**Parent Handbook**

****

**Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy**

**312 W Washington St.**

**Hartford City, IN 47348**

**765-302-8671**

**hlelc.gmc.hc@gmail.com**

**August 2023**

**Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**PROGRAM POLICY**

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy is under the mission and outreach of Grace Methodist Church. The learning academy is an unlicensed Registered Ministry with the Indiana Family Social Services Administration and the State Fire Marshall. We have met the health and safety standards to achieve a Level 3 in the Paths to QUALITY.

**Vision:**

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy is focused on caring for and developing a love of learning in a Christian atmosphere and a readiness for kindergarten that emphasizes social skills, academic preparedness, emotional and spiritual development of the child.

**Philosophy**

* Children’s play is important to their development.
* Children are provided with the opportunity to play, share and learn with other children in a safe, loving Christian environment with an atmosphere of acceptance and warmth.
* Parents are supported in the difficult but rewarding task of child rearing through the teaching staff, the church and parent events ( special speakers (in-person and/or virtual), educational readings (online and/or handouts), Family Movie Night, etc.) throughout the school year.
* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy responds to the needs of the community for quality care and education of children.

**Goals**

* To provide a healthy, nurturing, and safe environment
* To accept, respect, and appreciate each child and family
* To provide age appropriate materials and equipment that supports children’s learning in a fun and interesting way
* To encourage the physical development of large motor skills through outdoor and indoor play as well as fine motor development through manipulative toys, blocks, and puzzles.
* To encourage creativity by offering experiences in music, art, and literature
* To encourage interest in language through games, stories, and conversation
* To partner with parents in the care and teaching of their children.

**Curriculum (L3, 8.2)**

The daily curriculum is structured so that children learn the skills they need to enter kindergarten in a Christian environment. The curriculum is based on child development and appropriate practice and provides for the various ages, ability levels and developmental stages of the children (L3, 8). The staff is in constant contact with the kindergarten teachers in the school system to make sure that the curriculum meets the standards for kindergarten preparation. Children learn from a Bible curriculum as well as during chapel times with the church pastor. Prayer takes place at the beginning each day, before mealtimes and at any other time that a need arises ( i.e. hearing/e=seeing the firetrucks go on a call).

**Screen Time Policy**

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy understands that the amount of time children spend on screens impacts their health in many ways. Too much screen time can keep children from being physically active and playing with peers. Because of this, we are committed to limiting screen time in our program. We believe that limiting screen time will help children be more physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy. By limiting screen time at HLELA, we will help the children in our program get more physical activity, develop social skills, and learn school-readiness skills through active play and hands-on learning.

**Availability & Daily Practices**

* Televisions, tablets, smart phones, and computers are not visible to children in classrooms. They are either covered or stored out of sight when they are not in use by the staff members for parent communication purposes or for additional learning .
* Screen time is limited to use for music and movement (physical activity), yoga (emotional and mental health) and additional learning (i.e., virtual tours, informational programs, author visits, etc.). We offer 30 minutes, or less, of screen time each day for children 3 years old and older.
* When we use television shows or videos in our program, they are always educational and commercial free. Educational shows and videos are age appropriate and support children’s learning goals.
* If screen time is being used, teachers are talking to children about what they are seeing and learning. Screen time is never unsupervised nor used in place of personal teaching. It is an extension of the learning experience.
* There will be occasional special days (i.e., pajama days, parties, etc.) when the children may be permitted to watch a movie just for fun, but it will be not more than once a quarter and, most certainly, not a daily practice.

**Discipline Policy (L2, 10.3)**

Children are small, tough, exasperating, interesting, and loveable. To be “good” with children, we watch each face and listen to each voice. We observe what each child is like, how each is feeling, how each child plays, and moves around. We get to know the weaknesses and strengths of each child and of the group. This is how good discipline begins.

The word “discipline” is derived from the word “disciple,” someone who follows the teachings of another. Discipline means learning. It does not mean punishment, tears, or humiliation. It means a chance to learn how to live in a social world. Discipline is not something adults do to children. It is something they do with children.

The goals of discipline are self-control, responsibility, and self-discipline. Children need help in controlling their behavior. Most important, they need to become responsible for their own behavior and develop self-control.

Teachers are most likely to achieve the goals of discipline when they respond to the cause of behaviors as well as to the behaviors themselves. We ask, “why” silently before reacting/responding.

Teachers may utilize a variety of discipline techniques to meet the needs of different situations:

* Let children make some decisions and choices – one good way to teach responsibility is to give the child as much responsibility as possible.
* Give reasons for rules – understanding the reasons for rules make it easier to remember and follow them.
* Be consistent in our language and behavioral response to children – consistent behavior by adults facilitates development of inner control through modeling.
* Remove children from situations they can’t handle – if a child is too young to understand, or there is no way to change the cause, it may be possible to change the situation.
* Redirect children’s behavior – often there is a way to let children do something in a better place or safer way.
* Let children learn the consequences of their actions – experience is the best teacher.

Teachers **WILL NOT** humiliate or demean a child in any form, verbally or physically. Such actions will be cause for immediate dismissal. No punitive action toward children will be tolerated including slapping, hitting, and/or spanking. The return of negative behavior, such as biting back, is also not acceptable. Children do not like those moments when they are out of control. They need adults, at those times, to firmly, with gentleness, exert control. Returning negative behavior deepens frustration. Firmly holding and gently verbalizing, calms, and fosters control.

**Safety and Emergency Plans of Action (L2, 10.5)**

* Children will never be left alone or unsupervised.
* There will be a minimum of two staff members present during the hours of operation.
* Each employee is certified in CPR and First Aid yearly.
* Fire evacuation and severe weather plans will be posted in each area that is used by the children.
* Fire drills will be held monthly and at varying times. A record of drills is kept in the office.
* Tornado drills will be held during the tornado months.
* Lock-down drills will be held periodically.
* In the event of an emergency when evacuation is necessary, the children of Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will be taken to the house or parking lot directly across the street from the church by way of walking.
* Parents will then be called and informed of when to pick up their children.

**Safe Conditions Policies**

**Transportation Safety Policy (L2, 10.7)**

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will only provide transportation to field trips for their own family members. There is no other vehicle that may be used to transport children that have no other adult attending the field trips with them.

If a parent chooses to permit a staff member, which is a friend, to transport their child in their absence, a permission slip will be signed as well as a waiver of responsibility for any accidents for Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy and Grace Methodist Church. The staff member will be responsible for that child for the duration of the field trip. The staff member will have a current driver’s license and vehicle insurance.

**Safe Conditions Policy**

The following steps will be taken to ensure that children are safe while at Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy. Children will be actively supervised with the required number of qualified adults (adults who have completed a comprehensive criminal history check, drug screen and negative TB test and have completed all required trainings). Our learning academy will not care for children in areas that are being remodeled, repaired, or painted. The director is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces, including walls, floors, ceilings, equipment, toys, and furnishings, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances.

The learning academy will take the following steps to maintain the facility:

1. Clean the facility daily.
2. Keep the facility in a sanitary condition always.
3. Sanitize toys, furniture, and other equipment used by children, daily, weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
4. Wash all soiled items prior to sanitization.

Child Abuse Protection

* The director and each employee of the learning academy are mandated by law to receive Child Abuse Detection and Prevention training.
* The director and each employee of the learning academy are required by law to immediately notify the local child protection agency if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected.

**Parent/Guardian Communication (L2:8, 10.6)**

* Parents of children in the program will have daily opportunities at morning drop off and pick up to discuss the events of his/her child’s day. Written communication may be in your child’s backpack or handed directly to you as well.
* Parents may also receive and/or send communication to the director and staff through the communication application brightwheel, which is a free download to a computer and/or phone.
* Family conferences will take place, for all children twice per year, as requested. Assessment information will be sent home and appointments will be set up for face-to-face, virtual or phone conference. Topics discussed will include your child’s interests, development, strengths, and areas of individual need.
* Special conferences may be requested by the director or child’s parents, as needed, for behavior and/or other developmental issues.
* To further foster whole family relationships, parents or guardians of children enrolled at Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy are welcome to visit at any time, by scheduling a time that works best for both the teachers and them. Parents/guardians must follow all safety policies during their visit.

**ADMISSION/ENROLLMENT/TERMINATION POLICIES**

**Eligibility for Enrollment**

* Children that are 2 years old are eligible to be enrolled at Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy, provided enrollment space exists.
* Children, ages 3-5, with birthdates prior to August 1, are also eligible to be enrolled at Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy, provided enrollment space exists.
* We prefer children to be potty trained (3-5 year olds) but understand that all children develop at their own pace. We will work with the child, and parents, on a training plan for those that are not fully trained or have yet to start training (2 year olds).
* We enroll children who are at a stage of growth and development, which enables them to benefit from the educational program.
* The parent is responsible for submitting all enrollment forms for the child’s attendance.
* We cannot provide service to any child whose needs cannot be met or whose behavior endangers other children.
* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy is committed to supporting all children and families but realizes there are children who may be better served through the support of other local agencies. Parents will be notified if concerns arise.

**Caring for Children with Special Needs (L3, 11.1)**

Childcare programs must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities.

* Children with special needs will be accepted into our day care under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
* All families will be treated with dignity and respect for their individual needs and/or differences.
* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families in the program.
* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will ensure all health forms and other important information regarding the individualized needs of the child will be completed by the health care provider and/or other providers for the child.
* Children with special needs will be educated in the least restrictive environment as possible. To accomplish this, Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy may work in coordination with other agencies and/or health care providers as needed, including, but not limited to, Blackford County Schools, Blackford County Mental Health and Child Care Resource and Referral. No contact with outside organizations will be made without written parental consent. Inclusion of staff on IEP (Individualized Education Program) and IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) meetings is desired to ensure the childcare program provides the most supportive and least restrictive environment.
* It is important that parents keep Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy apprised of any changes or needs that their child may have regarding their special need.

**Enrollment Forms**

* Forms to be completed and submitted to the director prior to admission include:
1. Registration Agreement
2. First Aid Permission / Emergency Info
3. Social Media and Photo Release
4. Safe Food Transportation Agreement
5. Child Information Form
6. Parent Notice
7. Medication Consent (if needed)
8. Proof of immunizations and a physical exam (well child check-up)
9. Handbook Acknowledgement Signature Form

**Waiting List**

* In cases when enrollment space is unavailable, children will be placed on a waiting list.
* Enrollment will then take place as space becomes available. **Priority will be given to families with currently enrolled children.**

**Enrollment Options**

* A full-time enrollee is defined as a child attending five days per week and is eligible for the weekly rate. The weekly rate includes preschool.
* There is no part-time option available at this time. Full tuition is expected, even if your child does not attend for the full five days.

Registration Fee

* Upon registration the family must pay the $50 registration fee. This fee is non-refundable should the family decide to not attend.

**Termination of Care (L2, 10.14)**

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy reserves the right to terminate childcare for the following reasons (but not limited to):

* Failure to pay invoices as they are due
* Failure to complete required forms, as required
* Lack of parental cooperation
* Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property by a child and/or parent that is not corrected by an improvement plan set by the director and the parents.
* Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
* False information given by parent either verbally or in writing
* Disciplinary reasons as outlined previously

Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy also understands that life circumstances may arise that would require families to remove a child from our care. In that instance, we request the following:

* Two-week, advance written notice stating when care will be ending
* Payment for the last two weeks of care
* If the child is pulled without a two-week notice, payment is to be made immediately for the final weeks.

**OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

**Advisory Board**

* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy has an Advisory Board made up of members chosen by the director, current advisory board members and Grace Methodist Church Council.
* The Board meets monthly to review the Director’s report, the financial report, enrollment information, and other information as presented by the academy director.
* The Advisory Board assists the director in areas of policy, budget preparation and management, staffing decisions, and other facility operations.

**Hours of Operation (l2, 10.8)**

* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Special Holidays**

* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will close for the following special holidays: New Year’s Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. There may be additional days throughout the year when Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will close (weather related), but notice will be given whenever possible.
* There will be no charge for the special holiday closings.

**School Breaks**

* The childcare will remain open for all school breaks (Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break and Spring break based on the Blackford County school calendars).
* There will be preschool review during those times due to lower student numbers.
* School-age care is currently not offered during scheduled school breaks.

**EMERGENCY POLICIES**

**Bad Weather**

* Helen Lieber Early Learning Academy will make every effort to remain open in bad weather. We will close when Blackford County declares a Level 2 Orange “Watch” or when it is otherwise deemed necessary (i.e. extremely low student numbers, power outage, and/or for the safety of staff and families). A decision to close is a difficult one to make and there are occasions when the facility will be open during a Level 2 Orange “Watch” if the director feels the roads are safe enough for travel. Parents will be notified through the parent communication app, our private Facebook page and/or texts.

**County School Delays and Closings**

The childcare **DOES NOT** follow the county school’s delays and closings. We will be open for the regular hours (6am-6pm) even if the county schools are delayed or closed.

**Public Water and Sewage – Loss of Electricity Only**

There are state guidelines for the loss of utilities.

* If the facility loses electricity, as long as the water and sewage are working properly, the building will remain open until the parents arrive to pick up children. Parents will be notified so they can make the decision on whether to leave the children or pick them up until the electricity is back on if a time has been determined. If the electricity is not back on by the next day, **the building will remain closed.**
* If the public water and/or sewage is not working properly parents will be notified to pick their children up and the facility will remain closed until the utilities have been restored.

**Relocation of Children in the Event of Building Emergency**

* In the event of a major emergency, such as a fire or other event that would make the building unsafe, the children will be relocated to a safe facility.
* The children will be moved to the white house across Cherry Street, depending on what the emergency is and where emergency officials may ask them to stay to be as safe as possible.
* Parents will be notified that they must pick their children up immediately from the home.

**CHILD ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

**Arrivals and Departures**

* Drop off is 6:00-8:15 am at the Cherry Street Entrance. Pick up is whenever the parent arrives. Staff will meet the family at the door for both. The child may be picked up at the playground area if the children are outside as well.
* Parents on state vouchers may enter the building and check their child in/out using the machine in the director’s office. Staff will take the child to their class and bring them to the parent for pick up.
* We ask that children arrive no later than 8:15, as we start our preschool day at that time with music and movement. Preschool begins at approximately 8:30. If your child is to arrive later 8:15-8:30, please notify the director, with the understanding that your child may miss some preschool lesson time. Appointments (i.e. doctor, dentist, etc.) are the exception to this. Again, please contact the director so he/she is aware of an approximate arrival time.
* Parents/guardians **are required** to sign children in and out each day they are in attendance through the parent communication app (brightwheel). This is a free downloadable app.
* For your child’s protection, only persons authorized by the parent/guardian are permitted to take the child from the facility.
* Parents/guardians must list the names of anyone allowed to pick up the child as well as the names of anyone denied permission on the Emergency Information Sheet **(L2, 10.1).**
* Individuals listed in the child’s file may be asked for photo identification to confirm their identity.
* If someone other than the listed individuals will be picking up your child, you must notify the director. Staff will ask for photo identification before the child is handed over to them.
* In the case of court ordered custody decisions that would affect drop off or pickup, documentation must be on file.
* **Under no circumstances will the facility allow a child to leave without these provisions.**
* Please notify the Director if, due to some emergency, you are unable to pick up your child on time.
* Overtime charges of $5 per 5 minutes will apply after the scheduled pick up time of 6:00 p.m. **(L2, 10.9).**
* If a child has not been picked up by 30 minutes after their scheduled pick up time, and there has been no contact by the parent/guardian, or another authorized person, the local Department of Child Services will be called with a report of child neglect

**Reporting Children’s Absences**

* HLELA staff plan the day based upon the number of children expected. We ask that parents notify the Director as early as possible if their child is going to be absent, late, or if they plan to pick up their child unusually early. This can be done by text or messaging in the brighwheel communication app.

**Tobacco, alcohol, firearms and Drugs**

HLELA prohibits the use of tobacco, alcohol, firearms and drugs on the premises while children are in our care. The entire policy may be read at the entrance to the building. A copy of the policy may also be requested at any time.

**PAYMENT AND FEE SCHEDULE (L2, 10.10)**

**\*\*All tuition payments are due weekly, regardless of your child’s attendance. Payments may be made by cash, check (made out to HLELA) or online through the brightwheel communication app. HLELA reserves the right to change these fees with a 30 to 60-day notice. \*\***

**Childcare Fees**

* 2 yr old classroom:
	+ $145 per week (five days with preschool included)
* 3- 5 year old classrooms:
	+ $135 per week (five days with preschool included)

\***The payment remains the same whether the child is in attendance the full five days or a portion of the week.\***

**Fees for Families on Subsidy (i.e. CCDF or ON My Way Pre-k)**

 Families are responsible for the portion of the weekly fee not covered by the subsidy (co-

 pay). Your child is required to be in attendance per your agreement with the subsidy.

 You are responsible for checking them in and out (swiping card) each day as well. If they

 will not be in attendance, you may enter their day/days as personal days. If you do not

 swipe daily, or catch up on the swipes Friday of the week your child attended, they may not

 attend until their attendance is caught up.

**Other Fees**

 $10 late payment fee (assessed on Monday) per week with a maximum of $40 per month

 $7 returned check fee (Subject to change, based on the bank charges)

 $5 each 5 minutes after closing time, if the child has not been picked up

**Billing**

* Invoices will be sent by brightwheel each week. Payments are due Friday of each week.
* If the bill is unpaid by Friday at 6:00 p.m., a late fee of $10 will be assessed each Monday there is an outstanding balance, with a maximum of $40 per month.
* Any late fees will be added to the balance and included on the next invoice, if not paid in the payment.
* There will be no charge for holidays or other events (i.e. pandemic) when HLELA is closed.
* If the account becomes 2 weeks overdue, the child’s enrollment will be suspended, and not allowed to attend until the bill is paid.
* Billing will continue during this time.
* If the bill is not paid within two weeks of the suspension, the child will be removed from enrollment and their place could be filled with another child.
* **There is no reduction in fees if parents choose to send their children less than the specified number of days.**

**Vacation Information (l2, 10.11)**

* There are NO vacation days allotted for families. Full tuition will be paid as per the agreement.
* You will not be charged for any day in which HLELA is closed.
* If a staff member is on vacation, another caregiver will take his/her place as needed **(L2, 10.13).**
* Children whose parents are on scheduled days off such as Fall, Christmas or Spring break and do not attend during those times will be billed at the regular weekly rate.

**Late Pick-up Fee**

* Failure to pick up your child/children by the end of the day (6:00 PM) will result in a charge of $5 per 5 minutesper child.
* Please make every effort to pick up your child at the specified time.
* It is understood that circumstances may come up to prevent getting to the facility on time. If you are unable to pick up your child on time, please notify the director.
* If you will be more than 30 minutes late, please make arrangements with someone on your pick-up list to pick up your child to avoid a call to CPS for a child neglect report.

**Returned Check Fee**

* A fee of $7(This fee will change as the bank changes their fees.) will be assessed for any check returned to HLELA due to insufficient funds. If more than one check per client is returned NSF, the client will be required to pay in cash from that date on.

**MEDICAL POLICIES**

**Immunizations and Physical Exam**

* **Every** child must be current on immunizations and verification of a physical exam (well child check-up) within the twelve (12) months prior to their attendance. These records must be provided prior to your child’s first day of attendance, or within their first 20 days.
* Without this documentation, your child may not attend.
* If your child receives new immunizations and/or has an updated physical, please update the record on file in the HLELA office.
* Immunizations exemptions for personal reasons are not allowed by the state.
* Immunizations exemptions for medical or religious reasons must have proper documentation on file to be approved by state consultant.

**Medication (l2, 10.4)**

* Medication can be administered while in attendance provided a prescription is documented (pharmaceutical container and/or physician’s signed instructions).
* Over the counter, non-prescription medication **CANNOT and WILL NOT** be given without a written physician’s order. This order must be updated annually.
* A physician may write an order giving a blanket permission for the child to have any over-the-counter medication, but it must state the amount of medication to be given as well as the length of time between doses.
* Medication will only be administered if the child’s name is written on a medications form with the amount of dosage (including the appropriate measuring device) and time to be given along with the parent’s/guardian’s signature.
* Notify staff members of all medication, so that it may be locked in the medicine box or refrigerated as needed.

**Communicable Diseases (L2, 10.2)**

* Staff members are trained in the signs and symptoms of illnesses and in proper hand washing procedures to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
* Every means will be taken to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
* Please do not send your child if he/she is ill or has been ill in the last 24 hours. If your child is too ill to go outside or participate in activities with their class, they are too ill to attend.
* You will be called to remove your child if any of the following symptoms exist:

1. vomiting

2. severe coughing

3. temp of 100 or higher (Blackford County School policy)

4. diarrhea

5. **suspicious rash**

6. difficult or rapid breathing

7. lice (may only return when deemed “nit free”)

8. red, encrusted, or runny eyes

9. lethargic behavior

* Parents are expected to have the child picked up within 30 minutes of being notified that thechild is ill to minimize the spread of illness.
* Every effort will be made to separate a sick child from the rest of the class while they are waiting to be picked up.
* Children should be free of all symptoms for 24 hours, without medication, or have a note from the doctor stating that return is permissible before returning to HLELA **(L2, 10.12).**
* **Please do not give your child medication and send them to HLELA if they have been ill through the night.**
* Parents should have a backup plan of care established if a child is sent home from HLELA with an illness **(L2, 10.13).**
* If a staff member has a communicable illness, parents will be notified. A substitute caregiver will be assigned in his/her place as needed.

**Reoccurring Medical Issues**

* If a child has a medical issue that is reoccurring, such as a rash, runny eyes or an allergy, HLELA must have documentation from a physician stating that the issue is not contagious, and that the child may attend when symptoms are present.
* Please refer to the Communicable Disease section for suspicious rashes or conditions.
* If documentation of the medical issue does not exist, the condition will be treated as a potential communicable disease and the child will be excluded until documentation is presented.

**Accidents**

* Parents/guardians will be notified of accidents as soon as possible.
* The staff member who has observed the accident will fill out the accident report. A copy will be kept for the files and a copy given to the parents/guardians.
* In non-life-threatening instances, the staff will provide on-site first aid.
* If the child requires medical attention, the parent will be called, informed of the injury, and asked to pick up the child.
* Parents are asked to report any instances of the child being treated by a physician, clinic, or hospital. Any injury that has been treated at a medical facility must be reported to the state of Indiana. Parents will receive a copy of the accident report that is mailed to the state.
* If the injury requires immediate medical attention, 911 will be called.

**PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Meals and Snacks**

* Cereal and fruit will be provided for breakfast. Parents may also choose to donate boxes of cereal for breakfast for their children. We will also provide milk, spoons, cups and bowls.
* Breakfast is served from 7:15 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. daily. If your child will be coming after 8:00, please have them eat breakfast at home.
* Water and/or 2% milk will be provided by HLELA for meals and snacks.
* **Bringing fast food/breakfast foods from home for your child into the facility is not permitted. If they have them, please have them finish eating before entering.**
* HLELA will not provide special food items (i.e. milk) for individual children unless the child has a special dietary need that the parent provides for.
* A snack is served at approximately 9:30 in the morning and between 2:30 and 3:30 in the afternoon.
* HLELA will provide healthy snacks, as much as possible, each day. Donations of healthy snacks to share with the group are also appreciated. Suggestions for healthy snacks are fruit, yogurt, pretzels, string cheese, raisins, peanut butter, Sun butter (alternative for peanut butter for those allergic), vegetables and hummus. Goldfish crackers are also allowed (whole grain).
* Parents are welcome to bring a special snack for their child’s birthday, other special events, or just for fun, **BUT** the State Board of Health requires that all foods be commercially prepackaged. **No homemade foods are allowed. Items may be purchased at a bakery with the logo and address on the box. Please check with the staff for any allergies.**
* Lunches must be provided by the parents at this time. All lunches must be packed cold, however; warm lunches may be brought in stainless steel thermoses that keep foods at 140 degrees or warmer. Parents must heat the food at home before putting it in the insulated container. Please remember that younger children usually eat small portions. All opened and uneaten food must be thrown away at the end of lunch.
* Water will always be available as well throughout the day.
* We will provide water bottles that will go home each day for cleaning to be returned the next day.
* Juice pouches/boxes that are not 100% fruit juice are not an acceptable substitute for milk or water.
* If your child has a food intolerance or allergy, please send a doctor’s order stating that the child has the intolerance/allergy and a list of acceptable drink or snack substitutes.

**Naps/Rest Period**

* Children will participate in a rest period after lunch each day per our licensing requirements.
* Children are not required to nap but will be asked to stay quietly on a cot to help their bodies rest. Quiet activities will be provided for them after a period of time.
* Please provide a small pillow, blanket, and a security item(stuffed animal), if needed. Storage is limited so we ask that blankets, pillows and security items are small and will fit in a 5-gallon storage bag or on top of their cot.
* Each Friday, the child’s nap items will be sent home to be washed and returned on Monday.

**Files**

* Keep all information (addresses, phone numbers, work phone numbers, immunizations, emergency phone numbers, etc.) current.
* If information is requested for the child’s file, and is not received, care may be discontinued.

**Clothing**

* Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for a variety of active, and sometimes messy, activities as well as outdoor play, weather permitting. **We do go outdoors as often as possible.**
* Each child should be able to handle fastenings with a minimum of help.
* Accidents happen. In case of a toileting accident, crafting accident or spill, please provide a complete set of clothing that is appropriate for the season (i.e. no shorts for winter weather).
* Mark your child’s name clearly on all articles of clothing.
* If your child is sent home in a change of clothes that belongs to HLELA, please wash and return it as soon as possible.
* **Flip-flops or shoes without a heel strap may not be worn (Please have a pair of tennis shoes for outdoor play).** Also, dress shoes with heels have been known to cause accidents and are often painful by the end of the day so we ask they not be worn.
* Tennis shoes, or some other comfortable shoes are preferred for the daily activities and playing, both in and out of doors.
* **Necklaces and longer earrings are not permitted per our licensing**.
* **Please have your female child where leggings/shorts under her dresses.**
* As the weather changes, be sure to send sweaters, jackets, coats, gloves, hats, boots, etc. as warranted.
* Children will be expected to go outside to play (even if just for a short period of time) when the weather permits (Director’s discretion and the Weather Watch charts posted in the classrooms—36 degrees with wind chill in colder weather to 90 degrees in warmer weather).
* Children without proper clothing for outdoor play (i.e. winter coat, jackets), will not be allowed to participate.
* Sunscreen will be provided. Children with allergies, or sensitivities to sunscreen, must bring their own, clearly marked, sunscreen.

**Toys & Electronic Devices**

* HLELA is well stocked with a variety of toys and materials for the children to play with.
* Personal toys are often the cause of arguments among children.
* **No toys shall be brought to HLELA from home except when permission is given from their teacher (i.e. show and tell) or as a security item for napping.**
* If your child brings a toy, they will be asked to put it in their backpack until time for show and tell or the end of the day.
* Electronic devices (phones, gaming systems, tablets, laptops) are not permitted.

**Lost and Found**

* Items often get misplaced or put in the wrong backpack. Please put your child’s name on items that the child may remove (coats, sweatshirts, gloves, hats, etc.).
* Check with your child’s teacher if an item comes up missing.
* HLELA is not responsible for items that the child has misplaced.

**PANDEMIC PROCEDURES\***

**(Adopted May 1, 2020)**

The health and safety of our children, families and staff are top priority. In an attempt to mitigate the spread of this virus in our childcare community, the following changes, in alignment with CDC

 and the FSSA recommendations, will be implemented as follows:

**Drop off and Pick up of students**

To provide for the health and safety of the children, staff and families, changes have been made to our drop off and pick up policy until further notice.

1. The children will be dropped off and picked up at the west entrance (Cherry Street) of the building. This may also occur at the playground (weather permitting).
2. Parents and other visitors will be asked not to enter the building (See #7 for exceptions).
3. Temps will be taken for each child before they can enter the building each day.
	1. If their temp is 100.4, or higher, they will not be able to stay.
	2. They must stay home until they are fever, and symptom free, for a minimum of 72 hours before returning to school.
4. Parents are asked to check their child in using the parent communication app to avoid having to use paper and pen. Parents can notify staff of their arrival for pick up through the app, also.
5. **All** children will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before entering the classroom.
6. Masks are recommended for the children, but not required. They will be provided, if needed/required.
7. **Parents with children in the CCDF/On My Way Pre-k programs (vouchers) will park and enter on the building and sign their children in and out in the Director’s office.** **This is still a strict requirement and the only exception to entering on the west side. Hand sanitizer is also provided in the office. Masks are required.**
8. If parents need to speak with the director, they will let the staff member at the door know and he/she will be paged to come to the entrance.
9. If parents need to enter the building for emergency purposes, they should let the Director know and sanitize their hands upon entry.
	1. We ask that no parent touch anything during this time and practice social distancing by remaining six (6) feet away from any staff member or children, other than their own.

**Illness Policy and Monitoring**

Students will have their temperatures checked daily. Once upon arrival and then after lunch, or before, if a staff member notices any change with your child’s behavior and/or coloring, or if your child complains of not feeling well.

1. Any student with a fever of more than 100.4 must remain out of school for 72 hours after the fever has broken without fever reducing medications. We will not allow a doctor’s note for returning before the 72 hours.
2. Any student showing any concerning signs of a respiratory issues: excessive coughing, tugging in the chest, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc., will be sent home and may not return for 7 days plus 3 additional healthy days and must be cleared by a medical professional.
3. Students with a cough and a fever will be required to be seen by a medical professional within 24 hours. Student must remain out of school for 7 days, plus an additional healthy 3 days.
4. **Parents will be required to contact the director within 24 hours to inform the school what the illness may be and/or if the child is being tested for COVID-19.**
5. If a doctor has cleared your child to attend sooner, the medical professional MUST in writing state “That the child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was seen and was evaluated for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_... The child does NOT have Covid-19 and is able to return to childcare without placing another child or adult at risk” We must also have what the child has and why the child is coughing (i.e. allergies, bronchitis, etc.).
6. If the child, or anyone in the home, was in direct contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or has been diagnosed themselves, HLELA must be contacted immediately by phone at 765-302-8671 or 765-348-8854 (Director’s cell).
7. **If anyone in the home has been tested for COVID-19 and awaiting results, the child should remain at home until the results have been given. Again, the director should be notified of this circumstance immediately, as well as the results of any testing.**
8. The health department will inform both the parents and HLELA staff of the recommended quarantine period and give directions on any possible closings of a classroom or program and the length of time for either.

**Keeping Healthy**

HLELA will take every precaution for your child to stay healthy and ask that the parents help with this.

1. Consistent handwashing and cleaning of the center will be performed throughout the day.
2. Students and staff will be required to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer several times throughout their day. This may cause a child’s hands to become more dry/raw than normal. We ask that you use lotion on their hands nightly to help keep the child’s hands from becoming overly raw.
3. We need your help in keeping students and staff healthy. It is the responsibility of the parents to be open and honest with staff about any illnesses the child or parent may be experiencing. If we find that this is not the case, students will be asked not to attend the Academy.
4. We ask that all families practice social distancing as recommended and/or required by State and Federal guidelines.
5. During a time of a pandemic, HLELA will only care for the allowed students in accordance with the state, federal and local government.

**Closing of the Academy**

If the Academy is informed of a child or parent testing positive for Covid-19, they will first contact the licensing consultant and the Blackford County Health Department. Any, and all, direction for additional cleaning and disinfecting, quarantine recommendations and/or closures will be made by the health department after talking with those affected.

The Academy has every intention of remaining open during these uncertain times but may close as directed by state or local officials at any time during the pandemic.

**Tuition Payments during a Pandemic**

Payment of care is taken on a circumstance basis depending on the situation and pandemic. The director will keep all families updated of any tuition changes due to the closing of the facility.

**\*This Pandemic Policy is subject to change at any time, based on the Pandemic and further recommendations from the Blackford County Health Department, the State of Indiana and also the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).**

**CHURCH INVOLVEMENT**

On occasion you will receive church information in your child’s backpack. This will keep you informed of the church’s activities. Please accept our warm welcome to attend any service or program. The church has a pastoral staff to serve you. If you are not part of a church family, please consider making yourself a part of the family at Grace. Everyone is welcome.

**Service times:**

Sunday morning services 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

* As part of the ministry of Grace Methodist Church, chapel is conducted for children in our program, at a minimum of quarterly.
* Lessons teaching Bible stories will also be presented for the children in our program.