



The Learning Loft Inc

Parent Handbook

Updated August 1, 2025

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Purpose

At *The Learning Loft Inc.*, our purpose is to provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment where young children in the Palatine community can learn, grow, and thrive. We are dedicated to supporting each child's early development by fostering their curiosity, creativity, and confidence through engaging, age-appropriate activities and caring individualized attention.

Goals

The Learning Loft Inc was established in 1985, we are licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and comply with or exceed all standards provided.

We believe that early years are the foundation for a lifetime of learning. At The Learning Loft Inc., we create meaningful opportunities for children to explore, imagine, and build essential social, emotional, and cognitive skills in a warm, supportive setting. Our experienced educators work closely with families to cultivate a sense of trust, collaboration, and shared commitment to each child's success.

Rooted in the values of respect, inclusion, and hands-on discovery, our programs are designed to inspire a love for learning while meeting the unique needs of every child. Whether through interactive play, guided learning experiences, or social interaction, we encourage children to develop a positive sense of self and a strong connection to the world around them.

Our mission is to be a trusted partner to families in Palatine by providing high quality childcare and early education that promotes growth, development, and a joyful introduction to lifelong learning.

**Location**

The Learning Loft is located at 655 N 1st Bank Drive Palatine IL 60067. The phone number is 847.359.5437. Learn655@gmail.com

Operating Days and Hours

Monday-Friday 6:30 am-6 pm

- If School District 15 is closed due to extreme weather, the center will also be closed. You can hear the school closings on our Facebook page and an email notification will also be sent to you

The Learning Loft Inc. will be closed on the following holidays in observance of national celebrations and to allow our staff time with their families:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and Day After
- Christmas Day



ENROLLMENT AND FEES

| | |
|---|--|
| Full Time- 5 days a week | |
| Infant (6 weeks-18 months) | \$400.00 |
| Toddlers (19-35 Months) | \$380.00 |
| Preschoolers (36-48 months) | \$350.00 |
| Part time is <u>not</u> offered for infants or toddlers | |
| Before and after care (3-5 days a week) | |
| School age (5-12 years) full week rate | During School \$200.00 No School Full Time \$250.00 |
| Part time rate (2 days) Mornings or Afternoons only | \$50.00 |
| Part time rate (1-2 days) includes before and aftercare | \$100.00 |
| ** Note 3 or more days is considered a full-time rate | |
| Drop-in rate | \$85.00 |
| Registration fee (non-refundable) | \$150.00 |

Security Deposit = 1 week care rate (funds may be applied to the last week of enrollment)

Any credit issued to the account may only be applied to tuition. Families with two or more siblings in full-time care receive a \$50 discount. Multi-child discounts are not applicable to before and after care.



Security Deposit Required: To secure your child's enrollment into our program, a security deposit equal to one weeks tuition is required at the time of registration. This deposit will be held on file and may be applied toward your child's final week, provided that a two-week notice of withdrawal is given in accordance with our termination policy. This is separate from the registration fee. If two weeks notice isn't provided, the security deposit will be forfeit.

Tuition is due on the first day of your child's scheduled attendance and then each week must be paid in full by Friday before 6:00 PM. There will be a late fee of \$50.00 added to all accounts not paid by 6:00 PM, Friday, which will be added to your account balance. You will always be paying for the upcoming week, as tuition is paid a week in advance. This includes any extra care should this be availed of for all children (both day care children and after-school children).

Failure to Pay tuition: If tuition is not paid in full within one week of the due date, the following actions may be taken.

1. Dismissal from the Program – The child will be dismissed from the program, and their spot will no longer be held.
2. Forfeiture of Security Deposit – The security deposit (equal to one week's tuition) will be forfeited and applied toward the outstanding balance.
3. Collections Process – All unpaid balances remaining 15 days after dismissal will be turned over to a licensed collections agency for recovery. Additional fees and legal costs may apply. We understand that financial challenges can arise. If you are experiencing difficulties, please contact our office prior to the payment deadline to discuss possible arrangements

There are no refund for illness, holidays or closure of the service due to unforeseen circumstances. There is no exception to this policy.

The center will close if it is deemed by Management to be unsafe to open, i.e. extreme staff shortages or severe weather conditions. Full fees will be payable.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that full fees as charged by The Learning Loft Daycare are paid in full and on time each week or month regardless of any subsidy, grant and/or funding being applied for and/or availed of from any source.

Full fees without any subsidy, grant or funding deduction are payable to The Learning Loft whilst any application for a subsidy, grant or funding is being processed and during any time these no longer apply and/or are withdrawn.

Registration Fees: \$150.00 per child- All registration fees are non-refundable. This applies to all programs: Preschool, Daycare, and Camp Programs, Camp registration fees will be determined prior to the camp program. The non-refundable deposit must be paid in full a maximum of 30 days before the first day student attends the program.

Termination Notice: A minimum of two week's written notice is required in the event of termination of services. Failure to provide the required notice will result in the forfeiture of the security deposit. Vacation credit may not be used during the two week's notice period. The policy is in place to ensure adequate time for transition and to maintain fairness and consistency in our operations.

Payment

Families may keep submitting payment via credit card and check (we ask that you list the days being paid for in the memo field along with the child's name). We no longer accept cash as payment.



Vacation Day Policy

Children attending the daycare are eligible for 1 week of vacation after attending the center for 52 consecutive weeks (one calendar year). The vacation week will reset on January 1 for each student. Those students who attend on a 9-month basis are not eligible and therefore must pay for every week during those 9 months.

Emergency Contact & Unscheduled Pickup Policy

At The Learning Loft, the safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. The well-being of the child will be protected until a parent, emergency contact, or outside authorities arrive to take custody of and responsibility for the child's welfare. To ensure this policy is followed and a secure environment, we have established the following policy regarding emergency contacts and unscheduled late pickups:

Emergency Contact Procedures

Children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. In the event a parent or guardian does not arrive by closing time and no prior arrangements have been made, the center will initiate contact with the individuals listed on the child's Emergency Contact Form. Staff will make multiple documented attempts to reach the primary parent/guardian and all emergency contacts provided.

Failure to Pick Up Policy

If no authorized adult has arrived to pick up the child within one hour after closing (by 7:00 PM), and all attempts to contact the parent/guardian and emergency contacts have been unsuccessful, the center is legally obligated to notify the local police and/or child protective services. The child may then be released to the custody of appropriate authorities to ensure their safety.

Documentation:

All communication attempts (phone calls, voicemails, texts and e-mails) will be thoroughly documented, including time stamps and responses, if any. This documentation will become part of the child's file and may be reviewed in the event of repeated late pickups or failure to follow the center's policies. Learning Loft Staff will not hold the child responsible in the situation, and any discussion of this issue will be with the parent or emergency contact person only.

We urge all families to ensure that emergency contact information remains current and accurate at all times. It is your responsibility to notify the center immediately of any changes.



Snack and Lunch

We are a NUT-FREE center

The Learning Loft Inc serves snacks and lunch to children over 12 months. Snacks will consist of a fruit and grain or dairy item. Lunch is served between 11:15 and 11:30 allied time to eat is 30 minutes and is a DCFS-approved menu that includes milk, protein, grain, fruit and vegetable. A state-certified food manager will always be onsite at mealtimes (the director and cook are certified) to ensure proper food handling procedures.

Children may not bring in their own food unless they have a medical condition and written authorization from their pediatrician. Children under 12 months must bring food, snacks, bottles, etc. *Please label all items with the child's first and last name including the date.

Child / Teacher Ratios

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| • Infants (6 weeks-15 months) | 4 :1 |
| • Toddlers (15-24 months) | 5:1 |
| • 2-year-olds | 8:1 |
| • 3-4-year-olds | 10:1 |
| • Kindergarten -12 yrs | 20:3 |

Medical Form Policy

The Learning Loft requires all enrolled children to have a current and complete medical form on file. This form must be completed and signed and stamped by a licensed healthcare provider and include all required immunization and health verification information in accordance with state law. Medical forms are valid for two (2) years only from date of the physical examination and must be updated accordingly. Families are responsible for providing up-to-date medical documentation to maintain enrollment. Children without current medical records on file will not be permitted to attend until proper documentation is received. Lead screening and TB test results must be provided for all children by their pediatrician. DCFS now requires a copy of a birth certificate for each child. Additionally, children 2 years and up also need to provide a dental form 2 times per calendar year for their file. Hearing and vision is a state requirement for children 3 years and up. Yearly our center will offer hearing and vision testing for an additional fee performed by a licensed outside provider. If you have your child's hearing and vision performed at a district school please provide a copy of the results for your file here at The Learning Loft.



Immunizations

| Age | Immunization | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Birth | Hepatitis B | Dose 1 of 3 |
| 2 months | Hepatitis B | Dose 2 of 3 |
| | DTaP | Dose 1 of 5 |
| | Hib | Dose 1 of 4 |
| | IPV | Dose 1 of 4 |
| | PCV | Dose 1 of 4 |
| 4 months | DTaP | Dose 2 of 5 |
| | Hib | Dose 2 of 4 |
| | IPV | Dose 2 of 4 |
| | PCV | Dose 2 of 4 |
| | DTaP | Dose 3 of 5 |
| 6 months | Hib | Dose 3 of 4 |
| | PCV | Dose 3 of 4 |
| | Hepatitis B | Dose 3 of 3 |
| 6-18 months | IPV | Dose 3 of 4 |
| 12 months | TB test | |
| 12-15 months | Hib | Dose 4 of 4 |
| | MMR | Dose 1 of 2 |
| | PCV | Dose 4 of 4 |
| 12-18 months | Varicella | Dose 1 of 1 |
| 15-18 months | DTaP | Dose 4 of 5 |
| 4-6 years | DTaP | Dose 5 of 5 |
| | IPV | Dose 4 of 4 |
| | MMR | Dose 2 of 2 |
| | ROTA | Series of 3 doses |
| (NEW) 2, 4, & 6 months | | |



Illness and Medication Forms

As required by state law, each child will be given a visual health check upon arrival. All children must have their hands washed upon entering the Center. A child who exhibits any signs of illness will not be able to stay at the Center. If a child becomes ill during his/her stay, a parent or emergency contact will be required to pick him/her up immediately. The child will be isolated and given proper care until an authorized adult arrives. Written health clearance from a physician may be required for return, as per individual illness (e.g. rash, strep). In cases of an outbreak, the center will collaborate with local health officials, possibly implementing temporary closures or additional cleaning protocols. Staff are trained in illness prevention and infection disease control procedures.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- is unable to participate comfortably in program activities, this includes outside activities.
- needs greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- has any of the following conditions: fever, sore throat, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, chronic cough or other signs of possible severe illness
- has diarrhea (defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased water and/or decreased form)
- has vomited in the previous 48 hours
- has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours (temperature should be normal for 24 hours without the aid of medication such as fever reducers)
- has had a cold for less than 4 days
- has been taking antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- Head lice or scabies excluded until after the first treatment We are a nit free facility

Medication Policy

At The Learning Loft Inc the health and safety of every child is a top priority. To ensure proper care, medication will not be administered without written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

A medication authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian prior to any medication being administered. In some cases, a signature from the child's healthcare provider may also be required.

All medication must be provided in their original, labeled container and include the child's full name, dosage instructions, and expiration date. All medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the office and are administered only by the director or an authorized staff member designated by the director.

Parents are responsible for notifying the center of any known allergies, and for providing an EpiPen, asthma inhaler, or any emergency medication their child may require. These must also be labeled and accompanied by the appropriate medical forms. Failure to provide accurate and updated medical information may result in a delay or inability to administer necessary care.

No Pacifiers are allowed in the toddler room, only teethingers for redirection of biting. No Oral or oral medications will be given in the center.

The Learning Loft Inc | 655 N 1st Bank Drive Palatine IL 60067



Emergencies (Medical)

In the event of an injury, the staff will administer first aid to the child. If the injury requires medical attention, we will attempt to contact a parent immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency numbers. In the case of an emergency, the staff will call an ambulance to transport the child to Northwest Community Hospital/Endeavor Health. It is important that you keep the Center up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

Daily Program

The Learning Loft provides a daily schedule that is guided by a research-based curriculum that includes:

- Indoor free play with developmentally appropriate toys
- Small group and large group activities
- Creative art projects
- Gross motor and outdoor play
- Snack
- Language activities
- Science
- Simple musical instruments, songs and movement



Child Conduct and Inclusion Policy

We encourage and help children to Learning by:

- Help pick up toys in the classrooms
- Respect the property of the Center
- Respect others
- Share (when appropriate)
- Wash hands upon entering the Center, again before eating, and after using the bathroom
- Problem-solving skills
- Be tolerant and accepting of others
- Self-regulation

Acceptable behavior is encouraged and nurtured through positive reinforcement and modeling by the staff. Should a child show inappropriate behavior, that child will be redirected, and the behavior discussed.

If these techniques have been exhausted, and the child is in danger of hurting himself or others, removal from the group may be necessary. After the child has had time to regain self-control, he or she may once again participate in the activities.

Removal from the group will not be used for children less than 24 months of age.

The Learning Loft is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all children in our care. We believe every child has the right to feel secure, respected, and accepted, and we do not tolerate bullying in any form. Repeated or severe bullying may result in a formal behavior management plan and could lead to temporary or permanent dismissal if safety cannot be ensured.

For the purposes of this policy, bullying is defined as any intentional, repeated behavior—whether physical, verbal, or emotional—that causes harm, fear, or distress to another child. Bullying can include:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, or other aggressive contact
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, threats, or cruel jokes
- Social/Emotional: exclusion, spreading rumors, manipulation
- Cyber (if applicable): using digital devices to harass or intimidate (for older programs)



Open Door Policy

At The Learning Loft, we believe that strong communication between families and staff is key to supporting each child's growth and development. We are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure each child's experience is positive, nurturing, and developmentally enriching. We maintain an open-door policy for all families. Parents and guardians are welcome to speak with staff or the director regarding their child's progress, behavior, or development at any time. We encourage open, respectful communication and are happy to schedule a time to talk in person or by phone to ensure privacy and attention to your concerns.

If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, please feel free to:

- Reach out at drop-off or pick-up for brief updates.
- Schedule a conference or phone call for more in-depth discussions.
- Email or call the center to arrange a convenient time to meet.

Formal parent-teacher conferences are offered twice a year for our three- and four-year-old preschool classes. These conferences provide an opportunity to:

- Review your child's developmental progress.
- Discuss strengths, areas for growth, and goals.
- Share any concerns or observations from home.
- Collaborate on strategies to support your child.

Public Act 100-010 Preventing Expulsion of Children Birth-Five

At The Learning Loft, we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children. This act emphasizes the prevention of expulsion of children from birth to five years of age in early childhood programs. We firmly believe that every child deserves a fair chance to learn and grow, regardless of their unique circumstances. Our transition policy ensures that children and families receive the necessary support and resources to prevent expulsion and address challenging behaviors. We work collaboratively with families, educators, and specialized professionals to develop individualized behavior support plans, implement positive behavior interventions, and provide ongoing coaching and training. By fostering a supportive and understanding atmosphere, we strive to create an inclusive community where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. In cases where it is determined that a child's unique needs are better suited to be met in a different program, we understand the importance of a smooth and seamless transition. Our transition policy includes provisions for assisting families in finding and transitioning to a program that can better cater to their child's specific requirements. Our primary goal is to ensure that every child receives the appropriate care and educational environment that best suits their individual needs, promoting their growth and success.



Items to Bring to the Center

Parents check your child's cubby regularly to ensure clothing is seasonally appropriate and that spare

clothes are available. Teachers may send items home that are inappropriate or not permitted for safety reasons.

- Bag or backpack with the child's name on it
- Change of Clothes (at least one full set, including socks and underwear)
- Sunscreen when necessary, before drop-off
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing (boots, hats, mittens, coats, snow pants, all labeled with your child's name).

Infants and Toddlers

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Bottles or sippy cups -must be labeled with date and name. Sippy cups are to be non-glass and leak proof
- Bibs
- Security items (blankets for toddlers only)
- Finger foods (under 15 months)

Items Not Permitted

- Toys from home
- Electronic devices
- Candy, gum or soda
- Money or valuables
- Items with violent or inappropriate themes (weapons, superhero gear etc.)

Please be sure all items are labeled.

Appropriate Dress – Dress for Play Time and Fun

The Learning Loft encourages parents to send their child dressed for active play. We suggest comfortable weather appropriate clothing that allows free movement and active play. We encourage independence, such as elastic waistbands and easy fasteners. Closed toe shoes with a back or heel support like sneakers are encouraged. Shoes are required at all times for safety, children may not attend the center without proper footwear. Clothing can get messy (we explore with paint, sand water and more) as our daily schedule does include potentially messy art projects and outdoor play.

Please send your child with shoes that are appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. The children will be climbing, running, and riding toys.

Reminder all clothing and personal items must be clearly labeled with your child's name. The Learning Loft is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.



Toys From Home

Toys from home are not permitted. Children are not permitted to bring toys from home unless specifically requested by the teacher for a designated activity. (Show and Tell) This helps prevent lost, broken or inappropriate items and minimizes classroom disruptions. Toys with small parts, weapons or weapon-like features (e.g. toy guns/swords) electronics or items of high monetary or sentimental value are strictly prohibited. Toys may get lost, mixed in with The Learning Loft toys, or create problems for other children. A blanket that is necessary for the children's comfort is permitted but must be labeled with the child's name and remain in their cubby when not in use.

The Learning Loft is not responsible for any toys or personal items bought from home that become lost, damaged, or broken while at the center.

Toilet Training

Potty training is an important developmental milestone, and we are committed to supporting families through this process in a positive, respectful, and child-center manner. Toilet training is a team effort. Parents and caregivers must work together to create consistency between home and daycare. All children are taught and supervised in proper handwashing after using the toilet. Staff also follow strict hygiene and sanitation procedures. We request families

- Inform us when they begin the process
- Share their at-home routine, terminology and cues
- Provide several changes of clothes, training underwear and wipes
- All diapering supplies must be provided by the parent and labeled
- Children who are not fully toilet trained must arrive in diapers or pull-ups unless agreed upon with the teacher

Pest Control

Our pest Management services are in align with the State Requirements. Pest control is done on an as-needed basis. Therefore, we request that you do not come in or leave the center with open food.



School Bus Policy

Schools will provide services to District 15: Gray M. Sanborn Elementary School, Jane Addams Elementary School, Lake Louise Elementary School, Pleasant Hill School, Virginia Lake, Winston Campus, St Theresa, and Marion Jordan.

Class Parties and Birthdays

At The Learning Loft, we value the joy and excitement that comes with celebrating birthdays and class milestones. To ensure that these celebrations are safe, inclusive, and aligned with our healthy habit's philosophy, we kindly ask all families to follow the guidelines below: We appreciate your cooperation in making our celebrations fun, inclusive, and safe for all children. If you have any questions or need suggestions, please reach out to your child's teacher or the director.

- Absolutely no peanut or tree nut products are allowed at any time.
- All items must be pre-packaged or prepared in a facility that clearly labels ingredients.
- Please avoid candy, soda, or other high-sugar items.
- Goodie bags are optional and must be age-appropriate and nut-free.
- Please speak with your child's teacher at least one week in advance to arrange a celebration.

Healthy birthday treats include:

- Fruit kabobs
- Mini muffins (nut-free)
- Yogurt parfait cups
- Whole grain granola bars (nut-free)
- Frozen fruit pops (made from 100% fruit juice)
- Fruit trays or cups (e.g., apple slices, berries, orange wedges)
- Veggie trays with hummus
- Whole-grain crackers and cheese
- Yogurt tubes or cups (nut-free varieties)
- Applesauce or fruit pouches (no added sugar preferred)