

# **St. Jerome Little Lions Learning Center**



**little lions**  
**LEARNING CENTER**

**Addendums to Family Handbook**

All parents were previously notified that the regulations, procedures, and policies of Little Lions Learning Center are subject to alteration as necessary anytime throughout the year, and that such alterations will be published and distributed to parents and other designated parties.

All parents signed and returned the form entitled “Little Lions Learning Center Statement of Agreement,” in which they agreed to abide by the regulations, procedures, and policies contained in the Little Lions Learning Center Family Handbook. Parents also confirmed their knowledge that the regulations, procedures, and policies of Little Lions Learning Center were subject to alteration by signing the “Little Lions Learning Center Statement of Agreement.”

The following operational policies, procedures, and regulations will be implemented effective immediately.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments please feel free to contact the director of Little Lions Learning Center by calling (254) 666-6222, emailing [DirectorLLLC@StJeromeWaco.org](mailto:DirectorLLLC@StJeromeWaco.org), or speaking with the director in person.

If you have any questions and/or concerns that you feel have not been addressed by Little Lions Learning Center please direct them to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Waco office  
801 Austin Avenue  
Suite B-30  
Waco, Texas 76701  
(254) 750-9374

## **Parent Observations**

Parents of current Little Lions Learning Center students have the right to visit Little Lions Learning Center at any time during our normal hours of operation. Parents are welcome to observe their child in the classroom, Little Lions operations, and program activities without having to secure prior approval.

### *Sign in and out in Visitor Log*

Parents who wish to observe should sign the Little Lions Learning Center Visitor Log prior to beginning their observation and should sign out at the conclusion of their observation. The log is in a purple folder, which is located on the table in the foyer of Little Lions Learning Center.

### *Observation, not volunteering*

Please note, while parents are welcome to observe their child and Little Lions operations at any time this is not the same as volunteering at Little Lions Learning Center. Parents who wish to volunteer in the classroom, during field trips, and with other Little Lions programs and activities should consult page 16 of the Little Lions Learning Center 2011-2012 Family Handbook for the proper procedures on how to become a LLLC volunteer.

## Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation

Little Lions Learning Center has a **strict, zero-tolerance** policy concerning the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of any person, but especially a child.

Little Lions staff adheres to state law TFC 261.101(b) which states that a teacher and/or professional **must report within 48 hours of suspecting** the child has been abused or neglected. A teacher and/or professional cannot delegate this duty to another person, but must report the suspected abuse or neglect him or herself.

Little Lions Learning Center proactively seeks to prevent mental, emotional, physical, and/or sexual injury and/or abuse of children, persons 65 years or older, and adults with disabilities. Little Lions Learning Center also proactively seeks to prevent neglect and/or exploitation of the aforementioned vulnerable groups as well.

If the Little Lions Learning Center staff recognize symptoms of mental, emotional, physical, and/or sexual injury and/or abuse of children, persons 65 years or older, or adult with disabilities then the staff member who suspects such circumstances will report his or her suspicion to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services immediately and no later than 48 hours after initial suspicions arose.

### *Definitions*

Abuse	--	mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities, or failure to prevent such injury
Neglect	--	of a child: (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter, and/or medical care; and (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk for harm  of a person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities results in starvation, dehydration, over- or under-medication, unsanitary living conditions, and lack of heat, running water, electricity, medical care, and personal hygiene
Exploitation	--	misusing the resources of a person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities for personal or monetary benefit. This includes taking Social Security or SSI (Supplemental Security Income) checks, abusing a joint checking account, and taking property and other resources

### *Required annual training*

Little Lions Learning Center staff members are required to complete the Diocese of Austin Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) training.

As a part of the EIM training, Little Lions staff members are trained in the following: recognizing the factors indicating that a child is at risk for abuse or neglect, warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, internal procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect, and are notified of community organizations that have training programs available to staff, children, and parents.

Volunteers at Little Lions Learning Center are required to also complete the EIM training prior to volunteering in the classroom, during field trips, and at other Little Lions programs and/or activities.

The EIM training is valid for three (3) years. Little Lions staff members and volunteers are urged to take a course or training with another community organization about the prevention, recognition, and reporting of sexual and other types of abuse.

#### *Increasing awareness for staff and parents*

Little Lions Learning Center strongly encourages parents of its students to attend the Diocese of Austin Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) training. Please contact the director for a schedule of upcoming EIM trainings, or visit [www.stjeromewaco.org](http://www.stjeromewaco.org) and click on the “Schedules” link for a list of schedule upcoming EIM trainings in the Central Texas area.

Parents who have already completed the EIM Basic training are urged to complete an EIM Refresher course after their EIM training has expired—once every three years.

A tip sheet entitled “Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation” authored by Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is posted in Little Lions Learning Center for parents and visitors to read during normal hours of operation. This tip sheet is also included at the conclusion of this Addendum to Family Handbook packet.

Little Lions Learning Center will also send home information to parents once a month regarding the following: issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, and prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect.

Parents can also the following websites for more information about preventing, recognizing, and reporting child abuse, neglect, or exploitation:

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/itsuptoyou/>

<http://www.americanhumane.org/children/stop-child-abuse/report-child-abuse/>

[http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/childabuse\\_learnthefacts.htm](http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/childabuse_learnthefacts.htm)

Staff members of Little Lions Learning Center will also receive the “Reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation” tip sheet. Staff members are also made aware of the above websites and will also receive the aforementioned informational resources that are sent home to parents once a month.

### *Little Lions Learning Center Community Partnerships*

Little Lions Learning Center is partnered with Diocese of Austin in preventing child abuse and/or neglect. As previously stated, the Diocese of Austin provides training in this area to Little Lions staff through the Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) training.

Little Lions will also provide information about upcoming trainings on child abuse and/or neglect in the Waco community to its staff, parents, and volunteers.

Community Partnerships include a partnership with Children at Heart Ministries' STARRY Counseling. STARRY Counseling offers a course entitled "Love and Logic Parenting" in which parents develop techniques and skills to make parenting less stressful. Family Abuse Center is another community partner that provides education on preventing child abuse and family violence. Little Lions Learning Center staff, families, and volunteers may also seek additional training and resources for the Advocacy Center in Waco.

If you are interested in attending a training or class with one of Little Lions community partners, please contact the director for more information.

### *How parents can attain assistance and intervention concerning child abuse and/or neglect*

The law requires that any person who believes that a child, a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited report such instances to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

A person making a report is immune from civil or criminal liability provided they make the report in good faith, and the name of the person making the report is kept confidential.

Any person who suspects the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child, a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities who does not report their suspicions can be held liable for a Class-A misdemeanor.

Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible for a family to get help.

To report life threatening emergencies, please call 911 immediately.

To report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child, a person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities you can:

Call 1-800-252-5400

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide

Report online at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)

Please note, you can chose to report anonymously if you chose. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services cannot accept e-mail reports of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Time frames for investigating reports are based upon the severity of allegations.

## **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

### *Immediate evacuation*

If an immediate evacuation is necessary, Little Lions will do everything possible to ensure the safety of its students.

In the event that we are notified by authorities that our building needs to be evacuated, we will walk the children over to the nursery in St. Jerome Catholic Church.

If the entire church campus is unsafe, we will promptly call parents and ask them to immediately pick up their child from school.

If we do not directly speak with parents, we will transport students in the St. Jerome Catholic Church bus while under police escort from Waco Police Department. We will transport students to Academy for Creative Learning (ACL) at 9021 Chapel Road, Waco, 76712. If ACL is also in the zone of chemical and/or airborne threat then we will transport students to St. Louis Catholic School at 2208 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Waco, 76708.

Please know that your child's safety is our number one concern.

### *Fire emergency*

If the front entrance to LLLC is blocked by a fire then the children and adults will walk to Brooks Hall and exit through the left door, which lead to the blacktop by the playground.

Two alternate routes can also be used in case of a fire emergency: the left side door of Brooks Hall or the right side door of Brooks Hall.

If the back exits are blocked by a fire then the children and adults will walk out of the front door of LLLC to exit the building. In this case, everyone will walk on the sidewalk leading to the parking lot

### *Tornado and/or disaster emergency*

If there is a tornado within the surrounding city and/or counties then the children and adult will walk to the girls and boys bathrooms. The Pre-K 3 classroom will occupy the girls' bathroom with the Pre-K 3 teacher and classroom aide. The Pre-K 4 classroom will occupy the boys' bathroom with the Pre-K 4 teacher and director and/or other classroom aide.

The children will line against the bathroom wall, opposite the bathroom stalls. The children will sit on the floor with both hands clasped behind their neck. The children's resting mats will be placed on top of the children for added safety. Each adult will assume the same position and cover him or herself with a resting mat, if they are available.

All children and adults will remain in this position until the tornado or disaster is over.

#### *Bomb threat*

If there is a bomb threat then the children and adults will exit out of the front door of Little Lions Learning Center. They will walk to St. Jerome Catholic Church and enter the two front doors.

All children and adults will remain in St. Jerome Catholic Church until it is deemed safe to reenter the building.

#### *Intruder/lock down*

If an armed intruder enters Little Lions or there is a criminal and/or police activity which poses a threat to the students and staff then the adults will lock all the exit doors to the building. The children and adults will lock themselves in their respective classrooms. The mini blinds in each classroom will also remain closed.

Everyone will remain in the classroom with the shades closed until it is safe to unlock the classroom doors and exit doors.

#### *Chemical and/or airborne threat*

In the event that we are notified by authorities that our building needs to be evacuated due to a chemical and/or airborne threat, we will walk the children over to the nursery in St. Jerome Catholic Church.

If the entire church campus is unsafe due to a chemical and/or airborne threat, we will promptly call parents and ask them to immediately pick up their child from school.

If we do not directly speak with parents, we will transport students in the St. Jerome Catholic Church bus while under police escort from Waco Police Department. We will transport students to Academy for Creative Learning (ACL) at 9021 Chapel Road, Waco, 76712. If ACL is also in the zone of chemical and/or airborne threat then we will transport students to St. Louis Catholic School at 2208 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Waco, 76708.

#### *Safe areas*

The following areas are safe areas in case of an emergency and/or evacuation:

- The blacktop adjacent to the Little Lions Learning Center playground
- Outside St. Jerome Catholic Church main offices
- Nursery of St. Jerome Catholic Church

- Girls' bathroom (for Pre-K 3 class)
- Boys' bathroom (for Pre-K 4 class)
- Little Lions Learning Center classrooms
- Academy for Creative Learning—9021 Chapel Road, Waco, 76712
- St. Louis Catholic School—2208 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Waco, 76708

### *Designated responsibilities*

In case of fire, danger of fire, explosion, toxic fumes, or other chemical release, the director of Little Lions Learning Center will contact the fire department.

In case of an emergency, each classroom teacher will be responsible for contacting the parents of the students in his or her classroom.

In case of an emergency, unsafe conditions, and/or unsanitary conditions, the director will notify the Child Care Licensing representative from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services that is assigned to LLLC.

## **Gang Free Zone**

According to the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone. Gang related activity is strictly prohibited within 1,000 feet of Little Lions Learning Center. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity conducted within 1,000 feet of a child-care center are subject to harsher penalty under Texas law.

A tip sheet authored by the Texas Department for Family and Protective Services entitled "New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones for Child Care Centers" has already been distributed to parents. The same tip sheet is also posted in a prominent area of Little Lions Learning Center and may be viewed by parents and other interested parties during Little Lions' normal hours of operation. This tip sheet is also present at the conclusion of this Addendums to Family Handbook packet.

## **Medication**

### *Definition*

Texas law defines medication as "a drug that may be obtained with or without a prescription, excluding a topical ointment obtained without a prescription."

### *Over-the-counter medication*

Texas law now requires that parental consent must be given for any medication to be administered during school operating hours, other than over-the-counter ointments.

### *Specialized care*

Texas law requires child care centers to follow the directions of a child's health care professional when providing specialized medical assistance. The child care center must maintain a copy of the directions from the child's health care professional in the child's record.

### **Tuberculin Testing Requirements**

McLennan County is not a high-risk county for Tuberculosis. New students in Texas schools do not need a tuberculin skin test, however, a tuberculosis questionnaire has been developed by pediatric and public health experts to identify if children are at high risk for latent Tuberculosis (TB) infection.

The questionnaire can be used to determine if a child should be evaluated for TB infection with a TB skin test. If you answer "yes" to any of the TB questionnaire questions, you should have your child tested immediately for TB with your family doctor.

Children who have a positive reaction to the TB skin test, but no symptoms of Tuberculosis should not be kept out of school while they are being evaluated for treatment of latent TB infection.

A copy of the Tuberculosis Questionnaire in both English and Spanish can be found at the conclusion of this Addendum to Family Handbook packet.

### **LLLC Field Trips**

Parents will be notified if Little Lions Learning Center students will be taking any field trips during the school year.

Parents will be given permission forms prior to embarking on any field trips stating that their child has permission to participate in the Little Lions field trip.

Parents who do not wish for their child to participate in the field trip will have the opportunity to state in writing that their child will not be participating in the LLLC field trip on the field trip permission form.

Since Little Lions Learning Center is not authorized to transport students on the St. Jerome Catholic Church bus except in case of an emergency evacuation, parents will also be notified in advance of how the children will be transported to and from the field trip, should LLLC elect to embark on one.

### **New Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones** **For Child Care Centers**

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents.

***What is a gang-free zone?***

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

***How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?***

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

***What is the purpose of gang-free zones?***

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

***What does this mean for my day care center?***

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

***When do I have to comply with the new requirements?***

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care.

For further information please contact your licensing representative or your local licensing office.