



Welcome to Loving Arms Children's Center and Preschool! Selecting your child's learning environment is not an easy decision and we are pleased that you have chosen to enroll your child in our center.

Please take a few minutes to review this Parent Handbook. We have included policies, procedures and other helpful information to benefit you and your child as you make this transition. At any time that you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Business Office and speak with Gloria Sears, our Director or Debi Gladson, our Assistant Director.

LIVING OUR FAITH

Loving Arms Children's Center and Preschool is a center based upon Christian values and principles. It is our mission to build in each child a foundation of faith using Bible stories, drama, art work and other mediums to teach the Word of God. Each daily lesson plan includes a faith component and we also have weekly Chapel Chats with Pastor Jim Stogdill. Our primary objective is to teach children enrolled in our center that God loves them, He cares for them, He listens to them and that He died for him/her.

ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES

No two children are exactly alike and at Loving Arms Children's Center and Preschool we recognize the fact that every child learns differently. This is why we offer many learning opportunities that address auditory learners, kinesthetic learners, visual learners and creative learners. Our classrooms are intentionally arranged in learning centers so that children can make choices of what activities to participate in based on their interests and the ways that they learn best.

LACC takes the education of your children very seriously. This is why we require our full time staff to have Bachelor's degrees in Education or a CDA credential as well as adhere to State guidelines for continuing education credits each year.

OUR ENROLLMENT POLICY

- Our center is open all year round Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.
- Parents arriving prior to 6:00 a.m. or later than 6:00 p.m. will be assessed a fee of \$10.00 and then an additional \$2.00 fee for every minute that they are late/early. This fee will be due by close of business on the day that it occurred.
- The center will be closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve Day.
- Inclement weather closings will be determined by when Johnston Public Schools are closed.
- We offer child care for children ages six weeks through age twelve.
- Preschool is offered for children in our 2, 3, 4 and five year old classes. There is no additional charge for preschool if the child is enrolled for full time care.
- Each full time client will be given one week of vacation per year without charge. These vacation days must be taken consecutively and a two week notice must be given to the Business Office in writing. Vacation notices are supplied beside the tuition drop box.
- An annual \$50.00 registration fee is due before the first day of attendance. This fee is non-refundable and is separate from any other charges.
- Parents will need to complete all forms found in the Enrollment Packet and turn this packet into the Business Office PRIOR to the child's first day at the center.
- Discharge from the LACC program will be at the discretion of the director. Discharge may occur if the child is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others, if tuition payments are consistently late or become two weeks behind or if individual situations arise that cannot be resolved in a reasonable, professional manner.
- Parents of children who have special needs will need to complete a care plan in conjunction with the child's physician and the LACC Director. No child shall be excluded from care unless we are unable to comply with the recommendations in the care plan.

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture Policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of color, race, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or contact (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202-720-6382 TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FEE POLICIES

Current rates for childcare are available in the LACC Business Office. Should there be a rate increase, LACC clients will be notified at least four weeks in advance.

- Tuition is due every Monday for the current week of care. A tuition drop box is located just outside of the Infant Pod on the wall. Weekly tuition for infants up to age two is \$220.00 per week, weekly tuition for two years olds is \$200.00 per week, weekly tuition for three year olds is \$185.00, and weekly tuition for four and five year olds is \$175.00
- Registration fees as well as the first and last week's tuition must be paid PRIOR to the first day of attendance.
- Tuition must be paid weekly, biweekly or monthly as stated in the contractual agreement. Tuition is due in advance no later than Monday of the week that services are provided. A tuition drop box is located in the hall beside the entrance to the nursery area.
- Each child's hours are documented via our electronic time clock system.
- Refunds will not be made for illnesses or absences.
- A \$35.00 fee will be assessed for all non-sufficient fund checks. *If we receive two NSF checks, we will require tuition to be paid by cash or money order.*
- If two weeks of tuition are past due, childcare services will be suspended until the account has been brought current. Please do not ask for exceptions to this policy.
- If you have an FSA account, statements are available by request in our Business Office. Both the Director and Assistant Director are authorized to validate your FSA forms for your employer.

ABSENCES

- Please call the Business Office if your child is ill to let us know that they will be absent. If your child has a contagious illness e.g. pink eye, strep throat, Hand, Foot and Mouth or another illness of this nature, be sure to let the Business Office know so that we can post an exposure notice.
- We appreciate knowing if your child will be late. Our cooks begin meal preparations around 9:00 a.m. and we prepare food based on the number of children and staff present in the center on that day.
- If you are a full time client and you wish to schedule your one week of vacation time, please complete a Vacation Request Form (located by the tuition drop box) and submit it to the Director at least *two weeks prior to your vacation dates*. You must be a client for at least six months in order to qualify for vacation time.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

LACC strives to create a learning environment that is rich in creativity, literacy, math, cognitive development, social skills, motor development, decision making as well as imaginative opportunities and we have FUN while we are doing it! Age appropriate activities in each room offer children numerous opportunities for hands on learning and exploration.

If your child is in a classroom age infant through three years old, he/she will have a daily information sheet. We ask parents to complete the top portion of this form daily supplying information that may help our staff to assure that your child's day runs as smoothly as possible.

Children three years of age or older must be toilet trained to be in these programs.

CHILD GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE

LACC does not condone nor do we practice corporal punishment of any sort. We are committed to using Positive Behavior Support (PBS) in our center and taking a proactive approach to behavior. The following guidance principles will be used:

- Positive behavior modeling by all teachers in our center.
- Implementation and daily practice of "Tucker the Turtle" anger management techniques.
- Re-directing the child to a more appropriate activity.
- Directing the child to the "calm down corner".
- Teaching all children about their feelings and how to manage them.
- As a last option, having the child sit out from activity.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Our doors at LACC are always open to parents, their comments and concerns. We appreciate and understand how difficult that it is to bring your child to a new place and then leave. For this reason, we would like to have parents visit frequently, and call or email to help alleviate your concerns. We do ask that you consider how your child will feel if they see Mom or Dad in their class and how that second separation during the day will impact them. LACC has "peek" windows in our classrooms so that you may discreetly see your child and we also have an intercom system to connect you directly with your child's teachers.

It is the parent's responsibility to maintain current information with our Business Office regarding your child. This information includes, but is not limited to: address, phone, doctor,

dentist, persons authorized to pick up your child and allergies. All changes in information *must be submitted in writing to the Director or Assistant Director.*

Children's nap items e.g. blankets, pillows and snuggle toy will be sent home each Friday to be laundered. These items will need to be returned with your child each Monday.

Children at LACC do go outdoors as much as possible for fresh air. If the weather is over 35 degrees, children ages 3 and older will be outdoors for at least fifteen minutes daily. For this reason, we ask that children are dressed appropriately for each season wearing hats, coats, mittens, boots and/or snow pants. Please supply at least one change of clothing for your child at all times. For children who are potty training, multiple changes of clothing will be needed.

PLEASE CLEARLY MARK ALL CLOTHING AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME

Pull ups and diapers will be checked each hour and changed if damp. Plenty of diapers, pull ups and wipes need to be supplied to meet this schedule.

NUTRITION

LACC participates in the State CACFP Food Program. This program monitors that your child is receiving well balanced meals in the correct serving sizes for their age. Because of this, we respectfully request that children NOT bring snacks, fast foods, beverages, candy or other "extra" food items from home.

Children will be served a continental breakfast from 7:15 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. daily. Our morning snack is served around 9:30 a.m., lunch at 11:00 a.m. and an afternoon snack is served around 3:15 p.m. All meals served at the center must meet CACFP guidelines. Exceptions to the guidelines are made for allergies, medical conditions and religious practices.

HEALTH POLICY

As much as we love the children in our care, we respectfully ask that you keep them home if they are ill. "Ill" means having a temperature over 100 degrees, diarrhea, vomiting or any contagious illness e.g. pink eye, strep throat etc. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the center. If your child has been ill with any contagious illness, please notify the Business Office as soon as possible so that an exposure notice can be posted.

LACC promotes proper oral hygiene. Children ages two through five brush their teeth daily. We ask each child in this age group to bring their own toothbrush and change it as needed.

Toothpaste will be supplied by the center. Toothbrushes will be stored in an upright container labeled with the child's name.

Children's hands will be washed before and after eating, after using the restroom/diapering, after blowing/wiping his nose and after handling animals.

Medication of any type may not be administered without the written consent of the child's parents. This includes but is not limited to: Orajel or other teething ointments, diaper rash medicines, Tylenol or other over the counter pain relievers, sunscreen, powder, or chapstick. Prescription medication must be in its' original container with the label intact and legible. The label must have the child's name on it.

The teacher in your child's room will administer the medication and the dosage and time of dosage will be recorded on your child's daily sheet.

Injuries such as scrapes, bruises or bites will be evaluated by our staff. If needed, the area will be washed with soap and water. If there is blood present, a bandage will be applied. An incident report will be completed and a copy will be given to the parents. First aid kits are provided in each classroom and they are taken to the playground daily.

Parents will be notified immediately of any serious injuries (medical or dental). If it is necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital that is indicated on the child's emergency form. If we are unable to reach the parents, the emergency contact will be notified.

LACC is a smoke free, alcohol free and drug free campus. Use of these products while on our campus is strictly prohibited.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

LACC practices monthly tornado and fire drills in accordance with State of Iowa regulations. An emergency plan is posted in each room for evacuation.

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

LACC policy strictly prohibits the use of personal vehicles to be used for transporting children unless there is an emergency situation. It is our policy to retain the services of the Johnston Public Schools bus fleet and hire their professionally trained drivers to transport children to and from field trips or special activities. State guidelines for ratio are adhered to for the age group of children we are transporting PLUS at least one additional staff person. Children under age two will not go on field trips.

RATIO STANDARDS

27 months 1:6

3 years 1:8

4 years 1:12

5 and above 1:15

LICENSING AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Loving Arms Children's Center is a fully licensed childcare center with the State of Iowa. We are licensed for 125 children: 8 in the infant nursery, 8 in the crawler room, 12 in the 1 year old room, 18 in the two year old room, 18 in one of the three year old rooms, 24 in the other three year old room, 24 in our pre-kindergarten and 30 in our Summer Program.

In July 2011, LACC willingly volunteered to participate in the Quality Rating System (QRS) which means that we are committed to adhering to stringent quality improvements and guidelines for all children in our care.

TREATS AT SCHOOL

Birthdays, celebrations and special occasions are all wonderful times for young children and we enjoy celebrating at LACC. It is important to remember that many children have allergies and it is also important to take sanitation standards into account. For these reasons, LACC has adopted the following policy for foods brought from home:

“Due to allergic reactions in children from various food allergens and because this center adheres to all food safety practices, any food that is prepared at home *may not* be served in our center. This does not include meals that are prepared by parents/guardians for their own child due to allergy concerns.

If parents would like to bring birthday treats or other treats to be served in their child's classroom, these treats must be professionally pre-packaged. Bakery items e.g. cupcakes that are in their *original, unopened* packaging are acceptable to be served in our center.“

Biting Policy for Loving Arms Children's Center and Preschool

Implemented June 2011

In the best of childcare centers, periodic outbreaks of biting do occur among infants, toddlers and sometimes older children. This is an unavoidable situation that happens when young children are grouped together. When biting happens, it can be frightening as well as frustrating to children, teachers and parents. Identifying the reason for biting is the first step in correcting the child's behavior. Children bite for many different reasons e.g. boredom, teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, frustration, stress and seeking attention. Biting is not something that should be blamed on children, their parents or their teachers. When biting happens, a high quality childcare program will immediately take action, not to blame the biters but to change the environment and help children change their behavior.

When biting occurs:

- The caregiver must remain calm and in control of their emotions. Do not show anger or emotion towards the biter. Let the child know that biting is not okay. *Under no circumstances should the child be placed in "time out" or scolded for their behavior.*
- Remove the biter from the situation. Focus loving attention on the child who was bitten. Try to involve the biter in administering care to the child who was bitten e.g. applying an ice pack
- The care giver should talk to the child who bit if the child is able to communicate. Suggest different strategies that the child can use next time. Do this in a brief, simple manner.

It is very important to determine the reason for biting when it occurs. The staff should work with the parents to identify behavior patterns, observations and information that may help with determining a cause. Typical biting "triggers" are: communication deficits, lack of sleep, transitions, hunger, need for oral stimulation, boredom or teething pain. Once the triggers have been identified, staff can then take a proactive approach to preventing occurrences as well as teach replacement skills. Assessment will be conducted as follows:

- The director of the center will work with staff to identify patterns of behavior. This assessment will use *detailed documentation* derived from the Incident Reports in the child's file.
- The following questions will be addressed: Was the space too crowded? Were there too few toys? Was there too little to do or too much waiting? Was the child who bit getting the attention they needed at the time the incident occurred?
- The teacher will change the activities, environment or routines if necessary
- The teacher will work to change the behavior of the child who is biting so they react in more appropriate ways (if the child can communicate)
- The teacher will observe the child and get an idea of when/why they are likely to bite
- The teacher will identify children who are likely to be bitten and make a concerted effort to reduce their chances of being bitten

- If needed, an additional staff member will be designated to shadow the child who is biting to avoid incidents
- Regular communication will take place with the teacher, parents and administration to regulate an action plan and measure the outcome of the changes that have been implemented

First Aid in response to biting (both child and adult)

- Wear gloves and clean the wound with soap and water. Run water over the wound for five minutes
- Apply ice or a cool compress to reduce swelling
- Bandage the wound as needed
- Write a *detailed* incident report for both children involved in the incident

First Aid in response to a bite that breaks the skin (both child and adult)

- Wear gloves and clean the wound with soap and water. Run water over the wound for five minutes
- Control the bleeding
- Cover the wound with sterile dressing and a bandage
- Contact the parent of ***both*** children involved. Encourage the parent to contact their healthcare provider to determine if the child needs to be seen

When children bite, their parents are informed the same day of the occurrence. Information is *always kept confidential*. Here is what you can expect from us when biting occurs:

- We will always place the safety and well being of the children first by providing first aid as well as comfort and support
- We will work diligently to provide appropriate, proactive changes to help change behaviors of children who are biting
- We will make current information and resources available to parents and staff on the topic of biting
- We will provide teachers with appropriate knowledge and training on how to deal effectively with biting
- We will take your concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect
- We will work to develop an action plan and closely monitor /change the plan as needed
- We will keep your child's identity confidential if he or she bites

We wish we could guarantee biting would not occur in our program, but there is no such guarantee. We can guarantee that we will respond quickly and appropriately when biting happens. It is our intention to offer the best environment that we can for all children in our program. If you would like more information or if you have questions, please contact the Business Office. It is our pleasure to assist your children on their journey to independence.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Each child at LACC will receive the highest quality Christian education possible paired with academic excellence. Education is differentiated, that is, opportunities for learning are offered for kinesthetic, auditory, visual and struggling learners. Pre-kindergarten adheres to Kindergarten readiness criteria for Johnston, Des Moines and Ankeny public schools.

CONCERNS

Communication is vital in order to have a positive working relationship. It is the intention of LACC to respond promptly to all questions and concerns that are expressed by our clients. If we do not respond in a timely manner, please contact Gloria Sears, LACC Director as soon as possible.