specialized services.

We are committed to assuring that every enrolled child with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) and his or her family is provided with a full range of services, which may include making modifications to meet special needs. Partnering with the family and outside services provided is critical for the child's success.

The Preschool Connection provides information, referral, and services to families with concerns about their child's physical and/or mental development. If you have a concern that your child (infant, toddler, or preschooler) may have a delay, you can call The Preschool Connection directly at 1-800-345-0033.

To facilitate appropriate programming for all children, families are asked to provide information to classroom staff and/or Family Service Workers, if their child is receiving “Supportive Services” of any type. If applicable, please provide a copy of your child’s IEP or IFSP, written plans and/or special needs assessments to better assist us in planning your child’s classroom experiences.

Special Services

LCCAP develops and maintains partnerships with local providers in the county to offer supportive services within and in conjunction with LCCAP Early Learning. These services can include mental health consultation, Early Intervention services, school-based counseling, behavioral health services, etc.

LCCAP Early Learning is contracted with Vocational & Psychological Services and Angelus Therapeutic Services, Inc. to obtain Licensed Mental Health Consultation. Through this partnership LCCAP Early Learning will receive consultation for administrative duties, training opportunities, parental support, and classroom-wide observations & recommendations for teaching staff. With parent/guardian consent, individual child consultation will be utilized to assist with individual child plans and referrals.

Nutrition/Meal Service

We utilize family style dining when developmentally appropriate. In family style dining, the tables are set with plates and flatware by the children, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children help themselves, as food is passed around each table. Both children and adults sit at the tables during the meal. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. This method of meal service helps promote both language and fine motor skills, as well social skills, and self-control.

CACFP

LCCAP is able to provide nutritious meals and snacks for each child through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals are served to children under CACFP at no separate charge. CACFP meals and snacks help increase participants’ daily consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, as well as reduce the number of foods served with added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based

on race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.
or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442.
or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Cooking Activities

The monthly cooking experiences/activities offered in each preschool classroom are designed to introduce children to new foods and encourage healthy eating.

Breastfeeding and Breastmilk

LCCAP welcomes families to provide breastmilk for their infant and/or breastfeed in our facilities. We follow the CDC and CACFP guidelines for receiving, labeling, storing/freezing, and warming breastmilk.

Infant Formulas

- Infants up to 13 months will receive approved iron-fortified infant formula, cereal and baby food.
 - The infant formulas we will provide are the *store brand of Similac Sensitive and Similac Advance*. For infants with lactose intolerance, the store brand of *Similac Soy* will also be provided.
- If none of the iron-fortified formulas we offer are suitable for the child, families will have the option to supply their own **unopened, iron-fortified** infant formulas.
- Should a family opt to supply their own unopened, **non-iron-fortified** infant formula, a medical statement from a licensed physician must be provided. (See directions regarding food allergies and substitutions below).

Menus

- Approved by a registered dietician from UPMC Jameson
- Comply with the Department of Human Services regulations for childcare
- Will be posted in classrooms, sent home each month and be available on the LCCAP website
- Offer a variety of healthy foods (Infants up to 13 months will receive approved formula, cereal, and baby food.)
- Introduce children to new foods

Food Allergies

Accommodation for other special dietary needs can be met if there is a medical statement provided by a licensed medical authority. Medical statements must be provided PRIOR to the child's first day of school to allow time to arrange accommodation and create a Food Alert. The statement must include all of the following:

- An explanation of how the participant's physical or mental impairment restricts the diet
- An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the participant
- The food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives, if appropriate
- If the food allergy requires a rescue medication

Unflavored soy milk is the alternative to cow's milk which is available for those who are lactose intolerant. Any other milk alternative must follow the instructions above.

NOTE: For your child's safety, they may not be able to attend for 24-48 hours until:

- A note from a licensed medical authority has been received by the Health Office (fax: 724-658-7389)

- A plan & appropriate food/drink substitutes have been identified / obtained
- All appropriate staff have been informed (classroom staff, kitchen staff, district partners)

NOTE: Food allergy signs will be posted on the back of the student's chair during mealtimes to properly facilitate food substitutions.

Outside Food

NO "outside food" is permitted into the program other than unopened iron-fortified infant formulas. This includes breakfast, packed lunch, snack, or any other treats for special occasions. This policy was created to ensure compliance with nutritional guidelines, and to provide safety for children with food allergies/sensitivities.

Education Services (Early Childhood Development)

Learning Environment

The environments the children participate within provide rich learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom and have the children's interests in mind as well. Each environment has easily accessible materials to help children develop independence. Materials are chosen according to the children's interests, which invites them to explore and develop skills more naturally. There is a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. In a hands-on manner, children are free to explore the materials available within the interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development, encourage openness to that which is different from us, and help the children grow in the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos® is used for planning in classrooms with children ages birth to three. In preschool-aged classrooms, the Creative Curriculum for Preschool® 6th edition is used. Both use the aligned assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD. The cycle of the curriculum guides teachers through ***planning*** developmentally appropriate goals based on the children's individual strengths and areas of need. With the ***implementation*** of consistent daily routines and meaningful experiences, the learning and development of children comes more easily. Children want to learn! By ***assessing*** the goals, we can identify children's progress, in nine developmental areas, towards getting ready and being ready for Kindergarten. These areas include social emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. All these areas are incorporated into STEAM learning (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) that helps build the foundation for the

development of appropriate social relationships, receptive/expressive skills, problem solving, analysis and reasoning and many other life skills.

Family and Community Partnership Services **Partnership**

All parents/guardians of LCCAP Early Learning children are automatically participants in our program. As your child's first teacher, this means your participation is crucial to your child's success. We have several ways for you to engage in your child's school experience and work to make those fit each individual family.

Home Visits, Family Conferences, and Child Conferences

Families are highly valued in LCCAP's educational plans for children. Each family will receive two Home Visits, two Family Conferences, and two Child Conferences, during which a families' circumstances and input is considered for planning purposes. Home Visits allow your child to meet their new teacher in an environment that is comfortable for them and the staff to observe your child where they're most comfortable. Family Conferences allow you to dedicate time to you and the goals you have for your family. Child Conferences allow you to dedicate time to your child's screening/assessment results, and their overall progress. Observations on your child from home are always welcomed and can be contributed in-person or by connecting to GOLD online for families, or Class Dojo.

Case Management Services

Family Service Staff are required to support families in the following categories of life:

- Family Well Being
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

To do this, families are invited to participate in the Goal Setting Process, which can include referrals within LCCAP, Referrals to community agencies, Advocacy and Support services.

Family Engagement Activities

Each family has different schedules, needs, and interests so LCCAP provides multiple ways and opportunities for families to engage and spend time together supporting their child's education.

Center Committee

LCCAP Early Learning Programs organizes a Center Committee for each site, voted on by families, comprised of family members of all enrolled Early Learning children at that center. Each center committee is provided with the opportunity to: plan and participate in family engagement events, plan, and participate in the Parent Only Event, provide ideas for program policies and services, participate in educational workshops, elect, and communicate with members of Policy Council, and participate in recruitment and screening of Head Start staff.

Policy Council:

Head Start and Early Head Start parent representatives are elected to this group by their peers. Community members may also serve, once approved through a formal process.

Parent Nights

LCCAP holds monthly Family Engagement Events that provide families with the opportunity to learn, bond, play, and expand skills together through activities, education, community resources, new experiences, etc. These events are held on a regularly scheduled basis at LCCAP facilities. These events include fun-filled age-appropriate activities for families, as well as refreshments. Family events allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Family Resource Room

Housed at the Ben Franklin Early Learning Center, the Family Resource Room has space for families to get a snack, a cup of coffee, access informational material, get needed resources, meet new parents and LCCAP staff, and use the computer and printer. This room is open daily for adults to access as needed. We encourage you to come relax and take care of yourself!

Classroom Engagement Opportunities:

LCCAP believes that the children's success is enhanced when the program and families work together to support the child's goals, extending the learning from the classroom into the home, and when the family participates in supporting the classroom, participates in adult education and leadership opportunities, and attends events with (or on behalf of) the child. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our

program. There are so many ways to ENGAGE in helping us establish and reach our program goals. There is something for everyone! We also encourage you to stop in and participate in your child's educational experience by joining the daily activities of the classroom. Partnering together means great success for everyone!

- *Sign on to communicate with the Teacher on GOLD (the child assessment system) or Class Dojo*
- *Lending Library*
- *Parent-Child Activities*
- *Support activities in the classroom*

Early Learning Parent Education (learn about and support our programs):

- *Classroom Curriculum*
- *Child Development and Language Development practices (including Dual Language Learners)*
- *Health Practices*
- *Mental Health Supports*
- *Workforce Development services*
- *Enrollment, Attendance and Participations expectations*
- *Parenting Curriculum (Multiple available, based upon individual needs)*
 - *Safe Parenting*
 - *Conscious Discipline*
 - *Parent Talk*
 - *Ready Rosie*
- *Substitute Training Program*

Support your Child through Volunteering/Attending

LCCAP encourages families to volunteer. We understand that not everyone's schedule or personal interests permit regular volunteering, so we offer different opportunities, including in the classroom, office work, cleaning and sorting, supporting family events, etc.

Consumer Education – Learn from our Partners, for example:

- *Primary Health Network*
- *Public Libraries*
- *Early Learning Resource Center*
- *WIC*

Family Employment Opportunities

Announcements regarding employment vacancies are available to all parents as they occur. These notifications are available for review within the “Employment/Join Our Team” section at www.lccap.org, on the agency’s social media outlets, and/or by written memo.

The Substitute Training Program seeks to obtain qualified support staff through training. The program trains candidates on LCCAP policies and procedures, introduction to content area training, and professional conduct. Candidates will prepare their LCCAP employment application and documentation necessary and receive an interview. If hired, candidates will be on call to fill staff absences, when needed. This employment opportunity provides a flexible schedule and could lead to full-time employment.

Transportation Services

School Bus Transportation

Based on the program option in which your child is enrolled, school bus transportation services may be available. The transportation provided for our early learning students complies with all Federal and State Laws as well as the Head Start Performance Standards. All school buses providing busing to our early learning students are equipped with child restraint seats that are age, height, and weight appropriate for the children. Additionally, all buses will have at least one bus monitor assigned to supervise and assist the children while riding.

Eligibility for School Bus Service

- If your child needs transportation to and from school, please contact your Family Service Worker to verify whether your child is enrolled in a classroom in which transportation is available.
- Transportation is reserved for families who lack reliable school transportation. Due to limited seating on our school buses, children that do not ride the school bus regularly and are being transported by other means will be changed to a “Walker.”
- Children living closer than 3 blocks from the center may be designated as “Walkers” and not eligible for busing.

Enrolling Children for School Bus Service

- Contact your Family Service Worker to request transportation services for your child.
- Families must indicate one address in which the child will need transported to and from each school day. Based on the address selected, LCCAP will assign one bus

stop for the child, which is the sole bus stop the child will be permitted to board and disembark the school bus. There are no exceptions to this policy as this is for the safety of children, as well as to ensure consistency for the children and staff members.

- Families should communicate any special needs or circumstances to their Family Service Worker that we should consider when assigning your child's bus stop location.

Bus Stop Information

- Bus stops will be placed at intersections based on bus stop safety and proximity to the children that live nearby. Children will not be picked up in front of their home or in the middle of city blocks.
- Buses will not enter apartment complexes, trailer parks, alleys, or side streets. Bus stops will be at the closest, safest main intersection or at the entrance to the complex.
- Routes are designed so that children are not scheduled to ride longer than 60 minutes.
- For children living in rural communities or away from other children riding the bus, parents may have to drive several miles to the closest bus stop.
- Family Service Workers will communicate the bus stop locations and times to parents the week prior to the child's first day riding the school bus.
- Families are expected to arrive to their child's bus stop at least 10 minutes before their assigned stop time as the bus times can vary from day to day based on how quickly the children load the bus after school and how many children are riding on any given day.

Changes to School Bus Service

- All requests for changes to your child's school bus service must be communicated to your Family Service Worker. Bus Drivers and Bus Monitors are unable to change your bus stop location or times.
- Changes to the children's bus information are made once per week and take effect on the first day of school the following week.
- Please Note: Families moving to a different neighborhood during the school year may no longer be able to receive school bus service. If you are planning to move and your child will still need to ride the bus to school, please check with your Family Service Worker before moving to make sure that there is a bus route with a seat available that services that neighborhood. If busing from your new neighborhood to

your child's program option is not available, parents will be responsible for providing transportation to and from school.

Releasing Children at the Bus Stop

Children will only be released to an individual (aged 16 or older) who is listed on the child's Emergency Contact Card **and** who presents their Driver's License or other State Photo Identification to the Bus Monitor. The Bus Monitor will use this information to cross-check the child's Emergency Contact Card to confirm that the individual is listed as a person to whom the child may be released. Children must be transferred to and from the Bus Monitor at the bus door, not from a parked car or to individuals standing back from the school bus door.

- Custodial parents and legal guardians of children must comply with this procedure for the safety of the children.
- At the bus stop, if the bus monitor cannot verify the individual's identity using Photo Identification, or the individual is not listed on the child's Emergency Contact Card, the child will be returned to the designated LCCAP Early Learning Center.
 - The center staff will begin contacting individuals on the child's Emergency Contact Card, starting with the primary contact, so arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up at the center.
 - Once the bus returns the child to the designated LCCAP Early Learning Center, the center staff will only release the child to an individual (aged 16 or older) who is listed on the child's Emergency Contact card **and** who presents their photo identification to the center staff to verify their identity.
- Families must always keep their child's Emergency Contact Cards current.
- Changes to the Emergency Contact Card must be directed to your assigned Family Service Worker. Please allow a minimum of 48 hours before expecting the changes to the Emergency Contact Card to take effect.

Bus Stop Safety

- There is a 10-foot Danger Zone that circles the bus. Drivers have difficulty seeing anything within this zone. Families must teach children to:
 - Wait for the bus at least 10 feet back from the roadway.
 - Do not approach the bus until it comes to a complete stop AND the driver opens the door.
 - Exercise caution when crossing a street even if the bus is stopped and the 8-way red lights are flashing.

- When bringing other children to the bus stop, hold them or their hand to keep them from running out to the bus as it approaches.
- If you or your child drops something, wait until the bus leaves the area before returning to pick it up.
- Do not allow children to jump down from the bus stairs. Encourage your child to hold onto the bus rail as they walk up and down the bus stairs.
- Make sure backpacks and clothing items are secured, not loose or with dangling straps, as they could get caught in the bus doors.

Child Conduct on the Bus Stop/Bus Safety Rules

- Children must sit in their assigned bus seat and remain seated in their child restraint seat.
- Children must be able to ride the school bus for up to 60 minutes without requiring constant one-on-one attention or redirection from the bus monitor.
- Children who refuse to board the bus will not be carried onto the bus. Parents will be asked to make other arrangements for transportation for the day.
- No food or drink is permitted to be brought in the child's backpack onto the bus or to the center.

Any child who repeatedly disregards, or is unable to follow, the bus safety rules may be temporarily removed from the bus route for their safety, as well as the safety of the other children. Once a plan is in place, which ensure the child will abide by the bus safety rules, the child may be transitioned back to riding the school bus.

Adult Conduct at the Bus Stop

It is a violation of LCCAP policy to board or obstruct a school bus's movement; such conduct is also a violation of Pennsylvania State Law. No person may enter a school bus without the prior authorization of LCCAP Early Learning or the bus driver. Any person that attempts to enter a school bus without such authorization and/or refuses to get off the bus when directed to do so may be subject to a fine, imprisonment, or both pursuant to Section 5517 of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code.

5517. Unauthorized school bus entry. (a) **Offense defined.**-- A person who enters a school bus without prior authorization of the driver or a school official with intent to commit a crime or disrupt or interfere with the driver, or a person who enters a school bus without prior authorization of the driver or a school official who refused to disembark after being ordered to do so by the driver, commits a misdemeanor of the third degree. (b) **Notice.**-- A school district may place a notice at the entrance of the school bus that warns against unauthorized entry. (June 11, 1998, P.L.460, No.64, eff. 60 days) 1998 Amendment. Act 65 added section 5517.

It is also a violation of LCCAP Policy to create a “safety risk” while at the bus stop. Safety risks are defined as:

- **Public inconvenience** – using a loud voice that may distract the bus driver, other vehicle operators, and/or pedestrians.
- **Profanity** – any use of indecent language that may cause annoyance or alarm.
- **Threats** – any threat of physical harm that is intended to cause someone to fear for their physical well-being.
- **Physical violence** – any physical contact that causes fear of bodily injury including, but not limited to, touching, grabbing, slapping, kicking, punching, or using any instrumentality to cause fear of bodily injury.
- **Public intoxication** – any individual at the bus stop who appears to be impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol.

Any violations of LCCAP policies written to protect the health and safety of our children, employees, or the public; including posing a “safety risk”, or violations of Pennsylvania State Law while engaged with LCCAP or its representatives, may result in the police being contacted and charges filed against the perpetrator. LCCAP reserves the right to discontinue school bus services to families who are in violation of this policy.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

General Attendance Philosophy

Consistent attendance in the classroom is important to your child’s development and helps strengthen school readiness goals. Children learn best when they attend class daily, arrive on time and stay the entire day. Our expectation is to have each child maintain at least 85% Average Daily Attendance or better, because students who attend school regularly are more likely to succeed academically and socially.

Did you know? If your child is absent from school, he/she misses the exciting adventures of learning! All children need opportunities to...

- Be comfortable away from home and make friendships.
- Learn to control their feelings and be able to express them.
- Be a leader and follow others.
- Learn, play, and work with other children.
- Explore, be creative and express their own ideas.

Absence

If your child will not be coming to school, please call the Attendance Line at 724-658-7671. After pressing 1, leave your name, your child’s name, classroom number and the reason

for the absence. For your convenience, the attendance line can accept messages seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day!

If you do not report your child off on the Attendance Line by 11:30am your family service worker will contact you to see why your child is absent. If your family service worker cannot reach you by phone after three consecutive days a home visit will be conducted to help in establishing good attendance again.

“Excused” categories

The following absence types will be considered excused absences.

- Sickness or illness
- Doctor or Dentist appointments
- Family emergency
- Court ordered visits

Excuse forms: If your child is absent, please provide an excuse for their absence upon return to school. The note can be handwritten by you as the parent or come from the doctor. This note will be kept in your child’s file as proof of why your child was absent.

Vacation

If you and your family are fortunate enough to go on a family vacation, we urge you to do so! The only thing that we ask of you is to let us know when you will be gone so we can properly mark attendance for your child. We want you to enjoy your time together as a family. However, when possible, please try to schedule vacations so that they do not hinder your child’s attendance any more than possible.

Withdrawal

It is asked that you let us know if you plan to remove your child from our program. If it is your choice to move your child to another facility, we will assist you in any way possible to make it a smooth transition for your child.

Keep in mind that consistently unexplained absences could affect your child’s enrollment. If regular attendance cannot be established after creating a plan with the family service worker, another child on the waiting list must be given the opportunity to enroll in the program. Families will be given every opportunity to establish regular attendance and will be withdrawn from the program only when they are unwilling or unable to participate. Please keep in mind that consistent attendance is essential to your child’s success. When your child is absent from school, he/she is missing valuable experiences and services.

Please make a commitment to send your child to school every day. Your child's future school success depends on establishing a pattern of good attendance now.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

Since transitions can be extremely difficult for not only children but parents as well, LCCAP Early Learning staff are more than happy to assist you in the process of transferring your child's records when needed. Your written permission will be needed to share information about your child with an outside agency. Once this permission is obtained our staff will work to get records transferred to the facility of your choice.

Possible reasons for a transfer of records are:

- Your child is coming to our program from another facility.
- Your child is attending a childcare center before and/or after school hours.
- An outside agency has started to work with your family and is looking for records you have already provided to us.
- Your child is ready to transition to Kindergarten.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedures

Arrivals: ***Please*** do not drop off your child prior to the starting time for your child's classroom. Parents who are dropping off are expected to accompany their child to their classroom and sign them in with the teacher. We expect that the children will arrive at school on time. Tardiness (late arrivals) will be addressed, as necessary.

Dismissals: Parents who are picking up their child should allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by the closing time for your child's classroom. When parents are late for pick up, we reserve the right to reach out to those on your child's emergency contact/release list. When a pattern of late pick-ups occurs, staff will contact you to discuss the issue.

If your work schedule changes and you find yourself permanently needing additional periods of care on a regular basis outside of your child's school year classroom, we offer full year, extended day classrooms for children ages 6 weeks to 5 five years at our Ben Franklin, Ellwood City and Frew Mill centers. Ask your Family Service Worker if you are eligible to switch to this option and/or about Child Care Works subsidy assistance, as these classrooms have fees associated with them.

Building Specific Procedures:

All buildings: Park only in designated areas, leaving handicapped and short-term spots open for those that need them. Do not leave your vehicle running or leave children unattended inside the vehicle during drop off or pick up. You must escort your child into the building and assure that the staff member responsible for your child knows that he/she is present.

Although we encourage politeness and kindness at our facilities, for the safety of all involved, please do not hold open the door for anyone but yourself/your child when arriving or departing the center. We must be able to acknowledge all who enter and be aware of their presence in our facility.

Ben Franklin Early Learning Center

- All doors are locked.
- **Door A** (Lutton St. corner) entry reserved for:
 - Building Visitors
 - Families assigned as Walkers (no bus assigned) or Non-Riders (bus assigned, not using bus that day)
 - Assigned arrival/dismissal times to be provided
- **Door B** (Cunningham Ave./Stadium lot corner)
 - Learning Tree childcare families
 - Drop off/pick up spots are designated by “15-minute parking” signs
- **Door C** (Cunningham Ave./Stadium lot rear)
 - Reserved for two classrooms assigned as non-transportation rooms (preschool only)
 - Assigned arrival/dismissal times to be provided
- To gain entry, please ring the buzzer located next to the door. Look towards the camera, identify yourself and state the nature of your visit when asked. You may be asked to show/leave state issued or another photo ID.
- To exit the building please **ONLY PARENTS**, press the green button on the top left of the door
- For general long-term parking, use the upper Lutton lot or the north Cunningham lot. (Note: only Learning Tree families can access the building from the Cunningham lot.)
- **For added security**, all visitors (other than parents/guardians/ family members picking-up or dropping-off children), **MUST** stop at the Main Office to obtain a visitors pass to wear for the duration of the visit.
- If you need to pick up your child before the end of their school day, please stop in the office to receive an Early Dismissal slip (preschool only classrooms)
- **Handicapped Parking:** There are multiple handicapped spaces available at Doors A, B and C. Only those who have a handicapped placard or license plate should use these spaces. These restrictions will be enforced for the comfort and safety of those who are handicapped.

Ellwood City Early Learning Center

- All doors are locked.
- Pick up and drop off spots are available in the front and back side parking areas and rear of the building. Please use caution when parking/walking along 10th St. as it is a steep slope.
- To gain entry, please ring the buzzer located next to the 10th St. or Crescent Ave. doors. Look towards the camera, identify yourself and state the nature of your visit when asked.
- To exit the building please **ONLY PARENTS**, press the green button on the top left of the door
- **For added security**, all visitors (other than parents/guardians or family members picking-up or dropping-off children), **MUST** stop at the Reception Desk to obtain a visitor pass to wear for the duration of the visit. You may be asked to show/leave state issued or another photo ID.
- **Handicapped Parking:** There are two (2) handicapped spaces available at the Crescent St. door, and others in the lot off 10th St. . Only those who have a handicapped placard or license plate should use these spaces. These restrictions will be enforced for the comfort and safety of those who are handicapped.

Frew Mill Campus

- All doors are locked.
- Pick up and drop off spots are available in the front parking area.
- To gain entry, please ring the buzzer located next to the appropriate door, labeled **3A**. Look towards the camera, identify yourself and state the nature of your visit when asked. You may be asked to show/leave state issued or another photo ID.
- To exit the building please **ONLY PARENTS**, press the green button on the top left of the door
- **For added security**, all visitors (other than parents/guardians or family members picking-up or dropping-off children), **MUST** stop at the Reception Desk to obtain a visitor pass to wear for the duration of the visit.
- **Handicapped Parking:** There are multiple handicapped spaces available at FMC 3A. Only those who have a handicapped placard or license plate should use these spaces. These restrictions will be enforced for the comfort and safety of those who are handicapped.

School District buildings

When entering the following school district buildings, you will be required to show your driver's license, or a state issued photo ID. Additional policies not listed may be in effect in these locations. Please abide by them.

Wilmington Area Elementary

Use the outer areas of the parking lot for pick-up and drop-off, and proceed to the main entrance, which is equipped with a buzzer entry system. All visitors are subject to a metal detector scan, prior to proceeding to the office.

Mohawk Elementary

Use the parking lot assigned for visitors. You will be buzzed into the building and must register your ID using the Lobby Guard system before going to the office.

Laurel Elementary

Use the front parking lot and front door to gain entry. You will be buzzed into the building and must register at the office.

Neshannock Memorial Elementary

Use the front parking lot and front door to gain entry. You will be buzzed into the building and must register at the office.

Shenango Elementary

Use door 5 for regular pick-up and drop off. Use the parking near door 4 and enter through that door when dropping off late/picking up early or visiting the building for other purposes. Stop in the office to sign in, and to receive further instructions about building safety procedures.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we must communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, please try to avoid using your cell phone when visiting our centers. If you must take or make a call, we reserve the right to ask you to end your call should it be disruptive, distracting to those trying to learn or work, or, contain improper or offensive language.

Authorized & Unauthorized Drop Off and Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons (16 or older) you have listed on the Emergency Contact form as an authorized "Release Person". If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in writing, and give 48 hours' notice of this change. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification.

At times, new staff members may be caring for your child, driving their bus, etc. Please be prepared to always show photo ID to ensure a smooth release on these occasions. Please

notify your pick-up people of our release policy. During the 2024-25 school year, we plan to utilize a feature of our electronic data system that allows us to store photographs of parent/guardians for this purpose, in rare cases when someone may forget their ID.

We trust that those people assigned by you with responsibility to bring a child to school or bus stop are those that you list as “Release” persons (16 or older) on your Emergency Contact form. These people may be asked for photo ID at pick up at any time, as well, even if they brought the child to school or bus stop that same day.

To safeguard your child, we require copies of any court ordered custody agreements, Protection from Abuse orders, etc. for our records. Without these documents on file, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a non-custodial parent.

If a child has not been picked up and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and, to the people listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible. However, if one hour has passed after the end of your child’s typical school day, and we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, and the child has not been picked up, we will then call the local Children and Youth Services (CYS) agency for next steps.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation. We will follow **written** court orders in all cases. Verbal changes to these orders are not considered valid.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We will refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, other children in our care, or staff. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up your child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child, other children in the facility, or staff. Reoccurring situations may result in contact with the local Children and Youth Services (CYS) agency or law enforcement.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a “cubby.” Cubbies are labeled with your child’s name and/or photo. Your child’s cubby should be checked daily for items that need to be sent/taken home.

SAFETY

Automobile, Bus Stop and Pedestrian Safety

Parents must teach their children about the potential dangers of automobile travel, school buses and walking to school. Our drivers are highly trained and certified, however, there are many blind spots on a school bus. When you provide transportation to and from school for your child, you have the responsibility to follow and teach them basic safety practices.

Bus Stop Safety

Always supervise your children.

When crossing a street:

Stop at the curb

Look LEFT – Look RIGHT – Look LEFT again

Cross when it is clear

Praise your child for copying your safe actions!

PRACTICE with your child

Pedestrian Safety

Look for traffic at every driveway and intersection.

Be aware of drivers in parked cars that may be getting ready to move.

Obey all traffic signs and signals.

Cross the street safely:

Stop at the curb or edge of the street.

Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.

Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.

Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.

Walk! Do not run across the street.

Put away your phone and other electronic devices until you safely cross the street.

Walk on sidewalks or paths and cross street corners, using traffic signals and crosswalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.

Children always need to cross the street with an adult. Their ability to judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic will not develop until they reach age 10 or older.

When exiting your car in one of our parking lots, please keep your child close to you, and

watch for cars entering and exiting the lot and individual parking spaces.

Automobile Safety

One of the most important jobs you have as a parent is keeping your child safe when your child is riding in a vehicle and being a good role model by wearing your seatbelt and requiring your child to sit in a car seat.

Proper use of car safety seats helps keep children safe. The decision about the right car seat for your child might be overwhelming. If you need help locating an affordable car seat for your child, please speak with your Family Service Worker.

For more information about car seats, how to install them properly, and other tips, visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx>

NEVER leave a child unattended in your vehicle, for any reason, for any amount of time.

Emergency Preparedness

Typically, we conduct emergency drills monthly, including fire drills, so we are ready to keep children safe in all situations. These drills are not always announced to the classrooms, as they are a learning experience intended to teach the children how to quickly respond to teacher directives, and to allow classroom staff to practice implementation of our emergency procedures/protocols.

During an evacuation or other type of protective action, non-mobile children will be moved to safety in a crib, and toddlers will be assisted with a walking rope with handles. All other accommodations will be made as outlined in any existing and/or future medical care plan, or IFSP/IEP.

Our centers are fully equipped with fire detection equipment and alarms. Fire extinguishers are also available throughout our centers, and staff members are trained annually on their operation. Staff are certified in Pediatric and Adult First Aid/CPR/AED usage. They also receive training on our emergency preparedness plans and procedures, which include strategies for situations such as:

- 1) **HOLD:** A disturbance in a hallway; A medical issue that needs attention; Unfinished maintenance operation in a common/highly trafficked area
- 2) **SECURE:** An unknown or unauthorized person on the grounds; Dangerous animal on or near the grounds; Criminal activity in the area; Planned police activity in the neighborhood

- 3) **LOCKDOWN:** Danger within a school building such as Intruder; An angry or violent parent or student; Report of a weapon; Active assailant
- 4) **EVACUATE:** Mechanical failure such as long-term power outage, water main break or gas leak; Bomb threat; Violent event; Fire
- 5) **SHELTER:** Tornado; Earthquake; Hazardous materials events in the area or other local threats

The dates and times of drills are selected randomly so that we can practice under any likely real conditions. First, it is important to understand that children may need to evacuate rapidly in many different types of weather conditions. We do not collect personal belongings prior to these evacuation drills, as they typically last just a few minutes, and children are returned to the building as quickly as possible. Secondly, lockdown drills are conducted. Details of the drill scenario are not shared with children, but rather we develop children's ability to follow directions, stay in place, and remain as quiet as possible. Lastly, we also practice sheltering against things like tornados.

You will receive additional information about how we will communicate with you about these emergency protocols in a separate notice. Please review it carefully and ask questions to be sure you understand your role, and, what to do/not to do if any of these events occur so that you can quickly and safely be reunited with your child.

Our classrooms located in school district facilities follow the district's emergency plans and drill activities. Please ask your child's teacher for more information if your child's classroom is at one of these locations.

LCCAP has created an Alternative Operations Plan to guide decisions supporting ongoing service through modified delivery in the event of a facility or community emergency, disaster, or other severe, widespread, and long-term situation.

Child Accident Coverage

Should your enrolled child become injured at a LCCAP center, accident coverage will be provided as follows, in this order:

1. Student's health insurance policy
2. Student's household (parent/guardian) insurance policy
3. LCCAP insurance policy if no other coverage is available/coverage is exhausted.

Child Bus Accident Coverage

Should your enrolled child become injured while riding a LCCAP bus, accident coverage will be provided in the following order: (According to the PA Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Act):

1. Student's household (parent/guardian) auto policy
2. Student's health insurance policy
3. LCCAP insurance policy if no other coverage is available/coverage is exhausted.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playgrounds and outdoor spaces are used as an extension of the classroom, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals, flip-flops, and dangling jewelry are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Change of Clothing

- **Infants and Toddlers:** at least 2 spare changes of clothes. For older toddlers who are toilet training, you may be asked to provide a 3rd clean and spare set. Please replace them with a clean set(s) when returned to you soiled.
- **Preschoolers:** at least 2 changes of clothes, socks and shoes, and an additional set if toilet training.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name. This will allow us to do our best to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, but we are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside "feels like" temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 25 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if there is an air quality alert in effect.

Smoking/Prohibited Substances

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Lawrence County Community Action Partnership is a Smoke Free Organization. Use of any form of tobacco is prohibited while on the premises or while attending any LCCAP activity.

In addition, Lawrence County Community Action Partnership Early Learning sites are Drug and Alcohol-Free Zones. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited at any LCCAP activity or on any LCCAP or district partner premises. Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) are not to possess a dangerous weapon while on any LCCAP Early Learning premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately and permanently removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather or other Emergency Situations

LCCAP takes the safety of your child very seriously. Therefore, we will use caution when making decisions about cancelling classes due to severe weather, or other emergency situations such as power outages or water main breaks.

For Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts "preschool only" classrooms, we typically will follow the local school district's decisions about delays or cancellations at each of our centers but reserve the right to take additional precautions as necessary to ensure the welfare of the children, as severe weather is more dangerous for very young children (skin, breathing) than older children in elementary school and beyond.

For The Learning Tree Child Care services, we will remain open unless there is severe weather of catastrophic proportions, or some other issue that affects the safety of the center (water main break, long-term power outage, widespread illness, etc.).

Announcements regarding cancellations will be made using the School Messenger broadcast system which makes phone calls, and sends text messages and emails to you, based on your permission and the information that you have provided to us. Please keep your contact information up to date.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

Respectful Behavior/Adult Code of Conduct

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior (including abusive or aggressive language) toward staff, other adults, or children. If this occurs, we will ask you to control your behavior. If hostile or aggressive behavior continues, the police will be called, and you will be escorted from the premises. The expectation for appropriate behavior also applies to language used during in-person conversation, emails, texts and replies to messages.

Violation of this code or any of the agency's safety policies can result in the agency pursuing legal action and/or limiting the offender's family engagement in the program, and/or access to our facilities. The program reserves the right to take any additional steps as needed to preserve the safety of children, staff, and volunteers at any time, including calling 9-1-1.

Suspected Child Abuse and Abusive Head Trauma

LCCAP Early Learning staff and volunteers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. This means that we are **required by law** to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Childline Abuse Registry of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is important for families to keep in mind that a report is made in order to get help for a family experiencing an abuse or neglect problem, not to punish or embarrass the family. All child abuse/neglect reports are kept strictly confidential. For more information and helpful resources visit www.keepkidssafe.com.

Children and Youth Services (CYS) may investigate after a report to ChildLine. It then becomes the role of CYs to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the

family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our program will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

Our staff is also trained to recognize abusive head trauma, which is also considered child abuse, in young children. Abusive head trauma is a head or neck injury from physical child abuse. It happens when someone shakes a child or hits them against something hard. Most cases happen when a parent or caregiver is angry, tired, or upset because a baby won't stop crying or the child can't do something they expect, like toilet train. These injuries can cause permanent brain damage or death. Family Service Workers will share information with all families about how to prevent these injuries.

Megan's Law

LCCAP Early Learning administrative staff are updated on a regular basis regarding any individuals registered under Megan's Law. Any person who is registered as an offender and/or sexually violent predator under Megan's Law will not be permitted to:

- Volunteer in any capacity where there is a potential to have direct contact with children.
- Be on any LCCAP Early Learning premises where they may potentially have direct contact with children
- Be in proximity to any program/agency sponsored off-site event

Early Learning staff may release children using alternate methods (handoff in parking lot, at exterior door, etc.) to a biological parent, even if they are registered offenders under Megan's Law, unless a court order has been provided to staff which prohibits this parent from contact with the child. Under no circumstances will a child be released to any other individual (who is not the biological parent) if they are registered under Megan's Law.

Additionally, if any LCCAP staff are aware of any individual (including biological parents) registered under Megan's Law, who is residing with an enrolled child, it will be our obligation to report this situation to the appropriate Children and Youth Services office as well as the appropriate police department.

Please do not add persons (other than biological parent) who are on the Megan's Law list to your permission to release list. We check names on those lists, and if an offender is found on your list, we will remove that name, and notify you that we have done so.

Welcome to the Learning Tree Childcare Program

Specializing in infant, toddler, and preschool care, the Learning Tree is owned and managed by United Community Services, Inc., an incorporation of Lawrence County Community Action Partnership. The Administrators and staff of the Learning Tree have prepared this guide to help you and your children make an easy and successful transition from the home to our early learning environment.

Enrollment Forms

To comply with the PA Department of Human Services childcare and other regulations and standards by which the LCCAP Early Learning Programs abide, the following enrollment forms must be completed before your child's first day of care:

- An application
- An emergency contact form
- Two (2) food program forms
- Permission to photograph
- Fee agreement
- Proof of income

Emergency Card Updates

Before your child's first day of care, an emergency card is completed. This information is needed to identify family/guardians and friends, who with proper identification, are permitted to pick your child up from school. The emergency card must be kept up to date and is reviewed with you for changes at least every 6 months. The Teacher or Family Service Worker should be notified of any changes in phone numbers, addresses or emergency contact names as soon as possible. **There is a *minimum of 48 hours* before the change can take effect.**

All forms must be kept up to date.

Enrollment Policy

Upon enrollment, each parent signs a fee agreement (contract) specifically stating the number of days per week that your child would attend. Parents will be billed for those days.

Changes may be made to the contract by contacting the Learning Tree Staff at least 3 working days prior to the change. If you make special arrangements for your child to attend additional days, you will be expected to pay for those days.

The Learning Tree reserves the right to delay, modify or refuse care when it is in the children’s best interest based on information provided by a physician or other professional. Written permission will be obtained from the parent or guardian when it is necessary to contact a professional to make this decision. Communication will continue between the professional, parent or guardian, and the Learning Tree staff in order to determine how and when care can be provided.

Financial Information

The following financial policies must be strictly enforced to provide our families with quality childcare services.

Fees are based on the type of service requested. (Make checks payable to United Community Services, Inc.)	
Infant/Toddler	\$43.00 per full day (5+ hours)
.....	\$31.00 half day (up to 4 hours and 59 minutes)
Preschool	\$38.00 per full day (5+ hours)
.....	\$30.00 half day (up to 4 hours and 59 minutes)

Payment

All child fees are due by Monday of the week your child attends. Any parent who has not paid for the child’s care for the current week **will not receive care for the following week**.

Regarding the collection of unpaid balances, we reserve the right to:

- Utilize the services of the District Magistrate
- Utilize the services of a private collection agency
- Withhold year end statement of payments for income tax documentation

Payments can be made in the Ben Franklin Early Learning Center main office or the Reception Areas at the Ellwood City Early Learning Center and Frew Mill Campus.

No refunds will be provided for overpayments of less than \$10.00. Credit balances may be carried over for future use for a different child within a family.

MasterCard and VISA debit/credit cards are accepted for payment. Payment with a credit card by phone can be requested.

The Learning Tree also offers the ability to pay through **Venmo @ LEARNING-TREE**. You can download the free **Venmo** app from your phone's app store and submit payment from anywhere at any time.

Checks Drawn on Insufficient Funds

A \$30.00 fee is charged for checks returned for insufficient funds.

Absences & Holiday/In-Service Closures

Eligible children will receive a discount on their weekly rate in lieu of unpaid days for holidays, in-service days, and personal days. If the center is open and your child is scheduled per the fee agreement, you must call your child off before 8:00am that morning to retain your eligibility for this discount. If additional days are requested without a revised fee agreement, then the full rate will be charged.

Anyone leaving their children beyond the 5:30 p.m. closing time will be charged an additional \$15.00 late pick-up fee for every 15 minutes each child in the family stays after closing.

What Will Your Child Need?

Please label everything! With each child having their own set of supplies, it is very important that you label each item. This way, the items required for your child's special needs are available when necessary for his or her own use. The following list includes the items which we recommend you should bring to the Learning Tree on the first day.

Infants:

- Plastic bottles (with liners) labeled with your child's name.
- Specific feeding instructions
- Several changes of clothing, including socks (as appropriate for the season)
- Vaseline, Desitin, A&D Ointment, or powder for diapers.
- Pacifier, if used.

Toddlers:

- Bottle, if used, labeled with your child's name
- Specific potty-training instructions
- Several changes of clothing, including socks (as appropriate for the season)
- Pacifier, if used.

Preschoolers:

- Change of clothes, including underwear (as appropriate for the season)

Due to concerns with the spread of communicable disease, we request that you refrain from bringing toys from home to the center. Additionally, the center will furnish all crib and cot sheets/blankets, which will be laundered frequently--at least once per week or more often if needed.

Policies and Schedule

Naptime

The Learning Tree provides time each day for the children to rest or nap. Each child is supplied with his/her own crib, cot, or mat, and they are disinfected daily.

Infants will be provided with a safe sleep environment. Safe sleep environments include:

- Safety approved crib (approved by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety commission)
- Firm Crib Mattress
- Tight-fitting sheet
- Free from monitors or positioning devices
- Free from other objects except a pacifier (blankets, stuffed animals, pillows, toys/mobiles, etc.)

Infants will not nap or sleep in a car safety seat, bouncy seat, infant seat, swing, jumping chair, playpen, highchair, chair, or any other type of furniture/equipment that is not a safety-approved crib.

- If an infant arrives at the facility asleep in a car safety seat, the parent/guardian and/or caregiver/teacher should immediately remove the sleeping infant and place them on their back in their assigned safe sleep environment.
- If an infant falls asleep in any place that is not designated as a safe sleep environment, staff will immediately place them in their assigned safe sleep place.

Appropriate spacing will be maintained between children to prevent the spread of communicable illness.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for all transportation to and from childcare and home. If your child attends another program and needs transportation, it is your responsibility to contact the school district to obtain transportation.

Daily Schedule

The following is an example of an older toddler or preschool child's usual daily schedule. We allow for flexibility within this schedule to meet children's unique interests and individual needs:

7:00 a.m.	Arrivals, Creative Free Play Time
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Circle Time (Finger Plays, Song, Show & Tell)
10:00 a.m.	Individual skill building/small groups
11:30 a.m.	Table setting and lunch
12:30 p.m.	Naptime
2:30 p.m.	Afternoon snack
3:30 p.m.	Supervised activities
4:00 p.m.	Outdoor play (weather permitting)
5:00 p.m.	Free play/pick up times
5:30 p.m.	Center closes

Infants and toddlers enjoy highly individual learning experiences, as well as indoor and outdoor gross motor play. Routines such as eating/mealtime, diapering and toileting, and nap/rest time follow each child's schedule and habits. Infant and young toddlers are encouraged to choose their own experiences as much as possible and are given a wide range of materials and activities from which they can choose.

Teachers make plans for, supervise, and interact with all these little ones in a way that encourages their individual growth and development.