



LION CUB ACADEMY

A CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

MISSOURI SOUTHERN
— STATE UNIVERSITY —

Family Handbook

Welcome to the Lion Cub Academy!

The information contained in this handbook will introduce you to the Lion Cub Academy and serve as a quick reference guide for policies and procedures.

The Academy provides our lion cubs with the highest educational experience while remembering that they are children. Developmentally appropriate and challenging play is at the center of our curriculum. Everything in the classroom is there for a purpose in the educational development of your child.

We also believe in creating relationships with the whole family. The Academy is a home away from home and we want children to feel safe to explore in the classrooms. We welcome you to the Lion Cub Academy family and look forward to providing a secure foundation for your child's successful academic and social growth.

Nikki Tappana, M. Ed.
Director



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**Lion Cub Academy
School of Education
Missouri Southern State University
3950 E. Newman Road Joplin, MO 64801**

Office Phone Number: 417-625-9360

The MSSU Lion Cub Academy operates in accordance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, age, disability, religion, or national origin.

The Lion Cub Academy is licensed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). A licensing agent from the Bureau of Child Care inspects the academy several times each year. Inspections by sanitation and the fire marshal are conducted each year. A copy of *Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers* is available upon request or on the Missouri DESE web site for your review, <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/AdRules/csr/current/5csr/5c25-500.pdf>. The MSSU Lion Cub Academy license DVN number is 000183377, the Taylor Hall location DVN is 002995853

Introduction

Welcome to the Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) Lion Cub Academy (LCA)!

We are located on the north side of the Joplin Regional Academy at 3600 E. Newman Road Joplin, MO, across the street from MSSU. MSSU has had a child development center in operation since 1986.

This handbook provides information about the educational program at the LCA, and the policies that govern it. We hope that you will find this information helpful.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them openly with your child's teacher. We look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you and your child/children.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the LCA is to provide a safe, nurturing environment for children. The Academy is designed to create an atmosphere of security and mutual trust where children can develop emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The LCA is committed to providing high quality care and enriched educational opportunities. University students are provided the opportunity to experience real-life skills in child development, education, and safety.

OUR GOALS

The LCA incorporates a developmental philosophy, designed to maximize each child's growth in the following areas:

Cognitive Development

- The child will begin to develop curiosity and intellectual abilities necessary for the enjoyment of lifelong learning.
- The child will recognize/remember and connect experiences.
- The child will demonstrate flexibility and inventiveness in thinking.

Communication Skills

- The child will listen and express thoughts and needs with increasingly complex language.
- The child will use conventional grammar.
- The child will engage in conversations with peers and adults.

Physical Development

- The child will begin to develop attitudes and skills that promote physical fitness and motor control.
- The child will demonstrate gross-motor skills of crawling, walking, kicking, and throwing.
- The child will demonstrate fine-motor skills using drawing and writing instruments.

Social/Emotional Development

- The child will develop a beginning understanding of "self" as both an individual and cultural identity.
- The child will begin to acquire and develop language as a personal and social means to enhance communication and learning.
- The child will interact and form positive relationships with peers.
- The child will begin to develop social understandings necessary for interacting effectively with peers and adults.

Academy Staff

The LCA employs six full-time lead teachers, part time teacher assistants, and student workers. The director holds a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood. All lead teachers are required to hold degrees. Teacher Assistants are all university employees, and student workers are all working towards degrees. With the number of staff employed, we can easily maintain appropriate adult to child ratios. We are required to maintain ratios of 1:4 for the toddler (1 year old) rooms, 1:8 in our preschool (2 to 4 year old) rooms and 1:10 in our prekindergarten (3 to 5 year old) rooms. All staff members maintain current evidence of the appropriate medical examinations and background screening and register with the *Family Safety Care Registry* upon employment. Background checks are updated annually.

Enrollment Information

Admittance and Enrollment Policy

Enrollment at the LCA is open to the public. Priority enrollment will be given to the children of MSSU students and faculty/staff.

Children will be accepted for enrollment on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to children who are continuing from a previous semester and to siblings of already enrolled children.

For children to have consistent care and receive the full benefit of our educational program, they are enrolled on a regular schedule. Parents will be required to complete an *Agreement Form* at the beginning of each semester in which they will specify the child's schedule. Available days to schedule are as follows:

The full week, Monday through Friday
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
Tuesday and Thursday

Schedule changes may be made up to one week after classes begin each semester, depending on availability of days. After that date, the schedule shown on the *Agreement Form* is followed. Additional days may be added throughout the semester as room and staffing permits.

Required LCA Enrollment Forms

The following information must be completed at least 24 hours prior to the admittance of each child. Forms will be emailed and must be completed, signed electronically, and returned by email:

- *Lion Cub Academy Child Care Application (fully completed)*
- *Lion Cub Academy Child Profile Sheet*
- *Lion Cub Academy Student Information Sheet*
- *Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) CACFP Enrollment Form for Child Care Centers (fully completed)*
- *Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) Income Eligibility Form for Child Care Centers (fully completed)*
- Lion Cub Academy Emergency Authorization Form
- *Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) Parent's Specialized Instructions for Infants and Toddlers (if applicable)*
- *Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS) Child Medical Exam Report*—must be completed by child's physician and returned no later than 30 days after initial enrollment
- Copy of child's immunizations record (current and updated)
- Signed *Note of Understanding*, receipt of a Family Handbook

Signed Enrollment *Agreement Form* w/\$25 non-refundable fee (assessed each semester.) The \$25 fee is billed to your account and the Semester *Agreement Form* must be signed by all parties before a placement is secured for your child.

Hours/Days of Operation

The LCA is open from 7:00 am until 5:30 pm, Monday-Friday during the fall, spring, and summer semesters of the school year. The LCA is also open for MSSU intersessions.

Arrival at the Academy

Children must stay with their parents/guardians when entering and exiting the building. Upon arrival at the LCA, you will use the keypad (using an assigned code) for admittance. Individuals who do not have a pin number will be required to have a picture I.D. and be on the child's approved emergency/pick up list. The keypad maintains required attendance records for all children enrolled. Please notify your child's teacher if there is to be a change in your child's daily schedule, especially if someone other than yourself is picking up your child.

After signing in your child, the LCA staff will accompany your child to their assigned classroom or the morning classroom for their age group. This allows for a smooth transition for your child. Under no circumstances should your child be allowed to find his or her own way into the LCA. Children are not to be left at the academy unless a staff member has taken over supervision of the child. If a LCA staff member is not at the front office, you may ring the doorbell, and you will need to wait until a staff member comes to the door to take your child to their classroom. Children MAY NOT be left alone in the lobby.

Some children are eager to attend school; others are hesitant to have their parents leave. If a child has difficulty separating from their parent, it is best if the child is given to a teacher or assistant and the parents leave, always saying goodbye and leaving decisively. **Do not sneak away from a child.** Children who cry when their parents leave almost always settle down quickly and begin enjoying their day. Parents are encouraged to call the academy or text the classroom teacher to check on how their child is doing if they are concerned.

Children may NOT be dropped off between the hours of 9:00am and 2:30pm without prior arrangement.

LATE DROP-OFF FEE: There is a \$5.00 fee for the first minute past 9:00am (Based on the lobby kiosk time) and \$1.00 per minute after that.

Most of our classroom learning activities take place in the morning, and your child is missing important educational experiences when they arrive late, and it is disruptive to your child and to the class when a child arrives during the hours we have dedicated to lunch and nap/rest time. We also evaluate staffing needs in order to try to keep our costs down. If you must pick up your child during these hours, please notify the office and the classroom teacher in advance, so your child can be brought to you in the office on your arrival. Parents will not be allowed to go to the classrooms to pick up a child during these times.

Departure

The LCA staff will release a child only to the enrolling parent or to other adults authorized by the parent, as indicated on the *Enrollment Form*. Children will be released only to adults (over the age of 17). Children must stay with their parents/guardians when entering and exiting the building. Do not allow your child to exit the academy without your accompaniment. Upon arrival at the LCA, you will use the keypad (using an assigned code) for admittance. For your child's safety, picture identification will be required for individuals who do not have a pin number and are on the child's approved emergency/pick up list. Please notify your child's teacher if there is to be a change in your child's daily schedule, especially if someone other than yourself is picking up your child.

- **Once you and your child (or person designated by you) are reunited, he or she is no longer the responsibility of the LCA staff.**
- **LATE PICK-UP FEE:** There is a \$5.00 fee for the first minute past 5:30pm (Based on the lobby kiosk time) and \$1.00 per minute after that. (If it is over 30 minutes, the Department of Social Services will be called.)

Supervising Siblings/Guests at Drop Off/Pick Up

If siblings, or other individuals, accompany a parent during drop off or pick up, they must be kept under your immediate supervision and may not be left in the foyers or hallways while you pick up your child. They are expected to follow the same rules we have for the children here in the facility, such as no running, yelling, or disrespectful behavior.

Cell Phones

We ask that you refrain from using your cell phone in the academy as it is distracting to the activities in the classroom and interferes with parent-teacher communication. Your child deserves your full attention when being dropped off or picked up. Due to privacy, using a cell phone in the facility to take pictures or videos that have any child in it other than your own is NOT permitted.

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 Contact come 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.

Absences

Classroom teachers need to be notified if your child is going to be late or absent from school. This helps the LCA to adjust for staffing and food. If your child is ill, please let the classroom teacher or director know, especially if they are contagious. Tuition payments are still required during a child's absence to maintain their enrollment at the LCA.

Dismissal from the LCA

We understand that, as a parent, you are concerned about the welfare of your child. As an academy, we are concerned with the welfare of **all** children enrolled in our program. Be assured it is not our goal to exclude children and families from our program. On the contrary, it is our goal to work with families in providing the best possible care for their children.

The LCA may dismiss a family from our program for any of the following reasons:

Immediate Causes for Dismissal

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent or guest threatens physical or intimidating actions towards any staff member or other enrolled children.
- Parent or guest exhibits verbal abuse toward any staff member or other enrolled children.

Parental Actions for Child's Dismissal

- Failure to pay or repeated delinquency in payment of tuition.
- Failure to provide required forms, including the child's immunization records.

- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Inability of parent to adjust to the academy's program.
- Verbal or written abuse toward the staff or facility via in person, writing, or social media.

Child's actions for Dismissal

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outburst.
- Inappropriate behavior that continues after parent conferences and intervention strategies.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to any staff member or other enrolled child.
- Excessive biting.

Other Reasons for Dismissal

- Non-cooperation of parent and/or child which jeopardizes the health and/or safety of others.
- Noncompliance with the policies and procedures of the LCA.
- Excessive incident reports.
- If the LCA does not feel they can meet the needs of the child.
- If the LCA believes dismissal is in the best interest of the child and/or facility.

Personal Records

Parents may ask for a *Copy of Records Form* from the front desk to request a copy of their child's personal file from the LCA.

Custodial and non-custodial parents

Custodial and non-custodial parents are expected to confer and agree upon pick up orders for their children. In the case of joint custody, if a question arises between parents, we request that parents seek agreement without involving the LCA and inform the director once they reach an agreement.

Educational Experiences

Lion Cub Academy Curriculum

The teachers and their assistants in the LCA realize that young children learn by hands-on, interesting, and interactive experiences. The LCA uses Project Construct and Conscious Discipline to guide and scaffold children's emerging intellectual and social growth. Based on the Philosophy of Piaget, Project Construct is an educational guideline for teachers to help provide experiences so children can "construct" their own knowledge. Project Construct encompasses different learning environments; individual, small group and large group learning centers, and outdoor areas. The Natural Outdoor Classroom allows the teachers to take the curriculum outside and further the experiences that children have with hands-on learning.

The Lion Cub Academy believes in meeting your child where they are developmentally and propelling their education to its highest potential. With this belief, we need a few things from parents to help in the process. Information from the profile will be used to help the teachers assess the child's developmental level, provide context for learning environment choices, and optimize growth. Upon enrollment at the LCA, parents will assess their children with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Information received from this questionnaire will be used to help create a more individualized educational experience. All information is private and will only be shared with lead staff and those that are directly involved with your child.

Assessment

Developmentally appropriate practices are important at the LCA; therefore, we are constantly assessing students through observations. These assessments allow teachers to provide unique curriculum for the classroom and meet individual student needs.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher conferences are conducted twice a year (October and April). During the conferences, teachers and parents will discuss the development of their child while planning for future expectations of the family.

Observation & Research

The LCA operates as an educational laboratory to many academic programs at MSSU. Early childhood education majors, social work majors, nursing majors, as well as students from other departments use the academy for observation throughout the year. When a student needs to work one on one with our children, they do so in the presence of an LCA staff member. Families are not obligated to allow their children to participate in any educational or research projects. Families are provided with an opportunity to sign a permission form before a student works directly with one of our children. All research activities will be conducted within the Lion Cub Academy.

Natural Outdoor Classroom

Outdoor play will be provided daily, unless it is deemed by the child care weather chart to be hazardous. All children in attendance will be expected to go outside. If children are too sick to go outside, they should be kept at home until they can participate in all LCA activities including outdoor play.

Burdette and Whitaker (2005) state that children today are spending half as much time outside as their parents did 20 years ago. In addition, within their research they have found a correlation between reduced aggression and better attention with children who play outside for longer periods. Missouri State licensing requires that children spend at least one hour a day outside. The LCA is using the natural outdoor classroom as an opportunity for children to spend even more time outside.

The Outdoor Classroom is set up like a regular classroom. It has many centers with different activities set up to enhance the Creative Curriculum objectives.

Screen Time Policy

Because we care about the health and well-being of the children in our care, we follow the American Academy of Pediatrics' Recommendations on Screen Time:

- Children under 2 should have no screen time
- Children age 2 and over should watch less than 2 hours a day total.

The LCA understands that TV and other electronic media can be used to enhance the exploring and knowledge building experiences of children. Therefore, we are allowing up to 30 minutes of screen time a day for children age 2 and over.

Classroom Transition Policy

The children will transition from the Toddler Room to the Preschool Room and then to the Prekindergarten Room. Movement from the Toddler room and Preschool room is based on the availability of an opening and the age of the child. Factors in addition to age of the child may be considered. Factors will include the child's progress with toilet training, developmental considerations, and parental preference. Teachers and parents will discuss promotion at the Parent/Teacher Conferences. If a child is unable to move into the next classroom, tuition will remain at the higher rate due to the lower child-to-adult ratios.

Supplementary Education

The LCA is willing to work hand in hand with the First Steps, Parents as Teachers, local school districts and Child Care Aware of Southwest Missouri. If you choose to have any of these professionals work with your child at the LCA, and arrangements are made, an LCA staff member will maintain visual contact during instruction periods.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to maintain up-to-date information regarding their child. Failure to provide updated information will result in your child's enrollment being delayed or terminated. can update their family information at any time by contacting the LCA office.

Should any reason exist why a parent would not be allowed to visit or pick up a child, the school **must have court signed documentation** to that effect on file, and in the case of divorce, a filed copy of the **court order prohibiting visitation rights**. This statement will also be provided to the campus security office, should a situation arise.

Payment Information

Fees and Tuition

- There is a non-refundable \$25.00 enrollment fee per child per semester (fall, spring, summer semesters)
- **LATE DROP-OFF FEE:** There is a \$5.00 fee for the first minute past 9:00am (Based on the lobby kiosk time) and \$1.00 per minute after that.
- **LATE PICK-UP FEE:** There is a \$5.00 fee for the first minute past 5:30pm (Based on the lobby kiosk time) and \$1.00 per minute after that.
- **Record of attendance is required for state licensing, federal food program and financial assistance. The keypad MUST be used when clocking your child in and out.**
- Tuition is charged for days your child is scheduled to be at the LCA. No refunds will be made for absences.
- Late Payment Policy – a \$25.00 fee for late tuition payment and declined payments is charged and children cannot attend school until their tuition is fully paid. Tuition is also due for days missed if children are not in attendance due to tuition nonpayment.
- The LCA is closed anytime MSSU cancels classes or is closed due to Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather. However, during these rare events, tuition is still required.
- Tuition is not assessed when the LCA is closed for scheduled holidays or other pre-established periods.
- Tuition rates will increase each January due to cost-of-living increases.
- Current tuition rates can be found on our enrollment form.

Payment Policy

Families are required to pay tuition in advance. Payments will be made either with auto-pay set up or with a credit card online or at the lobby kiosk through our current Childcare Management Software. Debit or Credit card payments do have an associated fee. Tuition is charged for days children are scheduled to attend. No refunds will be given for absences. Payments are due on the day tuition is charged. These days can be found on the LCA Calendar.

Late Payment Policy

Payment due dates are outlined on the Lion Cub Academy calendar in green. Payments not received by close of business on the subsequent Friday will be assessed a \$25 late fee per tuition charged. This means if you have more than one child attending the LCA, there will be a late charge for each child account. Past due amount and late any fees must be paid before close of business on the following Friday. If your account is in arrears, your child(ren) will be unable to attend the LCA starting the following Monday, until your account is current. The LCA will hold the spot(s) for a one-week period before offering it to another family on the waiting list. Once the account is current, you can re-enroll if spot(s) are available. Excessive occurrences of late payments could result in dismissal from the LCA.

How to Pay

Payments can be made using the kiosk in the LCA lobby or online with a credit card through our current Childcare Management Software (a convenience fee is applied). Payments can also be set-up with an ACH when using autopay.

EMPLOYEE PAYMENTS

MSSU employees have the option to use payroll deduction. If employment is terminated with Missouri Southern State University, the university will deduct any unpaid expense amount from any wages/salary owed to employee at the time of termination of employment. If a terminated MSSU employee's paycheck is insufficient to cover the assessed charges the employee will be responsible for making payment for any remaining balance.

Holiday & Vacations

The LCA is closed in observance of the following holidays: Labor Day, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving weekend, the December/New Year holiday, Martin Luther King Day, the Friday of Spring Break, Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Juneteenth. Families are not billed for holidays.

The LCA is closed directly after the summer session to allow our custodian access for cleaning and repairs and the teachers time to prepare for the upcoming school year. The LCA is closed during the days in December that MSSU is dismissed to observe the holidays and will reopen after the first of the year.

Vacation Policy

Each child enrolled will receive one free vacation week per semester. For example, if your child attends two days a week, they will have two days of vacation available; if they attend three days a week, they would have three days available; if they attend five days a week, they would have five days available. Vacation days are days that the child is NOT in attendance. Vacation days CANNOT be used if the child attended school that day. The following rules apply:

- You must notify the Director or Administrative Assistant by email before using the vacation days.
- Vacation days cannot be carried over to another semester.
- Accounts must be current and paid in full to receive the vacation credit.
- Vacation days are non-refundable if not used.

Financial Assistance

The LCA gladly accepts payments from agencies such as the Division of Social Services (DSS, also known as State Assistance), National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA, military families), Tribal Assistance, etc. Families must indicate on their *Agreement Form* that they will be receiving assistance from these agencies. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the agency offices to determine eligibility and approved authorization amounts before the child's first day of enrollment.

Your child's attendance directly impacts the amount of reimbursement that these agencies contribute. For instance, DSS requires that your child be present at the LCA for at least 5 hours a day to receive the full reimbursement amount for the day. Please keep in mind that the amount authorized may not cover the entire amount of your academy fees. You will be responsible for the remaining balance of your account that financial assistance does not cover. Additional forms will be provided for families receiving assistance from one of these agencies. If you have questions, please contact the director.

Health and Safety Information

Immunization Policy

Before the first day of enrollment, all children attending the LCA must be current on all immunizations. A copy of their immunization record will be kept on file at the LCA. Parents are required to submit an updated immunization record within 30 days of an immunization due date. If a child's immunizations fall behind, a signed physician's catch-up schedule must be provided by the parent. Although, we do require all children to be immunized, some children may not have certain immunizations for medical or religious reasons. In such cases, the academy will have documentation available upon request. As a parent/guardian, it is your right to ask if any of the children in our care are not able to be fully immunized.

In accordance with Section 210.0003.7, RSMo., the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in or attending MSSU Lion Cub Academy may request notice of whether there are any children enrolled at our facility with an immunization exemption on file. If you would like to request this information, please contact the director, and the information will be provided to you. Please note, the name or names of individual children are confidential and will not be released. Our response will be limited to whether or not there are children enrolled at our facility with an immunization exemption on file.

Some children may not be fully immunized for various reasons. If an illness occurs at the academy, which would affect the unimmunized child, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up child as soon as possible. Medical advice will be sought as to how long the child will need to be excluded from LCA care. Tuition will not be refunded for days missed due to non-immunization. A complete immunization schedule can be found at [Vaccines & Immunizations | Vaccines & Immunizations | CDC](#).

Accident and Injury Policy

If a child is injured while at the LCA, the staff will take the following steps:

- Administer necessary first aid. There is always at least one person on duty, in each classroom, trained in first aid and CPR.
- Parents will be notified with a text, email, phone call, or message through our childcare management software.
- In the event a parent cannot be reached, the director will secure proper medical attention as indicated by the parent on the *Enrollment Form*.
- If the staff decides this is an emergency, campus security and 911 will be contacted to provide emergency assistance. If necessary, the emergency medical service will transport your child to a medical facility as designated on your *Enrollment Form*. A parent or alternate listed will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's primary health care provider may also be made.

When a child receives a bump or scrape, the teacher will complete the *Accident Report*. This report describes the nature of the injury and what first aid was administered. This report will be placed in the LCA office; you will need to sign this for our files.

Illness Policy

Proper care at the beginning of an illness can often shorten its duration and severity. If a child shows signs of illness or infection while at the LCA, the parent will be notified immediately. The child will be provided a quiet place to rest until he or she can be picked up. Parents will be asked to pick up the child or make arrangements to have their child picked up within 30 minutes of notification. Children must be symptom free for **24 hours** and able to fully participate in all activities before returning to the LCA.

The LCA will notify parents if their child:

- Has a temperature of 100.4 or higher. (Must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours to return)
- Has had diarrhea. (Two loose stools) (May return after 24 hours and no more diarrhea or a doctor's note)
- Vomits (must not return for 24 hours after vomiting)
- Shows signs of chicken pox, impetigo, or other rash
- Shows signs of "pink eye" (may return 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started)
- Shows signs of head lice or nits (must be nit free to return)
- Shows visible signs of illness, such as green mucus or phlegm, severe cough, headache, etc.
- Unidentifiable rash lasting longer than 2 hours and/or spreading throughout the body

Parents are required to notify the LCA if their child contracts a communicable disease or illness such as covid, chicken pox, hepatitis, "pink eye," strep, Hand Foot Mouth, etc. Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease or illness. Please call the LCA if your child will be absent due to an illness. If the contagious child has a sibling that also attends the LCA, that child should also not attend.

Medication Policy

The teacher of each classroom is authorized to administer medication to a child in their care when a parent requests it. To do this, the parent must complete a Medication Authorization Form obtained from the teacher. All medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name and instructions. Prescribed drugs must have a prescription label with the child's name on it and dosage amount. Over-the-counter drugs can only be administered by following the printed instructions on the bottle and/or box. Please do not indicate to administer medication "as needed" without talking to the classroom teacher (exceptions are asthma medication, Epi-pens, etc.) Medication will **NOT** be administered if the authorization form is not complete. Please give medication and authorization form to the teacher on duty when you arrive. Medication will be kept in a secure place, locked out of the reach of children, and will be refrigerated, if necessary. Please do not leave medication in your child's cubby or bag. A record will be kept for each child indicating dates, times, and dosage of medication and the name of the staff person who administered the medication.

Please do not leave medication at the LCA longer than it is deemed necessary to treat assigned illness. All medication will be checked once a month for continued usage. If it is not being used, it will be sent home or disposed of by LCA staff.

Disaster Plans

The LCA has plans in place in the event of a fire, tornado, or other emergency. The LCA teachers will help in preparing the children for such disasters through monthly fire, tornado, and biannual intruder alert drills. In the event that we need to evacuate the children and staff away from the LCA we will relocate to Criminal Justice. Parents will be notified if an emergency situation arises. Emergency contact information will be taken to our relocation area so that we may contact families. A complete disaster plan is available upon request.

Inclement Weather

Occasionally, MSSU will close campus due to hazardous weather. Notification of closed classes for MSSU will be posted on the MSSU web page and announced on local television/radio stations. Parents will be notified if the campus closes early. Arrangements for child pick-up must be made when MSSU closes for inclement weather during a school day. **No credits/refunds will be given for days the academy is closed for inclement weather.**

Clothing

Children at the LCA will be involved in messy art projects, water/sand play, and outdoor play activities. Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for an active time. We prefer that children not wear sandals or other open shoes. Sandals fail to offer adequate toe protection from trikes. Velcro tennis shoes help children independently dress themselves and the lack of shoestrings prevent tripping and falling. Each child needs to have at least one complete set of underwear, shirt, pants, and socks of season appropriate clothing in his or her cubby at all times.

Parents will be notified when we no longer have a change of clothing for their child. Toilet Training children need to wear elastic waist pants. This will help their toileting routine. All clothes need to be permanently labelled for proper identification in the event of misplacement. As much as the LCA staff try, clothes do go missing. Please make sure to check your child's cubby daily for soiled clothes. Also, please make sure that the clothes do belong to your child. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather—a coat, warm pants, boots, hats, and mittens are necessary during the winter months; a sun hat that protects ears from sunburn, sunglasses and shorts are appropriate when the weather is hot.

Biting Policy

Biting is a normal developmental stage for children. However, the Department of Social Services Child Care Licensing Division requires MSSU Lion Cub Academy to provide the safest and healthiest environment for all the children in its care.

Biting can occur for many reasons: teething, a lack of language, frustration, want of attention, being overly tired, or simply wanting to see the reaction of another.

The LCA teachers and staff will be working in the classrooms to avoid biting.

- We try to understand the cause of biting to proactively prevent further occurrences.
- We will be shadowing students with biting tendencies.
- We will provide quick responses to children who bite by explaining that biting hurts, we do not bite our friends, etc.
- We are open to implementation of parent approved behavior plans.

The MSSU Lion Cub Academy Biting Policy:

- The 1st bite will result in an age-appropriate discussion with the child. An incident report will also be completed and placed in the child's file.
- The 2nd bite will result in a talk with the teacher, an incident report, and a scheduled discussion with parent(s). A copy of the incident report will be placed in the child's file. The child will also be shadowed. That means the child will always be near or within an arm's reach of a classroom teacher. A required parent teacher meeting will also be held as soon as possible, usually within a day of the biting incident.
- The 3rd bite will result in an incident report, and the child will be sent home for the rest of the day. A copy of the incident report will be placed in the child's file.

- The 4th bite will result in being sent home for the rest of the day, and the child must remain home for one day more. A copy of the incident report will be placed in the child's file.
- The 5th bite will result in suspension of enrollment for six months. The child may then return to the MSSU Lion Cub Academy if there is an available position. A copy of the incident report will be placed in the child's file.

Family Involvement Information

Family Involvement

Each child's social and emotional growth is positively fostered by bridging home life and school. Lead Teachers are available to discuss your child via email, text, or a scheduled conference. Student workers are not permitted to discuss developmental or disciplinary issues. Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year (October and April) to discuss goals and progress. More frequent meetings will be arranged for parents and teachers who determine the need.

The Lion Cub Academy hosts family activities throughout the year (see calendar for exact dates and times) including Back to School Evening in August, Grandparent's Day in September, Fall Festival in October, Valentine's Day party in February, Spring Fling (Egg Hunt) in April, and the graduation of five-year olds in May. These activities are not mandatory but are a lot of fun for everyone!

Family Orientation

Making families feel comfortable is one of the LCA goals. To better orient parents and children, we allow drop-in visits to the facility before the child starts. These are to be short 15- or 20-minute visits. Due to insurance concerns, parents must stay in the classroom while the child visits his or her class. Parents are not allowed to leave the child at the academy unattended at any time prior to the child's first day of enrollment. While the child visits their classroom, the parents will be able to go over any questions or concerns that they have with the LCA staff. Open communication between parents and teachers is essential for your child's positive school experience.

Holiday Celebrations

It is the policy of the LCA to avoid interfering with religious beliefs. If holiday celebrations run counter to your personal beliefs, please have a discussion with your child's teacher and arrangements will be made. However, children may share their own individual holiday experiences with teachers and other children without censure. Children learn to respect and appreciate cultural differences through child-initiated sharing.

Parent Advisory Council

Parents/grandparents of children enrolled at the LCA will gather to discuss plans, ideas, and concerns of the Lion Cub Academy. Email communication will be sent as a reminder before the scheduled meeting. There will be no childcare provided at the time of the meeting. If you are unable to attend, a copy of the meeting minutes will be emailed to you upon request.

Family Information Change

If there is a change in your address, home or work telephone number, emergency contacts, or family status, please notify us so that the change can be noted in your child's file. It is important that we have correct information on file in the event of an emergency. It is especially helpful to know of new family situations such as separations, divorce, remarriage, a new baby, family member illness, etc. These changes may affect your child's mood or behavior. We can often help your child deal effectively with a new family condition if we are informed in advance. If your child has special health problems, unusual stresses, or obsessive fears, please ask that the information be shared with their teacher and noted in your child's file.

Parking

Parents may park beside the sidewalk when escorting children in or out of the LCA. These spots are for temporary parking only. Please do not leave your car running or leave unattended siblings in your vehicle when arriving or leaving the LCA.

Personal Belongings

Each child will be assigned a cubby in his or her classroom. Children may use the cubby to store jackets, backpacks, and nap items. Please check your child's cubby or classroom mailbox daily for your child's work. Since our teachers prepare many activities for your children to engage in while at the LCA, **personal toys need to remain at home** to avoid conflict, loss, or damage. Weapons, real or pretend, are never permitted at the LCA. Please check with your child's teacher when your child has something unique to share with the class such as a book or other activity that may be enjoyed by the entire group. *All clothing items should be clearly and permanently labeled to minimize loss or confusion. LCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or misplaced clothing.*

Nutritional Information

The LCA is a nut free facility. This includes peanuts and tree nuts, along with anything that may have had contact with nuts. Because of this, children should not bring anything into the school or consume peanut or tree nut foods on the way to school. We have adults and children that have severe nut allergies, and we want this to be a safe place for everyone.

Meals

A nutritious breakfast, hot lunch, and afternoon snack are catered daily to the LCA by the campus food service. Every meal and snack are planned to meet the child's daily nutritional requirements. Outside food is not permitted except for birthdays or other celebrations. (See birthday celebrations below for more info.) Weekly menus are posted in the lobby.

Breakfast is served at 8:00 am. Your child must be at the academy by 9:00 am to have breakfast. We cannot save food for children arriving late as children are transitioning to the next activity.

Hot lunches are served at approximately 11:00 am in the Toddler Room, 11:30 am in the Preschool Rooms, and 11:30 am in the Prekindergarten Rooms. An afternoon snack will be served at approximately 3:00pm. Please have your child here at those times if he or she will be eating meals at the LCA.

Meals will be served in each classroom. Teachers and helpers will sit to eat with the children. Mealtimes are pleasant and relaxed times of food and conversation. Children are encouraged to try new foods but are never forced. Small portions are served so that large amounts of food do not overwhelm children, but second helpings are readily available.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The LCA participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health. Forms will be given to all families upon enrollment and thereafter on an annual basis. The LCA is reimbursed by the CACFP for meals provided without having to change our enrollment costs for the inclusion of meals.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Special Diets

Inform your child's teacher of any food allergies or restrictions at the time of enrollment. If your child has a food allergy or requires a substitution, a *Medical Food Substitution Record* must be completed, signed by a pediatrician and in our files. Parent requests for vegetarian or religious/cultural substitutions are accommodated to a practical degree for feeding a large population of young children with government and program guidelines. The cook decides what vegetarian alternatives for meat, poultry, or fish are to be provided. These are usually cheese, beans, or eggs. If you need substitutions of this type, a written request from the parents will be required.

Breastfeeding Policy

Following the recommendations from Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC), 2nd edition, the LCA will promote and support breastfeeding academy wide. Parent and staff will be allowed to breastfeed or express milk at a mutually convenient time for parent and LCA. All expressed breast milk will be stored in a refrigerator/freezer at the LCA. All expressed milk must be labeled with name, contents, date, and time received before storing in the fridge for up to 24 hours or in the freezer for up to 2 weeks. To provide a private breastfeeding experience, the LCA has an observation room that allows privacy and encourages the parent and child to bond during feedings. *Breast fed toddlers who will be fed expressed milk in a bottle or cup at the LCA **must** have adapted to being fed with a bottle or cup before coming to the LCA.*

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a special time that we enjoy sharing with your child. Treats may be sent for your child's birthday; however, **all treats must be store bought and in original packaging**. We cannot serve homemade goodies. Please give advance notice to your child's teacher if you intend to bring treats. The teacher will inform you of the number of children who will be in attendance on the day you plan to bring treats and of any food allergies or special dietary restrictions.

Everyday Information

Classroom Updates

Your child's lead teacher will send weekly updates via Procure, email, or text.

Nap/Resting Time

Rest time is a very important part of the child's daily schedule. Nap time is scheduled from the end of lunch (12:00 pm) until approximately 2:00 pm. Each child will be supplied with a cot for resting purposes. Each child will also be provided a sheet and/or blanket. Children may bring a favorite stuffed animal, pillow, or blanket, if desired. Please keep in mind the limited cubby space available to each child. All items will need to fit in the provided basket at your child's cubby. We ask that you not send items that would encourage children to play during nap time. Please be sure to label your child's belongings with his or her name. Children are not required to sleep but must remain quietly on their cot for 45 minutes, according to licensing. During nap time we dim the lights, play soft music, read to, and help soothe each child. The atmosphere is very relaxing, and most children welcome the break in activity.

Toilet Mastery

When children are ready for toilet training in the toddler's room, toilet training will commence, but most toilet training occurs in the Preschool room. This room has two low profile toilets and a low-profile sink where toilet training occurs with positive motivation for independence. Messages will be sent home to let you know of successes and if clothing or diaper supplies are running low.

Toilet Mastery Policy

Potty training and self-help skills are primary goals of the preschool class (2 to 3 year old). Children in this class use the bathroom at approximately 8:30, 10:30, 12:00, 2:30, 4:30, and any other times a child expresses a need to go. Each child sits on the toilet for the length of time it takes to sing the "ABC" song. If the child urinates, they receive a sticker. If the child does not urinate, they are praised for their efforts and encouraged to try again later. If a child has a bowel movement (BM), they receive a Skittle (their choice of color), and their classmates also receive a Skittle to celebrate the toilet child's success.

A child is considered potty trained when they can do ALL the following:

- 1. Be able to TELL an adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go.**
- 2. Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.**
- 3. Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.**
- 4. Be able to get on and off the potty by themselves.**
- 5. Be able to wash their hands with soap and water, as well as dry their hands.**
- 6. Be able to go directly back to the room without directions after toileting.**
- 7. Be able to postpone going potty if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if they are outside and away from the classroom.**

To help your child succeed in potty mastery:

1. Dress your child in loose fitting elastic waist pants, shorts, or skirts (dresses are difficult to maneuver when getting on and off the potty, wiping, and keeping the dress dry).
2. Depending on where your child is in the potty-training process, they will need at least five diapers/pull-ups, or at least 3 outfit changes (which include shirts, pants/shorts/skirts, underwear and socks...a change of shoes would be helpful in a flood, but not necessary)
3. When accidents happen, it is not detrimental to your child's development. It is an opportunity to continue learning a new skill. For sanitation reasons, when a child has three (3) accidents in one day, they will be put into a diaper/pullup for the rest of that day. They will start fresh the next day. This is by no means a punishment.

Cameras in the Classrooms

All classrooms and hallways at the LCA have cameras in them. The cameras are used for safety and training purposes only and are not for parental viewing.

Field Trips

The children at the LCA do not take field trips off campus but enjoy walking trips on campus throughout the semester. We are fortunate to have access to wonderful campus resources such as the gym, Mayes Dining Hall, Lion's Den, library, biology pond, theater, and others. Parents sign a release to allow children to participate in these walking field trips on the *Enrollment Form*. The LCA will not take field trips in vehicles. To ensure safety and proper supervision, the children are accompanied by their classroom teacher as well as by the teachers' assistants on the walking trips. A backpack first aid kit, cell phone and an emergency contact list are taken along on all trips.

Guidance Information

Guidance Policy

The LCA believes that a developmentally appropriately challenged child is primarily a happy and well-behaved child. The LCA is an emotionally safe place to begin learning appropriate social skills within large groups. Positive reinforcement is used liberally and is the preferred choice of guiding children's social interactions. When there are social disagreements among young children, redirection is used to de-escalate the argument and maintain their dignity in the situation. Older children are taught empathy, fairness, sportsmanship, cooperation, and compromise. Sometimes it is necessary to use more tangible means of guidance. One-on-one discussions or removal from the classroom is used to help the child regain self-control to discuss methods to solve their upset. Withholding of food or outside time is never used as a form of discipline. Corporal punishment is NEVER used at the LCA. The LCA tries to be a comfortable and positive environment for children and families; however, we realize we may not be able to meet the needs of all children.

Children learn best when they are involved in a positive relationship with the teachers. The Lion Cub Academy implemented a social emotional intelligence program called Conscious Discipline. Its creator, Dr. Becky Bailey, uses the Brain State Model to help you visualize the child or adult's state of being. Our brain has three different states: the survival, emotional, and executive states of the brain. Many of the powers and skills associated with Conscious Discipline are developed through relationships. LCA provides annual parent training on the implementation of Conscious Discipline.

More information on Conscious Discipline can be found at: <http://consciousdiscipline.com/>

Child Abuse and Neglect

Children need a safe, nurturing environment that assists them in growing, learning, and feeling loved by their caretakers. To grow and learn, a child's minimum needs for proper nutrition, shelter, medical care, appropriate discipline, love, a feeling of importance, and a safe, non-violent home setting must be met. When these needs are not met, our staff is mandated to report it to the county child protection agency. It then becomes the role of the child protection unit to work with your family to ensure your child's needs are being met.

All staff members of the LCA are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. This is the law. Anything suspicious in nature will be reported. The Child Abuse Hotline number is 1-800-392-3738.

Should you have difficulty in providing for your own child's emotional or physical needs, and/or safety, you are encouraged to ask for help. Our staff can help you find a community resource that can offer assistance.

Grievance Information

Parent Concerns

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense, and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child, and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child.

Occasionally, miscommunications may occur. It is our goal to offer your family the best educational services possible. To meet our goal, we need your input, suggestions, questions, and concerns.

- Please remember that the teachers want parents to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving. If you have concerns, please discuss them with your child's teacher directly.

- Do not allow serious concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with teachers. It is disturbing to find out later that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- Sometimes we cannot make the changes you request due to other restrictions, but we hope to make a satisfactory resolution through compromise.
- If you have not reached a satisfactory resolution between you and your child's teacher, please set up an appointment for a conference with the LCA acting director.

Changes

The Lion Cub Academy maintains the right to make changes to the Family Handbook at any time. Changes will be emailed to the families and/or communicated through the parent newsletter.

Please understand that the policies stated in this publication are not an all-inclusive list, and that state childcare regulations, the LCA Family Handbook, and all other company policies, which may be modified at any time, without notice, and are binding for children, parents or guardians, family members, and authorized agents.

I also understand that the childcare regulations of the State of Missouri may prevail over these policies when the state regulation is stricter. I further understand that my continued enrollment constitutes my acknowledgement of, and agreement to abide by, all policies and state regulations.



**LION CUB
ACADEMY**
A CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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