



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF MERIDEN
LEARNING CENTER**

FAMILY HANDBOOK

15 Lincoln Street
Meriden, Connecticut 06451
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www.bgcmeriden.org



Welcome Message

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the entire team at the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center, I'd like to extend the warmest possible welcome to you and your family for the upcoming journey! We are thrilled to have you join our vibrant Early Learning family and embark on this exciting adventure of learning and discovery together.

At Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center, we believe that every child is unique and possesses boundless potential. Our nurturing environment is designed to foster a love of learning, spark curiosity, and empower each child to reach their individual milestones. We are committed to providing a safe and stimulating space where children can explore their interests, build social skills, and develop a strong foundation for lifelong success.

Our dedicated team of experienced and passionate educators is committed to providing your child with the highest quality early childhood education. Through play-based learning, creative exploration, and age-appropriate activities, we will nurture your child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development.

We understand that entrusting us with the care and education of your child is a significant decision. We are honored by your trust and assure you that we will partner with you every step of the way to ensure your child's well-being and happiness. We believe in open communication and encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or concerns you may have.

We are excited to witness your child blossom throughout their time with us and can't wait to create lasting memories together.

Welcome to the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center family!

Sincerely,



Nicola Nicholson

Learning Center Director

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Mission

To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

The Learning Center will carry out this mission statement by offering a high-quality early learning program for children between the ages of 6 weeks – 5 years old.

The Learning Center is a safe and positive place where children can learn and grow to their full potential while forming healthy relationships with caring adult professionals and preschool peers.

The Learning Center aims to develop a partnership with families, honoring that parents/guardians are a child's first teacher and establishing a strong home/school connection for a successful formal educational experience.

Families are invited and encouraged to share their home traditions with the Learning Center.

The Learning Center embraces diversity and inclusion and welcomes children from all faiths, races, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, and/or disability. We will provide reasonable accommodations to children who require them for medical or religious* reasons as required by law.

*As of September 2022, Connecticut will no longer allow a religious exemption from childhood immunization requirements for schools, colleges and day care facilities, becoming the sixth state to end that policy.

Days & Hours of Operation

The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., year-round.

The Learning Center will be closed in observance of the following:

- New Year's Day (observed)
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Presidents' Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (observed)
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Break Thursday & Friday closed
- Christmas Eve through New Year's Eve

Weather Related Closings:

In the event of inclement weather The Boys & Girls Club Learning Center will follow the City of Meriden Board of Education's closing, delay, or early dismissal schedule for snow days or during other hazardous weather situations. Parents or guardians will be notified via Brightwheel and the BGC website.

Subject to change

Enrollment

Children between the ages of 6 weeks – 5 years old are eligible for enrollment at the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center.

While pacifiers are permitted for infants and toddlers as appropriate for their developmental needs, pacifiers are not permitted within the preschool classrooms.

Children may attend the center for up to 10 hours a day between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Families seeking part-time care may do so on a "space availability" basis, knowing preference is given to full time care families.

Each child attending the Learning Center must have an updated physical form including an up-to-date immunization record that has been signed and dated by his or her pediatrician.

Documents needed for enrollment:

- Child information form
- Emergency Information form
- Medical form
- Physical form
- Photography or Video form
- Policies agreement form

The first 30 days of enrollment are considered a trial period, during which either the parent(s) or guardian(s) or the Learning Center may withdraw or excuse a child from the program.

Tuition & Fees

- A non-refundable registration fee of \$85.00 along with one week's tuition of \$330.00 (Infant/Toddler) or \$235.00 (Preschool), or one week of tuition for part time attendance at \$50.00/day, is due at the time of registration.
- Tuition is paid weekly and due the Friday prior to the week of care.
- Tuition is accepted in cash, check, or is payable with a debit or credit card through Brightwheel.
- A \$15.00 per day late fee will be added after tuition is 5 days past due.
- A service fee of \$35.00 will be charged for any declined payments.
- For any child who exceeds the 10 hours of care maximum per day allotment, a \$20 per day fee will accrue.
- A late pick-up fee will be charged in the amount of \$15.00 from 5:30 p.m. -5:45 p.m., or any portion thereof and an additional \$10 for each 10 minutes.
- Children with past due tuition balances may not attend the Learning Center until payment is paid in full.
- Tuition is expected regardless of if a child is absent. Said absence includes but is not limited to illness, family emergencies, doctor appointments, hospitalizations, vacations, and/or weather-related Learning Center closings.
- Tuition rate does not change in the event of a week including a holiday.
- Because The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center meets mandated staffing ratios daily, no refunds are given.

Late Pick-Up Policy

If a child is not picked up 15 minutes past The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center's closing time, the following plan will be put into action:

- Two staff members, 18 years of age or older, will remain with the child
- Staff will attempt to contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) at their work, home, and cell phone numbers
- If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, staff will attempt to contact the emergency/alternate contacts listed on the child's enrollment form
- If an hour has passed and no parent nor other adult specified as an emergency/alternate contact has been reached, the police will be called.
- Upon their arrival, the child will be released to the police.

Withdrawal & Dismissing Policy

Parents and guardians wishing to withdraw their child(ren) from The Boys & Girls Club Learning Center must provide notice in writing two (2) weeks before their last day.

- All tuition owed must be paid in full.
- The director and staff of The Learning Center will make every effort and work closely with parents and guardians to avoid a child's dismissal from the program.
- If dismissal of a child is deemed necessary, The Learning Center will (if possible) provide, as a courtesy, parents and guardians with a one-week notice of expulsion.
- No tuition refunds will be given upon a child's dismissal.

Arrival & Departure

- It is the parent(s) or guardian(s) responsibility to provide transportation for their child or children to and from the BGC of Meriden Learning Center as well as accompany their child into the building.
- It is the parent(s) or guardian(s) responsibility to supervise their child or children during drop-off and pick-up times (i.e. in the parking lot)
- It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to notify the Learning Center of their child's absence.
- Upon arrival and again at departure children must be signed in and out by their accompanying adults.
- At arrival and departure children must be signed in and out by their accompanying adult.

- Only individuals listed as “an authorized pick-up person” by parents or guardians will be allowed to pick-up a child.
- A photo ID will be needed to pick up a child or children.
- Children enrolled at the Learning Center have waited all day to be reunited with their parents or guardians. It is for this reason that parents and guardians are asked to put their cell phones away at pick-up time and be present.
- Children are expected to depart the Learning Center at the agreed upon time daily. Staff to child ratios are set according to children’s scheduled times for arrival and departure.
- Staff are not allowed to provide transportation for children enrolled at the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center.

Nutrition

- The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center follows CACFP guidelines
- Each child enrolled at the Learning Center is provided a morning and afternoon snack that includes 2 food groups. Accommodation will be made for food allergies and religious preferences. This service is provided free of charge.
- Each child enrolled at the Learning Center will bring lunch from home. The lunch will consist of 4 of the 5 food groups (milk/dairy, vegetable, fruit, meat/meat alternative, grains)

Belongings From Home

- Parent(s) and guardian(s) will label ALL items brought in from home (extra clothes, bedding, backpacks, jackets, etc.). If parent(s) nor guardian(s) fail to label items, staff will use a ‘sharpie’ and do so.
- Each child will have (provide from home) at least 2 outfits (labeled, size, and weather appropriate) stored in their cubby.
- Each child will have bedding, labeled with the child’s name, for naptime provided from home. A spare sheet will also be provided and left in the child’s cubby.
- Bedding is to be brought home at the end of the week to be washed and returned at the start of the next week.
- Each child should have a labeled water bottle.
- The State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood requires that children spend time outside each day. If the temperature is above 20 degrees Fahrenheit and not raining, we will go outside. Children should be dressed accordingly (winter jacket, hat & mittens, boots, sun hat, etc.)
- Toys from home are not allowed to come to school.

- The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center will not be responsible for any lost items.

Communication

- Daily communication between Learning Center staff and parents or guardians is vital to the success of the children enrolled at the program.
- Staff and parents or guardians may speak at drop-off and pick-up times.
- The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center will use the app Brightwheel as a communication tool. Parents or guardians will be required to download this(free) app.
- Parents or guardians will receive written/texted communication or messages daily.
- Parents or guardians must put into writing and changes as to:
 - Change of pick up or drop off person, or allowed persons
 - Address, phone number(s), or email address
 - Other pertinent information

Ongoing Communication with Families

We believe that strong partnerships with families are essential to providing high-quality care and education. Our program is committed to maintaining open, respectful, and consistent communication with all families.

Daily Communication

Families receive regular updates about their child's day through methods such as written reports, communication apps, or brief conversations at drop-off and pick-up. These updates may include information about meals, rest, activities, and overall well-being.

Program Updates

Important announcements, reminders, and program updates are shared through email, newsletters, posted notices, or digital communication platforms. Families are encouraged to review these communications regularly to stay informed.

Conferences and Meetings

We offer scheduled parent-teacher conferences to discuss each child's development, progress, and goals. Additional meetings can be arranged at any time upon request.

Open Communication Policy

Families are encouraged to share questions, concerns, or updates about their child at any time. Communication can take place in person, by phone, email, or through our designated communication app.

Confidentiality

All communication regarding children and families is handled with respect and confidentiality.

Family Input and Feedback

We value family input and may provide opportunities for feedback through surveys, suggestion boxes, or informal conversations. This helps us continuously improve our program.

Family Questions, Concerns & Feedback

We value open, respectful, and ongoing communication with families. Families are encouraged to ask questions, share concerns, and provide feedback at any time. The following steps outline how families can do so:

Step 1: Speak with Your Child's Teacher

Families are encouraged to first discuss questions or concerns directly with their child's teacher. Many concerns can be addressed quickly through informal conversations at drop-off or pick-up, or by scheduling a time to talk.

Step 2: Contact Program Administration

If a concern is not resolved or if families prefer, they may contact the program director or administrator. Meetings can be scheduled in person, by phone, or virtually to ensure concerns are fully addressed.

Step 3: Submit Written Feedback

Families may provide feedback, suggestions, or concerns in writing at any time. This can be done through email, communication apps, or written submissions. Written feedback allows for thoughtful review and follow-up.

Step 4: Participate in Formal Conferences or Surveys

We offer scheduled conferences twice a year and periodic family surveys to gather input about children's experiences, assessment and program quality. Families are encouraged to participate and share their perspectives.

Step 5: Ongoing Follow-Up

Our program is committed to responding to family questions and concerns in a timely and respectful manner. When needed, we will work collaboratively with families to develop solutions and ensure resolution.

Confidentiality and Respect

All concerns and feedback are handled with professionalism and confidentiality. Families can expect to be heard and treated with respect throughout the process.

Communication with the Director

The Director is available to support families with questions, concerns, and feedback regarding the program.

Director: Nicola Nicholson

Email: nnicholson@bgcmeriden.org

Phone: (203) 235-8185

Families are encouraged to first discuss classroom-related concerns with their child's teacher. If additional support is needed or the concern remains unresolved, parents/guardians may contact the Director by phone or email. The Director will respond as promptly as possible, typically within 1–2 business days.

Conflict Resolution Process

Our goal is to maintain open, respectful communication and work collaboratively with families to resolve concerns.

If a concern arises, the following steps should be followed:

1. Speak directly with your child's teacher to discuss the concern and work toward a resolution.
2. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Director to discuss the situation in greater detail.
3. The Director will review the concern, gather any necessary information from those involved, and work with all parties to identify an appropriate resolution.
4. If needed, a meeting may be scheduled with the parent/guardian, teacher, and Director to develop a plan that supports the best interests of the child.
5. The Director will communicate the outcome and any agreed-upon next steps and will follow up as appropriate to ensure the resolution has been implemented.

We value respectful communication and encourage families to share concerns promptly so they can be addressed in a positive, timely, and collaborative manner.

Curriculum Approaches

Our Commitment to Playful Learning

Our program is committed to providing a learning environment where play is central to children's development and learning. We recognize that play is a primary way young children explore, understand, and make meaning of the world around them.

How Children Learn Through Play

We believe that children learn best through active, hands-on, and meaningful play experiences. Through play, children:

- Develop language and communication skills through conversations, storytelling, and imaginative play
- Build social-emotional skills such as cooperation, empathy, and self-regulation
- Explore problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity
- Strengthen physical development through movement and hands-on exploration
- Practice early literacy, math, and science concepts in natural and engaging ways

Play allows children to make choices, take initiative, and follow their interests, supporting independence and a love of learning.

How Play Is Incorporated into Every Learning Experience

Play is intentionally integrated into all areas of our curriculum and daily routines. Teachers plan environments and experiences that support learning through play by:

- Creating engaging interest areas (such as dramatic play, blocks, art, sensory, and outdoor play)
- Embedding learning goals into play-based activities rather than relying on worksheets or rote instruction
- Using open-ended materials that encourage exploration and creativity
- Guiding and extending children's play through questions, conversations, and interactions
- Incorporating play into daily routines, including transitions, mealtimes, and outdoor experiences
- Observing children's play to inform individualized learning and curriculum planning

Through this approach, play is not separate from learning—it is the foundation of all learning experiences in our program.

Assessment of Children's Learning and Development

Our program uses ongoing, observation-based assessment to understand and support each child's development and learning.

What Is Observation-Based Assessment?

Teachers regularly observe children during play, routines, and interactions. These observations may include notes, photographs, work samples, and developmental checklists that reflect children's skills, interests, and progress over time.

How We Use Assessment Information

Information gathered through observation is used to:

Plan curriculum and activities that respond to each child's interests and developmental needs

Support individual learning goals and strategies

Identify strengths and areas where additional support may be beneficial

Ensure that teaching practices are responsive and developmentally appropriate

Sharing Information with Families

We regularly share information about children's development with families through conversations, written reports, and conferences. Families are encouraged to share their own observations and insights, creating a more complete understanding of each child.

Confidentiality and Respect

All assessment information is kept confidential and is used solely to support children's development and learning.

Our staff works collaboratively with families and, when authorized, with community professionals to support each child's learning and development. With written parental permission, relevant assessment information and observations may be shared to assist with evaluations, service planning, and continuity of care.

Our goal is to ensure that every child receives the support they need to be successful both in our program and as they transition to future educational settings.

Using Child Assessment to Improve Our Program

Our program is committed to continuous improvement to ensure high-quality care and education for all children. In alignment with the principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), we use information gathered from children's assessments to strengthen our teaching practices and overall program.

How Assessment Information Is Used

We regularly review observation-based assessment data to identify patterns, strengths, and areas for growth across groups of children. This information helps us to:

- Adjust curriculum and learning experiences to better support children's development
- Improve teaching strategies and classroom environments
- Ensure that activities are developmentally appropriate and engaging
- Identify areas where additional resources or support may be needed

Program-Level Reflection and Planning

Assessment data is used not only at the individual child level, but also to evaluate the effectiveness of our program. Staff and leadership:

- Reflect on assessment trends across classrooms or age groups
- Use data to inform program planning and goal setting
- Make improvements to curriculum, materials, and teaching practices
- Engage in ongoing professional development based on identified needs

Continuous Quality Improvement

We use a continuous improvement process that includes gathering information, reflecting on practices, making changes, and evaluating outcomes. This ensures that our program continues to grow and respond to the needs of children and families.

Family Partnership in Program Improvement

We value family input as part of this process. Information from child assessments is shared with families, and their feedback helps guide program decisions and improvements.

Confidentiality

All assessment data is reviewed and used in ways that protect the privacy and confidentiality of individual children and families.

Partnering with Community Resources

Our program believes that strong partnerships with families and community agencies help support each child's growth and development. Information gathered through ongoing observation and assessment may help identify when a child could benefit from additional services or specialized support.

If developmental concerns are identified, teachers will first discuss their observations with the child's family. Together, we will determine whether a referral to a community resource may be appropriate. Referrals are made only with the knowledge and written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, except when otherwise required by law.

Community resources may include:

Meriden Board of Education for preschool special education evaluations and services for children who may be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Connecticut Birth to Three System for infants and toddlers (birth through age 2) who may benefit from early intervention services.

Other community providers, including speech-language, occupational, physical, behavioral, mental health, medical, or family support services, as appropriate.

Family Participation in Assessment

Our program values families as essential partners in understanding and supporting each child's growth and development. We believe that working together creates the best opportunities for children's success.

Sharing Family Observations

Families are encouraged to share information about their child's interests, strengths, skills, experiences, and development at home. Families may share observations and updates with their child's teacher in person or through the Brightwheel app. These valuable insights help teachers gain a more complete understanding of each child's learning and individual needs.

Ongoing Communication

Teachers maintain ongoing communication with families regarding their child's progress and development. Daily updates, classroom activities, and important announcements are shared through the Brightwheel app. Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers through Brightwheel, by phone, email, or in person to ask questions, share updates, or discuss any concerns.

Family Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are held **twice each year**, in **November** and **March**. During these conferences, teachers will review assessment information, discuss each child's developmental progress, celebrate accomplishments, and collaborate with families to establish goals for continued growth and learning. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time upon the request of a parent or teacher.

Contributing to Portfolios and Documentation

Families are welcome to contribute photographs, stories, artwork, or examples of their child's learning and experiences at home through the Brightwheel app or directly to the classroom. These contributions may be included in the child's portfolio or classroom documentation to provide a more comprehensive view of their development.

Collaborative Goal Setting

Teachers and families work together to establish individualized learning and developmental goals that reflect each child's unique strengths, interests, and needs. Goals are reviewed during conferences and updated throughout the year as needed.

Respect for Family Culture and Diversity

We recognize that every family brings valuable cultural, linguistic, and life experiences that enrich our program. Family perspectives are respected and incorporated into the assessment process whenever possible to ensure assessments are meaningful, inclusive, and culturally responsive.

Confidentiality

All information shared by families and all assessment records are kept confidential and used solely to support each child's learning and development. Information will only be shared with authorized individuals or as required by law.

Infant Sleep Policy

The standards outlined below will be followed when placing infants under twelve months of age to sleep.

General Sleep Arrangements

- **Infant Position:** Infants shall be placed in a **supine (back) position** for sleeping unless a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse provides written documentation specifying a medical reason for an alternative sleep position or alternate piece of equipment.
- **Turning Over:** When an infant can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they will still be placed on their back to sleep but will be allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer once they have turned over.
- **Approved Sleep Surfaces:** Infants shall only be placed to sleep in a well-constructed, free standing crib or other equipment specifically designed for infant sleeping and appropriate for the particular child.
- **Prohibited Sleep Surfaces:** No infant shall be placed to sleep on a sofa, bed, couch, soft mattress, waterbed, or other soft surfaces. Additionally, infants shall not be put to sleep or allowed to remain asleep in a car seat, infant carrier, swing or any place that is not specifically designed to be an infant bed unless a medical provider has given written documentation for its use.

- **Swaddling** is not permitted unless a medical provider provides written documentation with specific instructions and a timeframe for swaddling.

Crib and Equipment Safety

- **Mattress and Sheets:** The mattress must be snug-fitting and covered by a tightly fitted sheet.
- **No Loose Items:** No items, including but not limited to, pillows, soft bumpers, toys, and blankets (including weighted blankets, sleepers, or swaddles*) or other pieces of equipment designed for sleeping, shall be placed with an infant in a crib or hung over the side. The only exception is a pacifier without attachments unless a medical provider has given written documentation for the use of another item.
- **No Attached Objects:** No toys or objects shall be attached to the cribs or other sleeping equipment.
- **Clothing:** Bibs and garments with ties or hoods must be removed from infants before placing them down to sleep.
- **Jewelry:** No child under three years of age shall have access to teething necklaces, bracelets, or other jewelry that could present a choking or strangulation hazard.

Supervision and Documentation

- **Observation:** Infants will be physically observed by a provider or staff member at least every fifteen minutes to assess their breathing, color, temperature, and comfort.
- **Parent Acknowledgment:** These sleep arrangement standards will be discussed with parents prior to enrollment and reviewed as needed throughout their child's time at the facility. Documentation will be maintained to confirm that parents have been informed of these policies.

Diaper Changing Policy

To maintain proper hygiene, comfort, and health for each child, diapers will be checked and changed regularly throughout the day. Staff will change diapers:

- Every two (2) hours
- Upon arrival
- Before and after sleeping or nap time
- Immediately when soiled or wet, as needed

Preparation

Before changing a child's diaper, staff will:

- Wash their hands with soap and water
- Gather all necessary supplies before beginning the diaper change
- Cover the diaper changing surface with disposable paper
- Put on disposable gloves when handling bodily fluids

Diaper Changing Procedure

During diaper changes, staff will:

- Keep one hand on the child at all times while the child is on the changing surface
- Remove the soiled diaper carefully to avoid contamination
- Clean the child's diaper area from front to back using disposable wipes
- Place all used wipes and diapers into a hands-free covered trash container
- Put on a clean diaper and redress the child immediately after cleaning

Handling Soiled Diapers and Clothing

- Soiled diapers shall be placed in a lined, hands-free covered container and disposed of properly.
- Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag labeled with the child's name and sent home with the child.
- Staff will avoid rinsing or washing soiled clothing in classroom sinks.

Clean Diapers and Supplies

- Each child's clean diapers, wipes, and creams will be stored separately and labeled with the child's name.
- Diaper creams or ointments will only be applied with written parent authorization.

Child Handwashing

After each diaper change, children's hands will be washed using soap and running water. Handwashing will occur:

- After diapering or toileting
- Before meals and snacks
- After outdoor play
- After coughing, sneezing, or wiping noses
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled

Cleaning and Disinfecting

After each diaper change, staff will:

- Clean and disinfect the diaper changing surface using approved disinfectant
- Dispose of gloves and disposable coverings properly
- Sanitize all surfaces and materials that came into contact with bodily fluids

Staff Handwashing

Staff are required to wash their hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds:

- Before and after each diaper change
- After removing gloves
- After handling bodily fluids
- Before preparing or serving food
- After assisting children with toileting
- After outdoor activities
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled
- Disposable paper towels will be used to dry hands and turn off faucets when possible.

Cloth Diaper Policy

Our program supports families who choose to use cloth diapers. To ensure a safe, sanitary, and efficient diapering process, the following procedures must be followed:

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Provide a sufficient supply of clean cloth diapers each day.
- Provide a labeled, waterproof wet bag for the storage of soiled diapers.
- Ensure diapers are clean, in good condition, and ready to use (including any inserts or fasteners already assembled).

- Take home all soiled diapers and wet bags daily for laundering.
- Provide any diaper creams or ointments with written authorization, if required by program policy.

Diaper Changing Procedures

Staff will follow all diaper-changing and handwashing procedures required by state licensing regulations and program health policies.

- Soiled cloth diapers will be removed and placed directly into the child's labeled wet bag.
- Staff will not rinse, scrape, soak, or launder cloth diapers.
- Disposable gloves will be used when required by health and safety procedures.

Storage

- Clean cloth diapers must be stored separately from soiled diapers.
- Wet bags containing soiled diapers will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to children until pickup.

Health and Safety

- Cloth diapers must have a waterproof outer layer or cover to help prevent leaks.
- If a cloth diaper repeatedly leaks or causes sanitation concerns, the program may require an alternative diapering solution.
- The childcare program reserves the right to use a disposable diaper in emergencies when clean cloth diapers are unavailable.

Compliance

All cloth diapering practices must comply with applicable childcare licensing regulations and local health department requirements.

Biting Policy

Biting is a common developmental behavior among infants and toddlers, particularly children under three years of age. While biting can be upsetting for everyone involved, it is often a child's way of communicating frustration, excitement, stress, or unmet needs. Our goal is to respond promptly, ensure the safety of all children, and help children develop appropriate social and communication skills.

When a Biting Incident Occurs

1. Staff will immediately attend to the child who was bitten and provide appropriate first aid and comfort.

2. Staff will respond firmly and calmly to the child who bit, explaining that biting is not acceptable.
3. Staff will redirect the child toward appropriate behavior and help them express feelings in a safe manner.
4. An incident report will be completed and maintained in the child's record.
5. Parents/guardians of both children will be notified as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

To protect the privacy of all children, the names of children involved in biting incidents will not be disclosed to other families.

Prevention and Intervention

Staff will:

- Closely supervise children.
- Observe and document patterns, triggers, and circumstances surrounding biting incidents.
- Teach and model appropriate communication and social-emotional skills.
- Provide redirection and positive guidance.
- Work with families to develop consistent strategies when repeated biting occurs.

Repeated Biting

If biting becomes a recurring concern, the program may:

- Increase supervision.
- Develop an individualized behavior support plan.
- Meet with parents to discuss strategies and progress.
- Seek additional consultation or resources when appropriate.

The program will not use physical punishment, humiliation, or other inappropriate disciplinary practices in response to biting behavior. Instead, staff will use positive guidance techniques that support children's healthy development.

This signed acknowledgment will be maintained in the child's file as part of the enrollment records.

Child Guidance and Discipline Policy

The childcare program is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and respectful environment for all children. Staff will use positive guidance techniques to help children develop self-control, responsibility, and respect for others.

Prohibited Practices

Staff are **strictly prohibited** from using any form of:

- **Physical punishment**, including hitting, spanking, shaking, pinching, or any action that may cause physical harm.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse**, including yelling, shaming, humiliating, threatening, or making negative comments about a child.
- **Coercion**, intimidation, or forcing a child to eat, sleep, or participate in activities against their will.
- **Withholding food, rest, or bathroom access** as punishment.
- Any disciplinary action that may frighten, isolate, or harm a child.

Positive Child Guidance Practices

Staff will guide children's behavior using developmentally appropriate strategies, including:

- Setting **clear and consistent expectations**.
- Using **positive reinforcement and encouragement**.
- Redirecting children to appropriate activities.
- Teaching children **problem-solving and conflict resolution skills**.
- Modeling respectful behavior and communication.
- Providing choices when appropriate to help children develop independence.

Cozy/Calming Area

The program provides a **cozy or calming area** within the classroom where children may go when they need a quiet space to relax, calm down, or regain control of their emotions.

- The cozy area includes soft seating and calming materials such as books or soft toys.
- Children may choose to use the area when they feel overwhelmed or need a break.
- Staff may guide a child to the cozy area to help them calm down and regulate their emotions.
- The cozy area is **not used as punishment or isolation**, and children always remain supervised.

Responding to Disruptive or Unsafe Behavior

When a child displays disruptive or unsafe behavior, staff will:

- Remain calm and respond in a supportive and respectful manner.
- Redirect the child to a safer or more appropriate activity.
- Help the child understand the impact of their behavior.
- Offer the child time in the **cozy/calming area** if they need help regulating emotions.
- Provide additional supervision and guidance when needed.
- Communicate with families to work together on strategies that support the child's development.

Behavior Support Plan

If a child demonstrates **consistent or prolonged disruptive or unsafe behavior**, the program will develop a **Behavior Support Plan** to provide additional guidance and support.

The plan may include:

- Documentation of the child's behavior patterns and possible triggers.
- Strategies to support the child's social and emotional development.
- Positive behavior guidance techniques used by staff.
- Environmental adjustments or classroom strategies to support the child.
- Collaboration and communication with the child's family.
- When appropriate, consultation with outside professionals or support services.

The goal of the Behavior Support Plan is to help the child develop positive behaviors and ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all children.

Suspension, Expulsion, and Exclusionary Practices

This program limits and seeks to eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, or other exclusionary practices due to consistent or prolonged disruptive or unsafe behavior.

Before considering exclusion, the program will:

- Implement and review the Behavior Support Plan.
- Work collaboratively with families to support the child.
- Use positive guidance and individualized strategies.
- Seek additional resources or professional guidance when appropriate.

The Learning Center is committed to supporting each child's social and emotional development while ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and staff.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Our Commitment to Child Safety

The safety, health, and well-being of every child in our care is our highest priority. Our program is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment where children are protected from harm and supported in their growth and development.

Mandated Reporting

All child care professionals are **mandated reporters** under Connecticut law. This means that staff members are legally required to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Staff members are not required to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. A report must be made when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect, or unsafe conditions.

Types of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect may include:

- **Physical Abuse:** Causing or allowing physical harm or injury to a child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Behaviors that negatively affect a child's emotional well-being, self-esteem, or development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any inappropriate sexual activity, contact, or exploitation involving a child.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide appropriate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, or protection from harm.

Reporting Concerns

If a staff member has a concern regarding possible child abuse or neglect, the concern will be reported to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Abuse and Neglect Careline as required by law.

Connecticut DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Careline

1-800-842-2288

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Our program will cooperate fully with DCF, law enforcement, and other authorized agencies as required.

Confidentiality

Information regarding suspected child abuse or neglect reports is kept confidential. Details will only be shared with individuals who are legally authorized to receive the information or who are involved in responding to the concern.

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

Our program works to maintain a safe environment for children by:

- Carefully selecting and screening staff members.
- Completing required background checks.
- Providing staff training on child safety and mandated reporting responsibilities.
- Maintaining appropriate supervision and child-to-staff ratios.
- Using positive guidance and discipline practices.
- Providing ongoing review of health, safety, and child protection policies.

Positive Guidance Policy

Our program believes children learn best in an environment where they feel safe, respected, and supported. Staff use positive guidance strategies that encourage self-control, problem-solving, and appropriate behavior.

The use of physical punishment, threats, humiliation, or any form of inappropriate discipline is strictly prohibited.

Family Partnership

Families are encouraged to communicate openly with our program regarding any concerns about their child's safety, care, or well-being. We value our partnership with families and are committed to working together to ensure every child receives a safe and nurturing experience.

Active Supervision Policy

The safety and well-being of children is our highest priority. Our program always uses active supervision to ensure children are safe, engaged, and supported. Active supervision means staff are intentionally positioned, attentive, and continuously monitoring children through sight and sound.

Core Practices of Active Supervision

All staff:

- Position themselves to always see and hear children
- Continuously scan and move throughout the environment
- Maintain accurate attendance and conduct frequent head counts
- Anticipate children's behaviors and redirect when needed
- Engage with children while supervising
- Adjust supervision based on activity, environment, and developmental needs

Supervision by Age Group

Infants are always monitored by sight and sound (Birth–12 months)

- Constant visual and auditory supervision at all times
- Children are always within immediate sight and sound
- Close proximity during feeding, sleeping, diapering, and play

Toddlers are always monitored by sight and sound (1–3 years)

- Close and active supervision due to mobility and exploration
- Staff position themselves near higher-risk areas (climbing, sensory materials)
- Frequent head counts and continuous movement throughout the space

Preschoolers are always monitored by sight and sound most of the times and no longer than 5 minutes (3–5 years)

- Continuous visual supervision of all children
- Staff actively engage and monitor both structured and free play
- Increased independence is supported while maintaining full awareness of group safety

Outdoor and Playground Supervision

Active supervision is always maintained during outdoor play.

- Staff are strategically positioned to see all areas of the playground
- Teachers spread out to cover climbing structures, open play areas, and equipment zones
- Frequent scanning, head counts, and movement are required
- Staff actively engage with children while remaining alert to hazards
- Boundaries are clearly established and reviewed with children regularly
- Staff anticipate and redirect unsafe climbing, running, or group dynamics

Naptime Supervision

Active supervision is maintained during rest periods in accordance with children's needs.

- Staff always remain physically present in the room
- Children are positioned so all can be easily seen and checked
- Regular visual checks are conducted to monitor breathing, positioning, and comfort
- Staff maintain awareness of environmental safety (noise level, spacing, temperature)
- Any child who is awake or distressed is promptly attended to without delay
- Ratio requirements are maintained throughout rest time

Indoor Supervision and Transitions

- Staff maintain visual supervision in classrooms, bathrooms, hallways, and common areas
- Transitions between activities include attendance checks and clear head counts
- Staff ensure smooth movement of children between spaces while maintaining sight and sound supervision

Training and Accountability

All staff receive ongoing training in active supervision practices. Supervisory practices are regularly observed and supported by program leadership to ensure consistent implementation.

Mandated Reporter Policy

At the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center all staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center. All staff at the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Child Abuse is defined as any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning), any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation), emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth) neglect (abandoned, denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his wellbeing) and at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect) inflicted upon a youth under the age of 18.

Medication Policy

- The Boys & Girls Club Learning Center will only administer emergency medications, medications that have been prescribed for the treatment of a known medical condition (diabetes, ADD), or 3 times/day antibiotics needed to clear an infection (strep throat, ear infection) that have been prescribed by a physician. An Epi-Pen, Auvi-Q, and rescue inhaler are examples of emergency medications.
- It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to provide the Learning Center with the proper medication authorization form and medication. The form will be signed by the prescriber, parent or guardian, and the Learning Center's director.
- Medication must be in its original child resistant safety container, clearly labeled with the child's name, and medication instructions by the pharmacy.
- Medication will be stored in a locked container.
- Only staff that have been trained in the administration of medication will be able to administer medication. Training will be supervised and renewed in accordance with state guidelines.
- The Boys & Girls Club Learning Center staff will keep accurate documentation of any medication administered.
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified by phone if/when their child has been given his or her emergency medication. Daily or scheduled medication doses will be noted as given on the daily communication.
- All unused or expired medication shall be returned to a parent or guardian.
- With the exception of topically applied sunscreen, no over the counter medication will be administered by Learning Center staff. A Non-Prescription Release form will be signed by a parent or guardian as part of the enrollment paperwork giving staff permission to apply sunscreen.

Illness & Injury Policy

A child who has any of the following symptoms should be considered “ill” and kept home from the Learning Center:

- A temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough (productive or not)
- Eye(s) that are sealed shut with ‘crust’, have discharge, are swollen, are red, and/or are itchy, (“pinkeye”)
- Persistent (heavy) greenish/yellowish discharge from the nose
- Has nits or lice
- In general, not acting like him/herself (fatigued, clingy, no appetite, crying in excess) or basically needing one-on-one care

A child who presents with any of the above symptoms will be sent home ‘sick’ from the Learning Center along with a completed illness report.

Parents or guardians that are called to pick up a sick child have one (1) hour to do so.

Children must be symptom free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen, ibuprofen, cough medication, cold medication, or any other ‘over the counter’ medications that might be masking a more serious condition. (For information about prescription medication, see the medication policy)

If a child has been seen by a medical professional (Doctor, PA, APRN) and diagnosed with a contagious illness (conjunctivitis, strep-throat, pneumonia, covid, etc.) she or he may not return until after the contagious period has ended. A ‘return to school’ note signed by the medical professional must accompany the child upon his or her return.

If a child sustains an injury greater than a bump, skinned knee, or bruise that most preschool age children are prone to, a qualified staff member will assess the injured child and administer first aid as needed.

An accident/injury report will be completed and given to the parent/guardian.

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of the situation and any further action needed.
- If the illness/injury is a true medical emergency (anaphylactic, asthma attack, seizure, compound fracture, etc.) and it is warranted, 911 will be called.
- If the ill/injured child is transported via ambulance, a staff member will accompany said child in the ambulance to the nearest hospital. The staff member will bring the child’s emergency permission form with them. Staff will notify/update the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) as to which hospital child is being transported via ambulance to.

- A child who has sustained an injury requiring medical attention, will need a ‘return to school’ note signed by the medical professional stating either that the child may fully participate or what limitations the child has upon return to the Learning Center.

Please remember that this policy is for the health of all the children at the Learning Center as well as the staff.

The non-emergency number for our police department is 203-603-6215.

Multi-Hazard Emergency Preparedness Policy

The safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. Our program maintains a comprehensive Multi-Hazard Emergency Preparedness Plan designed to protect children, staff, and visitors during emergencies. The plan is reviewed regularly, and all staff receive ongoing training to ensure they are prepared to respond effectively to a variety of emergency situations.

Emergency Preparedness

Staff members receive training in emergency preparedness, emergency response procedures, evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, first aid, and CPR. Emergency drills are conducted regularly to help children and staff respond safely and calmly during an emergency.

Our emergency plan addresses a variety of situations, including:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Severe weather, including thunderstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes, and winter storms
- Power outages and utility failures
- Flooding
- Gas leaks and hazardous materials incidents
- Lockdown or security threats
- Shelter-in-place situations

Fire/Evacuation

In the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation, children and staff will exit the building using the nearest safe exit. Staff will supervise the children in their care and escort

them to the designated evacuation area located at **Lincoln Street/Parking Lot**, a safe distance from the building.

Once at the evacuation site, attendance will be taken using the daily attendance records to ensure that every child and staff member is accounted for. Staff will bring the attendance records (or electronic access to attendance), a portable first aid kit, emergency contact information, and a cell phone.

If the building cannot be safely reoccupied, families will be notified immediately with instructions regarding the designated reunification location. Staff-to-child ratios will be maintained at all times, and a minimum of two staff members, age 18 or older, will remain with the children until each child has been released to an authorized adult.

Shelter-in-Place

In the event of severe weather, such as a tornado, hurricane, winter storm, or another situation in which it is safer to remain inside the building, staff and children will move to the designated shelter area located in the **hallway**, away from windows and exterior doors.

Staff will maintain attendance, provide comfort and reassurance to children, and utilize emergency supplies as needed. Trained staff will administer first aid when appropriate until emergency responders arrive. Families will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so after the immediate danger has passed.

Lockdown

A lockdown will be initiated when there is a potential threat of violence or other immediate danger in or around the program.

The Director or person in charge will notify staff using the program's established communication system to begin lockdown procedures. Staff will immediately call 911 if emergency services have not already been contacted.

Each staff member is responsible for the children in their care. Children will be moved to the safest location within the classroom, away from doors and windows. Classroom doors will be locked, lights turned off, and blinds or curtains closed. Staff will remain calm, reassure children, and encourage them to remain quiet. Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the lockdown.

The Director or person in charge will remain in communication with emergency responders and will notify staff when an official "all clear" has been given. During an active emergency, parents and guardians will not be permitted to enter the facility until emergency personnel determine that it is safe.

Every effort will be made to notify families using the program's communication system; however, emergency conditions may delay communication. Families will receive updates as soon as practical and will be notified immediately after the "all clear" has been issued.

Medical Emergencies

Staff are trained to respond promptly to medical emergencies. Emergency Medical Services (911) will be contacted whenever necessary. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible, and emergency contact and medical information provided by families will be used to ensure appropriate care for the child.

Family Notification

The program will communicate emergency information using available methods, including telephone calls, text messages, email, parent communication applications, or other emergency notification systems. Families are responsible for ensuring that emergency contact information remains accurate and up to date.

Reunification

If children must be relocated or dismissed following an emergency, they will only be released to individuals authorized on the child's Emergency Contact Form. Identification may be required before a child is released. Staff will document each child's release to ensure accountability throughout the reunification process.

Family Responsibilities

Families play an important role in maintaining a safe environment. Parents and guardians are asked to:

- Keep emergency contact information current at all times.
- Ensure authorized pick-up persons are listed and updated as needed.
- Inform the program of any changes to medical conditions, medications, allergies, or emergency care plans.
- Respond promptly to emergency notifications.
- Follow all reunification instructions provided by the program during an emergency.
- Refrain from coming directly to the program during an active emergency unless instructed to do so by the program or emergency officials.

Working together helps ensure the safety and well-being of every child during emergencies and allows staff to respond quickly and effectively to any situation.

Family Involvement in the Program

We believe families are essential partners in children's learning and development. We provide meaningful opportunities for families to be actively involved in their child's learning environment and in our program.

Participation in the Classroom

Families are welcome to participate in classroom activities when possible. Opportunities may include reading stories, sharing cultural traditions, participating in special projects, or joining classroom events.

Sharing Family Knowledge and Culture

We invite families to share information about their child, family traditions, culture, language, and experiences. This helps us create a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Communication About Learning

Families receive regular information about curriculum, activities, and their child's development. We encourage families to extend learning at home and to share observations or questions about their child's growth.

Conferences and Goal Setting

Families are invited to participate in conferences and discussions about their child's progress. Together, we set goals and support each child's development through collaboration.

Program Events and Activities

We offer opportunities for families to participate in program-wide events such as family nights, celebrations, workshops, and meetings. These events strengthen relationships and build community.

Volunteer Opportunities

Families may choose to volunteer in ways that fit their schedules and comfort levels, such as contributing materials, assisting with activities, or supporting special events.

Family Feedback and Leadership Opportunities

We encourage families to share feedback and ideas through surveys, conversations, and participation in advisory groups or committees when available.

Inclusive and Flexible Involvement

We recognize that families have different schedules, cultures, and preferences. We strive to offer flexible and accessible ways for all families to be involved in meaningful ways.

Photography & Videography

Photographs and/or videos of the children at The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center may be taken from time to time.

Photos and/or videos may appear:

- on social media
- in the newspaper, brochures, or publicity materials

Parents and guardians have the right to allow or decline permission for the use of photos and/or videos for the above-mentioned purposes.

No compensation is given for the use of above-mentioned photos and/or videos.

A Photograph & Video permission form is included with the enrollment packet.

Photographs of the children may be displayed in the classroom.

Confidentiality of Children and Family Information

Our childcare center is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of every child and family enrolled in our program.

All information regarding children, families, and staff is treated as confidential and is shared only with authorized individuals who have a legitimate need to know or as required by law. This includes personal information, enrollment records, medical information, developmental assessments, and family circumstances.

Staff members are required to maintain confidentiality at all times and will not discuss a child or family with other parents, visitors, or unauthorized individuals. Conversations regarding a child's progress, behavior, or individual needs will take place privately between the child's family and appropriate staff members.

Parents and guardians are also asked to respect the privacy of other children and families by refraining from discussing other children, staff, or families outside the program.

The childcare center will comply with all applicable state and federal laws regarding the confidentiality and protection of children's records. Records will be maintained securely and will only be released with written parental consent or when required by law.

By working together to respect confidentiality, we help create a safe, trusting, and supportive environment for all children and families.

Director's Discretion

The fees, procedures, plans, and policies outlined in the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center Family Handbook are subject to yearly review. Additionally, the Director has the discretion to amend or change any of these fees, procedures, plans, or policies at any time. Written notice will be given to parents and guardians as to any change made.

Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center, revised July 2026.

Community Resources

Food Pantries

Meriden Salvation Army
23 St. Casimir Drive, Meriden
(203) 235-6532

New Opportunities

55 W. Main Street, Meriden
(203) 639-5060

Master's Manna, Inc.

428 South Cherry Street,
Wallingford
(203) 678-3042

Medical Resources

Planned Parenthood

28 Womens Way, Meriden
(203) 238-0542

Community Health

Center/OBGYN

134 State Street, Meriden
(203) 237-2229

CT Dental Health

Partnership

1-855-283-3682

Meriden Health

Department Clinic/Nurses

165 Miller Street, Meriden
(203) 630-4234

Access Health CT

1-855-805-4325

Other Resources

Adult Education (Board of Education)

22 Liberty Street, Meriden
(203) 630-4190

American Job Center

87 W. Main Street, Meriden
(203) 238-3688

Birthright

39 Center Street, Meriden
(203) 237-9887

Birth To Three

450 Columbus Avenue,
Hartford
1-800-505-7000

Chrysalis Domestic Violence Hotline

English: (203) 238-1501
Español: (844) 831-9200

CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence

655 Winding Brook Drive,
Suite 4050, Glastonbury
(860) 282-7899
24-Hour Advocate Line: (888) 774-2900 (call or text)

Care 4 Kids

55 Capital Boulevard, Rocky Hill
1-888-214-5437

Children's First Initiative

165 Miller Street, Meriden
(203) 630-3566

Child Support Enforcement

1-800-228-5437

CT Department of Social Services

1-855-626-6632

Department of Children & Families (DCF)

505 Hudson Street, Hartford
(860) 550-6300

Express Employment Professionals

1501 E. Main Street, #102,
Meriden
(203) 235-5627

Family Resource Center (Playgroups)

Ben Franklin Elementary:
(203) 238-2316
John Barry Elementary: (203) 237-4743

Husky

1-877-284-8759
Husky Member Services
1-800-859-9889
Infoline (Homeless Shelter Assistance)
2-1-1

Literacy Volunteers

35 Pleasant Street, Meriden
(203) 774-0722

Meriden Public Library

105 Miller Street, Meriden
(203) 630-4621

New Opportunities

General Assistance: (203) 639-5060

Energy Assistance: (203) 235-0278

Hartford Health Family Enrichment Home Visiting Program

(860) 604-3318

School Readiness Program

(203) 630-4222

Smoking Quit Line

1-800-QUIT-NOW

Social Security Office

1-877-409-8429

Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW)

284 Washington Street,
Wallingford, CT
(203) 265-5866

Women and Families Center

169 Colony Street, Meriden,
CT
(203) 235-9297



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF MERIDEN
LEARNING CENTER**

**UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
TOGETHER**

15 Lincoln Street
Meriden, Connecticut 06451
203-235-8185
www.bgcmeriden.org



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