Parent Handbook

The Learning Tree

Family Child Care Home

Year 2024-2025



The Learning Tree

11903 Rushworth Terrace

Germantown, MD 20874

Charlene Gooding, Director/Owner

**Parent Handbook**

The Learning Tree a licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) in region 5, (Montgomery County), by The Maryland State Department of Education (MDSE). Registration Number 255620.

To be licensed, FCCH’s must comply with the state policies and regulations for appropriate physical environment and safety, staff qualifications, supervisions and staff/child ratios, program activities and equipment, health, food and nutrition and administrative and record keeping requirements.

The Learning Tree was approved on 7/11/2019 to care for 8 children at one time. No more than 2 children under the age of 2 years may be in care at any time unless approved in advance by the Montgomery County Office of Child Care (OCC). The Certificate of Registration is permanently posted at the basement entrance (lower level).

This Parent Handbook is given to Parents/Guardian at the time of enrollment of their child/ren. The handbook is meant to acquaint the Parents/Guardian with The Learning Tree’s policies and procedures. We believe that provider-parent communication is vital for all aspects of our partnership. Please feel free to ask questions, provide feedback, freely express any concerns you may have regarding our partnership and any other issues discussed in this handbook. While the material contained in the handbook describes general policies and procedures, it does not necessarily address each and every specific circumstance.

The Learning Tree reserves the right to modify, discontinue, or add policies and procedures as is deems necessary and appropriate. Parents/Guardian with registered child/ren at the time will be notified and will receive a new copy of the handbook. In addition, Maryland child care regulations require that your child care provider should have a copy of the document “A Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care” for your inspection.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Learning Tree is a creative, fun and developmentally age appropriate licensed child care facility. Our educators recognize that teaching is about nurturing the child. Each child is unique in his/her own talents and capabilities and has to be developmentally ready to learn. Children learn best through play. It is an experience that allows a child to fully engage and promotes conversation, self esteem, social growth and development.

The Learning Tree is committed to giving your child their best early childhood learning experience full of wonder, explorations, discoveries, memories and more.

**Philosophy and Guiding Principles**

The program is designed to encourage and support the development of each child and to provide opportunities for self-exploration and discovery. Learning experiences are designed to stimulate the child's creative and problem solving abilities. Positive development of the child's image of self is of prime importance in the program and is a priority in all aspects of program planning.

The Learning Tree follows the guiding principles established in Healthy Beginnings when planning activities for young children. The following principles should be followed:

* *Children construct understanding through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.*
* *Learning is sequential, building on prior understandings and experiences.*
* *Learning proceeds at different rates in each area; children will show a range of skills and understandings in any one area of development.*
* *Learning in each area is interconnected. Young children learn best through integrated, meaningful experiences.*
* *Learning is embedded in a culture. Children learn best when their learning activities are rooted in a familiar cultural context.*
* *Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.*
* *All children have the potential to achieve with appropriate supports and instruction.*

**CURRICULUM GOALS:**

Our curriculum is a play-based, Reggio inspired program engaging the whole child in a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment. Although weekly themes and activities are in place, the children’s interests and needs are considered and lesson plans are adapted as needed. Our facility is designed with learning centers (art, blocks, dramatic play, etc) and a variety of developmentally age appropriate activities, some of which are teacher-directed while others are child-directed. The curriculum is designed to enhance and foster a child’s:

* Social-Emotional Development
* Physical Development
* Cognitive Development
* Language Development
* Self Help Development

**STAFF:**

Charlene Gooding, Director/Owner is a highly experienced individual in the field of Early Childhood Education. Charlene became an educator to children ages 6 weeks through Pre-K in the private sector in 2002. Charlene has acquired vast experience as an early childhood lead teacher at Friendship Cooperative Play, Bethesda Country Day School (Chesterbrook Academy), The Goddard School at King Farm and most recently at Washington Hebrew Congregation’s Edlavitch-Tyler Early Childhood Center (ET-ECC) in Washington, DC Toddler Program. Charlene has a BA in Anthropology from Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. Charlene is Certified Child Development Associate (CDA), CPR/First Aid certified, SIDS certified, Certified in Emergency and Disaster Preparedness for Child Care Providers and Infant & Toddler Development Curriculum Planning (45 hours), Food Service Manager License and is approved from the Office of Child Care (OCC) to provide care to children. Charlene continues to take courses designed to keep her skills up to date in the field of child development, education and with the Office of Child Care (OCC).

Louise Gooding, is approved from the Office of Child Care (OCC) as a Designated Substitute. Louise has an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education from Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and a BA in Elementary Education from The George Washington University Washington, DC.  Louise is CPR/First Aid certified and SIDS certified.  Louise continues to take courses designed to keep her skills up to date in the field of child development, education and with the Office of Child Care (OCC).

Ioanna Mantzouratos is approved from the Office of Child Care (OCC) as a Designated Substitute.  Ioanna is a graduate of The George Washington University with a BS in Exercise Science and a MS in Kinesiology from George Mason University. Ioanna is fluent in Greek.

The Director and designated substitute(s) have undergone the required state and federal health and background checks, in accordance with Maryland State law for registration as child care providers.

**ADMISSION:**

1. Meet the Director and read the Parent Handbook and “A Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care” to familiarize yourself with the home and the child care program.

2. Complete the following forms:

a. Child/ren Emergency Form

b. MD Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Immunization Certificate

c. MSDE Office of Child Care Health Inventory

d. Child Sleeping Arrangement Form

3. Sign your child care contract

4. Pay the first month’s tuition

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

The Learning Tree is open from 7:00 AM- 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

**ARRIVALS/DEPARTURES:**

Parents/Guardian are expected to arrive at, or after 7:00 am and escort their child/ren into The Learning Tree facility, sign in on the daily attendance sheet (a state requirement), record temperature and not leave the facility until the Director, or designated staff member has received their child/ren.

Parents/Guardian/Guardian must also sign out on the attendance sheet at pick up time (at, or before 5:30 pm).

A late charge fee of one dollar per minute will be charged for late pick-up, which has not been prearranged. These fees are due the same day they occur. A phone call is expected for any lateness at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled pick-up time.

**TUITION PAYMENT/RATES:**

**$375 per week x 52 weeks/12 months for 6 weeks to 5 years**

**$90 per day Drop-In Fee**

A two-week deposit is due when the child(ren) enrolls; this is **non-refundable** and will be applied to the last two weeks of child(ren) care, providing that there is a two-week written notice given.

Payment in full is expected on the Friday of each week in the form of a check, cash, credit card via Parent Portal *Submit Payment,* or money order made out to The Learning Tree. A late fee of $10 will be added if payment is not made by 5:00 pm on the day that payment is due. A $10 daily late fee will be charged every day thereafter. If payment is not received within one week, care will be terminated without further notice.

**RETURNED CHECK POLICY:**

When a tuition check is returned by the bank due to “insufficient funds,” a written notification will be mailed to the family. Ten business days are allotted to make repayment for the amount of the check plus a $30 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Payment should be made by money order to The Learning Tree, cash, credit card via Parent Portal *Submit Payment*, or Paypal*.* If payment is not made within 10 business days, collections procedures will apply.

**COLLECTION POLICY:**

If a monthly tuition payment is not paid within 30 days of its due date, The Learning Tree/Charlene Gooding, provider reserves the right to immediately terminate this contract without any prior notice. Clients will be responsible for the late payment, late fee and the one month notice after termination of child care. Clients will also be held responsible for all court, attorney and collection agency fees involved in collection of late payment(s), late fees and one month notice.

If the delinquent account remains unpaid for any reason, the account will also be reported to *Provider Watch,* a national child care credit reporting agency.

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:**

Parents are required to pay a portion of the tuition every Monday to The Learning Tree even if awarded child care vouchers. The child care vouchers do not cover the entire tuition amount and the amount of money for tuition is on a case by case basis for each family. Parents are responsible to pay the difference between the cost of tuition and the subsidy 10 payments. Weekly payments must be made even if you receive Child Care Aware funding or child care vouchers. Failure to pay on a weekly basis towards to tuition will result in termination from The Learning Tree.

**TERMINATION OF SERVICE:**

Provider reserves the right to remove a child/ren from The Learning Tree after a two (2) weeks written notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) is given. If the provider believes that continued care may be detrimental to the child/ren, or the program, an earlier termination date will be discussed.

Likewise, parent(s)/guardian(s) must give a two (2) week written notice before the withdrawal of their child/ren. Payment is still required during this two (2) week period. Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the option to pay the full fee(s) in lieu of the two (2) week written notice.

**PANDEMIC CLAUSE:**

Full payment is due in the event of a public, national health emergency, or government/state/locally mandated shut down to keep your child/ren’s spot.

**CLOSINGS/SCHOOL DELAYS:**

The Learning Tree follows Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) snow/ inclement weather policy. When school is closed, The Learning Tree is closed. I will open for school delays, early dismissals and in-service days. Parents will be notified of any closures/delays/early dismissals via text, Brightwheel and email messages by 6:30 am.

The Learning Tree reserves the right to adjust/reassess snow school closures/delays/early dismissals as needed for the safety of students and families.

During operating hours, students and families’ safety are of great importance to The Learning Tree. I request that you use extra care and caution on the school premise when entering and exiting your vehicle with your child/ren.

Tuition refunds/credits are not reimbursed for inclement weather, power outages, closures, or delays.

**HOLIDAYS:**

***The Learning Tree is closed in observance of the following holidays:***

***NEW YEARS EVE, NEW YEARS DAY, MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY, PRESIDENT’S DAY, GOOD FRIDAY, MEMORIAL DAY, FOURTH of JULY, JUNETEETH, LABOR DAY, THANKSGIVING DAY, THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS EVE, and CHRISTMAS DAY.***

**PROVIDER SICK/PERSONAL DAYS:**

Working with exposure to many families and especially children, it is expected that I will become ill occasionally. Therefore, I reserve the right to take up to (5) paid sick/personal days per calendar year.

These days are also used for continuing education classes (CPR, Pediatric First Aid, etc.) in order to keep our childcare license in good standing. Parents will be given as much advance notice as possible.

Parents/Guardian will be notified as soon as possible of any personal, family illness, or an extreme emergency

The Director is entitled to 2 weeks (10 days) of paid vacation in a calendar year. I will give a minimum of 2 weeks’ notice before any closure when possible so you can have time to arrange alternative care for that period.

The Learning Tree will be closed when the Director is sick, or on vacation. It is the parents/guardian(s) responsibility to obtain substitute care on such days. Full tuition rates apply.

***TUITION IS DUE WHETHER OR NOT YOUR CHILD/REN ATTENDS AS AGREED UPON IN YOUR CONTRACT*.**

**IMMUNIZATIONS:**

Immunizations must be current before admissions and must be kept up to date. The child/ren must have all physical and medical forms completed before entering The Learning Tree.

**CHILD’S ABSENCES:**

The parent/guardian should inform the provider if the child/ren is to be absent for whatever reason, or late due to appointments, etc. No reimbursements will be given in the event of child/ren’s absence(s) that are not the provider’s responsibility.

**HAND WASHING:**

To minimize the spread of infectious disease and bacteria, ALL staff, students, parents/guardians are required to wash their hands with soap and warm running water upon arriving at The Learning Tree. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival. Together we can eliminate the spread of germs.

Other times your child/ren (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

* After coming indoors from the playground/outdoors
* Before and after art
* After each diaper change or using the toilet
* Before and after meal times
* Before and after using the sensory table/materials
* Before and after administering medication
* After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood, vomit, etc.)

**ILLNESS AND INJURY:**

Our first priority at The Learning Tree is to provide a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. Family Day Care Regulations (COMAR 13A.15.11.02) prohibits providers for caring for a child/ren who exhibits symptoms of acute illness.

The provider can and will refuse to admit the child/ren exhibiting symptoms of illness. The child/ren must remain at home for 24 hours after symptoms have resolved before they can return to The Learning Tree free of fever and fever medication. If a child/ren has been out sick a doctor’s note from a licensed health care professional granting permission for the child/ren to return after an illness must be submitted to The Learning Tree.

* Temperature of more than 100.0 F
* Nausea or vomiting
* Seizures
* Diarrhea
* Pale or flushed face
* Headache
* Persistent cough
* Earache
* Thick yellowish discharge from nose
* Sore throat
* Rash or infection of the skin
* Red, crusty or pink eyes
* Loss of energy or decrease in activity

Should your child/ren become ill at The Learning Tree, the child must be removed from the classroom in order to limit exposure of other children to communicable diseases. Parent/guardian/emergency contact will be notified and must pick up the child/ren as soon as possible to protect the health of the remaining children and staff.

In the event that parent(s)/guardian(s), or other persons named in the contract cannot be reached, Charlene Gooding/The Learning Tree is hereby authorized to take whatever action deemed necessary, in her best judgment, for the health of the child/ren.

If a serious illness, or injury occurs that requires emergency care, the Director will call 911/ambulance and then notify the parent/guardian listed on the emergency form. Charlene Gooding/The Learning Tree, The Learning Tree will not be held financially responsible for the emergency care and/or the transportation of your child/ren.

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease (Common Cold, Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye, Diarrhea, Fifth Disease, Hand, Foot and Mouth/Coxsackie, Influenza, Lice, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis/Whooping Cough, Pinworms, Ringworm, Streptococcal/Strep Throat, Staphylococcal/Staph Infection) families will receive email notification of the illness (excluding the child/ren’s name). If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately. In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the Director will notify the health department.

The Learning Tree requires a doctor’s note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child/ren is not contagious/symptom free after an illness.

**COVID-19:**

Any child (or child’s family household member) exhibiting any of the following symptoms will be sent home:

* Cough
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Fatigue
* Muscle or body aches
* Headache
* New loss of taste or smell
* Sore throat
* Congestion, runny nose, nasal discharge
* Nausea or vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Temperature of 100.0 F degrees or higher

Additionally, any child (or child’s family household member) who has come into contact with, tested positive for, or are awaiting test results **MAY NOT RETURN** to The Learning Tree without written consent from a licensed physician clearing the indivdiual(s) of all signs of illness, a negative test result and after the required

14-day self quarantine period has ended.

***Tuition will be waived under these circumstances***

The Learning Tree/Director are obligated to inform The Director of the Office of Childcare (OCC), Maryland Department of Health and enrolled families of any such cases.

The Learning Tree/Director reserves the right to amend these restricitinons at any time as updates, recommendations, mandates and guidelines are provided by the Govenor’s office, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), The Director of the Office of Childcare (OCC) and/or Maryland Superintendent of Schools**,** Maryland Department of Healthand The Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

**FACE COVERINGS:**

Per Montgomery County guidelines, indoor face coverings for children (ages 2 and up) are optional.

[https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/face-coverings.html](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/face-coverings.html" \t "_blank)

**VACCINATIONS:**

Drop offs for child/ren receiving vaccinations/flu shots, etc. will not be permitted without a doctor’s note of clearance from a licensed health care professional granting permission for the child/ren to return to The Learning Tree.

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**MINOR BUMPS AND SCRAPES:**

I have made every effort to keep your child/ren safe through supervision and child/ren proofing. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid and if an emergency injury, or illness occurs, you will be contacted immediately. All staff at The Learning Tree is trained in First Aid and CPR.

**REPORTABLE CHILD INCIDENT FORMS:**

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at The Learning Tree using a Reportable Child Incident Form as required by the state of Maryland. Biting incidents are treated as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report is completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten (maintaining name confidentiality). The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child’s permanent file.

**BITING POLICY:**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at The Learning Tree to prevent and stop biting.

After all steps have been taken to address the biting behavior, and it is deemed in the best interest of the child and other children attending The Learning Tree then the child will be removed from the center. The Director will work with the parent(s) to help develop a contingency/transitional plan and assist with referrals to appropriate child care services.

**SUNSCREEN/BUG REPELLENT:**

Between the months of April 1st - September 30th, all families will be required to supply sunscreen for their child/ren for outdoor activities. Sunscreen MUST be applied prior to coming to The Learning Tree. Sunscreen will be re-applied by a staff member prior to outdoor activities.

A signed authorization must be on file before sunscreen can be applied to a child/ren.

Parents are encouraged to apply insect repellant to their child before arriving at The Learning Tree.

**DIAPER CREAM:**

A signed authorization form must be on file before diaper cream can be applied to a child/ren.

**MEDICATIONS:**

It is agreed that the parent/guardian will administer the initial dosage of any medication for an attending child/ren. Subsequent dosages will be administered according to written direction by the parent/guardian.

For ALL prescription medications, the parent/guardian must provide a written prescription signed by the physician which states the name of the child/ren, the name of the medication, the dosage, the time(s) it is to be administered and the physician’s signature. All prescribed medications **MUST** be in their original containers and shall be clearly labeled with the child/ren’s name, the name of the medication, the dosage and times to be administered along with the physician’s name and telephone number.

For ALL non-prescribed medications, the parental/guardian **MUST** complete the Maryland State School Medication Administration Authorization Form for each “treatment”/”illness.”

**Please provide approved non-prescription medicines and dosages for your child/ren**

**Medication Dosage Date**

**Medication Dosage Date**

**CHILD/REN with SPECIAL NEEDS:**

All children have special needs, but if your child has been diagnosed with special developmental or health care needs, please consider sharing this information. We welcome all children but want to plan in such a way that all children can fully participate in all activities. To help with this, we ask that you share a copy of the child’s IEP, IFSP, or Asthma/Allergy Plan. Therapists and other special caregivers are welcome with parental permission.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY:**

Children at The Learning Tree will be treated with love and respect. They will be guided in a firm, but loving manner with positive reinforcement. At The Learning Tree discipline is not achieved by punishment but by nurturing, educating and encouraging self-control and responsibility. The main objective is to help children understand and observe self-respect, respect of others and respect for equipment, tools and the environment. Children will not be given a “time out,” deprived of food at any time, or be restricted from any activities of the program.

**The Learning Tree** uses positive behavior techniques to help children learn how to behave in appropriate manners:

* When acting in inappropriate ways, children will be “redirected” to positive activities.
* Choices are offered throughout the day, developed to fully engage the child’s interest and attention.
* Problem solving tools are offered “in the heat of the moment.”
* After any incidents, children are offered the opportunity and options to revisit and reflect on what they could do differently next time.
* Rules are simple and consist and revisited throughout the day. As new rules are needed, children are involved in setting them.

To ensure the safety of the staff and other children, inappropriate and disruptive behavior such as; intentional hitting, biting, or screaming will be documented and the parents will be contacted and asked to have a meeting with the Director and their child to work collaboratively toward encouraging positive behavior. If the child’s behavioral problems cannot be resolved the child may be dismissed from the program.

**REDIRECTION:**

This strategy will be used most frequently when working with young children at The Learning Tree. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, staff will quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity using positive words, tone and guidance. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now.” “You've been riding the bike for a long time and now it’s Joey’s turn.”

**SUPPLIES/CLOTHING:**

Parents/Guardian are responsible for supplying and labeling:

* Bottles, Formula, Baby Food
* Disposable Diapers & Wipes
* Three full sets of extra clothing (to include an extra pair of shoes) seasonally appropriate
* A small blanket & crib sheet for rest/nap time
* A family photo & individual child photo
* Water bottle

**MEALS/SNACKS:**

The Learning Tree is a nut-friendly facility. Foods containing nut products are prohibited. Provider will provide a healthy breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon snack with whole milk (ages 1-2), 1% milk (ages 2+) and water in accordance with the Child Care Food Program (CACFP).

A ready to eat lunch in a labeled lunch bag (**no glass dishes, please**) is to be provided by the Parents/Guardian(s)/guardian(s) should you so desire.

If your child/ren has a food allergy, or a restricted diet please notify the Director in writing at the time of enrollment. The parent is responsible for providing the child/ren’s special diet, making sure all items are labeled and dated with the child/ren’s full name.

**INFANTS:**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will provide formula/breast milk and baby foods/snacks until you choose for them to eat snacks provided by The Learning Tree.

**NAP/QUIET TIME:**

All full-time child/ren nap/rest each day from 1-3 pm as mandated by the state of Maryland on provided mats/pack-n-play. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. Children will be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest. Infants will nap according to his/her needs.

Parents/Guardian will provide nap materials (crib sheet, blanket, etc.) for their child/ren to comfortably rest.

**POTTY TRAINING:**

When your child/ren is ready and exhibits signs of readiness, I will assist in the potty training process with the understanding that it will only work if we all work together (i.e. consistency at home/school). Clothing should be easy to manage and encourage self-help skills. I also require that each child/ren have 3 complete sets of seasonally appropriate extra clothes (to include shoes) that will remain at The Learning Tree. Heavily soiled undergarments will be disposed of.

**COMMUNICATION:**

Parents/Guardian and teacher communication is vital to the success of your child/ren. Daily updates of your child/ren’s day will be provided to parents/guardian in the form of daily communication, pictures, emails and Brightwheel. Vital information will be relayed via a phone call during appropriate times.

In the event that you may have additional questions, or concerns related to the progress of your child/ren please schedule a convenient time outside of normal business hours to discuss further with the Director.

**PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

Conferences are held over a two-week period twice a year in December and May. Conferences are 20 minutes (one conference per day). A signup sheet will be generated to schedule a conference date and time; this signup sheet will be shared with parents through Google Docs and/or Brightwheel.

**ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS:**

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child. Assessment portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. When a child leaves The Learning Tree the assessment portfolio will be given to the family.

**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

The Learning Tree ask parents/guardians to come celebrate their child/ren’s birthday with a special pillar candle, book, story and healthy fruit snack (**no baked goods/cakes/cupcakes, please**) to mark the event. Please check with the Director regarding school allergies.

**VISITORS:**

Received authorization form at enrollment

**IMAGES:**

Received authorization form at enrollment

**SCHOOL CALENDAR:**

Received with enrollment packet

**SNACK MENU:**

Received with enrollment packet

**DAILY SCHEDULE:**

Received with enrollment packet

**FIELD TRIPS AND WALKS:**

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program at The Learning Tree and will be taken periodically. To enrich curriculum experiences and teach children about their community, we will take walks throughout Crawford Farm and go to places surrounding the neighborhood.

Parents/Guardians will be informed in advance of any trips off campus and are always welcome to participate. Your permission for your child to participate in walking excursions is part of this agreement.

The Learning Tree will follow state ratios for field trips, carry first aid equipment and emergency forms and a cell phone at all times.

A child may be excluded from participation in a field trip for safety, health, or disciplinary reasons at the discretion of the Director.

**SMOKING**:

The Learning Tree is a non-smoking facility during business hours (7:00 am-5: 30 pm M-F). Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vaping etc. are strictly prohibited on the premises (including the front driveway, outdoor play areas and all indoor areas) during these hours. Please inform spouses and those on your pick-up list about the policy.

**PARKING:**

Kindly respect the neighbors’ home parking spaces and avoid blocking their driveways when parking.  
  
Please feel free to park in our driveway, in front of our mailbox, or around the tree.

**PETS:**

For the safety of our students, please refrain from bringing your pets onto school property.

**OPEN DOOR POLICY:**

While your child/ren is in my care, you may always feel free to stop by and check on your child/ren during normal business hours. Please keep in mind that that child/ren may want to leave with you when dropping in, or calling. There may be times when I am unable to get to the phone (diaper changing, bottle feeding, etc.). If the phone goes unanswered, please leave a message that I will promptly return.

**MANDATED REPORTER:**

As a licensed childcare provider, I am required under Maryland State Regulations to notify the appropriate authorities if I, the provider, suspect that a child/ren has been physically, or sexually abused and/or neglected.

**GUIDE to REGULATED CHILD/REN CARE:**

The Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care was received at enrollment.

**AUTHORIZED PERSONS:**

To ensure the safety of your child/ren, only you, or the persons listed in your contract may pick up your child/ren. Phoning me to let me know someone other than yourself will be picking up your child/ren is permitted. I will require a photo ID to verify such person(s)…**NO EXCEPTIONS**. All persons authorized to pick up a child/ren must be at least 16 years old.

**CUSTODY CASES:**

I must have a copy of the court order recognizing the parent who has legal custody of the child/ren, as well as visitation schedules. Otherwise, I will have no choice except to release the child/ren to his/her parent.

**SAFETY DRILLS:**

The Learning Tree will conduct monthly fire drills in accordance with state requirements. ALL staff are trained on The Learning Tree’s emergency procedures and evacuation plan. Evacuation routes are posted at both emergency exits of the facility.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN:**

In accordance with state regulations, The Learning Tree has an emergency plan, which includes procedures for evacuating the facility. The plan is posted near the two exit doors in the day care area of the home. Depending on the type of emergency, the child/ren will be transported to either the neighborhood site, or to the out-of-neighborhood site.

The neighborhood site is the front yard of the house directly across from The Learning Tree.

11904 Rushworth Terrace

Germantown, MD 20874

The out-of-neighborhood site is:

Covenant Village Senior Housing

18889 Waring Station Road

Germantown, MD 20874

**The Director will immediately contact local authorities and the Parents/Guardian if an evacuation plan is executed.**

**FORMS:**

All required state and county child/ren care forms must be returned prior to your child/ren’s start date. **Forms attached.**

**TRIAL PERIOD:**

Your child/ren’s adjustment is important to all of us. It is, therefore, agreed that a two (2) week trial period will exist. At the end of this period the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the provider will discuss the child/ren’s care. At this time, either party may terminate care.

**ACKNOWLEDMENT OF RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK**

**I/We**

Acknowledge that I/we have read and received a copy of The Learning Tree Parent Handbook 2024-2025 I/we understand and agree to all provisions written in it and shall at this time, enter into this agreement with Charlene Gooding/The Learning Tree for the care of my/our child/ren and with the understanding that we shall work together on behalf of the child/ren.

This contract is in effect until a change is mutually agreed upon in writing, or upon termination of care.

Parent/Guardian Date

Parent/Guardian Date

Charlene Gooding, Director/Owner Date

Revised 1/2024