



# Family Handbook

## Mechanicsburg Learning Center



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[www.mlckids.org](http://www.mlckids.org)



MechanicsburgLearningCenter@MLCKids



Website QR Code



mechancisburg\_learning\_center

## Table of Contents

Locations	3
Welcome to MLC	4
Our Programs	4
Hours of Operation	5
Purpose and Philosophy	5
Inclusion Policy	5
Dual Language Learners	5
Board of Directors	6
Enrollment and Tuition	6
Attendance	7
Withdrawal	7
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies	7
Custody Orders	7
Parent Involvement	7
IEPs	7
Confidentiality Policy	8
Child Abuse Reporting	8
Treasures and Possessions	8
Diapers and Toilet Training	8
Meals, Snacks, and Food Allergies	8-9
Transitioning	9
Medical Records	9
Wellness Policy	10
Medical Records	10
Injuries and Accidents	11
Clothing	11
Daily Routines	11
Conferences	11
Discipline and Guidance Policy	11-12

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**Administrative Office**  
**601 E. Simpson Street, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055**  
**717-766-2439**  
**Office Hours: 8:00 – 4:00, Monday through Friday**

### ***Early Learning Centers***

**Delbrook**  
4746 Delbrook Road  
Mechanicsburg PA, 17055  
(717) 766-2439

**MLC Pre-K Counts**  
**Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church**  
1050 South York Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
(717) 856-9894

### ***School Age Programs***

#### **Mechanicsburg School District**

**Kindergarten Academy**  
600 South Norway Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055  
(717) 910-8640

**Northside Elementary School**  
411 North Walnut Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055  
(717) 579-3483

**Broad Street Elementary School**  
200 South Broad Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055  
(717) 910-8643

**Shepherdstown Elementary School**  
1849 South York Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055  
(717) 910-8722

**Upper Allen Elementary School**  
1790 South Market Street  
Mechanicsburg, PA. 17055  
(717) 579-6908

#### **East Pennsboro School District**

**East Pennsboro Elementary School**  
840 Panther Parkway  
Enola, PA. 17025  
(717) 910-8824

**West Creek Hills Elementary**  
400 Erford Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
(717) 315-2060

#### **Northern York County School District**

**South Mountain Elementary School**  
711 South Mountain Road  
Dillsburg, PA 17019  
(717) 350-0332

**Dillsburg Elementary School**  
202 Chestnut Street  
Dillsburg, PA. 17019  
(717) 910-8724

**Northern Elementary School**  
657 S. Baltimore Street  
Dillsburg, PA 17019  
(717) 910-8649

**Wellsville Elementary School**  
1060 Zeigler Road  
Wellsville, PA 17365  
(717) 579-6072

## **Welcome to MLC!**

We are delighted that you have chosen the Mechanicsburg Learning Center to provide for the needs of your child. We are committed to supporting families by maintaining open communication and encourage parental involvement in our programs.

This handbook has been written to describe our programs, philosophy, policies, and details that go into making each day as successful as possible. Please read the handbook carefully and keep it for future reference.

## **Our Programs**

### **Early Learning Center**

MLC's learning program at Delbrook is for children ages 6 weeks through five-years-old. MLC's program at McBIC is our Pre-K Counts program.

### **School-Age Programs**

MLC holds school-age programs in Mechanicsburg, East Pennsboro, and Northern York County School Districts. MLC's programs in Mechanicsburg School District serve children Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. MLC's programs in East Pennsboro and Northern York County School Districts serve children Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Summer Camp**

When school is not in session, MLC offers a summer camp for school-age children. Summer camp is an all-day program at select MLC locations. Throughout the summer, children will go on field trips, participate in activities brought to MLC, and more importantly, have fun and learn!

All of our programs are licensed by the PA Dept. of Human Services. For more information on the child care regulations please visit

<http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html&d=> or contact DHS by calling 1-800-222-2117.

## Hours of Operation

Mechanicsburg Learning Center School Age programs operate from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. MLC at Delbrook operates 6:30am to 5:30pm. Pre-K Counts at McBIC operates from 6:30am to 3:30 pm. All programs are closed for the following major holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Columbus Day
- President's Day
- Fourth of July
- Thanksgiving
- Spring Holiday
- Labor Day
- Winter Holiday

*\*Dates may vary yearly based on calendar and location. Yearly calendars distributed to all families.*

## Purpose and Philosophy

The original purpose of the Mechanicsburg Learning Center (MLC) was, and still is, to provide quality care of children while their parents are at work and to involve these children in developmentally appropriate and enriching experiences. We use the *Creative Curriculum*, linked with *PA Early Learning Standards*, to create child-based learning programs that reflect children's interests and needs. MLC utilizes the *Caring For Our Children National Health and Safety Guidelines* to ensure the best quality at all of our programs.

We believe . . .

- Children are unique and must receive care from adults who are capable and caring, whose values enable them to be excellent role models, and who acknowledge each child's uniqueness and individual needs.
- Children's play is extremely vital to healthy physical development, acceptable social skills, and cognitive growth.
- Teachers and staff drawing upon their training and experience must create an appropriate educational environment which guides children in enriching learning experiences.
- Parents contribute to and enhance the quality of care offered at MLC.

## Inclusion Policy

MLC is a non-sectarian, private, non-profit corporation dedicated to providing quality programs for children. We enroll children regardless of race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or special needs, medical condition or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a childcare setting, as well as the parents/guardians served. MLC will conduct an individualized assessment of the particular needs of a child and family and engage in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians, caregivers, and medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and to safely integrate the child into the program, given each individual's capabilities, and to give the family full access to and participation in our programs to the extent feasible.

Any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with our center administration or staff will be held to the strictest confidence.

## Dual Language Learners

Home language support is the foundation for developing English language skills. MLC will promote positive experiences for any children who are dual language learners by emphasizing their strengths and being aware of their culture and linguistic needs. Our program is committed to understanding and supporting the development of dual language learners that attend our centers.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the governing body for the Mechanicsburg Learning Center. Board meetings are held monthly at 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of the month at the MLC Administrative Office. All parents are welcome to attend. Representation on the Board is composed of parents/guardians of children who are or have been receiving MLC services and interested community representatives.

The annual meeting of the Membership and Board of Directors of MLC is held each May. The purpose of this annual meeting is the election of the Officers and Board of Directors, ratification of changes in the Bylaws governing MLC, and the completion of other required business. Any parent interested in further information about the Board of Directors, or any parents who feels they may be interested in assisting MLC as a Board of Committee member, should contact the MLC Administrative Office. As a non-profit organization, we readily welcome assistance from volunteers.

## Enrollment and Tuition/Fees

Before your child can attend one of MLC's programs, the following must be completed:

- Enrollment form with registration fee\* (*if applicable*) and deposit\*\*
- Tuition Agreement
- Emergency Contact Form
- Informed Consent Form
- Child Background Information
- Current Health Appraisal with Current Immunizations
- Special care plans (*if applicable*)

We are required to exclude children from care who do not have a current health appraisal on file within 60 calendar days of their beginning services. **Parents are required to pay for any day's children are excluded from care while obtaining an overdue health appraisal.**

\*Registration fees only apply to new MLC families and those who have left and later returned.

\*\*Deposit equals one-week tuition that will be applied to the first week of care/last week of school.

Our tuition schedule is included in our enrollment packet. MLC offers a sibling discount. Tuition is due **Friday** for the upcoming week. There will be a \$25.00 late fee if payment is received after Monday 9am. A \$20.00 service fee will be charged for returned checks. Tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance. **MLC reserves the right to terminate services due to nonpayment or habitual delinquency.**

MLC collaborates with the Early Learning Resource Center to ensure families can receive tuition assistance. All information on families receiving financial assistance is confidential.

Cumberland/Dauphin/Lebanon/Perry Counties  
(717) 210-3334 or 1-800-864-4295

Adams/Lancaster/York Counties  
(717) 854-2273 or 1-800-864-4295

## Attendance

We request that you notify the center your child attends if he/she will be absent to enable proper tracking of attendance. It is especially important to inform us of absences or changes in attendance if your child is enrolled in an after-school program. We need your assistance in knowing whether or not to expect your child and we will contact you if your child does not report to the after-school program and we have not received notice.

## Withdrawal

MLC requires a **two-week written withdrawal notice**. If this notice is not received two weeks prior to withdrawal, MLC will charge an amount equal to two weeks tuition from the date the notice is received.

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies

Parents/guardians are expected to accompany their child into the center and sign them in each day (*only applicable to early learning centers and before school care in school-age programs*)

**Only individuals listed in the person(s) to whom child may be released section will be allowed to leave with a child.** The staff is required to request a picture ID from any unfamiliar person (*including parents & grandparents*). If there is any concern, the staff of MLC reserve the right to deny a person's request to pick up a child.

In the event of an emergency, a parent may call to inform us of an alternate pick-up person. A verbal release form will be filled out and must be sign by the parent the next day.

## Custody Orders

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders **must** be given to the center supervisor.

## Parent Involvement

MLC has an open-door policy for parents, you are welcome to visit your child's program at any time. MLC strives to create a strong home and center connection by creating open communication with you about your child's development at their center. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and your child's center staff. MLC partners with outside community resources and is able to refer families if your child is in need of further assistance.

## IEPs

If your child has an IEP, we ask that you provide us with a current copy so we may make the necessary accommodations for your child. If you would like your child's site supervisor to attend their IEP meeting, please let us know.

## Confidentiality Policy

The Mechanicsburg Learning Center believes in the integrity of all our clients and will do everything possible to ensure that all information that is provided by enrolling families will be kept confidential. Families will be required to sign a release form before any information can be released from our agency.

## Child Abuse Reporting

All staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

## Treasures and Possessions

Each child at our early learning center will need a blanket or blanket sleeper and two sets of clothing, **labeled** with your child's name. These items should be checked at the end of the day to see if they have been used and need to be taken home for laundering. If your child needs a pacifier, security blanket, or stuffed animal to which they are attached with, you may bring these items.

Sometimes children need to bring special toys or new-found treasures to use as a "bridge" between home and the center. On these occasions, we will work with your child to make it a positive sharing experience. Past experience has shown us that often toys from home create problems at the center. We encourage you to keep personal belongings and toys at home unless the center has scheduled a show and tell day. **MLC does NOT allow children to bring electronics. MLC will not be responsible for any lost items.**

## Diapers and Toilet Training

Parents are required to supply disposable diapers and wipes **labeled** with your child's name. Please check daily to ensure your child has an adequate supply.

Children differ greatly in age for the right time to begin potty training. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful.

## Meals, Snacks, and Food Allergies

The center will provide milk each day with morning snack, afternoon snack, and lunch.

Parents must provide a lunch for their child each day (*only applicable to early learning centers and all-day care for school-age programs*). Lunches from home should be self-serving or easy to serve and clearly **labeled**.



If there are dietary needs or food allergies, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the center. An allergy action plan is required for any child with a food allergy. If your child has medication related to their allergy, it must be provided (*see Medicine section for more information*). Parents can supply special snacks for their child. If parents wish to send a special treat for your child's birthday or other special occasion, please speak with your center's supervisor several days in advance. This will enable time to prepare and assist in this special time for your child.

## Transitioning

There are four critical elements to the successful transition of young children and families as they move from infants to toddlers, toddlers to preschool, and preschool to kindergarten. Educational staff in both settings can facilitate transition by:

- Providing program continuity through developmentally appropriate curriculum for children.
- Maintaining ongoing communication and cooperation between staff in each room.
- Preparing children for transition.
- Involving parents in the transition.

By focusing attention on each one of these important aspects of the transition process, early childhood educators build a more continuous educational experience for their young children and their families. Children develop at their own pace; therefore, any transitions that are going to occur for your child will be discussed with you prior to the transition. Every child who moves from one room to the next will visit their new teacher and room for 1 day throughout the week for one week to ease this process.

The transition process continues through school age care. When your child has reached the age where they can no longer attend MLC, we are happy to provide seminars, handouts, and information on your child staying home or information on childcare for older children.

## Medical Records

A current health appraisal is required for all children within 60 calendar days from their start date and annually thereafter (*early learning centers only*). **The health appraisal must be signed by a medical examiner.** Children must have up to date immunizations on file at the time of enrollment and on an ongoing basis.

## Wellness Policy

In an effort to keep the children and staff as healthy as possible, we have developed the following policy using guidance from the Caring For Our Children Health and Safety Standards; A joint collaborative project of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and the National Resource Center of Health and Safety in Child Care. You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if your child becomes ill, displays an unknown rash, or acts out of character while in our care, you may be called to come take your child home. When called, you or an alternate emergency person is expected to come **immediately**. This is to protect the health of your child and the other children in our care. Your cooperation is appreciated. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Fever of 100°F or higher when taken axillary (*armpit or forehead*) and behavior change or other symptoms (*sore throat, rash, vomiting, etc.*).

- For mild fever, headaches, or muscle aches, Tylenol (*supplied from home*) may be administered (*see Medicine section for more information*)
- Diarrhea not contained in the toilet (*all infants and children in diapers with diarrhea must be sent home*).
- Blood or mucus in stool
- Abnormal color of stool for that child (*i.e. all black or very pale*)
- No urine output for 8 hours
- Jaundice (*yellow skin or eyes*)
- Highly contagious condition such as head lice, chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, mumps, conjunctivitis (*pink eye*), etc.

**If your child is too ill to play outside with their group or participate in regular activities, then your child is too ill to attend the center.**

Your child may return to the center after:

- Obtaining written verification from a doctor.
- Fever free for 24 hours *without the aid of Tylenol or other fever reducing medications*.
- In the case of head lice, following treatment with an appropriate shampoo so that **all** nits/eggs are gone.
- In the case of a contagious illness, antibiotics are given 24 hours prior to returning.

### **Health Care Consultant**

Mechanicsburg Learning Center works with a registered nurse through Penn State Health to consult on health care procedures, policies, CDC and local Department of Health guidelines.

### **Medicine**

**We strongly recommend that parents administer all medications to their children outside the hours their children participate in MLC programs.** When this is not possible, MLC will administer medication.

#### **Prescription Medication**

It is required that prescription medication be in the original container, labeled with the child's name. Staff cannot administer medication without the proper dosage for that child listed on the container. If the container reads "consult doctor" then written instruction must be provided from the doctor. All medication must be signed in on a medication log for staff to administer it to your child.

#### **Non-Prescription Medication**

Over the counter medication must be provided in the original container, labeled with the child's name. If over the counter medication is required for your child, it must be signed in on a medication log for staff to administer it to your child. MLC staff will administer over the counter medication at 12 pm each day it is required.

**\*Parents may come anytime to administer medication to their child\***

### **Injuries and Accidents**

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. In the events of minor injuries, treatment is limited to simple first aid by the staff. An accident report will be filled out and

must be signed by a parent. Should there be any doubt of our ability to treat an injury, parents will be notified immediately to pick their child up for appropriate care. If a life-threatening injury occurs, the parent will be called to meet the ambulance at the hospital.

Although every precaution is taken to avoid accidents, occasionally a child is injured. Our liability insurance does not cover the cost of medical care unless MLC has been negligent. Parental medical insurance is the primary coverage for their children.

## **Clothing**

Because we do a wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in comfortable clothing. We also ask that you provide the center with an extra set of clothing in case of spills or accidents. All extra clothing should be **labeled** with your child's name and placed in a plastic bag. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean set of extra clothes the next day.

It is required that children be taken outdoors each day (*weather permitting*). The children will play outdoors if the temperature is between 25°F and 90°F. Children should be dressed accordingly.

## **Daily Routines**

Each center has their daily routine posted on their parent information board.

## **Conferences**

Child assessments and parent conferences are scheduled with parents by teachers to discuss each child's progress and adjustment. Parent conferences are offered twice a year. All evaluations are based on observations that are completed on an ongoing basis and shared with parents prior to their child's conference. If a problem arises or if you have questions or concerns about your child, please do not wait for a conference, talk with your child's teacher immediately.

## **Discipline and Guidance Policy**

MLC's goal is to encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices. There are several forms of guidance in our centers:

- **Environment:** A place designed for the children. Rooms have age-appropriate furniture and toys.
- **Logical Rules:** Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and cleaning up after ourselves. These rules are discussed with children as well as why we have these rules.
- **Curriculum:** Developmentally appropriate and based on children's interests.
- **Positive Behavior:** We reinforce the behaviors we wish to see repeated.
- **Redirection:** Children will be offered a different area or activity to help eliminate any potential difficult behaviors.
- **Positive Reminder:** Telling children what we want them to do or what a better choice would be rather than just saying "no" or "don't".
- **Renewal Time:** Occasionally, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief break. This allows the child time to calm down and consider an alternate behavior.

We will make every effort to work with parents/guardians to ensure a cooperative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We welcome outside agencies into our programs to work with children to ensure their success, whether it is an occupational therapist, behavioral therapist, etc. We are also happy to refer families to services if desired. At times when this is not enough and behavior escalates and cannot be modified by the center's staff, a parent may be called at work or home. In these instances, parents may be asked to come get their child immediately. The following steps will be taken for children who display serious inappropriate behavior (*hitting other children or staff, kicking or throwing supplies or furniture, inappropriate language or screaming at other children or staff, spitting at other children or staff, etc.*)

### **1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence**

The situation will be addressed by a staff member and documented. The parent will be asked to sign the documentation of the event and discuss with staff any strategies or ideas to help prevent further events.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Occurrence**

Parents will be called to pick up their child immediately and the child will be suspended from the MLC program on the next MLC service day. Staff and parents should discuss new strategies and interventions to prevent further disruptive events.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Occurrence**

Parents will be called to pick their child up immediately and the child will be suspended from the MLC program for the next three MLC service days. A conference must be scheduled with the director, center supervisor, and parent before the child can return the program. Parents may be asked to consult outside professionals or bring in behavioral specialist to help identify the problems or provide new strategies.

### **Disenrollment**

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be disenrolled from the center at the discretion of the center director.

**\*Physical punishment or abusive language is not permitted under any circumstances.**

**\*\*Full payment is required for any absence due to disciplinary problems**