



# **Mary Lee Johnston Community Learning Center**

## **Parent and Family Handbook**

**1509 Hinkson Avenue  
Columbia, MO 65201**

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**April 2017**

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Thank you for your interest in our program! We are proud to have been providing quality care and education to the children of Columbia and Boone County since 1934.

As you read through this handbook, please let us know if you have any questions. We value open communication, and we encourage you to ask questions about how your child is doing. Feel free to talk with your child's teachers and the administrative staff. Your comments are important to us.

## **PROGRAM MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **Mission:**

MLJCLC is committed to providing high-quality, affordable care and educational programs based on the needs of the community.

### **Philosophy:**

MLJCLC firmly believes all children learn best in a play-based atmosphere. Social and self-help skills are emphasized in a supportive, nurturing environment where children are safe, happy and actively involved in developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

No person shall be denied enrollment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability. The agency is actively committed to the notion of equality of opportunity for all persons and shall actively seek to enroll qualified persons regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability.

*This policy statement supersedes and rescinds all previous policy and practice statements and becomes the official policy statement of the agency.*

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

MLJCLC strives to help parents recognize the importance of their role in their child's development. By fostering the relationship between home, school and community our program offers comprehensive child care services.

MLJCLC has as its primary purpose the care, development and enhancement of the lives of the children entrusted to the care of the staff. This requires that, as a minimum standard of performance, personnel employed by the agency are capable and willing to perform the following basic functions:

1. **SAFETY:** Staff must provide a protective environment for children. This includes knowing where the children are always when they are attending the center: never leaving children unattended: ensuring that parents or guardians bring children into the centers in the morning and pick children up from the centers in the evening or authorize appropriate other persons to be responsible for a child's arrival and departure. Safety is an essential element of quality child care. Attentive staff creates safe indoor and outdoor play environments.
2. **LEARNING:** Staff must provide an atmosphere and environment that will enhance and enrich each child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical learning experiences according to the High Scope Approach to Early Childhood Curriculum through the center's programs and activities.

## HISTORY OF MARY LEE JOHNSTON COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER



MLJCLC, formerly known as Community Nursery Schools, Inc. has provided high quality care and education programs for children since 1934. Ripley Children's Center was the original facility providing child-care for children placed in protective custody, children of single parent homes, children of students and faculty at the university, and eventually for mothers that went to work when their spouses went to war. In 1945, Stephens College was engaged to staff a director for the program in exchange for practicum experience for students. In 1952, The Social Service Society, which later became the United Way, chose incorporation for the schools to establish a separate agency. Today, the Heart of Missouri United Way, the City of Columbia, the State of Missouri, and the US Department of Agriculture all contribute to the financial support of our programs. Local service organizations and individuals also contribute to meet the center's needs. Tuition fees supply more than half of our budget.

In 1968, the Hinkson Children's Center was opened in response to long waiting lists for child-care. This was done with major assistance from MFA, Shelter Insurance, and the Cosmos Breakfast Club. A north wing was added to the building in 1978 with a gift from the Boone County Community Trust and the City of Columbia. The support of these same contributors enabled Community Nursery Schools to open a third center in 1987, the Hinkson Infant/Toddler Center.

After many improvements to the facilities Community Nursery Schools adopted the new name: Mary Lee Johnston Community Learning Center (MLJCLC) in the fall of 2008 in honor of the dedication of Mary Lee Johnston, a former Executive Director who served in that capacity for forty years.

Today, MLJCLC continues to offer professional care and educational programs for children and their parents. We are committed to offering programs that ALL families can afford and enjoy the reputation of offering one of the most diverse programs in Columbia. Our program is licensed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Section for Child Care Regulation and accredited by the Missouri

Accreditation for Children and Youth Programs. A copy of "Licensing Rules for Group Child-Care Homes and Child-Care Centers" is available upon request.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Our hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Children may not arrive before 7:00 and MUST be picked up no later than 5:30. We use our atomic time lock as our official guide. If you are late picking up your child, you will be charged a late fee (see **Sign In/Out**).

## **HOLIDAYS and Days Not In-Session**

MLJCLC observes the following legal holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

In addition to these legal Holidays, MLJCLC has two non-Holiday days off. These include the day after Thanksgiving and one additional day at Christmas. MLJCLC also has two scheduled Professional Development days each year that coincide with Columbia Public Schools Professional Development days for training, (one in September and one in January). The exact days will be announced as Columbia Public Schools sets their annual calendar.

Parents are responsible for full tuition for all weeks during the year, including weeks that include the above holidays and days not in-session.

## **ENROLLMENT/ORIENTATION**

As a new family, you will receive the following forms:

- Child Enrollment Form
- Income Eligibility Form (Food Program)
- Medical Exam Report
- Financial Terms and Conditions - Contract
- Parent Handbook
- Food Program brochure
- Lead Evidence Form
- Income Evaluation Form

Please complete these forms and return them to the office on or before your child's first day of school. You will be allowed thirty days in which to submit the Medical Exam Report. You have thirty days to plan for your doctor to complete the form and return it.

**The immunization form must be turned in before your child may begin active enrollment.**

Upon enrollment you will receive a copy of your child's classroom daily schedule. This schedule will detail what typically happens daily. This schedule provides activities that are balanced (active/quiet, small group/individual, indoor, outdoor, challenging or new/familiar, spontaneous/planned). They are developmentally appropriate and designed so that children have opportunity for success.

We encourage child orientation to the classroom before the first day of regular attendance. We have found it helpful for families to plan several short visits before active enrollment begins. This provides an opportunity to assist both the family and the child toward feeling comfortable with the staff and programming. Orientation can be customized to meet the child's needs. Please remember that children adjust to new environments, activities, and people at different rates. Most will be well-adjusted to the change within two months. Occasionally, a child may have difficulty adjusting to a child care center-based program. If staff and parents feel there are adjustment issues, a conference will be set up to figure out a strategy to work for the family.

What do I need to bring?

On your child's first day, please bring:

- Blanket,
- an extra set of clothes including underwear,
- jacket/coat for outdoor play if weather is cool, and
- diaper wipes, diapers/pull-ups if used.

Tuition is due before care is provided. Payment is due each Monday for the care provided for that week. You may pay weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, if arrangements are made beforehand with the Executive Director.

## **SIGN IN/OUT**

**When arriving at our center in the morning, we require that you sign your child in at the correct arrival time in your child's classroom notebook in the main office. You must escort your child into his/her classroom.**

**When your child is picked up at the end of the day, you must also sign out.** Attendance records are very important for bookkeeping purposes. Please make every effort to sign in/out each day. Your child must arrive and be picked up by an adult that is over the age of eighteen. Adults that we are not accustomed to picking up your child will be asked to show identification. Your child will not be released to anyone not authorized on your enrollment forms. If there are custody issues with your child, you

must provide legal documentation to prevent a non-custodial parent from picking up your child. If you have questions, please speak with the administrative staff.

Our facilities close promptly at 5:30 p.m. If there is an emergency and you know that you will be later than usual in picking up your child, please call so a teacher may reassure your child that you are coming. **Our doors prevent entry to parents after 5:30 pm so if you cannot enter the building with your code you may be late.**

#### **ATTENTION:**

**If you are late in picking up your child, a \$25.00 late fee will be charged from 5:31 p.m. to 5:40 p.m. At 5:41 p.m., \$1.00 per minute will be added to the \$25.00 late fee until your arrival.** If a child remains in our care at 6:00 p.m., legal authorities may be contacted. The late fee **MUST** be paid in cash before your child can return for care the following day. Late fees are assessed per child, not per family.

#### **TUITION/FEEES**

The cost of enrolling your child in the full-time programs at MLJCLC is on a sliding scale determined by your family's gross monthly income. Family income will be verified through pay stubs, and past tax returns.– Each family is required to pay a \$25 non-refundable enrollment fee per child. If you are enrolling two or more children, you will be provided a 10% discount for the least expensive rate as a family tuition discount.

We accept the Department of Social Services – Family Support Division child care assistance. If you need information about applying for such assistance, please speak with the administrative staff.

All payments are to be made to MLJCLC. We are unable to accept payment in any other form than a personal check or money order. **WE WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENTS MADE IN CASH!** All payments are to be placed in the payment box in the main office.

**Tuition is due on Monday or the first day of attendance of the week care is provided.** If you require other payment arrangements, please speak with the administrative staff. Tuition pays for your child's space at the center and is due regardless of attendance. Tuition will not be prorated for illness, vacations, or holidays. **Department of Social Services – Family Support Division Child Care Assistance will only reimburse the center for five absences per month so additional fees for more absences will be charged to you directly.** Payments must be received by noon on Wednesday each week to avoid a \$10.00 late payment fee. We will charge \$25.00 for any checks returned for insufficient funds. If two checks are returned for insufficient funds, payments will be required only in the form of a money order.

#### **MISSED/LATE PAYMENTS**

Children will not be able to attend MLJCLC if fees are not paid weekly, or by a payment arrangement approved by the MLJCLC Board of Directors Finance Committee, including any subsidized payment situations. You will receive a notice that payment is

due. Payment due must be paid in full prior to school the next week or your child will not be able to return. We cannot hold any spots for anyone.

When the account has been paid in full, and *only if* the class at MLJCLC has space (slot) available, your child may return. Delinquent accounts will be sent to a collection agency if payment progress has not been made for over 30 days.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Research shows that parent involvement greatly influences a child's attitudes and efforts. MLJCLC has an open-door policy and invites parents to visit at any time. We encourage parents to become involved in their child's early learning experiences. Talk with your child's teacher about classroom volunteer opportunities.

MLJCLC is committed to providing children with the best care and educational programs possible. We believe this can only be accomplished by forming a partnership with parents. A positive relationship between parents and staff will reflect in your child's learning and happiness. Parents are always welcome to visit our programs at their convenience. We encourage parents to occasionally observe their child in the classroom and on the playground. Observing allows you to see developmental behaviors as well as watch your child interact in the school environment. Staff members are always available to answer questions you may have regarding activities, behaviors, teachers' actions, etc. You are always welcome to come by or call, however, since our teachers' first responsibility is supervising groups of children, you may find that calling during nap time will allow you more uninterrupted time to discuss questions. You are always welcome to speak with the administrative staff.

Weekly lesson plans/activities and daily schedules are posted in each classroom. These will provide you with information about your child's activities each week. Your child will be provided with many fun and stimulating activities. It is often enjoyable for both the parent and child to discuss activities coming up or already completed.

Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged. We hope that all parents will find a way to participate in their child's school experience. Some parents may choose to participate by helping within the classroom on special occasions, attending parent education programs and other special programs, collecting and donating materials for art projects, dress-up clothes, providing services to maintain and improve our schools, or having lunch or snack with your child's class.

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year. Parents are welcome to schedule a conference with their child's teacher if they have special concerns at any time. Daily communications between teachers and parents to discuss activities, accomplishments, and behaviors are expected.

MLJCLC will sponsor parent education sessions, special programs, and social gatherings throughout the year. Parent participation and involvement in planning are encouraged.



MLJCLC is a not for profit agency governed by a Board of Directors. A parent representative sits on the Board and serves as a representative of parents. Our Parent Advisory Committee consists of any parent interested in supporting and improving our schools. Meetings are scheduled monthly and all parents are welcome to attend. Meeting dates will be posted on our website. Please ask your child's teacher or the administrative staff for more information about the Parent Advisory Committee.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Our staff has been carefully chosen to provide your child with the best early childhood education/care program in the area. The teachers in each of our classrooms are trained, experienced teachers. Our staff continually furthers their own learning experiences by attending education programs and training seminars offered by a variety of sources. Each staff member has passed a criminal background check and a child abuse/neglect screening through the Family Care Safety Registry part of the Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division. Each team has a team leader. They are the following:

Otter classrooms: Diana Smith

Early Head Start Classrooms: Jessica Wieberg

Fireflies and Butterflies: Colondra Malveaux

Lions and Tigers: Trenita Strong

As a state licensed and accredited center, our facilities are routinely inspected by the Section for Child Care Regulation, City of Columbia Health and Sanitation Department, the State Fire Marshall, and Missouri Accreditation to ensure that we meet quality, health, and safety requirements. Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin or disability.

Parents/families always have access to the most recent licensing reports and observations, health and sanitation inspections, classroom lesson plans, and their child's developmental records. Please contact the Administration if interested in reviewing any of these documents.

## **CURRICULUM**

We use the High/Scope approach as our curriculum model. The High/Scope curriculum is grounded in the theoretical perspectives of Jean Piaget, who believed that children learn best when they build understanding through direct experiences with people and objects in the world around them. The application of Piaget's theories to life in classrooms has led to the development of several programs that are collectively called constructivist in their approach. The High/Scope curriculum is the best-known example of this type.

While emphasizing the development of the whole child, High/Scope focuses on strengthening cognitive skills through active, hands-on learning experiences. This cognitively oriented curriculum is founded on the belief that children cannot understand

themselves without first being able to place themselves in time and space and to classify and order objects and events. The High/Scope program is designed to help children develop logic mathematical and spatiotemporal understandings of the world around them. Logical mathematical relationships include organizing objects into groups according to common characteristics and ordering items from smallest to largest. These tasks are based on Piaget's studies of logic and number. Spatiotemporal relationships focus on helping children understand relational concepts such as up/down, over/under, and inside/outside. Event sequences and cause-and-effect relationships are also emphasized.

To help children develop stronger conceptual understandings, the High/Scope curriculum uses a procedure called the plan-do-review sequence. The teacher encourages children to plan the tasks they want to accomplish during free-choice time, engage in those activities, and then spend time later in the day reflecting on what they learned.

Children typically engage in planning time in small groups of four or five, while working with a teacher. Children identify activities they would like to try during work time, and the teacher helps them refine their thinking to produce a clear, structured plan for the work period ahead. The teacher uses a variety of motivational strategies to assist children in making decisions about their school day. For example, a set of pretend walkie-talkies could be used to help children communicate their plans to others.

Teachers often refer to the "do" time in the High/Scope curriculum as work time; it directly follows the planning period. In this model, teachers organize classroom space into areas where children spend their work time with blocks, art projects, quiet activities, and dramatic play. Teachers provide children with a large block of time (usually 40 to 60 minutes) to carry out their planned activities.

Review time is the last of the three components of the plan-do-review sequence and typically follows the work period. Teachers can conduct this recall time either in small groups or class. Again, teachers assist the children in reviewing their work experiences in a variety of developmentally appropriate ways. Drawing a picture of the block structure built, discussing who children spent time with, and reviewing the plans made earlier in the day are examples of the techniques used during this period.

"In the High/Scope approach, children construct their understanding of the world from their active involvement with people, materials, and ideas. Whether they are infants, or preschoolers, children are active learners. They acquire knowledge by actively experiencing the world around them – choosing, exploring, manipulating, practicing, transforming, experimenting. The range and depth of children's understanding of the world is continually changing and expanding because of their day to day transactions."

Amy Powell

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Infant/Toddler Care**

MLJCLC offers care to infants and toddlers from 6 weeks through two years in our infant/toddler classrooms. These classrooms are housed in our building at 1509 and 1511 Hinkson Ave.

### **Early Learners**

Children who have shown self-help skills and are 36 months through four are provided expanding opportunities through group and individual activities that support each child's growing social and educational skills.

### **Preschool**

Our preschool class is for children who are in their last few years of preparing to be successful in a blended age format that follows more challenging demands than the Early Learners room. The preschool classes are housed in our building at 1505 Hinkson Avenue.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance in any of our programs will benefit your child's development. Your child will develop skills and self-esteem by participating in the social/developmental activities on a regular basis. Our daily schedule provides most of our educational opportunities and events within the morning hours of operation. Children arriving after the main lessons of each day are not able to receive the greatest value from the services provided at MLJCLC. If your child will be absent due to illness or arrive late please notify the office (449-5600) **by 10:00 a.m.** to help assure adequate meal preparations will be made for your child. Children must arrive by 11:00 a.m. In addition, the number of children in attendance allows teachers time out of the classroom for planning, preparation, and building team networking with other staff. If children arrive late, without prior knowledge, the use of teacher time for planning is limited. Children who have missed the daily activities are not aligned to the flow of the daily activities often causing disruption that affects the class. Failure to notify the office of a late arrival, or arrival after 11:00 a.m., will result in declined attendance for that day, unless extenuating circumstances are excused at the director's discretion.

### **Remember:**

- Children are to be in care by 10:00 a.m.
- If your child will be absent or late – you must call the office by 10:00 a.m.
- Children arriving after 11:00 a.m. will be declined from attendance for that day.

## **TRANSITIONING TO A NEW CLASSROOM**

A transition plan will be discussed as your child ages and demonstrates readiness to move to the next classroom. When a child transitions to a new classroom they will

receive a copy of the Daily Schedule for the new classroom. The teachers, parents, and administration will develop a plan to meet the child's own unique needs.

## **OUTSIDE and MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

It is part of the Licensure Ruling that all children are taken outside a minimum of (1) one-hour a day. Licensing Rules have been designed by health care professionals and early education experts to provide a guideline of the best practices for the development of children. Your child's daily plan therefore, will contain a planned morning and afternoon outside activity time of approximately 30 minutes to accommodate this ruling. We utilize a weather chart from Child Care Weather Watch that identifies high risk times of temperature highs or lows that guide our outside exposure times when the weather is severe. Only under severe weather highs, lows, or inclement conditions can this ruling be altered. Very young children (infants and toddlers) will have limited outside time on days of extreme weather. Children may not be kept inside due to illness or other. If they cannot participate in outdoor activities, they should not be here.

At MLJCLC we encourage a healthy physical activity environment, providing children at least 120 minutes of active movement time each day. Research has provided evidence that movement is essential for the child's learning environment. Children will have time for individualized play as well as teacher lead activities throughout the day. Active play is utilized as a support for positive behavior. Activity will not be withheld if children misbehave. Movement activities will be planned at specific intervals to limit inactive seating for extended periods of greater than 30 minutes.

Play structures at MLJCLC will include a variety of opportunities for multiple children to climb, slide, and swing. Indoor active equipment will also be utilized for active play.

## **FIELDTRIPS**

Occasionally fieldtrips are scheduled away from the facility. We do not have transportation therefore all planned fieldtrips must be within walking distance or accessible by use of the Columbia Public Transit. In the event a teacher plans an outing, our policy requires that written permission slips specific for each outing must be sent home at least 24 hours before a planned outing. Permission slips must be signed and returned before any child can leave the facility. This policy is followed for walks around the block through full day excursions. Scheduling fieldtrips in advance allows for arrangements to provide for proper additional staff or volunteers to attend. Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend any school outing.

## **ALLERGIES**

It is the parents' responsibility to keep the staff informed of any food allergies and or dietary restrictions, that your child may be experiencing. Physician documentation regarding emergency procedures, or dietary restrictions and substitutions specific to your child must be on file in the administration office.

## **CLOTHING**

Children should arrive at their center dressed appropriately for children's activities. Please avoid dressing your child in clothing that would be considered their "Sunday Best". Children will be involved in messy activities both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor play is a daily activity. Children play outdoors in mud, snow, and light rain. Outdoor play may be canceled when the temperature outside is less than 30 degrees and more than 100-degrees. Teachers may limit the time spent outdoors according to the weather and age of the children. Please provide your child with boots, coat, hat, gloves, etc., according to the weather. Rubber soled shoes are the safest for your child. Try to avoid patent leather, cowboy boots, jellies, flip-flops, and sandals. These can be the cause of many accidents. **REMEMBER: THE CHILDREN WILL GET DIRTY HERE!!!**

Children will not be kept inside because they lack appropriate clothing. Each center has a small supply of "extras" that may be used if you forget to bring appropriate items. Our supply is very limited, so please try to remember items that will keep your child comfortable while outdoors.

Infants and toddlers should arrive each day with one to three complete changes of clothing. Parents are also responsible for providing diapering supplies for their child. All items should be clearly marked with your child's name. Children that are potty training will also need additional changes of clothing each day. Parents may supply Pull-Ups if they wish. Reminder notes will be sent home as your child's supply of diapering items becomes low. If your child runs out of supplies, the school supply will be used at a fee of \$5.00 per day. Please help your child as they learn the skills of self care by dressing him or her for success in clothing that is easy to get on and off (avoid overalls if possible).

Older children should arrive with one complete change of clothing. This can be kept in your child's cubby until needed. If your child has a backpack or other bag, please make sure to check it daily for soiled clothing. This will help to ensure that your child always has a clean set of clothing in case of accidents. To avoid lost items, please have all items clearly marked with your child's name.

## **TOYS**

MLJCLC will offer your child many stimulating materials and activities. We ask that personal toys be left at home. Our staff cannot be responsible for toys brought from home. On sharing days, your child may bring an item to share with his/her classmates. The item should be small enough to fit in your child's cubby. Please speak with your child's teacher for the day of sharing in his/her classroom. Under NO circumstances can a toy weapon or any item that may appear to be a threat be brought to MLJCLC.

## **REST TIME**

After a morning filled with activities, children need a quiet time to refresh themselves for the afternoon. Nap/rest time is scheduled each day. Children are not required to sleep, but they must rest quietly for a minimum of 30 minutes. Children may bring a favorite

sleeping companion if you wish. MLJCLC will provide the sheet for the cot or crib along with blankets; however, you are encouraged to bring a favorite blanket for your children to cover up with during nap time. MLJCLC launders the bedding weekly or more often if necessary.

## **MEALS**

In accordance with USDA guidelines, only food prepared at the facility may be served. No food items may be brought from home.

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are served each day. Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. Your child must arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. to be served. Lunch is served between 11:30 and noon with afternoon snack served between 3:00 and 3:30. MLJCLC participates in the USDA Food Program. Our menus are posted weekly. Meals are served family style and children are encouraged to serve themselves when possible. Teachers eat with the children to encourage appropriate table manners and conversation. If your child has special needs during meals, please notify your child's teacher or the administrative staff.

Staff will follow an individual schedule for each infant. We believe that each infant develops his/her own natural biological schedule. Parents may provide breast milk, send formula and food or elect to participate in the USDA food program with the center providing food and formula. In accordance with the USDA food program if a child brings food from home they must provide ALL food items, if a child receives food through the USDA food program all food items must be prepared on site.

On special occasions (seasonal parties, birthdays ...) you may want to send special items for your child to share. We welcome your participation in special occasions; however, under USDA guidelines, all items brought from home or other outside locations (e.g. a store) must be non-food in nature such as small toy items or stickers. If you plan on supplying a special item for your child's birthday or a special occasion, please inform the classroom teacher.

## **HEALTH**

Infants and children do not possess a fully developed immune system and are more vulnerable to viruses and bacteria. For the sake of your child and all children in the classroom, please respect mandated health policies. This is the policy for this care center, part of being a responsible parent, and set forth and required by the State of Missouri:

- Children with a body temperature above 100.2 will not be accepted until their temperature has returned to normal and remained there for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. Children who are vomiting, have diarrhea, a rash, green/yellow mucous (first two days) or show other signs of potentially contagious diseases will not



be accepted for care until a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious is presented. If your child must be sent home for any illness or potential illness the center will contact you. You will be expected to pick up your child as soon as possible.

- Children who have experienced vomiting or diarrhea may return after 12 hours being symptom free. The length of time your child must be symptom free will be noted on the ill child report that will accompany your child's dismissal for illness. We understand that it may be difficult to take time from work to be with an ill child. If you make alternative arrangements for child-care in advance, you will be prepared in the event of illness. By excluding ill children from our programs, children and staff will be sick less often which will result in fewer lost work days for both you and our staff.
- Tuition is paid for all days when care is canceled due to the illness of your child

**III Child Reports:** If your child displays behavior or symptoms that indicate possible illness or other health issues, the procedure is as follows:

- Any child displaying behaviors or symptoms that are unusual will be evaluated by a staff member. If it is determined there are symptoms that indicate illness, or a health issue, the Ill Child Report will be completed by the staff member noting the behavior, symptoms, or health issue.
- The report will be signed by the Executive Director or person designated in charge.
- If indicated, you will be notified by phone call from either the teacher or Executive Director. If you, as the parent, are unable to be located, within 15 minutes, your child's emergency contacts will be called. Children are required to be picked up immediately.
- You, or the designated emergency contact adult, will be asked to sign the Ill Child Report when leaving the facility. The original will be filed in the office, a copy will be given to you for your records.
- The original report will be given to the Program Manager for filing.

There will be many times when children will require medications while in our care. **Only medications prescribed by a doctor** will be administered by a teacher when a parent or legal guardian completes a written authorization. Your child's teacher or the administrative staff can provide an authorization form at your request. All medication must be labeled with your child's name. Medications **must** be in their original containers with a current dispensing date. Each dosage amount and time must be documented on the child's medication form. We can accept a FAX from a doctor's office if a medication form was not obtained before the medication was prescribed.

It is against our policy to dispense **any** oral over the counter drugs to the children without a doctor's note. Many parents elect to have their doctor submit a notification

stating that all over the counter medications may be provided at the parents' discretion. Topical applications, such as sunscreen or diaper creams may be applied with the proper form completed.

**Children may not attend MLJCLC if they have, but not limited to, an undetermined rash, conjunctivitis (pink eye), chicken pox, or strep throat.** These conditions are extremely contagious. The child may return to the center upon receiving written verification by a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is no longer contagious and able to participate in all indoor and outdoor activities.

Occasionally, children in group settings will contract head lice. If your child is believed to have lice, he/she will be excluded from our program until he/she has received treatment for the condition AND is nit free. We require that you treat his/her hair with RID or NIX. Clothes, bedding, furniture, and your car upholstery must also be treated. It is recommended that you re-treat your child's hair in seven to ten days to help prevent any reoccurrence. Children excluded for suspicion of lice must be checked after treatment by the administration before returning to class.

## **Safety Procedures**

**Injury and Emergency:** Every attempt is made to prevent an injury or accident, but they do happen. All MLJCLC employees receive training in First Aid and CPR and can assess emergency situations, calling for additional assistance from the administration, or person designated in charge, immediately if the situation is serious and requires further action. Children take their response cues from the adults in a situation, so above all, teachers are instructed to remain calm! Knowing that any situation that causes concern to an adult can be traumatic to a child, the teacher and assistant are trained in reassuring children when emergencies arise.

All accidents, injuries, and incidents are reported on an MLJCLC Report of Injury form. Reports are written for injuries from minor scratches to serious lacerations. The procedure is as follows:

1. The Report of Injury is filled out by the staff member that observed the incident.
2. The report is signed by the administration
3. If needed, parents will be notified.
4. Parents need to sign the original and are given a copy for their records.
5. The report is given to the administration for filing.

We practice a fire, tornado, or earthquake drill each month. You will be notified as soon as reasonably possible in the event of an emergency that would require evacuation of the centers.

## **GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

At MLJCLC, we follow the practices of the PBS (Positive Behavior Support) System viewing behavior management as a teaching moment instead of a reward/punishment plan. We never use any form of corporal punishment. In compliance with the DHSS-



Section for Child Care Regulation, licensing guidelines, MLJCLC adheres to the policy of **NO corporal punishment on the premises by anyone at anytime**. Children are never embarrassed or ridiculed for misbehavior. We use positive forms of discipline that will strengthen self-esteem. We believe that discipline and guidance include all things adults say and do. The adults set behavioral limits and guide a child through positive learning experiences. Discipline is defined by Webster as "training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency."

Our goal is to guide children through positive, non-threatening teaching techniques, to increase children's respect for themselves by guiding them to become responsible for their own actions, and to help them grow to respect the rights and feelings of others. Some of the positive teaching techniques used are: modeling, verbalizing feelings, creating a community spirit, natural consequences, giving choices, re-direction to appropriate behavior, ignoring inappropriate behavior, and curriculum that develops a positive self-esteem. The staff utilizes the following guidelines:

1. The staff shall establish simple, understandable rules for children's behavior and shall explain them regularly to the children.
2. Expectations for a child's behavior shall be appropriate for the developmental age of the child.
3. Only constructive, age appropriate methods of discipline shall be used to help the child develop self control and assume responsibility for their own actions.
4. Praise and encouragement of good behavior shall be used instead of focusing on unacceptable behaviors.
5. Firm, yet positive statements of redirection of behavior shall be used.

When conflicts or inappropriate behaviors cannot be resolved using these techniques, our goal is to work further with individual children. We strive to listen and learn more of what each child has to say, thereby hoping to resolve the conflict through effective communication.

The following steps will be followed when discipline is necessary:

1. The teacher will go to the child or children displaying unacceptable behavior and explain why the behavior is unacceptable.
2. If conflict continues or a request to conform to a rule is ignored, the child will be removed from participating in a activity for a short period of time (one minute for each year of age beginning at age two). The child may be asked to sit quietly until he/she is ready to resolve the conflict and return to the group. A child's developmental stage is always considered.
3. Children shall not be permitted to intimidate or harm others, themselves, or destroy property.
4. If negative behavior persists after several attempts at verbally reasoning with the child and taking time away from the group, parents will be informed of the continuing behavior problem. The child's teacher and administrative staff will evaluate any persistent negative behavior to determine if it creates an unsafe classroom environment. If the behavior is determined unsafe for children or staff, the child may be excluded from the class for one to three days. Parents will be

responsible for full tuition. MLJCLC will provide referrals to the family to outside resources, if requested.

5. If conflicts continue, the child's teacher and the administrative staff may ask the parents to seek an outside resource, such as a counselor, pediatrician, or child psychologist, to assist with identifying problems and solutions. Parents will be given two weeks to obtain help for the child. During this time, the child may be able to continue attending the program if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the child and that MLJCLC can safely provide care. If this process is rejected by the parents, enrollment will be terminated.

***\* MLJCLC reserves the right to terminate care without notice if we feel it is unsafe to offer care for any reason.***

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROCEDURES**

Employees of MLJCLC are all mandated by state law to be reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect. The law specifically mandates that staff report sexual abuse within 24 hours. If staff suspects for any reason that a child has been physically or sexually abused or physically neglected or emotionally mistreated they are required by law to call the child abuse hotline number: 1-800-392-3738 that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff should bring the concern to the attention of Administration prior to contacting the hotline. The staff will complete a report that is given to the administration.

If parents/families suspect that their child has been abused, please contact the director immediately.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCIES**

We make every effort to have our centers remain open on snowy and icy days; however, inclement weather may make conditions so hazardous that it is dangerous or impossible for employees and the children to report to the center. We follow the guidance of CPS (Columbia Public Schools) when making weather determinations. We have several weather conditions to consider:

- #1 CPS closed = weather is expected to stay hazardous = MLJCLC will be closed
- #2 CPS closed = weather expected to improve = MLJCLC will open at 10:00 a.m.
- #3 CPS has a late start = no change to MLJCLC we will open at regular time
- #4 CPS announces early release due to weather conditions = MLJCLC will close at 3:30  
Late Pickup policy begins at 3:30 (see **Sign In/ Out** policy)

In case of any delay, closing, or early release closing:

- The three local television stations will be notified (KRCG, KOMU, KMIZ)
- It will be posted on our Facebook Page (Mary Lee Johnston Community Learning Center)
- Text messaging will be sent:

- The text messaging contact will be made available for you upon enrollment.

If there is a winter season that has an excessive amount of days of inclement weather causing cancellation of classes exceeding 5 days in a winter season – (October through March) an adjustment of those additional days (more than 5) can be made to families' accounts in *good standing* the first week of May. Delayed start days do not count in the total number of cancellation days.

## **RE-ENROLLMENT**

At MLJCLC we re-enroll children every August to ensure we have the most current information, parent contact numbers, and emergency specifications. Although we try to keep up with changes, if you have a change in your contact number, employment, individuals authorized to remove the child from the facility, or household address, please inform the office immediately. We are required by licensing to have the correct information to contact families in case of an emergency or illness.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

During the school year, MLJCLC often provides practicum experience for students in a variety of higher education programs. Occasionally, this experience requires the students to provide written information regarding their experience in our classrooms. Your child will never be identified by name or used in pictures without your prior written consent. If you have any concerns about these activities, please speak with the administrative staff.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

MLJCLC is actively involved with the Jumpstart volunteer program through the University of Missouri – Columbia, practicum students from local colleges, and civic groups. None of these volunteers count in ratio.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Parents with concerns regarding classroom issues should contact the teacher by phone or a note to set up a time to discuss the concerns. The parent or the teacher may request that a member of the administrative staff be involved in the meeting.

Please inform the director if you have concerns about child care policies, administration, physical environment, or safety. The director will arrange a time to meet. If the concern is a safety issue, please inform the director immediately.

## **WITHDRAWING ENROLLMENT**

If you find it necessary to withdraw your child from MLJCLC, we require a two-week written notice. The administration staff can provide a form at your request. Parents are

required to pay the full tuition for the two weeks' notice period, regardless of the child's attendance.

### **COPY OF LICENSING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

A copy of the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers in Missouri is available at the facility for review or on the state website at:

[www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/19csr/19c30-62.pdf](http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/19csr/19c30-62.pdf)

## PARENT SIGNATURE PAGE

I have been given, and have read, MLJCLC Parent Handbook and have been informed that a copy of the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers in Missouri is available at the facility for review or on the state website at:

[www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/19csr/19c30-62.pdf](http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/19csr/19c30-62.pdf)

Sign and return to MLJCLC office.

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Parent or Guardian Signature

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Date