



**LITTLE STEPS EARLY  
LEARNING ACADEMY  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **Assessment Plan**

### **Purpose**

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is important to understand and support young children's development. Each classroom completes screenings and assessments that encompass all areas of development; sensory, language, cognitive, gross-motor, fine-motor, and social-emotional, it is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively programs are meeting young children's educational needs, and to inform on program improvement.

Little Steps Early Learning Academy uses Brigance to assess our students. Brigance screeners and assessment inventories use observation, interviews, and child performance to pinpoint understanding in the domains tied to early development and school or kindergarten readiness. Test content aligns to the Common Core and many state-specific learning standards to equip educators with familiar information to fit their existing framework. Once the assessment is complete, the results are uploaded to the Online Management System. Parents will receive a copy of results and a copy will remain in the child's file.

### **Child Development**

Children do not just grow in size, they develop, evolve, and mature, mastering ever more complex understandings of the people, objects, and challenges in their environment. There is a general pattern **or** sequence for development that is true of most children. However, the rate, character, and quality of development vary from child to child. Culture influences development in different ways, and the goals for children differ from culture to culture. Quality assessment looks at not only to what is happening within the child, but also to the care that child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

### **Procedure**

All screenings, checklists, and assessments will be completed by the lead teacher in the assigned classroom. Any assistance in this procedure will be completed by staff persons under the direct supervision of the lead teacher.

Developmental screenings are completed within the first month of a child's enrollment in the Little Steps Early Learning Academics. This information is then discussed with parents during a formal parent/teacher conference after the screening is completed.

Screenings are Completed as an individually administered test and as checklist based on parent report. Developmental assessments are completed throughout the day and year using naturalistic observation of the children's interactions and behavior. Both group and individual observations will be used to compile documentation. All screenings and assessments are completed within the Little Steps Early Learning Academy complex. Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled semiannually or more often as needed.

## **FACILITY STATEMENT**

At **Little Steps Early Learning Academy**, our mission is to provide child care that meets the needs of each child and family in a safe, educational environment. We pride our Center's focus on the individual needs of each child, while providing quality, reliable and safe child care to provide for special needs of our children. We maintain a smoke free environment and staff is well trained and CPR certified. Parents are encouraged to tour our facility and ask questions before enrolling your child. Little Steps Early Learning Academy does not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or disability.

### **Our Goals Are:**

- To provide affordable, convenient, dependable child care services
- To create a child care setting for social, cognitive, and physical development
- To provide a nurturing environment
- To provide learning experiences for our children
- To provide a preschool program, readying children for lifelong learning

**Little Steps Early Learning Academy** offers the opportunity for each child to develop physically, socially and cognitively according to their individual learning style. Each child is considered unique in temperament and rate of development. Curriculum is planned to enhance and challenge, particular, distinct individual needs, interests and abilities. Activities and relationships occur in a healthy, positive and relaxed environment in which well-qualified staff provide personal attention, guidance and nurturing to each child. Young children develop rapidly. In fact, more development occurs during the first five years than at any other stage of life. A balance of, social, emotional, intellectual and physical stimulation is essential for development to be optimal. In our program we support and enrich individual development through several goal areas.

Physical Development – includes large and small motor development, and an understanding of personal health and safety. The day is a blend of child-initiated and Teacher-initiated activities including group time, free choice times, outdoor play, appropriate meals, snacks and rest times.

The Center strives to maintain continuity and consistency throughout the program by conducting cooperative staff planning, training and a variety of joint activities involving the various groups of children. In this context, all caregivers at **Little Steps Early Learning Academy** are encouraged to express their individual educational strengths as they work with children and in their cooperative efforts with other staff members.

When you come to **Little Steps Early Learning Academy**, your child will receive the best care the industry has to offer. All you need to do is "expect more."

**Little Steps Early Learning Academy** is able to care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. We also provide before and after school care for school aged children. Transportation is not available at this time.









The toys available at (Little Steps Early Learning Academy arms are selected to promote children's learning and development of language (books), large and small muscles (slides, puzzles and blocks), creativity (artwork), imagination (dress-up), self-help skills (dressing self) and cultural awareness (books and toys).

Little Steps ELA also offers an optional Christian Curriculum that includes Bible Art, prayer, bible verses, and bible themed activities. Parents must sign a permission form in order for children to participate in this curriculum.







***FAMILIES INVOLVEMENT***

Families are welcome to participate in the class activities and program events.

***WAYS FOR THE FAMILIES TO BE INVOLVE:***

Making things for the program

***Please note that the front lobby will close daily between the hours of 11:30 am-2:30pm. This is to ensure that the children's nap times are not interrupted. Please notify the director if exceptions need to be made.***

## ENROLLMENT

Our program gathers information during the enrollment process by asking parent's questions and collecting the following items: enrollment form, health history, child and family background information. All the data is kept strictly confidential in the child's file and kept locked in the director's office. The Little Steps Early Learning Academy only releases your information under your authorization. Our program has an Open door policy. Parents and family members are welcomed at all times. Our friendly entranceway provides an attractive and cozy area for families to ease transitional times. Each family is asked to create a Daily Connect account upon Enrollment for communication purposes. A complete physical examination is required by state law. It must be within 30 days prior to enrollment if the child is over 6 months old and within 30 days if the child is under 6 months old. An updated physical examination is required yearly, on the expiration date Of the current physical. Your child will be excluded if their physical has expired until an updated physical has been submitted. Immunization records must be in compliance with SNHD schedules.

## Parental Involvement

Little Steps Early Learning Academy wants parents to feel involved and knowledgeable concerning child's experience at the center. Parents are able to visit the classroom during the times that their child/children are in attendance. There are many ways for parents to be involved in their child's preschool experience. Parents may volunteer in the program. There is a sign-up with times and activities; before volunteering parents will meet with the Director for a brief orientation. As many parents work full-time we will have opportunities that allow the parents, their children and the teachers a relaxed opportunity to get together and share.

In addition, parent training opportunities will be posted on the Parent Board.

Parents will be asked to complete a survey 2 times per year. These survey assist us in making our program better. We want to hear your concerns, suggestions, or praise. We want to make sure that we maintain a high quality environment for your children.

Parents may contact staff directly through Daily Connect Messaging or by text or phone at 702-483-0092.

### Parent Meeting

There are several voluntary parent meeting that will be held from 6:30-7:30. Topics will cover parenting issues, activities to enrich your child's early experiences, cooking together, and/or family fun. We welcome your suggestions.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Children who are having difficulty for any reason will be re-directed to another activity with teacher assistance. in the event that a child's behavior is likely to result in harm to the child, others, or property, or seriously disrupts group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group. During this separation the child will be consistently supervised. A method of

discipline that frightens, demeans, or humiliates a child is strictly prohibited. Suspensions may be necessary if the child's negative behaviors are persistent and unwavering. If a child is suspended, the parent is still responsible for tuition fees. Extreme behaviors may result in the child being expelled from the program. Little Steps Early Learning Academy will follow all suspension and expulsion policies enacted by Children's Cabinet.

### **CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

All staff of Little Steps Early Learning Academy program are mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent, or volunteer. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise is prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. Additionally, withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. If any type of abuse or neglect is suspected it will be reported to the Department of Child and Family Services.

### **Children with Special Needs**

It is important to notify your childcare provider of any special needs that your child may have, in detail. This includes any current, or pending diagnosis, concerning behaviors, or accommodations that may be needed. Our goal is to ensure that Little Steps ELA is an appropriate fit for your child and that we are able to provide safe care for your child in an inclusive environment. At this time we do not offer one-to-one care. If for any reason, we feel that your child may be better served in a smaller class size, or may need one-to-one, or accommodations that we do not have available, the director may terminate enrollment and refer the parent to other accommodations.

## HEALTH POLICIES

*"The risk of transmission of the agents that cause infectious diseases is increased when children are gathered into groups for any reason. This risk is particularly significant in day care because of the many close physical interactions between children and adults. The majority of daycare programs attempt to exclude ill children. However, illness among young children is frequent and many parents want to bring mildly ill children to day-care programs. This results in a struggle between staff and parents and a desire for absolute criteria to use to determine when a child's illness requires exclusion. Day-care personnel criticize parents for demanding care for sick children. In turn parents criticize day-care programs, believing that their children acquire their illnesses from day-care contacts. The resulting tensions strain parent/staff relationships, negatively affecting the quality of the day-care experience. Unfortunately, absolute criteria for exclusion of ill children does not exist. Day-care programs base their exclusion policies on two issues (1) risk of transmission of infectious diseases and (2) the demand of sick children for increased adult attention, which may exceed the resources of the day-care program"* (Quoted from Pediatrics in Review). The health policy of the Little Steps Early Learning Academy Program is designed to best meet the needs of our children, parents and staff. We consult with doctors, nurses and other health care professionals in formulating our health policies. No policy will eliminate the problem of illness endemic to group care - especially of young children - no policy will satisfy all the populations the program serves, and no policy can entirely eliminate the element of subjective judgment inherent to individual situations. The Little Steps Early Learning Academy health policies may differ from your child's pediatrician's opinion in all situations, the policy will override your child's doctor's recommendation. Group care conditions differ from individual care situations.

### DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Staff will perform a daily health check on each child upon drop off every morning. The daily check will examine whether or not the child has: Fever or elevated body temperature of 100°, Skin rashes or unusual spots.

### ILLNESS

Signs/symptoms of disease including: Severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulty discharge from the nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea or vomiting.

Should any of these symptoms present themselves the child will be excluded until a medical evaluation allows inclusion. **A doctor's note must be submitted stating that the child is not contagious and indicating the date that they can return to daycare.** In order to minimize the spread of illness among children, it is important that parents have arrangements available for alternative care whenever your child shows signs of illness. The following symptoms will necessitate exclusion from the program:

***FEVERS***

A temperature of 100° F or higher is reason for exclusion from group care. A child who has been sent home with a fever of 100° F or higher may return to the program after being fever free for 24 hours without any medication.

***SEVERE COLDS***

Colds with extreme symptoms of excessive coughing, sneezing, nose drainage that is yellow or green and that interferes with a child's ability to eat, sleep or play are reason for exclusion.

***DIARRHEA***

Bowel movements that are extremely loose, watery and frequent are reasons for exclusion. A child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the program.

**EXPLANATION** — Diarrhea in children is an extremely contagious illness. Bowel movements that cannot be contained in a diaper or a toilet pose a high risk of contagion. Young children, especially infants, may have frequent or loose stools regularly or in response to a variety of conditions, but these are different from diarrhea. One or two meals should be eaten during the "24 hours free from diarrhea" (overnight with no meals eaten should not be considered 24 hours free from diarrhea). Secondary symptoms of crying, pain, refusal to eat, etc., must be considered.

***VOMITING***

Vomiting is a reason for exclusion. As with diarrhea, 24 hours should pass (with at least one meal eaten) without an episode of vomiting before a child returns to the program.

**EXPLANATION** — infants can spit up or throw up for many different reasons. With no other symptoms present we would wait to see if an infant threw up a second time before calling the parent to pick up the child.

***RASHES***

Rashes must be physician diagnosed for a child to be in the program. 17

***MOUTH SORES***

Mouth sores with drooling are reason for exclusion, unless the child's pediatrician states the child is non-infectious.

***CONJUNCTIVITIS***

Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye is reason for exclusion. A child may return to the program 24 hours after medication is begun.

***TEETHING***

Teething is not a reason for exclusion. Teething can cause low-grade fever (under 100 F), crankiness, loose bowel movements and a clear, runny nose. Teething does not cause the exclusionary conditions described above, though.





Tuition is due payable on Monday of each week. Any payments made after Monday will incur a late fee of \$5 per day. There will be no refunds or credits for missed days while the child is enrolled. Parents who are more than 14 days in arrear will be withdrawn from the program.

Please refer to holiday policy for planned absences. It is the program's policy that children may be required to withdraw from enrollment if the tuition is more For those family who receive reimbursement assistance through Urban League, Please note that all unpaid tuition fees are the parents' responsibility. Please be reminded that these programs will not reimburse for excessive absences, so it is important to make sure that your child attends during their approved schedule. All copayments are due by Mondayof each week. There may be trainings that occur during daycare hours. Should this occur, parents will be notified in advance of daycare closure dates.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

At Little Steps Early Learning Academy, you pay for the "position" held by your child. If your child misses a day for any reason outside of a daycare holiday closure, or vacation time, you are still expected to pay for that day missed. Payment is based on a flat weekly fee. Little Steps Early Learning Academy does not currently accept drop-ins. Children attending must maintain a schedule of at least 3 full time days. A 2 week written notice is required prior to withdrawing your child from care. In the case that notice is not given, the parent will be responsible for charges equaling a 2 week period. If your child will be transitioning to another program, we will be more than happy to provide you with any assessment information needed to ensure that your child's transition is smooth.

Please note that if you are the recipient of a childcare subsidy, excessive absences must be reported to the agency. Excessive absences will lead to termination. Parents are required to pay any co-payments and any uncovered expenses that the childcare subsidy declines to reimburse.

### **Vacation Days:**

Up to 5 days per full-time family per year with full credit. Must give 1 week written notice to receive credit. Part time family's vacation days will be based on the number of days they are enrolled each week( ex: enrolled 3 days per week, you will receive 3 vacation days per year).

The following holidays will be observed for teacher in-service training: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day. These are paid days for staff and tuition must be paid for these days. If any of these holiday fall on the weekend, the daycare may observe the preceding Friday or the following Monday to observe the holiday. The daycare will close on Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day after Christmas. These days will be credited back to parents. The daycare will notify parents of holiday closures, outside of those listed above at least 7 days in advance.

### **Toilet Training-Is your child ready?**

1. Expresses interest in coming into the bathroom with you to find out what goes on there and perhaps even sits on the toilet herself.
2. Understands what the toilet is for and what it means to have a wet or dirty diaper. If she also shows a preference for being clean and dry fussing when she's wet, pulling off a dirty diaper, or asking to be changed; all the better!
3. Knows the words for urinating and having a bowel movement (such as "going potty" or whatever words your family chooses).
4. Can stay dry for at least two hours at a time.
5. Has regular bowel movements with soft, formed stools
6. Can and will follow simple directions, such as those for washing hands.
7. Can help pull pants up and down
8. Seems to recognize at least a few seconds ahead of time that she's about to go and can tell you before it happens.  
(Many youngsters will squat, leave the room, or get "the look" before having a bowel movement.)
9. Is in a willing, receptive mood and isn't going through any major transitions (like adjusting to a new sibling or school).
10. Demonstrates a desire for independence (for example, wants to be a "big girl" and do things for herself) -- or, better yet, shows a specific desire to use the toilet like mommy and daddy do!

If your child meets most of these criteria, she's ready to try. If not, wait a month or two and reevaluate.

Potty-Training should begin at home over a long weekend or holiday.

Once you have had success at home for at least a week, your child may begin wearing CLOTH training pants with rubber pants to cover them at child care.

You must still provide me with 1-2 pull ups for nap or other extended periods. Also you MUST provide me with at least 2 complete changes of clothing for your child.

Under no circumstances will your child be allowed to potty-train in regular underwear.

This is for sanitary reasons! Regular underwear cannot contain urine & feces to prevent the spread of germs in my home & to other children in care & to my family. Please cooperate with me on this matter.

Also, if you begin training, please notify me so that I can continue with all the work you have accomplished.

Further, if within 2-3 weeks, your child shows no signs of progress, I reserve the right to put your child back in diapers & try again in a few weeks.

Parent has read & agreed to the Toilet training policies.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **HANDWASHING PROCEDURE**

All child care providers, staff, volunteers, and children shall wash their hands at the following times:

### **Before and After:**

- Preparing or handling food or feeding a child
- Administering medication
- Playing in water used by more than one person (i.e., water table)
- Eating a meal or snack

### **After:**

- Handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit, feces or urine) from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from cuts or sores
- Before engaging in any activity related to serving food, including, without limitation, setting the table, handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry, dispensing snack
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
- Changing a diaper with or without gloves (Hands must be washed after EVERY diaper change)
- After attending to an ill child
- After handling an animal
- Cleaning or handling the garbage

The staff of the facility shall ensure that each bathroom has running water, soap and paper towels.

All child care providers, staff, volunteers, and children shall use the handwash procedure:

1. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper towel is available
2. Turn on WARM water to a comfortable temperature
3. Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands
4. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nailbeds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
5. Rinse hands under warm running water until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands.
6. Dry hands with the clean, disposable paper towel
7. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper towel
8. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container. Use hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.

HAND SANITIZERS OR PREMOISTENED CLEANING TOWELETTES DO NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR HANDWASHING. THEY MAY BE USED AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE WHEN RUNNING WATER IS UNAVAILABLE, SUCH AS DURING AN OUTING, UNTIL HANDS CAN BE WASHED UNDER RUNNING WATER.

NAC 432A.412.2 requires that child care providers instruct, monitor and assist the children being cared for to ensure that the children follow the handwash procedures.

Caregivers shall provide assistance with handwashing at a sink for infants who can be safely cradled in one arm and for children who can stand but not wash their hands independently. A child who can stand shall either use a child-size sink or stand on a safety step at a height at which the child's hands can hang freely under the running water. After assisting the child with handwashing, the staff member shall wash his or her own hands.

If a child is unable to stand and is too heavy to hold safely to wash the hands at the sink, caregivers shall use the following method:

- Wipe the child's hands with a damp paper towel moistened with a drop of liquid soap. Then discard the towel.
- Wipe the child's hands with a clean, wet, paper towel until the hands are free of soap. Then discard the towel.
- Dry the child's hands with a clean paper towel.

### State of Emergency

During any and all pandemics, natural disasters, or any other situation that may result in the declaration of a state of emergency, Little Steps Early Learning Academy

Will remain open unless otherwise ordered by a government entity to close, or is directly effected by the event ( i.e destroyed by the natural disaster, has a substantiated case of extreme illness)  
All tuition, attendance, and vacation policies will remain in effect. There will be exceptions.

a. If a parent is directly impacted by the natural disaster, pandemic, or state of emergency. For instance, if the child is diagnosed with the illness which caused the state of emergency these policies will be waived and we will work with the parents regarding enrollment. Enrollment would resume once the child is released by his/her doctor. If the child will not be returning, a two weeks notice will still be required. Parents will be responsible for any tuition incurred after doctor's clearance.

b. If a parent is laid off, without pay, Little Steps ELA will work with parents to reserve enrollment and Suspend tuition costs for a period of time. Written acknowledgement from your employer will be required. This is also the policy should a parent be displaced or must move out of state due to a natural disaster or pandemic. Regular tuition policies will apply to parents who continue to receive their regular salary or hourly wage.

c. Vacation time of 5 days per year may be used during this time with at least a 3 day notice.