

## **Welcome!**

### **Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to provide a positive learning environment for children, which is: enriching, loving, culturally and linguistically diverse and fun!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Learning Station. We understand the important role in which we are about to encompass. We therefore, have created a learning environment where our primary objective is to optimize each child's own developmental potential. These early years are those years in which the rate of development is the highest, and the learning foundation is laid.

Change is one of the most prevalent features of a child's early life. Therefore we have created a learning environment that easily adapts to their ever changing needs. We encourage them to explore, and to learn many life long lessons, while having fun!

We also understand the value of communication. It is through the art of effective communications that we work together as a team, in order to maximize learning, while maintaining the highest level of care!

The **Learning Station supports language development** and academic achievements of all children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Many of our children and families are dual language learners, as well as our culturally diverse staff. Therefore, we do our best to communicate with families through the use of:

- Translators
- Visual cues and prompts
- Written translated information

We also encourage a variety of ways to communicate with you, these include but are not limited to:

- Direct verbal communication
- Newsletters
- Trainings

- E-mail
- Phone calls
- Texting

Our website is: <https://www.thelearningstationschool.com>

### **Conferences:**

Parent/teacher conferences can be scheduled Monday through Friday from 1:00 - 2:00, over nap time. If these times don't work for you, please contact your child's teacher to make other arrangements.

### **Philosophy:**

Several factors are fundamental to the optimal development of any child. One involves the experiencing of a wide variety of activities which allow the child to learn, acquire and refine skills. These activities should permit the child to consider alternative solutions, to access the outcomes associated with each solution in order to determine the optimal course of action. Such activities should foster independence, including the child's eventual ability to set their own goals and standards.

We also value the importance of creating a warm, loving, and nurturing environment that allows the adults and children to formulate a positive relationship and bond. It is important to note, that it is through these relationships that children learn to trust other adults and peers, which allows children to experiment, learn and then grow from their environment.

### **Program Dimensions and Curriculum:**

Our curriculum is based on 7 program dimensions. We understand that development occurs in all areas of a child's existence. Therefore, we have devised our curriculum to incorporate the following in order to expose children to many opportunities.

1. **Communication or linguistic activities** - those tasks that are traditionally associated with pre-academic or academic experiences which allow the child to convey information through non-verbal, vocal, verbal, and eventually written modes.
2. **Cognitive Activities** - classifying objects, putting material in order along dimension, colors, numbers, time, volume, etc.
3. **Spatial Activities** - to allow practice in finding one's way around the environment, formulating mental images of objects and then transforming them into reality.
4. **Music** - to allow the perception and creation of pitch, rhythmic patterns, language, and the appreciation of music.
5. **Motoric Development - Fine motor** skills through manipulations, puzzles, scissors, pencils, crayons, and markers. **Gross Motor** skills through running, climbing, jumping, dancing, skiing, etc.
6. **Interpersonal Experiences** - to help children become acquainted with themselves, to gain a sense of identity and a realistic concept of capabilities and potential. Self-awareness in emotions, capabilities and self-care.
7. **Social and emotional development** - to guide children in relationships with peers, through friendship and conflict. Self-awareness in emotion regulation and response.

Once we have taken the program dimensions into account, we formulate our curriculum based on the developmental needs of the children. Our developmental curriculum is coordinated with two thematic systems over the course of the school year. One is the concentric curriculum, which places the initial focus of the activities on the most important person to any child, himself. The focus then shifts to the immediate family, then on to the extended family, the child's home, his neighborhood, and eventually expands through their town, state, country, world, and solar system. The culminating activities for the year return the focus on the individual. The emphasis being on the changes that have occurred, including the greater skills the child now possesses. Interwoven within this concentric theme is the seasonal theme: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer, and then all of the Holidays there within.

Thus a strong developmental foundation is integrated to form the basis of planning. Specific activities are chosen which assure the broadest range of developmental

expression, and are aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. To expand upon our curriculum, and keep up to date with evolving ideas and information, we refer to Teaching Strategies: **Creative Curriculum**. This curriculum focuses on the whole child approach, which emphasizes the development of skills in all areas of a child's life. This includes math and literacy skills, as well as social-emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. We believe this supports our philosophy by helping the children learn effective communication, problem solving skills, and the ability to think in concrete vs. abstract ways.

### **Healthy Bodies Project**

We have been working with Penn State as they conduct a research study on the health and wellness of children. The goals of the program include healthy eating, active lifestyles, and healthy behavior development. We believe this project further supports our philosophy, especially because food is such an important part of our day. We love how they are providing us with ideas and materials to expand our knowledge on different foods out there, and giving the children an opportunity to try something new.

We have implemented this curriculum in all of the classrooms as often as the activity permits.

### **Daily Schedule:**

7:30 - 8:30	Welcome, Breakfast, Free-play, Bathroom and Diapers
8:30 - 9:30	Outside Time (will vary with classrooms, weather permitting)
9:30 - 10:00	Circle Time
10:00 - 11:00	Activity Time
11:00 - 11:15	Story Time
11:15 - 12:00	Lunch, Clean-up, Free-play
12:00 - 12:30	Bathroom and Diapers

12:15 - 12:45	Outside Time (weather permitting)
1:00 - 3:00	Nap Time, Number concepts, Free-play
3:00 - 3:45	Snack, Diapers, Free-play
3:45 - 4:00	Circle
4:00 - 5:30	Outside Time, Free-play, Prepare to go Home

\*Please note, this schedule gives you a basic idea of our day. However, depending upon the needs of the classroom, these times and activities can change.

### **Pre-K Counts Program**

Within our program, we have one Pre-K Counts classroom. This program provides early childhood education funding for 3-4 year olds in families that meet specific size and income guidelines. Unlike the rest of our classrooms, this program follows the SCASD calendar. The hours for this program are 9:00am - 2:30pm. If you are in need of wrap-around care, we do provide this at an additional cost.

#### Daily Schedule:

9:00 - 9:30	Arrival/Breakfast
9:30 - 10:00	Morning Meeting/Circle
10:00 - 10:40	Large Group Activity
11:00 - 11:45	Lunch
11:45 - 12:30	Outside Time
12:30 - 2:00	Center Time/Choice Time
2:00 - 2:30	Snack Time

### **Health and Illness Policy**

As working parents ourselves, we understand that being away from our jobs for any length of time can be troublesome. Illness is an ongoing issue in all group settings. While we do our best to control contagions, we realize, there may be times when a child needs to be excluded from other children, and we reserve the right to deny care. Therefore, we have adopted the guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as, the U.S. National Health and Safety Performance Standards. For more information please consult your Lead Teacher.

For protection of all children and staff, your child should be kept home or will be sent home if they display any of the following symptoms:

- When an illness prevents your child from participating comfortably in activities determined by your child's teaching team.
- When an illness results in a greater need for care than the teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in their room.
- A temperature above 100.4 degrees. Your child must be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine, as well as medicine used for comfort.
- Your child must stay home a minimum of 24 hours after vomiting
- Uncontrollable Diarrhea. Your child must stay home a minimum of 24 hours after diarrhea.
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness
- Uncontrolled Coughing
- Difficulty with breathing
- Unconsolable and persistent crying

Please remember, that we are not limited to these symptoms. If your child is really not feeling well, you may be called! We encourage you to have your child seen by a healthcare Professional!

### **Contagious Illnesses:**

Parents should keep their children home if they have a contagious illness. Please notify your child's teacher if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. We require your child to remain home during the first 24 hours on an antibiotic. Here is a list of contagious illnesses:

- Strep Throat
- Viral Infections (Influenza, RSV, COVID-19, etc.)
- Mumps and Measles
- Hand Foot and Mouth
- Chicken Pox
- Pink Eye
- Head Lice
- Impetigo
- Unexplained illness

We are not limited to these illnesses, and we reserve the right to deny care. Please consult your healthcare Professionals.

### **Medications:**

When it is necessary for your child to receive medication, we encourage you to attempt a medication schedule that does not include school! However, we understand that this is not always doable. Therefore, we have specific guidelines that need to be followed:

- **All** Medication must be in its original container, with your child's name on the container with correct dosage.
- Medication must be accompanied with medical permission from your doctor, with specific instructions, and your signature - giving us permission to administer.
- Non-Prescription Medication cannot be given without written permission from your child's healthcare professional as well as yourself.

**Please note: we will be unable to administer any medications without proper documentation and procedures.**

### **Food Safety, Allergies, and Dietary Restrictions:**

Due to the diversity in our school, we understand the importance of diet within each individual family and child. We strive to do our best to allow individual meal plans accessible to children when necessary by providing vegetarian options and egg free options throughout the week. We provide cow's milk daily to children during lunch, as well as water if your child does not prefer dairy. If necessary, we will accept another form of milk (such as soy milk, almond milk, cashew milk, etc.), but restrictions do follow. All outside milk must be labeled with your child's name, and handed to their teacher unopened. When opened, we will label the milk with the date, and the milk must remain in our refrigerator. If we are unable to meet your child's dietary needs, you are permitted to bring in lunch for your child in a closed container labeled with your child's name.

When an allergen is present, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization for Emergency Care of Children with Severe Allergies" form, that we will provide to you. This form includes extensive information about the child's allergen, and the action plan in place in case of an emergency.

### **Mealtimes and Nutrition:**

We provide healthy homecooked meals daily, while incorporating local and fresh foods into our meal planning. We understand the important role that early exposure to a variety of foods can create positive eating habits that carry on throughout their lives! Furthermore, we want children to understand the important role that nutrition plays in their life. Therefore, we incorporate the "**Healthy Bodies Project**" curriculum into our weekly planning.

Water and milk are offered at mealtimes and throughout the day. Our milk is provided by Meyer Dairy which is a local farm.

We provide fresh fruits and vegetables daily to the children in our program. Our homecooked meals are designed to incorporate a wide variety of fresh fruits and veggies into your child's daily diet. We limit the amount of foods that are high in fat, sugar, salt, and preservatives.

We encourage language development and food regulation during mealtimes. Our teachers encourage children to ask for more using phrases like: “more please, milk please, water please, I’m all done, or I’m finished”. Children are encouraged to make these decisions about their own bodies and decide for themselves when they have had enough.

### **Farm to School Program Policy**

The Learning Station’s Farm to School Program allows children a wide variety of hands-on early learning experiences that increase access to organic healthy foods, local farming products, on-site gardening opportunities, which will be incorporated into a variety of food based activities.

It is through this program that your child will participate in building thriving Eco-Systems that are good for growing our own herbs, fruits, vegetables and flowers. They will have the opportunity to visit local farms, and we will incorporate as many locally grown products into daily meals and various food based cooking opportunities, culminating in an understanding and appreciation for healthier foods.

In addition, we will incorporate a variety of scientific methodology such as: observation, experimentation, data collection, to name a few.

### **Inclusion Policy:**

We believe in the importance of inclusion, therefore, we have included our policy: “Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access and support.”

### **Referral Plan:**

The following steps will be taken when referring/integrating services for children:

- Upon entering into our school, we will spend a few weeks getting to know your child, and bonding with them.
- Within the first 45 days of enrollment, we will send home a questionnaire (Ages and Stages), we too will compare your input with ours, to find out if further screenings are needed.

- Whether your child needs further assessments or not, we encourage you to set up a parent teacher conference with your child's teaching team!
- During these conferences, we will discuss transitions, progress, concerns, short and long term goals for your child.
- If we determine, that additional services will be needed, then we will make recommendations at this time.
- Permission to move forward will need to be in writing.
- It is our policy to work hand in hand with you, your child, and the agencies in which provide specialized services.

### **Individual Educational Plans:**

If your child has an IEP or is need of one, we request a copy of the IEP in order to better meet the educational needs of your child.

Agencies:

Strawberry Fields: 814-234-6023

Providing Early intervention services, mental health, and people with disabilities.

Base Service Unit: 814-355-6786

They provide a wide variety of services such as:

- Identifies, evaluates, and treats people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.
- Provides treatment options.
- Provides crisis intervention.
- Provides information on referrals.
- Provides comprehensive prevention, intervention, treatment, and referral services for any person with drug and alcohol use/abuse issues.
- All services are confidential.

## **Expulsions Policy:**

The Learning Station has adopted OCDEL'S position statement regarding Expulsion and Suspension. We want to create positive environments that focus on prevention. Giving children strategies for social negotiation, self control, and opportunities to practice these skills. We want to establish clear, developmentally appropriate consistent rules, expectations, and consequences not only for the children, but staff and parents alike. We will ensure fairness and equality, and will evaluate the strategies necessary. We will also bring in other specialists for input and evaluation.

### Steps:

1. We will conduct regular classroom and outdoor observations.
2. We will write down information as it occurs.
3. We will ask for a conference, in order to discuss appropriate strategies.
4. We will be as consistent as possible.
5. We will ask you permission for a referral, if problem behaviors cannot be corrected.
6. We will meet again once we have exhausted all avenues, we then reserve the right to expel.

## **Late Policy:**

The Learning Station is open from 7:15 a.m. until 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on Holidays. When you are late, the teachers have no alternative but to wait with your child, therefore, we have instituted a late fee that needs to be paid directly to the staff members who have stayed with your child.

Late fees:

\$10.00 for the first 15 minutes/per staff member, \$5.00 for each additional 5 minute block/per staff member.

## **Children's Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity:**

Physically active play is important for the health and development of all children. Our program is committed to providing children with opportunities to move throughout the day.

#### Time:

- We provide children 2 to 5 years old (preschoolers) with at least 120 minutes for indoor and outdoor physical activity every day, and children 1 to 2 years old (toddlers) with at least 90 minutes. As weather allows, we strive to take children outside 3 times per day or more, for a total of 90 minutes for preschoolers and 60 minutes for toddlers. We see the outdoors as an extension of the classroom, so children not only enjoy the outdoors through physically active play, but also through other learning activities. During heavy rain, icy conditions, poor air quality, or dangerous heat or cold, children will stay indoors, but get the same total amount of time for physically active play. Throughout each day, we look for opportunities to keep children moving and limit the amount of time they are expected to remain seated.
- We offer tummy time to non-crawling infants at least 4 times per day. As weather allows, we strive to take infants outside two times per day or more so that they can enjoy the sights and sounds. To help infants build their strength and coordination, we limit the amount of time that infants spend in seats, swings, and ExcerSaucers.

We ask that families support our efforts by dressing children ready for play. This includes closed-toed shoes and clothing that is appropriate for the weather and allows children to comfortably run, jump, and climb, both indoors and out. In the summer, we require children to come to school with sunscreen already applied. If you would like your child to have sunscreen reapplied throughout the day, then we will need to have written medical permission as well as your permission.

#### Equipment & Environment:

- We seek to provide a fun and challenging play space that encourages movement and learning. We provide a variety of play equipment (balls, jump ropes, tricycles, etc.), in good condition, both indoors and outdoors. Additionally, books and posters in our classrooms help to teach children about the importance of physical activity. Outdoors, shade is provided and children are given regular opportunities to drink water.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:**

Parent Teacher conferences are offered all of the time. Parents are encouraged to schedule conferences with their child's teaching team as often as needed or warranted. We try and schedule these meetings over nap time. This allows us to maintain proper teacher/child ratios!

**School Closings:**

We are closed for major Holidays, the weeks between Christmas and New Years, as well as a week in March, which typically lines up with Penn State's Spring Break.

Inclement Weather: We try and stay open as much as possible, however, if we do close, you will receive a text or an email confirming this information.

**Tuition Policy:**

When enrolling your child in the Learning Station, it is important to understand that you are reserving a space in the program. This space is available for your use as you need it. Fees are calculated relative to the reservation of space and time.

The yearly costs of the program along with credited days for Illness, Vacation, Snow Days, Holidays, and Winter Break are incorporated to make up your child's tuition. Therefore, these fees are due whether or not your child is in attendance.

Tuition is due on the first of the month. A service charge will be assessed for late payments.

A two week written notification prior to termination of enrollment is required. Additional fees of \$35.00 will be assessed on return checks. Interest charges of 18% per year will apply on past due accounts. Costs and legal fees associated with collection efforts will be the responsibility of the signatory.

If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask!!!