



Lewis Cass
Early Learning
Academy

Parent Handbook

Philosophy

The Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy strives to redefine what *Child Care* means to the families of our community. We are committed to doing this by providing a safe, affordable, and high-quality Child Care Program. We believe that every child has a right to high-quality care and we actively work to support full inclusion of children with diverse abilities and disabilities, as well as those from all socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. We support the growth of the whole child through our belief that children should be treated with respect and dignity, to feel safe and secure, to have opportunities for learning through play, decision-making, and social interaction with their peers.

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Section 1 - Program Information

1.A Center Contact Information

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Center Director | Angela Johnson |
| Program Phone Number | (574) 626-3001 |
| Program Email | earlylearning@lewiscass.net |
| Program Address | 401 S. Maple Street, Galveston, IN 46932 |

1.B Program Description

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy supports the growth and development of children ages 6 weeks through 12 years old. We offer developmentally appropriate learning experiences that support the growth of the whole child in a safe and nurturing environment.

1.C Hours of Operation

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy operates Monday through Friday, 6:30am - 5:15pm

1.D Holidays

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy is closed on:

New Year's Day

President's Day

Memorial Day

The week the Fourth of July falls on (Summer shut down) *No tuition is charged*

Lewis Cass' First Teacher Day in August

Labor Day

The day before Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day

The day after Thanksgiving

The days between Christmas and New year (Winter shut down) *No tuition is charged*

Section 2 - Enrollment Policies

2.A Admissions Policies

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy shall accept children who are at a stage of growth and development which enables them to benefit from the program, and for whose developmental level the center is staffed and equipped to provide care.

2.A-1 We shall not admit or maintain any child whose needs we cannot meet.

2.A-2 We shall not admit or maintain any child whose behavior poses a threat to other children and/or staff.

2.A-3 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, or gender.

2.B Enrollment

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy is regulated by the state of Indiana. For your child to be enrolled in our state licensed program, all documentation requirements must be met. To gain and keep enrollment you must have all items that are listed below turned in prior to your child's first day. All items must be kept current or your child's enrollment will be immediately terminated.

2.B-1 Children's Records

. Prior to your child's first day we must have the following:

2.B-1.a Enrollment Form (completed online)

2.B-1.b Enrollment Contract

2.B-1.c Infant Feeding Plan (all children under the age of 12 months)

2.B-1.d Subsidy Agreement (when applicable)

2.B-1.e Transportation Form (School Age Children only)

2.B-1.f Emergency Medical Authorization & Treatment Policy

2.B-1.g Signed Suspension & Expulsion Policy Form

2.B-1.h Copy of child's birth certificate

2.B-1.i Current Physical (must be updated yearly)

2.B-1.j Current Immunization Records or CHIRP permission form
(must be updated each time additional immunizations are given)

2.B-1.k If a court order exists preventing a particular individual from having contact with a child, the center shall comply with the order. There shall be a copy of the court order in the child's file.

2.B-1l Family application for CACFP and a Child Enrollment form for each child.

2.B-2 Confidentiality Policy

2.B-2a All information pertaining to admission, health, family, or discharge is confidential.

2.B-2b All files are kept in a locked cabinet within the office.

2.B-2c Child information will not be shared with any other agencies or individuals unless we are required to do so by law.

2.C Transportation

2.C-1 Parents are responsible for transportation to and from our program.

2.C-2 As of the 2023-2024 school year, Lewis Cass Schools and Maconaquah School Corporation provide before and after school transportation for children enrolled in Kindergarten through 6th grade (up until the child's 13th birthday).

2.C-3 A transportation form must be filled out each school year for a child to be picked up or dropped off by a School Corporation.

2.D Attendance

2.D-1 All absences must be called in to the office, communicated through Procure, or verbally in person.

2.D-2 Full day students must be in attendance by 10:00am. Arrival after 10:00am must be approved ahead of time.

2.D-3 If a full day student is not present by 10:00am and prior approval has not been given, the child will be counted absent that day and will not be allowed to attend.

2.D-4 A family must follow the drop off and pick up times on their enrollment contract. These times cannot be changed without prior approval and a new enrollment contract filled out.

2.D-5 Morning half day is 6:30 am - 11:30 am, lunch is not provided.

2.D-6 Afternoon half day is 12:00 pm - 5:15 pm, child must be ready to nap 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm.

2.D-7 Any child that is absent for 5 days or more, with no notification of any kind, will be considered a no-show and will be automatically disenrolled from the program. Tuition for that time period will still be billed at the full amount.

2.E Late Pickup

2.E-1 Children must be picked up by 5:15 pm

2.E-2. A late fee of \$5.00 per minute, per child will be assessed for pick up after 5:15 p.m.

2.E-3 If a child is not picked up 90 minutes after closing time (by 6:45 pm) and we are unable to contact an authorized pickup, the Department of Child Services will be contacted and made aware of the situation.

2.F Tuition

2.F-1 Tuition must be paid each Monday of the current week.

2.F-2 Your child cannot be dropped off at the beginning of the week, if tuition is not current.

2.F-3 Failure to pay will result in your child's enrollment being suspended or terminated immediately.

2.F-4 Unpaid tuition balances will be turned over to collections. This could result in the overdue funds being pulled from your income tax return.

2.F-5 Parent/Guardian is responsible for returned check fees.

2.F-6 All payments made by ACH will be charged a \$1, per transaction, fee.

2.F-7 All payments made by credit card will be charged a \$5, per transaction, fee.

2.F-8 Changes to payment method must be approved and a new payment form must be filled out. Failure to do so could result in additional fees being charged.

2.F-9 All children must have an enrollment contract completely filled out prior to their first day.

2.F-10 A new enrollment contract must be filled out any time a change to the current contract is needed. Some changes require prior approval.

2.F-11 Your contracted tuition rate is due each week regardless of your child's attendance.

2.F-12 No tuition will be charged during the summer shut down (the week the 4th of July falls on)

2.F-13 No tuition will be charged during the winter shut down (the week between Christmas and New Year's)

2.F-14 All other weeks will be billed at your full tuition rate, regardless of holidays or other closures.

2.F-15 If a 2 week notice is given, one vacation week may be taken with a 50% tuition discount.

2.F-16 If a family chooses to pause their child(ren)'s enrollment for a period of no less than four weeks but no more than 10 weeks, a holding fee equal to one week's tuition rate can be paid to ensure your child's spot will be saved.

2.G Subsidy

2.G-1 All CCDF and OMWPK students must be signed in and out each day using the POS machine located on the kiosk in the lobby.

2.G-2 Each Monday at drop off, all attendance from the previous week must be current for your child to attend the current week.

2.G-3 If your child did not attend enough hours in a given week, it is your responsibility to either enter a personal day or pay the portion of the tuition that your subsidy does not cover.

2.G-4 Failure to keep your child's attendance current will result in immediate termination of enrollment.

2.H Infant Programming

2.H-1 All children ages 6 weeks through one year and one day of age are considered an infant and enrolled in our infant classroom. Parents of an infant are responsible for the following:

2.H-1.a Submit a completed Infant feeding plan that is signed by a physician. This must be updated by the parent every 3 months or any time a change is needed.

2.H-1.b Provide pre-made bottles that contain the exact amount of formula/breast milk to be given in one feeding. (unused amounts will be discarded after 1 hour)

2.H-1.c Provide enough pre-made bottles to ensure the infant can be fed while they are in attendance.

2.H-1.d All bottles must be covered with a lid, labeled with the child's first and last name, the contents of the bottle, and the current date.

2.H-1.e All bottles must be taken home at the end of the day. This includes used and unused bottles.

2.H-1.f Provide packaged infant cereal, and infant foods when the infant reaches the developmental stage where they are ready for such.

2.H-1.g Infant cereal and infant food will be given by a caregiver using a spoon. The parent will provide enough pre-made formula/breast milk for the caregiver to mix with infant cereal. A written statement from the infant's pediatrician must be on file for a caregiver to feed an infant cereal or infant food with anything other than a spoon.

2.H-1.h Parents will provide several outfits to ensure the infant has on clean clothing all day.

2.H-1.i Parents will provide diapers and wipes in their original packaging and unopened.

2.H-2 Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy follows all regulations of Safe Sleep. For the safety of your child, we cannot make any alterations to these regulations.

2.H-2.a Infants will sleep only in their designated crib.

2.H-2.b The only items allowed in a crib are an infant and a pacifier. (No pacifier strings/clips and no hooded outfits)

2.H-2.c All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. If an infant is able to roll both directions (back to tummy and tummy to back) they are allowed to sleep on their stomach but will initially be placed on their back.

2.H-2.d If an infant arrives asleep in a carseat they will be removed from the carseat and placed in their crib.

2.H-2.e A medical waiver, signed by a physician, that states the exact reasoning and type of sleep alteration must be on file for alterations or modifications to Safe Sleep practices. In addition, the medical documentation must be submitted to FSSA for final approval. We cannot make any modifications unless both items are met.

2.H-3 Our Infant program will provide a least restrictive environment for the children in our care. Infants need to be able to move, wiggle, roll, scoot, etc. To support their growth and development you will see the following:

2.H-3a Infants will have soft areas on the floor where they are able to move around, reach for toys, and engage with others of the same developmental level.

2.H-3b We will not use bouncers, infant swings, excersuacers, jumpers, etc in excess.

2.H-3c An infant will only be placed in their crib to sleep.

2.H-3d Infant seats will be used for feeding infant cereal/food to those that aren't able to sit in a high chair and for those that have a form on file documenting a medical reasoning for needing to sit upright for a length of time.

Section 3 - Food & Nutrition Policies

3.A Meals/Outside Foods

3.A-1 Meals and snacks are provided to children in attendance at the time they are served. We are unable to hold or save a meal; please ensure your child is in attendance at the following times:

3.A-2 Breakfast: 7:00 am -7:40am

Morning snack: 9:15am

Lunch: 11:30am

Afternoon snack: 2:30pm

3.B Dietary Restrictions

3.B-1 All food allergies and dietary restrictions must be made aware of at the time of your child's enrollment.

3.B-2 You will be required to have a food allergy form filled out, signed by a physician, and on file. This form must be updated yearly or sooner if changes need to be made.

3.C Outside Foods

3.C-1 Outside foods and beverages are only permitted if they meet one of the following:

3.C-1a Children enrolled in our Infant program (see "Infant Program" for further explanation)

3.C-1b Reasons that have been communicated by a staff member of Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy. This includes but is not limited to birthday parties, special events, or holidays. All items brought in must be store bought and in their original packaging.

3.C-1c The following items may not be brought in and will not be served to children:

Grapes, pretzel nuggets, hot dogs, chips, hard candies, popcorn, nuts, marshmallows, seeds, raw peas, dried fruit (including raisins), peanut butter, and/or pop.

3.C-1d All bottles/sippy cups provided by families must be labeled with the child's first and last name, the contents in the bottle/sippy cup, the current day's date, and the nipple/spout must be covered with a lid. They must be taken home daily to be washed.

Section 4 - Health & Safety Policies

4.A Authorization for a Child's Release

4.A-1 Children will be released only to their parent/legal guardian or a person named by the parent/legal guardian.

4.A-2 A photo ID must be shown at the time of pickup the first time an individual picks up.

4.A-3 If an individual is not listed as an authorized pickup, we cannot release the child to them.

4.A-4 Parents or persons named by the parent must make sure that a staff member is aware of the child's arrival and departure. Verbal and visual contact must be made between the parent and a staff member.

4.A-5 Do not drop your child off in a common area or in an empty classroom. Locate a staff member before leaving your child.

4.B Delays & Closures

4.B-1 All delays and closures will be communicated through social media, Procure, and/or local radio stations.

4.B-2 We are required by the State of Indiana to close if we do not have lights or running water.

4.C Discipline, Suspension & Expulsion Policy

4.C-1 All forms of challenging behavior must be addressed and handled in a cooperative manner.

4.C-2 Repetitive instances (3 or more times in a week) of challenging behavior could result in the

need for a Behavior Success Plan to be created for your child.

4.C-3 A child's parents are required to partner with us in the creation of the Behavior Success Plan and the follow-through of the items specified in the plan.

4.C-4 The following are considered challenging behaviors: hitting, kicking, spitting, biting, pinching, throwing objects, hostile verbal behaviors, or other behaviors that may hurt or endanger children or staff.

4.C-5 In response to these behaviors we will not use:

- Threats or bribes
- Physical punishment (even at the parent's request)
- Deprive your child of food or other basic needs
- Humiliation or isolation

4.C-6 In response to these behaviors we will:

- Respect your child
- Establish clear rules
- Be consistent in enforcing rules
- Use positive language to explain desired behavior
- Speak calmly while bending down to your child's eye level
- Give clear choices
- Redirect your child to a new activity
- Offer your child a calm down period where they determine the length of it

4.C-7 When a behavior becomes repetitive we will follow these guidelines to help stop the situation:

- Have a meeting with the child's parents, teacher(s), and Program Director to collaborate and share ideas. We will discuss what we are seeing, discuss possible causes and strategies we can use.
- Create a Behavior Success Plan that can be used at home and in the child care setting.
- Offer the family support from additional or outside resources that may prove to be helpful to the parents, child, and staff.
- Set a date to meet again and discuss the changes we are or are not seeing.

4.C-8 If the above outlined process is not followed by a family we reserve the right to suspend or terminate a child's enrollment.

4.D Emergency Plans

4.D-1 Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy will follow our Emergency Plan in the event of fire, bad weather, intruder situations, and medical emergencies .

4.D-2 You are required to have all emergency contact information up to date at all times for your child.

4.E Field Trips

4.E-1 All field trips will be communicated at least 1 week in advance.

4.E-2 All children must have a signed filed trip form. Failure to do so will result in your child not being allowed to attend the field trip.

4.E-3 All children must be dressed appropriately for each field trip. Failure to do so will result in your child not being allowed to attend the field trip.

4.E-4 When a child's class is on a field trip, they must attend the trip or find alternate care. There will not be a classroom available for children who cannot attend a trip.

4.F Health & Ill Child Policy

4.F-1 Children who are ill are not allowed to attend the program.

4.F-2 If your child becomes ill while at the center you will be contacted and you will be required to pick up your child.

4.F-3 If you cannot be reached, someone from your emergency contacts will be contacted.

4.F-4 Your child may not return until they are symptom free for 24 hours.

4.F-5 Your child may not attend if they exhibit any of the following:

4.F-5a A fever of 101° F or higher

4.F-5b Vomiting or diarrhea

4.F-5c A rash (with the exception of diaper rash)

4.F-5d A communicable disease

4.F-5e A bacterial or fungal infection

4.F-5f Appear obviously ill. Children must be well enough to participate in the daily schedule for their classroom.

4.F-6 Masking or hiding symptoms by the use of medication is not allowed. Children must be symptom free on their own.

4.F-7 Not adhering to any of the above or intentionally allowing a sick child to attend could result in immediate disenrollment from the program.

4.G Medications

4.G-1 Medications can be administered under the following provisions:

4.G-1a The prescribed frequency is 3 or more times per day.

4.G-1b A medication form is filled out completely by the parent/guardian and the directions match the medication label.

4.G-1c The label is intact and readable.

4.G-1d The medication is less than one year old (for over the counter medications)

4.G-1e The date on the prescription label matches the current date.

4.G-1f Parents will make every effort to have the medication dispensed in a manner that allows it to remain at the program instead of having to be taken home every day.

4.H Mandatory Reporting/Suspected Impairment

4.H-1 All staff of Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

4.H-2 If an intoxicated or impaired person insists on removing children from the center, the center will immediately report the incident to the local police agency.

4.I Parent/Visitor Conduct

4.I-1 Any person that is in our program must conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner.

4.I-2 We will not tolerate adult behavior that does not provide our students with a safe and calm atmosphere. Anyone that does not abide by this, will be asked to leave immediately and may not be allowed to return.

4.I-3 Parents can not yell, scream, use profane language, be overly aggressive or confrontational, or doing anything that may “make a scene” while in our Program. Doing so will result in immediate termination of your child(ren)’s enrollment.

4.I-4 Parents can not yell at, call staff members names or in general create a hostile environment. Doing so will result in immediate termination of your child(ren)’s enrollment.

4.I-5 It is expected that frustrating situations will be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

4.I-6 A meeting can be scheduled when situations arise that a family needs addressed. We will do our very best to ensure these occur withing 24 - 48 business hours. A parent cannot walk in and demand an immediate meeting.

4.J Premises Restrictions

4.J-1 The use or possession of the following are prohibited in our Program

4.J-1a Tobacco

4.J-1b Alcohol

4.J-1c Illegal substances

4.J-1d Firearms (with the exception of law enforcement officers)

4.K Ratios

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy adheres to the ratios mandated by the State of Indiana for Child Care Centers. If you ever see a room out of compliance or have a concern please notify the office staff immediately.

For Licensed Child Care Centers

| Age of the Youngest Child in Group | Maximum Number of Children Supervised By One Caregiver | Maximum Number of Children in One Group |
|---|---|--|
| Infant | 4 | 8 |
| Toddler | 5 | 10 |
| 2 years | 5 | 10 |
| 30-36 months | 7 | 14 |
| 3 years | 10 | 20 |
| 4 years | 12 | 24 |
| 5 years/Kindergarten | 15 | 30 |
| 1 st Grade and Above | 20 | 40 |

4.L Social Media, Photos, Videos

Parents must give us permission to post their child’s photo within the building and on social media. This must be filled out on your registration form.

4.M Supervision Policy

4.L-1 Children must be supervised by sight and sound at all times.

4.L-2 Children are not permitted to be by themselves in any area of our Program.

4.L-3 Children must be walked to their classroom at drop-off by the parent/guardian.

4.L-4 Children must be picked up from their classroom by the parent/guardian.

Section 5 - Education Policies

5.A Curriculum

Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy uses Frog Street curriculum in all of our classrooms. Frog Street provides a comprehensive continuum of research-based child care curriculum serving children from birth to age five. The child care curriculum supports key learning domains and is aligned with state and national learning standards. Conscious Discipline®(social-emotional development) is integrated into the early child care curriculum each day.

5.B Unscheduled Visits

5.B-1 Lewis Cass Early Learning Academy has an open door policy.

5.B-2 Please take the following points into consideration before visiting:

5.B-2a Interruptions are very distracting to young children. An unexpected visitor can disrupt a child's day.

5.B-2b Please be respectful of your child's learning and their teacher's time that they have with them.

5.B-2c Visits can be confusing to some young children and even cause them distress. They may misunderstand the intentions and think it is time to leave. Saying goodbye again may be difficult.

5.B-2d All individuals who are present in a classroom for a period of time longer than that of drop off or pick up must have a current background check on file at the Lewis Cass Schools Administration office.