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Parent Handbook

2024-2025 School Year

Equal Opportunity

The Michigan City Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of the Protected Classes of race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender status, sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age, religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information, which are classes protected by Federal and/or State law (collectively, "Protected Classes"). This includes the Corporation's employment opportunities, programs, and/or activities, or, if initially occurring off Corporation grounds or outside the Corporation's employment opportunities, programs and activities, affecting the Corporation's environment. For further information, clarification, or complaint, please contact the MCAS School Administration, 408 S. Carroll Avenue, Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000 for Title IX (gender equity related issues); or Special Education Department, 408 S. Carroll Avenue, Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000 for Section 504 (non-discrimination/ disability issues and Americans with Disabilities). Any other information concerning the above policies may be obtained by contacting the Administration Office, 408 S. Carroll Ave., Michigan City, Indiana 46360 at (219) 873-2000.

Little Wolves Early Learning Center

Parent Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the Little Wolves Learning Center! We are excited to provide five classrooms of full-day or half-day options. The highly educated staff members at Little Wolves Learning Center are committed to students' well-being. Because of our focus on early childhood development, we know that developing positive and trusting relationships with families is important for children's social and emotional development. Our goal is to help children grow into happy, confident individuals that love learning, whether they are taking their first steps in education, or making the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Little Wolves Mission

Our mission is to provide a foundation for students to be able to enter kindergarten as lifelong learners and critical-thinking citizens by offering a safe, caring, and engaging early learning environment that effectively serves the needs of students and families in our community.

Guiding Beliefs:

- A secure, nurturing, and engaging learning environment is essential.
- Collaboration with parents, teachers, students, and the community benefits a child's development.
- Encouraging diversity and valuing all human differences is important.
- Investing in students is worthwhile.

Preschool Sessions

Classes are taught by licensed professionals. Teachers and teacher assistants will be present in each classroom. Two different options are available to families for young children.

- Half-Day Sessions 8:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Full-Day Session 8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Programs/Fees

\$165 per week for full-time students

\$ 80 per week for half-day students

CCDF vouchers are accepted. Please contact the office for more information.

Tuition is due by Thursday for the following week of care. Students will not be permitted to attend if tuition is not paid.

A \$10 late fee will be added to your account and will automatically and due with the next tuition payment.

During any absence or extended absence, including sickness, vacations and eLearning days, tuition payments continue for each child.

Registration / Enrollment Criteria

The following items are required to register your child for The Little Wolves Early Learning Center and must be provided before the first day of school:

- Student Enrollment Form
- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residency
- Emergency contact information

- Immunization Records
- Parent /Guardian driver's license or State ID

After-School Care

Safe Harbor is available for an additional fee to support after-school child care, from 3:00 - 6:00pm. Additional information can be found on the Safe Harbor website at <http://educateMC.net/safeharbor>.

Assessment

Your child's progress will be assessed on a regular basis over the course of the school year. Teachers will share student learning information with parents during conferences or at the request of the parent.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important, however, children must be kept out of school for 24 hours after:

- Temperature over 99 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed skin rash
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms at school, parents will be contacted to pick their child up. Children should be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine before returning to school. In the event that your child will be absent from school, contact the school office at (219) 873-2035 and state the child's full name, teacher, and reason for the absence.

Communication between Parents/Teachers

A student's academic success depends on good communication with their teachers and parents. Following are the communication techniques we'll employ:

- Communication Folder (A Communication Folder will be used to send important papers home. The guardian is responsible to check their child's backpack and Communication Folder every day, returning it the next school day.)
- Newsletter
- Phone
- Email
- Parent-Teacher Conferences

Confidentiality

The staff at LWLC work together for the well-being of all children, and teachers will interact with every child during each day. For this reason, teachers regularly share information about children's behavior, interaction with other staff, including information about health needs and any other topics that may impact working with that child. This also may involve sharing observations or assessment data. All information about children will only be used to improve classroom interactions. Personal information, behavior issues, disciplinary issues, etc., are kept confidential.

Curriculum

The Little Wolves Early Learning Center utilizes a curriculum that is designed to foster development of the whole child.

The curriculum focuses on four areas of development:

- Social / Emotional
- Physical

- Cognitive
- Language

Daily Activities

Children will be provided with a variety of different activities throughout the day including quiet play (such as reading, block building, or art), and active play (including physical activities such as running and jumping or crawling and climbing). Activities will be balanced with attention to all areas of a child's development. Toys, games, and play equipment used indoors and outdoors will be safe, appropriate to the children's developmental stages and include a sufficient quantity to allow children to make choices.

Delays/Cancellations

Our preschool follows the Michigan City Area Schools delays and cancellation policy. In the event of a 2-hour delay, AM Pre-K is canceled; full-day students will report at 10:45 am. More information can be found at <http://educateMC.net/closings>.]

Discipline Policy

All students deserve a learning environment in which they can grow and thrive alongside others. They also need to know and understand boundaries and limits that develop their ability to develop self-control and to be responsible for their own behavior. Children thrive when they have boundaries and rules to keep them safe and help them learn.

Classroom rules are intended to support the well-being of all children and staff while promoting a safe learning environment. Children's behavior must not interfere with their safety or that of other children or adults in the class. Positive reinforcement includes verbal recognition, positive notes to the student, and much more. Staff will not use threats, bribes, physical punishment, humiliation, isolation, or deprive your child of food or other basic needs. When a child's behavior interferes with the safety and well-being of others, interventions will be used and could include:

- Using positive language to explain the desired behavior .
- Speaking calmly while bending down to the child's eye level.
- Giving clear choices.
- Redirecting the child to a new activity.
- Moving the child to a safe place in the classroom to calm down.

Expulsion and Suspension Policy

Little Wolves Early Learning Center works to create a positive learning environment that focuses on preventing expulsions and suspensions, encouraging partnerships between programs and families to support healthy development, and ensuring fairness, equity and continuous improvement to support children's social, emotional, and behavioral health.

At times, however, the Little Wolves Early Learning Center may not be the most effective setting to meet a particular child's behavioral or learning needs. There may also be situations where an individual child's needs negatively impact the learning or safety of the rest of the students in the class. In that case, we are committed to working with parents to find an alternate placement for their child.

The center focuses on fostering social/emotional development and responding to challenging behaviors by incorporating positive discipline practices and policies before ever considering expulsion or suspension.

Other Options Prior to Expulsion

Prior to the expulsion of any child from Little Wolves, the staff and director will follow these guidelines:

- Identify and engage mental and behavioral health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission.
- Reduce the number of days or amount of time in care for a specified amount of time.
- Hold a conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.
- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- Provide reasonable accommodations.

Transition Procedures

If an expulsion must occur, the Little Wolves Early Learning Center will assist the child and family in transitioning to another program by identifying and engaging mental/behavioral health consultants and community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for the child.

Local Resources

Staff will use the following list to assist families in locating services and resources.

- Child Find www.childfindidea.org
- Dunebrook : 219-874-0007
- Michigan City Area Schools : 219-873-2000
- Swanson Center: 219-871-9975

Additional Resources

1. Center For Parent Information and Resources www.parentcenterhub.org
2. IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Act <https://sites.ed.gov/idea>
3. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention – Parent Information www.cdc.gov/parents
4. The Pyramid Model Consortium- Supporting Early Childhood PBIS www.pyramidmodel.org
5. NCPMI – National Center for Pyramid Model INNOVATIONS <http://www.challengingbehavior.org>

Dress

Please have your children wear appropriate, comfortable clothing for school. Please do not send your children in flip flops, open-toed shoes, dress-up shoes, or slippers. Childrens' clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can use the bathroom easily by themselves. Please put your child's name inside clothes and jackets.

During wintertime, students will go outside and play. Please make sure they have extra gloves/mittens and hats at school. When students wear boots to school, please make sure they have an extra pair of shoes in their book bag or at school.

All students should have a minimum of one complete change of clothing at school (including socks and underwear). Clothing should be seasonally appropriate. Please send clothes to school in a Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name. Please label all clothing, especially jackets, hats, sweatshirts, and other clothing that will come off throughout the day and could be forgotten. We also request that you send a blanket and a travel-size pillow and travel-size pillowcase for rest time. Blankets and pillowcases will be sent home each Friday to be cleaned.

Emergency Evacuations

Michigan City Area Schools has developed emergency evacuation plans for students and visitors. Copies of these plans are provided to employees and are posted in all areas of the building. For more information, visit <http://educateMC.net/safety>.

Field Trips

Students may participate in field trips if all required documentation is completed at enrollment. Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips and chaperones invited as appropriate. Any chaperones must be approved following district guidelines. Visit <http://educateMC.net/volunteer> for more information.

Lunch and Snacks

Little Wolves Early Learning Center will provide a healthy AM snack, lunch, and PM snack to full-day students, and a snack for an additional fee. Students may also bring a healthy lunch from home.

Mandatory Reporting

Under Indiana Code 31-33-5 an individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report to the proper authorities. School personnel will make reports to the Department of Child Services or law enforcement as required under this statute. School personnel are prohibited by law from investigating the claims or concerns prior to making the required report

Outdoor Activity

Daily outdoor play will take place for all children unless severity of the weather poses safety or health hazard or if a health related reason for a child to remain indoors is documented by the child's parent, guardian or physician. Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone (smog) alerts. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma will not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels. All outdoor play environments will be safe and children will be actively supervised at all times, both while inside and outside. This includes protection from environmental hazards such as ponds or other bodies of water, traffic, and protection from wandering off or becoming lost.

Rest

Students will need to have a travel-size pillow and pillowcase, along with a blanket from home. This will be sent home every Friday to be washed and needs to be returned Monday for the school week.

Returned Checks

All checks returned to the Little Wolves Early Learning Center by a financial institution will be assessed a fee per I.C. 26-2-7-4. The fee for a bad check will be equal to no less than the amount charged by the financial institution.

Safe Conditions Policies

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while at our center.

- Students will be actively supervised by qualified staff members
- The student-to-staff ratio will follow state regulations
- Visitors will be required to wear a visitor's tag. The visitor's ID will be used to perform a background check using the Raptor Visitor Management System. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system.

These steps will be taken to maintain the school:

- Our facility will follow the cleaning schedule recommended by the state.
- The facility will be cleaned daily.
- The facility will be kept in a sanitary condition at all times.
- Toys, furniture, and other equipment used by children, will be sanitized weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
- All soiled items will be washed prior to sanitization.

School Supplies

Please make sure all items are labeled with your child's name.

Parents are asked to supply the following items for each student:

- Normal size backpack – no wheels
- 1 full set of extra clothes (this will need to be switched out for each season)
- 1 large box tissue
- 2 packages wet wipes
- 1 pocket folder
- Small blanket for rest
- Travel-size pillow and travel-size pillow case
- Gallon size Ziploc bags
- 1 container of disinfectant wipes

Student Health

Medical needs should be noted on enrollment forms. All medications must be sent to school in their original containers with a signed physician's statement specifying dosages. Any over-the-counter medicines must be in the original container and accompanied by a signed parent permission form. The director will be responsible for the storage and administration of medications.

Tobacco / Substance Policy

The Little Wolves Early Learning Center is a safe environment. Tobacco, illegal substances, alcohol, and weapons are prohibited from the building and grounds.

Transportation

Michigan City Area Schools does not offer transportation. It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to provide transportation to and from the school. Transportation to field trips will be provided by a school bus equipped with booster seats/seat belts.

Visitors

We welcome parents/guardians to visit our facility. All visitors must show a state-issued ID to enter the building. The visitor's ID will be used to perform a background check using the Raptor Visitor Management System. The Raptor system checks the visitor's name and date of birth for comparison with a national database of registered sex offenders. The registered sex offender database is the only official database checked by the Raptor system. Visitors will be required to wear a visitor's tag.

Volunteers

Volunteers do much to enhance our program. Some ways of assisting might include:

- assisting individual children or small groups
- guiding an art project
- preparing materials
- holiday celebrations

If you are interested in helping, please inquire at the office. **All volunteers must complete a required background check and be cleared BEFORE volunteering.** The volunteer form can be found at <http://educateMC.net/volunteer>.

Withdrawal

If your child is absent for 10 days and you have not contacted the office, your child will be withdrawn from preschool. If you decide to withdraw your child from the program, please give us a written notice of two weeks. Parents will be responsible for payments.

The Little Wolves Early Learning Center follows procedures that are in place with Michigan City Area Schools. More information can be found at: <http://educateMC.net/handbooks>.