PARENT HANDBOOK - TABLE OF CONTENTS

For question contact- Ella Shvarzman, Executive Director.

1. WELCOME .................................................................................................................. 2
2. POLICIES & PROCEDURES ..................................................................................... 2
3. AUTHORIZED PERSON ............................................................................................. 4
4. DAILY ROUTINE ......................................................................................................... 4
5. ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE ......................................................................................... 7
6. HEALTH ....................................................................................................................... 8
7. DRILLS & EVACUATION ........................................................................................... 9
8. CURRICULUM ............................................................................................................ 9
9. SPECIAL EVENTS ..................................................................................................... 12
10. GRIEVANCE POLICY ............................................................................................. 13
1. WELCOME

We are pleased that you have chosen Little Berries Day Care Center as your “partner” in the care and education of your child. Like you, we are interested in your child’s whole development. Our commitment is to provide you and your child with the best in child care and education. This handbook is given to all parents at the time of enrollment of their child in the child care center, and is designed to acquaint you with our policies and procedures. In addition to our policies, we are licensed by the state of New York and abide by state rules and regulations.

1.A) CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

Through a quality program, Little Berries Day Care will provide care and education based on best practices.

1.B) CENTER PHILOSOPHY

We believe in the development of the whole child. Our curriculum is designed to focus on the creative, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social growth of each child. The purpose of our approach is to foster competency in the young child. While the emphasis is on children, family involvement is encouraged and supported. We have several goals for children.
- to be competent and confident in their abilities
- to be self-directed in a constructive, creative manner
- to be successful in future educational experiences
- to develop a love for learning and the ability to know how to learn
- to develop self-control and a sense of right and wrong
- to feel good about who they are
- to learn cooperation with other children as well as adults
- to reach their full potential in emotional, intellectual, physical and social development

2. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.A) Registration

A non-refundable one time enrollment fee of $150.00 per child is due at the time of enrollment. Registration fees are the same for the full time as well as the part time enrollments. These fees and required documentation must be turned into the office prior to your child’s starting date.

Documentation Required For Your Child’s Records

1. A signed agreement packet.
2. An immunization record, completed by your child’s pediatrician.
3. Authorization for pick-up.
4. All completed forms/permission slips.
5. If applicable- A copy of any court orders regarding child custody/visitation concerns
2.B) Programming
The Little Berries is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please see the Director for full day/half day program information and timings.

2.C) Late Fees
Parents must adhere to the hours of their child’s scheduled time block. If your child (ren) is/are dropped off before or picked up later than your scheduled contract time, you will be billed for the extra time and any applicable early drop-off and or late pick-up charges. There will be a charge of $10 for 10 minute that goes over the day care’s hours of operation. This is necessary because of staffing ratios, which must be strictly followed. The clock in the front office is our time clock.

2.D) Tuition Rates
Tuition rates are subject to review and change each year. Contact the administration office for current rates.

2.E) Payments
LBDC00 accepts credit card payments. Only cash, checks and money orders are accepted. Please make checks or money orders payable to “Little Berries Day Care”. Monthly payments are due on the first of each month. A late charge of $50.00 will be imposed after one week past due date. It is the parent’s responsibility to physically hand in the payment to the center Director. Do not leave your payment in child’s back pack. Please Note: There is a $30.00 charge for returned checks.

2.F) Refunds
No refunds in tuition are made for absences or sick day. There will be an exception only if there is a medical procedure.

2.G) Orientation
Before your child starts LBDC, you and the assigned Head Teacher/Director will meet to discuss your child’s classroom policies and procedures. You will also be given a tour of the school and made familiar with the program.

2.H) Attendance/Cancellations
Please notify your child’s teacher and / or the Director if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance. We do worry. If circumstances cause you to withdraw your child, you must submit a written notice of your exit date to the office two weeks prior to your child’s last day of care.

2.I) Vacation and Holidays
LBDC will be closed in observance of the following holidays: New Years, Passover, Independence Day, Memorial Day, Labor day, Rosh Ha Shana, Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving Day & Christmas. These holidays are subject to change. In case of an emergency (or weather) closing, we will notify all the parents. We do ask you to give us a courtesy notification of two weeks in advance when you
will be talking a vacation. You will be charged as though your child were here, even though they were not.

3. AUTHORIZED PERSONS

3.A) Emergency Contact Information
Each parent must have on file a list of names and phone numbers of emergency contacts. The emergency contacts are persons in the area who are authorized by the parent(s) to pick up and/or care for the child in case of illness or emergency when the parent cannot be reached. Please be sure the persons whose names you give are aware that they have been listed for this purpose and that staff members will ask for identification of any person with whom they are not familiar. In the case of legal issues, the registered parent must indicate who has legal custody and who may pick up the child on the enrollment form. We assume no liability if not properly advised. If you won’t be at the number you have listed to contact you during your child’s day at LBDC, leave a note with a staff member and/or on the sign-in sheet with the number at which you can be reached. Whenever there are changes to be made, it is your responsibility to update the emergency forms located in the center’s front office and your child’s classroom. Written authorization is required for changes in this respect. Children will only be released to persons whose name appears on the emergency forms.

3.B) Special Circumstances
If a staff member suspects that the person picking up the child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the child will not be released. Another person authorized to pick up the child will be called. The safety and well being of the children in our care is of primary importance. If any child care staff believes that an adult who is picking up a child is not in a condition to drive or adequately care for the child’s safety, the staff will not release the child to the adult until the child’s safety is assured. Staff will offer to call a cab for the person or call another authorized adult to assist in picking up the child. Determining whether or not to release a child in this situation is difficult for the parent, the child, and the staff member.

4. DAILY ROUTINE

4.A) Clothing and Personal Belongings
Your child will have a cubby at school for storing personal belongings. Some children may have to share their cubby with another child. We ask that all clothing be appropriate for child care. We do many fun and messy activities. Although children always have access to smocks and are asked to wear them for messy types of activities, there may be mishaps. We don’t want to ruin anything that is special to you or your child. We ask that you leave at least one complete outfit for your child here at LBDC. A complete change of clothing is requested to be at the center at all times (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in case a child needs to change. Because children grow so fast, it is important to
check the fit and weather appropriateness of these extra clothes from time to time. Always label everything with your child’s name. LBDC is not responsible for any belongings getting lost.

4.B) Communication
Communication is vital to building positive relationship. We encourage parents/guardians to communicate with the administration and teachers as and when need be. The parent bulletin boards contain items pertaining information and notices for parents. Every month, a newsletter will be published and placed in your child’s backpack. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled periodically; however, you can request a parent-teacher conference at any time.

4.C) Discipline
Children are taught the importance of being a friend and treating others with care and respect. It is our belief that the goal of discipline is to help young children gain inner self-control so they become aware of what is acceptable behavior. If unacceptable behavior is displayed, we explain why the behavior is inappropriate. If the behavior continues, the child will be directed to another activity. A child continuing to have difficulty will be removed from the activity for a short period of time in order to regain his/her self-control.

We try to foresee and prevent problems by structuring an appropriate environment and setting basic limits. These limits are mainly for reasons of safety and respect for oneself, for others, and for property. These limits are explained or shown to a child at the outset in terms that s/he can understand. Negative “attention seeking” behavior is ignored if at all possible. Discipline shall be fair, reasonable, consistent, and related to the individual behavior.

4.D) Severe Behavior
Young children can present challenging behavior as they learn to interact appropriately in the educational setting. The LBDC is committed to using positive guidance strategies when teaching young children how to manage their own behavior. Developmentally appropriate guidance and classroom management promotes positive social skills, fosters mutual respect, strengthens self-esteem, and supports a safe environment. However, at times some children will exhibit severe behaviors that cannot be managed within the classroom setting. Severe behavior is defined as:

- Danger to self or others (examples include but are not limited to: head banging, excessive biting that breaks the skin, hitting, hair pulling, using objects to inflict bodily harm, etc.) and/or disruptive behavior that creates chronic interference to classroom activities (examples include but are not limited to: tantrums, screaming, foul language, severe or chronic non-compliance or defiance.) The Center has developed procedures to deal with such cases of severe behavior. In these situations, the parents will be contacted. The parents will need to meet with the teacher and/or the director
to discuss the situation and appropriate measures. Behavior that is chronically unacceptable may be an indicator that further support or assessment is needed. This support may include a referral process for further assessment and additional outside services. If the Center’s procedures for dealing with severe behavior problems do not result in the restoration of an acceptable and safe educational environment, the Center Director reserves the right to temporarily or permanently remove a child from the Center.

4.E) Keep us Informed
As your partner in caring for your child, it is important that good communication exist between the home and our center. If your child is experiencing a change in the home environment that may result in changes in behavior, it is important for you to notify your teacher. Your teacher will keep you informed of any behavioral concerns that may occur with your child at the center. Every effort will be made to resolve any problem that may occur.

4.F) Hygiene
Children will be encouraged to learn good hygiene habits. Children will be guided by teachers to wash hands with soap and water before and after meals and snacks, after using the toilet, and before engaging in any cooking activity or water play.

4.G) Outdoor Play
Please bring appropriate clothing for the weather (i.e., sweatshirt, jacket, gloves, and hat). Please remember to label all clothing. Unless the weather is extremely severe, we will go outside for much needed fresh air and large motor play. If your child is too ill to go outside, s/he should be kept home.

4.H) Rest Time
The children have a rest period each day. Depending on the age and need of children the center has developed resting periods that fit into classroom routine. Every child is provided a cot sheet. To protect your child's health, sheets are laundered each week. Cots are sanitized regularly. Parents should provide a familiar cuddly blanket to help soothe a restless child. Please label the blanket and remember to take it home at the end of the week for cleaning.

4.I) Meals
LBDC provides nutritious meals at the center. Therefore no food from outside is permitted. The only exceptions are yogurt and water/Sippy cups. Please label each item. Food Menus are posted on the parent board. Arrangements may be made with your teacher if you would like to provide a snack for a birthday party or special event. Special snacks provided by you must be store purchased or made here at the center. Children with a dairy/milk allergy must have on file a written exclusion from their physician.

4.J) Toys
We ask that all toys with the exception of a soft sleepy time toy or toys for sharing days stay at home. This assures they will not be lost or broken while at school. Any toys that are brought to school will remain in the child’s cubby until pick up time.

Schedule

5. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE ADJUSTMENT

5.A) Arrival
The center opens at 7:30 a.m. each morning, Monday- Friday. We encourage children to arrive by 8:50 a.m. so they may fully participate in the morning activities. Parents must always accompany their children inside the center. Upon your child’s arrival and departure, please be sure to hand over your child to a staff member. Share information that will help teachers with your child; in turn they will share information about your child’s day. According to New York State Child Care Licensing regulations, you must sign in your child using your signature and time of arrival. Similarly, you must sign out with your signature and time of departure. This is extremely important for your child’s safety. In case of emergency, please be sure to follow this regulation.

5.B) Guidelines for a Smooth Separation
When you arrive at the center, plan to spend a few minutes with your child. Seek out a familiar adult or favorite activity. A staff member will be there to greet you, especially if you and your child are new to the center. Sometimes children need to share this time with parents before they can try it on their own. Interestingly, in most cases when children sense their parents’ willingness to spend some time with them, they feel comfortable enough to move out on their own. However, when they think parents are anxious to leave, children sometimes feel they have to cling all the more. When you leave, be sure to say good-bye, then follow through and leave. Continually returning makes it more difficult for the child and parent to separate. When you depart, your child may cry and protest. This protest is what psychologists call separation distress. It is part of the normal developmental process of establishing an independent and autonomous existence, separate and apart from parents. The intensity of a child’s distress seems to depend mainly on the child’s personality and temperament. It also depends on the way teachers handle the anxiety and the way in which parents leave. Children may show this kind of behavior at the initial separation. As they become familiar with the teachers in the classroom their protest will taper off. If you are experiencing difficulties in this area, please let one of the teachers know. If you feel a need to insure your child’s adjustment, please feel free to observe your child and his/her interactions in the classroom- see the center director for more information.

Please note that the LBDC Center has an open door visitation policy for parents. However, there may be occasions when seeing your child is a disruption to other children; please remember to consider the needs of others. Thank You.
6. HEALTH

6.A) No-Smoking Policy
LBDC is a non-smoking facility. No smoking is permitted inside the building at any time. Smoking is also prohibited within 50 feet outside of center.

6.B) Sick Child Policy
For the safety and health of all our children and staff, sick children need to be at home. Please do not send your child to school if s/he has had any of the following described conditions during the previous 24 hours. Also be advised, if your child exhibits any of the following signs while at LBDC, s/he will be isolated immediately and you will be contacted to come pick up your child. When you have been contacted because of illness, please pick up your child within the hour. It is very important you have alternative care for your child when s/he is sick. We know it can be a very frustrating time when a child is sent home because of illness. No tuition adjustment will be made for absences due to illness.
Symptoms Include: Severe pain or discomfort, acute diarrhea, episode of acute vomiting, elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degree Fahrenheit, sore throat or severe coughing, yellow eyes or jaundice skin, red eyes with discharge, infected & untreated skin patches, difficult or rapid breathing, skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding, swollen joints, visibly enlarged lymph nodes, stiff neck, blood in urine. Once the child is symptom free, or has a doctor’s note stating that he/she no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or other, he/she may return to the center.

6.C) Medications
LBDC do not administer any medication.

6.D) Sanitation Procedures
Parents must supply disposable diapers and wipes. Changing areas have running water and are disinfected after each use. Teachers wear a fresh glove each time they change a child’s diaper. Every precaution is made to keep the diaper changing areas as germ free as possible. Licensing regulations are adhered to in all areas of sanitation procedures.

6.E) Injuries
The staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. As a partner in the care of your child, we realize that you will want to be aware of your child’s injuries or illnesses that occur at the center. In order to keep you informed, we will provide you with an Incident Report for each occurrence. In case of a serious injury, we will make every attempt to contact you for instructions. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person you have indicated on the emergency contact form to make medical emergency decisions about your child. Please keep all these numbers updated. Your signed emergency medical release will also assist us in obtaining prompt
7. DRILLS & EVACUATIONS

7.A) Fire Drills
Emergency fire drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. This may make quite an impression on your child the first time a drill is held, but your child will soon become accustomed to it and know just what to do. Our center is equipped with a fire alarm system, ceiling sprinkler system and fire extinguishers are placed throughout the building. The Fire Marshall Inspection Certificate is posted in the front office.

7.B) Emergency Evacuations
In the event of an actual emergency, an attempt to reach parents by telephone to inform you of the need to pick up your child will be made if there is sufficient time and ability. If we are unable to contact you, the evacuation location will be posted on the center door. If such an event were to occur, LBDC Staff will stay with the students and take total responsibility for their safety and liability until parents pick them up.

8. CURRICULUM

8.A) Learning centers
At LBDC, we believe that education should be fun and engaging, therefore besides the traditional reading and writing programs we do several other fun activities. Following is the list of areas that we cover in learning centers.

Art- We use a variety of materials so the child may experience the joy of creating by cutting, gluing, coloring and painting. Art may also be used for instructive purposes such as identification of shapes, learning to follow oral instructions, sequencing steps and learning various skills, such as cutting and pasting. Activities are geared to the child’s level, and are concerned with the process of creating instead of the final product.

Science- A variety of science materials will be out for exploration by the child in learning centers, books and group experiments will be done frequently. Science study increases vocabulary and general knowledge, encourages curiosity, helps the child discover natural laws, and helps the child become more aware of his/her surrounding world.

Music- Music is used to express emotions, reinforce subject material, and as a source of joy. We use tapes, CD’s, records, rhythm instruments, scarves, ribbon sticks, singing, clapping, and body movement.

Group Time- This is a period of 15-30 minutes which serves as a vehicle for teaching a wide variety of subjects. It often includes finger plays, stories, games, songs, and discussion centered around one topic. This topic is the basis for our weekly themes, which may include Zoo, Food, numbers, forest animals, etc. Talk to your teacher for more information on monthly and weekly themes.
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Math/Manipulative- Children through discovery and exploration learn number concepts by solving puzzles and games. They are given the opportunity to learn and develop new skills using math manipulatives and counters.

Small Muscle- Through manipulative table toys, games, and other activities, small muscle coordination grows. A variety of small motor toys are offered and changed weekly to coordinate with the weekly theme.

Large Muscle- Children received large muscle coordination through outside play, going for walks, or indoor play in within the classroom. Depending on the weather children are offered large muscle play two times a day.

8.B) Programs
LBDC has full day programs for children ages 2-6 years.

2’S Program
This program is designed to accommodate the development of self-help skills needed for children 24 months to 36 months. The children are introduced to new and exciting sensory experiences. A consistent program of developmentally appropriate activities helps to nurture a positive “can-do” attitude. Teachers in these classrooms believe in the right of every child to a safe, nurturing, supportive environment where children can reach their full potential. Our goal is to facilitate the growth of each child through a carefully planned curriculum encouraging children in each area of development. Cognitive, emotional, physical, and social domains are developed using hands-on experiences and sensory activities focusing on the process, not the end result. Each child is allowed to progress at his/her own rate in a developmentally appropriate environment based on best practices. During this time of constant growth and exploration by busy toddlers, we encourage a “can do” attitude to promote many self-help skills and develop a healthy self-concept. Washing hands, participating in toy cleanup, clearing their table space after eating, and potty learning are a few of the self-help skills we work on daily.

3’S Program
This program is designed to accommodate the development of independence and pre-academic skills needed for children 37 months to 48 months. The program provides a well-balanced curriculum that includes teacher and child initiated activities, large and small groups, active and quiet times, indoor and outdoor play, fine and gross motor fun, individual and group needs, and structured and unstructured activities. Children are allowed to choose from activities in various learning centers: art, blocks, dramatic play, language arts, manipulatives, music, reading, and sensory play. The child’s ability to choose activities fosters a positive outlook toward the learning process.

4’S Program
This program is designed to accommodate the developmental academic and social needs for children 49 months to 60 months. This program offers a
variety of hands-on activities and experiences. Planned academic activities and consistent daily schedules are balanced with time to create a developmentally appropriate setting that enhances the preschooler’s love of learning. The purpose of the preschool is to provide a safe and caring environment for children, while meeting their individual creative, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social needs. We believe this development happens by creating a warm and trusting atmosphere where children can establish a sense of security through a combination of hands-on experiences and active involvement in play. We acknowledge the importance of a child’s unique and intrinsic sense of wonder. We therefore provide a variety of hands-on activities and experiences to encourage exploration, manipulation, problem solving, and sharing. We believe in offering choices for children, giving them a sense of empowerment and self-control. This is accomplished by balancing structured and unstructured daily activities, and offering individual, small and large group interactions. Most importantly, we believe in and respect a child’s right to be a child. We encourage discovery, fun, laughter, and success.

5'S Program
This program is designed to accommodate the developmental, academic and social needs for children 61 months to 72 months. This program seeks to facilitate a joyful beginning to lifelong learning. This means encouraging children to be creative and active explorers who are not afraid to think their own thoughts and to try out their ideas. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We help children develop good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of self. This positive sense of self is part of the strong foundation needed to tackle life’s experiences. Our hands-on, activity-based curriculum is designed to enhance the creative, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development of the child. Emotional: to help children develop self-confidence, independence, self-control, and a positive attitude toward life. Intellectual: to help children become confident learners by providing opportunities to experience success and develop learning skills through problem solving, asking questions, and using words to describe their ideas, observations, and feelings. Physical: to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and develop confidence in what their bodies can do. Social: to help children feel comfortable in school, build trust in a new learning environment, develop friendships, and feel they are a part of the group. All activities planned for children, the selection of materials, the daily schedule, and the way we talk with children are designed to accomplish the goals of our program and give children a successful start in school and the road to lifelong learning.

8.C) Transitions
Upon completion of one program, the child is gradually introduced into the next age group. A meeting between the new Teacher and parents will help facilitate a smooth transition for all.

8.D) Videos in the Classroom
As part of your child’s daily schedule educational videos and games may be shown in the classroom to educationally enhance the early childhood experience. Occasionally, videos are shown for entertainment purposes, but these are age-and group-appropriate. The quality, quantity, and purpose of videos shown to children are important considerations in a group care setting. When a child brings in a video to have shown to the other children, there is much we need to consider. Does it have educational relevance? Is it appropriate for the group of children (too long, scary, etc.)? Does it contain some material other parents may find objectionable? Parents can help us in this effort by letting their children know parents need to talk with teachers about bringing videos into the classroom.

Our guidelines are as follows: The use of media such as television, films, and videotapes is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that has been previewed by adults prior to use. Another option for activity is always available; no child is required to view the program. Staff discusses what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. Television, videotape, and other forms of media have the potential to be effective educational tools for children. Media will be used constructively to expand children’s knowledge.

**If you have questions about any of these programs, you are welcome to ask the Director or your teacher. Please see your teacher for class specific daily schedule**

9. SPECIAL EVENTS

9.A) Birthdays

Birthdays will be celebrated at the LBDC. Please contact your child’s teacher for specific guidelines and a list of birthday ideas regarding food or party celebrations. For health regulations, it is required that all food be store bought or made at the center. Food may not be prepared at home.

9.B) Holiday Celebrations

Holidays represent opportunities for young children to learn about the celebrations various cultures observe. Certain holidays are recognized in the preschool classrooms in ways that are consistent with the individual program’s curriculum and the age of the children. Examples include (but are not limited to) Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, and Easter. LBDC, however, recognizes, understand, and value other holidays which reflect the cultural diversity represented among our families. We encourage all parents to propose the observance of additional holidays that reflect their family background and traditions. Such celebrations represent unique opportunities for children to experience and understand various cultural heritages.

9.c) Transportation/Field Trips

We do not provide transportation to and from school. For special field trips, transportation may be arranged. Parents will be notified prior to any field trips. Parental permission is required before children may be transported on a field
trip. Parents may be requested to join a field trip event. Please watch for special event information.

10. GRIEVANCE POLICY
Should there be a conflict between parents and staff, the parent is advised to approach the Director to find a solution.

Acknowledgment:

My Child’s Name: _______________________________ Date:
__________________________________________

I (the parent) have received and read the Little Berries Day Care parent hand-book and will operate in agreement with all the policies and procedures. If I have any questions I will contact the Director to clear any misconceptions.

I (the parent) hereby acknowledge that I (the Parent) am aware of the conditions stated in the Little Berries Day Care Policy Handbook, and agree to abide by the above signed policies and requirements in conjunction with the financial agreement and the Agreement for Child Care Services.
Parent full name_______________________
Signature_________________________

Parent full name_______________________
Signature_________________________