# 2011/2012

# Parent

# Handbook

**A Ministry of Green Valley Baptist Church**

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## LEARNING CENTER PURPOSE AND CURRICULUM

The Little Ed. (Education) Learning Center was created in 2004 by a group of mothers looking for a place of learning grounded in Christianity for their preschool age children. Green Valley Baptist Church agreed to sponsor an educational center for children. Currently, as per the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, the Center is religiously exempt from licensure and is classified as a "religiously exempt child day center."

Little Ed. Learning Center has been designed to facilitate children's growth in a Christian environment. The curriculum, in order to reinforce the teaching within a Christian home, is created and implemented to meet the following needs of each child:

1. <u>Spiritual</u>
   - Heighten a child's understanding of the active presence of God in his/her life.
     a) "Bring them (your children) up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)
     b) "And these words, which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)
2. <u>Intellectual</u>
   - Develop a child's ability to understand and deal with new situations and academic tasks (ex. beginning academics including phonic awareness, math exploration, verbal expression, pre-writing/writing skills, etc.)

3. <u>Social</u>
   - Opportunities for interaction with others, both adults and children, on an individual level and in groups.
   - Practice Christian concepts of love, cooperation, compassion and helpfulness.

4. <u>Emotional</u>
   - Enhance the child's ability to identify, understand and deal with his/her emotional states.
   - Promote positive perception about how he/she feels about him/herself.
   - Freedom to gain self-esteem, to acquire confidence in abilities and to develop personal responsibility.

5. <u>Physical</u>
   - Activities designed to strengthen a child's ability to master fine motor and gross motor skills in the framework of the child's ever-changing body.

- Little Ed. Learning Center provides a warm, safe, clean and nurturing environment where a child can learn through teacher-guided and child-initiated activities. Interactive discussions, hands-on approaches and utilization of props/manipulatives are used to help children learn and apply concepts in various subjects.

- The Center is located inside Green Valley Baptist Church at 695 Green Valley Road. The church building is a 37,400 sq. ft. facility with three rooms in the lower level set aside specifically for Little Ed. The fellowship hall and kitchen facilities are also available for the Center's use. However, food service is not provided. Outdoor play equipment is available including a climber with tube slide, playhouse, swing set, sandbox, and spring bouncer. The Center is covered by public liability insurance in the event of personal/bodily harm to any person during operating hours.

- A Beginner and a Pre-Kindergarten class is available. The maximum number of children that are enrolled per class is eight; one teacher per eight students. Classes are grouped according to age, but may be adjusted due to the number of enrollments.

- The Little Ed. Learning Center is based upon developmentally appropriate practice and understands that young children learn best through play. Therefore, the curriculum capitalizes on child-initiated activities involving:
    1. Choice making – chooses from a variety of learning activities throughout the day.
    2. Creating – freedom to be creative (ex. play dough, art projects, blocks, and other manipulatives, etc).
    3. Conversation – interacts with teacher, volunteers and other children.
    4. Playing – creative centers to question, to experiment, and to pretend.
    5. Discovering – various time to learn from experimentation, active exploration and special visitors.

- Classroom planning also takes into account that children vary in their abilities; therefore, children, at various times, may be worked with individually and in small groups.

**God make my life a little light,**
**Within the world to glow-**
**A tiny flame that burneth bright,**
**Wherever I may go.**

-M.B. Edwards

**ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- Student age range: children who have turned 3 years old by Labor Day to age 5.
- All students must be fully toilet trained. Diapers, training pants or pull-ups are not allowed.
- Completed admission application, emergency contact and child release forms.
- Completed confidential information form stipulating health issues, if any.
- Immunization form -- This form must be completed by each child's physician before entering the Center. If a child is not current on required shots, we will expect the deficiencies to be taken care of as outlined by the child's physician. Little Ed. Learning Center must ensure that all students are in compliance with current Code regarding immunization of children against diseases.
- Certified copy of birth certificate or other proof of child's identity and age. Parent/Guardian is asked to bring the birth certificate (or other documentation) to Orientation or make available to Little Ed. Staff on or before the first day of school.

Blessed are parents who have learned to laugh,
for it is the music of the child's world.

**REGISTRATION**

- Enrolled children are eligible to submit an application for the following school year by April 1st and are considered before outside enrollments are taken.
- Little Ed. Learning Center is a ministry of Green Valley Baptist Church. Therefore, priority placement is given to church members and their families at all times. Remaining placements are open to the community. To ensure a quality program, the Learning Center maintains a low child/teacher ratio.
- If classes become filled, a waiting list is maintained for each class. There is no fee to have a child placed on our wait list. Wait list candidates are considered if vacancies occur.

**FEES AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

- There is no registration fee at time of enrollment. However, upon acceptance into the Learning Center, we ask that a payment totaling one month's fee (for September) be included with completed admission application.
- Center Fees: $50.00 per month fee for the two-day class or $75.00 per month fee for the three-day class. Payments are to be made on the first class day of each month. If payment is not received by the 10th of the month, a written reminder may be sent home in the student's folder.
- Payments are accepted in the form of <u>check or money order only</u>. Payment should be made out to Green Valley Baptist Church. Cash payments <u>cannot</u> be accepted. Payments may be given to the teacher or church secretary.

## SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR 2011-2012

| | |
|---|---|
| September 6/7 | School Begins |
| November 8 | Election Day – no school |
| November 23 - 25 | Thanksgiving Holiday |
| December 19 | Christmas Vacation Begins |
| January 3/4 | Return to School |
| April 6-13 | Spring Break & Easter Holiday |
| May 24 | Graduation Ceremony (evening) |
| May 25 | Last School Day: Field Day Fun for all students |

Little Ed. Learning Center follows the Russell Country Public School Calendar
for holidays, breaks and inclement weather closings and delays.
The Russell County school calendar can be found at http://www.russell.k12.va.us/calendar.htm.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

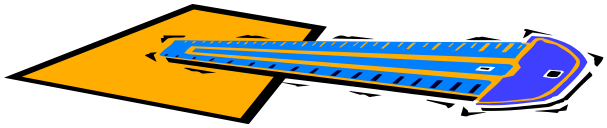
In the event of inclement weather, the Russell County Public School's decision for closure will be followed. If Russell County Schools have a delayed opening (snow schedule), the Learning Center will delay its opening until 10:00 a.m. and will extend closing to 12:30 p.m. If the Russell County Public Schools close after the school day has begun, we ask that you pick your child up as soon as possible. The local TV channels and radio stations will broadcast school closings

## ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

- It is important that you be punctual in your arrival and departure times. Class will normally begin promptly at 9:00 am. We ask that you say your good-buys at the classroom door and allow the student to enter the classroom independently. The student should also be picked up at the classroom door at 12:00 p.m. dismissal time. Please note that running and/or screaming in the Fellowship Hall before or after school is not allowed due to safety concerns and in consideration of others working nearby.
- The teacher is ready to accept children at 8:50 am. Your child should never be left at the Learning Center without informing a staff member. We also require that you sign your child in and out of the Learning Center at the designated location.
- Children will only be released to those individuals authorized on the applicable release form. The teacher must receive written notification, in advance, if someone other than the individual(s) listed is to pick up the child.

**OUR TEACHER: Karen Lambert 2008/2009 School Year - Present**

- Ms. Lambert is a member of Green Valley Baptist Church and is one of the Founding Mothers of the Little Ed. Learning Center, its program and curriculum. Because the Center originated in 2004 with her own daughter in mind, she is committed to the goals and purpose of Little Ed. and feels blessed to have had a part in this ministry of the church since its inception. She has experience at the Center as planner, volunteer, and teacher and feels very privileged to have shared a time of learning with all the students who have been with us.
- Please know your child will be cared for and encouraged to develop and better the skills needed in preparation for Pre-K or Kindergarten…and just have fun too!
- Karen, her husband Kent, and their daughter Kira live in the Huffman Hill area of Lebanon. She can be reached at home at (276) 880-1210 for any questions/concerns you may have. She welcomes you to be part of the "Little Ed. Family".



*"In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him,*
*and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths." Proverbs 3:6*

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

- Volunteers from the church and community are used in the classroom and are a vital part of our program. This dedicated assistance enhances the program and expands the students' normal classroom activities. Little Ed. Learning Center expects our staff and volunteers to be kind, trustworthy, patient, and cooperative; to have a love of children and work with the objectives of the Center in mind. Our teacher must be certified annually to be free from any disability which would prevent him/her from caring for children and also retain certification in First Aid. The Center has criminal background checks performed for staff members and regular volunteers.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION**

- Parents are welcome to visit their child's class at any time. Parents are also encouraged to get involved by sharing their vocation or special talents (ex. cooking, music, crafts, etc.) with the students. Please let the teacher know if you have a desire to participate.

**LEARNING CENTER CONTACTS**

- The Learning Center can be contacted any time during school hours by calling the Green Valley Baptist Church office at (276) 889-0257. Our Church secretary is Lynda Edmonds. Lynda graciously acts as liaison for the Center's staff during school hours.
- We encourage open communication with the teacher, volunteers and church staff. Our teacher, Ms. Lambert, is available to talk with you before or after school hours or may be contacted at home at (276) 880-1210. We want you to feel free to discuss your child's activities and progress, and will work with your schedule to do so. We ask only that you do not voice grievances about the Center in front of the students.

Additionally, if warranted, our Pastor will be available to meet together with teacher and parents to discuss grievances, questions and/or concerns.

## HEALTH POLICY

- Parents are strongly encouraged to keep their child home if:
    a) the child has had a fever in the last 24 hours. Parents will be contacted by the Learning Center to arrange pick up if their child develops a fever or becomes ill during the day.
    b) fussy, cranky and/or generally not him/herself.
    c) shows symptoms of infectious or communicable diseases: sniffles, red eye, sore throat, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, hacking cough, difficulty in breathing or abdominal pain. Please consult your child's physician if unsure and notify us so that we can encourage others to take precautions.
    d) undiagnosed rashes.
- The child may return to the Learning Center after illness when:
    a) a fever has broken for 24 hours.
    b) nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea has subsided for 24 hours.
    c) at least 4 doses of antibiotic has been administered over a 24 hour period for any type of strep or bacterial infection.
    d) showing signs of feeling better and resumed normal behavior.

## SAFETY/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Entry doors remain locked during operating hours. Anyone desiring entry into the church building can be admitted only at lower level doors by authorized personnel.
- A fire drill may be held to familiarize the children with the proper way to exit the building during an emergency. During an emergency, children will be escorted to a safe place outside the building.
- The Center's staff will perform assessment and treatment of minor injuries. If additional treatment appears necessary, the parent, guardian or emergency contact will be notified. If a life-threatening situation occurs, 911 will be called first and then the parent, guardian or emergency contact will be notified.

## SPECIAL DAYS

- On or near the date of a student's birthday, parents are welcome to bring in treats during snack time in celebration of the special occasion. Parents/family members are invited to stay and host the party and may bring treats of their choice (cake, cupcakes, cookies, etc.) for all students. Please be mindful of food allergies and carefully select the food (ex. avoid nut or nut products). One week before the intended party, the parent should notify the teacher. Students with summer birthdays may celebrate their half-year birthday. Students are not expected to exchange gifts and only the usual twenty-minute snack period will be allocated for this activity.
- Theme days will occur throughout the year. Parents will be given written notice if the child is to wear or bring something special to class on a particular day (ex. Teddy Bear Day, Pajama Day, etc). Please check folder in backpack daily for notes sent home. This is our best means of communication.
- Holidays will be celebrated with a Christian emphasis including Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Please note that some secular holidays, including Halloween, will not be celebrated.

**GRADUATION / END-OF-YEAR CELEBRATION**

- A gathering of family and friends will be held at the end of the school year to celebrate the students' accomplishments and to thank those who had a part in the encouragement and care of the children during the school year. All students, even those who are returning for a second year, are eligible to attend and will be asked to participate. Parents will have the option to purchase a cap and gown for their child to wear during the ceremony and photo ops.

**DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE**

The daily schedule is planned to include quiet periods, active times and short/long durations. The schedule is flexible depending upon the day's activities.

9:00 – 9:20 Get Started with Fun
- To ease separation from parents, the day will begin with a fun activity or craft relating to the number, letter or theme of the month.

9:20 – 9:30
- Say "good morning" to God in prayer.
- Assign child their classroom job for the day (to be rotated by day).
- Pledge to the American Flag and Christian Flag

9: 30 – 9:50 Classroom Time
- Meaningful classroom activities provide opportunities to write, color, draw, to explore ideas, to observe, to ask questions and to facilitate academic and social learning.

9:50 – 10:20 Circle time
- Games and stories relating to the day's lessons.
- Special guests and/or show and tell.
- Bible lesson including story and verse.
- Songs that may have a Christian emphasis, relate to the daily lesson and/or contain movement.

10:20 – 10:25 Gather lunchbox for snack time and be seated at snack table.

10:25 – 10:45 Morning Snack (after prayer)
- <u>Snack and drink are to be provided each day by the parent.</u>
- Clean-up and return to classroom.

10:45 – 11:25 Active and Classroom Time
- Activities, projects and/or crafts relating to the day's lesson or theme.

11:25 – 11:50 Play & Learn
- Opportunities to play on the outside playground (weather permitting) or in the Imaginative Play Center room.

11:50 – 12:00 Clean-up and Wind down
- Children review day, assist in clean-up and gather personal items in preparation for pick-up.

12:00 Students dismissed to Parent/Authorized Individual

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## PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The Learning Center will provide each child with a coat/backpack hook and a cubby in the classroom for personal belongings. You may wish to label all of your child's belongings with a permanent marker. Additionally, each child is provided with a folder to carry information and activities to home and back to school. This folder facilitates written communication between parent and teacher as well.

- The following is a list of things that each student should bring:
    a) Soft school backpack to hold send home projects and information.
    b) Change of clothes (shirt, underwear, pants, socks), updated with seasonal changes. Clothes will be kept at the Learning Center until the end of the school year in a ziplock bag marked with your child's name.
    c) Daily snack packed in lunchbox or bag. Parents are encouraged to provide nutritional snacks appropriate for mid-morning (ex. juice box, water, crackers, fruit, etc). At times, the teacher may ask the parents to pack a snack that enhances the monthly theme. Please pack an amount that can be consumed in the normal twenty minute allotted snack time.
    d) Parents interested in providing photos that may be used in the slide show at our graduation/end-of-year celebration should submit photos on a Picture CD. CD should be labeled with your child's name and will be returned.

Note: Toys from home are not always conducive to co-operative play and may become misplaced, damaged, etc. Toys are to be brought to the Learning Center <u>only</u> on designated special days.

## CLOTHING

- Children should wear comfortable clothing that is easily washed. Your child will be engaged in active learning, art projects and play, so please dress him/her in casual clothes and sturdy, well fitting rubber-soled shoes.

**DISCIPLINE**

- "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). "Kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healthy for the body" (Proverbs 16:24).

- The staff uses positive reinforcement, and the setting of clear guidelines to encourage acceptable behavior. Incentives are used to promote good behavior. Each week students who have not received a time-out are rewarded by being allowed to choose a "Treasure". Star stickers can be earned daily. After 20 stars are awarded, student is allowed an additional "Treasure" selection. Additional incentives and rewards may be added during the school year.

  The Center also utilizes a Behavior Color System similar to that used locally at the kindergarten level. This System allows the child to visually track their behavior and make needed corrections. Our intent is not to shame a child for bad behavior, but to assist the child in making choices on their own to correct behavior and be happy with themselves for doing so.
  ☺ Green Light – "I'm having a good day. I will keep up the good work!"
  😐 Yellow Light – "This is a warning. I can choose to behave differently."
  ☹ Red Light – "I need a time-out to think about my behavior."

- The child may be separated from the group for a time-out, if he/she needs to regain control or is in danger of hurting self/others. The time-out lasts one minute per the child's age, and the child remains in view of the teacher. If the child's behavior continues, after these measures are taken, the parent may be asked to come and to pick up their child. Parents will be notified if a time-out is used with their child.

  Examples where a time out may be needed include:
  a) pushing, hitting, or other improper physical contact.
  b) disrespect toward the teacher, volunteers or other children.
  c) refusal to follow directions.
  d) repeated acts of not sharing, not listening, or not taking turns.

- Corporal punishment is not carried out under any circumstance. Children will not be slapped, spanked, or hit in any manner.

- The teacher will contact the parent and arrange a meeting to develop strategies for managing a child's behavior if there is above average concern. If behavior does not improve or continually worsens, the Little Ed. Staff reserves the right to withdraw the child from the Learning Center.

- Learning Center rules are posted in the classroom and explained in detail with the children during the first week of school.

*The Little Ed Learning Center staff reserves the right to refuse service or to request the withdrawal of a child. Each situation is evaluated on an individual basis.*

**STUDENT WITHDRAWAL**

- Parents are free to withdraw their child at any time. Written notification is requested to be given two weeks in advance of withdrawal of any student, if possible.
- A two-week lapse in attendance <u>without</u> notification is considered withdrawal.