



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025-2026 School Year



WELCOME

Dear Family,

We at Little Wonders feel privileged to walk alongside you in your child's journey through the early childhood years. These years are full of wonder, growth, and learning for children and parents alike. We know you have a host of choices in who supports your family, and we're thankful you chose us.

Our educators are passionate and qualified individuals who truly honor a child's curiosity, wonder, and social-emotional development. We believe we're not just preparing children for kindergarten, but for life! Through our mission of empowering educators and their children, each teacher in our school brings their own unique giftedness while moving toward the same values and goal of enhancing your child's early childhood experience.

This handbook serves as a guide to our school in its practices, protocols, and provides further information. This handbook supersedes any written publication before it.

As always, please know my door is open for questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Colleen (Coco) Melchiorre
Chief Executive Officer
Little Wonders Early Learning Center
6152605055

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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's mission is to support Davidson county's educators by providing high-quality, child-centered early education and care to their children. 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 consider family to be the parent, legal guardian, sponsor or any individual who provides for the well-being and best-interest of the child in our care and bears responsibility for the same. We acknowledge the 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.

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.

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.

Licensing

Little Wonders Early Learning Center is licensed through the Department of Human Services. A [Summary of Licensing Requirements for Child Care Agencies](#) is available for your review.

Responsive, Joyful Learning Through Play

Hands-on learning and play is at the heart of our work at Little Wonders. Educators share responsibility for developing engaging learning environments and experiences that reflect children's needs, opportunities for growth, and curiosities. Educators of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers document children's development and tailor the environment and instruction to support all children in building strong social, emotional, physical, and academic foundations for kindergarten and beyond.

Little Wonders ELC values inclusion and believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. Families of children with identified special needs will meet with the leadership team, classroom teachers, and external partners and work together to develop a plan to support the child. While 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, we acknowledge that we may not be able to meet the specific needs and accommodations of all students.

If an alternative care setting is necessary, Little Wonders will work with the family to identify a program where the child can be successful and will guide and support the family throughout the process of transitioning to a different program.

Curriculum Resources

Planning for each group of children is intentional and flexible. Educators value and understand the importance of predictable routines in the lives of young children, and thoughtfully plan for the needs of children in the classroom. Educators also have the professional freedom to adjust their plans on any given day in response to emerging interests or unexpected opportunities. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: empathy, respect, critical thinking, 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.

Four key resources inform daily practice across age groups:

CDC Developmental Milestone Checklists support educators' ongoing and systematic monitoring of each child's development and are an important tool for communicating with families. Each one-page, age-aligned checklist is drawn from indicators developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and is designed for ease-of-use by caregivers and families. Milestones are organized into four domains of development: social/emotional, language/communication,

cognitive (learning/thinking/problem-solving), and physical/movement. The full collection of checklists (ages 2 months to 5 years) is available online at www.cdc.gov/Milestones.

The **Pyramid Model for Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children** (Pyramid Model) is an early childhood framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social, emotional, and behavioral development. Professional development and support is provided across the year as we work toward consistent and skillful implementation of recommended practices. By supporting children's friendship skills, emotional literacy, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills, we aim to promote social-skill development and to prevent challenging behaviors for ALL children. *Please refer to the Behavior Guidance section of this handbook for essential information about our use of the Pyramid Model.*

Creative Curriculum is our go-to resource for environmental design and lesson planning across age groups. Lead teachers have access to print resources and an online curriculum-support portal. *Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos* and *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* prioritize interactions that promote development and learning, foster social competence, support learning through play, guide the creation of rich learning environments, and cultivate strong home-school connections. For our youngest, this includes incorporating meaningful learning into daily caregiving routines, responding to children's earliest communication, attending to their interests, fostering early peer connections, and ensuring a safe, engaging environment. At around age two, *Studies for Twos* are introduced to nurture and extend children's early exploration. Investigations for this age focus on everyday objects and phenomena such as bags, rocks, and light. Preschool expands on these early explorations through a project-based, investigative curriculum that promotes creativity and critical thinking. In addition to continued center-based opportunities for free play and exploration, preschool classes engage in studies that deepen understanding of topics such as water, trees, buildings, or exercise. For each 4- to 6-week study, topic selection is guided by children's interests, and the learning path is shaped by their questions, observations, and discoveries.

Tennessee Early Learning Development Standards (TN-ELDS) support educators of children ages birth to five. The standards for children ages birth-48 months provide a developmental framework to support the identification of interactions and activities that are appropriate for children within a given age range (0-12, 13-24, 25-36, and 37-48 months). Standards are organized into

eight domains of development: Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional Development, Language and Early Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts, and Physical Development. Infant and toddler educators use the standards to guide design, selection, and implementation of experiences that will be meaningful to young learners and as a framework for supporting developmental milestones. Educators in our mixed-age preschool classrooms also attend to the Pre-K Standards for four-year-old children. The domains for four-year-olds are similar (Approaches to Learning, Social and Personal Competencies, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts, Physical Development) and the TN-ELDS Pre-K standards are explicitly linked to TN Kindergarten standards.

In addition, state law requires all licensed childcare programs to educate preschool children (ages 3 and above) on the importance of personal safety and child abuse prevention. We use the [Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum](#), which is provided by Tennessee's Department of Human Services. Children are taught prevention, safety, and correct anatomical names for their body parts, as well as bike safety, feelings, problem solving, and other topics.

Educator Qualifications

Educators are hired in compliance with state requirements and qualifications as a baseline and complete a new-employee orientation. We intentionally pair more experienced educators with newer professionals to create co-teaching teams. Across the year, our educators take part in ongoing professional training in the areas of growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity.

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 child-to-staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
6 wks - 30 months	5 to 1	10
12-30 months	6 to 1	12
24 to 35 months	7 to 1	14
3 to 5 year-olds	13 to 1	22

Behavior Guidance

Little Wonders ELC is committed to each child's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination and violence. We work to ensure that all children and educators have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and to share a personal and meaningful bond with people in our school community.

We are committed to nurturing responsive relationships among children, families, and educators and to proactively building our individual and collective social and emotional capacities. We believe that every person in the Little Wonders community has a right to:

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

Through intentional instruction in social skills and the development of high-quality, supportive environments, we lay a foundation that encourages appropriate behavior and helps to prevent behaviors that are challenging. Little Wonders utilizes the Pyramid Model to support young learners in developing friendship skills, emotional literacy, emotional regulation, and problem solving. These links provide detailed lists of Pyramid Model practices recommended for educators' use with [infants/toddlers](#) and with [children ages 2-5 years](#). Together, the practices transform everyday "discipline" issues into teachable moments in which children develop the ability to self-regulate, rather than relying on adults to apply discipline to children. If a child needs additional support in learning social and emotional skills or addressing behaviors that are challenging, we collaborate with the family to develop individualized strategies and interventions.

Our Behavior Expectations

Little Wonders has four program-wide expectations that are taught to children and expected of all adults:

- We are safe.
- We are friendly and fair.
- We are respectful.
- We are responsible.

Educators engage in proactive, prosocial teaching that focuses on what children *should* do, as opposed to emphasizing what they should not do. Through the implementation of Pyramid Model practices, educators strive to provide consistent and clear expectations, to model and encourage empathy, to engage in co-regulation as a

pathway to self-regulation, and to empower children as problem solvers. This approach creates an environment that supports the development of children's social and emotional capacity, and helps children come to understand the results of their actions. Each classroom develops a succinct list of age-appropriate classroom rules to help children understand and meet program-wide behavior expectations.

Our Response to Behavior that is Challenging

From time to time, children's behaviors are challenging for adults and/or other children. We recognize all behavior as a form of communication and understand that any given behavior may be an attempt to communicate a variety of messages (e.g., desire for attention, attempt to avoid an activity or interaction, frustration with self or others, physical or emotional needs).

Through consistent and skillful implementation of Pyramid Model practices, we work toward the promotion of social-skill development and the prevention of challenging behaviors for ALL children. When confronted with behavior that is challenging, our intention is to first identify what children might be trying to communicate and then work to address their needs. Common responses to difficult behavior include redirecting children to more appropriate behaviors, guiding children to express their needs, or helping children to regulate strong emotions.

One space you'll find in each toddler and preschool classroom is a calm corner. This is a protected space in the classroom where children are supported in their effort to relax, breathe, and access strategies that promote the development of self-regulation. When young children are in the grip of big emotions - whether they're feeling sad, disappointed, angry, or something else - educators initially offer support through co-regulation. This may look like sitting together quietly in the calm corner and taking a few deep breaths, squeezing big feelings into a pillow, listening together to calming music, visually tracking the sand as it flows through a timer, or any number of other strategies that have been taught and practiced in the classroom. The calm corner is a quiet and supported space. It is not "time out." Teachers continue to observe children while they're in the calm corner to ensure they are not hurting themselves or others. Teachers encourage children to talk about and name their feelings and, as needed, provide support for the child's reentry into the life of the classroom community.

The Pyramid Model's emphasis on supporting children in developing friendship skills, emotional literacy, emotional regulation, and problem solving helps us tailor our responses to the behaviors we observe. If a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children - and then work through the process of interpreting and responding to the behavior. In every interaction,

we aim to uplift children by providing prosocial support that builds capacity for social and emotional development. Toward that end:

- **Little Wonders' educators commit to respectful practices that do not shame or humiliate a child in any way.** Terms such as “bad” or “naughty” are never used in reference to a child.
- **Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline.** In rare instances - and only when necessary to ensure a child's safety or the safety of others - educators may restrain a child by gently holding her or him and only for as long as is needed to gain control of the situation. For example, physical restraint might be the only means of preventing a child from running away or preventing a child from harming self, others, or the environment.
- **No physical punishment of any kind is endorsed by Little Wonders ELC.** In keeping with DHS policy and our commitment to best practice, staff and families are restricted from using physical punishment at Little Wonders.

Our Commitment to Supporting All Children

In our experience, children with persistent behavior concerns typically need more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills.

If classroom supports are ineffective and a child continues to engage in behaviors that challenge the safety of the child(ren) or the wellbeing of the learning community, the teacher accesses additional support by engaging Little Wonders' site-based leadership team. In partnership with the family, Little Wonders' educators and administrators then work together to 1) understand the child's needs and challenges in the context of our program, and 2) develop supports that are individualized, consistent, and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. The child's family and educators actively monitor the effectiveness of the targeted supports in shifting the child's behavior and the team communicates regularly to share observations and make adjustments. As needed, the team will seek guidance from professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

Little Wonders makes every effort to meet the needs of all children in 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:

- The child appears to be a danger to others
- Continued care is deemed harmful to or not in the best interest of the child, as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel
- Accommodations needed to ensure a child's success and participation place an undue burden on our resources and finances

If an alternative care setting is necessary, Little Wonders will work with the family to identify a program where the child can be successful and will guide and support the family throughout the process of transitioning to a different program.

Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The use of data to inform decision making is an essential component of Pyramid Model implementation. During Little Wonders' first year of implementation (2024-25), we began developing data collection systems and envisioned using collected data to improve our understanding of children's needs, to gain insight into how well we implement the Pyramid Model, and to ensure that children with additional intervention needs make progress. This includes collection of data about teachers' responses to children's behavior incidents and the factors that might be related to the behavior, as well as feedback from families. Ongoing analysis and reflection will help us to make changes that strengthen our prevention and/or intervention practices. We will continue these practices even more robustly this year.

Little Wonders is partnering with Ready. Set. Grow, TN Voices Early Childhood Program to launch and develop educators' and administrators' expertise in implementing the Pyramid Model's evidence-based practices. We are on the path to earn a designation as a Demonstration Site, in which our implementation will serve as a model of practice for other early childhood educators in our community and our state.

Little Wonders' Pyramid Model Leadership Team, which includes administrators, classroom educators, and families, will review this child guidance policy annually and make revisions to strengthen our practice. Should you have any concerns or questions about this discipline policy or its implementation, please reach out to your site director.

Before You Begin

Brightwheel Website: You created a brightwheel account when you applied to Little Wonders ELC. You can access this account by going to mybrightwheel.com to register your child, view your account balance, and make online payments. Please note in previous years we utilized an app called ProCare- families that signed up via procare will need to be transferred to brightwheel.

Brightwheel App: A few days prior to your child's first day at Little Wonders ELC, you will receive an invitation to set up the brightwheel App. Follow the instructions provided to install the app on your personal device. This app is used for daily sign in and sign out, as well as communication with the teacher and program. This is also how emergency notifications are delivered to all families. Please ensure you allow notifications on your device.

Emergency Contacts: It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a State requirement, to ensure the center has **three** up-to-date emergency contacts in addition to the primary guardian(s) who can be reached at any time in case of emergency.

Forms & Fees: Prior to your child's first day of attendance, all admission and enrollment forms must be completed AND the child's enrollment fee and first tuition payment must be paid in full. *Note the TN immunization form can be found [here](#) and must be completed by your pediatrician.*

Supplies: All food, diapers, changes of clothing, and bedding are provided by families with the exception of pack and play sheets for infants (the center provides those and cribs and nap mats/cots). All food is brought/returned daily. Storage space for other supplies varies by center and classroom; please follow the lead of your child's teacher regarding resupply of such items as diapers and wipes.

What to Bring Each Day

Families provide all food, diapers, changes of clothing, bedding, and other as-needed items related to their child's eating and sleeping routines. General guidelines for each age group are provided below.

Infants	<u>Food</u>: clean bottles for a day's use and solid foods as applicable. All bottles must be labeled and dated, and all frozen breast milk must be labeled with your child's first and last name and date of expression. <u>Diapers</u>: at least 6 diapers per day, wipes, creams (as needed) <u>Clothing</u>: at least 2 changes of clothes per day <u>Bedding</u>: sleep sack (if desired); NO blankets/pillows/lovies; crib sheets are provided and laundered weekly <u>Other</u>: bibs, pacifiers, sunscreen
Toddlers	<u>Food</u>: Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack must be sent daily to Little Wonders. Include all napkins and utensils, as well as a milk cup and water cup (or water bottle) for the day. Refrigeration is not available, so please include cold packs in the lunch bag. <u>Diapers</u>: at least 6 diapers per day, wipes, creams (as needed) <u>Clothing</u>: at least 2 changes of clothes per day (more if toileting) <u>Bedding</u>: crib sheet for nap mat (a smaller pack-n-play size sheet fits the toddler cots well), blanket <u>Other</u>: bibs, pacifiers, hats, sunscreen
Preschoolers	<u>Food</u>: Morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack must be sent daily to Little Wonders. Include all napkins and utensils as well as a milk cup and water bottle for the day. Refrigeration is not available, so please include cold packs in the lunch bag. <u>Diapers</u>: at least 6 diapers per day (as needed), wipes, creams <u>Clothing</u>: at least one change of clothes, socks, and shoes (more if toileting) <u>Bedding</u>: crib sheet for nap mat, blanket <u>Other</u>: stuffed animal/lovey (for naptime), hats, sunscreen

In preparation for your child's time at Little Wonders, please note the following:

- Note that **Little Wonders is a NUT-FREE FACILITY**. DO NOT send foods containing nuts. See the Nutrition Guidance section of this handbook for additional information about food.
- Remember to **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.
 - In partnership with Mabel's Labels, a portion of your order is donated back to Little Wonders ELC to support our program!
<http://campaigns.mabelslabels.com/>
- Expect **laundry** (bedding and soiled clothing) to come home on an as-needed basis. Expect bedding to come home on the last school day of each week. Please launder and return.

Daily Arrival and Departure

Little Wonders hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 6:45 a.m. until 5:15 p.m.

Across the day we make every effort to support each child's routine and to create an optimal learning environment for all. Your partnership is important. Please note:

- A family member walks each child to their classroom after morning sign in.
- Children must be signed in by 9:00 a.m., unless a late arrival has been communicated to the teacher (or office staff) in advance and for reasons of medical appointments, etc. We ask for 24 hours' notice if your child will be late; if the schedule change is due to an emergency or other unanticipated situation, please contact Little Wonders by 8:00 a.m.
- Avoid arrivals and departures between 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to limit disruption to children's mealtime and sleep routines.
- At the end of each day, allow enough time to arrive, sign out your child, and leave by 5:15 p.m. (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 continuous tardiness occurs, services may be suspended or terminated.)

Safety is our number one priority. With this in mind:

Daily Sign In and Sign Out. Each day, families must sign children in and out of the program, typically through the brightwheel app and occasionally (when technology fails) using paper and pen. Failure to ***sign your children in or out of the center*** may result in suspension from the Center.

Up-to-Date Emergency Contacts It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, as well as a State requirement, to ensure the center has **three** up-to-date emergency contacts who can be reached at any time in case of emergency.

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.

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 emailing LWOffice@littlewonderselc.com with the name and phone number of the new Emergency and Release Contact and our office staff will add them to your brightwheel account. Please allow up to 2 business days for this change to take effect. 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.

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. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Secure Facilities Our facilities are secured by locked gates and doors with access control systems. Access is restricted to individuals with an authorized purpose at Little Wonders. At certain locations, families are provided with a door code to enter the Little Wonders space. We ask that all families do their part in keeping our spaces secure by taking the following precautions:

1. **Ensure Doors and Gates Close Securely** After entering or exiting the facility, please ensure that all doors and gates close and latch securely behind you. This prevents unauthorized access and helps keep children safe within designated areas.
2. **Do Not Allow Tailgating:** Avoid letting others enter the building or playground areas with you unless they are staff or another authorized

parent you recognize. This ensures only approved individuals access the facility.

3. **Do Not Share Entry Codes** Entry codes are provided exclusively to parents or guardians authorized for pick-up or drop-off. Please do not share these codes with others not on your child's approved pick up list.
4. **Safety Is a Shared Responsibility** Creating a safe environment is a shared responsibility. By working together—parents, staff, and caregivers—we can ensure the security of all children in our care. If you observe any safety concerns or notice unfamiliar individuals on the premises, please report them immediately to a staff member.

Daily Communication Between Families and Educators

For up-to-date information about ways in which educators are planning for your child's day, please see the daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

The time you spend dropping off and picking up your child are important opportunities for in-person check-ins between families and caregivers. In order to make the best use of these moments, as well as to ensure attention to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

To get a message to your child's teacher during the school day,

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

Daily notes from educators will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes may be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day or communicated through the brightwheel App. Photos from the children's school experiences may be shared with families through the brightwheel App.

Educators always do our best to speak with parents/guardians. However, it is usually not feasible to engage in a lengthy, unplanned discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Ongoing Communication Between Families and Educators

Annual Calendar. The annual calendar helps all of us plan ahead, for our time together and our time apart. Please note that Little Wonders is closed for certain holidays AND for quarterly teacher professional development. Please refer to the full calendar for specific dates.

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

Conferences. Family-teacher conferences are held twice a year (fall and spring), typically with in-person and online options. Family attendance is highly encouraged.

We will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning, and we will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development.

If you would like to have a conference sooner than the scheduled times, please contact the director and she will be able to coordinate this for you. You may request additional conferences at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

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 Advisory Board. Family representatives from our Little Wonders community come together to discuss the Little Wonders program. This board meets quarterly to provide input, support center initiatives, and partner thoughtfully with administration and teachers as we continue to grow and develop our program for our families. If you are interested in serving as a member of this board, please contact your site director and they will direct you to the committee chair.

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.

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, though we ask that you be mindful of children's mealtimes and rest periods. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Visit our classrooms, volunteer, join us for a puppet truck show, 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 when visits occur outside of typical pick-up and drop-off windows. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

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

Nutrition Guidelines

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. 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.
- All heated bottles must be consumed within an hour. If the child doesn’t finish the bottle within an hour, it is disposed of. Please fill bottles to a capacity that reflects your child’s current eating patterns.
- All unheated breast milk and formula must be collected by families at the end of the day. Any remaining breast milk or formula will be discarded nightly.
- 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.

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 (morning snack, lunch, afternoon 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.
- Label all lunch boxes, containers or bags so these items can easily find their way back home to you.
- All food must be cut up and ready to eat. Finger-foods that require no heating are preferred. If you would like to send warm food, please heat it at home and send in a thermos. Oranges must be peeled at home.
- In keeping with safety guidelines for proper food preparation for infants and toddlers, please remember that your child’s esophagus is very small (about the size of a straw). Pay close attention to the size of food being sent. Our job is to keep your children as safe as possible and one way you can help is by cutting your child’s food up to prevent choking. Be sure to cut all fruits and vegetables into bite size pieces (cut lengthwise and across). We cannot serve your child

anything that is a choking hazard, including popcorn. All grapes, cherry tomatoes, carrots, hot dogs, etc. must be cut lengthwise and across. NOTHING SHOULD BE ROUND.

- “Blue ice pack” is a MUST for every lunch box no matter the contents!

Building Healthy Eating Habits: We know that healthy diets support healthy brains and development. Below are a few recommendations as you pack your child’s lunchbox.

A healthy meal might include:

- 1 serving of grain: Bread or cereal, roll, muffin, etc. (1/2 pc. bread)
- 1 serving of meat or meat substitute (eggs, cheese, yogurt) - 1/2 oz. meat or 2 oz. yogurt
- 1 vegetable and 1 fruit (1/2 cup portions - 100% fruit preferred)
- Milk or nut-free milk substitute

A few menu ideas:

Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips (crackers) Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk	Macaroni & Cheese Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk	Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk
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Food Allergies

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

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing prior to enrollment OR as soon as the allergy is diagnosed. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy must have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. An action plan outlines the child’s symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. Emergency medication must be provided to the school.

If your child has an allergy that necessitates an Epipen, BOTH epipens must be at school. According to the **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)** food allergy guidelines, there are two reasons that patients should carry two doses of their epinephrine auto-injector. “If a patient responds poorly to the initial dose or has ongoing or progressive symptoms despite initial dosing, repeated dosing may be required after 5 to 15 minutes.

Additional Policies, Practices, Procedures

Items in this section are listed alphabetically. The policies, practices, and procedures in this handbook are reviewed and updated annually. Center policies not included in this handbook (such as staff protocols for playground supervision) also are reviewed yearly and updated as needed. All are available for review upon request from the center director.

absence If you know your child will be absent from school, please inform your child's teachers through brightwheel. If your child is sick, be sure to 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.

allergies Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. Emergency medication must be provided to the school. If your child has an allergy that necessitates an EpiPen, BOTH epipens must be at school. 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.

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. 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. When biting happens, our response is to care for and help the child who was bitten and also to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on substituting effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. State regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. We will inform the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. Names of the children are not shared with either parent by educators, though verbal children may communicate this information to their families. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. If biting becomes persistent, we will take steps outlined in our Behavior Guidance policy.

Biting Policy

The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn alternative, 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 who 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. A brightwheel Incident Report is filled out to document the incident and parents must sign electronically to indicate their receipt of the report.
3. Additionally, we may reach out to parents by phone or email depending upon the severity of the incident.

For the child who bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "Biting hurts. We don't hurt friends." and proceed with any further relevant alternative. For example, if a child bit because they were angry, providing alternatives to express anger appropriately.
2. A brightwheel Incident Report is filled out to document the incident and parents must sign electronically to indicate their receipt of the report.
3. Additionally, we may reach out to parents by phone or email depending upon the severity of the incident. If biting continues and/or becomes excessive, the Behavior Guidance policy outlined above will be implemented. Additionally, it may become necessary for a child to be "shadowed" to prevent injurious behaviors. This is a temporary measure and can only be done as staffing allows.

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.

clothing & shoes 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 in collars and hoods must be removed from children's clothes as a precaution against strangulation. Tennis shoes are required for all toddler and preschool-aged students, both inside the classroom and outside. Flip flops, crocs, and other open shoes are discouraged due to the mulch on the playground. These shoes may be appropriate for summer water days if they stay securely on your child's foot. Please note that all infant classes are shoe-free environments for children and adults.

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.

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 or a prompt for further discussion. 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. Tennessee rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos, and computers. For children age two and older, 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.

emergency responses

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.

Evacuation In the event we need to evacuate to a safe location, children will be transported on school buses (in partnership with our charter school partners), or will be taken in teachers' personal vehicles. Families will receive communication through brightwheel about reunification plans and procedures.

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.

immunizations/physicals We follow state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons. 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. A copy of your child's physical should be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring 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. However, to protect the school at whole, we do not provide sick care for students. 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 (100.4)
- Diarrhea – 3 or more 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 on antibiotics and 24 hours without a fever.
- 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.
- Is under written order from a physician or other health professional that requires separation from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or other fever-reducing medications. This does not mean that a child that is sent home is allowed to come back 24 hours later. It means they must remain home until they have exhibited no fever without medication 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.

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.

lost & found You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-Found Box located at each site. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property. Labeling everything is your best defense against lost items.

medications All medications should be hand-delivered to an EDUCATOR the front office with specific written instructions for administration. Medications must 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 family. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container including the box (as applicable). Non-prescription medication will not be administered for more than the published recommended period without a written order by the child's physician.

Non-prescription topical ointments and sprays such as diaper cream, teething gel, sunscreen, and insect repellent are provided by the family and applied according to product instructions. All such treatments require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time for which the authorization is valid. Note that authorization periods cannot exceed 12 months. We believe strongly in the importance of outdoor time for young children. Each family should send a container of labeled sunscreen and insect repellent with instructions for use.

Families are responsible for the initial application of sunscreen before school; educators reapply sunscreen as needed during the day.

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.

outdoor play We value children's time outdoors and it is a regular part of each day. HOWEVER, outdoor play will not occur if the outside "feels like" temperature is greater than 95°F or less than 32°F degrees.

outings and field trips Weather permitting, we engage in 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, we ask that families be mindful of the weather in dressing your child. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

private employment agreements Please Note: We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (*i.e.*, babysitting, transportation, etc). 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.

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.

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. We ALWAYS obtain family permission prior to using pictures and/or names of children for publicity.

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.

rest time All children are required to have a rest time. Even if your child does not sleep, he/she will be expected to rest on their cot for 30 minutes. After that time, they can choose a quiet activity for the duration of rest time. All children nap on individual cribs or mats. Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs.

school closure 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 brightwheel 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.

smoking 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. Tobacco use in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

social media Little Wonders ELC has two active social media accounts. Please like/follow us on Instagram (littlewonderselc_nash) and Facebook (@LittleWondersEarlyLearningCenter)! We never share photos of children to these accounts without parent permission. Please note, photos shared through brightwheel are only visible to families in the classroom and specifically the children who are tagged in that photo. Please do not share any Little Wonders' photos that include other people's children through your personal social media accounts.

suspected child abuse If we suspect or observe that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred, we are required by law to report all observations and suspicions to the appropriate state authorities. 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.

Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) Little Wonders is proactive against SIDS. In accordance with DHS policy, our educators 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 sleep in a crib, and are NOT permitted to sleep in car seats, swings, or bouncy chairs. Any children who are asleep in their car seat will be moved to a crib upon arrival in the classroom.

In addition, sleep checks are performed on children in their cribs every 15 minutes. Swaddling is not allowed but sleep sacks are permitted. Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times.

toileting 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.

Your child's teacher is an excellent resource as you begin the potty training process! Whatever method you choose, we ask that you communicate with your child's teacher before moving forward. **We ask kindly that every child in Prek and ANY child potty training be brought to school in pull ups (not diapers). Please do not send a child in underpants that is not fully potty trained.** Consistency and collaboration are key. If for whatever reason, if your currently potty training child is having many accidents, it may be time to take a break from active potty training and come back to it a few weeks later.

Is your child ready?

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

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. However, comfort items while students are transitioning or during naptime are welcome (e.g., a stuffed animal).

transitions We strive to make sure your child's transitions into school and across school settings are positive and exciting learning adventures. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. Our process includes classroom visits, parent-teacher meetings, and ongoing communication. We encourage you to speak with the school and the teachers prior to the first day of school, so you'll be able to walk in with confidence. If families are calm, children are more likely to feel safe and secure.

Beginning in the later stages of infancy and up until the age of 5, separation anxiety is a common age-appropriate response to being left with new caregivers. Tears at drop-off for the first couple of days are normal! We're happy to send you a picture of your child or give a quick phone call once they're settled. Rest assured crying at drop off is a phase that caregivers are prepared to lead and love your child through.

Transition from home to center Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet 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 transition to new classrooms based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Prior to the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to develop a plan to introduce your child into the new program. Most transitions will be made in July with a few exceptions throughout the year.

water play During the summer months, Little Wonders schedules water days and children are invited to engage in water-play given adequate supervision. Whether outdoors or in the classroom water tables, precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease. Children wash hands before and after water play.

Enrollment, Tuition, and Fees

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from six weeks to five years of age. Parents of students who are eligible for Kindergarten must complete a Parent Acknowledgement form.

Re-enrollment: Each spring, all returning families are invited to re-enroll for the upcoming program year, which begins in early July. Returning families are offered automatic enrollment for current children. Our priority for enrollment thereafter is: host/member educators, current siblings, non-member educators, then any available spots are offered to the wider community. Spots are not guaranteed. The month of June is charged at a community rate for everyone and is optional for all educators.

Tuition Rates

Little Wonders has a documented fee schedule that is set according to the child's class. Rates are current and competitive with extensive research and considering multiple factors including cost of living, rates in the area, our belief in the quality of the program, and more. From time-to-time, planned adjustments in tuition and fees are necessary. Little Wonders ELC will make every effort to give prior notice, so that families can plan for an increase.

Tuition rates (effective 07/01/2026) are noted below.

<i>Community/NM Infant</i>	<i>\$1,700</i>
<i>Community/NM Toddler</i>	<i>\$1,590</i>
<i>Community/NM Prek</i>	<i>\$1,370</i>
<i>Legacy infant</i>	<i>\$1,540</i>
<i>Legacy toddler</i>	<i>\$1,420</i>
<i>Legacy Prek</i>	<i>\$1,280</i>
<i>Member Infant</i>	<i>\$1,400</i>
<i>Member toddler</i>	<i>\$1,350</i>
<i>Member Prek</i>	<i>\$1,180</i>
<i>Host infant</i>	<i>\$1,250</i>
<i>Host toddler</i>	<i>\$1,160</i>
<i>Host Prek</i>	<i>\$1,060</i>

M Rate: KIPP, Valor, Nashville Classical, East End Prep, Purpose Prep

H Rate: LEAD, RePublic, STEM, aventura

L Rate: All educators enrolled prior to June 2025 (**applies to current children only**)

C/N Rate: Community members and non member/host educators (enrolled after June 2025)

June Summer Program - provided at community rate for all

Monthly tuition payments are required whether or not your child attends. Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, staff training, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

Periodic Program Fees

As needed, program fees are charged to monthly statements:

Application Fee: An application fee of \$80 is due when submitting an application for a new child. This fee is non-refundable.

Initial Registration Fee: A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 is required for each new child enrolled. This one-time, non-refundable fee is required to accept your child's seat. This fee is not applied to future tuition costs.

Re-Registration Fee: A non-refundable re-registration fee of \$85 (per child) is due annually during the spring re-enrollment window for all current families accepting a seat for the next programming year (July-May). This fee is not applied to future tuition costs.

Materials/Program Fee: This required fee (\$125 per semester, per child) is added to August and January tuition payments (or to a child's first month if they begin mid-semester) and helps support our programming and materials at Little Wonders.

Special Activity Fee: From time-to-time there are additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity, or trip.

Summer Registration Fee: A summer registration fee of \$35 is due for all families interested in enrolling in our summer program for the month of June. Please remember that all tuition for our summer program is charged at the community member rate.

Late Fees: Late pick-up is not a 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 charged to your account. Repeated late pick up may result in childcare services being terminated.

Sign in/ out fee: A fee of \$25 will be assessed for every missed sign in/ sign out. This is for the safety and security of all children and must be done.

Payment Procedures

Tuition at Little Wonders guarantees the enrollment of the child regardless of their presence or absence. Therefore, even though a child may be absent for illness, vacation, inclement weather, holidays, or any other reason, tuition is still billed with the expectation of continued payment.

Fees must be paid prior to services rendered.

As outlined in the Enrollment Agreement, families decide whether to pay tuition in one monthly payment (withdrawn by 5 p.m. on the 1st of the month), or two monthly payments, each equal to half of the monthly tuition (withdrawn by 5 p.m. on the 1st and 15th of the month). Additional monthly fees (e.g., Program Enhancement Fee) will process on the 1st of the month they are due.

All payments must be made through brightwheel via either direct withdrawal (ACH), or credit/debit card payments. A 3% processing fee is added to all credit/debit card payments.

No cash payments will be accepted. Teachers may not accept payments.

DHS Certificates: DHS Childcare Certificates provide assistance in paying childcare fees and eligibility 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.

Late Payments & Failure to Pay

It is your responsibility to ensure all payment authorization forms are kept current.

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$5. 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 payments result in the imposition of late payment fees. 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. 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.

Failure to pay results in suspension and/or termination of enrollment. Unpaid tuition will be considered a notice of disenrollment, and the associated slot is given to the next child on the waiting list. Tuition that is two weeks overdue will result in automatic suspension of childcare services until full payment is made. When overdue

tuition and fees are paid in full and if space is available, enrollment can continue. Failure to pay after being suspended will result in termination from the program.

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.

Withdrawal & Transfer of Records

A written notice, **45 days in advance**, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Tuition payments are expected to be made through the end of that time period. Failure to provide the requisite notice will result in tuition charges for the 45-day period following withdrawal. **This is the policy for every family including children that sign up with Little Wonders and choose not to attend the first day.**

When your child transitions to a new classroom or to a different Little Wonders' location, records are transferred internally. When your child transitions to a new school, we require written instructions as to where the records should be sent.

insert new calendar

Family Activities

We are excited to offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the 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.

Family Advisory Opportunities:

- 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.

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
- Family Fun Fridays
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Spring Festival
- Annual Family Picnic

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

- Share a meal with your child
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Join monthly classroom read-alouds with our NPL children's librarian
- Welcome new families
- Attend annual Puppet Truck performances
- Chaperone field trips
- Donate requested items

Family-Teacher Conferences: Family-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Please make note of the calendar dates and plan to join your child's teacher in person or via zoom. Conference sign-up links will be shared through brightwheel about a month before 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
- Childproofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Young Children and Mathematic



Family Handbook Acknowledgement 2026-27

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

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.

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.

Your name: _____

Your child's name: _____

Recipient Signature		Date
		June 30, 2026
Staff Signature		Date

Initial below:

_____ I have received the [Summary of Licensing Requirements for Child Care Agencies](#) licensed by TN Dept of Human Services