



## Discovery Learning Center Parent Handbook

Established in 1979, the program at Discovery Learning Center has always been one which values the needs and interests of the individual child. By creating an enriched learning environment that stimulates the senses and sparks curiosity, we create an atmosphere where inventiveness, creativity, and divergent thinking are truly valued! Our staff carefully prepares activities, projects, and “hands-on” areas that are designed to be thought provoking and challenging (cognitively, physically, or emotionally). The genesis for these program areas comes directly from the children’s emerging interests. Consequently, as the children evolve, so does the program.

At Discovery Learning Center we are committed to the developmental growth of our students. Our program features multi-age grouping where children are given many opportunities to make choices and problem solve in an environment filled with interesting and stimulating materials. Above all, we know that the quality of the teachers working directly with the children is crucial for the child’s overall learning experience and success in any school setting. Our teachers are educated, knowledgeable, and creative Early Childhood professionals. They constantly observe their students interests, evaluate their changing needs, and create projects based on those needs.

While children are engaged in activities teachers ask questions like:

- What’s your plan?
- What do you think that is?
- How can that be used?
- How/what does that feel like, taste like, smell like, look like, sound like?
- What happened?
- Tell me more about that?
- How do you think that happened?

The right answer is not important; rather teachers encourage children to think critically “outside the box” and share ideas, as they begin to understand the child’s thought process and perspective.

A teacher’s primary goal should always be for children to experience the “process” (versus creating a final product). The benefit of learning comes from the all the steps involved in a project, including making mistakes. In fact we often learn the most when we make mistakes. Children need adults in their environment who respect their ability to create and who provide the means for them to do so. We must be consistent in our respect for the children’s ability to make choices and to function independently. By doing so, we help to develop a creative, divergent problem-solver and unique human beings. Children are placed in the small group that is the best match for them developmentally and socially, as opposed to placing them in groups based solely chronological age and whether or not they are toilet trained. When moving a child to a new group we look for developmental readiness. We don’t want to hold a child back nor do we want to ask too much of them because they are a certain age. Some of these developmental readiness indicators include:

- 1. Overall maturity** (turn taking, sharing, being responsible for personal items, impulse control, following through with directions, etc).
- 2. Attention span:** Does the child want to be at circle time for extended periods of time (5-20 minutes)? Do they participate in group conversations? Do they spend longer periods of time at one activity (5-10 minutes)?

**3. Advanced language skills:** Is the child able to use his/her words (more than 5-10 words in a sentence) to communicate with their peers and teachers?

**4. Advanced problem solving/reasoning skills:** Does the child attempt to solve problems using language in a cooperative/prosocial manner? When faced with a challenging task or question do they explore various methods of solving the problem on their own? Do they make connections with events or objects that may otherwise seem unrelated? Do they notice patterns? Can they hypothesize and predict?

**5. Overall interest in more complicated projects/activities.** Does the child choose to work on activities that require multiple steps or a long attention span? Are they eager to draw, write, cut, count, and other activities that require greater fine motor control? Are they interested in teacher/adult directed activities such as; bingo, M&M Math and cooking projects.

As we watch your child grow, it will become apparent to us when they are ready for new challenges that a different small group can provide. Timing is of the essence when making group changes. Moving a child to the next group prematurely can cause anxiety, frustration, and a sense of failure. We want them to always feel accomplished, secure, and confident! A child who starts the school year in the same group as the previous year may only need a couple more months to grow and mature. Please see pages 15-19 to learn about each small group's goals.

Our students benefit from large chunks of uninterrupted outside playtime in the morning and in the afternoon. Our large outside space is mostly sand and some pavement on our bike trail, patio space, and basketball court. We allow children to take off their shoes, climb structures, ride bikes, swing on swings, ride our zip line (which we call "The Zoom"), play in the mud, paint, garden, and navigate their own play with mixed-aged peers. This outside time is not only fun but also fundamental to their cognitive and motor development. When children are allowed to explore, interact, and create freely in an environment that is infused with tools and materials that speak to their senses and natural curiosity, the possibilities for learning are endless!

We also allow our students to play outside in cold weather and light rain, or after it has rained. We spend less time outside in colder weather but we do bundle the kids up, strap on their rain boots, and allow them to run, play, climb, and splash. It is critical for children to have access to fresh air and exercise year round. In our experience, year round outside time helps reduce the spread of infectious germs.

### **Communicating with children and conflict resolution**

We believe success in school, as well as in life, is measured by one's ability to relate and socialize positively with other people. The ability to relate with others begins with the ability to identify and verbally articulate our own feelings. Children are not always happy and well behaved, and that is ok. It is our job to help foster awareness each child's feelings, think about what they mean, and choose appropriate ways to express those feelings. Instead of being destructive or aggressive, we encourage children to talk, cry, breath, use facial expressions, and create expressive art to work through emotions.

For example, we ask children questions and make statements like:

- How did that make you feel?
- What were you trying to do or what would you like to say?
- How else can you say you're angry (if child has committed an aggressive or destructive act)?
- It's ok to be sad, mad, confused, scared, angry, etc. Sometimes we just feel that way.
- When you're feeling this way you can; talk about it, you can choose to be alone, look at books, and draw pictures.
- Look at their face. How do you think they are feeling?
- Listen to their words. What are they trying to tell you?
- How can we help your friend feel better?
- What can you do differently next time?
- What can you do to make this ok?

We model to children how to actively and empathetically listen by:

1. Listening with full attention and giving them our eye contact
2. Acknowledging their feelings with a word – “Oh”... “Mmm”... “I see”... “I understand”
3. Giving their feelings a name/paraphrasing back what you heard them say

### Apologies

Instead of insisting that children apologize (ie, say “I’m sorry.”) for their actions, we guide children to practice and develop their empathy by asking the above questions. We may have them ask a friend that they have hurt if he/she is all right, or ask what they can do to help them. An example would be to have a child who has hit a friend, ask the friend if there is anything that would help him feel better. A common response from a hurt child at our center is a request for an ice pack. We would then have the child facilitate getting an ice pack (ask a teacher for one) and then stay with the friend until the friend feels better.

### Physical or social/relational aggression

To facilitate conflict resolution with children, we:

1. Gather information from child
2. Acknowledge feelings
3. Describe problem
4. Brainstorm solutions with child

### Biting

Biting is a developmentally typical behavior for very young children. It is especially common among children who do not have adequate language to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Biting may be used by children as a tool to express strong emotions such as anger or frustration. Biting is also used as a way to interact or enter play when they don’t know any other way. When a child has bitten a peer our staff follows the same protocol mentioned above in the “conflict resolution” section. We make sure the child knows it is not ok to bite. We ask questions to help them identify their problem and how they feel about the problem. Alternative ways of solving their problem next time are brainstormed. We also make sure they notice their peer’s body language, helping them identify how the bite made their friend feel and direct them to ask the child how they are feeling.

When a child has been bitten by a peer, our staff will address his feelings by asking if he is ok. We acknowledge his physical and emotional pain by giving him an opportunity to verbally communicate his feelings about being bitten to the peer who bit him. We then clean the bite area with soap and water, and/or any other necessary first aide.

Bite incidents will be documented, and parents of children involved in a bite incident will receive a copy of the documentation, and parents will be notified by phone. If a child begins to bite habitually, DLC staff may require a parent teacher conference to gather more information, and to develop a plan of action with the parents. If necessary, a child who often bites may be “shadowed” by a staff person to ensure other children are safe in their presence.

### Weapon and Pretend Play

The number one tool to prevent aggression in young children is to foster a sense of empathy. In order to develop empathy toward another human being, one must first be able to understand that other people have feelings too, and begin to take on the perspective of another. This is difficult for young children who are naturally self-centered. It takes a great deal of practice. One way children develop empathy is through pretend play. They are able to safely step into the role of a mother, father, sister, brother, baby, etc. Children may pretend to be the “bad guy” or for example, a dragon or characters that may scare them in real life. Pretend play is a critical tool for kids to work out their fears and to process confusing real life issues such arguments, consequences, and fighting.

At DLC, we believe providing a safe environment where kids can act out various pretend scenarios, games and roles is paramount to their healthy development. Our staff observes pretend play closely, asking questions and providing direction when needed.

Pretend weapon play (guns, swords, etc.) is allowed and valued at our center. Just as kids love to pretend to be the monster or “the bad guy”, they also love to pretend to shoot and swing swords. At our center this is turned into an opportunity to build, create, and develop critical thinking skills. Our students often spend hours using paper, tape, scissors, glue, and string to create pretend weapons. HOWEVER, it is made very clear to our students that the pretend weapons may not be used to actually hurt anyone, or come into physical contact with anyone. In fact, if there is a child who even feels scared or unsafe being involved in pretend weapon play, the kids with pretend weapons must respect their friend’s feelings or the pretend weapons are no longer available.

## **DLC Daily Schedule**

**6:30 am:** DLC opens

**6:30 am - 8:00 am:** Free play, mixed ages together, breakfast club.

**8:00 am:** Breakfast Club ends, school-agers leave for school.

**8:30 am -9:15 am:** Morning snack (provided by DLC).

**10:00 am - 11:30 am:** Morning “Small Group Time.”

**11:30 am - 12:00 pm:** Lunch (each child brings lunch from home).

**12:00 pm - 1:00 pm:** Nap time (not mandatory for all children).

**12:00 pm - 1:30 pm:** Mixed ages/free play

**1:30 pm:** Clean-up/large group circle time

**2:00 pm:** Afternoon Snack (provided by DLC).

**2:30 pm - 4:00 pm:** Afternoon “Small Group Time.”

**4:00 pm:** “Four O’Clock Snack” (leftovers from lunch).

**4:30 pm - 5:00 pm:** Homework Time/4pm snack (for School-Agers).

**4:30 pm - 6:00 pm:** End of day activities/mixed ages/free play

## **Arrival and Departure**

*Prior to dropping off children for their first day, the registration packet must be completed. The registration fee and first tuition payment must also be received. All children must be accompanied into and out of the center. You will be given a door code to allow you access to the center. Please only share this code with individuals that are authorized to pick up your child.*

- Please sign your child in and out, using the time and your complete signature. In the fall of 2015 a new attendance management system will be implemented. After this, you will only need to use your thumbprint to sign in and out.
- Written authorization must be on file at the center prior to your child’s release to anyone. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, please let DLC know ahead of time. If it is our first time meeting them, we will ask to see a photo I.D.
- For families that are contracted for 3, 4, or 5 hour schedules, there is a **5 minute grace period** allowed for drop off and pick up. If you are more than 5 minutes early or late, a \$15 extra hour fee will be added to your account.
- Please allow sufficient time in picking up and dropping off your child. Your child may have some concerns regarding separation. When you are ready to leave, please say goodbye quickly and confidently. Remember, your child is taking cues from you on how to feel confident and secure. We will be happy to help if necessary.

- When you pick up your child please check their cubby/locker and art file. Please bring home any art, soiled clothes and note what needs to be restocked. Please also allow time for your child to clean up activities.
- Please take a look at our lost and found located on the front porch. The items in the lost and found are donated to the Goodwill on the last Friday of each month.
- All children (whether enrolled or just visiting) must be supervised at all times at our center including drop off and pick up times. It is against licensing regulations to allow a child to go into an unsupervised room regardless of having been signed in or out. Please accompany your child as they gather their things and have their siblings within arms reach.
- We encourage you to communicate with teachers about any concerns/pertinent information at drop off, and to ask how your child's day was at pick up. Our teacher's primary job is supervising the children, thus conversations involving more than a minute or two, may require the teacher to call you or to have the Program Director (if she is not immediately available) to call you. This ensures that the children continue to have the most attentive supervision.
- **Please finish cell phone conversations before entering the center.** This helps ensure that your attention is focused on the tasks of dropping off or picking up your child.

### **Clothing, Diapers and Napping**

Your child needs to be dressed for action at DLC! We ask that your child come to school in clothes that can be easily moved in, easily changed in and out of, and are okay to get stained.

- Please use a permanent marker to write your child's initials on all belongings from home. This includes socks, shoes, underwear, lunch bag, containers in lunch, ice packs... everything.
- Please provide at least two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. An extra sweater and pair of shoes are needed during the cooler months. An extra swimsuit and a towel (optional) are needed during the warmer months.
- During the cold months we bundle up and go outside! Please make sure that your child comes to school in a coat, sweater or vest, hat and gloves. Your child is also welcome to keep a pair of rain boots at the center.
- If your child is in diapers, you provide diapers and wipes. We greatly appreciate you writing your child's initials near the exterior fold/bottom of each diaper. We will let you know when they need replenishing. During the warmer months, please provide swim diapers.
- Diapers are promptly changed as needed, as well as checked hourly. Daily records are kept of your child's changes at the diapering area.
- Napping is not mandatory. If you would like your child to nap, please provide a crib sheet, pillow and blanket. You may also supply a sleeping comfort item (such as a special blanket or stuffed animal) and/or a pacifier that can be made available only during nap time. We ask that napping items be left at the school for the week. Items will be sent home on the last day of your child's weekly schedule for laundering.

- Nap time begins after lunch. Nappers that have not fallen asleep by 1:00 PM may get up and join the rest of the preschool group. Children are allowed to wake up naturally, but are woken for afternoon group.

## Toilet Learning

- Close collaboration between you, your child, and DLC staff makes for more successful toilet learning.
- When your child shows an interest, we will invite your child to use the restroom and work with them through all the steps of using the toilet.
- Accidents are expected and part of the learning process. We will work with your child in changing their clothes and cleaning their body as necessary.
- Toilet learning is most successful and least stressful when child led. Typically, your child will demonstrate toilet learning readiness in the following ways:

The below information was originally published at [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)

### Body Awareness

- Ability to associate an inner feeling of fullness before a bowel movement or urination
- Discomfort over a soiled diaper
- Interest in all body parts, especially ones used to eliminate

### Making Plans and Carrying Them Out

- Solving problems requires picturing a solution and planning a way to achieve it.
- Around age two and a half or three, your child's memory has typically developed to the point of enabling them not only to remember where they are headed when he/she starts toward the bathroom, but to recall previous toilet-training experiences and benefit from them. Their imagination has expanded, allowing them to explore toilet use through imaginary play with stuffed animals, dolls, and puppets.
- An expanded imagination may also create new challenges in toilet training, leading to anxieties such as the fear of a flushing toilet or the fear of being flushed away.
- Observing your child problem solving and pondering how they will obtain the current object of their desire are signs that they may be cognitively mature enough to figure out how to solve the problem of staying dry without diapers.
- Around age three your child may have grown somewhat better at interrupting their focus on another task to go to the bathroom and resist distraction on the way.

DLC staff is available to discuss with you your child's developmental readiness for toilet learning.

## Personal Belongings

- Your child is welcome to bring comfort items, items from nature, and books to school. **We ask that toys and electronics be left at home.**

## Outdoor Play Criteria

- Cold weather
  - When the temperature is under 50°F, we wait until 9 AM to go outside and keep an indoor classroom available so that children have the option to play inside or outside.
  - All children go back inside for group and lunch time on these cold days.
  - When the temperature reaches 65°F, we allow kids to go barefoot and wear short sleeve shirts.
  
- Hot Weather
  - At 90°F we evaluate weather variables, such as wind, humidity, air quality, etc., to determine how long kids will engage in outside play.
  - Water play is always available and encouraged.
  - Above 95°F and/or Spare the Air Days, outdoor play is limited to the morning hours with the exception of School Agers.
  - School Agers participating in our Summer Program are on all day field trips. Public swimming pools or indoor locations are scheduled for the afternoon of these trips.
  - All children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. At the center, water is available at the drinking fountain and from a thermos with cups. School Agers on field trips are required to have a water bottle and are reminded to drink from it and refill it.

## Health and Safety

### Illness

- DLC is not licensed for sick childcare.
- If a child is exhibiting unwell symptoms during drop off, DLC staff will evaluate if they are well enough to be dropped off.
- Parents are notified when children exhibit unwell symptoms at school. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts will be contacted and asked to pick up the child.
- **Children must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification.**
- While your child is waiting to be picked up, he or she will be made as comfortable as possible.
- Unwell symptoms may include, but are not limited to:
  - Fever – defined as 100.4° F or above when measured with a temporal artery thermometer, 100°F or above when taken orally, or 99° F or above when measured in an axillary position (under the arm).
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea occurring more than one time
  - Lethargy or falling asleep at atypical times
  - Eating or drinking very little, or not at all
  - Atypical skin color

- Lack of interest in playing or engaging in typical activities
  - Child indicates discomfort in a specific part of body and modifies their behavior to accommodate it
  - Undiagnosed inflammation, rash, skin lesions, or eye irritation
  - Coughing and/or mucus that causes the child to vomit, or limits the child from engaging in typical activities
  - Atypical behavior, i.e., increased sensitivity and/or aggression
  - A virus, bacterial infection or skin irritation that is actively contagious. The contagious time period varies depending on the pathogen. Please consult your child's health care provider to determine when it is recommended for them to return to school.
- **Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

- DLC may request a note from your child's healthcare provider stating that he or she is well enough to return to school.

### Lice

- If your child has lice please notify us immediately so that other families can be notified and we can treat possibly affected areas of the school. Your child's name will not be used when notifying other families.
- Your child may return to school when they are nit and louse free. A DLC teacher may inspect your child upon return to school to ensure they are nit and louse free.

### Medication

- We will administer prescription and/or over the counter medications (OTC) to your child.
- A "PARENT CONSENT FOR ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS AND MEDICATION CHART" form must be filled out prior to medication being administered to the child. These forms may be obtained on our website or at our center.
- If your child's medication is an inhaler, the additional "Consent/Verification for Nebulizer Care" form, must be filled out.
- The medication must be administered just as the prescription label states, or as the OTC directions indicate. If the OTC medication is not formulated for children, and/or does not have dosage information for the age and/or weight of your child, a doctor's note must accompany it and provide specific administration instructions.
- All medications must come to the center in their original packaging with the originally dispensed label.
- Medication is kept in a locked location and refrigerated if needed.
- Medication that is expired cannot be administered or kept at the school.
- Parents are responsible for collecting medication at the end of treatment, or medication that needs to return home on a daily or weekly basis. DLC staff routinely reviews all medications and discards any that are expired or no longer being administered.

### First Aid

- Per licensing, no topical antiseptics are allowed. We assist children in cleaning superficial wounds with soap and water.
- We provide comfort, ice and band aids.



- Bee stings or bites. A circle is drawn around the sting or bite (if needed) to observe the amount of swelling and redness.
- Accidents are logged and parents are notified, by phone or note, any time an injury involves a child hitting their head, bites, bee stings, and anything beyond a small superficial scrape.
- All of our teachers are CPR certified.

### **Creating an environment for children to feel comfortable and confident in their bodies**

- Children are naturally curious about their bodies and other children’s bodies.
 

*“Children learn about sexuality [and their developing bodies] the same way they learn about everything else—through words, actions, interactions, and relationships.”*

*Healthy Sexuality Development: A Guide for Early Childhood Educators and Families*  
*(Chrisman and Couchenour 2002).*
- As children learn about their developing bodies, DLC staff approach it the same as any other learning process; with patience, consideration and respect. We understand the importance of talking about our bodies without shame, embarrassment, or being misled.
- It is okay for children to talk about body parts, differences between boys and girls, and body processes; however teasing, discussing body functions at mealtimes, or simply talking about body parts to gain a reaction is not available.
- We use correct anatomical terms for all body parts, including genitals.
- Masturbation in children is a normal behavior and often comforting to them. When children masturbate while at the center, we respond by letting them know that a lot of kids their age do the same thing and that it is a really normal thing to do. However, it is also a private activity for their home.
- When answering questions about how babies are made, we tell children that to begin the process of growing a baby, a woman’s egg is fertilized by a sperm cell.
  - When children request more specific information, we communicate to them that their question is smart and important, and that moms and dads usually like to be the one to answer questions about that for their kids. We then communicate to the parents about their child’s interest.
  - We emphasize that people make babies when they have a grown up body and consent – both people want to make a baby.
- When children explore each other’s bodies we communicate the following:
  - Lots of kids that are their age are curious about each other’s bodies.
  - At DLC, a child looking at or touching another child’s genitals or chest is not available.
  - We encourage children to verbalize when they do not want, or do want, peers and teachers to hold their hand, hug, or sit closely to them.
  - Save your kisses for your mommies and daddies.

- When weather is warm enough, children at our center are welcome to play shirtless. Children do have to wear the minimum of a diaper or underwear.
- Preschool children commonly change their clothes in front of their cubby area, with other children changing at the same time.
- As they enter the school age program, or if any child requests more privacy, children are provided privacy to change.

## Nutrition

- ***DLC is a peanut butter and tree nut free school.*** The snacks we serve contain no peanut butter or tree nut products. Children’s lunches and community treats (brought from home to share on special occasions) **may NOT contain products made with nuts.** In the event that a child’s lunch contains a nut product, the following procedure will be followed:
  1. The item will be carefully removed from the lunch.
  2. The item will be placed in a bag with the child’s name on it and stored in the kitchen.
  3. If necessary, the staff will provide alternate food items and a \$5 fee for emergency food will be assessed to the parents account.
  4. The removed item will be stored for the remainder of the day and the parent can pick it up when picking up their child.
- Lunch is at 11:30 AM. Families provide a packed lunch for their child. Lunch may include a microwavable item that takes up to 90 seconds to heat up. Please pack the microwavable item in a **glass container**, labeled with your child’s name and place in the “Heat Ups” basket at drop off.
- At lunch time our teachers guide children on how to make healthy food choices. We coach them to find two “growing foods” (food from a plant, animal, or a tree), then they can choose to eat a snack or treat after they have begun to eat two “growing foods.”
- Our teachers sit and eat with the children to create a positive family style experience. We encourage each child to open and close his/her lunch box, food containers, and to pour water from the pitcher on each lunch table.
- Our staff will never attempt to force a child to eat any meal they do not wish to. But we will make it clear that food is only available at our designated eating times. This is to ensure that children are adequately supervised while eating. If a child does not want to eat lunch/snack, they may be asked to sit at the lunch table to ensure they are supervised.
- The only time lunch or snack/lunch will not be given to a child at the designated time, is if the child chooses not to eat. If the child decides later they are hungry, they will have to wait until the next meal time to eat. This is to ensure the safety of all children, as well as to have a consistent routine and boundaries.
- DLC provides two daily snacks, at 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM.
- There is an additional snack time at 4 PM where children may have food from their lunches.
- Please do not send lollipops, hard candies, gum or soda in packed lunches.

- Breakfast Club is available. You provide the breakfast and we serve it until 8 AM. Items such as cereal, milk, oatmeal or other easily prepared items may be stored at the center.
- Emergency breakfast or lunch can be provided at a cost of \$5 per meal.

## **Celebrations and Birthdays**

### Holidays

- Seasonal celebrations at DLC include Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Hanukkah, Christmas. While we approach these holidays in a secular manner, we communicate with the children that each individual family’s belief system is valued. We teach that respect, kindness and tolerance are unifying factors in most belief systems and the most important message from these holidays.
- We welcome families to arrange an activity or share a special food item that introduces additional holidays or cultural celebrations. Please contact the Program Director if you are interested in doing this.
- Families are invited to our much-loved Halloween sing-a-long and Winter Holiday sing-a-long events.

### Birthdays

- Birthdays are special days for children. If you would like to celebrate your child’s birthday at the center, please make arrangements with a staff member prior to the special day. Some common ways parents celebrate their child’s birthday at the center are by doing one of the following:
  - Providing a special treat, we light candles and sing happy birthday
  - Coming to the school and reading a story to the children
  - Providing a filled piñata
  - Providing a bounce house for the day
- If you would like to provide a special treat for your child’s birthday, please provide an ingredient list of what is in the food item(s) as well as ensure that the food item is in compliance with DLC’s nutrition guidelines.
- Sweet treats are welcome for these special occasions; however, if you would like to provide an alternative, below are some ideas:
  - Fruit kabobs (Please remove sharp point)
  - Fruit and yogurt parfaits
  - Kids create a face or body with pre-cut vegetables
  - Build a sandwich with crackers, cheese, veggies and/or meat
  - Veggies with ranch
  - 100% fruit popsicles
  - Pumpkin, banana, or zucchini bread
  - Trail mix “bar”; sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, whole grain cereals, pretzels, dried fruit, yogurt covered raisins, etc.
  - Fruit popsicles

## **Field Trips**

- Our field trips are made possible by the generous participation of parents. DLC asks that each family commit to participating in at least one field trip per year.
- Parents provide car seats for field trips. California state law requires children to stay in a booster or car seat until they are 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall. A car seat is required for children under 40 pounds.
- DLC T-shirt is required for field trips. Cost: \$15.00. DLC Tie-Dye shirt is additionally required for school-age summer field trips. Cost: \$15.00. DLC sweatshirts are available, but not required. Cost: \$15.00.
- In the event that your child does not have their DLC shirt on the day of a field trip, a new one will be issued and \$15.00 will be billed to your account. You may also rent a “loaner” shirt, if one is available, for a \$5.00 fee.

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

We make parent teacher conferences available once a year and as needed throughout the year.

We may request a conference with parents to discuss challenging behavior. It is imperative that if a conference is requested by DLC staff, that parents make themselves available within the time period requested. It is important that the teachers and parents are seen as a united front by the child with only the child’s best interest in mind. These meetings help promote this. They provide the opportunity to brainstorm ways to deal with challenging behavior as well as help set expectations which are consistent both at home and school.

Occasionally children’s physical behavior presents a physical danger to themselves, their friends, or their teachers. When this happens, we tell children to stop and that they may not hurt themselves or others. Occasionally, a teacher may need to physically redirect the child away from the group. This can be done with a bear hug or by holding the child’s hand.

## **Adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act**

Our policy is to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations, and any other applicable local, state or federal laws pertaining to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. We review each child’s need on a case-by-case basis, and make reasonable accommodations for any child who can safely participate in a group care environment. Again, your child’s safety and well being are our primary concern as well as the safety of others.

Please discuss your child’s needs with the Program Director before you enroll. If you have additional documentation or information for your child’s needs, just let us know. Our goal is to provide the best possible care for your child.

## **Nondiscrimination**

Discovery Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of a person’s religion, color, race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, veteran status, or any other factors protected by law.

## **Confidentiality and Children’s Records**

All information contained in your child’s records, including your personal information, is confidential. Anyone who is not directly involved in the care of your child or affiliated with child care licensing, protective services or other government agencies will not have access to the records without your written authorization or court order.

## **Center Hours of Operation**

Our center is open Monday – Friday, 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM. We very occasionally will close before 6 PM, if the last child is picked up prior to 6:00 PM and on December 24th. You may use your door code to enter the center at any time during business hours. The door code is not available for use during non-business hours. In the event that DLC is hosting a special event or after hours child care, the door code may be used at the indicated start time.

DLC is closed on the following holidays.

HOLIDAY	OBSERVED
New Year's Day	January 1 <sup>st</sup>
Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday	Third Monday in January
President's Day	Third Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4 <sup>th</sup>
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Veterans' Day	November 11 <sup>th</sup>
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday in November
Day After Thanksgiving	Friday following Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve – We close early at 3 PM	December 24 <sup>th</sup>
Christmas Day	December 25 <sup>th</sup>
Day After Christmas Day	December 26 <sup>th</sup>

### Emergency Situations and Evacuation Plans

To maintain a safe environment, we make every attempt to be prepared for potential emergency situations. We regularly schedule and practice emergency evacuations as required by child care licensing regulations and the Fire Marshall. Should an emergency situation arise, please know that the DLC staff has taken all appropriate precautions and that an adequate stock of supplies is maintained. In the event that an evacuation is necessary, our meeting spot is:

The First Baptist Church (Down the street from DLC)  
 4401 San Juan Avenue  
 Church phone number: (916) 966-2295

Once children are relocated and settled, DLC staff will contact families to arrange for their child to be picked up. Families are responsible for keeping all contact information up to date.

### Closures Due to Utility Service Interruption and Severe Weather

- In the event that DLC experiences interruptions to utilities which prevent us from having running water and/or adequate heating or cooling of the center, we may unexpectedly close.
- In the event that severe weather is forecasted and may possibly make traveling to and from our center unsafe for our staff and families, we may close.
- Under either of the above mentioned circumstances, parents will be notified by phone and email.

### **Night Owls – DLC Parent Group**

The Night Owls are an independent, parent run organization. They offer DLC families the opportunity to not only meet other parents, but also share information, ideas and resources! The Night Owls focus on ways to support the school in providing an enriched program experience for the children. This is accomplished through planning fundraisers, scheduling social events and building a community in which parents can support one another throughout their children's preschool - elementary school journey. If you are interested in learning more about the group, please fill out the form provided in your enrollment packet.

### **Thank you for choosing our school!**

Jami Harnish, M.A., Child Development  
Program Director

Linda Smyth, M.S., Child Development  
Owner, Executive Director

# Discovery Learning Center Policy Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to abide by all guidelines as set forth in the Discovery Learning Center Parent Handbook.

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Small Group Goals

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Listed below are the criteria we use for each different small group. Our staff does not use standardized tests to evaluate each child's progress. We believe that a teacher's intuition and observations is the most accurate & powerful developmental assessment tool available. Through our hands-on assessments of social interactions, art work & projects, we are able to evaluate overall development! The names of the small groups listed below are the most common group names used at DLC. If your child is in a differently named group, the children and teacher(s) in that group collectively decided on a new name.

## Small Group – The Squirrels (2 – 3 years old approximately)

### Motor Development

#### Gross Motor

- Large body movements
- Moving to music
- Hopping
- Begin Left/Right coordination
- Throwing and catching a ball

#### Fine Motor

- Tearing Paper
- Finger plays
- Finger paints
- Exploring tactile medias  
Playdough - glop/glupe  
Media trays – rice, etc.
- Sensory experiences
- Pre-scissor activities

#### Social/Emotional Development

- Using words to solve problems
- Encourage self expression
- Encourage self-help skills
- Introduce/increase awareness of positive social behaviors
- Develop cooperative play/sharing

#### Cognitive Development

- General – Development attention span, language development, memory experience
- Following 1-2 simple directions

- Develop/encourage verbal skills
- Increased vocabulary
- Exposure to written print in their environment
- Singing/rhyming
- Recognize the first letter of their name
- And/or recognize their whole name
- Begin sorting tasks
- Following/understanding directions
- Understanding spatial relationships: in/out, over/under, front/back, around/through, backwards/forwards, Inside/outside

#### Pre-Math

- Recognizing and naming primary shapes (circle, triangle, square, and rectangle)
- Primary colors – red, yellow, blue
- Recognition or assorted numbers
- Begin counting activities
- Work on one-to-one correspondence
- Sorting and classifying activities
- Color mixing
- Pre-math concepts (full, empty, half, inside, outside, under, over, etc.)

#### Memory/Visual Discrimination

- What's missing?
- Memory games
- Puzzles

#### Pre-Reading/Literacy



## Small Group – The Honeybees & Dragonflies (3 – 5 years old approximately)

### Motor Development

#### Gross Motor

- Increased laterality
- Increased coordination
- Mastering basic body movements
- Increased control of gross motor skills: Hopping, balancing on one foot, galloping, skipping, throwing, catching, etc.

#### Fine Motor

- Refine cutting skills
- Develop printing skills
- Strengthening use of left and right hands independently
- Following patterns
- Handling manipulatives

#### Social/Emotional Development

- Further interpersonal relationships
- Increased problem solving skills
- Encourage responsibility/self-help skills
- Understanding socially acceptable behaviors
- Acceptance of those who are different
- Development of frustration tolerance, impulse control and delay gratification
- Understanding cause & effect; if – then
- Enhancing a positive self esteem
- Encourage divergent thinking
- Cognitive Development
- General – Extending attention spans, listening & following instructions, memory, language/verbal skills, knowing first and last names by sight, phone number, address, city, parents' first names, etc.

#### Pre-Reading

- Knowledge of alphabet & phonetic sounds
- Develop stories using drawings
- Understanding concept of beginning-middle-end
- Extending left to right progression
- Extending verbal skills
- Matching words, pictures, letters and shapes
- Retell stories with accurate sequence of events.

#### Memory/Visual Discrimination

- Discriminate parts of a whole
- Find hidden pictures, letter, shape, etc.
- Complex memory games
- Recognizing visual clues
- Recognition of colors as well as blending colors
- Copying/acting out movements from memory

#### Pre-Math

- Recognition of complete shapes
- Ordering/classifying/sorting/sequencing
- Recognition of many numbers (0-20)
- Count to 10
- Introduce the concept of a pattern
- Continue concept of one to one correspondence
- Introduce concept of addition & subtraction
- Understand concepts such as full, empty, half, inside, outside, under, above, front, and back.
- Understand opposites

## Small Group - The Butterflies (Prekindergarten/approximately 4-6 years old)

### Learning & Development Guidelines

#### Language & Literacy

- Understand two-four step requests that are sequential but not necessarily related (e.g., “Please pick up the ball and then get your coat.”).
- Engages in conversations that develop a thought or an idea (e.g., tells about a past event, explains how something works).
- Plays with sounds of language in songs, rhymes, games, and stories (e.g., substitutes beginning sound of a friend’s name [“Lally” for “Sally”]; claps out sounds or rhythms of language; creates own rhyming words through songs, finger plays, chanting).
- Experiments with using more complex grammar and parts of speech (e.g., uses plural forms of nouns, such as *balls* or *fishes*; uses future or past tense; or uses pronouns such as *he*, *she*, *I*, or *you*).
- Knows some letter names.
- Understands that letters make up words (e.g., knows some of the letters in his or her name).
- Recognizes print in the environment (e.g.; recognizes signs around the room as labels for “blocks,” “drums,” or “books”).
- Recognizes own written name.
- Makes some letter-sound correspondences.
- Retells main events from a story in order.

#### Reading Concepts about Print

- “Read” books right-side-up and from front to back.
- Begin to understand that text and illustrations convey distinct information.

#### Phonemic Awareness

- Listen to and recite familiar poems and chants; increase awareness and use of rhyming words and alliteration.
- Participate in games and lessons involving separation or repetition of words and word sounds. Listen to and sign along with alphabet songs while following along in an illustrated book. Participates in activities that teach alphabet letter name.
- Clap in rhythms that mimic multisyllabic phrases.

#### Decoding and Word Recognition

- Match, sort, and trace letters; know initial of first name; recognize some other letters.
- Recognize own name (e.g., on cubby or name tag), names of friends; recognize letters in books; begin to point to highly familiar words in books.
- Know that certain pictures (icons) go with certain labels (words); know that different icons carry different meanings.

#### Vocabulary and Concept Development

- Have many opportunities to converse with adults and peers about a variety of people, objects, activities, event, and ideas in the environment; sort objects by category.
- Identify common objects in the environment. Regularly learn new vocabulary through activities, conversation, and teacher-guided instruction.

## The Butterflies (Prekindergarten/approximately 4-6 years old) continued

### Reading Comprehension

- Offer plausible predictions about story during the initial reading; predict the next events in a story after several reading; plan and carry out a sequence of actions in the classroom.
- Contribute relevant personal experiences and prior knowledge during storybook reading; tell (oral) stories about self and family, respond to teacher requests to relate personal knowledge and experience to text.

### Literary Response and Analysis

- Have many opportunities to hear interesting, culturally diverse stories read aloud; attend to storybook reading or storybook tapes; respond orally during storybook reading; draw pictures based on a story and talk about drawing; act out stories, spontaneously discuss stories.

### Writing Strategies

- Draw pictures to represent people, objects, events, or concepts (e.g. winter); make controlled and uncontrolled scribbles and name the scribbles or describe their meaning; make mock letter strings, letter groups, label pictures; write initial or whole name.
- Dictate stories about their illustrations.
- Create original stories including a beginning, middle, and end.

### Listening and Speaking

- Have many and varied opportunities in a supportive, stimulating environment to converse with adults and peers about topics of personal interest and importance and about topics beyond direct current experience.

### Mathematical Knowledge

- Count to ten
- Understand that number represents quantity (e.g., can get three apples out of a box)
- Enumerate small sets by subitizing (nonverbal counting of sets of four or fewer).
- Use and manipulate concrete objects
- Practice one-to-one correspondence
- Match sets
- Practice addition, subtraction, and division by using manipulative and other concrete objects (e.g., distributing a sack equitably; folding a paper in two equal parts).
- Make comparisons of a relative quantity
- Recognize attribute variance (e.g., color, shape size).
- Classify objects according to one characteristic (e.g., blue bears, red bears, or yellow bears).
- Begin to classify by multiple characteristics (e.g., from a group of mixed color and size of bears, sorts big blue bears and small bears).
- Demonstrate some pattern knowledge (match objects to established pattern, identify and describe patterns; distinguish patterns from non-patterns; use rhythm and repetition).
- Participate with teacher in the use of graphs and charts to represent and organize information.

- Understand abstract concepts of *some, all, none*.
- Employ reasoning strategies using number and geometric shapes (e.g., use objects or finger counting in addition, subtraction; construct objects using unit blocks).

### The Butterflies (Prekindergarten/approximately 4-6 years old) continued

#### Physical and Motor Competence

##### **Gross motor skills**

- Shows better balance and control.
- Speeds up and slows down.
- Runs and stops quickly.
- Avoids obstacles (e.g., moves about the room without bumping into objects).
- Climbs stairs without holding onto the railing.
- Pedals tricycle.
- Kicks a large ball.

##### **Fine Motor Skills**

- Shows increasing eye-hand coordination, strength, and control to perform fine motor skills.
- Manipulates two small objects at the same time (e.g., hammer, hole punch, scissors).
- Zips zippers.
- Fastens buttons.
- Cutting along a line.
- Writing with increased control.
- Lacing and weaving.

##### **Music Education**

- Learn to sing with others.
- Learn to respond rhythmically to music through creative movement instrumental expression.
- Learn to play simple instruments that do not require fine motor skills.
- Learn to develop attentive listening habits