



## Learning Center of Littleton

We welcome your family to Stepping Stones Learning Center of Littleton (SSLC)! Our school is designed to meet the needs of childcare in your area and to provide a quality program for all children, regardless of race, nationality, or any other basis. We are committed and passionate about offering care and learning experiences that promote growth and development, and that is individualized for each child, and his or her needs. We recognize that so much growth and development occurs in these young ages, and it is exciting to be a part of this important time in each child's life. We are not simply here to provide care, we are enthusiastic participants in each learning experience, and in guiding children as they become more socially and emotionally competent, and learn new cognitive and physical skills every day! It is a very humbling and inspiring experience when we recognize that each child's experiences now will have a lifelong impact on their individual lives, and can also drastically change our community in the future. We believe in hugs, play time, creative learning experiences, and building positive relationships and family partnerships!

We invite you to stop by and see us at any time. As a partner in the care of your child, we are always interested in your comments and concerns. Most of the policies governing the school are included in this handbook. Please keep it for your reference through the years your child stays with us. We have designed programs that incorporate the ideals of learning through experience for children six weeks to 12 years of age.

The characteristics of our philosophy are as follows:

- Teachers are aware that each child has different needs and develops at an individual rate, and provide a variety of activities geared toward individual and group learning.
- The school provides each child with a loving, warm, safe and healthy environment.
- Teachers focus on the fact that children learn best by doing. With opportunities for problem solving, decision making, and exploration.
- Teachers and Staff are aware that social and developmental intervention may be needed for individual children at times. Staff will always communicate with families regarding children's individual growth, health, and development and are able to provide families with numerous and helpful resources.
- The school has developed a program that enhances self-esteem through positive learning experiences.
- Teachers guide children in developing self-control through positive disciplinary methods.
- Teachers provide children with a predictable yet flexible environment that allows for the freedom of self-expression.
- Teachers respect the trust given by parents and work to establish positive communications between school and home.

### *Hours of Operation*

Stepping Stones Learning Center will be open from 6:45 am through 6:15 pm Monday through Friday, except in the nursery where the hours are 6:45am-6:00pm. The center operates on a year round basis and enrolls children throughout the calendar/school year. In general, we observe New Year's Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day (and Black Friday), and a winter break (typically the week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day). We also schedule two teacher in-service days per year, where no care is provided so the staff can participate in mandatory training. Parents will be reminded of these holidays prior to the date that they are observed. No tuition credit or make up days are available as the tuition structure takes these days into consideration. For the winter break closure, however, families will only be charged 50% regular tuition rate for the week that falls between Christmas and New Years. All tuition is based on an annual amount, which then has vacation and holidays deducted. This amount is then divided into 52 equal installments, to be paid over the course of a year. The tuition rates are subject to change, typically 3% on an annual basis, and this is due to changes in cost of living, program changes, and market rates. The rate sheets will be posted in the lobby, and we will provide you with written notice at least 30 days before the new rates take effect. When a holiday falls in the middle of a week we reserve the right to close the school additional days. Two week's notice will be given for these closures. Each January we publish a school year calendar to inform families of additional closures which we minimize for your convenience.

### *Program Information*

Stepping Stones Learning Center of Littleton provides nursery care for infants aged six weeks through eighteen months, or earlier if a child is walking independently. We schedule classroom graduations based not only on a child's age, but also on each child's individual developmental abilities. Toddler care is available for children as young as 12 months old whom are walking independently. Classrooms are separated by six month increments to allow children to progress at their own pace, reaching developmental milestones with same-aged children in the classroom. We offer potty training in our transitional preschool classroom when a child reaches two and one-half years; however, we may opt to forego the transitional preschool classroom, transitioning your child to our first preschool classroom if potty training has been mastered and there is no need to focus on potty training skills. We consider a child to be potty trained when there are no bathroom related accidents for a two week period, a child recognizes the need to use the bathroom, and the child is walking independently, based when the child will be for the globe of a preschool class, such as before going to the toilet. All two and three year olds (and potty trained) we offer preschool in three separate classrooms

Our Friendly Fawn classroom is our youngest preschool classroom, followed by the Kind Raccoons, and finally the Wise Owls classroom which is a pre-kindergarten classroom. We also offer before and after care, as well as summer day camp, for our elementary school aged children. We provide transportation to and from multiple local schools, please check with us for a current list of school's that are offering transportation to.

We offer a list of community resources at our initial entrance interview, and parents and families may request this list at any time if they need information regarding Medicaid, low-income dental services, housing, and more!

## **General Policies**

### **Absences**

A tuition week is defined as Monday through Friday. Families must pay tuition based on their child's expected enrollment, not on actual hours of attendance. If your child is absent due to illness or vacation, tuition is still due at the full amount, and on the scheduled due date. For this reason, we do recommend parents pay in advance if they are aware of an upcoming absence, otherwise late fees will incur. Each family is allowed only one no-charge vacation week each year, this amount is subtracted from your annual tuition amount, which is then broken down into 52 weekly installments.

### **Admission Procedures**

For your child's safety and to comply with state regulation all enrollment papers must be completed and on file in the school no later than the day your child begins attending SSLC. Within 30 days of starting a child must have his/her medical and immunization form completed and signed by your physician. Non immunized children may be considered depending on age and circumstances, but in general children are expected to be up to date on immunizations. To reserve your enrollment space we require you to place a deposit to include your Enrollment Fee, the Enrichment Fee (the amount of which is located on our rate sheet and will be charged annually, every fall) and 1 week of tuition. The week's tuition will be used as a first week's deposit for your attendance at Stepping Stones Learning Center. Please choose your start date carefully as we will begin charging tuition based on

the date indicated on our Start Date Contract. Should you choose not to enroll, your deposit is non-refundable.

### Attendance

Each day, you are responsible for checking your child in and out of our care using the app Brightwheel. State regulations mandate that you sign your child in and out of our care on a daily basis. If you need to use the pen and paper sign in on the front desk, you must ask the classroom staff to please check your child in on the app. If your child will be absent for the day, please call and let us know as early as possible, so we can plan staffing and activities accordingly. All children must arrive by 9:30 am, or they are marked absent for the day. Please avoid picking up children during the center's quiet time, which is 11:30 am – 2:30 pm.

### Damage to Property

Normal wear and tear is expected at any childcare. However, if a child is intentionally causing damage to property through destructive behavior, the parent will be held liable for any reimbursements required, which will be due with tuition the following Monday due date. In regards to personal property, SSLC is not responsible for any personal items that are lost or damaged. Please leave toys and other personal belongings (aside from the requested supplies needed) at home.

### Recalled Toys and Equipment:

We are regularly notified of recalled toys and equipment through the different child care associations we belong to. When we become aware of a recalled item that is in our center, Stepping Stones Learning Center will take the necessary steps to remove the item and/or replace the item according to the manufactures instructions. In most cases, we will print out the list of recalled items, and post them next to the sign in station so you can see if you have any of the recalled items in your home as well.

### Smoking:

There is to be no smoking on the premises at any time, indoor or outdoor (this includes the parking lot).

### Child Pick-up

Only the parent/guardian on record will be allowed to pick up a child. Prior arrangements with the center must be made if a child is to be picked up by someone not authorized in your child's permanent file. Permission forms are available on the front counter and are titled "Special Release". In an emergency situation a child may be picked up by someone else if you notify us in advance. This person must identify themselves with photo identification and in context mention the code word listed on your child's Enrollment Information form. Each child must be signed in or out by the adult who is dropping off or picking up to/from Stepping Stones Learning Center. Should you feel that a panic code is warranted for you/your child's safety, we will discuss our possible interventions and actions, assigning a code to your family. Pick-up past 6:15 (6:00 in the nursery) will result in a late charge of \$15.00 per quarter hour (not to be prorated) per child. This policy is effective in the event of weather or traffic delays which may not be within your control, but need to be accounted for. Jefferson County Child Services and Jefferson County Police will be called for any child not picked up by 30 minutes past the close of business. During this time, children will be provided a small snack and supervision. Should you discover that you will not be able to reach Stepping Stones Learning Center by 6:15, advance notification by means of telephone is appreciated. If your delay will be greater than five minutes we suggest that you contact family or friends to arrange an alternative authorized adult pick up, as our staff has personal evening events and obligations to attend.

### Communicable Diseases

Any communicable disease will be reported to the county health department in accordance with rules and regulations. If your child has been exposed a notice will be posted on the classroom door.

### Disabled Children

Each child and their needs will be evaluated on an individual basis. Stepping Stones Learning Center will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We will also comply with all state, county, or local jurisdictions. Prior to enrollment, a meeting with the child, child's parents/guardians, and the Director will be held at Stepping Stones Learning Center. The Director will interview both

the child and the parents to determine the needs of the child. Prior childcare history as well as all information regarding the child's social, emotional, and physical abilities must be disclosed at that time. There will be a ten day consultation period during which the Director, management, and consultants of the facility will meet to determine the needs of the child and the center's ability to meet those needs. At that time, a determination of enrollment will be made. Any information that is withheld that is determined to be vital with regard to this evaluation will result in immediate disenrollment if that determination is made. If the child is enrolled, there will be a meeting in the Director's office not less than once per week for the first five weeks. During that time, we will evaluate: - If Stepping Stones Learning Center can make reasonable modifications to policies and practices to integrate the child - If auxiliary staff/aids and services can be employed without undue burden - If the child poses a direct threat to staff or other children If it is determined that Stepping Stones Learning Center cannot meet the physical, medical, supervisory, or emotional needs of the child, or by virtue of enrollment we cannot address the needs of the other children in that child's group, we reserve the right to give notice of disenrollment. That disenrollment shall take place within 5 operating days.

### Emergency Cards

Many of our policies revolve around the telephone numbers and persons listed on your child's Emergency Card. Please make sure that your child's cards are filled out accurately, updating contact information as it changes. We do require that a new Emergency Card be filled out on an annual basis for practical reasons.

### Emergency & Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation routes as well as Emergency Procedures are reviewed and practiced regularly. Each classroom has an information sheet posted near each exit to guide actions and behavior during drills and in the event of the unthinkable. During an emergency situation every child will be kept at the center until picked up by the parent or an authorized adult. The center will keep apprised of the situation by radio, television, Internet, or other means from within the center. We will use discretion in determining the need to contact families to relay information/direction via the numbers provided on your child's Emergency Card. In the event that there is an emergency that will affect our school, Stepping Stones Learning Center will post a notice on social media, and we will also notify families via phone and email. Should the need to contact parents in the event of an emergency arise, your quick action and cooperation is greatly appreciated.



## Food & Meals

### Breakfast

If your child arrives before 7:30am, they may bring a small breakfast from home so that they may have time to eat and get a great start to their day. However, all breakfast items need to be fully prepared, such as fruit being peeled or cut, and no items that will require being heated or cooked will be allowed. Additionally, your child must be able to self-feed all items that he or she brings for their breakfast, and breakfast foods may not contain any nuts or seeds, or any of the items listed below that need to be avoided. Please do not send items requiring syrup or juice to drink. Milk or water are acceptable, as well as yogurt drinks that are in a spill proof cup. Absolutely no peanut butter or nuts please! Don't forget to label any containers, cups, or utensils and send all items in a lunchbox that is also labeled with your child's name. Additionally, if there are known food allergies in your child's age group, we may notify you of additional foods that must be avoided. If you have a question, or need safe food ideas, please check with your child's teacher.

### Morning Snack and Lunch

We will provide a small morning snack for each child, which is typically served at 8:30am. This snack usually includes milk and cereal. Lunch will be provided by Stepping Stones Learning Center, and it will be healthy, and well balanced. Meals are comprised of fruits and or vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy. If your child has dietary restrictions, and will require items that we are not providing, you will be responsible for providing alternate foods. If space in our kitchen allows, we are more than happy to keep a week's supply on site for your child.

### Afternoon Snack

For the afternoon snack, we ask parents to sign up for snack slots in each of their children's classrooms. Parents also have the option to opt out of the community snacks, and simply send an individual snack for their child in the afternoon. We will keep some extra snacks on hand in case a child forgets his or her afternoon snack. Absolutely no peanut butter or nuts please! Don't forget to label any containers, cups, or utensils and send all items in a lunchbox that is also labeled with your child's name. Additionally, if there are known food allergies in your child's age group, we may notify you of additional foods that must be avoided. If



you have a question, or need safe food ideas, please check with your child's teacher.

For the community snacks, we have a few guidelines that must be followed:

1. When parents or guardians furnish snacks for children other than their own child, the snack shall consist only of foods that are prepackaged and prepared from commercial sources. Such foods shall be non-potentially hazardous or shelf stable and received sealed, and,
2. If the food requires refrigeration after opening, remaining portions shall be discarded or sent home with the parent that supplied it.
3. Uncut produce may be provided if the facility has the capacity to wash and prepare it.

### Footwear

Children must wear closed-toe shoes to prevent injury to their feet. Please take care in choosing your child's footwear to ensure that shoes are comfortable for the various activities Stepping Stones Learning Center students will engage in on a daily basis.

### Illness & Medication

If your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below, a parent/guardian will be called to investigate concerns further. It is likely that we will ask the parent/guardian to pick up the ill child, which must be done within 60 minutes of being contacted. If a child is sent home, he/she is not allowed to return to school the next day in order to implement an appropriate get well/stay-home period due to strong recommendations to mitigate the contagiousness of any illness. The child may return only when symptom free for 24 hours without the use of any fever reducer. Additionally, please do not medicate your child prior to drop off in the morning unless the medication is related to specifically relieving teething discomfort or prescribed by a physician. We reserve the right to request a physician's note indicating an all-clear for a child to return to school. This will specifically be requested if a child has a fever in addition to another symptom of illness, as well as any unusual rash (excluding a diaper rash or known eczema). We use the following guidelines when sending a sick child home:

- Atypical behavior (this is typically our first indication of an illness)
- Breathing concerns

- Diarrhea – more than 3 incidents causes us to become concerned about hydration
- Extreme cough
- Fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Suspicion of conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Symptoms of a communicable disease
- Unusual rash
- Vomiting

### *Keeping Your Child at Home*

In order to maintain the health of all children at Stepping Stones Learning Center as well as our staff, consideration for removal from the school environment should be seriously considered if the following conditions are manifested:

- A constant, deep, and disruptive cough
- Behavioral concerns that may indicate the onset of illness
- Diarrhea
- Fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Suspected sinus infection related nose discharge
- Suspicion of conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Symptoms of a communicable disease
- Unusual and/or undiagnosed rash
- Vomiting

Please understand that if we see your child manifest these conditions during his/her day at Stepping Stones Learning Center, we will call you to pick up your child, which must be done in a 60 minute time frame.

REGARDING NOTES FROM A DOCTOR: Please understand that, at times a doctor's recommendation may not match our sick policy, and may not be made with the wellness of the entire group of children in care in mind. Since there are infants, or children with autoimmune or respiratory disorders in our care, it is at our staff's discretion when to allow a child to return to care or not. For example, if

your child has diarrhea and it is posing a sanitary issue (such as leaking out of pants or diapers), or creating care needs that prevents staff from being able to care for the rest of the children in the group, the doctor may determine that the child should be able to return to care but since this a group setting and the sanitary concerns and unique factors are present, the child will need to follow the illness policy, along with Stepping Stones Learning Center's determination, and remain at home until symptoms have cleared.

If your child is determined to have a contagious illness, such as pink-eye or croup, they will not be allowed back without a doctor's note. If they are vomiting or have diarrhea, they will not be allowed back for 24 hours past their last bout of vomiting or diarrhea whether at home or in our care. If a child is sent home while in care, he or she must not attend the following day and must remain at home for 24 hours past the last occurrence of symptoms. The exception to this is in cases such as pink eye, or similar illnesses, where a child can comfortably attend and is not contagious once he or she is on antibiotics for a specified amount of time, which must be stated on a signed physician's note. Also, we do not expect parents to keep children home for minor colds. This typically means clear nasal discharge and a minor wet or dry cough. However if the discharge is thick, green or yellow or if the cough is persistent, severe, or has any bark to it, in order to prevent the spread of RSV, respiratory infections, or croup to small children, your child must not attend.

In addition to the above policies, influenza presents a unique set of factors to consider and will fall under additional sick policy terms. Please note that the stomach flu is not influenza and does not fall under this category. If anyone in a child's household is diagnosed with influenza, since this is a highly contagious and potentially life-threatening illness, Stepping Stones Learning Center requests that you avoid sending your child to school if they have been exposed to the illness. This is especially true in the case of siblings, as children often do not understand how to prevent illness as well as adults do. Even as adults we may not realize the need to be extra cautious because influenza is highly contagious one day before symptoms begin. If a child does have influenza, he or she will need to be excluded from care for a minimum of five days, as the flu is contagious typically for 5-7 days (even after symptoms have begun to go away), and sometimes even longer. To read more on influenza, specifically on the matter of being contagious, feel free to visit this article by the CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm>

### Medication Administration

We are able to administer medicine at Stepping Stones Learning Center. To be able to give a child prescribed medicine at school we need to have a physician's note on hand specifying the medicine's name, the start and end dates, as well as specific times to administer the medicine. We must have the medication in its original packaging so that we are able to compare the label with the physician's instructions, cross-referencing for your child's safety. For children with specific health plans (chronic concerns) we do need to have a health treatment plan filled out by the physician with specific instructions. This health plan is typically updated on a yearly basis and our visiting nurse will check these plans for compliance. We do reserve the right to refuse medication administration to any child if medical forms are not in our possession or incomplete: we do not want to take any risks/chances with your child's health and well-being. Teething infants and toddlers may receive Tylenol/Motrin to ease the associated pain, but please make sure you have a physician's signature on our OTC Medication form. We will call each time we feel a child may benefit from OTC teething-related medicine to obtain your approval. Lastly, should your child receive prescribed medication or OTC medication, we will place a record of the administration in your child's daily folder to ensure that you are aware of dates, times, and amounts. All medication will be stored in a locked location, that is inaccessible to children.

### *Injuries*

Our staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, minor accidents may occur. Your child will be comforted and given minor medical care by Stepping Stones Learning Center staff (ice, bandaid, etc...). You will also receive a carbon copy report of the accident/injury which we require you to sign, leaving a copy with your child's teacher, and taking a copy home for your records. Occasionally, we may reach out with a phone call to inform you of a minor injury that occurred during your child's school day. If an accidental injury requires immediate medical attention we will make every effort to contact you, as parents and/or guardian, for instructions. If we cannot reach you, we will call the authorized persons you have indicated on your Emergency Card who have the ability to make medical decisions for your child. A staff member will always stay with your injured child while they are on school premises. A medical injury that is life or limb threatening will result in an immediate call to 911. You, as parent/guardian will be contacted as well, and in the event of ambulance

transportation, a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital deemed most suitable to handle your child's emergency needs.

### Notice of Withdrawal/Disenrollment

You must give written notice of your intent to withdraw your child(ren) from Stepping Stones Learning Center. Four weeks written notice is required throughout the building. If you withdraw you may not re-enroll until six calendar weeks have passed. Re-enrolled children will be subject to registration fees. A schedule reduction cannot be used to accommodate a withdrawal. Whether your child attends Stepping Stones Learning Center during that period or not you will be liable for the tuition due. At the time of notice given, the full 4 week's worth of tuition is due immediately. We reserve the right to terminate care prior to the end of the notice period, and the full 4 weeks' tuition amount still applies. Notice periods begin on Mondays, so if you provide notice on any other day of the week, it will begin on the following Monday.

### Center-Mandated Disenrollment

We reserve the right to dis-enroll any child or family for any reason. A child will be dis-enrolled without notice for expressing violence towards a teacher, administrator, or another child. A family will be dis-enrolled without notice for staff raiding (as well as attempts), chronic late child pick-up (more than three times in a six month period), or any other breach of company policy or lack of parental cooperation. In the event that SSLC chooses to dis-enroll your child, you are still responsible for paying 4 weeks' worth of tuition, regardless of attendance.

### Raiding Policy

If we are informed by our staff or another family that you are attempting to hire a staff member from our facility we will disenroll your child at once. Raiding of the staff impacts all families.

### School Closures

Should Stepping Stones Learning Center close for any reason, (weather, building concern, etc ...) please check our Facebook page, Brightwheel, and 9news. We will also make every attempt to contact you via email. If your child's teacher has put together a class text list, we will also request that they text your family to relay closure information. We do not take closing the building lightly, but must assess whether the given situation allows staff to transport themselves with reasonable accommodation to and from the center, as well as allow us to provide quality care for your child(ren) ensuring we are following state rules and regulations. In the event of an impending storm warning

we may choose to close the school early. The early closure will be determined by the extent of the storm warning. In most cases, the closure will occur at 3:00 pm. You, as parent and/or guardian, will be notified by telephone per the contact numbers listed on your child's Emergency Card. In the event of a delayed opening, Stepping Stones Learning Center will open at 9:00 am. In general, if Jefferson County Schools are closed due to weather conditions, we will close as well. However, we reserve the right to make this decision for our school, and we may choose not to follow Jefferson County Schools if we believe a differing decision must be made.

### Transportation/ School Transport

Transportation to and from select schools is available, please see our school age section, located near the end of this handbook. Should we transport children off site, for field trips or school transportation, car seats will be provided based on availability. If we do not have one available, our director or staff will speak with you about providing a safe seat for your child. Children will be transported in center vans, and the designated driving staff will have current state driver's licenses, and who are over the age of 18, along with satisfactory driving records that have been recently pulled for the DMV, and have had training prior to driving the center vans. Such trips are under the supervision of our staff, and the health and safety precautions that are taken are in compliance with the Colorado Department of Human Services' standards. We will travel to and from sites with a staff member trained in driving a 15 passenger van, as well as an assistant Teacher or Teacher's Aid. This will allow us to operate within the ratio that CDHS requires for each age group and excursion. At least one staff member will hold CPR/First Aid/Standard Precautions certification, and if there is a child being transported off site who will need medication administered, a staff member delegated to administer medication will be in attendance. We will carry a binder with partial student files, including medical information, emergency contact information, and hospital preference, in addition to well-stocked first aid kits. Our vans are insured with a \$3,000,000 policy. Staff will be able to communicate via personal cell phones, and we will have a center-designated cell phone to contact the school or parents should the need arise. Stepping Stones Learning Center will not transport your child without first obtaining written permission. Please be certain to sign field trip and school transportation waivers before the departure time, or we cannot transport your child. Also, on field trip days, children must be in attendance at least

30 minutes before the departure time.

### Tuition Payment

- Tuition payment is to be made in advance of care provided by Stepping Stones Learning Center and is therefore due on Monday of each week. If your child is not scheduled to be in attendance on Monday, please speak to the director, in advance, to make an alternate payment option, such as automatic credit card payments.
  - Tuition is considered late if paid after the close of business on Monday, unless otherwise agreed upon. This applies to each week, regardless of whether or not the building is closed (holiday, in-service, snow day, etc...).
  - Any financial communication will be left with your child's teacher, and we will make every effort to also communicate in person and via Brightwheel.
  - Late fees are \$30.00 per week.
  - We require that all families sign up for automatic payments via Brightwheel. If you sign up for ACH payments, there are no additional fees. Credit card payments are subject to an additional 2.9% processing fee. Families may choose to make one-time payments now and then (cash or check), but they must communicate this in advance with management.
  - If a family falls one week behind on payments to Stepping Stones Learning Center, we will not allow the child(ren) to attend until payment is brought current. Additionally, even if we restrict your child's attendance, families are still liable for ~~the child's weekly tuition. Should not provide to file (and thus small) fair families~~ to recover unpaid tuition, families are responsible for paying all relevant court and filing fees, as well as late payment fees.
  - Non-sufficient checks will be run through our bank only one time. If a check is returned as NSF, the family will be charged a \$25.00 NSF fee as well as a \$30.00 late fee if sufficient funds are not presented for payment by the close of business Tuesday for the week care is needed. Additionally, two NSF checks will result in our inability to accept checks from a family and require cash payment for tuition for the duration of the child's tenure at Stepping Stones Learning Center.
  - The tuition drop box is located on the wall, just to the left of the check-in/out computer. It is a black box and there is an accompanying label: "Tuition Payments".
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- We are happy to issue receipts or statements with each payment, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. We can and will sign any flex-spending paperwork you might need for benefit reimbursement (although we cannot take payment with a flex-spending debit card). Receipts can be picked up from your child's teacher.
- Year end tax statements are available by January 31st, after we return from winter break. We will give these to your child's teacher to pass out.

### Weather

Children will not be permitted to play outdoors in inclement or severely hot weather. An interior multi-purpose room has been provided to accommodate your child's gross motor needs during these times.

## **For Your Information**

### *Attendance*

Should you have advance knowledge of an absence from the center, we'd appreciate knowing. There is an Absence Notification sheet for you to fill out to let us know of any planned days or weeks your child will not be at Stepping Stones Learning Center. If your child will not be coming to the center due to an illness or last minute plans, please call us via telephone we will relay this information to your child's classroom teacher. When dropping off your child in the morning, please make sure that your child's teacher knows s/he has arrived for the day. We appreciate the same courtesy in the afternoon/evening as you pick your child up so we can ensure we are properly staffed and accountable for each child in our care.

### *Birthdays*

Arrangements may be made with your child's teacher to bring in a special treat for a birthday celebration. We celebrate birthdays during afternoon snack time at 2:30 pm and typically sing the Birthday Song to the birthday child. We do not allow entertainment, gifts, decorations, or guests to be brought into the school for birthday celebrations. Invitations to outside birthday celebrations may be brought to Stepping Stones Learning Center, but we require that these invitations not be distributed in your child's classroom. Instead, they can be left in our black wire spiral note holders on the front counter for parents to pick up with the invited child's first name, first letter of last name, and the classroom on the outside of the invitation. This prevents hurt feelings for those children who may not be invited to a celebration. If you do not wish for your child to participate in in-class birthday

celebrations, please let your child's teacher know and we will respect your wishes, subtly removing your child during celebrations.

### *Clothing*

Each child that attends Stepping Stones Learning Center needs at least one complete change of clothing in his/her cubby that is appropriate for the current season. A complete set includes the following: shirt, pants, underwear, and socks.

Infants and toddlers, as well as children whom are engaged in potty training, should have more than one change of clothing available to change into. If your child is actively potty training we have found that the original rubber Crocs are quite easy to wash and rinse, preventing the need to bring an extra pair of shoes to change into. During winter months all children should have hats, coats, gloves (waterproof preferred), and appropriate footwear (snow boots). Because we strive to take the children outside each day, snow pants or a snow suit gives us greater access to outdoor play, and is appreciated in each classroom throughout the building, especially the toddlers because they tend to sit in the snow immediately. A jacket should be provided during spring and fall months, as Colorado weather is unpredictable and during the spring, summer, and fall months a hat to protect from the sun's UV rays should be brought to school each day.

### *ESL/Dual-Learners*

To fully support young dual language learners, we provide a climate that welcomes and honors all languages, cultures and abilities. We ensure each child receives support in their home language to help them build upon current skills and knowledge as they also gain the benefits of growing up bilingual. Stepping Stones Learning Center recognizes that children who are exposed to English as a second language will need understanding and support to develop both their home language and the second language. If needed, we can locate an interpreter to work with the child, their family, and I. In this event, parents will be required to pay the interpreter's fees, and we will select an interpreter together to ensure that all needs are being met.

### *Communication*

It is important that you have information about your child's day. Stepping Stones Learning Center's teachers post classroom communication on bulletin boards outside the classroom's door along with a copy of the classroom schedule. Our

teachers make every effort to adhere to the information presented to you, but please understand that there are times when changes are warranted. Our infant and toddler teachers provide you with daily communication via Brightwheel, which gives you a record of your child's daily activities. In our preschool classrooms, please check the classroom bulletin board, the dry erase board, and your child's art file/cubby daily to see what their class has been working on. We welcome you to chat with your child's teacher, but must request that parent-teacher conversations be kept to a minimum so that our teachers can continue their teaching and supervision duties. Additionally, please refrain from asking questions that ask teachers to name other children. Because we respect each family's right to privacy, we are not able to relay those details. We encourage phone calls during the day and also questions, comments, and conversation as you drop off and pick up, as well as emails at any time, although you may not receive a response until the next business day if you are emailing on the weekend or in the evening.

You can call the center at 303-904-1121 or email our staff at [CMAGrouplittleton@gmail.com](mailto:CMAGrouplittleton@gmail.com). Any paperwork or notes you may need to leave can be placed in the black wire basket at the front desk, or on the director's desk.

We do have forms designed to assist us in maintaining communication about educational, financial, safety, and attendance, please see staff to request any of these helpful forms.

The Child Release Form should be filled out when you have someone unfamiliar coming to pick up your child. We place these in your child's file as a method of recordkeeping.

The Absence Notification form informs us that your child will not be at school for a planned event, such as a vacation or an extended weekend. It also allows us to relay financial information to you about your child's absence in advance. Please refer to your Financial Agreement in the Enrollment Packet and the Tuition Payment section in the Parent Handbook for detailed information about our tuition terms.

The Amended Schedule Request puts your request for a permanent or temporary schedule change, a day substitution for part time families, or drop-in day in writing and allows us to relay any financial information about this change to you. Please note that we will do our best to accommodate any schedule changes, but based on staffing and enrollment, we may be unable to do so.

### *Guidance*

At Stepping Stones Learning Center, we believe it is a teacher's role to guide children. Guidance comes in many forms, and depending on your child's classroom, differing discipline will be employed. Additionally each classroom possesses its own culture and rules/guidelines differ from classroom to classroom.

We advocate that when communicating with a child about an action and its consequence that teachers speak to children at their level, bending down and making eye contact. Verbal warnings, redirection, and then removal are strategies used throughout the center. Removal may result in a short time out period and illustrates that a child needs to manage his/her behavior, making positive choices to be able to participate in classroom activities. After a removal, the child will be reminded and asked to give his/her input as to the direction of his/her behavior from that point forward. Social and emotional competence is a skill children must be taught and provided with opportunities to build competence. When necessary, we will help guide them and can provide resources to families that can help with behavioral, mental, and developmental issues. Physical and/or corporal punishment is **never** permitted.

### *Insurance*

We will take every precaution for the safety of your child. Should an accident occur and medical treatment is necessary, you should contact your healthcare insurance carrier with related questions.

### *Meals*

Stepping Stones Learning Center provides and serves morning snack and lunch (and serves family-provided afternoon snacks) on a daily basis. Food modification may be necessary to accommodate eating abilities for infants and toddlers, as well as children with food allergies. If your child does have a food allergy it is imperative that we not only know about the allergy, but have current medical information provided by your child's physician on file.

### *Nap*

We are required by the State of Colorado to provide a two hour rest period for all children whom are enrolled in full day care at Stepping Stones Learning Center.

Children generally take advantage of this post-lunch nap/rest period due to the activities we engage them in throughout the morning. Should your child choose not to nap, s/he will be encouraged to rest quietly on his/her mat, which we provide.

We also provide a sheet and a blanket which we launder weekly. Your child is welcome to bring a blanket from home and/or a small soft, naptime appropriate item, such as a stuffed animal, to rest with. These items may be transported to and from school on a daily basis or taken home weekly for laundering.

### *Reporting of Child Abuse*

Your child's best interests, health and safety are our primary concern. As required by law, if we have reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused, neglected or has observed the child being subjected to circumstances which could result in abuse or neglect, we will immediately file a report with Jefferson County Department of Human Services and/or a local law enforcement agency. A report demonstrates that there is a cause for concern and should not be taken as an accusation. We are not allowed to consult with the parents/legal guardians first and must file a report immediately.

If you believe that your child has been a victim of abuse, you should seek immediate assistance from your local department of Human Services. The phone number for abuse reporting at Jefferson County Department of Human Services is: 303-271-1388

### *Conferences*

Currently the pre-kindergarten T-Rex and preschool classrooms are the only classrooms that regularly hold parent-teacher conferences. These conferences occur twice a year, and results from assessment are presented to give you insight towards your child's learning proclivities as you finalize school age enrollment decisions. At your request, we are happy to schedule conferences with Stepping Stones Learning Center administrative staff or your child's teacher. We appreciate the opportunity to learn more about your child, your family, and are always eager to share information about your child's growth and development in our center.

### *Television/Media Use*

We believe that television has a place in today's world and allow our teachers to check out the TV/ DVD to add enrichment to the classroom. Please understand that we allow for television viewing in moderation to limit the amount of screen time your child is exposed to and will never allow the television to take the place of a caring, engaged, adult. We may also use the computer for less than 20 minutes at a time to access learning sites, such as education.com or ABCMouse. In the school aged classroom, we will, at times, have a "bring your own device" day. In this event, your child must have a signed permission slip to bring and use their own media device, and we will not be held liable should any damages occur to these devices.

### *Toilet Training*

Teachers at Stepping Stones Learning Center will not attempt to toilet train any child before the age of 18 months. We recommend that, when making the decision to begin toilet training, your child's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development is taken into consideration allowing your child to toilet train at his/her own pace. We do have a specific toilet training classroom in which the children are introduced to the toilet, and can pursue the act of elimination as they feel comfortable. When your child is ready to begin potty training (or if you have questions about your child's potty training readiness) please talk to your child's teacher to ensure consistency between home and school.

### *Toys*

Please do not bring toys from home to school unless your child's classroom has made a special request. If an item from school has accidentally been brought home, please return it to the school.

### *Volunteers/Visitors*

If you wish to share your time and talents with the children that attend Stepping Stones Learning Center, we encourage you to talk to a member of the administrative staff and/or your child's teacher. Each classroom has specific needs that can be addressed and met through parent support. We would also love to set up in-house field trips, classroom talks, or off-site tours for children in our pre-k and school age programs that involve our families and members of our community. Please speak to us if you have any ideas, questions, or would like to volunteer or offer ideas and services!

All visitors who are in the building for reasons other than picking up a child must check in with management, and sign in and out on our visitor log.

### *School Age Care and Transportation*

We will be providing transportation to and from the following schools:

- Columbine Hills Elementary
- Mount Carbon Elementary
- Collegiate Academy of Colorado
- Kendallvue Elementary
- Other local schools may be considered, provided they do not conflict with the bell schedules of the schools we currently transport to, and they are within a 10 mile radius of our school.

Children who are attending before school will need to arrive no later than 7:30 am, or risk missing the vans before they begin their morning drop-off route. The vans will typically depart at 8:40, but may leave as early as 7:30, depending on known or suspected delays due to traffic, road work, or weather. If your child does arrive after the vans depart, we cannot provide a later ride or in-house care, so please be sure to arrive on time! Children are allowed to bring their breakfast with them to eat before they head to school in the morning, provided that it falls in line with the approved food items under our new breakfast policy. Also, during the summer, all children will be given the option to either bring their own snack in the afternoon, or participate in the classroom community snack sign up. However, during the school year (since we have varying school dismissal times), children will need to bring their own after school snack, which they can eat once they arrive at the center. We will have transportation waivers, with the specific van routes, ready for all families to sign and keep a copy of. These will go out early next August each year. During the summer, our school aged children will typically have field trips 3-4 days per week. There will be a mandatory activity fee due at the beginning of the summer, which includes field trip fees, meals, a tshirt, and more.



School aged children will also need to bring a clean water bottle daily. Should you choose not to have your child attend a field trip, you will be responsible for finding alternate care for that day.

After school, we will have enrichment clubs offered, such as book clubs, sports clubs, Lego clubs, and sometimes even science and foreign language clubs. Some of these will be provided at an additional fee, and you will have a chance to register your child before these offerings begin.

Thank you and we welcome you to our community here at  
Stepping Stones Learning Center of Littleton!

Contact Information:

10670 Bradford Road

Littleton, Colorado 80127

Phone: 303-904-1121

Email: [CMAgrouplittleton@gmail.com](mailto:CMAgrouplittleton@gmail.com)

SIGN ON NEXT PAGE

These policies may be changed without prior written notification. An addendum to your handbook will be presented to you within seven work days of the implementation of a new policy. Revised 7/21/18

I/We certify that we have received this handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures within:

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Parent/Guardian (s) Signature and Date

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School Administrator's Signature and Date

Please turn in a signed copy of this page only for SSLC to keep in your child's folder.

To file a complaint against this facility, contact the Colorado Department of Human Service, Division of Early Care and Learning. 303-866-5958

1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203