

# Family Handbook

Little Dreamers Childcare  
2024-2025

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**Mission Statement:**

Providing quality childcare that meets the needs of each child and family through a safe, healthy, and educational environment while also making our center feel like home.

**Core Beliefs:**

- Children learn best through play and exploration.
- A child's behavior is communication.
- "Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed." -Maria Montessori ● Building strong relationships with children and families will create a better learning environment.
- Accommodate each child's needs and learning style.

**Introduction**

Little Dreamers Childcare opened in December of 2020 but has been a dream in the making for many years prior. I, Seonna, have been working hard to make this dream a reality. In May 2020, I graduated with an Applied Associates of Science Degree in both Early Childhood Education and Small Business Management. I worked at the Early Childhood Center at FVCC from November 2018 until they closed as well as work/ volunteering at smaller programs, babysitting and nannying. I recently got married to my highschool sweetheart in July of 2024 and am finding my happiness in life! Being born and raised in Kalispell, I quickly realized that there was a desperate need for quality childcare in the valley and that demand continues to rise. Little Dreamers Childcare welcomes all families and strives to provide high quality care everyday. We are a STAR 2 in the STARS to Quality program. STARS bases its assessments off of ITERS and ECERS and is Montana's voluntary rating and improvement system to set a higher standard of quality care. We want all children here to have a fun and engaging environment while fostering their independence and education through play and exploration. Through my education, I have learned the importance of implementing a play-based curriculum learning from a wide variety of activities including: reading, art, math, science, music and movement, outdoor play, and more through a structured and routine day. I find it very important to develop strong relationships with both children and their families. I'm really looking forward to having you join our center and becoming part of our center family. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

**Daily Operations:****Tiny Dreamers:**

*6 weeks to 18 months old*

- 7:30 Morning Greeting
- 7:45-8:15: Exploration of Materials
- 8:30-9:00: Breakfast
- 9:00-9:10: Story Time/ Nap
- 9:15-9:45: Gym
- 10:00-10:30: Morning Snack
- 10:45-11:15: Sensory Activity
- 11:30-11:45: Music and Movement
- 12:00-12:45: Lunch
- 1:00-3:00: Play Time and Exploration/ Nap
- 3:00-3:30: Afternoon Snack
- 3:45- 4:15: Story/ Music Time

- 4:15- 5:15: Floor/ Teacher Time
- 5:30: Departure

\*Each infant will nap on their own schedule and not be given a designated quiet time. Infants that are not yet on solid food will have bottles or breastfeed based on their own schedule (typically every 2 hours but depends on the baby). If their nap time coincides with other activities, we will provide additional opportunities to make up for it.

### **Little Lullabies:**

*18 months to 30 months*

- 7:30 Morning Greeting
- 7:45-8:20: Free Play
- 8:30-9:00: Breakfast/ Self Care
- 9:00-9:50: Gym/Outside
- 10:00-10:30: Morning Snack/ Story Time
- 10:40-10:45: Brush Teeth
- 10:45-11:30: Center Play/ Activity
- 11:30-11:45: Freeplay/Self-care Routines
- 12:00-12:30: Lunch
- 12:30-1:00: Gym
- 1:00-3:00: Quiet/ Nap Time
- 3:00-3:30: Afternoon Snack
- 3:30-3:45: Music and Movement
- 3:45- 4:15: Group Play/ Sensory Activity
- 4:15-5:15: Classroom Exploration
- 5:30: Departure

### **Little Dippers:**

*2.5 years to 4 years*

- 7:30 Morning Greeting
- 7:30-8:15: Classroom Explorations/ Table Top Activities
- 8:30-9:00: Breakfast and Self Care (brush teeth and potties)
- 9:00-9:45: Center Play/ Activity
- 9:50-10:00: Morning Gathering/ Music and Movement
- 10:00-10:30: Morning Snack/ Story
- 10:30-11:15: Gym/Outside
- 11:15-12:00: Group project/ activity
- 12:00-12:30: Lunch
- 12:30- 1:00: Self Care Routine & Book Exploration
- 1:00-3:00: Quiet/ Nap Time
- 3:00-3:30: Afternoon Snack
- 3:30- 4:00: Classroom Exploration
- 4:00-4:30: Gym
- 4:30-5:15: Table Top/ Sensory Activity
- 5:30: Departure

### **Preschool Classroom:**

*4 years to 5 years*

- 7:30 Morning Greeting
- 7:30-8:15: Free Play
- 8:30-9:00: Breakfast
- 9:00-9:30: Morning Gathering/ Jobs
- 9:30-10:00: Small Group Activity

- 10:00-10:20: Morning Snack
- 10:20-10:40: Journaling (M, W, F) or Buddy Reading (Tu, Th)
- 10:40-11:15: Music and Movement
- 11:15- 12:00: Gym/ Outside
- 12:00-12:30: Lunch
- 12:30-1:00: Self Care & Large Group Activity/ Gym
- 1:00-2:15: Calm Body Time/ Nap (in gym)
- 2:15-3:00: Small Group/ Free Play
- 3:00-3:30: Afternoon Snack
- 3:30- 4:00: Gym
- 4:00-4:15: Afternoon Gathering
- 4:30-5:15: Group/ Free Play
- 5:30: Departure

### **Tuition Policy:**

Parents/Families will have the option to pay for the whole month up front or in two installments a month. **Half of the monthly tuition is due on the 1st and the other half on the 15th.** Only half of the tuition is charged at a time but you can always pay more than the required amount to pay for the full month or request a change in your billing plan. If the 1st or 15th were to fall on a weekend, and you are paying by check you will need to get it in before the weekend/ holiday! Card payments and bank account withdrawals can still happen on the weekends. If the payment is not turned in, you have TWO days to make the payment in with a \$30 late fee per child. If the tuition is not paid in full on their required due date, **the child will no longer be able to attend.** They can only return once their bill is paid off in full. After TWO days, if the payment has not been paid in full, the child's reserved spot at the center will be revoked and offered to the next person on the waiting list. If a payment agreement has been worked out with the owner, the parent will have to sign a promise of payment form with their credit card information on file. In our withdrawal policy, it will lay out the need for a two week notice for children leaving the center. The deposit will only be returned to a parent or used towards the last two weeks of care if the remainder of the balance has been paid in full. If the balance isn't paid within 30 days or a payment plan is worked out, the balance owed will be turned over to collections along with a 25% fee added to the balance to cover part of the charges associated with going through a collection agency. Your account will continue to be billed until verbal or written confirmation is given that your child will no longer be attending. Upon enrolling, you will select how many days per week your child will be attending. Once this is set, if there is a day where you do not bring your child, you will still owe that for tuition because their spot was unable to be filled. This goes for sick days, vacation days, etc. There is also no discount for picking your child up early. The same monthly tuition is applied every month until the child transitions to a different classroom. The rate will only change from transitioning from Little Lullabies to Little Dippers, then it will remain the same. In order to provide the best quality care and stay open, our prices may fluctuate based on the economy. If prices increase, it would take into effect in September or with a months' notice sent out. Little Dreamers Childcare will be accepting the Best Beginning Scholarship. The scholarship helps reduce the cost of childcare, but **parents are responsible for their copays along with the full amount that Best Beginnings doesn't cover.** The copay for Best Beginnings must be paid on the 15th of each month. If there is a difference owed after Best Beginnings makes a payment, the remaining balance will be due no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Please read your policy to see how much Best Beginnings will cover and what your copay is. The Best Beginning scholarship looks different for each person on it and some may not qualify for it. What they do not cover is the parent's responsibility on top of their copay!

**Pricing:**

**Tiny Dreamers & Little Lullabies**

Days Per Week	Day Rate	Monthly Tuition
5 Days	\$55	\$1,100
4 Days	\$57	\$912
3 Days	\$57	\$684
2 Days	\$58	\$464

**Little Dippers & Shooting Stars**

Days Per Week	Day Rate	Monthly Tuition
5 Days	\$49	\$980
4 Days	\$53	\$848
3 Days	\$53	\$636
2 Days	\$55	\$440

*\*Monthly tuition is charged based on the days your child is enrolled to be here. If they do not show up, they will still be charged. There are no refunds for days a child does not attend. \*Each additional child will receive a 10% discount off their tuition! (The discount goes to the oldest child(ren)). Tuition has increased due to inflation, however, it's still slightly lower than state rates.*

**Billing Policies:**

All billing invoices are due on the 1st and the 15th of each month. All payment for time is paid before the child comes. Parents have the option to pay the whole month up front on the 1st of the month or the 1st and the 15th. Bills will be sent 5 days before they are due, except for the child's first month. **Any additional charges such as late fees, diaper charges, nap time pick up, etc. will be added and MUST be paid within 5 days.** Paying through our brightwheel app is the preferred method of payment. You can set up automated billing or pay through your card once your bill is sent. You are also able to advance pay if you would like and it will go on your account as a credit. Checks are also an acceptable payment method. If a check bounces there will be an additional \$35 fee added. We do not accept cash as a payment option.

Best Beginnings Scholarship billing will look slightly different. When going through Best Beginnings, there will be a copay required by the parents which will be due the 15th of each month. Best Beginnings will be billed at the end of the month and reimburse on the account once the state has paid. The parent will be responsible for paying the remainder of the balance which will be due on the 15th. Once the Best Beginning paperwork is filled out, they will outline the amount that they will cover and what your copay is so that you can get an estimate of what you will owe monthly. Anything Best Beginnings does not cover will be charged and due the 15th of the next month.

**Late Policy:**

There will be a charge of **\$1.00 (per minute, per child enrolled)**, if a child is picked up after 5:30 pm. This fee will be charged to your account and is DUE WITHIN 5 DAYS! If you are receiving a scholarship, this late fee must still be paid by the parents/ family through the brightwheel app. If late pick ups happen frequently, it may lead to suspension or termination of enrollment.

**Closures:**

We feel holidays are a great time to spend with family and providing teachers with training opportunities, so Little Dreamers Childcare will be closed on the following dates:

- Labor Day
- October 17th & 18th (Teacher MTAEYC Conference for Childcare Training)
  - Potential early closure on Wednesday, October 16th depending on the number of teachers that are going
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4<sup>th</sup>
- August 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> (Prep for New School Year and Professional Development)

*\*We ask that other holidays that we are open, that you let us know if your child will not be attending so that we can staff accordingly. The monthly tuition accommodates these closures.*

*\*If for some reason the school has to close due to unforeseen circumstances such as not having enough staff for the day there will not be reimbursement, for the center still has monthly expenses. The monthly tuition accommodates additional closures if need be. This is always the last resort and we hope that it never comes to this. We will try to give as much of a heads up as we can but unforeseen circumstances may limit this being in a timely manner. This being said if it happens more than 2 times per year, parents will be reimbursed the full day rate. The year will begin September 1st, 2024.*

**Celebrations:**

We recognize the diversity in our families and celebrate some holidays and non-traditional holidays to some extent. If there are holidays or family traditions you would like to see incorporated in class discussion or to come in and talk to the children yourself, we are very open to expanding the children's knowledge and want all children to feel their traditions matter. We will do activities and discuss holidays such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparent's Day, and Teacher Appreciation and other special holidays that are about the people around them. When we are celebrating these holidays, we understand that not everyone has all of these people in their lives. At this point, we would like to work with families of an important person in their life they could celebrate instead such as an uncle or a close family friend.

We do not discuss religion when dealing with holidays such as Christmas and Easter. We check in with all of our families so see their tradition to see if incorporating characters such as Santa Clause is acceptable. If you have any hesitations or restrictions with holidays, please let us know. We will explore history on holidays such as Independence Day or dive into another culture with Cinco de Mayo.

**Birthdays:**

We do celebrate birthdays when we can since it is such a big day in their lives. If you do not want this celebration for your child at school, we will respect that, just let the director or your child's teacher know. If your child's birthday is something you want to contribute to at school we accept store bought treats or party favors. If your child is under 4 years old please make sure party favors are not choking hazards. There must be enough for each child in the class as well as not being labeled as "sugar free" or has other alternative sweeteners in it. Appropriate treats would include mini muffins or cupcakes, popsicles, cookies, pudding cups, ice cream or individually wrapped snacks such as goldfish or rice krispies. We follow appropriate portion sizes for children so we will not be giving children full size cupcakes. We **CANNOT** accept homemade treats unless you would like to

make them in our center so that we can monitor the ingredients. Party favors are also accepted as long as they are age appropriate but will not be opened while the child is in school. These will get sent home with the child at the end of the day. PLEASE NOTE: ASK YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER ABOUT POTENTIAL ALLERGIES!

### **Classroom Transition Period:**

Transition periods will not be held on the time of the child's birthday. The ages per class are what ages are in the classroom but may adjust based on the transition time. Tuition will stay the same until their full transition is complete. Some children may be in the same classroom for two years depending on their age and where we believe they will be most successful. The transition age will vary based on their birthday so that they can transition with their classmates. Some children may transition a little early or a little later than the given age based on when transitions are scheduled to happen, if the child is developmentally ready (discussed between parents and their child's teacher), and if there is space in the next classroom. The teachers and director will determine when children will transition. Parents will be notified before transitions begin. If there is availability in other classrooms, transitions may happen sooner, especially for our infants.

### **Enrollment, Waiting List, and Withdrawing Policy:**

When enrolling at Little Dreamers Childcare, we ask you to set up a tour with the director or manager to get you familiar with our center. You will receive all the necessary paperwork and to enroll we will need:

1. Child's Enrollment Form
2. Emergency Contact Form
3. CACFP Eligibility Form
4. Non-Ingestible Medication Form
5. Infant Feeding Schedule Form (if applicable)
6. Pediatric Health Statement signed by doctor (if applicable)
7. Photo Release Form
8. Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
9. Parents as Partners Survey
10. ASQs
11. Immunization Records
12. Annual Registration Fee (\$50 per child)
13. Two weeks deposit (Half of the monthly tuition)
14. Monthly tuition

All of the child's paperwork will be kept on file in a locked file cabinet in the director's office space. These forms are kept for liability purposes and locked so your personal information is not leaked. There will be a copy of your contact and emergency contact information in the classroom for the teacher to have quick access to if need be. All children with allergies will be on a list in each classroom and the kitchen to remind staff. A copy of the infant feeding schedule will be kept in the infant classroom.

If our center is full or you are looking to enroll your child in a certain time you will be added to the waiting list. Our waitlist will run off a first-come, first-serve basis, with the exception of existing families and staff. There will be a separate waitlist per classroom and children will only be placed in a classroom that is suitable to their age and development. We will call parents once a spot opens up at the center, even if it is a part time slot, just to see if the parents are interested. If they choose to take a part time slot, they are stuck with those days until more time during the week opens up. At that point these parents will be offered to switch to full time. If you decide to no longer continue with



Little Dreamers Childcare for whatever reason we require a **TWO-WEEK NOTICE**. You are responsible for the payment of this two-week grace period as we will be working to fill this slot. Child's attendance for the last two weeks is optional, with the expectation of the last two weeks still being paid for. The 2 week deposit at the time of enrollment will cover if you stop coming without a two week notice. If you give a two week notice and follow the policies and procedures this two week payment will be reimbursed to you or you can use it towards your final tuition bill.

### **Parking Area:**

We ask that when you arrive in the parking lot to drop your child off, pick up your child, tour the facility, or meet with the director or teacher that you turn off your vehicle. Your vehicle releases toxic gas and chemicals into the air. With it being where children walk to their vehicles, we try to minimize harmful air quality as much as possible. If the director or a teacher realizes that your vehicle is being left on, they may ask you to go shut it off.

Please make sure that all children are accompanied from the car to the door of the center and vice versa, to avoid any accidents. No child is to operate the door by themselves and leave the center without adult assistance. If a teacher sees that a child is attempting to push the button to leave, they will stop your child and have them wait for you. Please keep your child(ren) by your side or holding your hand to prevent them from running out in the parking lot. Before your child gets dropped off or picked up, you or whoever is picking up/dropping off is responsible for them. Teachers cannot keep an eye on children outside of their classroom at this time because they have other children to watch.

### **Sign-in and Pick-up Policy:**

Due to licensing regulations and liability, child(ren) MAY NOT be dropped off or signed in before 7:30am. Your child's teacher is still preparing the classroom for the day and will be in and out of the classroom until 7:30 am so it is unsafe to leave your child unattended. To track attendance, Little Dreamers Childcare uses the brightwheel app. Parents/ families will check in and out at the check in desk using their phone to scan the QR code. If someone does not have the app, they can sign out on the classroom tablet with their 4 digit pin. Upon drop off we ask that you check in with the teacher on how your child is feeling, if they have eaten, how much sleep they got the night before, or any information you feel the teacher should know so that they can better assist your child throughout the day. We also ask when you drop them off, to come in with them to their own classroom, have them wash their hands, and get them settled with a toy or activity. Then, once you leave, please let your child know and say goodbye. If your child needs assistance, call over a teacher so that they can help ease this transition with your child. Building in this routine will be very beneficial for future drop offs and departures. If your child is frequently dropped off sleeping (infants are excluded) and is unable to participate in the classroom routine you will be asked to bring your child in later or to come pick up your child. This may be an inconvenience but it is a severe safety concern for all involved. Only people authorized to pick up your child will be registered in the system (as shown on your Emergency Contact and Parent Information Form). If it is not a regular person picking up (such as grandma is in town visiting) you must add them to your authorized pick up list and notify your child's teacher. The authorized pick up person must bring a photo ID or the child will not be released to that person. Additional pick up people must sign the child in and out using the tablet located in the classroom with their OWN four digit code located on the brightwheel app. If they do not know their code the manager or director can be contacted for help. If the app isn't working, a paper sign in/out form will need to be signed.

### **Door Pins:**

Our doors at the facility remain locked to provide children's safety and avoid random strangers from wandering into the facility. Every person on the child's pick up list will be able to locate a 4 digit pin

on the brightwheel app (or ask the director/manager for assistance if they don't have the app). If you are signing them in or out on the tablet, this pin will be used. Once enrolled in the system each pick up person's 4 digit bin will be imputed into our door system. Brightwheel assigns a pin and we prefer people to keep that code, however, in the app you have the capability to change your own code. If you do change your code you must let the director or manager know so that they can update it in our door system. To enter the building you must enter your 4 digit pin followed by the # sign. To exit the building there is a green button that must be pressed to the left of the door. We ask that parents are the only ones doing the door pin and pressing the button. If you are unable to enter the building there is a doorbell you may ring and a staff will open the door for you. If staff do not recognize you right away, they will ID you at the door.

### **Meal Policy:**

We will be in compliance with CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) at Little Dreamers Childcare. This program will help us in supplying nutritious food to the children at our center based on our family's incomes (this information is private and only used to determine reimbursement rates according to CACFP guidelines). During the children's time at the center they will be provided with breakfast, lunch, and two snacks. Breakfast will take place at 8:30am, first snack at 10:00am, lunch at 12:00pm, and afternoon snack at 3:00pm. **If a child arrives 15 minutes after a snack or meal, the child will not be served.** We also accommodate allergies and lactose intolerances which must be specified on the child's Classroom Survey as well as filling out a CACFP Meal Accommodation form and getting it signed by a doctor. If the form is filled out and not signed by a doctor, accommodations must be provided by the parents. For infants we supply a generic formula, purée baby food, and rice cereal. Once infants are on solid foods, we chop it up very small to prevent choking. Parents will have a form they must sign once they want us to introduce baby food and solid food to their child. If preferred, a parent may bring their child's own supply of baby food and/or formula (labeled with child's name). We request a minimum of a week's supply or more at a time.

### **Tooth Brushing Policy:**

We care about oral health and fostering independence so children will practice brushing their teeth. We will supply toothbrushes and change them out regularly or anytime a child is sick. Fluoride toothpaste will be provided to children in the preschool classroom and all other classrooms will just practice brushing with water. This is meant to encourage healthy habits but should NOT replace morning and evening tooth brushing at home.

### **Breastmilk Policy:**

For breastfeeding mothers, we can freeze breastmilk at the center and thaw it when needed. You can bring in the full amount for the day or stockpile for a week-month (if you produce that much). We will give notice when we are running low on breastmilk. If we are out of breastmilk while the child is still in our care, parents will be called to bring us in more breastmilk, nurse, or take their child home. Breastmilk must be stored in proper breastmilk bags with the child's name on it, how many ounces the bag contains, and the date it was produced. The oldest breastmilk we have is used first. If we have leftover milk thawed for the day it will be sent home with the parents, so it is not wasted. Thawed breastmilk is only usable for 24 hours and frozen breastmilk we can keep for 3 months from the date produced. Once breastmilk is thawed, it cannot be refrozen. We also allow breastfeeding mothers to come in and feed their child throughout the day if they desire. We can only administer breastmilk in our infant classroom which goes through 18 months of age.

## **Napping Policy**

At Little Dreamers Childcare, all children will be assigned their own crib, cot, or yoga mats as well as sheets (when applicable). Parents can drop off and pick up at any time of the day, except at nap time due to the disturbance of their sleep and other children's sleep (except the baby room). Their quiet time ranges from 12:30pm- 3:00pm. If your child has an appointment at nap time, they will need to be picked up before 12:30pm. If you have to pick up during this time please let us know in advance so we can ease this transition. If children are picked up between the hours of 12:30pm-3:00pm, there will be a \$30 charge added to your account.

All children in the infant room will be sleeping in a crib or pack n' play. Sleep sacks for our children are allowed and encouraged and will be provided if wanted. There is not a designated "nap time" in the infant classroom because everyone naps on their own time and often takes multiple naps while in our care. All of our teachers are trained in infant safe sleep and will follow those practices such as laying the child on their back, no bedding in the crib besides a fitted sheet, and no additional items in the crib such as a blanket until they are at least a year old. Since our infants are all on their own sleep schedule, drop off and pick up times can occur at any time during the day (we do still appreciate a heads up so we can make sure they will be ready).

Little Lullabies and Little Dippers will have cots that they sleep on with fitted sheets. These cots are labeled per child and will not be shared with other children. All of these children do lay down for a nap and teachers will assist them to sleep. We ask that all of these children have a blanket (child-sized) that is left at school so they can be cozy while they nap. Please make sure blankets match the weather and trade out a thicker blanket for a lighter one during the summer.

Our preschool aged kids are not required to take naps, but they still have quiet time. They are required to lay down and rest their bodies for 30 minutes while listening to soft music. They will be offered a yoga mat to rest on. Once there is a calm environment and children have rested, they will get the opportunity to sit up and receive an individual nap bucket, legos, books, puzzles, or anything they can do independently on their mat. We allow these children to listen to their bodies and nap if they need it.

We will wash all nap sheets, blankets, and stuffed animals weekly so parents will not have to take them home to wash them unless they want to.

## **Pacifier Policy:**

Pacifiers can bring comfort to some infants and children and have been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS. Little Dreamers allows pacifiers with controlled use in some classrooms. Tiny Dreamers (under 18 months), allows pacifiers as needed, during naps and throughout the day. Little Lullabies (18- 36 months), allows pacifiers with controlled use. They are used when a child is having trouble calming themselves or falling asleep. However, they are not allowed at all times of the day. Pacifiers with attachments are not permitted. Pacifier's should not be clipped, pinned or tied to a child's clothing. Teachers need open communication with the families on how pacifiers are used at home and will voice what they see in the child's routine at the center. It is not the teacher's responsibility to cut out a child's use of a pacifier on their own. If a parent wishes to only have their child use a pacifier during sleep at the center, they should only use their pacifier at home during sleep. Pacifiers are allowed in the Little Dipper classroom (36- 48 months), but will not be permitted past the age of 3. In this classroom your child, if they still use one, CANNOT enter the building with the pacifier in their mouth as they are to only be used for nap time. If at any time we feel the child isn't using the pacifier safely, discontinuation of use at the center will be discussed with parents (ex: child being able to put the pacifier in their whole mouth during use or chewing on the pacifier). Pacifiers will not be permitted past the age of 3!

**Weather Policy:**

We will follow these weather guidelines to protect children from harmful weather. If the temperature is between 30 to 89 degrees Fahrenheit, we will go outside for our scheduled play time or based on what the children can handle. Outdoor time in this temperature range will be left to the teacher's best judgment. Any closure due to snow days or any other emergency closure will coincide with School District 5 closures (if emergency closures are made, the monthly tuition will not be adjusted). Children must have appropriate clothing to go outside. If a child does not have appropriate clothing, their parents will be notified. If a child continues not to have appropriate clothing, the child will be sent home or not allowed back at the center until they have appropriate clothing. This includes jackets, shoes, hats, gloves, etc.

<b>Temperature/Wind Chills</b>	<b>Outdoor Policy</b>
Between 50-30 degrees Fahrenheit	Regularly scheduled outdoor play times
Between 29-20 degrees Fahrenheit	15-20 minutes maximum
Between 19 degrees Fahrenheit and below	No Outdoor Play Time

<b>Temperature/Heat Recommendations</b>	<b>Outdoor Policy</b>
Heat index 90-95 degrees Fahrenheit	Outside for 15-30 minutes or less
Heat index greater than 95 degrees Fahrenheit	No outdoor play time
Air Quality index between 151-200	Vigorous outside activities in morning hours only
Air Quality index above 200	No Outdoor Play Time

**Transportation Policy**

We will not be transporting children at this time.

**Personal Items:**

We thrive to help all children feel safe and comfortable while at Little Dreamers Childcare, especially in beginning transitions. We welcome children to bring a blanket, small stuffed animal, pacifier or whatever will help them feel more at home and comfortable. These items need to be labeled and appropriate for their age group. These items will be used as a soothing mechanism, and not as a toy. This being said, the child can have this for comfort at drop off and nap time or as needed but will not have them all day. They will be placed in the child's cubby once they feel secure so that they can engage in play. Keep in mind that we cannot give infants under the age of one anything in their crib besides a pacifier, swaddle, or sleep sack. After they transition out of the infant room, pacifiers may only be used at nap time.

We ask that all toys such as action figures, cars, balls, etc. stay at home or in the car so that they don't get lost, broken, or become an object of interest for other children. We have plenty of toys at our center to encourage creative play and problem solving. The only times we will allow these at home toys during "Show and Tell" which will be announced. All tablets and other electronics are not allowed in at the center. Outside food and drink are not allowed in at drop off. This can cause problems for the other children as well.

### **Parent/ Family Supply Policy**

Parents/families are required to supply diapers, wipes, and diaper cream. We ask that they supply between **two weeks to one months' supply at a time**. This will guarantee that we do not run out before more is needed. We will send a notice on our brightwheel app if we are in need of more supplies. If these items are not provided within the allotted time asked by your child's teacher you will be charged a **\$25 fee so that we as a center can replenish our supply of diapering items**. **If your child does not have extra clothes (after 3 instances of consecutive communication from the teacher) an additional \$25 fee will be added to help replenish our clothing supply. A \$25 fee will be added weekly until the child's extra clothing supply is restocked.** We also ask that parents supply us with a few extra outfits just in case there is a spit up, blowout, accident, or outdoor catastrophe. Our infants through age two need at least two spare outfits at the center, which can be switched out at any point. Children that are toilet training, need at least two pairs of pants and underwear, one backup shirt, and wipes in case of accidents. Children ages four and older just need one back up outfit unless they are still having accidents. Please make sure the backup outfits are switched out when needed to fit sizing and major weather changes. If the child runs out of clothes they will be put in extra clothes the center has. These clothes need to be washed and returned to us within the week. These extra clothes are in case of emergencies and are not to be relied on. **Refusal to provide with the necessary supplies may lead to a temporary suspension or sent home until proper backup clothes are provided.**

### **Parent and Family Involvement:**

Parents and families are a child's first teacher and we love to have family involvement throughout the school year, even if it is just for a little bit in the day. We would love to have you come in to read books, talk about your job, or showcase your talent involving the kids such as playing an instrument for them, teaching them a song, art, dance, martial arts, yoga, etc. It is important for children to learn more about our community, outside interests and jobs, and what better way than a kid feeling proud and excited by having a family member educate their classmates. This also helps children begin to think outside of the box and start to develop their own interests and expand their vocabulary. Please talk to your child's teacher to schedule a time to come in.

We also love to have family members volunteer for things such as building and repairing furniture and materials, cleaning, cooking, curriculum ideas or activities, or anything you think you or your family can bring to the table to enhance the center for the children's overall experience.

Occasionally we will accept donations, especially art materials, but teachers will let you know if we are in need of anything. Our center has grown so much and we need all the space we have for extra classroom materials. Please talk to the director about any donations that you would like to bring in to get them approved first.

### **Parent/ Family Orientation and Conferences**

When you start at Little Dreamers Childcare, you meet with the director/manager and go over the paperwork as well as a tour of the facility so that you see the full space, ask questions, and make sure that Little Dreamers Childcare can suit all your and your child's needs. We will be hosting two parent teacher conferences a year for the teacher to go over the child's portfolio and give the teacher and parent an opportunity to set goals and discuss or ask each other questions. These meetings will

be held in January and June (allow a little grace on time as we have to make sure we have coverage for the classrooms). Conference times will be posted for parents as they can sign up for slots that work best for their schedules. During these meetings it will be the lead teacher with possible assistance from the director/manager. We also like to host occasional family involvement days such as a back to school night, preschool graduation, fundraisers, family lunches, play dates, BBQ's and water play, and more. These events will be discussed with parents and posted prior to the event.

### **Curriculum and Assessment**

At Little Dreamers Childcare we have begun using Experienced Curriculum. Through our curriculum we will post what we are doing every week and month in different subject areas such as the books we have incorporated, art projects, science and math activities, music and movement, etc. We will have the same theme center wide for a span of 2 months to really dive into learning the subject as well as using children's interest as a guideline and keep all materials and activities developmentally appropriate. We want children to be able to learn about what they are interested in while still growing and learning. Each month the teacher will set goals that they are looking for in the whole class as well as specific goals per child. Once teachers have time to assess how children did with the new materials and continue to develop, they will hold parent teacher conferences. These conferences will be held in January and June. Our back to school night will give parents an opportunity to talk to their child's teacher about the upcoming school year. The teacher will discuss how their class functions, what you can expect from them, and what you expect from them. As a group, parent's can ask questions and discuss class goals for the year in what they would like to see. They can also meet with the teacher individually to discuss any specific goals for their child moving forward. At the other parent- teacher conferences, the teacher will compile a digital portfolio of each child on what they have learned and which milestone they are hitting in physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive development based on the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS). From there, parents and teachers will work together to create achievable goals for the child and also will be a time for parents and teachers to address any questions, comments, or concerns. These portfolios will not be shared with other parents but a copy will be kept at the center for licensing and STARS suggestions and requirements. A digital copy of the portfolios made on Google Slides can be shared with parents upon request.

### **Code of Conduct and Discipline Procedures**

All Little Dreamers Childcare staff will read, sign, and follow all of the aspects of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. All of our staff are also trained in positive guidance as disciples. None of the children will be undermined, physically punished, or placed in a time out for "misbehaving." We strongly believe that behavior is communication and a child's action is their way of trying to tell us something, even if they don't yet know how to match words to their emotions. That is why they are here, to learn.

Our primary focus for these children in their younger years is their social emotional development. Through the techniques they learn with us and at home, they will learn how to self regulate, control their emotions, how to treat their friends, etc.

Based on a child's needs, they may need extra guidance or reinforcement or even an IEP (individual education plan) which will be a way for their teacher to better support their child. If a child needs one on one support during childcare, a para may be provided at the parent's expense. In order to receive these a child will need to be observed and receive a referral. Teachers will communicate with parents if they believe this is a necessary step. The expectations of the children at Little Dreamers Childcare is to respect others, take care of their environments, listen to their bodies, and be engaged learners. This will be discussed with the children and will look different in the different classrooms.

**Sick Policy:**

At this point in time we will be in compliance with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) symptom policy until further notice as we head into the cold and flu season. We understand that these symptoms occur more likely during this season and will take into account the severity of the symptoms before sending a child home. This will change as the CDC updates their recommendations and we will return to our normal policy listed below but as of now we are going to be using the following recommendations:

- Fever of 100.4 or higher/Chills (due to licensing requirements)
- Difficulty breathing
- Dry cough
- Congestion/ Runny Nose
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Sore Throat
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell

If your child does exhibit more than 2 of these symptoms you will be asked to get a COVID test before returning to the center or quarantine for 5 days. If your child comes into contact with anyone with these symptoms or someone who tested positive, your child will automatically need to quarantine for 5 days or need to be tested. You are still required to pick up your child within 30 minutes of being notified. If we are unable to reach you or another primary caregiver your emergency contacts will be notified.

**Sick Policy that will be in effect after the CDC recommendation's change:** If a child has a fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the parent will be notified to pick up the child. The child needs to be picked up within 30 minutes of the phone call. If the primary caretaker does not answer, emergency contact members will be called. Once the child is picked up, they must be fever free for 24 hours, non-supported by medication. If your child vomits or has three or more diarrhea diapers or toileting in the time they are there, the parent will also be notified to come pick up. If a child is sent home for this reason, with no fever, they still must wait 24 hours from the time of pick up to return to the center. We conduct daily health checks for all of the children in the center and will take the child's temperature as we see fit. If the child is unable to participate in normal classroom routines and activities, they will be sent home.

**Sick and Vacation Days:**

Once you are enrolled in Little Dreamers Childcare, you are responsible for paying for the days your child is enrolled for. If your child is sick, you decide to keep them home, or if you go on a vacation, you are still responsible for paying the full amount for those missed days. These days are your responsibility because we are unable to fill that slot for days missed. The same monthly tuition will be charged.

**COVID Credited Days:**

If your child comes into contact with someone outside of the center with COVID you will not be reimbursed for those days you miss. This will also apply to your child if they came into contact with someone at the center and it was directly linked to your child's classroom you will not be reimbursed

as we are still open and operating. In turn if we had to close the whole building for multiple contacts in the building then at that time you would be reimbursed for those days we are closed. Reimbursements may only be applied as a credit towards the next month of tuition or if a balance remains for the current tuition. Reimbursements for Covid closures will not be issued as a cash or check reimbursement. At this time the Best Beginnings Scholarship is paying the same rate regardless of attendance so there will be no reimbursement credit for these students.

### **Medication Policy:**

1. Whenever possible, it is best that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receives medication prior to going to child care, and again when returning home and/or at bedtime.
2. The parent/guardian is encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child's health care provider. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home and with sufficient time before the child returns to child care to observe the child's response to the medication given. When a child is ill due to a communicable disease that requires medication as treatment, the health care provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to child care. This is for the protection of the child who is ill as well as the other children in child care.
3. Medication will only be given when ordered by the child's health care provider and with written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian. A "Permission to Give Medication in Child Care" form will be used as a Permission Form must be completed before the medication can be given. Copies of this form can be duplicated or requested from the child care provider.
4. "As needed" medications may be given only when the child's health care provider completes a Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given.
5. Medications given in the Center will be administered by a staff member designated by the teacher in charge of the classroom, director, or manager and have been informed of the child's health needs related to the medication and has completed their New Staff Health and Safety training on how to administer medication.
6. Any prescription or over-the-counter medication brought to the child care center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the appropriate information. For more information see the Medication Administration Form.
7. For the child who receives a particular medication on a long-term daily basis, the staff will advise the parent/guardian one week prior to the medication needing to be refilled so that needed doses of medication are not missed.
8. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parent/guardian when it is no longer needed or for parents to properly dispose of.
9. Records of all medication given to a child are completed in ink and are signed by the staff designated to give the medication. These records are maintained in the center.
10. Information exchanged between the parent/guardian and child care provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is brought to and picked-up from the center. Parents/guardians should share with the staff any problems, observations, or suggestions that they may have in giving medication to their child at home, and likewise with the staff from the center to the parent/guardian.
11. Confidentiality related to medications and their administration will be safeguarded by the director and staff. Parents/guardians may request to see/review their child's medication records maintained at the center at any time.
12. Parents/guardians will sign all necessary medication related forms that require their signature, and particularly in the case of the emergency contact form, will update the information as necessary to safeguard the health and safety of their child.



13. Parent/guardian will authorize the director/ manager to contact the pharmacist or health care provider for more information about the medication the child is receiving, and will also authorize the health care provider to speak with the director/ manager in the event that a situation arises that requires immediate attention to the child's health and safety particularly if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

14. Parents/guardians will read and have an opportunity to discuss the content of this policy with the director, manager, or lead teacher. The parent signature on this policy is an indication that the parent accepts the guidelines and procedures listed in this policy, and will follow them to safeguard the health and safety of their child. Parents/guardians will receive a copy of the signed policy including single copies of the records referenced in this policy.

**Immunization Policy:**

According to Montana State Law, ALL children in a licenced childcare must be immunized. We will not be taking any medical or religious exemptions. We need proof of your child's immunization records before they start at the center and updated records once more shots are given. We understand that children may fall behind on the timing of their shots due to illness, in which case we will need a medical plan from the doctor on when their next immunization shots will be given. If there is not a medical plan or scheduled appointment, the child will not be allowed back at the center until appointment is made, a hard copy of a medical schedule is turned in, or the immunization shot has been given. If a child is suspended until the immunizations are up to date or a medical plan is signed, the parent will still owe their tuition or their spot will be revoked. If their spot is revoked, they will not receive the reimbursement of their two week deposit. The director will check immunization upon enrollment, as well as throughout the year. Licensing also has the right to look at all children's immunization records to make sure they have all the shots they need and a nurse from the health department comes in annually to go through all of the children's immunization records. If they find a child without the proper immunization records, parents will receive a 7 day notice to turn in up to date immunizations or have a doctor fill out a medical plan. If this is not completed after a week, the child will not be allowed to come back. Licensing requires all children to have the following immunizations in correspondence to their age:

Age at Entry	Number of Doses – Vaccine Type
By 5 months of age	2 doses of polio vaccine
	2 doses of DTP vaccine
	2 doses of Hib vaccine
	2 doses of Hep B vaccine
	2 doses of PCV vaccine
By 7 months of age	2 doses of polio vaccine
	3 doses of DTP vaccine
	*2 or 3 doses of Hib vaccine
	2 doses of Hep B vaccine
	3 doses of PCV vaccine
By 16 months of age	2 doses of polio vaccine
	3 doses of DTP vaccine
	1 dose of varicella vaccine
	1 dose of MMR vaccine
	*3 or 4 doses of Hib vaccine
	2 doses of Hep B vaccine
*4 doses of PCV vaccine	

By 19 months of age

1 dose of varicella vaccine  
3 doses of polio vaccine  
4 doses of DTP vaccine  
1 dose of MMR vaccine  
\*3 or 4 doses of Hib vaccine  
3 doses of Hep B vaccine  
\*4 doses of PCV vaccine

By 6 years of age

3 doses of polio vaccine, 1 after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday  
4 doses of DTP vaccine, one given after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday  
2 doses of varicella vaccine  
2 doses of MMR vaccine  
3 doses of Hep B vaccine

### **Injury/ Owie Report:**

If a child gets hurt, the teacher will write an “Owie Report” and have whoever picks up the child sign it to acknowledge that we let them know. If there is a greater injury that affects the child's ability to continue to play, we will call the parent to give them a heads up, message the parents in the app, or have them pick them up if they need to go to the doctor. We ask parents to understand that children are exploring and learning and sometimes children get hurt during risky play. Our environment is set up to help minimize injury and is developmentally appropriate. There are also incidents that may occur from other children such as hitting, biting, pushing, ect. We always will try to prevent these from happening and do our best to redirect the children and teach them how to be kind friends. We also ask that parents understand that a lot of these behaviors are developmentally appropriate as kids begin to learn and explore. Most of these behaviors are out of curiosity or a child trying to communicate something that they may not have words for at the time. If there is a situation that does occur, both families (whose children are involved), will be notified and told about the situation. This helps to keep communication fluid and consistent with helping with persistent behaviors. The teachers are also very observant to see when they need to step in to prevent possible accidents. Little Dreamers Childcare is not responsible for any injuries that may occur.

### **Termination of Child’s Enrollment Policy:**

A child’s enrollment could be terminated due to lack of payment, frequently late to pick up, lack of compliance to Family Handbook, lack of parents cooperation, or any other reason the director deems appropriate for dismissal. Enrollment may also be terminated if the child’s behavior continually puts themselves, other children, or teachers in danger, or if their behaviors are beyond our realm of expertise. We want what is best for every child and will do anything and everything we can to help them within our center. Terminating a child’s enrollment due to behavior is not preferred and will always be a last resort.

### **Mandatory Reporting Policy:**

By law, all staff members are required to report any suspected child abuse to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Service’s Child and Family Services Department. Suspected child abuse includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, maltreatment of a child, parent’s substance abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

### **Children Evaluations:**

Little Dreamers Childcare will have members of the community come in to conduct health screening and observations on their developmental milestones so that we know how best to support the children. If there is something found of concern or that parents can work on at home with the kids, the director, lead teacher, or evaluator will contact the parent. Parents will be notified if they are referring the child to get further evaluated. We conduct vision screening, hearing screening, and other screening that become available to us. Parents will have to sign a permission slip before having their child screened but it is not a requirement.

### **Emergency Procedures**

We will have routine fire drills, earthquake drills, lockdown drills, and other emergency drills as seen fit. It is important to practice for both children and staff to be prepared. If you have any questions on what we do in case of an emergency please view the emergency procedure plan listed in each of the classrooms or ask your child's teacher.

### **Non- Discrimination Policy**

In accordance with federal civil right law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation, for prior civil rights activity.

### **Contact Info**

Owner/Director: Seonna Dimond (Clark)

Manager: Sadee Miller

Email: [littledreamersmt@gmail.com](mailto:littledreamersmt@gmail.com)

Phone: (406)314-4476

Address: 2165 Hwy 2 East Suite A Kalispell, MT 59901

Please call or email to discuss any questions, comments or concerns or to schedule a meeting to go over the Family Handbook. Please return the last sheet of the Family Handbook or come in to sign another copy to acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to be in compliance with the Family Handbook.

**Acknowledgement and Signature**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/ legal caregiver of \_\_\_\_\_, have received and understand the policies and procedure discussed in the 2024-2025 Family Handbook provided to me by Little Dreamers Childcare. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to follow policies and procedures discussed and ask any questions that may arise.

I understand that I am responsible for reading and reviewing the Family Handbook every year because policies and prices are subject to change. The Family Handbook will be adjusted if the Center deems it fit and a notice of the changes will be given to the parents.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
*\*this acknowledgement page must be signed annually for each child enrolled at Little Dreamers*

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Directors Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_