

The Learning Spot at MCF Operational Policies



Teach me your ways Lord, lead me in a straight path.
Psalm 27:11

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Thank you for sharing your child with us! The Learning Spot at MCF will provide quality education and care for toddlers and preschoolers in a loving, Christian environment. We are so glad you have given us the opportunity to be a part of your child's life and look forward to what God has in store for the upcoming year. The following guidelines have been established so that we may comply with the regulations established by the state of Texas, and to ensure that your child receives the best possible care and education. Thank you in advance for your compliance.

As a parent, please note the following:

- Make sure all information, health and other required forms are completely filled out and returned to me by the first day of school.
- Throughout the year, if anything changes (phone number, address, etc.) please be sure give us current information.
- If someone other than those listed on the enrollment information will be picking up your child, please let us know. Safety first!
- Please keep your child at home if he/she has fever of 100 degrees or higher, or has had any fever reducing medication.
- The parent will be responsible for payment for any medical treatment for illness or injury occurring while the child is in the care of The Learning Spot at MCF.
- Parents will be verbally informed of the Texas Penal Code stating any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Hours of Operation

Fall/Spring Session (September 5, 2017 - May 24, 2018)

Preschool Hours (2's, 3's & 4's)

Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Kindergarten Hours

Monday – Thursday
8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Stay & Play Hours

Monday – Thursday
11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

School Year and Closing Due to Weather

Our program will closely follow the Madisonville CISD student calendar except for the beginning and ending dates. The first day of school will be September 5, 2017 and the last day will be May 24, 2018. Please refer to The Learning Spot at MCF school calendar for further information on special days and school holidays. In the event of bad weather, we will follow the decisions made by MCISD on school closure.

Drop Off & Release of Children

Children are to be brought to school and released into the director/staff's care by the parent or adult responsible for the child. Upon arrival and departure, the child's teacher will sign he/she in daily. Children will be released to authorized persons only (those listed on the child's enrollment form). If someone new will be picking up the child, written permission or confirmation over the phone will be required from the parent. This person will be required to prove his/her identity with picture identification.

Illness and Exclusion

The Learning Spot employees will take all precautions to keep the center as clean and germ free as possible to help aide in the prevention of illness. All children must be healthy and well to attend school each day. As a parent, please help maintain this policy. Due to the health and well-being of each child at The Learning Spot, we will strictly adhere to the following illness and exclusion criteria. If your child is experiencing one of the following, he/she will not be admitted for care:

- Fever as measured by a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Vomiting (two or more episodes in 24 hours)
- Diarrhea
- Swelling/Redness of the Throat
- Constant Cough
- Extreme Fatigue/Lethargy
- Head Lice
- Reddened/Draining Eyes
- Skin Rash
- Bumps on Hands, Feet and/or Throat
- Uncontrollable Diarrhea
- Mouth Sores
- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
- The child has a communicable disease. Some of these might include, but are not limited to conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, head lice or strep throat.
- Head lice continue to be one of the most prevalent communicable childhood diseases among children, and outbreaks are possible whenever and wherever children gather. Screen your child regularly and notify us immediately if head lice or their nits (lice eggs) are detected. Please be advised that TLS has a "NO NIT POLICY". Working together helps protect all of the children, including your own. Thank you for your cooperation.
- Diagnosis of a communicable disease by a healthcare professional with no medical documentation that the child is no longer contagious

If your child should become ill while at school, the parent will be called. A parent or authorized pick-up person must arrive at the center as soon as possible.

- Illness reports will be generated and must be signed and dated by both a staff member of TLS at MCF and a parent.
- Re-admission of a child should occur only after the fever has subsided independent of fever reducing medication and after he/she is free of fever fro 24 hours. If a child is diagnosed as having a contagious condition, parents should notify the school as soon as possible. If he/she is recovering from a communicable disease, re-admission will be upon written approval of the child's physician or after the child has been taking antibiotics for 24 hours.

Dispensing and Handling Medication

Medication will not be administered by the director/staff of The Learning Spot at MCF.

Accidents/Medical Emergencies

First aid supplies will be kept at the facility in a designated location and out of the reach of children. An incident report will be filled out and a record will be kept of all injuries. Parents will be notified of such injuries. If an incident is due to the actions of another child, we cannot give parents information about whom injured whom for confidentiality purposes. In the event of a medical emergency that requires immediate attention of a physician, the employees of The Learning Spot will contact the physician identified in the child's record, contact the parent as well as the person designated on the enrollment form. In the case of an extreme emergency, 911 will be called or the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. Precautions will be made to minimize accidents and create the safest environment possible for the children. We cannot be responsible for injuries that are out of our control which includes, but is not limited to the following.

- Incidents to fingers from doors and containers
- Incidents due to the actions of of another child like pushing, biting, hitting and thrown objects
- Incidents by contact with furniture or objects
- Accidents while playing indoors or on the outside playground

Parental Visitation

Parents are welcome, and have the opportunity to visit the school any time during the hours of operation to observe your child, the child care center's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval. Breastfeeding moms are welcome to use our nursing mom's room at any time.

Discussing Policies and Procedures

Parents are welcome to contact the center director with any questions that they have regarding their child's care at our center or about our center's policies, procedures or in general about how the center operates. The director is available during daytime business hours and can also always be reached by phone at 936.520.0655.

Parental Notification

The most recent copy of our Operational Policies and Procedures will be available on our website at www.mcf.org. As a parent, you are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the center director to show you the most recent copy of:

- The Minimum Standards for this Licensed Child- Care Center (also available on the web at www.dfps.state.tx.us or at your local Licensing office)
- The most recent Department of Family and Protective Services Inspection / Investigation Report, (compliance information is also available on the web at www.dfps.state.tx.us or from the local Licensing office 979.731.0118)
- Documentation of liability insurance that complies with Human Resources Code, Section 42.0491
- The most recent Fire Marshal's Inspection Report
- The most recent Health Department's Sanitation Inspection Report
- The most recent Gas Pipe Inspection Report
- The Child-Care Center's operational policies.

Preventing, Responding and Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation of a Child

The following is a list of phone numbers and websites for additional information or to make a report. Parents of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact DFPS immediately.

- Local Licensing Office: 979.731.0118
- Reporting Abuse and Neglect: 1.800.252.5400 (confidential reports)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: www.dfps.state.tx.us

All caregivers have received one hour of annual training on recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect. Parents and employees have received the Information on Reporting Child Abuse information sheet (Form 7261) Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation - Department of Family Protective Services information sheet dated October 2010 issue. It is a requirement by law to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect.

If you have any questions about abuse and neglect, please contact our local advocacy facility.

Scotty's House
2424 Kent St
Bryan, TX 77802
(979) 703-8813
www.scottyshouse.org

If you have any questions about domestic violence, please contact our local advocacy facility.

Phoebe's Home
500 N Main St
Bryan, TX 77803
(979) 775-5355
<https://www.twincitymission.org/domestic-violence-services>

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

Discipline and Guidance Practices

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate for the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

Suspension/Expulsion of Children

If there is a problem with behavior that continues, or the behavior is of special concern, the parent will be called for a conference regarding steps to be taken with the child. If the behavior does not stop, the parent will be called to pick the child up from school. A behavior contract will be signed at the time of enrollment outlining the above steps in further detail. The Learning Spot at MCF is committed to helping the children and families of our school.

Safe Sleep for Infants

The Learning Spot at MCF does not care for infants 12 months old or younger.

Snacks/Meals/Food Service Practices

The Learning Spot at MCF will provide a morning snack to all students. The parent understands that The Learning Spot is not responsible for the nutritional value for meeting the child's daily food needs. For students participating in Stay and Play, parents will provide lunch for their child. Please send food as ready to eat as possible (no warming up). Send self-feeding table food and a drink in a cup with a spill-proof lid. The school will provide an afternoon snack. All food will be of safe quality and will be stored, distributed and served under sanitary and safe conditions.

- Parents of children with food allergies are required to provide written documentation of the food allergy.

Immunization Requirements

Each child enrolled or admitted to child-care centers must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B. You can access it on the Texas Department of State Health Services Internet website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize>.

Acceptable documentation includes:

- An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority, including a record from another state. For example, the record may be from the Texas Immunization Registry, a copy of the current immunization record that is on file at the prekindergarten or school that the child attends, or the health passport for a child in the conservatorship of DFPS. The record must include:
 - (A) The child's name and date of birth; Medium-Low
 - (B) The type of vaccine and number of doses; and Medium-Low
 - (C) The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination; or Medium
- An official immunization record or photocopy. For example, the record may be from a doctor's office or a pharmacy. The record must include:
 - (A) The child's name and date of birth; Medium-Low
 - (B) The type of vaccine and number of doses; Medium-Low
 - (C) The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination; Medium
 - (D) The signature (including a rubber stamp or electronic signature) of the health-care professional who administered the vaccine, or another health-care professional's documentation of the immunization as long as the name of the health-care professional that administered the vaccine is documented; and Medium-Low
 - (E) Clinic contact information, if the immunization record is generated from an electronic health record system.

The laws of the State of Texas and Department of Family and Protective Services require the following age appropriate immunizations for all children enrolled:

- Hepatitis B, DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis), Hib (Haemophilus Influenza Type B), PCV (Pneumococcal), IPV (Inactivated Poliovirus), MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), Varicella, Hepatitis A

Hearing & Vision

- Children four years of age or older, who are enrolled in any facility for the first time, must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems within 120 calendar days of enrollment. If a child is enrolled within 60 days of the date a facility closes for the summer, the child's vision and hearing must be tested by December 31 of that year.
- Children previously enrolled in a facility who are four years of age on or before September 1, must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems by December 31. After the screening is complete, please provide a copy of the results to The Learning Spot to be put on file.

Protecting Children from Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Employees of The Learning Spot at MCF are not required to have any vaccinations. Immunizations for Influenza, Hepatitis A and Pertussis will be left to the employee's discretion.

Enrollment Procedures

All enrollment forms must be completed and turned in, **before** your child enrolls in school.

- All immunization records must be current with state standards.
- Required vision and hearing screening for all four year olds.

The Learning Spot at MCF will notify parents in writing of any changes made to the operational policies.

Transportation

The Learning Spot at MCF does not provide transportation.

Water Activities

Parents will be notified in advance of any outside water activities. All water activities take place on our playground. On these days, please ensure that your child arrives in their swimsuit with sunscreen applied. If your child wears diapers, please include a swim diaper on water days. Additionally, please pack a change of clothes and a plastic bag for wet clothes

Field Trips

The Learning Spot at MCF will not go on field trips.

Animals

From time to time, animals may be brought to the preschool for observation to enhance the lesson being taught in the classroom. Parents will be notified in writing. This notification will include the date, type of animal, and how the children will be interacting with the animal. Children who have an allergy to pet dander will not be exposed to the animal.

Sunscreen/Insect Repellant

Parents will be responsible for applying sunscreen and insect repellant to their child before drop off.

Texas Penal Code

The Learning Spot at MCF will inform parents verbally that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

We have an emergency preparedness plan in place and routine drills will be conducted according to licensing requirements.

Health Check

The Learning Spot at MCF will not administer health checks upon arrival.

Children's Products Certification:

Posted on the bulletin board is a copy of a notice stating that TLS certifies that there are no unsafe children's products in the center.

Tuition Payments

- The Learning Spot at MCF receives income solely from tuition and fees. Because of this, our budget requires complete payments made on time.
- A \$35 late fee will be applied to accounts with unpaid balances by the 10th of each month. Children with a balance not paid in full by the 15th of the month (and without a prior payment arrangement) will be suspended until payment has been made. If the balance has not been paid by the last day of the month and no payment arrangement
- has been made, the child will lose their enrollment status and be placed on the waiting list.
- Absences, holidays, and bad weather days will not be deducted from set fee.
- A fee of \$50 will be charged on all returned checks. All returned checks must be substituted with a cash payment. A family with 2 returned checks, must make future payments in cash or by money order.
- No refund will be granted in the event of withdrawal from the program.
- Parents who are more than 5 minutes late will be charged \$1/minute and will be reflected on the next month's invoice.

Arrival & Departure

Our classes are Monday-Thursday (8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)

Students need to be dropped off daily by 8:45 AM. If your child is not at school by 8:45, he/she will be counted absent and unable to attend school that day unless a doctor's note is brought upon arrival.

If your child participates in the Stay & Play program, he/she will need to be picked up by 3:00 PM.

ARRIVAL-Please make every effort to drop your child off between 8:00-8:30 a.m. daily. We start our day with free choice centers which is during the above time to accommodate arrival times and to give the kiddos a chance to get acclimated to being at school. At 8:30 we are ready to start our day. Once our day has started, late arrivals create unwanted distractions. Not only is your child missing out on quality learning time, the other children lose quality learning time when class is interrupted. With this being said, life does happen and situations arise which is OKAY and understandable! However, if tardiness becomes a frequent problem that is not resolved, other measures will be taken.

DEPARTURE-Please be aware of ending class times and pick your child up on time. Parents who are more than 5 minutes late will be charged \$1/minute.

Personal Items

WHAT TO BRING

Children in all classes will bring a filled water cup each day with a **spill-proof lid**. Please label said cup with your child's name. Your child will use his/her cup throughout the day. It will be sent home each day to be washed and returned the next school day full of water. Please send one change of clothes and a pair of socks to be kept in your child's cubby incase of an accident.

2 Yr. Class

- Each child will need to bring a package of diapers and/or wipes. Please label these items. As your child's supply begins to run low, we will notify you. **If your child is already potty trained, please send one package of wipes.**
- We are excited to help your child during the potty training process! It is our policy that you do not send your child in underwear until they can complete a successful morning at home with no accidents and are very close to being potty trained. If your child has two accidents, in underwear, in one day, we will put them in a pull-up. If you send pull-ups, please send the type with Velcro on the sides. Please communicate with your child's teacher where he/she is in the process and we will do everything while they are at school to help!

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Please **do not** bring toys or stuffed animals to the school unless The Learning Spot has requested it. Please do not send small trinkets, money, coins, jewelry or any other small objects that could be hazardous if swallowed. Please **do not** send breakfast with your child. Breakfast should be eaten **before** school. Water cups should be filled with **water** when your child arrives at school. Cups will be refilled as needed throughout the morning. Please **do not** put milk in your child's cup. Our cups travel with us every where we go so that the children have access to water at all times. Milk (A) causes a large mess if it is spilled, (B) requires the teacher to have to wash and clean the cup before filling it with water, taking up valuable learning time and (C) can spoil quickly when left unrefrigerated (our water cups stay in a plastic tub which travels with us from room to room and outside therefore cups containing milk will **not** be refrigerated). Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Parties

Throughout the year, we will have parties to celebrate various holidays and special events. We will have a sign up sheet for parents to volunteer to help with parties. You are welcome to attend all parties and activities at any time.

Attendance

Please make every effort to have your child at school at his/her class time. We miss them when they are not here! Thank you!

Weekly Work

Student work will be sent home on Thursday along with any other notes regarding activities or upcoming events.

End of Year Program

This is a very special night for the kiddos that we prepare for throughout the year. During the first half of the program, the children perform. The second half of the program is our certificate presentation during which our students entering Kindergarten in the fall will graduate. Special program t-shirts are ordered each year for the children to wear during the first half of the program. Each child will be responsible for purchasing said t-shirt when notified before the program. If your child is graduating, he/she will wear a cap & gown for the certificate presentation. Each graduate will be responsible for purchasing cap & gown when the time comes. The cap & gowns vary in color and texture from year to year. Because of this, borrowing from someone else or using an older brother's or sister's from years past is not an option. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.