CHILDREN'S CORNER

CHILDREN'S CORNER LEICESTER

Parent Handbook

A practical guide to our program, policies, and family partnership

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70 Winslow Ave, Door 15

Leicester, MA 01524

Monday-Friday | 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

508-514-5199 | hala@childrenscornerccc.com

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Welcome

Dear Families,

Welcome to Children's Corner Leicester. Choosing care for your child is an important decision, and we are grateful for the trust you place in us. We want our center to feel warm, familiar, and dependable: a place where children are known well, families are treated as partners, and learning grows naturally through play, relationships, routines, and thoughtful teaching.

Children's Corner Leicester continues the work and experience of Children's Corner while creating a program specifically for families in Leicester and the surrounding communities. Our staff members are selected for their understanding of child development, their ability to build caring relationships, and their commitment to providing safe and engaging care.

This handbook explains what families can expect from us and what we need from families in return. Please read it carefully and ask questions at any time. Clear communication is one of the most important parts of a successful child care experience.

We look forward to getting to know your family and helping your child feel secure, capable, and excited to learn.

Warmly,

Hala Laverdure

Director, Children's Corner Leicester

Program at a Glance

Program name	Children's Corner Leicester
Legal operator	Children's Corner Child Care Center of Worcester, LLC
Location	70 Winslow Ave, Door 15, Leicester, MA 01524
Hours	Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Primary contact	Hala Laverdure | 508-514-5199 | hala@childrenscornerccc.com

How this handbook works

This handbook summarizes program policies. The signed Tuition Agreement, enrollment forms, Health Care Policy, Emergency Plan, annual calendar, and applicable funding rules also apply. If a conflict exists, applicable law and EEC requirements control, and the signed Tuition Agreement controls tuition and fee obligations.

Contents

The headings in this document are formatted for easy navigation in Microsoft Word. Use the Navigation Pane to move directly to any section.

1. Our Program

Our Philosophy

Children learn best when they feel safe, connected, and respected. Our program supports each child's social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical, and creative development through a balance of child-directed exploration and educator-guided experiences. Children have opportunities to play independently and with others, solve problems, build relationships, develop self-help skills, and experience the satisfaction of trying new things.

Educators serve as positive role models and provide care that is warm, responsive, and appropriate to each child's age and development. We respect parents and guardians as the most important people in their child's life and believe that children do best when families and educators communicate openly and work together.

Program Purpose and Services

Children's Corner Leicester provides year-round early education and care for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, subject to the age groups, capacity, and space approved by EEC. Children are grouped and staffed in accordance with the program's license and current EEC requirements.

- Nurturing, developmentally appropriate classroom care.
- Play-based learning experiences that support school readiness and whole-child development.
- Daily routines that build independence, communication, cooperation, and confidence.
- Regular opportunities for outdoor play and active movement.
- Ongoing family communication through Brightwheel and direct conversation.

Our Staff

Our educators meet applicable EEC qualification requirements and complete required orientation, background record checks, health documentation, professional development, and emergency training. Staff members receive ongoing supervision and support from the Director. At least one appropriately trained staff member is available whenever children are in care, as required by EEC.

The program also maintains access to health care consultation and referral resources. With parental consent when required, we may consult appropriate professionals to help us respond to a child's health, developmental, educational, or behavioral needs.

Program Administration

Children's Corner Child Care Center of Worcester, LLC is the legal operator of Children's Corner Leicester. Hala Laverdure serves as Director and primary program contact. Classroom educators work

under designated lead educators and the Director. The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care is the program's licensing authority.

Equal Access and Individualized Support

Children's Corner does not discriminate in enrollment or services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, marital or family status, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.

Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

When a child has a disability, developmental delay, medical need, or behavioral need, we will work with the family to understand the child's needs and consider reasonable accommodations. With appropriate consent, we may collaborate with health care providers, Early Intervention, public schools, or other professionals. Decisions are made individually and focus on the child's successful and safe participation in the program.

Referral Services

When an educator or the Director has a concern about a child's development, learning, health, hearing, vision, behavior, or social-emotional well-being, the program will observe and document the concern, review relevant information, and meet with the family. The goal is to share specific observations, hear the family's perspective, identify supports that can be tried in the classroom, and decide whether an outside evaluation or service may be helpful.

When a referral may be appropriate, the Director will offer current contact information for suitable community resources, such as Early Intervention, the child's public school district, the child's health care provider, or medical, dental, developmental, mental health, or family-support services. Except when reporting or action is required by law, the program will obtain written parental consent before sharing confidential information or communicating with an outside provider. Staff will document the referral steps and, with the family's consent, follow up and coordinate reasonable supports. A family may decline a voluntary referral; that decision does not prevent the program from continuing to discuss documented needs or safety concerns.

2. Enrollment and Transitions

Admission Process

Before enrollment, a parent or guardian will meet with the Director or designee to review the program, visit the child's classroom when appropriate, discuss the child's needs and schedule, review required forms, and ask questions. Enrollment is complete only after the program confirms availability and receives all required paperwork and payments.

- Completed enrollment and emergency contact forms.
- Current physical examination, immunization, and lead screening documentation as required.
- Developmental history and information needed to provide individualized care.
- Emergency medical consent and authorized pickup information.
- Copies of relevant custody orders, restraining orders, or other court documents.
- Individual Health Care Plan and medication authorizations, when applicable.
- Signed Tuition Agreement, handbook acknowledgment, and any required deposit.

Records must remain current

Families must promptly provide updated contact, medical, custody, pickup, and emergency information. Care may be paused when legally required health or enrollment documentation has expired and has not been provided after notice.

Getting Comfortable

Starting child care is a transition for both children and families. We encourage families to share routines, comforting strategies, familiar words, interests, and concerns. When possible, the Director and classroom educators will plan a gradual and reassuring start that fits the child's age and needs.

At arrival, families should complete a warm but consistent goodbye and allow staff to help the child settle into the day. Staff will contact the family if a child is unable to settle or if additional planning would help.

Moving Between Classrooms

Classroom transitions are based on age, development, available space, the needs of the child, and the program's licensed groupings. Before a transition, staff will communicate with the family, share information between educators, and help the child become familiar with the new environment and routines. Families will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide input.

Changes in Schedule or Services

Requests to change a child's days or schedule must be approved in advance and depend on availability, staffing, and enrollment. Approval of a temporary schedule change does not guarantee a permanent space. Drop-in or additional care may be offered only when space and staffing permit.

3. Schedule, Attendance, Tuition, and Closures

Hours of Operation

Children's Corner Leicester is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except for scheduled holidays, professional development days, and emergency closures. Families must use Door 15 for arrival and dismissal unless the program communicates a different procedure.

Attendance and Arrival

Families should follow the schedule listed in their enrollment agreement. Consistent attendance and on-time arrival help children participate fully in classroom routines. Please notify the program through Brightwheel as soon as possible if your child will be absent, late, or picked up early.

Children must be escorted to a staff member and signed in. A child may not be left at the entrance, in a hallway, or in a vehicle. Families should share relevant information about the child's sleep, health, medication, mood, or morning that may affect care that day.

Tuition and Fees

Private-pay tuition is billed weekly through Brightwheel and is due each Monday in advance for that week of care, unless the signed Tuition Agreement states a different due date. The child's current tuition rate is based on the enrolled schedule and age group and appears in the Tuition Agreement or current fee schedule. Deposits, credits, discounts, and other charges are applied only as stated in the family's written agreement.

- A full week's tuition is charged each week because tuition reserves the child's scheduled space. Tuition is not reduced for holidays, professional development days, storm or emergency closure days, illness, routine absences, or family vacations unless the Tuition Agreement or applicable funding rule expressly provides otherwise.
- A 10 percent late charge may be added each month to an unpaid private-pay balance, as stated in the signed Tuition Agreement. A private-pay account that remains unpaid for two weeks may result in suspension or termination of care unless the Director has approved a written payment arrangement.
- Families using vouchers, contracts, or other child care financial assistance must comply with the rules of that funding source. Private-pay provisions will not be applied when they conflict with subsidy requirements.
- Families using financial assistance are responsible for keeping authorizations current and for any parent fee or other amount permitted by the funding rules. If authorization expires, continued attendance and responsibility for private tuition will be handled under the funding rules and the family's written agreement.

- Families should contact the Director promptly if a payment problem develops. When possible, we prefer to address concerns before a balance becomes unmanageable.

Unresolved nonpayment may result in a pause or termination of care after required notices and funding procedures are followed. Any payment arrangement must be approved in writing. Families may request receipts or a year-end payment summary; the program's federal tax identification number will be provided when appropriate for child care expense reporting.

Withdrawal by a Family

Families must provide at least 14 calendar days' written notice before ending care, unless the Tuition Agreement provides a longer period. Tuition remains due through the notice period. Deposits are applied or forfeited according to the signed Tuition Agreement.

Late Pickup

Children must be picked up and signed out by 5:30 p.m. Pickup from 5:31 through 5:35 p.m. results in a $5 late fee. Beginning at 5:36 p.m., an additional $2 is charged for each minute. When two children from the same family are picked up late, the total fee is one and one-half times the single-child amount. The fee is due that evening or before the child's next drop-off using the payment method directed by the program.

The late fee compensates for care outside the program's operating hours and does not extend the family's approved schedule. If an emergency may delay pickup, contact the program immediately and arrange for an authorized adult to pick up the child. Repeated late pickups may lead to a required meeting, a written pickup plan, suspension, and, if the problem continues, termination of enrollment.

Annual Calendar and Emergency Closures

Families receive an annual calendar identifying scheduled holidays and professional development days. Severe weather, power loss, building conditions, public safety concerns, or other emergencies may require a delayed opening, early closing, relocation, or full closure. Notifications will be sent through Brightwheel and other available contact methods. Families are responsible for maintaining backup care plans and current contact information.

4. Daily Care and Family Partnership

Learning Through Play and Relationships

Classroom schedules include welcoming routines, learning centers, stories, music, art, sensory exploration, active movement, meals, rest, outdoor experiences, and small- and large-group activities. Educators plan experiences based on children's ages, interests, development, and classroom goals while allowing flexibility for individual needs and the natural rhythm of the day.

Our curriculum supports communication, early literacy, early mathematics, science and discovery, creativity, motor development, self-help skills, emotional development, and positive relationships. The goal is not to rush children into academic tasks, but to help them build strong foundations for learning.

Outdoor Play and Active Movement

Outdoor play is an important part of the daily program. Children will go outside when weather, air quality, and safety conditions allow. When outdoor play is limited, educators provide indoor gross-motor experiences. A child who is well enough to attend should generally be well enough to participate in the classroom's full schedule, including outdoor play.

Families must send clothing appropriate for the season and weather, including labeled coats, hats, gloves, boots, and extra clothing as needed. Sunscreen or insect repellent will be used only with the required written permission and in accordance with program procedures.

Brightwheel and Daily Communication

Brightwheel is our primary system for family communication, billing, attendance, and routine updates. Families are responsible for keeping account access and contact information current. Staff will provide daily information appropriate to the child's age and classroom, including routine care information for infants and toddlers.

Brightwheel is the preferred place for non-urgent communication because it creates a clear record and protects privacy. Urgent matters, same-day pickup changes, or health and safety concerns should be communicated directly to the center as well as through Brightwheel when appropriate.

Family Visits and Participation

Families are welcome and encouraged to make announced or unannounced visits to the program or their child's classroom at any time while their child is present. For security, visitors must enter through the designated entrance, identify themselves, and follow check-in procedures. Visits should not disrupt supervision, rest, or classroom routines. The Director may help manage the visit in a way that protects children's safety and privacy.

Families may be invited to share traditions, skills, stories, or classroom experiences. Participation is always optional, and family information will be treated respectfully.

Family input on program policies is encouraged. Suggestions may be shared with the Director in person, in writing, or through Brightwheel. The Director will consider family input and communicate follow-up when appropriate. Final policy decisions remain with the legal operator and must be consistent with EEC requirements and safe program operations.

Progress Reports and Conferences

Educators observe children regularly and prepare written progress reports. Reports are prepared every three months for infants and children with identified special needs, every six months for toddlers and preschoolers, and at least annually at the midpoint of the program year for any school-age child served. Families receive a copy, a copy is maintained in the child's record, and the program offers a conference to discuss the report. Families may request a conference at any time. Staff may also request a meeting when a child's development, health, adjustment, attendance, or behavior would benefit from family collaboration.

Screen and Media Use

Screens are not a routine substitute for active play, conversation, books, creative work, or educator interaction. Limited, age-appropriate media may be used for a specific educational, music, movement, or program purpose under staff supervision. Personal devices are not available to children, and infants are not provided screen-based programming.

5. Child Guidance, Behavior Support, and Enrollment Decisions

Our Approach to Child Guidance

Young children are still learning how to communicate needs, manage strong feelings, solve problems, wait, share space, and keep themselves and others safe. Behavior is treated as communication and an opportunity to teach. Educators use calm, consistent, developmentally appropriate guidance that protects each child's dignity.

- Build warm relationships and predictable routines.
- Set clear, simple, age-appropriate expectations.
- Notice and reinforce safe, kind, and cooperative behavior.
- Redirect children and offer acceptable choices.
- Help children name feelings and learn safer ways to express them.
- Modify activities or environments when they contribute to repeated difficulty.
- Use brief, supervised calming space only as a supportive tool, never as isolation or humiliation.

Practices We Do Not Use

Children's Corner prohibits corporal punishment and any cruel, severe, humiliating, frightening, or abusive treatment. Children will not be deprived of food, rest, outdoor activity, or toileting as punishment; force-fed; shamed for toileting accidents; restrained except as lawfully necessary to protect a child from immediate harm; or isolated in a locked or unmonitored space. Guidance will never be based on anger, ridicule, threats, or retaliation.

Behavior Support Progression

Most concerns are resolved through classroom support and family communication. When behavior is frequent, severe, or unsafe, the following progression provides a clear path while allowing the Director to adjust the sequence to the child's age, needs, and the seriousness of the situation.

Stage	What Children's Corner does	How families are involved
1. Prevent and teach	Use predictable routines, active supervision, clear expectations, redirection, choices, emotional coaching, and developmentally appropriate teaching.	Share information about routines, strengths, culture, language, and strategies that help the child.
2. Observe and communicate	Document patterns such as triggers, frequency, duration, impact, and successful supports. Adjust the environment and teaching strategies.	Receive timely, factual communication and share relevant changes or observations from home.
3. Meet and plan	Hold a family meeting and create a written support plan with specific strategies, safety steps, responsible adults, and a review date.	Help develop and consistently support the plan. Attend scheduled meetings and provide requested information.

Stage	What Children's Corner does	How families are involved
4. Add support and review	With consent when required, offer referrals and pursue consultation, educator training, reasonable accommodations, and coordination with appropriate professionals.	Consider referrals and authorize collaboration when appropriate. Participate in review meetings and updates.
5. Enrollment decision	If serious risk continues or the program cannot safely and appropriately meet the child's needs despite reasonable efforts, determine whether care can continue, must be temporarily suspended, or must end.	Receive written reasons, the effective date, circumstances for return if any, and transition or referral information when appropriate.

Written Support Plans

A written support plan may identify the behavior of concern in objective terms, known triggers, prevention strategies, skills to teach, adult responses, safety steps, family and program responsibilities, outside supports, and a date for review. Plans are shared only with people who need the information to care for the child and are updated as the child's needs change.

Immediate Safety Response

Serious or imminent risk may require immediate action

If a child's behavior presents a serious or imminent risk of injury to the child, another child, a staff member, or another person, Children's Corner may require immediate pickup, use a temporary suspension, or end enrollment without completing every step above. Examples may include a serious physical assault, repeated dangerous behavior that cannot be safely contained, use of a weapon, or another incident that makes continued care unsafe. The response will be based on the actual circumstances, not on a diagnosis or label.

When immediate action is taken, the program will document the specific reasons, notify the family, and provide written information about the decision and the circumstances under which the child may return, if any. Immediate action is a safety measure, not a punishment.

Temporary Suspension

Temporary suspension is used only when necessary to protect health or safety, comply with a legal or documentation requirement, or allow time for urgent planning. The written notice will state the reason, expected duration when known, steps being considered, and the circumstances for return. A child may also be placed on an administrative hold when required records or medical documentation are missing.

When Enrollment May End

Children's Corner may end enrollment when, after considering the circumstances and reasonable alternatives, one or more of the following applies:

- The program cannot safely or appropriately meet the child's needs without compromising the health or safety of the child or others.
- Serious or repeated unsafe behavior continues despite reasonable strategies, family meetings, and support efforts.
- A single serious incident creates an immediate safety risk that makes continued care unreasonable.
- The family does not participate in required meetings, does not provide necessary information, or does not cooperate with a safety or support plan to a degree that prevents safe care.
- Required tuition, health, enrollment, or custody documentation remains unresolved after applicable notice and procedures.
- A parent, guardian, or authorized adult threatens, harasses, intimidates, or engages in unsafe conduct toward children, families, staff, or others at the program.
- The family repeatedly or substantially violates the Tuition Agreement or program policies.
- The program closes, changes services, or loses the ability to provide the contracted care.

When circumstances allow, the program will provide at least 14 calendar days' written notice. A shorter notice period, including immediate termination, may be used when required for safety, serious misconduct, nonpayment after required process, loss of eligibility, legal compliance, or another substantial program concern.

Any suspension or termination notice will identify the specific reasons for the decision and the circumstances under which the child may return, if any. When appropriate and feasible, staff will help prepare the child in a developmentally appropriate way and provide families with referral or child care resource information.

Adult Conduct and Conflict

Concerns involving another child, family, or staff member must be brought to the Director. Adults may not confront, threaten, photograph, question, or discipline another family's child, and may not engage in arguments or disruptive conduct on program property. The Director will address concerns privately and protect confidential information. Unsafe or threatening adult behavior may result in removal from the premises, limits on access, a change in authorized pickup arrangements, or termination of the family's enrollment.

6. Health, Nutrition, Rest, and Personal Care

The program's complete Health Care Policy is available to families upon request and controls detailed health, medication, exclusion, infection-control, and emergency-care procedures.

Meals and Snacks

Children's Corner provides breakfast and morning and afternoon snacks. Families provide a nutritious lunch unless the program communicates another arrangement. Menus for food provided by the program are posted or made available to families. Mealtimes are relaxed, supervised, and used to encourage conversation, self-help skills, and healthy habits.

- Label lunch boxes, bottles, cups, containers, and utensils with the child's name.
- Send food ready to serve. Use an insulated thermos for hot food and ice packs for food that must remain cold unless the classroom has communicated a different procedure.
- Children's Corner Leicester is a peanut-free program. Do not send peanuts, peanut butter, or foods containing peanut ingredients. Follow any additional classroom restrictions communicated because of a child's allergy plan.
- Inform the program of allergies, dietary restrictions, feeding concerns, or choking risks before the child attends and whenever information changes.

Nutritious lunch choices may include fruit, cooked or appropriately cut vegetables, yogurt or cheese, eggs, beans, lean meat or another protein, and whole-grain bread, crackers, pasta, or rice. Foods must be prepared in a form that is safe for the child's age and eating skills. Staff may provide additional guidance based on allergy plans and current choking-prevention practices.

Food from Home and Choking Prevention

Families must prepare food in a size, shape, and texture that is safe for the child's age and eating skills. Children eat while seated and supervised. The enrollment packet includes a food-from-home safety guide; the following requirements apply whenever these foods are sent:

- Cut grapes and cherry or grape tomatoes lengthwise into quarters. Cut or crush firm berries when needed for the child's age and chewing ability.
- Cook hard vegetables such as carrots until soft. Cut apples, pears, celery, and similar foods into small, thin, manageable pieces.
- Cut hot dogs and sausages lengthwise into quarters and then into small pieces. Never send round coin-shaped slices.
- Cut string cheese and other firm cheese into short, thin strips or small pieces rather than sending a whole stick.

- Do not send popcorn, chewing gum, hard or gummy candy, marshmallows, whole nuts, or other hard, round, sticky, or difficult-to-chew foods.

Staff may decline to serve food that presents a choking, allergy, spoilage, or sanitation concern and will contact the family when a safer replacement is needed.

Infant Feeding

Infant feeding follows the child's individualized schedule and written family instructions, consistent with health and safety requirements. Breast milk, formula, bottles, and food must be labeled and supplied in the quantity and form requested by the classroom. Bottles must have covers and may not contain cereal or other food unless authorized by the child's health care provider. Bottles and cups are sent home daily for cleaning.

What to Bring

For infants

- Breast milk or formula and one labeled, covered bottle for each expected feeding.
- Diapers, wipes, diaper cream with written authorization, and sufficient supplies for the day.
- At least two complete changes of labeled clothing.
- Pacifier, sleep sack, food, cups, and other items requested by the classroom.
- No pillows, loose blankets, stuffed animals, crib bumpers, or other prohibited sleep items.

For toddlers

- Nutritious lunch and labeled drink container.
- Diapers or training supplies and wipes, if needed.
- At least two complete changes of labeled clothing, with additional clothing during toilet learning.
- A fitted sheet and small blanket or other rest items requested by the classroom.
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing.

For preschoolers

- Nutritious lunch and labeled drink container.
- At least one or two complete changes of labeled clothing.
- A fitted sheet and small blanket or other rest items requested by the classroom.
- Diapers, wipes, or toileting supplies when needed.
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing.

Classroom supply needs may vary. Families are responsible for replenishing requested items promptly. If a required personal care item is unavailable, the program may need the family to provide it before care can continue that day.

Rest and Safe Sleep

Children are offered a daily rest period appropriate to their age and individual needs. Children who do not sleep may engage in quiet activities after a reasonable rest period, consistent with classroom needs and EEC requirements.

Infants younger than 12 months are placed on their backs for every sleep in a safety-approved crib, portable crib, or other approved sleep equipment unless the child's health care professional provides a written medical order for another position. Infant sleep spaces remain free of pillows, blankets, comforters, stuffed toys, bumper pads, and other soft or loose items. Staff follow the current EEC Safe Sleep Policy and required supervision practices.

Toileting and Diapering

Diapering and toileting are handled respectfully, hygienically, and without punishment or shame. Families and educators will work together when a child shows readiness for toilet learning so that routines and language are as consistent as possible. Children will never be punished for accidents or required to remain in wet or soiled clothing.

Sunscreen and Preventive Topical Products

Sunscreen, insect repellent, lip balm, and similar non-prescription topical products used only on unbroken skin require written parental authorization renewed annually. Families may provide a preferred product in its original container, clearly labeled with the child's name. Staff will follow the product label, the written authorization, EEC requirements, and the program's Health Care Policy. Products will not be applied to open wounds, rashes, or broken skin under this general authorization. The optional sunscreen authorization is included in the enrollment packet and may be withdrawn in writing for future use.

Mild Illness

A child with mild symptoms may remain in care only when the child has no exclusion symptom, is not known or reasonably suspected to pose a significant communicable-disease risk, can participate comfortably in the full program including outdoor play, and does not need care that compromises supervision. The Director or designee makes the final attendance decision under the program's Health Care Policy and current public health guidance.

Illness and Exclusion

Children should attend only when they can participate comfortably and do not require care that compromises supervision. A fever is a measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher. A child will be excluded or sent home for any of the following:

- A fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher. For an infant younger than three months, the family will be told to contact the child's health care provider promptly because fever at this age requires timely medical guidance.
- Vomiting at the center, or vomiting two or more times during the previous 24 hours, unless a health care provider has documented a noninfectious condition that the Director has approved as an exception.
- Diarrhea that occurs two or more times within one hour, is more than two stools above the child's usual pattern in 24 hours, cannot be contained in a diaper or by toilet use, or contains blood or mucus.
- Unusual lethargy, persistent irritability or inconsolable crying, breathing difficulty, uncontrolled or severe coughing, significant pain, or another sign of serious illness.
- An undiagnosed rash with fever or behavior change, purulent eye drainage, mouth sores with uncontrolled drooling, draining skin sores that cannot be covered, or another suspected communicable condition.
- An illness or injury that prevents comfortable participation, requires medical evaluation, or requires one-to-one care beyond what classroom staff can safely provide.

The 24-hour return rule

After a fever, vomiting, or exclusion-level diarrhea, a child may return only after a full 24 hours have passed with no fever, vomiting, or exclusion-level diarrhea. The child must be fever-free without acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or any other fever-reducing medication, symptoms must be improving, and the child must be able to participate comfortably in the full program. Giving medicine to reduce a fever does not shorten the exclusion period.

Some diagnoses have additional return requirements. A child with strep throat may return after at least 24 hours of appropriate treatment and after being fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. A child with impetigo may return after at least 24 hours of treatment or when all sores can remain securely covered. A child with chickenpox may return when all lesions have dried and crusted. Purulent conjunctivitis must be evaluated; return is permitted when the child's health care provider and the program determine that the child does not pose a serious health risk and any drainage can be managed without compromising care. Other communicable illnesses are handled under the program's Health Care Policy and current EEC, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, local public health, and health care consultant guidance.

If a Child Becomes Ill at the Center

The program will contact a parent or guardian immediately when a child meets an exclusion criterion or when staff determine that going home is in the child's best interest. The family must arrange pickup as soon as possible. Until pickup, a qualified staff member will supervise the child in a comfortable, quiet

area where the child can rest while appropriate supervision and infection-control practices are maintained. Toys, bedding, mats, and other items used by the ill child will be cleaned and disinfected before reuse. Staff will call emergency medical services when symptoms require emergency care.

A health care provider's note may be required for certain symptoms or diagnoses, but a note does not automatically permit return while an exclusion criterion still applies. The Director or designee makes the final return-to-care decision under the Health Care Policy and current public health guidance. The program may request documentation that a symptom is due to a diagnosed noninfectious or chronic condition when an exception is appropriate.

Communicable Diseases

Families must promptly report a diagnosed or suspected communicable disease so the program can protect children and staff. When exposure occurs, the program will notify potentially affected families in writing without identifying the ill child, provide reliable disease information when available, and report to EEC, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, or the local board of health when required. The program may apply disease-specific exclusion, clearance, testing, treatment, masking, or other precautions required by current public health guidance.

Medication

Medication is administered only when required authorizations, instructions, training, and documentation are in place. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container. Nonprescription medication and topical products require the authorizations specified by EEC and the program's Health Care Policy. Medication must be handed directly to an authorized staff member and may never be left in a child's bag, cubby, lunch box, or bottle.

Except in an emergency or when otherwise directed by a health care professional, the first dose should be given by the family at home so the child can be observed for a reaction. Individual Health Care Plans and specialized medication training are required when applicable.

7. Safety and Emergency Procedures

Secure Arrival and Release

Children are released only to a parent, guardian, or adult authorized in writing. Every adult listed in the signed authorized-pickup section of the enrollment packet is authorized to pick up the child. An emergency contact is not automatically authorized unless also listed for pickup. Staff may request government-issued photo identification. Changes to pickup arrangements must be communicated by a parent or guardian through an approved method. Staff cannot release a child based only on a message from an unauthorized person.

A parent or guardian must provide the program with any court order that restricts custody, visitation, contact, or pickup. Without a valid court order on file, the program generally cannot deny access to a legal parent or guardian. Staff will follow documented legal restrictions and contact appropriate authorities when necessary for safety.

Injuries and Incidents

Staff provide first aid within the scope of their training and document injuries or significant incidents. Families are notified immediately of an injury requiring medical care beyond minor first aid and of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their child while in program care. Families are informed by the end of the day of minor first aid, and written notice is provided within 24 hours when required by EEC. The program will seek emergency medical care and transportation when delay could endanger a child, using the family's emergency consent and contact information.

Emergency Preparedness

The program maintains written emergency plans addressing evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, missing children, fire, severe weather, power or heat loss, medical emergencies, and other hazards. Staff practice drills and receive emergency assignments. During an emergency, the program may relocate children to a designated safe area and will communicate reunification instructions as soon as circumstances allow.

- Families must keep all emergency contacts and authorized pickup information current.
- Adults picking up during an emergency must bring identification and follow staff instructions.
- Children will be supervised until released to an authorized adult or transferred to emergency authorities.

Missing Child Response

If a child cannot be immediately located, staff will activate the missing-child procedure, maintain supervision of the other children, search assigned areas, notify program leadership, contact 911, and notify the family and EEC as required. The program will document and review the incident and take corrective action.

Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Children's Corner staff are mandated reporters. When staff have reasonable cause to believe a child may have been abused or neglected, they must make the reports required by Massachusetts law and notify EEC when the allegation involves a child while in program care. Staff do not investigate allegations on their own or promise confidentiality to the exclusion of reporting duties.

When an allegation concerns a staff member, volunteer, or person connected to the program, Children's Corner will take immediate protective steps, cooperate with DCF and EEC, preserve confidentiality as much as possible, and follow all required staffing restrictions and investigation procedures.

Emergency Closings and Family Pickup

If the center must close early, families must arrange pickup within the time provided. If a parent or guardian cannot arrive, an adult who is authorized for pickup must be available. Repeated inability to arrange timely emergency pickup may require a family meeting and backup plan.

8. Family Rights, Records, and Concerns

Family Rights

Families have the right to understand the program, ask questions, visit while their child is present, receive required notices and progress information, review their child's record, and raise concerns without retaliation. EEC regulations and program policies are available for review.

- Receive written program information before enrollment and notice of significant policy changes.
- Request conferences and information about the child's experience and development.
- Review, request amendments to, or request transfer of the child's record as allowed by EEC regulations.
- Receive notice of injuries, incidents, emergency actions, and suspension or termination decisions as required.
- Contact EEC with licensing questions or concerns.
- Contact EEC for information about the program's regulatory compliance history.

Confidentiality and Child Records

Children's records and family information are confidential and are shared only with authorized individuals, staff who need the information to care for the child, government agencies with lawful authority, or others with written parental consent. Parents will be notified if a child's record is subpoenaed. The program maintains the access and release log required by EEC.

A parent or guardian may request access to the child's entire record at a reasonable time. Access will not be delayed more than two business days without the parent's consent. A parent may add relevant information and may request that information be amended or deleted. If a conference is needed to address the request, the program will provide a written decision stating its reasons within one week after the conference and will promptly implement a decision in the parent's favor.

Upon written request, the program will transfer a copy of the child's record to the parent or another person the parent identifies within a reasonable time. Any charge for copies will be reasonable and permitted by EEC requirements.

Questions and Concerns

Most concerns are resolved quickly when they are raised early. Families should begin with the classroom educator when the concern involves a routine classroom matter. Concerns involving safety, confidentiality, staff conduct, another family, billing, enrollment, or a matter that was not resolved should be brought directly to Hala Laverdure.

1. Describe the concern privately and as specifically as possible.

2. Allow the appropriate staff member or Director to review the facts and relevant documentation.
3. Participate in a follow-up conversation and agreed next steps when appropriate.
4. If the concern remains unresolved, request a written response or contact EEC regarding a licensing matter.

Privacy matters

Staff cannot discuss another child, family, or employee's confidential information. We can explain how we are addressing safety and program expectations without disclosing protected details.

Family Responsibilities

- Treat children, families, staff, and school personnel respectfully.
- Follow security, parking, arrival, dismissal, payment, and communication procedures.
- Keep contact, medical, custody, and authorized pickup information current.
- Read Brightwheel messages and respond promptly to requests affecting care or safety.
- Provide required supplies and weather-appropriate clothing.
- Arrange timely pickup for illness, emergency closure, or behavior-related safety concerns.
- Raise concerns directly with staff or the Director rather than confronting another family or child.

9. Additional Program Policies

Transportation, Walks, and Field Trips

Routine transportation is not provided unless separately arranged and authorized in writing. Families are responsible for drop-off and pickup. Children may participate in supervised neighborhood walks or off-site activities only when the required permissions and safety plans are in place. Families will receive advance information and may decline participation when permitted.

Photographs, Video, and Digital Media

Children may be photographed, video recorded, or audio recorded only when the program has current written permission from a parent or guardian. The enrollment packet provides two separate optional authorization checkboxes, one for internal program use and one for public or promotional use. Each unchecked box means permission is not granted for that category. Images or recordings will not be used for a purpose outside the authorization.

Internal program use may include classroom documentation, child portfolios, secure Brightwheel communication with enrolled families, learning displays, or keepsakes. Public, promotional, website, advertising, or social media use requires a separate, optional affirmative selection. A family may decline either category without affecting enrollment and may withdraw permission in writing for future use, subject to materials already lawfully produced or distributed. Staff may not store or share child images or recordings on personal devices or personal accounts. Families and visitors may not photograph, video, or audio-record other children without permission from those children's families and the program.

Personal Belongings

All items brought to the center must be labeled. Children's Corner cannot guarantee replacement of lost, damaged, or mixed-up items. Expensive, sentimental, dangerous, or easily lost items should remain at home.

Toys from Home

Toys should remain at home unless requested by the classroom or approved as a comfort item. Items that encourage unsafe play, resemble weapons, create significant conflict, or cannot be safely shared will not be used. Comfort items are handled according to classroom and safe-sleep requirements.

Jewelry and Clothing

Jewelry and clothing with small parts, long cords, or other hazards may not be worn when they create a risk of choking, strangulation, entanglement, or injury. Staff may ask that an item be removed or sent home. Footwear and clothing should allow active indoor and outdoor play.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Families may coordinate a simple classroom celebration with the teacher. Any food must follow allergy restrictions and classroom guidance. If invitations are distributed at the center, every child in the class must be included; otherwise, invitations should be shared privately outside the program.

Smoke-, Vape-, Drug-, and Weapon-Free Program

Smoking, vaping, alcohol, illegal drugs, impairment, and weapons are prohibited in program areas and during program activities. A child will not be released to an adult who appears unable to transport or care for the child safely. Staff may contact another authorized adult or emergency authorities when needed to protect the child.

Policy Changes

Children's Corner may revise policies to respond to changes in law, EEC requirements, health guidance, funding rules, or program operations. Families will receive notice of material changes. The most current version of the policy controls after the effective date stated in the notice.

10. Contacts and Acknowledgment

Program Contact

Children's Corner Leicester

70 Winslow Ave, Door 15, Leicester, MA 01524

Hala Laverdure, Director

508-514-5199 | hala@childrenscornerccc.com

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

Central MA Office, Region 2

324-R Clark Street, Worcester, MA 01606

508-461-1440 | mass.gov/eec

Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting

In an emergency, call 911. Suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported by telephone to the appropriate DCF area office during regular business hours or to the Massachusetts Child Abuse Emergency Line at 800-792-5200 after hours, on weekends, or on holidays. Mandated reporters must make the required immediate report and submit the required written follow-up within 48 hours.

Acknowledgment of Receipt

Please sign and return this page to the program. Keep the remainder of the handbook for your records.

Children's Corner Leicester | 70 Winslow Ave, Door 15, Leicester, MA 01524

I acknowledge that I received the Children's Corner Leicester Parent Handbook and had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that the handbook summarizes program policies and works together with the Tuition Agreement, enrollment forms, Health Care Policy, Emergency Plan, annual calendar, and applicable funding rules. I agree to follow program policies and to communicate promptly about matters affecting my child's care, health, safety, attendance, or enrollment.

I understand that policies may be revised and that applicable law and EEC requirements control if a conflict exists. My signature confirms receipt and understanding, not a waiver of any legal right.

Authorizations are completed separately

Optional permissions for internal photographs or recordings, public or promotional media, sunscreen, and neighborhood walks are contained in the enrollment packet. They are not conditions of enrollment and are not granted by signing this handbook acknowledgment.

My signature below confirms only my receipt and acknowledgment of the handbook.

Child's name	
Parent/guardian name	
Parent/guardian signature	
Date	
Director/designee	