



Early Childhood Education Program FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023-2025 School Year



WELCOME

Dear Family,

Thank you for choosing Lake Dow Learning Academy for your childcare and educational needs. Our dedicated staff is committed to providing high-quality care and education for children and the families we serve. We are confident that you will be pleased with the care provided to your child at Lake Dow Learning Academy. Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing and loving educational environment that meets the needs of all children. We are a state-licensed childcare facility that adheres to the highest standards of security, safety, cleanliness, and teaching.

Our program consists of developmentally appropriate practices for children, that include a high-quality early childhood program that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of their families. Our classrooms reflect the spirit of children and support their developmental needs. We prepare the environment so that it offers stimulating, challenging materials and activities. Every day we work to make education fun.

Lake Dow Learning Academy is open to any child from infant - 5 years of age, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin.

We provide excellent childcare and affordable rates to our families. We work in partnership with parents and families to build a mutual understanding and always welcome your participation in your child's care. Our program not only stimulates educational growth but, most importantly, ensures love, acceptance, and safety for all children.

Thank you for choosing Lake Dow Learning Academy. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Vivian Terry
Owner and Program Director

Robyn Terry
Owner
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Lake Dow Learning Academy

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

Lake Dow Learning Academy offers developmentally appropriate care and education. We strive to enhance social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth in the children we serve. Our teachers encourage children to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their daily experiences. The classroom is designed to reflect the children's interests and to cultivate positive self-image, independence, and interdependence.

Mission

The mission of Lake Dow Learning Academy is to provide a safe, nurturing and loving educational environment that meets the needs of all children.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Lake Dow Learning Academy is licensed for operation from 6:00 AM to 6:30 PM, Monday through Friday, and is open year-round except for holidays and inclement weather days.

School-age care will also be conducted at these times.

Transportation is provided for before and after-school care.

Holidays

We are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (schedule varies)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Good Friday

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Independence Day (schedule varies)

Labor Day

Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)

Christmas Day and the day after (Schedule varies)

When the holiday falls on a Saturday, we will observe Friday as the holiday. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, we will observe Monday as the holiday. There is no deduction in tuition for holidays. If the center is closed for a holiday, full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

Staff Development Days

We are closed for the following staff development days:

Good Friday (April)
July 31
December 31

Staff development days are necessary for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills. There is no deduction in tuition for staff development days.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, enrollment fee paid, and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age.

LDLA is required by DECAL to keep certain information on file while your child is in our program. This information is in the best interest and protection of the children in our care. You must complete and provide the following:

A completed enrollment application.

A copy of your child's current Immunization Certificate, form 3231.

Written permission from you at any time that the provider is asked to administer medicine to your child.

A formula or feeding schedule for your child if he/she is under one year of age.

Copy of parent identification.

Religious/medical form with doctor's signature for each child that is excluded from immunization.

Parent(s) or guardians) are expected to inform the center immediately if there is a change of name, address, phone number, or place of employment. It is important our files are kept current, so we may contact up in case of an emergency.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Inclusion

Lake Dow Learning Academy believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At Lake Dow Learning Academy equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

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

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Teacher	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Child Development Associate Credential	1 year

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

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Lake Dow Learning Academy.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Brightwheel is our primary method of communicating with parents.

Newsletters. Quarterly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking and through Brightwheel.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Family Night. Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights 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.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Service Learning. Families and students are encouraged to participate in the various service-learning activities presented throughout the year. These activities combine learning objectives with community service that promote leadership and communication skills, reduce stereotypes, facilitate cultural and racial understanding, and a sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity/Social Media and Photos

Photographs/videos will be taken of the children at the center during the course of the school year for use in the center, for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources). Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Lake Dow Learning Academy uses the Creative Curriculum. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

Developmental Screening

Lake Dow Learning Academy uses the CDC's Developmental Milestones to monitor and screen children to coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is a collaborative one, involving parents/guardians and done in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct 90 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the campus daily. From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and outdoor play and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Georgia State rules prohibit children under 2 years of age from going on field trips or outings if transportation is needed.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transitioning into the Center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Transition to elementary school

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Transition for before/after school care

Children who are of school age may continue with before/after school care at our center. The center will provide staff to ensure that your child arrives to school (before school) and picked up (after school) in a timely manner. The Supplemental Enrollment Form must be completed and on file with the center in order to be eligible for this service.

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 30 minutes per week per child.

Georgia rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. 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.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

January - Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, **February** – Groundhog's Day, **Valentine's Day**, **March** –Dr. Seuss's Birthday - St. Patrick's Day, **April** – Easter, **May** – May Day, Mother's Day, **June** – Father's Day, **July** – Independence Day, **September** – Grandparent's Day, **October** – Columbus Day, November – Thanksgiving, **December** – Christmas/Kwanzaa

Rest Time

Infants 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 every 15 minutes.

After lunch, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

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.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Lake Dow Learning Academy is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works 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 ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help 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.

Discipline Policy

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Lake Dow Learning Academy has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director or Assistant Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed through Brightwheel or the business office. The Director or Assistant will be in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact our business office. Payment is always due

in advance with no deduction for any absence, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due weekly, bi-weekly or monthly by 9 AM on Tuesday, as outlined in the Parent Contract. Please take note that if you're paying bi-weekly or monthly, it must be paid in advance.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$100 per child/\$125 per family is due annually on the day of enrollment. This fee will not be prorated.

Tuition Rates

Full-Time Rates:

Infants:	\$205
Ones:	\$200
Twos:	\$195
Threes:	\$190
Pre-K	\$190
Before School	\$100
After School	\$100
Before & After School:	\$110
Summer Camp-Full Day	\$190
School Closings	\$190
Drop in	\$65

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the Parent Contract. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week, year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due weekly, bi-weekly or monthly by 9 AM on Tuesday, as outlined

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by check, money order, automatic electronic funds transfer or credit card through the

Brightwheel App. We do not accept CASH for Tuition payments. The business office is responsible for collecting fees.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.**

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$30 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 7 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$30. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “money order or certified check” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$5 per minute will be assessed beginning at 6:31 PM and will be due upon pick-up of the child/children that evening. **Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.**

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM, please call us at 770-957-7647. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

If a school age child will not be attending before or after school care, please notify us at 770-957-7647 or through the Brightwheel App.

Annual Free Week

Every child is allowed one free week each calendar year, after the year anniversary, in which the parent does not have to pay tuition. The year starts on the day of your child's enrollment and your child must be enrolled for 12 months. The annual free week may be used for vacations, illness, inclement weather closings, emergencies, etc. The annual free week may not be split into days and it must be utilized as one full consecutive week. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center during that week.

Withdrawal

A written notice, **two weeks** in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your two-week deposit.

Transfer of Records

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

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

We make every effort to remain open during inclement weather. The center's goal is to make sound decisions based on the safety of families and staff, while still meeting the families' needs for childcare. If the Federal Government is closed, LDLA will be closed. If the Federal Government has a delayed opening, LDLA will also have a delayed opening.

The following outlines the most likely Lake Dow Learning Academy schedule, based on the Henry County Public Schools inclement weather decisions:

- If Henry County Public Schools are open, then Lake Dow Learning Academy will be open
- If Henry County Public Schools are closed, and their administrative offices are open, then Lake Dow Learning Academy will be open
- If Henry County Public Schools and administrative offices are closed, then Lake Dow Learning Academy will be closed.
- If Henry County Public Schools are delayed two hours and the administrative offices are open, Lake Dow Learning Academy will be open.
- If Henry County Public Schools close early and the administrative offices remain open, Lake Dow Learning Academy will close early.
- If surrounding Henry County Public Schools close, we will make a sound decision to close as well

If severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local news stations, Channel 2 and Channel 5, and through Brightwheel.

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

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 6:00 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 6:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Parents with children in Building 2 should enter the Main Building and sign their child in and out.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. 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 advance, in writing. 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. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may 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. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 8 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated daily.
- **Toddlers:** six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes, (socks included) or more per day if going through the toilet training program and four pull ups.

- **Preschoolers:** two changes of clothes, socks and pull ups, if needed.
- **After School Care Children:** books for homework, appropriate play clothes

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

Adequate and nutritious breakfast, lunch and supper will be served daily. Breakfast is served until 7:45 AM. Children who arrive after 8:00 AM should be fed at home (except infants 6 to 12 months). Current menus will be posted in the center at all times. Information regarding special dietary needs and/or allergies must be in writing from a doctor. Under no circumstances can we allow outside food in our program. All children ages 1 and up will be served family style meals. Infants 6 weeks to 11 months will be served meals by their teachers until they are able to hold their own bottles. Each child that is able to sit, hold and pick up their own food will sit in highchairs. Children who are unable to hold their own bottle or pick up their food will be fed by the teacher.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing with a doctor's note so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

No outside food is allowed at Lake Dow Learning Academy.

Meal Time

At meal time, the dining table is set with disposable plates and flatware. Everyone sits at their assigned table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for that day.
- Daily breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

School Aged Participants

- Before and after school child care participants will be offered a light snack at each session. These snacks are not a meal. If your child will be arriving before 7 AM, arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please make sure your child has had breakfast before arriving to the childcare center and is supplied with an adequate lunch if required for school.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every June, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children

who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than [30] days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

It is our goal to keep staff and children safe during the pandemic. If suspect that you or your child has been exposed to COVID, please do not come to the center or send your child to the center. We recommend that you and the child get tested and only return after receiving a negative result. We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. Upon check-in, please answer the questions related to COVID in the Brightwheel App. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever of 100°F.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They receive a negative COVID test result after a 14 day quarantine.
- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

- (A) Our center does not administer prescription or over the counter medication to children.
- (B) All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.
- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
 - **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- (C) **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the "family and/or physician, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

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 playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular 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 and flip-flops are not permitted, closed toe shoes are required.

Beads are not permitted.

Electronics are not permitted.

No Bags or Purses are permitted.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 30 °F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is medium or below.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained

caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

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.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise 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) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the 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 removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

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.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with all fire safety features including alarms, lights and rolling cribs. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed annually and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

Destruction of Property

Anyone that breaks or destroys any property due to neglect or on purpose will be held responsible for the replacement of that item.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- Home and School Committee – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraisers

Family Events: We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Family Math Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Parent Appreciation
- Annual Family Picnic

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class Pot Luck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Lake Dow Learning Academy Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Lake Dow Learning Academy** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Lake Dow Learning Academy Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

Lake Dow Learning Academy Provider-Parent Contract

The following agreement is made between:

Legal Guardian	Social Security Number	Date of Birth
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Home Phone	Work Phone
------------	------------

Home Address _____

Employer's Name and Address

And

Legal Guardian	Social Security Number	Date of Birth
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Home Phone	Work Phone
------------	------------

Home Address

Employer's Name and Address

And

Lake Dow Learning Academy

Child Care Provider

616 Highway 81 East, McDonough, GA 30252

Address _____

For the care of:

Child's Name/Date of Birth	Child's Name/Date of Birth
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Child's Name/Date of Birth Child's Name/Date of Birth

Fees:

The payment fee shall be \$ _____ per _____
 Additional fee: A non-refundable \$80 annual registration fee per child/\$100 per family. The registration fee is due prior to enrollment and due annually on the anniversary of the enrollment date. The registration fee covers insurance, administrative costs and supplies. Registration fees are non-refundable.

Care shall be provided from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. Payment shall be due on Monday. Payments are considered late if not received by Tuesday evening, 5:00 pm or on your child's second day attending in the week. Full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

Overtime Rates:

- For the purpose of this contract, overtime will be considered pick up after 6:30 p.m.
- The following rate will be charged for overtime: \$2.00 per minute or portion thereof.

Rates for Holidays, Vacations and Other Absences:

- The following are paid holidays when they fall on a regular day scheduled for care:

New Years
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
Christmas

When the holiday falls on a Saturday, we will observe Friday as the holiday. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, we will observe Monday as the holiday. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays. If the center is closed for a holiday, full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

- Charges for a child's absence will be: Full tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance. There is no reduction in tuition.
- Charges related to the parent(s) free week: Every child is allowed one free week per year in which the parent does not have to pay tuition. The year starts the day of your child's enrollment and your child must be enrolled for 12 months. The annual free week may be use for vacations, holidays, illnesses, inclement weather closings, emergencies, etc. The annual week may not be split into days and it must be utilized as one full consecutive week. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center during that week.
- The provider and the parent(s) will each give two weeks advanced notice of scheduled vacations or other leave.

Other Charges:

- There will be a charge of \$85.00 for after-school care.
- There will be a charge of \$85.00 for before and after-school care

Termination Procedure:

- This contract may be terminated by either parent/guardian or provider by giving a two-weeks written notice in advance of the ending date. Payment by parent/guardian is due for the notice period, whether or not the child is brought to the provider for care. The provider may terminate the contract without giving notice if the parent/guardian does not make payments when due. Failure by the

provider to enforce one or more terms of the contract does not waive the right of the provider to enforce any other terms of the contract.

Publicity/Social Media and Photos

As a parent or guardian of this student, I hereby consent to the use of photographs/videotape taken during the course of the school year for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources). I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use, or for damages. _____ Yes, I give consent for LDLA to photograph my child for school purposes and/or at school events. _____ No, I do not authorize LDLA to photograph my child for any event.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Signatures:

- By signing this contract, parents(s)/guardian(s) agree to abide by the written policies of the provider. The provider may amend the policies by giving the parent(s)/guardian(s) a copy of the new or changed policies at least two weeks before they go into effect.

_____ Provider's Signature	_____ Date:
_____ Legal Guardian's Signature	_____ Date:
_____ Legal Guardian's Signature	_____ Date