



Little Wonders

Early Learning Center

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2022-2023 School Year



WELCOME

Dear Family,

We are overjoyed to come together as a team this year to foster the innate wonder, curiosity, and brilliance of the children at Little Wonders. I could not be more thrilled about the amazing team of educators that make up our founding staff. Every educator on our team comes with a bachelor's degree in early childhood, elementary education, or a related field and years of experience working with young children. They have a passion for growing in their work as educators and cannot wait to build relationships with your children and your families.

We know that raising children requires a village. You no doubt have friends, family, religious communities, neighbors, etc. who support your family. Now you'll be able to add the Little Wonders community to that network of support. Together, we will watch our children grow and wonder, puzzle through the daily challenges of parenting, and take time to appreciate the little wonders of family life.

Thank you for choosing **Little Wonders ELC**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching early childhood experience.

Sincerely,

Zarabeth Davis
Executive Director
zarabeth@littlewonderselc.com
Little Wonders Early Learning Center

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ABOUT US

Philosophy

Through stimulating classroom and outdoor environments and responsive educator practices we strive to foster children's innate wonder, curiosity, and brilliance as, together, they learn about the world around them.

Mission

Little Wonders Early Learning Center aims to deliver high-quality, child-centered early education and care to the children of Davidson county's hardworking educators. When educators know their own children are deeply cared for in their school-day setting, it allows them to be fully present in their own work.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Little Wonders hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 6:45 a.m. until 5:15 p.m. Children will not be accepted after 9:00 a.m., unless the late arrival has been communicated to the teacher (or office staff) previously. Also, children will not be accepted between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., so that disruption to the children's naptime may be avoided.

Parents are expected to sign children in and out. Parents are required to walk their children to their classroom each morning after checking in. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a **TN state** requirement, to ensure the center has an up-to-date emergency contact who can be reached at any time in case of emergency. Failure to **sign your children in or out of the center** on a regular basis can result in suspension from the Center. A late fee of \$1.00 for every minute past the 5:15 p.m. closing time will be charged to the parent's account if a child is not picked up by 5:15. If continuous tardiness occurs services may be suspended or terminated.

Calendar

We are closed for certain holidays and once a quarter for teacher professional development. Please see the full calendar for dates.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A registration fee of \$75 is due at the time of registration. This fee is non-refundable.

A two-week, non-refundable enrollment fee is required for each child enrolled. Half of this enrollment fee will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the last week of the child's enrollment.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from six weeks to five years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program includes classroom visits, parent-teacher meetings, and ongoing communication to ensure a smooth adjustment to the new learning setting.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is required at the time of enrollment each year.

When a parent/guardian pays tuition at Little Wonders they are paying for the slot, not the number of hours or days attended. Therefore, even though a child may be absent, for example, tuition is still assessed and expected to be paid. When fees are not paid, the associated slot is given to the next child on the waiting list.

Little Wonders has a documented fee schedule that is set according to the child's age. These fees are set using Middle Tennessee childcare rate surveys. Therefore, our fees are considered competitive and current.

DHS Certificates — In some cases, a parent/guardian may need assistance paying their childcare fees. Eligibility for DHS Childcare Certificates is based on the family's household size and income. Little Wonders ELC accepts DHS certificates. Parents are responsible for: (1) full fees until we receive their DHS certificate; (2) securing their certificate and keeping it up to date; (3) paying the difference between the value of the certificate and the program fees.

Fees must be paid prior to services being rendered, which is prior to Monday mornings of the new service week. Payments must be made through Tuition Express via either direct withdrawal (ACH), or credit/debit card payments. Families may decide if they want to make their tuition in one monthly payment (withdrawn on the 1st of the month), or two monthly payments, each equal to half of the monthly tuition (withdrawn on the 1st and 15th of the month). No cash payments will be accepted. Teachers may not accept payments.

From time-to-time fee adjustments are made. Little Wonders ELC will make every effort to give prior notice, so that families can plan for an increase.

Past Due Balances

Failure to pay fees will result in the loss of the childcare slot. If fees become two weeks overdue, children will automatically be suspended from the program until full payment is made. When overdue fees are paid and if space is available, childcare can continue. Failure to pay after being suspended will result in termination from the program and any unpaid fees will be transferred to Little Wonders contracted collections agency.

Returned Payment

A \$35 charge will be assessed for all returned ACH payments. A 10% late fee will be charged when payment of childcare fees are not made on the designated payment date. Payment for hours, in excess of contracted hours (late fees), are due immediately.

Inclusion

Little Wonders ELC believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, please arrange a time to meet with the Director and classroom teachers to discuss your child's unique needs.

Non-Discrimination

At **Little Wonders ELC** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our educators are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Teacher	Associate Degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field	2 years
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Child Development Associate Credential	1 year

Educators participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by **Little Wonders ELC**.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
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6 wks - 15 months	4 to 1	8
12-30 months	6 to 1	12
24 to 35 months	7 to 1	14
3 to 5 year-olds	13 to 1	22

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day or communicated through the ProCare App. Please note that pictures from the children's school experiences may be shared with families through the ProCare App.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are shared through the ProCare App.

Email. We require all families to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Family Night. Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences will be held for ages 24 months and up once a year and for 36 months and up twice a year (fall and spring). These are not mandatory but highly encouraged. If you would like to have a conference sooner than these scheduled times, please contact the director and she will be able to coordinate this for you.

During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Little Wonders ELC uses the Creative Curriculum.

Infants and Toddlers Curriculum: Everyday moments with infants, toddlers, and twos present opportunities to build upon their natural curiosity. Our teachers prepare the environment and respond to children through meaningful interactions that help young children learn to regulate their emotions and behaviors, participate in a group, develop relationships with people in their lives, and have confidence in their own learning.

Preschool Curriculum: Build children's confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills through hands-on, project-based investigations. Promote discovery and inquiry with opportunities for children to think critically and develop process skills with rich, hands-on investigations of relevant and interesting topics in the classroom. Language, literacy, math, science, physical development, and social emotional learning are all integrated into the project-based investigations.

As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

Developmental Screening

Little Wonders ELC uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System to monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct 45-60 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood one to two times a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the childcare program as well as during field trips.

Transitions

Your child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between learning programs

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

Gold Sneaker Initiative

Child care programs licensed through DHS have the opportunity to participate in the Gold Sneaker Initiative to support children's development of active lifestyles, healthy eating habits (including public support of breastfeeding, and tobacco-free campuses. See the full list of policies below:

Policy 1 Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules

Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) utilizing age appropriate activities

Policy 2 Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of limiting screen time according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan

Policy 3 Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime

Child care director shall take Go NAP SACC Self Assessments (Infant and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards

Policy 4 Child care providers must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior

Policy 5 Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. All educators shall be trained to: advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly

Providers shall publicly display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in Breastfeeding Welcomed Here through the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding)

Policy 6 Child care educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for snack and meal consumption and age-appropriate portion size

Child care educators shall provide education to families twice each year (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size

All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a positive attitude toward food

Child care educators shall apply evidence-based early food preference learning strategies such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods

Policy 7 The child care provider campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Child care employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e. fieldtrips, walks, and all other outdoor activities)

Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to change clothes and wash hands thoroughly prior to interacting with children

“No Smoking” signs shall be posted conspicuously at each child care provider entrance, as required by state law

Electronic Media

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show or video without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as part of our project-based curricular units and limited to no more than 20 minutes per week per child.

Tennessee rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos, and computers.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community. We encourage you to share your family's holiday and celebration practices with the Little Wonders Community.

Rest Time

All children are required to have a rest time. Even if your child does not sleep, he/she will be expected to lie or sit on their cot or mat quietly. All children nap on individual cribs or mats. If the child chooses not to sleep, they can/will be given a quiet activity to do during rest time.

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times.

Sudden Infant Death (SIDS)

Special Note Little Wonders is proactive against SIDS. We follow the ABC's of Sleep.

- Alone- No mobiles, stuffed animals, or extra blankets will be allowed
- Back- Children will be placed on their backs in their crib. No propping is allowed
- Crib-Children will sleep in their crib, they are not permitted to sleep in swings, or bouncy chairs

These rules are in accordance with DHS rules and regulations. Sleep checks will be performed on children in their cribs every 15 minutes. Swaddling is not allowed.

After lunch, all children less than five years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Is your child ready to be Potty Trained?

- Follows simple directions
- Remains dry for at least 2 hrs. at a time during the day

- Dry after nap
- Regular and Predictable Bowel movements
- Walks to and from bathroom
- Pulls down own pants and up again
- Seems uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers
- Seems interested in the toilet
- Has asked to wear grown-up underwear

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

General Philosophy

Little Wonders ELC is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

At the heart of Little Wonders ELC's discipline philosophy is to encourage self-control, self-esteem, and respect for all children and adults. We draw from a number of social-emotional learning programs (Conscious Discipline, Pyramid Model, Responsive Classroom) to help children express and regulate their emotions in healthy ways, manage conflict, and develop impulse control. This philosophy turns every day discipline issues into teachable moments in which children develop the ability to self-regulate rather than adults applying discipline to children.

Discipline Policy

We have found that behavior concerns usually indicate that a child needs more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

When a child continues to be unable to control their actions, one method we use is called "safe place." When children are upset, angry, or being disruptive, they may be sent to or asked if they would like to go to the "safe place." This is a quiet spot in which they can allow themselves to take the time to relax, breathe, and try to get their emotions under control. Teachers will continue to watch children while they are in the "Safe Place" to make sure they are not hurting themselves or others. They will encourage the child to talk about their feelings and help with calming techniques so the child will be able to return to the classroom setting.

If a child is unable to use these calming techniques and continues to be disruptive, the teacher will then notify the site director and another adult will be called in to help the child. We might also reach out to parents so they can speak with the child and/or be notified of the circumstances.

If further guidance is required, actions taken will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's level of understanding. **No physical punishment of any kind will**

be administered in the Little Wonders ELC program. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on their own children while on at Little Wonders. In addition, staff may not yell at, shame, or humiliate a child in any way. Our goal is to correct children's behavior in a way that will help mold and perfect a child's mental faculties or moral character. The terms "bad" or "naughty" shall not be used about a child.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at **Little Wonders ELC** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed by Zarabeth Davis, Executive Director. She will be in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact Zarabeth Davis.

Tuition Rates

Updated 12/19/22 -

All community members enrolled since Fall 2022 will remain at the current Educator Rate through the end of May 2023.

	Community Rate	Educator Rate	Educator - M Rate	Educator - H Rate
6 wks - 24 mo.	\$1400/mo	\$1355/mo	\$1260/mo	\$1135
25 mo - 36 mo	\$1295/mo	\$1250/mo	\$1165/mo	\$1050
3-5 years	\$1195/mo	\$1150/mo	\$1070/mo	\$965

M Rate: KIPP, STRIVE, Nashville Classical, East End Prep

H Rate: LEAD, RePublic, STEM, Rocketship

Optional June Summer Program - provided at community rate for all

Enrollment priority is given to families requesting full-time care. Monthly tuition payments are required July - May whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather. Part-time care requests may be accommodated based on availability. Please reach out to Zarabeth Davis to inquire about part-time care opportunities.

Enrollment Fee

A two-week, non-refundable enrollment fee is required for each child enrolled. Half of this enrollment fee will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the last week of the child's enrollment.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due monthly or bi-monthly by 5 PM on the first of the month, or the first and 15th of the month, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is due annually on during the reenrollment process.

Methods of Payment

In order to streamline managerial tasks, we ask all families to set up automatic, reoccurring payments, through Tuition Express. Please complete and return an ACH authorization form to Zarabeth Davis prior to your child's first day of school.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than two weeks of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees.**

Failure to pay childcare payments will result in childcare services being terminated. If fees become two weeks overdue, children will automatically be suspended from the program until full payment is made. When overdue fees are paid and if space is available, childcare can continue. Failure to pay after being suspended will result in termination from the program.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of 10% will be added to your next tuition payment. Please ensure all payment authorization forms are kept current.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 30 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$35. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "money order only" status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be assessed beginning at 5:16 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick up may result in childcare services being terminated.**

Other Fees

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity, or trip.
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$75 is due annually on during the enrollment window.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

Little Wonders has a drop-off time of 9:00am. We ask for 24 hours' notice if your child will be late due to a doctor's appointment, etc.

In the event of an emergency, please contact Little Wonders by 8:00 a.m. if your child is going to be late. This is to ensure optimal learning experiences.

If your child is sick, please keep us informed about their condition. As a DHS requirement, Little Wonders alerts other parents to possible communicable diseases. In these instances, your child's information will always be kept confidential.

Vacation

Due to the vacations already built into the calendar, we do not provide credit for vacation days.

Withdrawal

A written notice, two weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your deposit.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced through the ProCare app.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 6:45 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

We close at 5:15 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a State requirement, to ensure the center has an up-to-date emergency contact who can be reached at any time in case of emergency.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Teachers are not permitted to be on their personal phones during hours of operation. If you need to be in contact with your child's teacher, you can

- Use the ProCare App
- Call the main line of the school (615-239-5313)

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. The most efficient way to do this is by adding an authorized release contact through the ProCare App. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after one hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. Solid foods (if applicable)

- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles for a day’s use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated. Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack must be sent to Little Wonders daily.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program. Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack must be sent to Little Wonders daily.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks, and shoes. Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack must be sent to Little Wonders daily.

Please label all items brought from home with your child’s name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a “cubby.” Cubbies are labeled with your child’s name. Please check your child’s cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the entrance hall. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

- Parents must provide all food, milk, and formula for their child daily.
- Foods should be labeled with the child’s name and the intended time to be eaten (am snack, lunch, pm snack).
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child’s family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be sent home at the end of the day. This serves to communicate with parents about their child’s daily eating habits

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche	Whole Wheat Macaroni &

Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk
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Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At mealtime the children will bring their lunch bags to the dining table. Everyone sits at the same table. Please send all utensils needed for your child's lunch. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to six months.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every year, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. Every child is required to have a current TN Department of Health Certificate of Immunizations on file.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.

- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - o The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - o The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in each classroom. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

In order to limit the possibility of severe allergic reactions, Little Wonders ELC is a nut-free facility.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- (C) **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

We believe strongly in the importance of outdoor time for young children. Each family should send a container of sunscreen and insect repellent, labeled with their child's name, to school along with directions for use.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 95°F or less than 32°F degrees.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained

caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Biting Policy

Biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants, toddlers, and 2-year-olds. As children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they usually outgrow this behavior. While not uncommon, biting can be an upsetting and potentially harmful behavior. As a preschool, we understand that biting is a part of developmental growth. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues.

If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Biting Does Occur:

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage
2. Parents are notified
3. The "Injury Occurring at School" form is filled out documenting the incident.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "Biting hurts, no thank you!"
2. The child will be redirected
3. The parents are notified by phone. If unable to answer, parents will be notified via email
4. An accident/incident form is completed for documentation

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for 2 business days.
3. If after steps 1 and 2 have been taken, the child continues the pattern of biting and there is no sign of improvement or active involvement from parents to find a solution, the parents may be asked to make other childcare arrangements or intervention services. If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again. If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up within 1 hour of notification.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environments are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms, evacuation cribs, and fire extinguishers.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

CENTER POLICIES

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed yearly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Little Wonders ELC Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Little Wonders ELC** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Little Wonders ELC Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

We are excited to offer a variety of ways for families to participate in hard work of parenting together as a community, and to contribute to the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisors:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- Home and School Committee – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraisers

Family Events: We will have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements! Activities may include:

- Open House
- Language and Literacy Night
- Holiday Gathering
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Annual Family Picnic

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Family Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of possible workshops we may offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. Some workshops may be offered on Zoom. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home
- Child Proofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math

Little Wonders 2022-23 Parent Calendar



July 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2022						
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28	29	30	31			

September 2022						
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October 2022						
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30	31					

November 2022						
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27	28	29	30			

December 2022						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 2023						
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29	30	31				

February 2023						
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26	27	28				

March 2023						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

April 2023						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May 2023						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June 2023						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

Vacation/Center Closed

Teacher PD – No children

Summer Program *additional Tuition required

July 2023: Open July 10th for 23-34 school year

Federal holidays 2022/23

Jul 4, 2022	Independence Day	Nov 24, 2022	Thanksgiving Day	Jan 1, 2023	New Year's Day	May 29, 2023	Memorial Day
Sep 5, 2022	Labor Day	Dec 25, 2022	Christmas Day	Jan 2, 2023	New Year's Day (obs.)	Jun 19, 2023	Juneteenth
Oct 10, 2022	Columbus Day	Dec 26, 2022	Christmas Day (obs.)	Jan 16, 2023	Martin L. King Day		
Nov 11, 2022	Veterans Day			Feb 20, 2023	Presidents' Day		