



Parent Handbook

2016

Mission Statement

Learning Ladder strives to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment that enhances physical, social and emotional development, values, and the cognitive skills needed to climb the ladder from infancy to preschool and onward to elementary school.

Philosophy

A child's work is play

Play Leads to Learning & Learning Leads to Play

Our Goals

- To provide children with an appealing assortment of play-based activities and areas of interests in order to provide joyful, learning experiences
- To provide meaningful and responsive teacher and child relationships
- To provide children with a solid social foundation and opportunities to build friendships
- To share information with parents and work as partners concerning their child's development
- To provide ongoing professional development opportunities for our staff
- To provide nutritious and delicious meals
- To be united within our local community
- To regularly assess the program for effectiveness

Learning Ladder

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Welcome

Welcome to Learning Ladder Preschool & Childcare. You are now a member of *our* family. This is how we grew into one of the best preschools in the area.

Our building was built in 1990 as one of the original Gingerbread Preschools. It was purchased in 1994 by Linda Kudrna and renamed Learning Ladder. At that time another building called Tiny Tots, located a few blocks away on Main Street, was also being occupied by young Learning Ladder students (2 and 3-year-old's).

In 1998 an addition was added to the Cottage Grove Road location, doubling the size of the building to over 11,000 square feet. The Tiny Tot building was sold and the children were moved to this location.

Due to the growing demand for infant and toddler care, in 2005 our former Butterfly Room classroom (preschool room) was remodeled and divided into 2 classrooms. The new infant and toddler rooms have been renamed the Inchworms and Grasshoppers. The Butterfly Room was moved to the lower level.

In the fall of 2008 we partnered with Monona Grove School District to include T4K (Together 4 Kids) in our building. This is a universal preschool program that is available to all 4-year-old's residing in the district. Children outside the district may apply for open enrollment to attend.

During this time frame we also operated an after-school program in the Cottage Grove Elementary School buildings.

Many of our staff are family members and we consider our additional staff extensions of our own family. We are often reminded how long we have been in business when 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of families continue to enroll children or become part of our educational team. We couldn't ask for a more heartwarming career!

Our staff is very important to our program and we believe that providing them with professional development opportunities and instilling a positive work ethic has kept many of them in our program for long periods of time.

Our program was **Nationally Accredited 1998-2008** by the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**. In anticipation of the new statewide YoungsStar programming that was in process in 2008 we choose to let our accreditation expire and go through YoungStar at the state level. It took a few years for the extensive statewide project to finalize. **In 2014 we received our YoungStar 5-star-rating using the National Accreditation Commission.**

The following pages describe our curriculum and policies. They are designed to ensure that your child and all of the children in our program receive the best education and care possible.

Most of our policies are uniform throughout the program. However, our infant & toddler, preschool program and school-aged program, vary slightly due to the developmental stages of children. Please refer to the Summer Camp brochure for additional policies and information about the school-age program.

If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to contact us personally, by phone or email. Maintaining a high quality program involves open and frequent communication with our families. For families that do not speak or read English we will assist in contacting an interpreter.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Orientation

In order to provide a great beginning for your child a Learning Ladder representative will schedule an orientation for families prior to your child's first day. We will assist families that need an interpreter.

- Tour of the campus that includes classrooms and grounds
- Introduction to teaching staff
- Plan parent and child visit with teacher
- Overview of parent handbook

- Discuss your family's expectations for your child
- Overview of family support resources and activities
- Plan extended visits for children who need additional time to become comfortable with their surroundings
- Review required forms and operating procedures

Family Communication

The success of our school is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication between parents, teachers and administrators will help each child to experience a positive early learning experience. We want family members to feel at ease communicating to their child's teacher and the administrative team. Special considerations for privacy will be made for matters that are considered confidential.

We use the following tools to build a solid communication partnership;

- **Verbal Communication**—Teachers will greet parents every morning in an effort to exchange information about the child's night and early morning. Teachers also greet parents each afternoon in an effort to exchange information about the child's day at school.
- **Pro Care Messaging**—Personal messages about the program or reminders may appear when you sign your child into the computer attendance program.
- **Bulletin Boards**—Parent informational boards are located outside each classroom. These boards provide important information regarding lesson plans, menus, curriculum news, office news, and the daily classroom photos. There is also a central parent information bulletin board located outside the offices. Here you will find our licensing information, contagious disease notification, sunscreen and insect repellent information and community news.
- **The Daily Buzz**—This centralized area is located near the attendance computer. The classroom clipboards will provide parents with field trip information, reminders, special events, newsletters, child development articles and other important program news.
- **Staffing Information**—Photos and Registry Certificates (Educational status) is posted in the parent area.
- **Newsletters**—Monthly newsletters will include program news, child development articles, and health & safety information.
- **E-Mail**—Newsletters, statements, and parent surveys will be distributed by email.
- **Parent Resource Guide**—This directory is located in the Parent Resource area and provides a list of public health organizations and family support programs.
- **Learning Ladder Website**—Our website has general information about the school as well as the parent policy manual. There are many child forms available for you to conveniently download. Check the website often as it is managed on-site and is frequently updated.
- **Facebook**—We are on Facebook. Please join us and be our friend.
- **Daily Sheets/Notebooks**—“Daily Notes” will go home with parents of children under two. Detailed information will include meals, diaper changes, learning experiences, and their disposition.
- **Parent Conferences and Assessments**—Scheduled phone conferences will be held in November and May. The conferences will focus on past individual achievements and future goals. Additional conferences may be scheduled either by the parent or the teacher. For children under the age of 24 months there will be 2 additional progress reports each year. Our T4K children will be assessed according to the Monona Grove School District calendar.
- **Portfolios**—Teachers will develop individual portfolios for each child as a way to keep track of their learning and development and to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. This keepsake will include observations of your child's learning, writing and work samples, photographs and memorabilia.
- **Parent Surveys**—Surveys are periodically distributed to families. We truly value your insight and use the information in our goal planning sessions.
- **Suggestion Box**—Parent suggestions are very useful for us to determine how we are doing. A suggestion form is located in the parent area and may be dropped off in the tuition mail box.

Parent Involvement

Parents of children that get involved and show interest in their child's growth and education will instill a sense of well-being, self-worth, and promote confidence in their child's emotional development.

We are certain that the parents belonging to the children in our program have special talents, unique cultural traditions, musical talents, storytelling capabilities, collections, interesting jobs, or life experiences to share. We welcome any and all parents willing to reveal their talents to our program!

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in our field trips & special events. Frequently new events are added as opportunities arise. Please watch for information.

Breastfeeding Mothers

Learning Ladder supports the health of infants by providing space for nursing mothers. Mothers are welcome to nurse their little one as often as they are able on a daily basis. Chairs are available for use in the infant room.

Parent Visits

Parents are welcome to observe or visit their child's classroom. We believe it strengthens the bond between teacher, child, and parent. "Surprise" stops are welcome, but to ensure that you will get the most out of your visit it is recommended that the child's teacher is given prior notice. This will allow the children to stay on their predictable daily routine and give the teacher time to prepare the children and adapt the classroom schedule for your visit.

Parent Responsibilities

In order to help us provide the best care possible and maintain high standards we ask for the following support from our families.

- **Turn in all necessary paperwork on time.** Even before your child attends their first day of school you'll need to submit documents such as immunization records, medical health release forms, and enrollment forms. These records are mandated by the state of Wisconsin. Some forms need to be updated periodically after your child is enrolled.
- **Read all parent notices and e-mails.** Missing this information may affect your child being prepared for the day. You are your child's most valuable asset and advocate. Keep yourself informed.
- **Bring your security card/tag to get in the security locked door, sign your child in and out each day and make contact with the teacher.** This is for the safety of your child and the best way to stay connected with the teachers.
- **Keep your child on a consistent schedule.** Children need a schedule and routine to function well. It is important to maintain a consistent and bedtime schedule. Children that regularly arrive late or at varying times will be "out of sync" with the group and the daily routine.
- **Start your child's day by allowing them to be prepared for the day.** Wake your child early enough to allow him/her time to get dressed. Do not allow children to bring in food/drinks or toys from home. (See *Toy Day* and *Items from Home* policies for more clarification).
- **Let your child's teacher know if your child needs extra care on a particular day.** If your little one didn't sleep well last night or your partner is away on business and your little one misses him/her, let the teacher know so that we can give them extra TLC.
- **Let us know if your child's arrival or departure times will change on any given day.** If grandma is in town and wants to pick up your child early contact the office and we will pass the information on to the child's teacher.
- **Contact Learning Ladder when your child is going to be absent.** This will alleviate taking up precious classroom time from teachers who will contact you if your child does not arrive 2 hours after your regular arrival time.
- **Accurately inform teachers regarding the health of your child and respect and follow our health policy.** It is common for children new to the program become ill as their immune systems adjust to a new environment. This is both normal and beneficial to the long term development of your child's immune system.
- **Make sure your child has all the supplies he/she needs.** Provide all the necessary supplies and clothing required for your child's care.
- **And pay your fees on time.**

Making Your Child's First Day Comfortable

All children are unique and will react differently to a new program or classroom. Some children are very outgoing and seem not to need any adjusting time. Others are very shy and may need more time. Most children fall somewhere in between. Parents are welcome to call anytime during the day to ask how their child is adjusting.

- Whenever possible, we encourage parents to bring their child in before their first day of enrollment to tour the campus and meet their teacher and some of their new classmates
- We suggest that you join in with your child during an activity and familiarize yourself with the daily schedule
- At home talk about your child's teacher using her/his name and an activity that your child took an interest in. Remind your child of any friends they may already know or that they met on their first visit
- Reassure your child that you will always return for them at the end of the day
- If possible, a shortened first few days is suggested

Grievance & Conflict Resolution

Parents are requested to raise any concerns they may have regarding their child's care with the teacher in the first instance. This should be followed up by speaking to the Director if the concern has not been satisfactorily resolved. If you have any suggestions please do not hesitate to contact the Director, so that appropriate action can be taken.

All concerns will be dealt with in the following manner:

- With confidentiality
- Meet with the staff members in the group (if appropriate) to discuss the issue
- The administrator will be informed of the grievance and discuss with the director possible strategies to resolve the grievance
- Meet with the parents to discuss the grievance and document outcomes
- Outside agencies or community resource programs may be accessed

In the event that there is a conflict that arises we suggest that you speak directly to the person with whom you are having a conflict. It is best if you can bring ideas for possible solutions as well. Working in a spirit of cooperation and compromise is the key for resolution.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Licensing Status

Learning Ladder is a State of Wisconsin licensed group daycare program for children ages 6-weeks to 11-years-old. We are licensed for up to 120 children. It is owned and operated by Linda K's Inc. In 2008 our program has partnered with Monona Grove School District to offer T4K (Together 4 Kids) on site. Specialists have inspected, evaluated and recognized our program for meeting or exceeding standards set forth by the Department of Children and Families and the Monona Grove School District. We are NAC Accredited and have been a 5-star rated since 2014.

A copy of the Learning Ladder Policy Manual and the Wisconsin Administrative Code are available at the main entrance and on our website.

Delegation of Authority

Learning Ladder Child Care follows a chain of command for the delegation of authority. The administrator is responsible for carrying out the policies and the day-to-day operations of the program. In the absence of the administrator, the delegation of duties will be carried out by the director, business manager and/or office assistant. In the absence of the administrative authority, the school-age coordinator or a teacher will be appointed to make leadership decisions. Emergency phone numbers are included on the *Chain of Command* that is posted in each classroom.

For safety purposes Learning Ladder schedule's at least 2-staff members to be present in the building during open

In case of an emergency:

- Staff will assess the situation
- Contact an administrator and/or dial 911. (Administrator will contact additional help when needed so that the working staff members can stay focused on the emergency)
- Parents will be notified as soon possible/safe to do so

There are staff members and local authorities located within 5 minutes from the program. Their phone numbers are posted on the Chain of Command located near each phones.

In the unlikely event that an emergency situation where it is not possible to contact help or the designated person in charge, all employees are expected to take charge of the situation and provide safety for the children.

Staff will program the emergency phone numbers into their cell phones for field trips and/or use when a land line is not readily available.

Registration/Tuition/Additional Fees/Miscellaneous Information

- Parents must return all necessary and required forms prior to the first day of enrollment
- There is an annual registration fee
- All tuition is due in advance.
- Automatic payments (Tuition Express) are processed weekly on Mondays
- Cash/Check payments are due by Friday for the following week and should be placed in the tuition mailbox
- A late payment fee will be applied when tuition is late
- There will be a fee for all returned checks or electronic payments
- Children will not be admitted to the program if fees are delinquent
- Refunds are not given for severe weather closings, holidays or when your child is absent
- Parents arriving after closing time will be assessed a late fee on a per minute basis
- A fee will be charged to families who run out of diapers or wipes
- Enrichment programs and field trip costs will be posted individually and payments should be placed in the tuition mailbox or will be added to the following automatic payment
- Adding extra days to part-time schedules is possible, but is based upon the daily availability of open spaces and must be authorized in advance by the office
- When a permanent change of hours, days or payment is needed, a new contract is required

Multiple Child Discount

A discount is available to families with two or more enrolled children. The discount will be applied to the oldest child's tuition.

Vacation Days

Each child may receive up to one vacation credit per contract year. The contract year begins the first week of September and ends the last week of August. In order to receive a vacation credit, each of the following criteria must be met:

- A Vacation Request Form must be turned into the office a minimum of two weeks in advance
- The office must authorize all requests
- The vacation must encompass one full contract week (Monday through Friday)
- Vacations may not be taken during the last two weeks of your child's scheduled attendance
- Vacation credits must be used before the end of the contract year and do not carry over
- Any outstanding balance must be paid in full before a credit will be issued
- Children that enroll after December 31st are not eligible for vacation until the next contracted year
- Children that withdraw from the program will lose remaining vacation time
-

Wait List Policy

When classroom enrollment is full you may place your child on our wait list by submitting an application and small fee.

Openings will be filled in the following order:

- Families with other children currently enrolled
- Children of Learning Ladder staff
- Children with full-time schedules
- Chronological order of the date the application was received

Once an enrollment opportunity becomes available, families will have 5 business days to accept the position at which time payment for the first week’s tuition is due to hold the spot.

If you are unable to accept the first position, you may keep your status on the wait list for the next available opening. If you are unable to accept the second position offered, you will be removed from the list unless you elect to maintain your current position on the wait-list with an additional application fee.

School-Aged Transportation

School-age children will be transported to and from Learning Ladder by the Monona Grove School District bus or a Learning Ladder vehicle. Occasionally an administrator’s vehicle may be used for transportation. Busing assignments are determined by the Monona Grove School District. Parents must notify Learning Ladder of all busing assignment changes.

All vehicles used to transport children will have an annual safety and inspection report on file.

Walking or Biking to/from Learning Ladder or to/from Home or Other Activity

Children that are at least 8-years-old will be permitted to walk or ride their bikes unsupervised to or from Learning Ladder if a parent submits a School-Aged Daily Transportation Release and Waiver of Liability.

Ratios

The teacher/child ratio standards set by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children & Families appears in the chart below. The first number is always a 1 and stands for the teacher. The number that follows represents the number of children. The last column is the maximum group size with the first number representing the teacher. When there is a mixed age group the staff-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a prorated basis, according to age.

Ages	Staff to Children Maximum	
	Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6-weeks to 2-years	1:4	2:8
2-years to 2 ½-years	1:6	2:12
2 ½-years to 3-years	1:8	2:16
3-years to 4-years	1:10	2:20
4-years to 5-years	1:13	2:24
5-years to 6-years	1:17	2:34
6-years and older	1:18	2:36

Non-Discrimination

We accept and cherish all children and families regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, national origin, ancestry, or religion

Inclusion Policy

Learning Ladder’s goal is to remove barriers that exclude people with disabilities. We support the belief that children with disabilities, like all children, have a need to be welcomed, cherished, and embraced in our community. We carefully consider each child’s individual needs in order to determine how our program can accommodate a child’s special needs in collaboration with community resources. In order to determine if we can support the needs of a child with special needs our program will use a Specialized Educational Plan (SEP). This plan will define the following:

- Identifying typical development patterns and common health problems

- Identifying community supports and resources such as; Family physician or pediatrician, Medical Specialists, Mental Health Professional, Dane County Human Services, Birth to Three, Rainbow Project or local school districts
- Availability of supportive resources to the program
- The extent and/or scope of the special need in relation to the resources available
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of teachers, community resource staff, and parents
- Discuss strategies for modifying and adapting curriculum, schedules, materials, and instruction to meet individual needs
- Refer to IDEA and other applicable laws
- Identify the need for funding or additional costs
- Willingness of the parents to work with the program in meeting the needs of the child
- The ability of the child to benefit and participate in the school's activities

Release of Information

Learning Ladder requires a parent permission form for the release of information to other agencies concerning their child.

Hours of Operation

Learning Ladder is open Monday through Friday. The day begins at 6:30 AM. and closes promptly at 6:00 P.M.

Holidays

The program will be closed in recognition of our specified traditional holidays throughout the year in addition to one day each year for a Teacher Training day. A list of the closing days will be provided and available no later than January 31st each year.

Severe Weather Closings

In most cases Learning Ladder follows the lead of the Monona Grove School District system when making decisions on school closings or delays due to inclement weather conditions. When the Monona Grove schools are closed or delayed, we will also be closed or delayed.

When the school district closes due to extreme cold weather Learning Ladder may make an exception to stay open. The decision will be made on a day by day evaluation of conditions.

When school is not in session Learning Ladder will make an independent decision to close after assessing local forecast information.

There is no reduction in tuition as a result of such closings for families.

Child Arrival and Departures

All children, regardless of age must be escorted by their parent, guardian, or designated adult directly to and from the premise. For safety reasons and state regulations children may not walk through the building without an adult.

When dropping off and picking up your child, always sign your child into the attendance computer. It is important that the person picking up or dropping off makes sure that the teacher is aware that your child has arrived or is leaving. This procedure is for your child's safety.

Parents will be asked to supply Learning Ladder with their child's estimated arrival and departure times. Parents are required to contact the office or their child's teacher if the child will be absent or tardy. A staff member will attempt to contact the parents if a child has not arrived on a scheduled day.

Parents are required to enter the program's west door to drop off and pick up their child. Each parent is issued a key fob to enter the locked door and a security password and pin number to be used to sign in and out your child on the computer attendance system.

Children will not be allowed to leave the program with a minor (including siblings) or alone unless a signed Release and Waiver of Liability is on file.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up Child/Emergency Contact Person

At the time of enrollment, state regulations require parents to provide our school with an emergency contact of person/s (who live in close proximity) authorized to pick up your child. We will release children to authorized persons only (as indicated on the enrollment form). Emergency pick-up contacts will be called if your child becomes ill or you do not arrive before closing time and we cannot contact you.

Parents must call or provide written permission each time that someone other than a parent is picking up their child. In addition, the person picking up, including authorized persons must show identification.

Children Listing More than One Residence

If your family needs more than one copy of information from Learning Ladder please let us know. We will be happy to send multiple copies of information to all parents/guardians of enrolled children. Families who wish to share the cost of tuition may contact the office for options to split payments.

Custody Discrepancy

Children of parents who are divorced or separated must be legally released to the non-custodial parents according to the Wisconsin statutes. That also means that both parents have access to the child's records. In order to prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up or accessing a child's records, a signed court document stating the circumstances is required. If you anticipate any problems in this area, please contact the Learning Ladder office.

Child Records

Copies of your child's records are available to parents/guardians upon request while the child is actively enrolled at Learning Ladder. Requests should be made in writing and allow up to two weeks to process. There is a small processing fee of \$5.00 or \$0.10 per page, whichever is higher.

Daily Closing Time Procedure/Late Fee

Learning Ladder has a specific closing time. Parents arriving after closing time will be assessed a late fee on a per minute basis.

If an emergency arises which may cause you to be late in picking up your child, please call the program before the closing time. We suggest that you carry the program number with you at all times. (Calling does not waive the late fee.)

In the event that your child is still at the program after closing and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps:

- Attempt to reach you at all of the phone numbers that you have provided us
- Call the emergency contacts listed on your child's enrollment form
- Call Dane County Child Protective Service or local police

Supplies for Infant and Toddlers

Parents of infants or toddlers are required to supply the following items for their child. Please label items.

- Diapers or pull-ups
- Wipes
- Formula/breast milk and infant food that are labeled with your child's name and date
- Pacifier with clip
- Crib sheet for cot after your child turns 1-year. (required to be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Lightweight blanket (required to be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Extra clothing; socks, undergarments, pants, shirts (3 of each) stored in a gallon sized ziplock bag labeled with your child's name

- Winter gear; coat, snow pants, hat, boots, mittens
- Small beanie-baby sized snuggly for nap time (Toddlers only)

*Families are required to keep their supply of diapers and wipes replenished. If your child's supply runs out before you are able to replenish them, Learning Ladder will purchase a package for you and charge it to your account in addition to a convenience fee.

Supplies for Preschool

Parents of preschool children are required to supply the following items for their child. Please label items with your child's name.

- Diapers or pull-ups (if needed)
- Wipes (if needed)
- Cot sheet (a fitted crib sheet works best and will be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Lightweight blanket and small pillow (required to be sent home weekly for laundering)
- Small beanie-baby sized snuggly for nap-time (optional)
- Extra clothing; socks, undergarments, pants, shirt (replenish as needed) stored in a gallon sized ziplock bag labeled with your child's name
- Winter gear; coat, snow pants, boots, hat, 2 pairs of mittens labeled with their name.
- Additional classroom items may be added periodically

Supplies for School-Age Children

Parents of school-age children are required to supply the following items for their child. Please label items with your child's name.

- Extra clothing-socks, undergarments, pants, shirt
- Winter gear-coat, snow pants, boots, hat, 2 pairs of mittens
- Additional classroom items may be added periodically.

Appropriate Dress

Casual clothing is recommended so that your child doesn't need to worry about getting "special clothes" messy. Comfortable shoes or sneakers give children the freedom to run, jump and climb without unpleasant mishaps. Shoes with Velcro rather than laces work best for young children.

Children will need a variety of clothing to get the most out of their recess times during the ever changing Wisconsin weather. Please label ALL removable clothing such as jackets, hats, gloves, snow pants, boots, etc. Both boots and gloves need to be labeled. You cannot imagine how many clothing items look alike, get lost, and end up in the "lost and found or mistakenly go home with another child.

Please provide daily a gallon sized ziplock bag (labeled with your child's name) in your child's backpack that includes an extra pair of underwear, socks, pants, and a shirt in case a change of clothing is needed. Be sure to change the clothing to match the seasonal temperature variations.

Personal Belongings

We ask that you do not allow your child to bring items from home to school. Personal items from home such as toys, lip gloss, nail polish, action figures or purses require special planning and supervision by your child's teacher. It is difficult for children to forget about items that are stored in their backpack or cubbies. However, if your child wants to bring something from home; a small, beanie baby sized stuffed animal can be brought in for rest time.

Please support us in encouraging children to be responsible for their own belongings. Please label your child's belongings to help prevent loss. Check our lost and found regularly. Unclaimed items will be donated to local charities. Learning Ladder is not responsible for lost or broken personal items.

Pets, Houseplants & Gardening

Classroom pets may be added to the classroom for the children to observe and care for. Pets will reside in a secure environment. A current list of pets is posted on the parent board.

- Pets from home should not be brought into the building without authorization. Concerns of allergies, safety, state regulations and insurance liability will be reviewed prior to visits.
- Classroom plants are a natural teaching tool for young children. We choose non-toxic plants that offer oxygen purifying elements to the inside air.
- Summer gardens are planted each year on our playgrounds. The children will care for and learn about vegetables and flowers throughout the summer.

Volunteers

A volunteer is defined as a person who agrees to give time, without compensation, to work with children at Learning Ladder. It is our goal to properly acclimate all volunteers to the policies, rules, and regulations of our program and DCF Licensing Rules prior to assuming their position. This acclimation will take place in the form of a full and complete orientation of all policies as outlined in the personnel policies.

Volunteers will not be considered or included in meeting the center's staff to child ratios. Volunteers will always work under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Volunteers must complete the following criteria prior to assuming the position;

- Complete and submit background information disclosure form
- Fill out a volunteer application and emergency form
- Complete orientation process

Photographs/Video Taping

Photos are taken of the children playing and interacting with each other. The images are displayed throughout the classroom and used for your child's portfolio.

Videotaping is used for in-house training, security, and/or observation purposes.

Babysitting

Families who seek Learning Ladder employees for the purpose of caring for children outside of the school hours must do so at their own discretion. We do not assume any responsibility for any individual who cares for a child outside the program.

Withdrawal and Termination

A two-week written notice to the office is required to withdraw from the school.

Parents are responsible for the contracted rate for those two weeks whether our services are used or not. Vacation may not be used for these two weeks.

These policies are in no way intended to be punitive. However, in order to meet expenses and offer adequate staff to child ratios, we must ask your cooperation in these matters.

Termination of Care by the Program

As stated above, Learning Ladder strives to promote harmony within our community and families, but when this cannot be attained, we reserve the right to terminate care. Reasons that may include, but are not limited to, the result in the termination of a specific care arrangement is as follows:

- Non-payment for child service and/or lack of adherence to our policies
- Lack of cooperation from parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parents/staff meetings or conferences
- Abusive behavior and/or threats by parents towards program staff or other parents

- Parents disciplining children (other than their own) in any way while at the program

Child Abuse & Neglect

Learning Ladder shall protect children from abuse and neglect while enrolled in the school. All personnel are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will receive child abuse and neglect training bi-annually. Staff will follow the listed procedures for reporting any suspected incidents of abuse or neglect.

- All staff members are mandated to report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.
- Staff should report concerns to the director.
- The director, administrator, and reporting staff will objectively discuss concerns relating to observable criteria.
- If deemed necessary, assistant director or director will place call to the Department of Social Services and report findings. They will follow up with a written report to Wisconsin Department of Children & Families.
- The director/administrator will also contact Wisconsin Department of Children & Families with a written report.
- Learning Ladder shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect.

If it is alleged that a staff member was abusive or neglectful, that person will be removed from working with children. Pending the outcome of an investigation, and any such further time determined by Wisconsin Department of Children & Families, the director and administrator will determine to reinstate, suspend with or without pay, or terminate the staff member.

YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Guiding Principles

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Steering Committee has established **Guiding Principles** to inform the development and application of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) in Wisconsin. These guiding principles reflect the knowledge base in scientific research, our values, and our commitment to young children and families.

Curriculum

Learning Ladder uses **The Creative Curriculum**. This curriculum highlights the important balance between applying a general knowledge of child development with the particular knowledge a teacher gains by forming a relationship with each child and family. Our Curriculum is based on five fundamental principles.

- Teachers build trusting relationships and provide positive interactions with children to ensure a solid foundation for successful learning.
- Daily opportunities for social & emotional learning are built into the daily lessons in order for children to have many opportunities to make friends. Research has proven that this is a significant factor in school success.
- Building new skills by observing what a child already knows is implemented by planning constructive, purposeful play. This maximizes and supports learning opportunities.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions. Our classrooms and playgrounds are kid friendly with plenty of equipment in each learning center.
- Teacher–family partnerships promote development and learning with the benefits extending well into the future.

Frequent communication, parent teacher conferences, assessments, and parent outreach activities are scheduled periodically throughout the year to build strong family connections.

The field of early childhood education has made great strides in identifying the building blocks of later school success. Our Curriculum uses these building blocks as the foundation for our philosophy, the objectives for each child's learning, and guidelines for teaching and working with families. Our Curriculum is used to guide interactions with children in ways that promote development and learning, foster social competence, support learning through play, create rich environments for learning, and forge strong home-school connections. Another important benefit is that it aligns with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

Typical Daily Schedule for Infants

The infant curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is responsive to the infant's basic needs and grows into a toddler's more predictable, yet flexible daily routine. The infant and toddler schedules will provide nurturing physical contact and attention such as being cuddled, rocked, spoken to, sung to, and taken on walks outside in strollers. Scheduling routines

relating to activities such as taking a nap, eating, diapering will also be used as opportunities for language development and additional nurturing tender moments.

Typical Daily Schedule for Toddlers, Twos, & Preschool Children

Children will spend the majority of the day in their specified classroom following their predictable daily schedule. Classroom groups are organized by birth dates, individual child needs, and enrollment obligations.

Classrooms will be combined in the early mornings and late afternoons when there are low numbers of children in the building. As teachers arrive, the children will go to their classroom to begin their day.

A morning snack is served to children who arrive early in the day and after breakfast the daily anticipation of new activities will include circle time, a variety of learning activities and an outside playtime. Lunch and rest time will be next on the schedule. Snack will be served shortly after nap-time, followed by the afternoon activities. These activities are often an extension of the morning activities.

Daily activities will include a thematic curriculum with play-based learning centers. Learning centers will include reading areas, block areas, creative art, dramatic play, science, sensory, quiet areas. Music, math and literacy activities will be supported in the learning centers. In addition, you will see teacher lead activities and daily physical education.

As the number of children decreases at the end of the day children will gather in one classroom where there will be activities available to choose from until parents arrive.

T4K Program (Together for Kids) (4-year-old's)

Learning Ladder has partnered with the Monona Grove School District to provide 4-year-old preschool as part of district wide community collaboration. The program is located on-site and wrap around care is provided daily. The program is taught by a DPI certified teacher who is employed by Learning Ladder.

School-Age Curriculum (Kindergarten-5th grade)

The school-age curriculum is designed to provide an atmosphere that builds confidence, self-esteem, personal achievement, while promoting respect for other people and the environment. The natural curiosity and interests of the children will be used as the motivation for development of group and individual situations. Homework assistance will be provided during the academic year and the summer camp will include field trips and community outreach activities.

Typical Daily Schedule for School-Age Children

The school-age children will be transported to our school on the Monona Grove School bus or via Learning Ladder vehicle. Attendance, snack, homework, recess and a variety of activities will be made available each day. There will be plenty of time for friendships to blossom. Additional activities will be added on days that they attend 'full day'. Summer Camp provides an environment for children to continue to learn and grow through the summer months. See the summer camp brochure for more details. The children will be served an early morning snack, breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack on full days of attendance.

Enrichment Programs

Enrichment Programs are offered periodically. Gymnastics, ballet, swimming lessons, karate, and Spanish have been offered in the past. Programs will be offered based on interest and availability.

Creative Art

Art provides many opportunities for your child to expand learning in literacy, math, science, social studies, technology, music, and of course creativity. It is a hands-on sensory experience that most children love to participate in. Our weekly lessons will include process art, product art, and three-dimensional art activities.

- **Process Art**

"Process Art" is allowing your child the freedom to experiment with art materials. *Process Art* means that your child can explore art materials and enjoy what naturally happens. *Process art* is an open ended activity that emphasizes the process of discovery rather than the finished product. Your child will not be instructed to copy what an adult or classmate has made. There is no right or wrong; only the joy of discovery. This type of art will be available most often in the program because it is the foundation for future artists.

- **Product Art**

“Product Art” is an activity where your child is given an idea, simple directions or some guidelines on how to create a finished product. *Product art* is similar to a craft project and all the finished products will look similar when completed. *Product art* activities are planned occasionally for children when art is used to enhance a learning activity, to practice following simple directions, or when making a special gift. Children will not be required to participate.

- **Three-Dimensional Art**

Three-Dimensional art means that the final project has height, depth, and width. Typical materials such as play-dough, paper mache, wood for sanding, gluing, or carpentry; pipe cleaners, clay, or collage material will be accessible to children in both process and product art projects. These lessons are the foundation for children as they begin to understand geometry and spatial sense.

Physical Fitness

Physical Activity is a vital component to a child's overall development and health. Our program schedules 60 minutes per day of active play.

Weather permitting; children will go outside in the morning and in the afternoon. Children will also be provided with physical activity during transition times such as hopping from one activity to another or follow the leader to another area in the classroom. When the weather prohibits outdoor play, equivalent time indoors will be provided for a moderate level physical fitness. Physical Fitness Activities will be a combination of teacher-led and free play each day. Often times when the activities are indoors they will include music in the form of dance, yoga, marching, rhythm or chanting.

Outdoor Nature Appreciation & Play

Outdoor playtime, physical education, nature appreciation and exploring are important components to the development of young children. Our unique park like playgrounds and campus provide seasonal learning experiences.

Sidewalks surround our neighborhood and strollers are available for the infants and toddlers. There is a number of community parks located within walking distance. Water play is included in our summer physical fitness program as is our sledding hill in the winter. Outside playtime is scheduled daily weather permitting.

Inclement Weather

“Inclement weather” is defined as stormy or severe weather such as any of the following:

- Moderate to heavy rain
- Thunder and lightning
- Air pollution advisories
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F
- Wind chills of 20 degrees F. or below for children under the age of 24 months
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below for children age 2 years and above

Children will enjoy the outdoors unless there is an inclement weather condition. In some warm weather circumstances the children will be allowed to enjoy the outdoors when inclement weather occurs. Example: The temperatures are expected to be above 90 degrees. Children may be taken outdoors to a shaded area for a short amount of time. Water play is also permitted (and especially fun) when temperatures are in the 90's. Children may also enjoy a light sprinkle of rain on a warm afternoon.

Please supply appropriate clothing for the weather extremes found in Wisconsin.

Snow pants and boots will be worn when it is wet, muddy or the temperature is 32 degrees or lower.

Technology

- Technology such as video or Internet may be used to support and enhance curriculum learning.

- All video programs and Internet will be previewed by a reliable adult to determine age-appropriateness.
- An alternative activity will be available for children who do not want to watch.
- Videos *will not* be used to *fill* time at arrivals, departures or any other part of the day.
- TV programming is not available for use in our program.

Toilet Learning

Reminders, praise and patience are the most effective tools in helping children through this process. Children tend to learn this skill by observing their friends and with ample practice time available. Children will not be forced into toilet training. Every child will learn this skill when they are emotionally, physically and cognitively ready. Staff members will support efforts that begin at home.

Children under the age of 18 months will not be toilet trained. Toilet training in our program will generally begin after 24 months. Children will never be humiliated or punished for lapses in toilet training; instead they will be praised for their successes.

Soiled clothing will be changed promptly and placed into a labeled plastic bag. It will be kept separate from clean clothing. Solid matter will be dumped into the toilet before storage for take home laundering.

Child Assessments, Progress Reports & Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers will systematically organize a confidential system for observing and recording each child's development, both formally and informally, that integrates the curriculum objectives, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and developmental milestones. This collected information will include evidence of progress towards identified learning and developmental goals, and will be gathered in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, observational data, examples of each child's work over time, anecdotes, performance during authentic experiences, photographs, and input from parents.

Parent/Teacher Conference and Progress Report Time Line

The purpose of our parent/teacher conference is to gain parental insight on your child's growth and development, review our assessment methods, interpret the results and discuss goals in terms of future learning.

Parent/Teacher conferences will be conducted in person or over the phone in the spring and fall. Two additional progress reports will be completed for children under the age of two. T4K will follow the instruction provided by the Monona Grove School district. Progress reports for school-age children will be completed in the spring and fall.

- **Infant /Toddlers 6-weeks to 24-months:** August, November, February, & May
- **Preschool—ages 24-months to 10-years-old:** November & May
- **Preschool (T4K) 4-years-old to 5-years-old:** Fall, Winter & Spring
- **School-age- 5-year-old to10-year-old:** Fall-Spring Progress Reports)

Portfolio Keepsake

Each classroom will provide families with a portfolio of their child's development. The portfolio is a collection of accomplishments that your child will master. It will include antidotes, projects and photographs of your child actively involved with friends in their learning environment. By observing and documenting child development each portfolio becomes a tool for teachers to use as they write lesson plans and set individualized goals. In addition, portfolios provide a sentimental keepsake for your family. Children attending T4K or off-site schooling will not be included due to the complexity of the portfolio process.

Confidentiality

Learning Ladder regards all information either received or observed regarding enrolled children and families to be confidential. The following measures are taken to ensure the above mentioned:

- Only Learning Ladder Staff and the parent or legal guardian of the child have access to all individual child records including but not limited to all required enrollment information as well as assessments and results.
- If a child is referred to an outside agency, a signed parent authorization form will be required before any information regarding the child will be shared.
- Staff will not discuss children or families with anyone except fellow staff members who are inclusive in the care of the child and family.

- A special awareness of confidentiality will be maintained by staff members who may live in the same neighborhood as, or who may be socially connected with, any enrolled children and their family.
- Any person requesting observation of the program will adhere to our confidentiality policy.

Touch and Nurturing

Physical touching has a vital role in the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted, and supported through the sensation of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Physical touch will be respectful of individual child body cues and only occur with their permission. Staff members are sensitive to each child's response and request for physical interactions, and model appropriate nurturing touches.

Establishing a nurturing touch routine into the morning greetings and afternoon goodbyes will establish a sense of belonging and build bonds with children. The most common way to acknowledge arrivals and departures is with a "high five," hug, or a gentle touch on the shoulder.

Except for safety or cleansing, children will always have the right to refuse touch. Children are also taught to respect adults and peer touch preferences. It is our policy to inform parents of the nature and type of routine physical contacts that are discussed in this document.

Nurturing touch includes: hugging, holding on lap, rocking, carrying, rubbing or patting backs, cuddling, and hand holding. Children always have the right to refuse these touches. While tickling may be an appropriate form of playful touch, it is kept to a minimum because of its potential for getting out of control.

Personal care touch includes: cleaning, dressing, and nap time routines; and is done in a gentle and respectful manner. It will also include: face and hand washing, assisting with toileting, examining rashes and unusual marks, nose blowing, and assisting with necessary clothing changes.

Holiday Philosophy

Holidays are an opportunity for learning about the traditions and values of our families and community. We strive to provide a learning environment that is non-sexist and reflective of our community's ethnic, cultural and economic diversity. Exposing the children to the valued traditions of others will encourage the respect and understanding of individuality and uniqueness; as well as discovering the commonalities that unite our families and communities collectively. We encourage family participation in teaching the children the important values and traditions of individual family culture, by entering the classroom and participating in an interactive celebration and observance in relation to your family's ethnic and cultural history.

Part-time families wishing to attend holiday celebrations that occur on their off days may do so **if space is available** and may be required to accompany their child as a chaperon. If a child attends an extra day (and the parent does not chaperon) the daily tuition charges will apply. Due to teacher to child ratio requirements families may not switch days of the week for upcoming celebrations or special events.

Diversity Philosophy

We embrace and encourage cultural diversity in our teaching techniques and recognize that our efforts now will instill values that will carry forward as our children grow into young adults faced with the challenges that our society presents. Thus, we have made the commitment to create a program that reflects the varied lifestyles of the children, their families, our staff, and our community.

Field Trips/Transportation

Field trips are a fun and educational part of our programming and are planned regularly. Parents are notified in advance of an upcoming field trip and are always welcomed and encouraged to join us.

Part-time families wishing to attend field trips that occur on their off days may do so when space is available and may be required to accompany their child as a chaperon. If a child attends a field trip on a non-scheduled day (and the parent does not chaperon) the daily tuition charges will apply. Families may not switch days of the week for upcoming field trips or special events.

A local busing company will be used to provide transportation for field trips or one of the Learning Ladder vehicles.

Classroom Assignments

Children are most often scheduled to move to the next classroom in the fall when the academic school year begins but there are opportunities for individual or small groups of children may move during the year. Moving children to a new classroom is based on the child's birth date, developmental needs, teacher/parent recommendations, schedule, and current program enrollment obligations. Families will be consulted prior to finalizing a change in classrooms. The director and classroom teachers collaborate to provide visits and prepare children and parents to ensure a smooth transition.

Guidance Policy

Our goal is to provide children with opportunities throughout the day to be successful, make good choices, self-regulate, learn to interact socially with confidence, and gain a respect themselves and for others. A variety of techniques and strategies will be used to help gently guide child behaviors. Positive social skills are modeled and supported by teachers. Picture boards, clear rules, preplanned organized transitions and a reasonable balance of teacher-lead and free play activities will be used. Natural consequences may be used in situations where it is safe to do so. Some children respond well to charts where they can visually see their progress. For the younger children, redirection is often used. The classroom learning areas will be arranged to support positive play and learning.

Prevention measures and redirection does not help every child make the right choices or problem solve in an acceptable way. In these cases, a reflection time will be used. In some cases, an Individual Guidance Plan will be implemented.

A child will never be forced to eat food or have food withheld; or punished for lapses in toileting; physically restrained; or be treated cruel, aversive, frightened or humiliated.

Reflection/Time-Out

When a child's behaviors are persistently inconsistent with the rules they may need to be move a safe distance away from the other children or removed from a play area. ***This reflection time will not be use as a punitive time-out.*** The supervised time away will be used as time for the child to compose himself and reflect on the situation. Teachers will provide support and guidance to ease the child back into the group. This reflection time will not exceed five minutes. The child will be located within the site and sound of the teacher. If a child needs more assistance to self-regulate he/she may be taken into the office where they will be supervised by a director until they are ready to re-join their group. If a child is not able to compose themselves or begins to show a pattern of causing harm to himself, the other children, the teachers, or the environment the parents will be contacted.

Reflection time is prohibited for children under the age of 3 and may not be used for more than one minute for every year the child is old.

The staff will explore all other aspects of guidance including redirection and reminders before utilizing "reflection time". Reflection time will only be used when all other appropriate guidance techniques have been tried and have failed.

Child Biting

Biting is perhaps one of the most distressing behaviors that parents and caregivers confront. At the same time, it is a normal behavior for older infants and toddlers. Reasons for biting are much different for infants and toddlers than for preschool children. For infants and toddlers, some of the reasons are:

Exploration: A toddler doesn't make a distinction between a stick on the ground, a rubber toy, or a person's body. All are fair game for this natural form of exploration.

Teething: This could be a cause for periodic biting, as the pressure on the mouth and gums relieves the pain and discomfort of teething.

Affection: The toddler also hasn't learned to distinguish between their own feelings and those of others. He or she experiences relief from their own discomfort, and they are not able to understand that this experience isn't as pleasant for others as it is for them.

Lack of skills for expressing needs: Young children don't have words to express feelings of frustration and anger. They may use physical actions (biting, hitting, grabbing) if they want a toy, if they are angry, or if another child takes something from them.

Experimenting for cause and effect: A lot of interesting things will happen when a child bites. The other child gets upset, and the caregiver often responds very strongly. There may be an internal rush of adrenaline that comes as a result of the fear, anger, or excitement that follows the biting.

Attention: Biting often results in lots of attention! The more powerful the attention (even if it's negative) the more likely the child is to continue biting.

Over-stimulation: The child may respond to noise and confusion by feeling frustrated and tense.

Some of these same reasons apply to older children who bite. Between the ages of two and three, new skills are emerging:

- The ability to manage words or cues to and get what they want
- The ability to understand the feelings and needs of others
- The ability to control their own actions

When a child is past the age of two and a half or three, biting is more likely to be an act of aggression. The child may use biting to get what he needs, or to threaten other children. This puts biting more in the category of hitting, pushing, and other forms of physically asserting power and influence. Older children who bite probably haven't learned more effective ways to express anger. (Aronson Lorna, 2002)

We will explore various methods dealing with biting including looking at our environment and patterns of behaviors for the biter. Our staff will respond promptly and appropriately to biting and will provide the necessary guidance, prevention and comfort as needed.

If a child is bitten and it does not break the skin, the bite will be washed with soap and water and an ice pack applied for swelling. Parents will be called or informed through the mishap form at pick-up time.

If a child is bitten and the skin is broken the following procedure will be followed:

- We will let the wound bleed gently.
- We will clean the wound carefully with soap and water.
- We will check whether the child has been vaccinated against tetanus and make sure that the shot is up to date.
- Parents will be called immediately to be informed of the following information:
 - Call and talk with your child's physician about whether the child needs any additional preventative care
 - To observe the wound over the next few days
 - And if the wound begins to swell or turns red, call the child's physician

Individual Guidance Plan

An Individual Guidance Plan (IGP) will be put into action when there is a child with a behavior that requires additional support and/or close supervision. The child's parents, teachers, director, and administrator will be included in the process. Strategies for conducting a problem-solving session will include the following.

- **Identifying the problem or behavior.**
- **Identify possible causes.**
- **Agree on goals for the child.**
- **Discuss strategies for achieving goals.**

- **Assess need for support from outside agencies.**
- **Agree on strategies and plan to stay in touch with parents and staff.**

If, after reasonable attempts by the school and support agencies, the child continues to demonstrate behavior deemed unsafe or inappropriate the administration will regrettably proceed to the procedures noted in the suspension/termination policy.

Annual Special Events

Traditions are what makes us unique and bonds our friends and family together. This is a sample list of some of our established traditions;

Birthdays

We will recognize your child's birthday by singing "Happy Birthday" and providing a birthday crown. Children may bring in a favorite book to read or share a birthday snack. If you chose to provide a snack, please contact your child's teacher in advance so that we can assure the treat meets our healthy guidelines and refer to our ***Approved Healthy Snack List and keep in mind our strict Nut Free Policy.***

Water Days

During the warm, sunny days of summer the children will have many opportunities to run through the sprinkler, slide down the "slip and slide" and get wet and wild with water fun.

Sledding Hill

Our sledding hill is the perfect way for children to release energy during the winter season. It is located on the southeast side of the building and is a well-liked and memorable activity.

Summer Garden

Over the course of the summer the children will plant, water, observe and taste vegetables that they will grow in their own classroom gardens.

Scholastic Book Club

Each month during the academic year, inexpensive books are offered for sale through the Scholastic Book Club. Our program will earn bonus points from your purchases to use for free books and materials to enrich the classrooms.

Gingerbread Boy

In December, the children will bake a gingerbread boy cake that will mysteriously run away. We never know where he will hide so the children may need to search the whole building before they find him.

Portraits

Individual and class photographs are usually scheduled in the fall and often arrive before the Christmas Holiday.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Wellness Policy

Learning Ladder promotes child well-being and academic learning by supporting quality nutrition and physical activity as part of the daily learning environment.

Healthy eating patterns and physical activity are essential for young children to develop strong bodies, healthy bodies and mental capacity.

We recognize that collaborating with parents, students, health professionals, and community members is the most effective method of creating a healthy environment where children can learn sensible choices towards healthy lifestyle habits.

Nutrition

Nutritional needs for children must be met for them to reach their highest potential of growth and brain development. All meals and snacks provided by the program will meet or exceed the healthy requirements established by The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Breakfast and lunch are served family style, thus creating additional opportunities for the child's social and language development.

Menus are posted monthly and reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the children in our program.

Breakfast, lunch, and two snacks are served daily.

Parents of infants and toddlers will provide formula or breast milk, and baby food until the child is ready to eat what is on Learning Ladder's menu. This is a gradual process as *some* of the foods from the menu are introduced.

School-aged children attending Learning Ladder have a choice of bringing their own lunch from home or enjoying a Learning Ladder lunch. Lunches from home must meet our same healthy nutritional standards.

Occasionally, school-age children will be required to pack a lunch for a special event or field trip.

Learning Ladder will supplement meals or snacks brought in from home to meet the USDA & CACFP guidelines.

Breakfast will consist of the following:

- 1 vegetable or 1 fruit, or 1 protein source; such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- Cereal, or whole grain or enriched bread products
- Milk

Lunch will consist of the components listed in the following categories:

- 1 protein source such as; meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- 2 vegetables or 1 vegetable and 1 fruit, or 2 fruits
- Cereal, or whole grain, or enriched bread products
- Milk

Snack will consist of at least two of the following items:

- Milk or milk product
- 1 protein source such as meat; poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried peas or beans, cheese
- 2 vegetables or 1 vegetable and 1 fruit, or 2 fruits
- Cereal, or whole grain, or enriched bread products

Milk will be always available for children at breakfast and lunch.

Children requiring specific food substitutions for their meals such as soy milk must be regularly provided by the family. All food and beverages are required to be labeled with the child's name and dated. **Refer to the Restrictive Diet policy.**

Healthy Snack Policy

Instilling nutritional concepts at an early age can influence a lifetime of healthy food choices and balance. Learning Ladder promotes healthy food choice by offering nutritional food choices for meals, snacks, and special events. Families are always welcome to bring a healthy snack for birthdays, special events, or to share family traditions. Please refer to the following snack guidelines.

- Although children can be allergic to any kind of food, most food allergies are caused by tree nuts, peanuts, cow's milk, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish.
- Additional safety considerations for infants and toddlers will be considered.

- **All food must be prepackaged, unopened and have a complete ingredient list.**
- **All snacks will be opened and washed and prepared at school to reduce cross-contamination.**
- Additional healthy, prepackaged and labeled toppings or dips may be added to the snack to make them more festive.
- Please refer to the **Approved Healthy Snack List** for a list of approved snacks.
- If you have a nutritional snack item that you would like to share that is not listed or would like to prepare a traditional family recipe in our kitchen, contact the director for assistance.

Food Allergies Most Common in Young Children

Eggs, milk, and peanuts are the most common causes of food allergies followed by wheat, soy, and tree nuts. Peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish commonly cause the most severe reactions. Between 2 and 4 percent of children have food allergies. Although most children "outgrow" their allergies, allergy to peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish may be life-long.

The development of food allergies cannot be prevented, but can often be delayed in infants by following these recommendations.

- If possible, breastfeed your infant for the first 6 months
- Do not give solid foods until your child is 6 months of age or older
- Avoid cow's milk, wheat, eggs, peanut, and fish during your child's first year of life.

Each child may experience symptoms differently, but may include

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Cramps
- Hives
- Swelling
- Eczema
- Itching or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Lowered blood pressure

For additional information, check out the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin's website www.chw.org.

Food Allergies & Restrictive Diets

The Health and Nutrition Manager will plan and comply with state regulations in regard to nutrition. Each meal and snack will meet or exceed the U.S Department of Agriculture child care minimum meal requirements. The menu food serving sizes will meet age appropriate guidelines. Meals and snacks will support diversity.

A copy of the menus will be posted in the main hallway near the Daily Buzz. Extra copies of the menus are located in the Parent Resource area. All copies of the menu will be kept on file for review for a minimum of three months. Any food substitutions to the menu will be posted on the Daily Buzz menu and all staff will be made aware of the change prior to meal/snack times.

Requests for special diets such as vegetarian or kosher will be honored if parents supply the foods necessary to ensure compliance with the diet when the food differs from the center's menu.

Please indicate any food allergies or special food needs of your child on the Food Allergy/Dietary Restriction form.

When a child has an acute food allergy the family will be asked to supply the proper medication (epi-pen, Benadryl) and/or an alternative food (soy, milk, egg free). Detailed medical instructions will also be required on the child's enrollment form. A list of allergies posted in the kitchen and in each classroom and will be common knowledge for

ALL staff members. For an additional safety measure an allergy icon is placed next to the child's name on classroom attendance sheets. All classrooms with a nut allergy will be clearly marked with a **NUT ALLERGY ALERT** sign.

Children who require additional cross contamination safety measures will be seated separately but in close proximity to other children during mealtimes.

The following guidelines must be met for families choosing to supplement or replace meals.

- Families must substitute foods from a like category such as a protein for a protein item, a grain product for a grain product and so on.
- All foods and beverages brought from home must be labeled with the child's first and last name, date and what the food is if it is not in its original container.
- All food must be prepared and ready to serve. Infants food is required to be cut into small pieces, no larger than ¼-inch square.
- Toddlers and preschool children are required to have their food cut into ½ -inch square sized pieces.
- Foods containing peanut butter or tree nuts are restricted. See **Nut Restrictive Policy**.
- Food brought in for special diets should be clearly labeled with their child's name.

Nut Restrictive Policy

- Foods that say: **“Processed in a facility that also processed nuts”** or **“Processed on a machine that also processes nuts”** (or similar wording) **are OK to bring in and may be included on our menu and may be brought to school with your child as a snack, brown bag lunch or shared with the classroom.**
- Foods that say **“May contain peanuts or tree nuts”** (or similar wording) **will not be served on our menu and may not be brought to school with your child as a snack, brown bag lunch, or to be shared with others.**
- If labels have no allergy information, those food items, in most circumstances, are considered OK for children without nut allergies to consume in school. However, these food items that are not labeled should not be given to children with allergies.
- If the child brings in a nut product to school, we simply use a ziplock bag to immediately bag the item with a reminder label that says “Learning Ladder is a Nut Restricted School, please enjoy this food item at home.” Then we send the item home with the family at the end of the day. If the item is a large part of their snack or brown bag lunch, we will substitute the food with a food item from our kitchen.
- **Item purchased from store bakeries DO NOT meet the Nut Restricted School Requirements.**

Nap & Rest Time

All children under the age of five are required to rest for at least 30 minutes. Infants will rest according to their own schedules, while toddlers will be encouraged to rest according to a routine but will always be allowed to sleep and wake as determined by the individual child. Older children will be allowed to sleep from 1-2 hours; however, if a child has not fallen asleep within 30 minutes of restful lying down, that child will be allowed to pursue quiet activities that do not disturb the other children. Infants will sleep in cribs; toddlers and older children will be provided with cots/cribs. Toddlers and older children will bring a blanket, pillow, and “cuddly” from home.

All infants/toddlers up to the age of two, will be placed “Back to Sleep” while in the care of Learning Ladder unless parents provide a written statement from the infant's physician that states otherwise. The “Back to Sleep” initiative has lowered the accounts of SIDS by more than 40%. Our program provides tight fitting sheets for infant sleeping in cribs or pack & plays.

The school provides cots for children over 1-year. Parents are responsible to provide a crib sized sheet, and small blanket labeled with their child's name. Bedding will be sent home on Fridays for laundering.

SIDS Policy

Learning Ladder staff members understand that it is important for babies to sleep on their backs. The brochure "[Back to Sleep: Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome](#)" (SIDS) is available for families.

Although scientists still do not know what causes SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, research has revealed some ideas that can help reduce the risk of SIDS. Staff will follow the research suggestions.

- Healthy babies should sleep on their backs. A few babies with special health conditions might need to sleep on their tummies. Teachers will follow any special health needs if written orders are received from a child's physician.
- Babies need to sleep on a firm mattress or other firm surface. They will not be put on fluffy blankets, comforters, sheepskins, pillows or other soft materials for sleeping purposes. Stuffed toys or pillows will not be placed in the crib with infants.
- The temperature will be kept moderate. Air conditioning is provided during the warm summer months.
- Records will be checked to make sure infants and toddlers are up-to-date on immunizations. Suspected illnesses will be reported to parents promptly so they can make a decision whether or not to make a visit to their child's pediatrician.
- Breast milk is believed to keep babies healthy. Mothers will be encouraged to continue breast feeding for as long as possible and will be encouraged to breast feed if they so desire.

Dental Health

Brushing and flossing properly twice each day, along with regular dental checkups, can help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Proper nutrition is also important in maintaining good dental health. Eating sugar and frequent exposure to acid (from soda and juice) damages the enamel that protects teeth. Our school will support good oral health by offering healthy snacks and meals, and encouraging children to drink water after eating. In addition, dental health is in our curriculum and dental brochures are made available for families in our parent resource area.

Hand Washing

Adults and children must wash their hands following the 7-step standard procedure; upon arrival at the program, before and after handling food, after changing diapers or toileting, after playing in the sensory materials, and after handling bodily fluids (even when gloves are used).

Universal Precautions

Learning Ladder provides training and will observe universal precautions when exposed to blood and blood-containing body fluids and injury discharges of all children. All persons exposed to blood or blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges will wash their hands immediately with soap and warm running water. Single use disposable gloves will be worn if there is contact with blood-containing body fluids or tissue discharges. For spills of vomit, urine, feces, blood or other body fluids, staff will clean and disinfect the floors, walls, bathrooms, tabletops, toys and kitchen counter tops.

Healthy Child Policy

Please note that some children will have frequent illnesses when they first enter a childcare or school environment. Once the child's immune system becomes more resistant, those illnesses usually decrease in frequency.

Proper nutrition, adequate sleep and keeping children on predictable routines will help children through this process.

Children need to be in good health to get the most out of their school day. It is Learning Ladder's policy that if children are well enough to attend, they must be well enough to participate in all of the daily programming, including outdoor activities.

Learning Ladder follows the recommended guidelines established by the Dane County Public Health Department. The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk or spread of disease. Listed below are some of the most common illnesses. Please note that this may not be a complete list.

Observation of the Child

Upon arrival at the center, and periodically throughout the day, each child will be observed for symptoms of illness or injury.

Any evidence of unusual contusions, lacerations or burns in and out of care will be documented in a log book and reported to the director for review.

Ill Child

If a child appears ill, an area will be provided for the child to rest with their cot and blanket. If the area is not in a separate room the space will be separated from other children by the use of a partition, screen or other means. Parents or contact person will be notified to pick up their child within the hour.

Communicable Diseases

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. If a staff member suspects a child of having a reportable communicable disease as defined by Dane County Public Health Department the staff member shall contact their director. Some diseases will require a statement from a physician before a child may return to the program. Parents are required to report any communicable disease to office. Learning Ladder is required to report some diseases to the Dane County Health Department.

Parent Notification

When a child shows symptoms of an illness, a teacher will contact the parent(s) by telephone or, as necessary will phone other individuals listed on the child's enrollment form for pick up. Parents are required to pick up their child within 1 hour of notification. Learning Ladder does not have the mandated resources to provide isolated and sustained individual attention for children who are ill or unable to participate in classroom activities.

When a communicable disease has been confirmed by a medical professional, and the parent has notified the Learning Ladder office, a notice will be posted on the central parent board. These notices will not contain personally identifying information, but will indicate the name of the condition and the number of program participants known to have contacted the illness. If there is a concern that the infectious disease may cause harm to a pregnant staff member or parent, additional preventive safety measures will be applied.

Exclusion Period

Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms *for 24 hours without medication* or return to the center with a note from the doctor stating that the child is not contagious.

NOTE: In forming of this exclusion policy, the focus of concern is on the needs and behavior of the ill child and the ability of the staff to meet those needs without compromising the care of all other children in the group and to prevent the spread of illness.

Auxiliary Temperature

Learning Ladder staff will use the auxiliary (armpit) method to check a child's temperature when a fever or illness is suspected. If a child's temperature reads normal or low grade, and the child is systematic, an additional check will be done periodically in 15-30 minute intervals until the health status of a child can be sufficiently determined.

When reporting the child's temperature to the doctor it is advised to note the temperature reading and the method (auxiliary) rather than adding or subtracting a degree.

Fevers

Elevated body temperatures may or may not be an indicator of an illness. The following policy will be used to determine whether a child with a fever shall be excluded from school.

A child's temperature will be taken by a staff member if they observe one or more the indicators of an illness listed below. An auxiliary temperature will be taken. Staff members will give careful consideration to factors that might affect body temperature, such as strong emotional upset, high activity level, warm clothing or coverings.

For children 6-weeks to 6-months of age:

If the child auxiliary temperature is read at 99.8 degrees or greater, the child's temperature will be rechecked after an interval of not less than 15 minutes and not more than 30 minutes. If a second or subsequent readings are 100.6 degrees or greater, the child's parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted, and exclusion from the center will be required. No other indications are necessary for exclusion. Young infants are not able to show other symptoms as readily as an older child. It is recommended that infants remain under the close supervision of a parent if a fever is present.

For children over 6-months-of-age:

For fevers 99.8 degrees up to and including 100.5 degrees:

If the child's auxiliary temperature is read at 99.8 degrees or greater, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be alerted that there is a fever concern.

If a child's temperature reads low or normal, and the child is symptomatic, an additional check will be done periodically in 15-30 minute intervals until the health status of a child can be sufficiently determined.

During this time, the child will be observed for the following signs or symptoms of illness. Considerations will be given to each child's own typical individual habits. If one or more of these signs are observed in conjunction with a fever of 99.8 up to and including 100.5 degrees, exclusion from the center is required:

- Child shows a need for more sleep than usual; very drowsy, sleeps a long time or often, difficult to wake up
- Child's behavior changes significantly; persistent or uncontrollable crying, excessive clinging to caregivers, refusal to play or participate normally
- Child has difficulty breathing; uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, etc.
- Child's appetite changes significantly; refuses to eat or drink normally, drinks excessively
- Child's appearance is abnormally flushed or pallid
- Child's comments or complaints indicate illness

For fevers of 100.6 degrees or higher:

If the child's temperature is measured at 100.6 degrees or higher, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted and the child will be excluded from the center.

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours without medication.

Diarrhea Illness

A diarrhea illness is characterized by an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, or an increase in stool water and /or lack of formed stool consistency.

The parent will be informed after the first incident of diarrhea is observed. The child will be observed for other symptoms of illness. If the child is observed to have two diarrhea stools within an 8-hour period (including incidents at home), or the diarrhea cannot be contained, the parent or authorized pick-up person will be contacted, to remove the child from the center promptly.

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24-hours without medication.

Vomiting Illness

Caregivers will be careful not to mistake "spitting up" or other mild digestive disturbance for vomiting. The parent will be informed after the incidence of vomiting is observed. The child will be observed carefully for other signs of illness.

A vomiting illness requires that children be excluded from the center after one or more episodes of vomiting in a 24-hour period (including incidents that occur at home).

Exclusion Period: Children will be excluded until they have been free of symptoms for 24-hours without medication.

Ear infections

Some children are symptomatic when they have ear infections. Others complain of, or show one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain
- Pulling on ear
- Unable to nurse or take bottle comfortably
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fever
- Inability to attend to play
- Need to be held or comforted constantly
- Excessive crying

Infant, toddlers or young children exhibiting one or more of the listed symptoms may be excluded from the center and will be most comfortable at home with family members during this time.

Exclusion Period:

- **If the child is diagnosed with an ear infection and exhibits one or more of the above symptoms, the child must be on medication for 24-hours before returning to the center. If the diagnosed child is not treated with medication, s/he must be fever-free and symptom free for 24-hours before returning.**
- **If the child has green or bloody drainage from the ear, s/he must be excluded for 24-hours after the antibiotic has been started-this policy includes children with ventilating tubes in the ears as well as those having a ruptured eardrum. If the child with drainage from the ear is not treated with antibiotics, exclusion from the center is necessary until the green or bloody drainage has stopped.**
- **If a child has been diagnosed with an ear infection, does not have any drainage from the ear and exhibits none of the symptoms listed above, the child may attend the center. If any of the above symptoms occur, the parents will be called to pick up the child.**

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) is a contagious eye infection often caused by either bacteria or viruses. It spreads from direct contact with an infected person, or with their secretions. First symptoms occur 1 to 3 days after exposure.

Exclusion Period: An infected child will be excluded from the program until 24-hours after being placed on antibiotic and the eye no longer produces pus, or if no treatment is prescribed, the child should stay at home until the eye no longer produces pus and the child is able to participate in activities.

Rashes

There are many types of rashes from heat rash to streptococcal infection. Many go away without intervention, but some do not. If a rash of unknown origin remains present for more than 24-hours, Learning Ladder reserves the right to request that a child be seen by a physician to rule out any serious illness.

Lice

Head Lice is not a serious health threat. They are unpleasant, cause itching, and are sometimes difficult to extinguish. They are highly communicable and are not a sign of poor hygiene.

Prevention is the best way to deal with head lice. Children will be discouraged from sharing combs, brushes, hats, or other headgear. If a case is confirmed Learning Ladder will take the necessary precautions to prevent spreading.

While it is the parent's responsibility to monitor their children for all communicable conditions, including head lice, the Learning Ladder staff will also watch for signs and symptoms, and will periodically check for head lice. If head lice are discovered at home, parents are asked to inform the office immediately. Learning Ladder will post notification of possible exposure, but will not share personally identifying information. If a staff member finds nits (eggs) or lice in a child's hair, the child's parent will be notified immediately. Parents should contact the child's physician, treat the child's hair with a medicated shampoo, and remove the nits from the child's hair (haircut's may be helpful).

Exclusion Period: Children with head lice will be excluded from the program until they are treated and s/he is nit free. Children must be checked by a trained Learning Ladder staff member before returning to the classroom.

Exclusion Required for Other Illnesses

The diseases listed below are a partial list of common illnesses. Exclusion will be required for the following if they are identified by a health provider.

- Blood in the stools that not explained by dietary change, medications or hard stools.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- Rosella
- Influenza
- Measles
- Shingles
- Tuberculosis, until the child's physician or local health department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Impetigo
- Streptococcal pharyngitis
- Bacterial meningitis
- Fifths disease
- Scabies, until after the first treatment has been given.
- Chicken Pox
- Pertussis,
- Mumps
- Hepatitis A and B
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Health Precautions

- Children will wash their hands with soap and running water upon entry into the program.
- Children will wash their hands before eating and after toileting; their hands and faces will be washed after meals.
- Bodily secretions such as runny noses, eye drainage and coughed-up matter will be wiped with a disposable tissue used only once and placed in a plastic-lined container. Whoever does the wiping will wash his or her hands.
- Bodily secretions on surfaces will be washed with soap and water and disinfected. Hands will be washed.
- Individual washcloths, combs, and toothbrushes will be kept in a sanitary condition when used.
- Wet or soiled clothing will be changed promptly from a supply of clean clothing provided by parents for their child's use. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag.

Physical Examination

- Each child shall have a record of a health examination prior to enrollment in accordance with licensing rule DCF 251.07(6) (k) 3
- Evidence of the child's most recent physical examination shall be provided by a Child Health report signed and dated by a physician
- Except for school age children, each child two years of age and older shall have a subsequent physical examination by a physician at least once every two years
- Each child under 2 years shall have a subsequent physical examination every 6 months

Immunizations

A record of immunizations for each child shall be maintained and updated to document compliance with state regulations.

Sunscreen/Insect Repellent

Learning Ladder will supply and apply sunscreen and insect repellent as needed on a daily basis. The product information will be posted on our main parent board throughout the season. Sunscreen & Insect Repellent forms will be available at the time of enrollment and renewed annually.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medicine will be administered using the guidelines listed.

- Parents are required to give their child the first dose of a new medicine to ensure that he/she child does not have an allergic reaction to it.
- An *Authorization to Administrator Medication* form (available in your child's classroom) is accurately filled out prior to staff administering prescription medication.
- Medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's first & last name.
- Medications will be given your child's teacher for safe and proper storage. Do not send or store medications in your child's backpack.
- Parents may opt to receive documentation of the medication administered to their child at the end of the day.

Medications Delivered by a Device

- Parents or a health care professional must provide detailed written instructions on indications for use that include signs and symptoms that the medication is needed.
- The parent or health care professional must demonstrate use of the device and any special care after use to all staff who will be administering the medication.
- Documentation on the demonstration for use and care is made on the medication form including date and staff in attendance.
- The medication will only be given by staff trained on use of the device.
- Training on use and care of the device is provided annually or as needed with staffing or device changes.

Over-the-counter Pain Medication

Over-the-counter pain relievers such as Tylenol will only be administered to children for symptoms that do not require exclusion from the center based on the criteria and guidelines set by the Department of Public Health. Such circumstances where it is appropriate to give a pain reliever would be for teething, immunizations that were received, diagnosed ear infection, or seizure prevention.

- An *Authorization to Administrator Medication* form must be submitted and signed by a parent prior to administering over-the-counter medication. This form is available in the classroom.
- The *Authorization to Administer Medication* may be valid for up to 3-months.

For children under the age of 2-years or not meeting or exceeding weight requirement for dosage - A written note from the child's physician is required when the OTC medicine directions for use indicates that a physician should be consulted. Physician instructions will include all of the following information:

- the name of the child
- directions for dosage
- medication intervals, and any contradictions
- any reason for use or listed symptoms-(for teething, fever, pain, etc.)
- length of time that the medication will be used with a beginning and end date (3-month limit)

For children over the age of 2-years - Pain relievers will be administered within the guidelines of the medication as prescribed on the bottle. This includes the directions of dosage, medication intervals, length of time that the medication will be used (start and end date within a 3-month limit), and listed symptoms.

- It is recommended that parents offer the first dose of a new medication, to their child to check for allergic reaction.

- When the instruction for administration of medicine reads “as needed” the parent/physician should include a description of symptom. Example- As needed for teething, fever, or ear pain.
- Parents will be contacted prior to administering an “as needed” pain reliever medication.
- Parents will receive documentation of the OTC medication administered to their child at the end of the day.

Diaper Salves and Teething Gels

Over-the-counter diaper salves and teething gels will be administered to the child as needed.

- An *Authorization to Administrator Medication* form must be submitted prior to application
- Documentation of salve and gel application is not recorded
- It is recommended that parents offer the first dose of a new salve or gel to their child to check for allergic reaction

We reserve the right to limit or not administer over-the-counter medication that has not been prescribed by a physician.

SAFETY & EMERGENCY STANDARDS

Video Surveillance System

Learning Ladder is equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. Cameras are located inside in classrooms, hallways and common areas, as well as outside on the playgrounds and parking lot. Cameras have been strategically placed to help promote the safety and security of children, parents, staff and property.

Some of the benefits and uses of this system in our program include:

- Monitoring the facility to observe classrooms schedules, routines and interactions
- To improve curriculum activities and as a tool for teacher training
- Resolution of safety or security incidents
- Surveillance is an effective crime deterrent

The surveillance system will be used for the internal purposes. Only administration and authorized personnel will have access to on site or remote video feeds.

Administrators may view video surveillance on a periodic basis or in response to a specific incident. The video surveillance system is not monitored on a continuous basis.

In the event that a safety or security related incident occurs, the administration should be notified immediately. An administrator will review any related video recordings and determine if any relevant footage is available. The video may be used by the administration to investigate and resolve the reported incident and/or be released to the appropriate authorities.

Employee Qualifications and Annual Background Checks

Each new employee is screened at the time of hire. Their references and educational documents are validated, background checks are submitted, and the new employee is required to submit proof of good health and a TB test signed by their health care provider. Educational status is submitted to *The Registry* upon hire. Photo's of our teaching and support staff along with their Registry Certificate is displayed in the entryway. Information is reviewed periodically in accordance with Department of Children & Families (DCF) and National Accreditation Requirements (NAC) requirements. Performance Reviews are held annually.

Emergency Preparedness

All personnel are trained annually on Emergency Preparedness. CPR & Basic First Aid training is required to be completed within 6 months of hire and kept up to date. In addition, teachers are trained on Medication Administration, Child Abuse & Neglect, Shaken Baby Syndrome, & Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. First aid kits, evacuation routes, and emergency phone numbers are located in each classroom. Emergency provisions are located in the designated safe areas. Fire Drills and Tornado drills are practiced monthly. A professional security system is wired in to the building with smoke detectors. Criminal Background checks are submitted annually for all staff. Licensing Standards are met. Fire Inspection standards are met. Access to the building is controlled. Diving records are submitted annually

for staff members who transport children. In addition the following policies are part of our safety and emergency standards.

Injuries

In the case of an emergency, staff will assess the situation to determine what kind of care is needed; *professional emergency care* or on-site *basic first aid*.

- If *professional emergency care* is needed, we will contact 911 and notify parents
- If routine, *basic first aid* is needed, staff will proceed with needed care, and notify parents by filling out a *Mishap Form*
- In the event of a bee sting or bump to the head, or questionable injury, staff will notify parents by phone as well as the written documentation

Emergency Transportation

Parents will provide written permission for emergency transportation along with their child's health information, child's physician, and hospital choice. When transportation for an emergency is necessary, Learning Ladder will contact 911 to request an ambulance. Staff will provide the child's health information to the attending Emergency Medical personnel.

- Parent will be notified as soon as possible
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital when it is deemed necessary.

Fire/Tornado Drills

Fire/tornado drills are practiced monthly. The drills are a combination of scheduled and unscheduled drills

Emergency Lock Down

Lock down procedures will be used in situations that may result in harm to persons inside the school, such as a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, environmental disturbance or at the discretion of the administration or public safety personnel. Established methods of **Emergency Relocation and Tracking Children** will be followed as well as the **Emergency Relocation and Parent Notification policy**.

There are three types of lock downs. The following terminology will be used if there is a need for a lock down. Staff Members will be notified over the intercom or verbally by the designated person in charge of the type of "lock down" being implemented. Secret passwords will not be used.

A "Hold and Secure" will be implemented when it is desirable to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g., a bank robbery occurs near a school but not on school property). In this situation, the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved. Staff & children that are outside should re-enter the building immediately.

A "Shelter in Place" will be implemented for an environmental or weather related situation, where it is necessary to keep all occupants within the school, to protect them from an external situation. Examples may include chemical spills, blackouts, explosions or extreme weather conditions. Staff & children that are outside should re-enter the building immediately.

A "Lock down" will be implemented when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. Staff and children that are outside should not re-enter the building, Staff will quickly direct the children to take shelter at one of the off sites safe locations and wait for an all clear from administration or emergency personnel.

Designated Safe Areas Located in the Building

The middle classroom located on the lower level is a designated safe area that is used for inclement weather conditions or an extended lock down. A first aid kit, blankets, and emergency backpack is stored in the adjacent storage room.

In case of an emergency where there was not time to relocate a group to the lower level room teachers should take shelter in a centrally located upper level bathroom. Emergency provisions, attendance sheets and enrollment information will be collected from classroom during the evacuation process.

Notification of parents would begin as it becomes safe to do so. Mass e-mail and text messages will be sent by administration as soon as it safely possible. Land line phones, TV and radio will be used if cell and Internet power is lost.

Emergency Relocation and Parent Notification

In the case of an emergency requiring the children to evacuate the premises, a neighborhood relocation shelter will be determined, at the time of the event, after all considerations for safety have been evaluated. Authorized nearby evacuation sites are; Black Bear Restaurant, Kindred Hearts, or Taylor Ridge Retirement home.

In the event that children need to be relocated to a nearby building for shelter:

- Administration will coordinate a safe route for children to the designated relocation site and transport the children
- Staff will keep children protected and calm while gathering the following items: Daily Attendance Sheet, Enrollment Forms, and First Aid Backpacks
- Teachers will keep detailed attendance records

Emergency relocation may require moving a greater distance away. This destination will be determined by the local Emergency Government and would most likely be Glacier Drumlin Middle School, Monona Grove High School, or other school district building.

- If this should occur Learning Ladder vehicles or school district busing would be assigned. *All safety measures will be followed*, but if the relocation is determined by The Emergency Government Incident Command Officer to be immediate; vehicle capacity, safety belts, and car seats rules may possibly be disregarded if abiding hinders the safety and timeliness of the evacuation.
- Parents will be instructed to reunite with their child at the relocation site rather than during the evacuation process. Abiding by this will allow the Learning Ladder staff to devote all of their attention to safely implementing the emergency plan.
- Once the children have been moved and settled into a safe location the Administration/or designated person-in-charge will determine how to best notify families with instructions on how to safely reunite with their child
- Mass text messages, email, land line phones, Internet, radio, or television will be utilized if needed.

Missing Child

Many attendance & safety procedures are used to ensure the whereabouts of children throughout the day.

- When groups of children leave the classroom or playground, one teacher will lead the children, and the other will follow the last child.
- Attendance sheets referenced throughout the day and taken to the playground and on field trips.
- Teachers will count their group of children periodically throughout the day.
- If a child cannot be located, the director will be notified and a search will be conducted. If the child is not found the police department will be notified, in addition to notifying the child's parent(s).

Run Away Child Procedure

In the event that a school-aged child runs away or threatens to leave the group or premises, the following procedures have been established:

- Every effort, short of physically restraining the child shall be made to keep the child from leaving the group or premises.
- A teacher may follow the child if the other children are adequately supervised.

- Teachers will not pursue a run-away child if it results in the rest of the group being left inadequately supervised.
- The teacher will notify the director. Parents and/or police will be notified.
- A child that runs away may be terminated from the program.

Smoke Free Environment

The use of any and all tobacco products is strictly prohibited on or in Learning Ladder's property.

Prohibition of Firearms, Weapons, Drugs, & Alcohol

Firearms, weapons, drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited within the building and grounds.

Parking

Ample parking is available in the front of the building. Staff will use the parking stalls closest to the road and parents may use the stalls near the building. Handicap parking is available. **Unattended vehicles should not be left running and children should not be left in unattended vehicles. Young children can be unpredictable so please hold your child's hand to and from your vehicle whenever possible.** Please use caution and drive slowly.

Thank-you for sharing your child with us!