

# **The Learning Patch**

Parents' Handbook

# Our Philosophy

At The Learning Patch, we believe that all children have the right to play and learn in a safe, supportive, nurturing environment. We feel that in today's fast-paced world, children don't get to be young long enough. Here at The Learning Patch, your child will get to enjoy being a child and have time to build the foundation for academic success. We believe that every aspect of growth and development should be fun and educational.

Children at The Learning Patch are treated with respect and given the ability to make choices throughout the day. This allows them to develop sense of self worth and respect that will help their ability to adapt well when they begin school. We will relate to your child as an individual and make sure that his or her needs are met.

The Learning Patch staff will do its best to ensure that your child does not have the feeling of having to be here, but rather wanting to be here. This is our home and we want your child to feel at home here, too.

## First Day Checklist

- We have read the Parents' Handbook.
- We have completed all enrollment forms.
- We have notified the people we listed as emergency contacts.
- We have brought a complete change of clothes (including socks, underwear, slippers or flip-flops.)
- We have brought a sheet and blanket labeled with our child's name.
- We have talked to our child about what to expect on the first day.
- We have a Learning Patch business card in our wallets with all contact information.

# **General Policies**

## **State Licensing Requirements**

The Learning Patch complies with all applicable licensing standards and regulations. These standards apply to our physical plant, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, class size and recordkeeping. We are subject to inspection by state health, fire and licensing officials.

## **Hours of Operation**

The Learning Patch is in operation from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. We are open 12 months per year.

## **Enrolling Your Child**

To enroll your child, you must sign the Enrollment Agreement and pay a security deposit and non-refundable registration fee. You must also complete and return a Parental Consent and Emergency Form, Child Health Appraisal, Pre-Enrollment Questionnaire, Permission to Photograph Form, and Parents' Right-to-Know.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Weekly tuition payments are due by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday for the following week. If your payment is not received by that time, you will be assessed a late fee. Care will be suspended if all tuition and fees are unpaid on Monday morning. Tuition is due if your child is absent for any reason. A returned check will be subject to a service charge and subsequent payments must be made in cash.

## **Tuition Increases**

From time to time it may be necessary to increase our tuition rate. The Learning Patch reserves the right to change tuition rates at any time with one (1) week written notice.

## **Late Pickup Policy**

Close of business is 6:00 p.m. If your child is not picked up by that time, you will be charged a fee. If you have more than one child enrolled, the fee will apply to each child. Please call if you know you will be late. A call or other notice does not excuse the late fee. If one hour has passed and we have not heard from you or an emergency contact, we will contact the authorities.

## **Custody and Visitation**

Please note any custody or visitation restrictions upon enrollment and advise us if there are any changes in these restrictions. We will require copies of any court documents to ensure that we only release children to the appropriate parent or guardian.

## **Termination of Enrollment**

We request that you provide us with two weeks written notice to withdraw your child. The Learning Patch reserves the right to terminate care at any time for a child who poses a risk to the health and safety of other children or staff, or any child whose needs cannot be met in our program.

## **Absences**

Please notify us if your child will be absent. If the absence is due to illness, please let us know the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious.

## **Holidays**

The Learning Patch is closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

## **Dress**

Please dress your child in seasonally-appropriate clothing. We will enjoy outdoor play every day, weather permitting. Clothing should be comfortable, allow freedom of movement and be washable. Sneakers or other closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes are required.

## **Personal Belongings**

The Learning Patch provides an individual storage area for each child's outerwear and blankets. Please label your child's clothing and other personal items. Children may not bring personal toys to the Learning Patch (except for show-and-tell.)

# **Health and Safety Policies**

## **Arrival/Departure Procedures**

Upon arriving, please accompany your child into the classroom. Be sure to sign your child in and out every day. You must provide written notice, in advance, if anyone other than a custodial parent or legal guardian will pick up your child. We will require those individuals to produce a photo ID before we release your child. You should provide us with the names and contact information of at least two people who may pick your child up in the case of an emergency.

## **Emergency Notification Forms**

In the case of injury or illness, we will use the information you provide to notify you or others designated by you of your child's condition. Please make sure to inform us when any information changes.

## **Accidents**

If your child is injured, first aid will be administered. If treatment by a doctor is required, we will make every attempt to contact you and/or your child's doctor. In the case of an emergency, we will make sure your child received the necessary treatment until you can be contacted. You will be required to sign an authorization for emergency treatment upon enrolling.

## **First Aid Procedures**

In the case of a minor injury, staff certified in first aid procedures will administer appropriate treatment. The parent/guardian will be contacted and informed of the child's condition. A written report will be prepared and signed by a staff member and parent/guardian.

## **Confidentiality**

No information regarding any child will be released unless by the authorization of a parent/guardian. The only exception will be in the case of suspected child abuse. In the event of suspected abuse, the proper authorities will be notified.

## **Medical Requirements**

In accordance with state law, we require immunization records to be provided within 30 days of enrollment. Immunization records must be kept up-to-date.

Your child must have an annual physical examination. Failure to keep immunization records up-to-date may be cause for termination of enrollment.

## **Illness Policy**

A child exhibiting any of the following symptoms may not return without a physician's note:

- Severe pain or discomfort, particularly in joints, abdomen, or ears
- Acute diarrhea
- Two or more episode of acute vomiting in a 24-hour period.
- Severe cough or sore throat
- Oral temperature of 101 degrees or auxiliary temperature of 100
- Jaundiced (yellow) skin or eyes
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches or lesions
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Sever itching of body or scalp
- Skin rashes lasting more than one day
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood or pus from ear, skin, urine, or stool
- Unusual behavior for child (lethargy, confusion, inconsolable crying)
- Loss of appetite

### **The following table indicates when your child may return from a particular illness**

Chicken pox	At least 6 days or after lesions have completely dried
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24 hours after treatment has begun (if drainage and excessive tearing have stopped)
Croup	After illness has subsided
Diarrhea/ Gastroenteritis	24 hours after loose stool
Rubella	At least 6 days after onset of rash
Hepatitis A	At least 7 days after onset of jaundice
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment has begun
Fever	24 hours after temperature is normal
Influenza	24 hours after symptoms have subsided
Measles	At least 5 days after onset of rash
Lice	24 hours after treatment has begun
Whooping Cough (pertussis)	At least 7 days after therapy has begun
Pin Worms	After treatment has been completed

Roseola	After illness has subsided
Scabies	24 hours after treatment has begun
Strep Throat	24 hours after treatment has begun and cessation of fever
Poison Ivy	After lesions have dried up
Pneumonia or Epiglottitis	Written note from physician (if due to H-flu, Health Department must give order)
Bacterial (Spinal) Meningitis	When Health Dept. gives OK
Mumps	9 days after swelling has begun

## **Prescription Medication**

The Learning Patch will administer prescription medication as directed by a licensed physician or dentist. Parent/guardian and physician must provide written permission for the medication to be administered. Medication must be in original container with label bearing the child's name, date, dosage and pharmacy name. Any unused medication will be returned to the parent/guardian. A separate form must be submitted for each medication.

## **Over-the-Counter Medication**

The Learning Patch will administer over-the-counter such as aspirin or ibuprofen under the same conditions as prescription medications. Written instructions from physician or dentist must be provided.

Topical applications, such as suntan lotion or insect repellent may be applied with written parental consent.

## **Reporting of Child Abuse**

We are required by law to report any suspected cases of possible child abuse or neglect. In some cases, we are directed by the state's child protective agency not to notify the parents of the report.

## **Meals and Nutrition**

The Learning Patch serves breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. All meals are designed to meet USDA nutritional guidelines. You may supply your own meals, but any food brought from home must meet the same nutritional standards. We will furnish you with a list of acceptable and unacceptable foods. Also, meals brought from home cannot require heating or refrigeration.

Please notify us of any food allergies your child may have. If your child has special dietary requirements, you will need to furnish those items.

Our staff eats all meals with the children. We believe this is the best way to teach healthy eating habits and good table manners.

## **Naptime**

Our daily rest period begins after lunch. Each child has his or her own cot. Children are encouraged to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes in order to re-energize for the afternoon.

# Discipline Policy

We understand that children are individuals and each has his or her own temperament. Our goal is not to punish undesirable behavior but to redirect their aggression or confusion. A benefit of having only 12 children with two adults is that we are able to get to know the children in our care and learn what works for them.

The Learning Patch will not punish or reprimand any child for toileting accidents, not finishing or trying food served, accidental messes or spills, not sleeping (please see our rest time procedures) or natural curiosity (asking questions). We will never use corporal punishment or deny children meals, physical activity, rest or toileting. These means are not effective, and do not fit with The Learning Patch's philosophy of respectful treatment of children. We will not use "time out" because we do not believe it gets the desired results and often postpones more negative behavior. We will use the "Take a Break" method. This approach allows children to take the time to calm down, discuss with an adult, regroup and join back in the activity.

Positive redirection will be used during center time, this means we will encourage children to play somewhere else, take turns with a specific toy or distract the child by offering an alternative activity.

Children, like adults, will have their good and bad days. As such, they will be permitted to have "alone time" when needed. A child may choose some quiet activity such as snuggling with his or her rest time blanket or drawing in the art center. After children become familiar with this method, they often know exactly when they need some time away and take a break on their own. In the preschool classroom, this is often a great way to avoid tantrums that occur when a child is tired or not in a good mood.

Young children will often react to frustration by becoming physically aggressive. We will do our best to prevent this and encourage children to calm themselves in appropriate ways. Some suggested calming activities include one-on-one time with a care giver away from the group, listening to relaxing music, or getting a drink to cool off.

Above all, we want to ensure the safety of each child. Sometimes a child's behavior may pose a danger to himself or others. If we cannot calm a child, a parent or guardian may be called to talk to the child. If we judge the child's behavior to be unsafe, we will require that he or she be picked up. The Learning Patch reserves the right of immediate termination of care in instances where a child's behavior poses a severe risk to other children or staff.

# Privacy Permission

I/we grant permission to The Learning Patch to conduct the following activities (please initial next to those items to which you consent and sign below.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Post photos of your child around the center.

\_\_\_\_\_ Give copies of photos which may include your child to other families in our care (group photos, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Place photos of your child in photo albums intended for viewing by prospective clients.

\_\_\_\_\_ Display artwork and crafts that include your child's name around the center (first name only.)

\_\_\_\_\_ List the name of your child in our newsletter and posting this information on our bulletin board (first name only.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (child's name)

X \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian)

X \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian)

## Parents' Right to Know

Under the Delaware Code, you are entitled to inspect, at any time, the active record and complaint files of any licensed child care facility. To review a child care facility record contact:

Office of Child Care Licensing  
1825 Faulkland Road  
Wilmington, DE 19802  
302-892-5800

Office of Child Care Licensing  
821 Silver Lake Boulevard  
Suite 202  
Dover, DE 19904  
302-739-5487

X\_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian)

X\_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian)

X\_\_\_\_\_ (The Learning Patch)