

Little Guppy Child Development Center

Parent Handbook

1078 Bryan Road
O'Fallon, MO 63366
phone 636-240-7332
fax 636-240-7332

3151 Elm Point Industrial Dr.
St. Charles, MO 63301
phone 636-916-4280
fax 636-925-1171



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Welcome to Little Guppy Child Development Center

Thank you for choosing Little Guppy Child Development Center. You have made your first and best investment in your child's education. We are looking forward to your family joining the "Little Guppy" family. Please take some time to read this information, so you can have a better understanding of what you can expect from us and what is expected of you. After reading these policies, we will have you sign this copy and return it to the center. We will then provide you with a copy for your reference.

13 Years of Excellence

For 13 years, Little Guppy Child Development Center has been providing an ever-increasing quality raising the bar for early childhood education in St. Charles County. Partnering with Missouri State Organizations, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, The Child Day Care Association, and Lindenwood University, we are community leaders constantly gauging our program against the latest research in the field. Several of our educators have been with us since the beginning and many seek us out to begin their teaching career. With a spirit of teamwork and dedication, we work diligently each day to provide a unique educational experience for your child. We will continue to grow and expand our programming and expertise.

Philosophy

Little Guppy is an early childhood development program integrated with the convenience of day care. Our Little Guppy Family is comprised of three facets: the children, their families, and the teachers/staff. Our program values each of these facets equally and is devoted to their development. We also recognize and value our role in the community.

Children

Little Guppy's child development program focuses on developing each child in each area of development, at their individual pace. Our environment provides excellent opportunities for exploration and development in an "at home" atmosphere. We use the "High Scope" approach to plan our curriculum, assessment, and environment. High Scope is an approach based on the constructivist theory of education. Constructivism encourages mutual respect between children, teachers, and parents. Children are provided with many opportunities from which they may choose to explore in a "hands on, minds on" manner. Teachers document each child's progress through portfolios, daily reports, anecdotal records, and other assessments. You will be well informed of your child's progress in each facet of our program.

Families

We are committed to meeting the needs of the families of the children who attend our center. We believe that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers and by supporting and educating them, we will have improved the life of the child.

Teachers/Staff

We are committed to our teachers and staff. We strive to meet their needs as individuals as well as develop them as teachers. We believe that providing a supportive and professional environment will enable teachers to be happy and productive. This will ensure their longevity and provide your child with stable and loving relationships. An integral part of supporting our teachers and staff is providing them with above average salaries and benefits. Therefore, we must be committed to maintaining a financially strong program.

Community

We are committed to bettering our community and teaching children the importance of community involvement. Further, it is our goal to raise awareness of the importance of positive early childhood experiences.

Professional Affiliations

State of Missouri

Little Guppy Child Development Center is licensed through the Missouri Department of Health, Child Care Licensing and Safety Division. Our Child Care Facility Specialist is Renee McFerron. Families are able to review our file or speak with Renee McFerron about our center in regards to licensing requirements. Renee McFerron can be contacted at 314-877-0217. Families may review our copy of the licensing guidelines at any time, though our copy cannot be removed from the center. Information concerning licensing regulations can also be found at www.dhss.mo.gov.

NAEYC Accreditation

Little Guppy is proud of our accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children at our St. Charles facility. NAEYC is the largest professional organization of early childhood educators. Obtaining accreditation through this organization means that we meet or exceed the high standards developed to identify high quality programs. Currently, only 6% of the early childhood programs in this country are accredited by NAEYC. More information about NAEYC and their accreditation standards can be found at www.naeyc.org. Our O'Fallon location will soon begin the self-study process of accreditation with an anticipated accreditation year of 2012.

Professional Memberships

Little Guppy and many of its team members belong to the following professional organizations:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Child Care Association
- National Association of Child Care Professionals
- HIGH/SCOPE Educational Research Foundation

The Little Guppy Team

Our team at Little Guppy Child Development Center is excited to meet you and your child. Our staff is screened utilizing extensive background checks. They are some of the finest instructors in the field of early childhood development. The majority of our lead teachers are certified, degreed, or credentialed. Their combined years of experience and education ensure a professional and stimulating environment. Each team member is certified in infant and child CPR and first aid. The Little Guppy team is committed to meeting the needs of our families and exceeding their expectations.

Mandated Reporters

Each member of the Little Guppy team is a mandated reporter. Missouri state law requires every staff member to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to the child abuse hotline.

Program Descriptions

Placement

Little Guppy Child Development Center reserves the right to arrange placement of children in classes based on factors other than chronological age. Children usually spend a full school year in the class which they begin at the start of the school year. A child will move to the next class when the teacher and administration feel that it is in the child's best interest and a spot in the next class is available to them.

Infant and Toddler Programs

Angelfish & Goldfish (Children approx. 0-18 months)

Our programs for infants are based on the latest brain research. We know the importance of stimulation at this early age. These children are stimulated with a variety of music including children's and classical. The teachers read to them often. They are given many objects to sense by means of touch, taste, smell, hear, and sight which promote the development of the brain. Our infants are also introduced to sign language as early as five months. Sign language is used in cooperation with verbal language. Studies support that children exposed to sign language increase their verbal skills dramatically. Each infant receives plenty of individual time which includes language communication, stretching, baby yoga, exercises, and infant massage. These children are provided with lots of love and encouragement in developing their new skills. The ratio of children to teachers is 4 to 1 with a maximum class size of 8. Diapers are

routinely changed every two hours and at any indication of a bowel movement. They are fed according to their individual schedule and parent specifications. We also support breast feeding mothers. The teachers partner with the families to ensure continuity between home and school. The parents will be informed daily of the child's activities with an individualized daily form. Each child's development is documented in a portfolio which the parents will receive at the end of the school year.

Starfish & Pufferfish (Children approx. 12-30mos)

There are many skills acquired at this stage of a toddler's development, as well as their desire for independence. Our program focuses on developing these new skills while fostering the child's need to do for themselves. The children begin to feed themselves, use sippy cups, sleep on toddler cots, and complete small tasks, such as putting away a toy. They are stimulated with a variety of activities to satisfy their short attention span. The toddler class includes lots of physical exercise, including yoga, to increase their large motor skills and introduces smaller manipulatives to increase their fine motor skills. Excellent early childhood development toys provide stimulation vital in developing these fine motor skills as well as the brain. Stimulation continues through this stage and there is additional emphasis on language development. This development is achieved through music, children's books, peer interaction and sign language. The learning environment is designed to enable the children to develop in a "safe and soft" atmosphere. This exceptional development program is integrated with first rate care for the toddler. The child to teacher ratio is 4 to 1 with a maximum class size of 16. Parents will be informed of the child's day through an individualized daily form. The child's progress will be documented in a portfolio which will be sent home at the end of the year.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Dolphins & Sea Turtles (Children approx. 24-40mos)

The program for two and three year olds provides many stimulating activities to facilitate their development. We do many "hands on, minds on" activities which include sorting, counting, marching to music, and painting. Our program addresses every area of the child's development. The environment is rich with developmentally stimulating toys to help facilitate their development. The NIFTI system, along with many other manipulatives, is used to promote fine motor skills and math concepts. We help these children build language by speaking with them and reading a lot of books. Our program provides weekly Spanish lessons and yoga instruction. We continue to assist these children in their quest for independence by fostering other life skills, such as: learning to dress themselves, put away their things, and serve snack. Children may participate in field trips, have class celebrations, and special guests. The child to teacher ratio is 8 to 1 with a maximum class size of 16. Each child receives a daily report indicating how they did that day. It informs families of the menu, activities, and diaper changing/ potty development for that day. The Dolphins will also have their development documented in a portfolio which will be sent home at the end of the year.

Whales, Orcas, Sharks, & Seahorses (Children approximately 3-5 years)

Our Pre-Kindergarten Program is excellent for the child who has been previously enrolled in pre-school as well as the child who will be experiencing pre-school for the first time in preparation for Kindergarten. We utilize manipulatives to teach math and science concepts. We encourage their language development by reading with them. Each child will develop readiness skills they will need to be successful in Kindergarten. Other skills your child will develop include: writing their name, knowing their phone number and address, recognition of letters, numbers, shapes, and colors. All of this material is presented in creative and innovative ways ensuring that your child will enjoy learning and be motivated to continue to explore. Our program also includes lessons in Spanish, yoga, music, cooking and sign language. Pre-Kindergarten students attend a field trip each month and have lots of class parties! Your child's day will be filled with interesting and fun learning activities. The child to teacher ratio is ten to one with a maximum class size of twenty. You will receive information regarding your child through daily class notes posted in the class, frequent communication with your child's teacher, student portfolios, and other assessments.

School Age Programs

Stingrays (children 7-12)

Before and After School Program

The Before and After School Program is an exceptional program which caters to the needs of today's families. Children are provided transportation, a nutritious snack, group and individual activities, as well as homework time with a teacher available for tutoring and enrichment work. We transport to many elementary schools in the area. A bus from Discovery Elementary School (for those who reside over 1 mile from the school), Orchard Farm Elementary School, Rock Creek Elementary School and Wentzville Elementary School transports to our center. Parents MUST

notify us if their child will be absent or will be picked up by another source. We do not transport on days when Orchard Farm, Fort Zumwalt or Wentzville buses do not transport due to inclement weather, however, we do provide care for your school-ager on these days for an additional fee.

We do provide care for children enrolled in our Before and After School Program on scheduled days off and half days. There is an extra fee for these days and parents must give a one week notice to the center of these days (not including snow days). This is crucial in planning meals, activities, and staffing. Families are financially responsible for all the days they notify us that their child will be attending. Your child will not be accepted into care if the one week notice is not given. Families will receive information pertaining to activities planned for these days. These activities may require an additional fee.

Camp Guppy/Summer Camp Program

Our full day Summer Camp is an exciting and eventful way for your school age child to spend their summer. Children must have completed Kindergarten to attend Camp Guppy. Our program focuses on FUN and academic enrichment. Our calendar is packed with fun activities your child will enjoy. We have weekly visits to the library to participate in their Summer Reading Program as well as awesome water days! Other activities include sports, sleep overs, hiking, crafts, parties, special guests, and LOTS of field trips.

Program Components

Yoga

Children seek balance. In a world of over-worked parents and over-scheduled children, balance is rare. Families today are often stressed and we see the effects of this stress in their children. This is what inspired us to implement the Radiant Child Yoga Program at the center. When teaching simply yoga postures and deep breathing, children learn to approach the world through a calm state of mind. Yoga is practiced in all of the classrooms daily by the children and the teachers. The goals of Little Guppy's Yoga Program include increased mental alertness, improved strength and balance, lower stress levels, and a more positive sense-of-self. Yoga fits our holistic approach perfectly. Yoga is also taught to the parents so they may practice with their children at home. This is just one of the many programs at Little Guppy which enriches the lives of children, families and teachers.

Spanish

Children in our program will participate in weekly Spanish lessons. The focus of these lessons is beginning vocabulary, phrases, and an introduction of what life is like for children in Mexico. The children learn through games, songs, and creative activities. You will receive a word list so you can reinforce at home what your child has learned in school. This program begins in the Dolphin's class.

Sign Language

Sign language is used in cooperation with language, not only to build their verbal capacity, but also providing children an alternative means to communicate their needs. Children as early as 6 months will be able to sign for basic everyday needs and by the time they reach Kindergarten, they are capable of signing the "Pledge of Allegiance." They are exposed to the alphabet, vocabulary, and songs. Sign is taught utilizing games, worksheets, and creative activities. You will receive a word list so you can reinforce at home what your child has learned at school. We use the "Sign with your Baby" program developed by Joseph Garcia as well as our own sign language program.

Music

Music is integrated into every aspect of our curriculum. We have a music teacher that visits the classes instructing the children in early music concepts. The children sing, play instruments, dance, march, and clap their hands. Music is also a part of our daily curriculum.

Potty Development

Potty development is an important period in the development of all children. No two children will do it the same. We plan lots of flexibility and patience into our potty development program. Children are introduced to the skills needed to achieve independent toileting at their own pace and then taken potty on a regular schedule. It is important that the parent and teacher communicate about the child's pottying habits. They must work together to achieve independent toileting. Parents are given information on their daily report in reference to the child's potty progress. Parents need to dress their children in clothing they can pull up and down easily. This decreases the likelihood of accidents due to

difficulties in getting their pants down. Your teacher will let you know when it is time for underwear. We strongly discourage the use of pull ups. Moving to the next step too soon causes a sense of failure in the child and a lot of unnecessary work for the teacher. Children will not be promoted to the WHALES or ORCAS class until they achieve independent toileting. Independent toileting is defined as a child who goes to the bathroom without prompting, can get their pants down and up, wipe themselves, and has accidents less than daily. Little Guppy reserves the rights to distinguish children who have achieved independent toileting from those who are still in the process. Please remember to keep your child stocked with extra clothes as we can not change them if they do not have extra clothes. Little Guppy is unable to begin potty development until the child is in the Dolphin's/Sea Turtle's Class due to licensing requirements.

Field Trips and Special Events

The class curriculum includes a variety of field trips and special visitors. Past events have included the St. Louis Zoo, World Ways Children's Museum, Piwackett Theatre, and farmer's markets. Information pertaining to these events is included in the monthly newsletters. It is assumed that all children in the class will be attending the field trip unless the parent submits a field trip waiver form two weeks prior to the event. If you choose to not have your child participate in the field trip, you will need to make other arrangements for their care as they are unable to attend the center while their class is at an event.

Field trips and special events may require an additional fee. You will be informed of the fees in the monthly newsletter. These fees are debited on the Monday prior to the field trip unless otherwise stated. Field trip fees will not be refunded for any reason.

Field trips are an excellent opportunity for families to be involved with their children's education. Parent participation is essential to the success and safety of the event. We transport the children using the Guppy Van, parent/staff volunteers, or bus.

You will be notified of what time your child will have to arrive at school for them to be able to participate. Children arriving after this time will be unable to attend the field trip; therefore, will not be accepted into the center. For your child's safety, children are not allowed to join a field trip already in progress nor are they allowed to leave a field trip in progress. Children must wear a Little Guppy field trip shirt or sweatshirt and tennis shoes on all field trips. There will be no exceptions. Parents are not mandated to wear our field trip t-shirts, however, it is appreciated. This enables children to readily identify the adults in our group. Field trips are an important aspect of our curriculum.

Extra Curricular Activities

These activities, such as Gymnastics on Wheels and a dance program, are available for additional fees payable to the organization providing the service. Information for these activities can be found in the front office. Little Guppy is not affiliated with these organizations. Payment must be made directly to these organizations and not Little Guppy.

Birthdays and Celebrations

All holidays are celebrated at Little Guppy. Children learn about other cultures through experiencing their holidays. We encourage families to help us make these celebrations more authentic by sharing their own cultural experiences with us.

All children's birthdays are celebrated at the center. Parents may send treats for the entire class. Treats must be commercially prepared and appropriate for the age of the children in the class. Teachers can assist you in choosing appropriate items. It is important to let your child's teacher know what you are planning prior to that day. Birthday party invitations are not allowed at Little Guppy. Please make other arrangements for their distribution.

Assessment and Documentation

Documentation

We document the progress of every child in the center using pictures, work samples, audio samples, written samples of their language, and video samples. This information is used to help us assess your child's development and to plan curriculum to further their growth. It is also used to make the child's daily activities visible to the parents. This documentation is the property of Little Guppy and may be used in training, recruiting, and advertising. You or your child will not be compensated in any way for the use of their image or work.

Portfolio Assessment

Each child’s growth is recorded in a portfolio. A portfolio is a collection of work samples, documentation, and other tools used to show a child’s progress throughout the year. The portfolios are the basis of the family/teacher conferences. Each child’s portfolio is available for their parents to review at any time, though they must remain at the center. They will be sent home at the end of the school year or on the child’s last day.

Documentation Fund

Little Guppy, with the support of the Parent Partner Group, established a fund to help off set the cost of the supplies and equipment necessary to produce this level of documentation. We replenish this fund through fundraisers organized by the parent advisory board.

Family/Teacher Conferences

Family/Teacher conferences are held in the Spring and the Fall. This is an opportunity for the family to meet with their child’s teacher to discuss the child’s development and to set additional developmental goals. Conferences are 20 minutes long and are a mandatory part of a family’s enrollment. Families may request additional conferences with the teacher if necessary.

Daily Schedule

Hours of Operation

Little Guppy Child Development Center is open from 6 A.M. until 6 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Holidays

The centers are closed on the following days: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Tuition for those weeks will not be pro-rated.

Bad Weather

We have adopted a Winter Weather Action Plan to ensure the safety of our staff and families. During extreme weather conditions and/or power outages, we may close, have a delayed opening (the center would open the center at 9:00am) or have an early dismissal. Weather announcements will be made on KSDK – News Channel 5, KTVI – Fox 2 News, Little Guppy – St. Charles Facebook or Little Guppy – O’Fallon Facebook.

Arrivals

Your child may be dropped off any time after 6:00 A.M. We encourage all children to be dropped off no later than 9:00 A.M. so they do not miss any of their class activities. Please call by 9:00 A.M. if your child will be late or absent that day. Children who are not present and are not called in by 9:00 A.M. will not be counted in the lunch count.

Children who need to be transported to school will need to arrive no later than the times listed. Children who arrive later than these times will not be transported.

| <i>School</i> | <i>Time to arrive to be transported</i> | <i>Time to arrive to have breakfast</i> |
|------------------|---|---|
| Discovery | 7:30 | 7:00 |
| Orchard Farm | 7:15 | 7:00 |
| St. Charles City | 7:00 | 7:00 |
| Rockcreek | 8:00 | 7:30 |
| Green Tree | 8:00 | 7:30 |
| Crossroads | 8:00 | 7:30 |
| Prairie View | 8:00 | 7:30 |

Signing In

Your child needs to be signed in and out everyday. This is the only way to keep an accurate count of our children. Failure to sign your child in or out may result in a **\$10** fine per occurrence. Each person who brings or picks up a child on a regular basis (three times or more per week) should have their own four digit code. **DO NOT SHARE YOUR CODE!** When an authorized person without a code needs to bring or pick up a child, they must see the person at the front desk. This staff member will enter the child as in or out.

Please follow these steps when dropping off:

1. Enter through the front door only. Use your four digit code to enter if the front door is locked. Please be sure to not let anyone else in as you enter.
2. Enter your four digit code on the key pad
3. Press the button by the child's name that you are signing in so it reads that "Jane Is In"
4. Press finish
5. Press Options to check for messages and/or account balance
6. Press finish again to exit program
7. Walk your child and their belongings to their classroom

Separation Anxiety

There are some mornings when the child can be clingy and upset. We ask that you hug and kiss your child, assure them you will be back that day, and then leave. Children are usually fine within a few minutes. Prolonging the good bye makes it harder on the child and the parent. We encourage parents who wish to call do so between 1 P.M. and 2:30 P.M.

Departures

Authorized Persons

Your enrollment form has a place to list authorized persons to pick up your child. Please remember to carry identification with a picture, as you may have to show it before the child will be released into your care. In the event that you need someone to pick up that is not on the list, you must give the director written notice which is signed and dated. In an event of an emergency, you may give verbal permission on the phone. The director may ask for personal information in an attempt to verify your identity. Persons authorized to pick up must be at least eighteen years of age.

Identification

Proper identification is required for all persons authorized to pick up and to drop off. Proper identification includes a valid driver's license, state issued identification, or military identification. This identification must be presented as you enter the center. Little Guppy reserves the right to deny access or release a child if proper identification is not shown or if management deems the situation not in the best interest of the child.

Signing Out

Please follow these steps when picking up...

1. Go to your child's classroom to get your child and their belongings (we prefer you start with the youngest child and work your way up)
2. Come to the office and key in your four digit code (or ask for assistance from the staff member at the front desk)
3. Press the button by the child you are picking up so it reads "Jane Is Out"
4. Press finish
5. Press Options to check your messages and/or your account balance
6. Press finish to exit the program

ONLY PARENTS ARE ALLOWED IN THE ANGELFISH , GOLDFISH, PUFFERFISH, AND STARFISH ROOMS. SIBLINGS ARE NOT ALLOWED. SHOES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE ANGELFISH, GOLDFISH, AND STARFISH, ROOMS. PLEASE SLIP OFF SHOES.

Late Picks Ups

We close at 6:00 P.M. We expect your child to be picked up no later than that. We understand that there maybe circumstances that may cause you to be late; however, you must have a back up plan for these days. Any child left past 6:00 P.M. will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child. Families leaving their children at the center past closing may be mandated to pick up by 5:30 P.M. and charged the same late fee from there after. Continually leaving your child at the center after closing may result in the termination of your child's enrollment.

Meals

Children on table food will be served breakfast (for an additional daily fee), lunch, and an afternoon snack. Breakfast is served at the center from 7:30-8:00 a.m (breakfast will be discarded at 8). Our menu was designed to include all the nutritional requirements set forth by the Missouri Department of Health.

Please do not send food to school with your children as it is against state licensing policy and they will not be allowed to eat it. If your child eats breakfast on the way to school, please have them finish before they enter the center.

We understand that there are children who will not be able to eat items on our menu. Children who fall into one of the following groups may bring alternative foods to the center.

- Children who are not on table food (and are less than 1 year of age)
- Children who have a food allergy documented by a physician
- Children who are on a special diet due to health reasons as documented by a physician
- Children who have special diets due to cultural or religious beliefs

These families need to supply their food on a daily basis. As mandated by the Department of Health, all food items must be brought into the center in their original container. Food that has already been opened will not be accepted into the center. Any unused food will be sent home each night.

Rest Time

Children in the Starfish, Pufferfish, Dolphins, Sea Turtles, Whales, Orcas, Sharks, and Seahorses classes have a scheduled rest time each afternoon. Licensing rules require children to stay on their cots for 30 minutes. Children are not required to sleep during this time however it is a quiet time so others may nap. Your child may be given books or other quiet activity to do on their cot during this time. You must supply one crib sheet, and 1 small cot blanket (small beach towels or bath towels work well). **Sleeping bags, large blankets, and pillows are strictly prohibited.** Please send them each Monday and they will be ready to be picked up on Fridays. Please launder them and bring them back each Monday. Parents will be called to bring the child's blanket if they forget. Do not forget to label both blankets with your child's name.

Outside Time

Children in the Angelfish, Goldfish, Starfish, and Pufferfish programs will go outside at least three times per week. Children in the Dolphin's class through the School Age Program will go outside daily if the weather permits. The temperature must be above 40 degrees and below 95 degrees. We will not go outside if it is raining, lightning, or if there is a storm or heat warning. We will also consider air quality when determining if outside play is appropriate. Outdoor field trips will be cancelled if that day's weather does not fall within these guidelines. Parents who do not want their child to go outside due to a medical issue must have a physician's note stating they have an ailment which inhibits them from going outside. This note must include the dates the child needs to stay inside.

Preparing Your Child for School

Dress Code

Please send your child in comfortable clothes that they may feel free to get dirty. We learn through making messes. Your child must wear **tennis shoes** everyday whether we will go outside or not. Children WILL NOT be accepted into care if they are not wearing tennis shoes. This is for their safety. Be sure to send items appropriate for the current temperature as we will go outside almost everyday. This includes jackets, coats, hats, gloves, or mittens. We encourage sending a hat with your child to be worn outside everyday to assist in their defense against the sun. We are not responsible for any damage to children's clothing.

Guppy Wear

Each child enrolled in any of the Little Guppy Programs will need a Little Guppy Field Trip T-shirt and/or sweatshirt. We have a wonderful variety of children's and adult clothing with our "Little Guppy" logo. Please see a member of the management team for ordering information.

Extra Clothes

Every child (not including school age programs) will need to have two FULL changes of clothes at the center. School age children may want to keep an emergency set of clothes at the center. A full change of clothes includes underwear, socks, shirt, and pants (or dress). We will keep children's clothes in their cubbies. We will send soiled clothes home in a bag with a note. Please remember to send a full set the next day. Parents will be required to bring extra clothes to the center immediately if the child needs a change of clothes and does not have them. Please check to make sure the extra clothing is appropriate for the current season.

Items To Be Provided By Parents

Each class requires different items to be provided by the family. It is the parent's responsibility to see that their child has what they need everyday. In the situation that a child needs something they are out of, the parent will be called and must furnish the item right away. You will receive a list of things needed for your child when they enroll or move to a new class. Many of these items may be purchased at our "Guppy Store". **FAMILIES MUST LABEL EVERYTHING THEY SEND TO THE CENTER!** This enables us to reunite missing items with their owner.

Toy Policies

In an attempt to keep your child's favorite toys safe from harm and possible abduction by other children, we ask that you do not send toys from home. Toys brought from home into the center will be considered a donation.

Family Involvement

Our program depends on the involvement of families in our program. There are many ways to be involved in our program. Families may volunteer for a field trip, bring treats for a party, serve on the Parent Advisory Board, assist with a fundraiser, or come to read with your child's class. The most important way to participate in the program is by making sure your child has everything they need to ensure a great day at our center and by spending a little time in your child's classroom to see what they have been busy exploring. **We do require that all families volunteer at the center at least one time per year and attend all family/teacher conferences.**

Parent Communication

You will receive information pertaining to your child's day, development, and upcoming events. It is important to read all of the information in the newsletters, daily notes, and on parent communication boards. Monthly newsletters will be distributed at the beginning of the month. It will include a calendar of events. Placing this calendar on your refrigerator and checking it daily is encouraged so that your child will not miss out on any activities or deadlines. **It is important to check your child's folder everyday.** This will contain notes pertaining to your child's day, development and anything they will need the following day (diapers, extra clothes, etc.). It is equally important for the parent to inform the center of all pertinent information regarding your child. We should know of major changes in your child's life (moving, divorce, new baby, etc.) as well as injuries and illnesses suffered at home. This will enable us to keep a close eye on your child during these times so we may share with you our observations. Please be sure to communicate any changes in addresses, phone numbers, or work so we may update your file.

Home School Activities

The center will send home activities with the child for them to complete with their family. These activities are intended to incorporate the child's family into our program. These activities may range from a craft to reading a book. We ask that the families return all items sent home so the child may share their experience with the class and so we may send the activity home with another family.

Parent Resources

We have an excellent resource of articles, books and videos on many subjects pertaining to early childhood development. These resources cover topics such as: vaccinations, potty development, temper tantrums, divorce and many more. You may request this information from a member of the management team. We will supply you with information on any topic we can find.

Parent Education Nights

Seminars and events are planned throughout the year to help support and develop our families. We offer babysitting at most of these events.

Parent Partners Group

The parent advisory board is a group of parents who provide our center with assistance and guidance from a parent's perspective. We ask for volunteers in May to serve for the coming school year. From those interested we select someone from each class. A person may serve up to three years. We meet one time per month to discuss issues and to plan special events.

Fund Raising

Little Guppy and the Parent Partners Group raise funds through various events and programs throughout the year. These funds help off set the costs of programs or items that are not accounted for in the weekly tuition paid by the parents. We strongly encourage all families to participate in these events, though participation is not required.

Parent Grievances

Any family with a grievance toward anyone at Little Guppy Child Development Center should address this to the director of the center. A meeting of the director and the involved team member will take place within 48 hours of notification. General concerns will be addressed as necessary. Again, we encourage open and respectful communication between our center and the families we serve.

Custody Issues

Our program was designed to meet the needs of all types of families. Families dealing with custody issues must provide proper documentation relative to the legal agreement. We are not able to uphold any requests that are not supported by legal documentation. Our center does not permit families to use our facilities as a visitation site. We strongly encourage that parents with custody issues resolve these issues outside of the center. Parents choosing to put our center and/or its staff in an unfavorable position in regards to separation, divorce, or custody issues may lose their access to the center. It is our goal to work with all of our families to provide a comfortable and beneficial relationship between home and school.

Policies on Behavior

Kind and Loving Friends

We encourage children, families, and teachers/staff to make choices based on being a "kind and loving friend". A kind and loving friend is someone who respects themselves and others. This is a simple way for families to establish expectations that are congruent with those of our center.

Discipline

Our program was created to keep children involved and stimulated. This helps deter the need for discipline. When trouble arises we encourage the children to talk out their problems. This process teaches children the skills of self expression and conflict management. Other techniques utilized are positive reinforcement and redirection. Occasionally, a child may be sent to the director so they may talk in the absence of other children. Parents will be informed of behavior which falls outside of the norm for their child by use of a Behavior Report. We ask that the parent read this carefully, sign it, and return it to the director. It is our goal to work with the child and the parents to eliminate the unacceptable behavior, however, children exhibiting unacceptable behavior may be required to be picked up by the parent. The parent has one hour from the time of the phone call to have the child picked up.

WE DO NOT UTILIZE ANY FORM OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, INCLUDING SPANKING, OR VERBAL ABUSE. PARENTS MUST REFRAIN FROM THIS WHILE ON OUR PREMISES.

We reserve the right to discontinue the enrollment of any child we believe we are unable to effectively care for or if we do not believe the family is effectively addressing the recurring problem.

Biting

Young children in group settings will bite. They bite because they are threatened, angry, or teething. Our program is set up to deter biting, however, it is inevitable. Any time a child bites, we will talk to them about biting. We will fill out an incident report for the child who bit and an accident report for the child that was bitten, for the parents to read, sign, and return to the director. Due to licensing guidelines, we are unable to identify the child who bit to the parents of the child who was bitten. Families of children who bite excessively will be called in for a conference in regards to the biting at which a plan to deter the biting will be developed. The child who continues to bite even after this plan is utilized may have their enrollment terminated.

Children's Health

Medical Form

Children between 0 through Kindergarten will need to have a medical evaluation completed by a physician within seven days of starting the center. School age children will need to have a medical form on the day that they begin the center. This form is completed by the parent and does not need to be signed by a doctor.

Illness

Please do not send your child when they are ill or have a contagious ailment. Any child who exhibits any of the following symptoms will be sent home immediately and may not return until they have been symptom free for 24 hours. We will not make ANY exceptions to this rule.

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Infected eyes
- Severe congestion
- Excessive coughing or sneezing
- Skin rash or infection
- Severely lethargic, irritable, or disoriented
- Pain which inhibits the child's ability to participate in daily activities

Parents must pick up their child within ONE HOUR of being informed of the illness. We will contact individuals listed as emergency contacts if we are unable to reach the parents. Parents will be given an illness form to read and sign. This illness form will list the symptoms identified by the teacher and include instructions for when your child may return to the center.

Exclusionary Criterion

- Children may not return to the center unless they have been symptom free for 24 hours. Children must be fever free without the assistance of Tylenol or other fever reducer for 24 hours.
- Children diagnosed with a contagious ailment (strep throat, pink eye, etc.) will need to have a doctor's note stating they are able to safely return to the center. Failure to provide this documentation will prevent your child from being accepted into care.
- Children diagnosed with pink eye (conjunctivitis) may not return to the center until they have been on medication for 24 hours.
- Children diagnosed with chicken pox may not return for seven days after the virus is diagnosed.
- Children with head lice must have been properly treated and be nit free before they may return.

Family Notification of Illness

We will notify families of any diagnosed illnesses experienced by children in their class. These notes may be posted on the front door or included on the daily note. We ask that families notify us if their child is suffering from an illness.

Immunizations

It is the parent's responsibility to keep their children up to date on all immunizations as required by the Missouri State Department of Health. The parents are responsible for supplying the center with their records of immunizations. Children without proper immunizations will not be able to attend the center until they are made current. A record of immunizations is required before your child may attend. This includes the varicella vaccination for children who have

not had the chicken pox. Families who choose to not immunize their child according to the Missouri State Department of Health are not able to enroll their child at our center.

Medication

We will administer medications to your child at 11:30 A.M. Prescription medicine must be in its original container with the child's name printed on it. Over the counter medication must be labeled with the child's name, dosage, and times. A medication authorization sheet must be filled out for each medication. We will not administer any medication that is expired. All medications need to be checked in with your child's teacher each day. In cases when the dosing information says to contact a physician, a physician's note of proper dosage must accompany the medication.

Parents with children who need medication or breathing treatments at times other than 11:30 A.M. will need to make arrangements to come to the center and administer the medication or treatment. We encourage parents to administer all medicines at home. Please advise us if your child is on medication as it may affect them during the day.

Parents who want their child to have sunscreen or insect repellent applied must sign a medication authorization sheet for the sunscreen and insect repellent. These will only be applied at 2 P.M.

We reserve the right to refuse to dispense any medication or treatment for any reason.

Allergies

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the center of all diagnosed allergies experienced by the child. An allergy alert form must be completed by a physician and returned to center so that we are able to provide your child with the necessary interventions.

Special Needs

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the center of any special needs their child may have related to developmental issues or an illness. We will meet with the parent to develop an Individualized Educational Plan. We will not accept children who have needs that we can not meet with our program.

Safety

Security

Your child's safety is very important to us. We need the help of families in keeping our building, children, and staff safe and secure by following all policies and procedures.

Disaster Readiness

We practice fire, tornado, and security drills each month. The children are taught how to react if an emergency happens at the center or at home. We enlist the help of professionals, including the fire department and the police department, to teach children what to do in case of an emergency.

Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation, we will contact parents immediately and they will need to pick up immediately. This will only happen if extreme circumstances mandate that the building be evacuated.

Accidents

You will receive a report to be read, signed, and returned to the director any time your child is injured at the center. You will be contacted immediately if there is an emergency.

The emergency contact person you list will be the person we call if we are unable to reach the parents. An ambulance will be called in any incident we deem as necessary. Little Guppy Child Development Center is not responsible for any medical expenses including those associated with ambulance and emergency care.

Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited in our center or on our property. This includes the parking lot.

Fire Arms

Fire arms are not permitted in our facility.

Tuition

The following are the tuition amounts and fees for the 2010-2011 school year.

| Preschool Programs | 5 days | M,W,F | T,R | Daily |
|---|-----------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Angelfish, Goldfish, Starfish, Pufferfish (Approximately 0-24 months of age) | Call for Rates | | | |
| Dolphins & Sea Turtles (Approximately 24-36 months of age) | | | | |
| Whales & Orcas (Approximately 36-48 months of age) | | | | |
| Sharks & Seahorses (Approximately 48-66 months of age) | | | | |

| School Age Programs | Weekly Fee | Additional full day | Additional ½ Day |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Stingrays (1-4 grade) | Call for Rates | | |
| Vacation/Snow Day Not Enrolled | | | |

| Camp Guppy's Summer Program | 5 days | M,W,F | T,R | Daily |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Stingrays (Ages 5 yrs. To 12 yrs.) | Call for Rates | | | |

*Must commit to 10 weeks

Tuition Express

All families must pay their fees through Tuition Express. Tuition Express will allow you to automatically pay your child's tuition and incidentals (guppy wear, field trips, etc.) via an automatic debit from a checking account, savings account, or a credit card. We accept Visa or MasterCard with a \$4.50 fee to process all Credit Card transactions. Payments for each week's tuition and fees are initiated automatically from your designated account every Monday. The account will be debited on Tuesday.

This is the only method available for paying fees at our center. Tuition Express is the safest, most efficient means of processing payments while meeting the specific payment needs of our families.

A \$25 fee will be assessed on any payment transaction that is not able to process due to insufficient funds, closed account, insufficient credit limit, or for any other reason.

Registration Fees

The registration fee is \$50 per child. The registration fee is due at the time of the child's enrollment into any of our programs including pre-school, before and after school, vacation plan, and camp guppy.

Annual Fee

The annual fee is \$50 and is assessed on all infant/toddler and preschool accounts on September 1 of each year with the exception of families who enrolled on or later than June 1 of that year.

ALL REGISTRATION FEES AND DEPOSITS ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.

Multi child discount

Families with more than one child enrolled at the center will receive a 5% discount off of the tuition for the oldest full time child over the age of 2.

Pro-rated Tuition

We do not pro-rate tuition for any reason.

Vacation Credit

Each child enrolled in our preschool program is eligible for one vacation credit (one week of tuition) per year (September 1st to September 1st). A child must be enrolled for three months before becoming eligible for the vacation credit. A vacation week is defined as a week Monday through Friday –consecutively- in which your child does not attend the center. Requests for using your vacation credit must be submitted to the front office two weeks prior to the vacation week using a Vacation Credit Request Forms located in the front office. A vacation credit will only be issued if your account is in good standing. Vacation credits will not carry over into the next September. Children enrolled in our Before and After School Program are eligible for one vacation credit between the beginning of school and the last day of school.

Late Pick Up Fee

The late pick up fee for children left after 6:00 P.M. is \$1.00 per minute per child.

Additional Fees

Families will be notified of additional fees associated with field trips and other special events.

Past Due Accounts

All accounts past due by more than seven days will have their enrollment terminated. The family will still be responsible for a two week period following the termination to serve as a two week notification. The account will be turned over to a collection agent. All fees and expenses incurred during the collection process are the responsibility of the parents.

Families Receiving State Subsidy

We may accept families who receive state funds for the payment of tuition. The parent is responsible for maintaining the aid without lapse, filling out all paper work on time, and paying any amount the state does not cover (co-pay, field trips, T-shirt, enrollment fees, book fees, etc.). Children receiving state funds MUST be signed in and out daily on the state board. Failure to do any of the above is grounds for termination of your child's enrollment.

Applying for Enrollment

Families who would like to be considered for enrollment must complete an application packet. This packet must be filled out in its entirety before we can consider your child for enrollment in our center or to be placed on our waiting list. You will be notified if your child has been accepted into the center or on our waiting list within two weeks of receiving the completed application packet.

There is a \$50 application fee. This amount will be transferred to your account and serve as the enrollment fee once your child has been accepted. The fee is non-refundable for families who are not accepted into our program or choose not to enroll their child in our program.

Enrolling Your Child

Enrollment is limited and is selected from our waiting list. Once an enrollment position opens, the enrollment fee must be paid along with the first week's tuition to reserve this position for your child. The director will notify you of the date of the opening. Your financial obligations, if you choose to accept the opening, begin on the day of enrollment. These fees are non-refundable.

Pre-Enrollment Visits

You will need to complete all paperwork prior to your child's first day. You will receive a list of the items necessary for your child's first day. At that time you may choose to set up pre-enrollment visits. A pre-enrollment visit is an opportunity when you and your child may participate in the center's activities prior to enrolling. It is the purpose of these visits to acclimate your child to our program. It also gives the parent insight into the daily workings of our program.

Termination of Your Child's Enrollment

Parents must give a two week **WRITTEN** notice prior to withdrawing a child from Little Guppy Child Development Center. Parents who do not give a two week notice shall pay tuition for two weeks after they terminate, or are terminated by Little Guppy.

We reserve the right to terminate any child's enrollment, who has not attended for five consecutive days if the family has not contacted us about the absences. These families will still be financially obligated for two weeks of tuition after the date of termination.

Changes to the Parent Handbook

Little Guppy Child Development Center reserves the right to change any policy set forth in this handbook or elsewhere at any time.

Confidentiality Agreement

Families must agree to keep all of our forms and policies confidential.

Parent Handbook Agreement Form

I have thoroughly read, understand, and agree to follow all policies set forth in the parent handbook revised 2009. I agree to accept all financial responsibilities for the instruction of our children at Little Guppy Child Development Center.

Both parent's signatures are required!

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Child's Name | |
|--------------|--|

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mother's Name | |
| Date of Birth | |
| Social Security Number | |
| Signature & Date | |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Father's Name | |
| Date of Birth | |
| Social Security Number | |
| Signature & Date | |