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PRESCHOOL

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Welcome to the Leddy Preschool

A Guide for Families

2021-2022

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Our Beliefs

The Leddy Preschool embraces the importance of treating each child as a whole, and providing developmentally appropriate experiences to promote the development of cognitive, physical and social-emotional skills. Leddy Preschool emphasizes the importance of play in the lives of young children. We believe in the importance of a stimulating environment and the availability of caring adults to scaffold and support each child's learning. Leddy Preschool honors the role of the individual child in constructing his or her own knowledge of the world. We recognize that learning takes place within each child's individual context, and the program respects and nurtures each child's family, language and culture.

The Leddy Preschool recognizes the critical role of social competence and self-regulation in helping students to become successful learners. Our program supports the critical importance of the warm and positive interactions between children and the adults in their world.

We strive to provide the highest quality, most effective curriculum that encourages children to master new skills and to become self-confident and independent learners. Our program encourages children to be creative problem-solvers and to develop their skills in all developmental domains: cognitive, social-emotional, and physical.

The Leddy Preschool believes that it is crucial for the school and the family to have a positive relationship and to work together to provide the maximum support for each youngster. The unique characteristics of each family are respected and appreciated.

We believe that education is a cooperative and joint venture between families, school and community. With a shared vision of excellence, we are committed to working together to provide each child with a safe, nurturing environment that provides the experiences and support to allow all children to grow into happy, well-adjusted and successful adults.

Our Mission:

EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY, COLLEGE BOUND

We work with families to start every child off on the path to success. At Leddy Preschool, we encourage children and families to say, “When I go to college.” By becoming effective, motivated and successful learners, our Leddy Preschool students will enter kindergarten ready to start on a path to success in school and in life.

Our Curriculum:

The Leddy Preschool curriculum is based on best practices for young children and is founded on the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Experiences and the Massachusetts Common Core Standards. Teachers plan learning experiences around the needs of the individual children in their classes, and in keeping with the curriculum of the Taunton Public Schools. The Pre-K curriculum we are using is *Opening the World of Learning* or the OWL curriculum. This provides the strongest research-based early literacy curriculum and weaves a solid content that captures children’s natural curiosity about the world into an activity-centered day. The curriculum covers all domains of learning. Teachers

curriculum covers all domains of learning. Teachers understand that young children learn best through play, and design experiences to help each child construct his or her understanding of the world. Teachers communicate classroom events and learning objectives to families, to create a strong home-school connection.

Confidentiality:

The Leddy Preschool staff will not discuss a child with any other agency, professional or program without written permission from the family. We comply with all regulations regarding the confidentiality of student records. All children's folders are kept in locked file cabinets in the school office. Student assessment data is confidential and will be shared only with parents and authorized school personnel, unless parent permission is obtained.

Authorized school personnel include the professional staff members working with a child so that they can have the information necessary to help each child learn and grow; guidance department to manage any IEPs, file maintenance, etc.; secretarial staff for such tasks as filing of progress reports, and processing registration information: and administration has access for such tasks as monitoring individual student's progress, checking documents and accessing necessary information.

Emergency Forms:

All families are required to have an update Emergency Form on file in the office. This needs to include correct home and cell phone numbers for parents and other adults who can be called to care for your child in the event of an emergency. In the event that your child is brought back to school on the van, please include relatives or family friends who could come to school to get your child.

Be sure to inform the office of any changes in phone number or address so that we can always reach you if your child needs you.

Emergency Drills:

The Leddy Preschool practices fire drills monthly, weather permitting. We also practice drills for other types of emergencies such as lock down drills, secure and hold drills and evacuation drills. If we ever had to evacuate the building, our evacuation site is Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School. Whenever they leave the building with the students, teachers carry copies of emergency cards for all children. Each classroom is equipped with an Emergency Response Booklet which provides specific information on how to respond to different situations.

Family Resource Guide and Resource Center

We strive to help families connect with resources in the community. A binder is available in the office with specific information on such areas as housing resources, counseling, and other agencies. Pamphlets and written information on topics important to families are also available in the Guidance Office. Our guidance staff and nurse are available to meet with any family in need of services.

Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch (Snack)

(For the 2020-21 year, all kids have free snack)

**All families are asked to complete the Free and
Reduced Lunch Form whether or not they wish
to receive breakfast or snack because it has a**

significant impact on funding for the Taunton Public Schools. Breakfast will be available for eligible children at no cost when they come to school. All families can purchase breakfast. Children who are not purchasing breakfast should eat breakfast at home. All children will need a small snack for the mid-morning break. Eligible students will receive a snack during afternoon snack. This is eaten during the regular classroom snack time. All PM children should eat lunch before coming to school.

Field Trips:

Throughout the year, the Leddy Preschool may plan a field trip to extend the children's learning. Parents will be notified in writing of the date, time, location and purpose of the field trip. Written parental permission and a completed liability waiver form are required for a child to attend. No child will be permitted to leave the school for a field trip without these written permission forms. For the safety of our children, **NO** exceptions can be made. Parents are asked to return all permission slips promptly. In addition, Leddy students frequently take virtual field trips where we bring the trip to our school.

Safety is always our top priority on a field trip. First aid supplies are always taken on a trip, as are emergency cards with parent's phone numbers and emergency contact information. Children may walk as they do when

contact information. Children may walk, as they do when going to the park, or may ride on a bus. All bus transportation is through the approved contracted bus company for the Taunton Public Schools. Were a bus to break down on the field trip, the bus company would promptly send another vehicle to the scene. While on the field trip, at least one teacher or teaching assistant has a cell phone to use if necessary.

Guidance and Discipline:

We believe that discipline should be positive and consistent. It should be based on child development and developmental appropriateness. The cornerstone of discipline is to help students develop self-discipline. Discipline strategies include clear expectations and natural consequences. Staff use occasions of inappropriate behavior as opportunities to help children learn how to behave in more acceptable, constructive and cooperative ways. Teachers adapt routines, schedules and staffing to help solve discipline issues. We strive to set developmentally appropriate expectations for waiting and attending. At all times, children will be treated with kindness and respect.

Our teachers are kind and caring professionals, who enjoy children and are skillful in managing the classroom in positive ways. Our teaching staff does not use physical punishment of any kind, nor do they engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory remarks, nor do they withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. Time out is not used. We offer a child having difficulty an opportunity for alone quiet time in the classroom or a walk in the halls, escorted by a staff member.

When students engage in persistent, serious, challenging behavior, teaching staff will work with families to develop and implement a plan to support the child's inclusion and success.

Kindergarten Transition:

For our children who will be going to kindergarten next year, our staff will work closely with families to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten. We will provide registration information as soon as it becomes available, and will assist families with this process. To find out which elementary school your child will attend, families may go onto the website for the Taunton Public Schools (tauntonschools.org) and access street list, or you may ask our secretary. Our office would be happy to supply information about elementary schools such as address, phone number and the name of the principal.

Activities to prepare children for the transition may include meeting a kindergarten teacher during Read Across America Week, reading books about kindergarten, and providing information so families can visit a kindergarten class. Our teachers work closely with the kindergarten program to be sure that our program is carefully aligned with the curriculum and is designed to maximize each child's success in kindergarten. Families are encouraged to talk with the teacher or Guidance Counselor if they have questions or concerns about kindergarten transition. Children on IEPs will have a TEAM meeting in the spring to discuss each child's needs in kindergarten and to develop a new IEP if needed.

Each spring, the Leddy Preschool plans a field trip for children to visit the kindergarten classrooms. This is very helpful in reducing the anxiety that children may feel at going to a new school.

Late Arrival/ Early Dismissal:

It is important for children to arrive at school on time. If

It is important for children to arrive at school on time. If arriving late, the parent must go to the office and sign your child into school. A staff member will then take the child to the classroom. In the event that a child must be picked up early, parents should go to the office to sign out the child. Late arrivals or early dismissals are discouraged due to the disruption it causes in the classroom. Please attempt to schedule your child's appointments during times other than when they are school. Thank you for your consideration.

Negotiating Differences:

While our staff works hard to ensure that all children and their families have a positive experience at our school, we know that occasionally parents may have a concern. When this situation arises, parents are strongly encouraged to speak to the teacher first. The teacher will make every effort to work with the parent to help resolve whatever issue may have come up.

If the parent continues to have a concern, after working with the teacher, a meeting will be held with the teacher, the principal and the parent. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue. We truly strive to ensure a cooperative working relationship with all our families.

In the event that the principal is unable to resolve the issue to the parent's satisfaction, the concern will be referred to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services of the Taunton Public Schools.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

Laddy Preschool welcomes all children and their families

Leddy Preschool welcomes all children and their families to our program. We encourage enrollment by families of our diverse community. Leddy Preschool makes a special effort to support all children and families, and to respect the traditions, customs and beliefs of all families.

Nursing Mothers:

We strive to be supportive of nursing mothers who may be visiting our program. We would be happy to find a quiet, secluded place in the building for any nursing moms. Please let the office know if you require this assistance.

Open Door Policy:

We welcome parents to our program at any time. All parents have the right to visit the program unannounced at any time while your child is here. You are a vital and valued part of our program. All parents are invited to come in and see the program, and to observe their child's classroom. Please check in with the office when you arrive. Parents will receive a visitor's pass from the office. If you have a little extra time and would like to spend time with us, we would love to have you join us and your child!

Outdoor Time:

Being outside is important to children's health and development. If weather permits, all children will have the opportunity to play outside every day. Children should wear shoes such as sneakers that allow children to run and jump. Flip flops are not allowed because they frequently cause tripping and falling. They also make it

more difficult for children to do all the outdoor activities

more difficult for children to do all the outdoor activities that they need to do such as climbing, sliding, running, jumping and swinging!

In the event that there were high levels of air pollution on a particular day, the Leddy Preschool staff would limit outdoor and physical activity as a precaution during smog or other air pollution alerts.

Family Involvement:

YOU are your child's first and most important teacher! We truly believe that education is a partnership between the school and the family. We encourage family members to become involved and to participate in the program. We welcome your ideas, your input and your feedback. Please share your ideas with the teacher and with the principal either by email or appointment.

It is important to have frequent communication between parents/guardians and the school. Teachers welcome family members' questions and are happy to discuss your concerns, suggestions, goals and ideas. There are a number of ways to contact your child's teacher. Please feel free to call the school and leave a message for the teacher to return your call. When teachers are working with their class, it is not possible to have them leave the room to take phone calls. The teacher will call back as soon as possible. You may also send a note to the teacher, asking for her written reply or asking that she call you. All of our teachers use email as well.

There are many opportunities to volunteer in the program. A volunteer sheet will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Opportunities include being on the School Council, working as a classroom volunteer, office volunteer, working on projects at home and being part of the Parent Teacher United organization. We need your help!! Becoming part of the school and getting to know other parents will make preschool a fun and rewarding experience for you as well as for your child!

A Family Bulletin Board is posted in the main lobby. It will contain items of interest to families and upcoming events.

Mandated Reporters:

All staff members of the Leddy Preschool are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Conferences are held in November. Hours are available during the day and in the evening. We encourage you to come in and talk with the teacher.

Please feel free to call and request a conference at any time you feel it is necessary. Additional parent conferences can be scheduled by the family and/or the school at any time.

Because open communication is so important, teachers are available by telephone, email or in person. Teacher email addresses are listed on our school website. We encourage you to get in touch with the teacher whenever you have a concern, question or want an update on how your child is doing. While teachers cannot leave the classroom to answer telephone calls, they will return your call as soon as they can.

Parking:

Parking at Leddy Preschool can be very challenging. We truly wish we had a BIG parking lot!!! In consideration of our neighbors and to keep traffic flowing safely and smoothly, families are asked to keep in mind the following information:

Cars may not park in the parking lot of Crano

Cars may not park in the parking lot of Grape
Hathaway Funeral Home as they will be
towed from the lot

We are unable to allow cars to park in the back
parking lot. This is for staff so they leave you
space near the school. Please be aware that
a Handicapped Tag is required to park in the
Handicapped Parking Spaces in the rear of
the building.

Please be sure to observe all parking signs
along Second & Charles Street. Please note
that Charles Street is a one-way going
south.

Cars are not permitted to stop in front of the
school on either side of the street as this
creates a serious traffic flow problem.

Please be extremely careful walking our young
children into and out of the building, and
along the street. The safety of our
youngsters is our highest priority.

Progress Reports:

Progress reports are written in January and June, to share information with families of how their children are progressing in all areas of development. Children on IEPs (Individual Educational Programs) will also receive Special Education Progress reports in January and June. Teachers are also available to discuss children's progress at any time that families wish an update or have a concern. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher to share information or to get updates.

Resources for Families

In order to assist our families with basic needs, our

In order to assist our families with basic needs, our program maintains a current list of resources in the community. A list of important phone numbers is included in this Family Welcome Book. A Family Resource Book is available in the school office. It includes resources in the community such as WIC, housing, dental clinics and other community resources. Pamphlets with additional information for our children and their families are available in our Guidance Office. Our School Nurse is also available to answer any questions and to assist families in locating assistance. Please feel free to call us at any time. We are here to help.

Security:

Our building is locked at all times. A security camera is located near both the front and back doors, and is monitored by a television, intercom and buzzer in the office. Visitors to the building are asked to identify themselves and the reason for their visit before being admitted into the building. All visitors are asked to go the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass.

Only identified individuals will be admitted into the Leddy Preschool. While family members and other visitors are in the building, they are asked not to open the door to let anyone into the building. If parents need assistance with this, please ask in the office.

It is crucial that emergency contact information is current. If families change phone numbers, addresses, etc., please let the office know. We highly recommend including multiple phone numbers on the emergency forms to assist us in getting in touch with you if an emergency arises.

Smoking Policy:

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, smoking is

in accordance with Massachusetts state law, smoking is not permitted in our school building or on our school grounds. Smoking is also prohibited in all school buses.

Snack:

Having a snack is part of our daily routine. All children should bring a snack every day, whether or not they qualify to eat Free and Reduced Breakfast. Eligible children will receive a Snack Box. These are eaten during the snack session during the day. Families are asked to fill out the Free and Reduced Lunch forms if they feel they are eligible. Healthy snacks such as water, 100% fruit juice, and cheese are encouraged. NO peanut products are permitted at any time. To prevent choking and allergies, families are asked **NOT** to send the following:

- Peanuts, peanut butter or tree nuts of any kind

- No foods containing nuts of any kind

- Popcorn

- Whole grapes (please cut them in half)

- Hard pretzels

- Chunks of raw carrots

- Candy

Families must send snacks that do not require refrigeration. Parents/guardians may want to use a small cold pack or thermal lunch bag to keep food cold. Please put your child's name on all lunch boxes. It is important to clean out the lunch box every night and to remove any uneaten food.

We do NOT allow **food that comes from home for sharing among the children**. This means that NO homemade baked goods or food can be brought to school to share with the class. This does NOT apply to snacks for your own child. If you desire to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, kindly ask the teacher about the appropriate items to send in however no food products

appropriate items to send in however no food products are allowed for the entire class to consume. We have many students with allergies.

Student Assessment:

Either during the initial screening all regular education students are given a developmental screening. The DAYC-2, Dial Screening and/or the Brigance Screening are used. Each is a brief screening which looks at a preschool child's development in the following areas: language, fine motor skills (how he/she uses her hands to copy shapes), gross motor skills (jumping, balancing, etc.) and basic readiness skills (naming colors, shapes and basic concepts) The screening is administered on an individual basis with one of our teachers. The purpose is to allow the teachers to get an idea of how the child is developing. If a child scores in the at risk range, the student will be monitored within the first three months of school, after the child is comfortable in school and has developed a warm relationship with the teacher. We know that many children do not show all of their skills when they are in an unfamiliar setting. If the child continues to score in the at-risk category, the teacher will call the family to discuss their concerns and what may need to be done. If further assessment is needed, this will also be discussed with the family.

All teachers in the program are certified by the MA Dept. of Education and have been trained in the use of our assessment instruments through school based professional development. They are familiar with the administration and interpretation of the instruments being used.

In addition to the DAYC-2, Brigance or Dial Screening, students are observed during the initial screening by the teacher to informally assess the child's social and play skills. These will continue to be observed by the teachers throughout the year, and will be shared at parent conferences, and through January and June progress reports.

Prior to entering the program, families are asked to complete a number of questionnaires to help us get to know each child. These questionnaires will ask the child's developmental history, his or her interests, language, etc. Teachers carefully review the questionnaires that family members submit, so that they can have a more complete picture of each child's development.

Throughout the year, teachers maintain developmental checklists on the children to monitor their progress. They are assessed at the initial screening, and for January and June Progress Reports. This information is shared with families at conferences and through Progress Reports. Family members are welcome at any time, to talk with the teacher about their child's progress, and to see the results of all assessments.

Within the program, assessment information is used to monitor each student's progress. If a child appears to be having some challenges acquiring basic skills, the teacher will meet with the parent and the principal to work together to collaborate on finding out what is happening with the child, and on determining what interventions may help the child. A Child Study may be held at school. This is a meeting of the teacher, principal, guidance counselor, and other school personnel, at which, the child's strengths, interests and needs are discussed. Additional parent conferences will be held. If necessary, the need for a special education evaluation may be discussed with parents.

Screening results and assessment information is used to monitor student progress, to identify children who may need additional support to become a successful learner, and as part of program evaluation.

Student Attendance:

It is essential that children attend school EVERY school day that they are assigned. Children need to come every day so that they do not miss important skills and activities.

Good attendance is a habit that starts early. Help your

Good attendance is a habit that starts early. Help your young child understand that he or she needs to go to school every day. It is expected that vacations and trips will be taken **ONLY** during school vacation times. Children need to come to school even if they went to bed late and are tired in the morning! When they get to school, all of the friends and activities will wake them up! Leddy Preschool's attendance counts for the attendance for the Taunton Public Schools, so our excellent attendance is very important!

If your child is too ill to attend school, parents are expected to call the school office at **508-821-1275**. Please send a note when your child returns, explaining the absence. If your child is absent 5 days or longer, a doctor's note is required before your child can return to school. If you have questions, please call our school nurse.

Translations:

We want to be very sure that all families are able to communicate with the teacher about their child and about the program. For parent conferences and for Special Education TEAM meetings, the school will make every attempt to arrange for someone to translate in the parent's language, whenever a family requests such assistance. We can also arrange for an interpreter, if necessary, in American Sign Language, Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages.

If a parent needs a written translation, or does not understand a communication, Leddy Preschool will do everything possible, to ensure that families understand the program, and are able to express their ideas, thoughts and concerns with us.

Transportation:

Transportation is provided only for children at Leddy

Transportation is provided only for children at Leddy Preschool who are on an IEP for a disability, and for those whose IEP specifies transportation. These students are required to wear safety harnesses. Parents must place the child in the van and clip them into the seat after boarding the van. A parent or guardian must be available to take the child off the van.

Bus changes go to the bus company on a weekly basis. It takes a full week for any changes to take place.

Van students must be met at the bus by the parent or person listed on the Emergency Form. It is essential that parents be outside when the van pulls up. Vans are not required to sound the horn, so parents need to be watching. If no authorized adult is available when the van arrives at home, the child will be brought back to the school. It will then be necessary for the parent to come to the Leddy Preschool to pick up the child. It is extremely important to keep the Emergency form up to date, and to notify the school of new cell and home phone numbers so that parents can be reached if the child is brought back to school.

Most children are driven to school by their families. Children should be picked up or dropped off by parking and walking the children to the school building. For the safety of our children, parents/guardians will be asked to show a driver's license if they do not have the dismissal tag. NO child is released without identification.

(Due to the pandemic, this is not allowed this year) A very limited car line is available. We ask that the use of the car line be limited to families with infants or those who are physically unable to park and come into the building. If a family needs to use the bus line for pick up, parents are asked to complete the Bus Line Permission Request Form that is available in the office. When picking up their child in the bus line, parents must place the official Leddy Preschool Bus Line Permission Card on the passenger side of the dash board. Without the Bus Line Permission

Card, students must be dismissed from the front entrance

card, students must be dismissed from the front entrance. For the safety of our children, **no exceptions** will be made.

In the car line, staff will bring the child to the car. Due to liability issues, parents must buckle the child into the car seat. For the safety of all children, cars picking up in the car line must be equipped with an appropriate child-restraint system. Teaching assistants and children are not permitted to walk between cars, and must bring the child to the school side of the vehicle.

While in the bus line, it is very important for drivers to remain alert, as small children are present. Parents are asked to **NOT talk on a cell phone** in the bus line due to the presence of small children loading and unloading. We truly appreciate your cooperation. There is a NO CELL PHONE policy while in the front foyer.

Volunteering:

(Due to the pandemic, volunteers are not allowed this year) There are many opportunities for parents, grandparents and friends to become involved in the Leddy Preschool. We truly need your help! A volunteer sheet will go home at the beginning of the year. Whether you are working or at home, we have many important ways for you to help us! For the safety of our children, all volunteers who work with children are required to have a CORI check.

1. **School Council:** The Leddy Preschool Council meets monthly to develop and implement the School Improvement Plan. The council has many in-depth discussions on how to improve the program for all our children. The council consists of community members, teacher representatives, the principal and parents. Parent members of the School Council are elected by parents in the fall. We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to become involved.
2. **Classroom Volunteers:** These helpers come into

2. **Classroom Volunteers:** These helpers come into the classroom on a regular basis to interact with individual children as well as small groups. The teachers need help reading to the children, playing with them, putting papers in cubbies, etc.
3. **Leddy Tutors:** We need individuals who can come to school for approximately 30 minutes once or twice a week to work with a child who really needs the attention of a caring adult. Leddy Preschool tutors work under the direction of the teacher, to help children develop language, play games and practice important early literacy skills.
4. **At Home Helper:** Parents are needed who can help assemble packets, cut out Labels for Education, etc. at home. These are great volunteer opportunities for working families.
5. **Special Event Helpers:** These volunteers come in when we need you! It could be helping to work at the Book Fair, tallying up fund raisers, etc. Special Event Helpers also assist in chaperoning field trips.
6. **Office Helper:** Our very busy secretary and guidance clerk are in great need of help running off papers, sorting the mail and other tasks.
7. **Sharing Your Interest with the children:** We are looking for families who will come to school one day and share a special interest such as fishing, painting, cooking, music, learning a song or words in your native language, etc. What can you show our young children?
8. **Parent Teacher Union (PTU):** Working hand in hand, teachers and parents do important fundraising to allow us to go on field trips and have special programs for the children. The PTU runs fun family events such as our Pizza and Puppet Show Night and the Ice Cream Sundae Party. The PTU is a great way to make friends with other parents, and to make an important contribution to the school. Please join the PTU. We need you!

Welcome to the Leady Preschool! We look forward to working together to help each of our children have a fun-filled and successful preschool experience. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's first educational endeavor.

***“Every Child, Every Day,
College Bound!”***