



# Parent Handbook

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,  
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*

*Matthew 19:11*

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## Welcome

**Little Branches Learning Center** (LBLC) is a licensed, high-quality, Christian early education program, that serves the greater Woodstock, VT, and Upper Valley area. We are licensed to enroll children ages 6 weeks to 12 years; however, our primary groups are infants through grade 2. Established in 2024, this non-profit, educational mission is built upon the roots and legacy of Woodstock Christian Child Care, which served the community for 30 years. LBLC is also certified as a Specialized Care Center through Children's Integrated Services (CIS), and we are dedicated to providing an inclusive learning environment for children with diverse abilities and needs.

The mission of **Little Branches Learning Center** is to create a loving and supportive Christian early education community where children can explore, discover, and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning, while experiencing God's love in action. With a focus on values, such as kindness, compassion, and respect, we strive to create a warm and welcoming environment where everyone feels valued, accepted, and loved.

Our hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm for full-day programs, and 2:30pm – 5:00pm for our After School Program (ASP). ASP is only available on days that Woodstock Elementary School or Windsor Central Supervisory Union schools are open with normal dismissal at end of school day. On the first Wednesday of each month, WCCC opens at 10:00am to allow for monthly staff training/meetings.

Full day slots are available for full-time and part-time weekly schedules. ASP enrolls for FT, five-day a week schedule, unless children from two families can share a FT slot. The morning program for full-day classes has a planned structured schedule, and the afternoon is more relaxed.

- We are licensed to provide early and specialized care and education for up to 55 children of ages 6 weeks to 12 years.
- We currently offer a class for infants/toddlers ages 6 weeks to 2 years, a class for toddlers/children ages 18 months to 3 years, a Pre-K class for ages 32 months – 5 years, and after school (ASP) classes for PreK – grade 2.
- In the Sumer Session, we offer classes for PreK – grade 2.

We have an open-door enrollment policy, with a Christian environment and faith-infused curriculum.

Little Branches, commits itself to the following standards of practice:

- Ensuring an environment and community that is free from discrimination.
  - No child, parent, guardian, or employee, will be pressured to disclose their sexual orientation, their race, ethnicity, or religion.

- No child will be excluded from enrollment, or expelled from the program, on the basis of the sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or religion, of their family members or guardians, or for any other reason prohibited by state or federal law.
- Insisting upon an atmosphere that is a safe learning environment and center community that reflects the mission of the program:
  - Physical assault, harassment (snide remarks, jokes, innuendo, slogans, disparaging terms), or bullying on the basis of one’s sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, or needs will not be tolerated. This policy extends to gestures, emails, text messages, notes and any other written or electronic form of threat or harassment.
- Providing the Little Branches community with the following:
  - A compassionate and respectful environment where children can ask about the very real and confusing issues related to human sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, etc.
  - The assurance for parents that teachers will answers questions in ways that are consistent with our statement of faith and practice, and guide children to discuss questions about these topics with their parents or guardians.
  - The assurance that the dignity of all children, families, and employees will be guarded.
  - The understanding that we will communicate and uphold God’s standards for human sexuality and gender identity, racial and ethnic equality, and equality for those with any type of disability, with grace, mercy, compassion and equity. (Philippians 2:1-5, Ephesians 5:1,2)
- Acknowledging our own human frailty and dependence upon Christ for his humility, grace, and wisdom in our considerations of human sexuality and gender, seeking always to love one another as He has loved us.

If you have any questions which are not answered by this handbook, please feel free to call the center at 802-457-2278, or contact our Executive Director, Ruth Brisson at rbrissonblc@gmail.com or on her cell phone at 410-925-7959.

## Enrolling Your Child

Enrollment is based on scheduling availability and the order in which a family inquires. If you inquire, and we do not have an opening, you are welcome to be added to the waitlist for the appropriate class by using the link to our system and entering the information asked.

- The link to the full-day program waitlist is <https://enrollments.smartcare.com/wccc>
- The link to the After School Program is <https://enrollments.smartcare.com/wcccAfterSchoolProgram>
- Only children attending a public school program for a full-day schedule are eligible to

- enroll in the After School Program (ASP).
- Children enrolled in ASP should be potty-trained, and if not, a discussion with the Executive Director, and approval, is required to enroll.

After a successful visit with you and your child, if an offer to enroll is confirmed by the Executive Director, please complete the forms attached in the Offer to Enroll email or in the Admission Packet, and return the admission forms via email or hard-copy to:

Little Branches Learning Center  
36 Elm Street  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
Attn: Ruth Brisson

The Executive Director will confirm enrollment and the attendance schedule, at which time a refundable deposit equal to one week of tuition will be required to secure your space. The first week of tuition will be due on or before the first day of attendance.

## Philosophy Statement

Little Branches views every child as a unique individual, with special qualities and characteristics, created and loved by God. We guide the development of the “whole child” - intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and we facilitate a natural unfolding of each child’s potential to be an independent, well-balanced, and free-thinking individual. Therefore, we endeavor to prepare and implement an environment with a variety of learning experiences through play and planned activities. We believe that the foundations of learning need to be introduced at a young age, as children acquire the building blocks needed to develop language, literacy, and math skills.

We also observe, oversee, encourage, and nurture each child’s individual progress through these experiences. We believe that each child, regardless of developmental concerns, social/emotional abilities, or adverse life experiences, is created for a specific purpose and deserves to receive the education and care necessary to help them reach their full potential. We recognize and honor parents and guardians as the primary teachers and role models for their children, and we strive to engage and offer them guidance, encouragement, and support in nurturing their children. We seek to build a resilient and caring center community, that serves the needs of the larger community.

The Holy Spirit is our guide and strength in all we do. It is our greatest hope that the children know God’s love for them and come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior (John 3: 16&17), so no matter what they encounter in life, or where they may go, they will know that they never walk alone, because God is always with them.

## Goals and Values

### Planting Seeds of Faith...

Teach each child that he/she is a special individual created and loved by God.

Be a light to the families and staff to reflect the love that God has for them.

Share the grace that God offers those who believe in His Son to everyone in our center community

### Nurturing Hearts and Minds...

Create an environment which promotes independence and a positive self-esteem through peer problem solving skills and appropriate self-motivated choice-making.

Facilitate positive interaction with peers and adults.

Provide opportunities for the development of both small and large motor skills.

Foster the development of readiness skills for future learning through play and planned activities, guided by the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS).

Coordinate specialized care and education for children with identified needs in a fully inclusive environment by implementing approaches and strategies recommended by specialists for individual children, which will enrich the learning and development of all children.

### Growing Community...

Create a support system for families, children and staff, through email updates, events, gatherings, support groups, and workshops.

Develop open and honest lines of communication with families and staff, through informal daily contact and scheduled conferences.

Encourage parents as the primary teachers of their children.

Serve the needs of our community by connecting, listening, and finding resources to meet needs.

## Tuition and Payment

A deposit equal to one week's tuition payment per child, or \$100.00 per child (whichever is greater) is to be collected at the time of enrollment. The deposit will be applied towards the amount of the last balance on your account. In the event that your child is enrolled for a

future starting date, the deposit is considered a holding fee and is non-refundable.

Payment is due on Monday, for that week of care, or on the last Monday of the month for the following month.

**Families in all Little Branches programs contract for a specific weekly schedule** as completed on the Admission Form and Tuition Agreement Form, and approved by the Executive Director. Requests to amend/change a child's weekly schedule should be emailed to the Executive Director, and all amendments/changes to the schedule for attendance and billing purposes must be approved by the Executive Director. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week for year-round programs, during the school year for those enrolled in ASP, and during the weeks of Summer Session for those enrolled in summer only, whether or not your child attends. This billing plan enables us to pay teachers a stable salary, and pay other program expenses. No credits are given for sick or vacation days; holidays; closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (including Covid-19, except as noted below), public health emergency, such as a pandemic; weather-related or environmental emergencies; or facility/utility emergencies (building safety concern, power, heat, water issues), or staffing issues.

**In the event of any of the above circumstances**, if we are prevented from operating, families shall pay their agreed upon tuition. Payment of your tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child's spot for when we are safely able to reopen.

**Tuition assistance for families experiencing financial hardship**, resulting from closure for infectious disease or public health emergency/pandemic, may request assistance by contacting the Executive Director. Requests for tuition assistance, due to these types of closures, will be considered on an individual basis by the Executive Director.

**Tuition Credit or Billing Pause may be given for Serious Illness/Injury** – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, or absent due to a serious contagious disease, serious illness, or injury, for more than two weeks, a credit for pre-paid tuition may be granted, or billing may be paused. These exceptions to the typical billing policy are considered on a case-by-case basis, and documentation from a doctor or medical facility may be required. Requests for tuition credit/billing pause for serious illness/injury can be requested by contacting the Executive Director.

**Extra time/days** are possible with notice, depending on available space. It is not possible to exchange extra time for any unused regularly scheduled time.

**A two-week notice is required for withdrawal from the program**, or a change in your weekly schedule. All weekly schedule changes must be approved and confirmed by the Executive Director.

**Current tuition rates, effective 8/26/2024, are on the following page.**

# Current Rates

## Little Branches Tuition Rates Fall 2024 - Summer 2025

Tuition Rates	Daily Rate	Weekly Rate
<b>Willows (ages 6 weeks - 2 yrs)</b>		
Full Day (8:00am - 5:00pm)	\$85.00	\$425.00
Extra Time (Hourly Rate)	\$15.00	
<b>Aspens and Maples (ages 18mos to 5yrs)</b>		
Full Day (8:00am - 5:00pm)	\$80.00	\$400.00
Extra Time (Hourly Rate)	\$15.00	
<b>Elms and Oaks - ASP (Pre-K - Grade 2)</b>		
After School Program (2:30pm - 5:00pm)	\$30.00	\$150.00
<b>(TBD - Cedars) - Summer Program (Pre-K - Grade 2)</b>		
Full Day (8:00am - 5:00pm)	\$80.00	\$400.00
Extra Time (Hourly Rate)	\$15.00	

Drop-In Rates	Per Hour	
Drop-In for 1 child	\$30.00	
Drop-In for 2 children	\$40.00	
Drop-In for 3 children	\$60.00	per family

Late Pick-Up Fees	Per Minute	
Per Minute at 5:00pm or later	\$1.00	
Late PU fee applies when parents do not sign out of system		
System signs all children out at 6:30pm		
90 minutes Late PU Fee charged if child is not signed out	\$90.00	
Sign In Fee applies to full-day programs when child is not signed in at drop off	\$5.00	per day
<b>Late Tuition Payment Fee</b>	<b>\$15.00</b>	<b>per week</b>

## Past Due Tuition Policy

Little Branches Learning Center depends on its incoming funds to pay expenses. The following policy has been designed to produce peace among all. Please read this policy and be familiar with it.

1. Tuition payments are due each Friday for the coming week, or by the first of the month, if tuition is being paid on a monthly basis.
2. If the tuition that is due on Friday is not paid by the following Friday. A late payment fee will be added to your bill.
3. If after one more week (two Fridays) payment has still not been received, email contact will be made to the parent(s) or guardian(s) requesting payment.
4. If after one more week (three Fridays), the tuition payment due at the original point of default is not paid, a letter will be sent to the parent(s) or guardians(s), indicating that if all accumulative tuition is not paid within one week (four weeks overdue), or a payment arrangement has not been made with the Executive Director, then the child will be dismissed from the child care program. Tuition will not remain chronically behind schedule.
5. If tuition payments cannot be met for any reason, please contact the Executive Director, to seek a payment arrangement.

## Policies and Procedures

### Arriving and Leaving the Child Care Center

#### Drop Off and Sign In & Out

Parents with children enrolled in full-day programs should take their child to the teacher who is doing daily health checks, which includes temperature checks, making sure a staff member knows your child has arrived, before leaving the center.

PreK children in ASP will be walked to Little Branches by WES staff. Children in ASP who are in grades K-2 will ride a WES bus, and the bus will drop them off at the corner in front of the church, where a Little Branches staff member will meet them, and walk them to the center entrance. Parents may also drop their children off for ASP. Children will have health check by the center staff, and parents will need to sign them in on the kiosk.

Children in ASP will have health check done by the elementary school staff, and then by our staff upon arriving at the center. Pre-K children who do not meet Little Branches health

criteria to attend will stay at WES, and parents will be contacted to come pick them up. Children in grades K-2 who are enrolled in ASP, who do not meet health criteria to attend when assessed at WES, will remain at WES, and parents will be contacted to pick up. A child in grades K-2 who does not meet health criteria to attend after being dropped off by the bus, will be asked to wear a mask, their parents will be contacted to pick up, and the child will stay in a designated area in the classroom, until parents pick up.

Parents with children enrolled in a full-day program should take children to the restroom to wash hands after health check and signing children into the center, before the child begins engaging in in open play time.

Please be sure to sign your child in and out on the SmartCare Kiosk (ASP children would only be signed out), located near the door, every time you bring him/her in, and every time you leave together. You may use the QR code on the Parent App with your smart phone, or your Pin Code, to sign in/out on the Kiosk tablet. We need an accurate record of who is present and in attendance at the center at all times.

A quick, warm goodbye is generally easiest for all parties involved! If separation is a problem for your child, the teacher may have some helpful hints, or provide comfort to ease the transition.

### **Safety, Parking, and Traffic**

Families of children enrolled in year-round, full-day, classes are asked to park their vehicles to load and unload their children and belongings in the parking lot to the north side of the church --- NOT in the fire lane (paved area close to the building without parking lines) and NOT on Elm Street, in front of the church. The last three spaces near at the end of the parking lot (nearest the dumpsters) are reserved for these Little Branches families, during our operating hours. The area where cars are allowed is clearly marked with parking lines.

Please enter through our main entrance, the “playground door,” on the west side of the child care center. Be sure to sign your child in on the Kiosk tablet, complete health check, take them to wash hands (wipes for infants are okay) and leave him/her in the presence and sight of a staff member. Parents in toddler and Pre-K should take their children to their class restroom to wash hands before engaging in free play in the classroom.

When leaving the parking area, the zoning board requires all traffic to take a right turn onto Elm Street --- Not a left turn, or cutting across the street.

Families of children enrolled in ASP and Summer Only Program (SOP) will need to park on the streets near the church where permitted, and come to the ASP Entrance (double doors facing Elm Street) to pick up.

### **Authorized Release**

Children will not be allowed to leave the center with anyone unauthorized by parents or guardians. Authorized names must be on the Authorized Pick-Up List or in a written (email)

permission by parent or guardian. Any staff member who is unfamiliar with a person authorized to pick up will ask for a driver's license to verify identity before releasing the child.

Children working with partner staff for specialized services that are not provided in the classroom with our staff present require a parental consent form to be submitted to the Executive Director, parents must add the specialist to their child's Authorized Pick-Up List, so staff can sign them out of the center for the session with the specific specialist, even when the session is done onsite. The specialist and/or their agency are responsible for the care and welfare of the child, until the child is signed back into their Little Branches class.

Little Branches staff will not release a child to any authorized parent or person who they believe may be under the influence of any substances, per licensing regulations. Staff will contact another person on the child's authorized pick-up list to come to the center, so that the child can be released. If the person under the influence causes a disturbance, tries to take the child, or drives away, staff will contact the local police department.

Per state law, a child must be released to any parent, unless a court order restricting or prohibiting the parent from picking up has been provided to the program to be kept in the child's file. If a parent who is not allowed to pick up comes to the center, and wants the child released to them, the Executive Director or an Assistant Director will ask them to wait outside of the center, the custodial parent will be contacted to come, and the situation will be addressed outside of the center, so that the children are not present. A custodial parent, or Little Branches staff, may consider contacting local police to come to the center to facilitate a safe resolution of the situation.

Children must be placed in appropriate car seats when driven to and from the center. Our staff will require the person picking up to get a car seat before releasing the child to them, and if they witness someone driving out of the parking lot with a child not in a car seat, or the child is not fastened into the car seat, they will make a report to the local police.

## Health Policies

### Medication

If your child requires prescription medicine, you will need to fill out a Medication Permission form, noting all instructions. Medications must be in the original container that includes the prescriber's instructions, with the child's and doctor's name on it. The protocol is the same for non-prescription medications, which require a doctor's order/prescription for staff to be able to give to a child.

### Health and Illness

We need an up-to-date immunization record for your child's first day of attendance. You may provide permission for the Executive Director to access your child's immunization record on the registry with the signed Vermont Immunization Registry Release included in

the Admission Packet. Updated immunization records are required on first day of attendance, and documentation of a well child visit with a medical provider is required within 45 days of first day of attendance to comply with state regulations.

Please alert us of any allergies, or special health requirements on the Admission Form. If a child has a serious, life-threatening allergy/ies, the family needs to discuss the accommodations needed, with the Executive Director prior to enrollment, who will assess how/if the program can safely meet the needs of the child. We notify families if a we have a child enrolled with a food allergy, we ask all families not to send in those particular foods, and we exclude those foods from our snack options.

If your child shows signs of illness in the morning, or is not well enough engage in class activities or to play outside, please do not send him/her to the center. You should text or email your child's primary teacher, and the Executive Director, if your child is ill to notify them that your child will not be attending, or to discuss symptoms for guidance to know if they should stay home or test for COVID-19. **WCCC is a well child care center.** If your child becomes ill, while in attendance, with any of the following symptoms, you will be called to come get him/her:

- Fever (100° F or higher)
- Symptoms of respiratory illness, such as coughing, sneezing, discolored nasal discharge, etc.
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rashes that are contagious, or are undiagnosed by a physician
- Obvious discomfort or other physical ailment or illness which concerns the staff, (or requires the full attention of one staff for an extended period of time) or inability to fully engage in class activities.
- Suspected communicable diseases: rubella, mumps, measles, chicken pox, pertussis, impetigo, hepatitis, scabies, ringworm, head lice, strep throat, scarlet fever.
  - Children must be certified non-infectious by a physician before returning to the center, meet Little Branches health criteria and guidance, and receive approval to return by the Executive Director.
  - Other illnesses, like HFM (hand, foot, mouth) Disease, Flu, Stomach Flu/Gastroenteritis, etc., must meet Little Branches health criteria and guidance, and receive approval to return by the Executive Director and/or Assistant Directors.
  - Please let us know if your child has become ill with one of these diseases, so we can alert other parents.
- Our policies regarding COVID-19 positive cases adjust, as needed, and policy/protocol updates are emailed to families as official notification. Please

note that our policies for exclusion for positive COVID-19 infection of an enrolled child, or a household member, may be different than the policies of the public school. Please check with the Executive Director for clarification of current policies and protocols for COVID-19. Closures or class cancellations for COVID-19 positive exposures can occur at any time, so families should check their emails every evening and morning, as notifications will be made as soon as possible.

- Efforts will be made to avoid class or center closures, as long as staffing/ratio requirements can be met
- Families should ensure they have alternate care plan in place in the event of program closure or class cancellation.

### Return After Illness

Please keep your child home, if they show any symptoms of illness or signs that they are not feeling well. The classes have activities throughout the day, and children who are not feeling well enough to fully engage should stay home. If they have symptoms of illness, or were sent home for symptoms or not feeling well, they are able to return after a full 24 hours with no medications needed, including over the counter fever-reducing medications. **For example:** if your child is sent home by center staff on a Monday, and the symptoms resolve without the need of prescription or over-the-counter medication, they are welcome to return to attend on Wednesday. Otherwise, the child needs a full 24 hours with no symptoms before they return to attend.

Families should notify the primary teacher in their child's class, and the Assistant Director, and Executive Director via text or email, if the child will not be attending due to illness. Text or email health status updates to the primary teacher, Assistant Director, and Executive Director, to receive guidance on when return to attendance is appropriate.

Please do not bring/have your child attend, if they have a cough, unless their doctor has stated that the cough is not due to a contagious illness (such as cough due to allergies). The same is true for runny nose. If nasal discharge is clear, your child has allergies documented by their health care provider, or is a teething infant, and they appear to feel well otherwise, then they may attend. However, if nasal discharge is thick, consistent, or discolored, they may have a cold or infection, so please consult their doctor and/or keep them home, until symptoms have resolved for at least a full 24 hours.

Please always consult your pediatrician when your child has symptoms of illness, especially those that can also be due to COVID-19. The exclusion policy for illness is not just for COVID-19, it applies to all illnesses that are/may be contagious. Typically, if your child is 2 years of age or older, and has symptoms associated with COVID-19, you should test them, report test results to the Executive Director, Assistant Director, and their primary teacher, and you will receive guidance for isolation and returning to attendance, if the test is positive.

## Nap/Rest Time

State regulations require a nap/quiet period of rest be provided daily. We provide a “resting space” and quiet play area for non-nappers, and a “sleeping space” for nappers. Non-nappers are also encouraged to bring a bag with small quiet toys, books, puzzles, etc. to use when sitting/lying on their mats during rest time.

Infants up to 12 months of age are required by state regulation to be placed on his/her back to go to sleep, blankets or soft toys are not permitted in cribs, and a sleep sack may be used, if provided by parents.

At 12 months of age your infant may be moved from a crib to a mat.

## Behavior Policies

### Behavior Management Approach

We believe that children need guidelines, boundaries, and logical consequences. We feel these needs can best be served by the adult maintaining a nurturing, yet firm manner. Redirection and positive reinforcement are our first goals. These lead to strengthened self-esteem, and self-confidence. We recognize that children get angry, and that it is okay for children to have big feelings/emotions. We want to help them work through their anger/frustration, etc. in an appropriate manner, using peer problem solving skills (checking in with a peer that is upset, apologizing, giving a hug, etc. to resolve). We remind children to make good choices, even when they are having intense emotions. Age appropriate “quiet times,” “body breaks,” or “chill times” may be used to help a child regulate their bodies, emotions or behavior, at the discretion of the teacher, Assistant Directors, or Executive Director. During these times for resetting and regulating, calming sensory items may be provided. Our primary goal is to promote a happy, healthy, positive child and class.

### Repeated Unacceptable Behavior

Repeated unacceptable behavior is any behavior which is harmful to others and/or takes away from the safety of others by entertaining the full energy of one staff person, or more.

If this behavior occurs repeatedly, attempts have been made to curtail this behavior, behavioral interventions have been identified and employed, and other possibilities have been explored, it may be the decision of the Board of Directors to request that your child be unenrolled.

### Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Child abuse and/or neglect are against the law. If a Little Branches staff member suspects abuse or neglect, a report will be made to the Child Development Division of the Department for Children and Families, as mandated by law.

## Unenrollment/Expulsion of Child/ren for Behavior of an Adult

Any child/ren may be unenrolled from the program, due to the inappropriate, unsafe, or disruptive communications or actions of a parent, guardian, foster parent, or family member, at any time. If the adult engaging in these ways is only an authorized pick-up person, the family will be required to remove them from that list to avoid expulsion.

The Executive Director will assess the situation, request to meet with the family and a Board member, and if the behavior/issues persist, or the family refuses to meet, the child/ren may be unenrolled.

### **Reasons for expulsion may include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Unacceptable behavior of parent/guardian, family member, or authorized drop off/pick up person
- Inappropriate communications with staff or other families
  - Communications via email, texting, or messaging are disrespectful, contain unacceptable language, contain disparaging remarks about staff or other families, and continued after instructed to desist

If the situation cannot be remedied, notification of expulsion, with 5 days of notice, will be provided to the parent/ guardian, or foster parent. A copy of the child's file will be mailed to the primary account holder who enrolled the child initially. If the child receives subsidy, the final week of enrollment will be billed to CCFAP, and the tuition deposit paid at the time of enrollment, will be applied to the account for the final week of billing.

The Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors of the situation, and the decision to expel the child from enrollment. The Executive Director may also request the guidance or assistance of the Board of Directors in these types of situations, and efforts to avoid expulsion of a child are the priority.

The Executive Director and Board of Little Branches takes decisions to unenroll a child this very seriously. The staff and board are required to treat enrolled families with dignity, respect, and professionalism, and in return, we expect the same consideration and behavior from each family, and persons they authorize to pick-up or drop off their child/ren.

### **Other reasons for termination of enrollment are:**

- Outstanding fees
- Frequent late payments
- Failure to comply with any center policies (including health policies):
  - COVID – 19:
    - No one who has tested positive with antigen or PCR tests may enter the center

- All current center health criteria and exclusion guidance for the child who tested positive, or the person who tested positive and is living in their household have been met.
- The Assistant Director or Executive Director have approved return to attendance
- Health and Safety
  - Return to care after any illness permitted when all symptoms have been resolved for at least a full 24 hours, without the use of prescription or over-the counter medications, including fever-reducing medications,
  - All center health criteria and guidance have been met
  - The Assistant Director or Executive Director have approved return to attendance
- Provider’s inability to meet child’s developmental, social /emotional, or behavioral needs
- Repeated Drop off and/or Pick-up outside of regular hours of operation

The Executive Director and Board take decisions like this very seriously. The staff and board are required to treat enrolled families with dignity, respect, and professionalism, and in return, we expect the same consideration and behavior from each family.

## Specialized Early Care and Education Policy

### Specialized Needs Enrollment

Little Branches Learning Center views every child as individual, with special and unique characteristics, created and loved by God. Children with specialized needs are welcomed and encouraged to enroll and attend our center, unless their presence requires a fundamental alteration to the program that cannot be met, as determined by the Executive Director. If the Executive Director determines that a child needs assessment by Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Early Intervention specialists or the Early Childhood Special Education department of a local elementary school, for children age 3 years and older, a request to make a referral will be offered to parents, and the referral may be required to continue attendance.

An individualized assessment by the primary classroom teacher, the Assistant Director, and the Executive Director will be made to decide whether or not Little Branches can meet the particular needs of the child, without fundamentally altering the program, or not being able to maintain the safety of other children and staff. As a specialized care center, our staff are required to take advanced training in providing care for children with special needs, and we work closely with specialists and therapists to implement identified strategies and approaches to meet the needs of each child within the context of a group setting. We have a Specialized Early Care and Education Coordinator on staff, and he is experienced in behavioral intervention observation, planning, and implementation. His role is to help support the needs of the children and their families. We are working to create future

opportunities for families to learn and find support through our center.

Children in ASP who are enrolled in a public school, and who receive services through an IEP or similar plan, need to sign a release form for the service providers and special education team at the public school to share information and coordinate with the staff at Little Branches. The release form for Woodstock Elementary School (WES) is included in the admission packet for ASP.

If your child has a one-to-one paraeducator assigned during the school day, the family needs to disclose this information to the Executive Director, prior to enrollment in ASP, so that discussion can happen to discern how/if the needs of the child can be met safely in the ASP setting, where a one-to-one ratio is not available.

If, after consultation, observation, and implementation of available interventions or behavioral plans, the Executive Director determines that Little Branches cannot accommodate the specific needs of a child, a request for accommodations to be put in place by the family to assist the child will be made, or the child will be removed from the program. The Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors, if a child's needs cannot be safely accommodated in the program/center.

## Family Involvement and Parent/Guardian Conferences

### Family Involvement

Family involvement is imperative to a child's growth and development. We intend to keep the lines of communication open between parents/guardians and teachers. Our working together is most beneficial for your child, and your family.

We welcome family involvement in various ways. Visiting the classroom to observe and participate, chaperoning field trips, volunteering a special talent, sharing your occupations or cultural traditions, or spending time reading a story are a few examples of how family members or guardians may be involved. If you have an idea of how you may want to be involved, please discuss it with your child's teacher or the Executive Director.

Any child may be unenrolled from the program, due to the inappropriate, unsafe, or disruptive communications or actions of a parent, guardian, foster parent, or family member, at any time. If the adult engaging in these ways is only an authorized pick-up person, the family will be required to remove them from that list. The Executive Director will assess the situation, request to meet with the family and a Board member, and if the behavior/issues persist, or the family refuses to meet, the child may be unenrolled, with 5 days of notice by email, or in writing, provided to the family. A copy of the child's file will be mailed to the primary account holder. If the child receives subsidy, the final week of enrollment will be billed to CCFAP, and the tuition deposit paid at the time of enrollment, will be applied to the account for the final week of billing. The Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors of the situation, and the decision to expel the child from enrollment.

The Executive Director may also request the guidance or assistance of the Board of Directors in these types of situations, and efforts to avoid expulsion of a child are the priority.

## Parent/Guardian Conferences

Parent conferences are offered twice a year for children in our full-day toddler and PreK classes. Teachers will complete assessments of your child's development and skills prior to each conference. We are currently using the Ages and Stages assessment tool, and we are evaluating the possibility of transitioning to the TS Gold assessment.

Infants receive daily documentation of their activities, developments and any concerns, and infant teachers may choose to do a formal assessment of an infant, if they have concerns about the infant's development.

After assessing a child, the primary teacher, Assistant Director, or Executive Director may talk with parents/guardians and recommend that a referral for CIS Early Intervention be made. Referrals are submitted with parent/guardian consent. All teachers are available daily to talk about your child's progress on an informal basis. Conferences may also be requested as needed.

## Items to Bring

### Infants (6 wks - 24 mos)

A written schedule

Diapers, wipes, ointment/powder

Bottles (a clean bottle for each feeding during the day), pacifier if used, cup

Fitted Crib sized sheets & blankets (12 months and up)

Crib sized sheet and sleep sack (under 12 months)

Burp cloths and drool bibs

Two sets of extra clothing, including socks (appropriate to season)

Appropriate seasonal outerwear (boots, water resistant mittens/gloves, hat, scarf, sun hat)

Bug repellent, sunscreen (in season, requires permission form)

All food for two snack times and lunch every day (cereal, finger food, jar food, etc.)

New foods must first be introduced at home.

### Toddlers & Pre-K (2 yrs - 6 yrs)

Daily nutritious lunch (no juice or sugared drinks)

Two complete changes of clothing (appropriate to season)

Appropriate indoor and outdoor clothes, keeping in mind “messy” activities, sneakers for indoor gross motor activities

Crib sized sheet and blanket (laundered weekly at home)

Favorite nap item and/or pillow (optional)

Diapers, wipes, ointment/powder

Appropriate seasonal outerwear (boots, water resistant mittens/gloves, hat, scarf)

### After School (Pre-K and older)

Appropriate seasonal outerwear (boots, water resistant mittens/gloves, hat, scarf)

Two full sets of clothing, including underwear and socks (appropriate to the season)

Water bottle

**It is important to label all clothing and personal items with a permanent, laundry-proof marker.**

## Meals and Snacks

- Children attending full-day should eat breakfast before coming to WCCC.
- We will provide two nutritious snacks every day. One in the morning and one in the afternoon. Water will be served with each snack.
- ASP classes will be served a snack each afternoon
- Please pack a nutritious lunch for your child every day. We will provide milk at lunch time. We cannot cook foods for children, or heat them. If you wish you may send hot food in a thermos.
- Please do not send gum, candy, juice/sugared drinks, or excessive sweets to school (except for celebrations).

## Other Information

### Toys from Home

Special items are often helpful in the transition from home to school. A favorite stuffed toy, or other security object is great for rest-time for children in full-day programs. Appropriate books or games are always welcome. Toys may be allowed at special times during the day, but they are typically kept in the child's cubby during the day. It is best to tell your child that their toys will be in there for them when they are picked up or get home. Toys of a violent nature, or with any weapon-like possibilities are not allowed.

### Classroom Policies

There may be additional classroom policies pertaining to specific age groups. Please check with your child's teachers.

### Emergency Response Plan

Available in the classroom.

## Hours and Holidays

Woodstock Christian Child Care will be open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for full-day programs, and 2:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for ASP. We plan to be open every weekday, except for the following holidays, as designated by the Federal holiday schedule:

**New Year's Day**

**Memorial Day**

**4th of July**

**Labor Day**

**Thanksgiving & the Friday after**

**Christmas Eve through New Year's Day**

In addition to these holidays, we will be closed for one week, near the end of August, in order to thoroughly clean the facility and prepare for the next school year. It is most probable that the days selected will be mostly in the month of August, the week prior to when the local public schools begin in the Fall. We will notify all families well in advance of the cleaning days.

ASP plans be open on days that the Windsor Central Supervisory Union and Woodstock Elementary School are open with end of school day dismissal. ASP Families will be notified via email, if a planned or unanticipated closure occurs.

We also may close for in-service training days, or to attend workshops or conferences, and families will be notified of any such closure well in advance.

Weather, and adequate staffing permitting, we will provide child care the rest of the year. On the occasional snowy/icy Vermont day, we will make every effort to open on time. However, if there will be a delayed opening or center closing, you will be notified via direct email, and/or email, and the closure is typically posted on WCAX.

**Thank you for honoring us by choosing Little Branches Learning Center.  
We look forward to being a part of your family's community!**