

Family Guide

OHIO

Revised July 2026

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Welcome to Lionheart!

We are so excited to welcome your family to Lionheart Children's Academy! Every child who walks through our doors is uniquely made and deeply loved by God. It's our greatest joy to partner with you as we help your child discover who God created them to be.

Here, learning is full of wonder where we explore God's amazing creation through play, laughter, and hands-on experiences. Whether your child is building with blocks, painting a masterpiece, digging in the sensory table, or singing worship songs during chapel, every day is filled with opportunities to grow, learn, and celebrate how much God loves us.

As a Lionheart parent myself, I've loved watching my own children build friendships here and come home full of stories about what they learned that day. It's a special thing to see their joy and confidence grow, and I can't wait for your family to experience that too.

We know starting something new can feel big, for both kids and parents! Our team is here to walk alongside you through the transition, and we welcome your ideas to help your child settle in and feel at home.

Your Academy Director is always your best resource, but if you ever have a concern or a compliment, I'd love to hear from you.

We're grateful God brought your family to Lionheart. Let's get started — and let the fun begin!

Mia Beall

Mia Beall
COO



About Us

Lionheart Children's Academy is a non-profit organization that partners with local churches to provide exceptional child care. Lionheart is operationally independent from the church. However, we are grateful for the leadership and congregational support from host churches, as well as the incredible facilities that our churches provide. We are thankful for this partnership as it allows us to serve hard working parents in need of safe, reliable child care in the communities and neighborhoods surrounding each church.

Lionheart offers year-round, full and part-time child care for children six weeks old through Pre-K. Additionally, we offer before and after school care and our Trailblazers summer club for children kindergarten through 12 years of age.

LIONHEART CHILDREN'S ACADEMY AT COMMUNITY COMMONS

Phone
513-688-0085
Email
CommunityCommons@lionheartkid.org
Address
9850 Carolina Trace Road
Harrison, OH 45030
Hours
6:30 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday

EVACUATION LOCATION

In the event of an emergency evacuation from the premises, we will relocate all children and staff to:

The Fire Department southwest of our academy, located at 10250 West Rd, Harrison, OH 45030

If an emergency evacuation takes place, teachers are equipped with emergency kits that travel with them. Teachers will maintain name-to-face attendance as the children relocate to the alternate site. Families will be contacted by phone and/or email. Children will only be released to parents/guardians or emergency contacts. Please refer to the Emergency Evacuation Procedures in this handbook and on the Family Board in the academy for more detailed information.

LICENSING INFORMATION

Families are invited to review policies that govern all early childhood programs.

- You can contact the licensing office at 1-877-302-2347 option 4, or email them at childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov
- Suspected child abuse can be reported to 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453).
- Parents may review a copy of the Ohio rules at any time at **https://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/**



Family Engagement

PARTNERSHIP

We care deeply for children and their families. We are passionate about early childhood education, and our leadership teams bring decades of experience in the classroom. We also have an innate desire to create a sense of community and family within our academy. Our goal is to not only capture children's minds, but also their hearts. We consider our work at Lionheart a calling, and therefore have a relentless desire for excellence. The experience that you and your child have at Lionheart is incredibly important to us. This handbook is designed to help you navigate your time with Lionheart and provide you with our policies and procedures.

You know your child best, and having a strong partnership with you will help us best serve your family. Family involvement, family satisfaction, and shared decision making about your child's experiences are essential. By working together, we can help your child feel safe, loved and connected. We desire to get to know you. Building strong relationships and maintaining clear, consistent communication between home and the academy is vital to our success. It is important you feel comfortable and confident in the team that cares for your child. We also encourage your child to talk about the academy and their activities.

Communication is essential, and we will do our best to keep you informed. Our methods include email, phone, text messages, Daily Connect and face-to-face communication. Unless specified in a court document, communication will be sent to both parents. If you see a way we can improve or have any questions about your child's class, the academy, the policies in this handbook or anything else, please connect directly with your Academy Director. Your feedback is important. Our annual parent survey also allows you to rate and comment on the experience your child and your family are receiving at our academy.

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's academy activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. If you wish to volunteer, please speak to your Academy Director.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment in which children can grow, learn, develop, and thrive. Achieving this is not only the responsibility of our employees, but it is the responsibility of every parent or adult who enters the academy.

Disagreements or differences of opinion may happen. It's critical that we have an environment of mutual respect, tolerance and honest communication at all times, even before disagreements occur. If you have concerns, please bring those directly to the appropriate teacher or the academy leadership.

EVERY ADULT WHO ENTERS THE ACADEMY IS EXPECTED TO:

- **Use appropriate language**- Swearing or any other inappropriate language is not tolerated.
- **Be respectful**- Threats of any kind will not be tolerated.
- **Appropriately guide and speak to your child**- Physical punishment or verbal abuse of children is not permitted.
- **Provide guidance to your child only**- Parents are prohibited from disciplining or correcting a child that is not their own.
- **Bring all concerns to academy leadership**- We prohibit parents seeking out other parents to discuss a child's behavior. Parents/guardians may not communicate with staff through channels outside of Academy or Lionheart-approved communication methods.
- **Follow all safety procedures**- Please read through our academy safety section and abide by those requirements.
- **Dress appropriately**- Inappropriate clothing would include revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and/or see-through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.
- **No Smoking or Vaping**- Smoking and vaping are prohibited in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot.
- **No Drug Use**- It is prohibited to be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or other illegal drugs in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot.

Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the academy property, and their child will be disenrolled. Due to the parents right to immediate access, we unfortunately cannot have a child at the academy when the child's parent has prohibited access.

ACCESS TO YOUR CHILD

Having a strong sense of trust with us is important. As a parent, you are entitled to immediate access to your child whenever they are in our care. You are welcome to call to check on them at any point in the day.

Generally, the academy cannot deny a parent or guardian access to a child without court authorization, and families are required to resolve their differences through legal channels.

Some families have legal custodial orders that address who is permitted to pick up or visit a child. If there are custody orders relating to your child, a certified copy must be provided to the academy for your child's records. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child, and will be strictly followed by the academy.

All families must update the academy when custody orders change or expire.

Please discuss questions about custody arrangements with your Academy Director.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We respect the right of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding all health, behavioral and developmental records and information about their child. As such, all information contained in your child's records is confidential. Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Lionheart Children's Academy and support staff in order to appropriately and safely care for your child.

Parents will be notified about the information that is to be shared outside of Lionheart Children's Academy, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information. Family contact information will periodically be shared with our host church for strengthening family connections. If licensing, CPS, or another government agency needs to speak with your child as part of an investigation, we are required to allow them access. These conversations take place in a room with camera coverage to help ensure your child's safety and maintain transparency.

As a parent or guardian, you can request access to your child's records, and we are happy to provide access at reasonable times to records kept at the academy. You also have the right to add and update information, comments, data, or other relevant materials to your child's record. If you withdraw your child from the academy, we will maintain your child's records for the minimum period of time required by the academy's local child care licensing regulations.

We also have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of all persons associated with the academy. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as we strive to protect everyone's right to privacy. Employees of Lionheart Children's Academy are strictly prohibited from discussing anything regarding another child with you.

Lastly, out of respect for other children and families, please do not post photos or videos that contain images of children other than your own on the internet.

CAMERAS

For your child's safety, we use security cameras throughout the building. By entering the Academy, you give permission for video recording while on site. Only Academy leadership or licensing officials (when required) review footage. If an incident occurs, parents are welcome to review footage of their child alongside Academy leadership. To protect the privacy of all children, video copies are not shared or distributed.



Our Program

AT A GLANCE

Educational Curriculum

We utilize Experience Early Learning curriculum in all classrooms. The curriculum is research-based and designed to nurture your child's natural curiosity, promoting whole-brain learning that supports both cognitive and emotional development. Our teachers are equipped with a toolbox of hands-on materials to bring children a variety of learning experiences through creative expression, play and open-ended discovery. All lesson plans are posted outside of each classroom.

Spiritual Curriculum

We support children's spiritual development with First Look curriculum, which is based on three foundational principles: God made me, God loves me, and Jesus wants to be my friend forever. First Look is taught during our weekly chapel time, known as "ROAR Time," and also implemented by teachers in the classroom all throughout the week. We focus on one scripture per month which allows many opportunities for children to hide these scriptures in their hearts.

Assessments

Research tells us that the highest quality programs consistently measure the developmental progress of children. We use the observations collected to strengthen our programs and provide a customized learning experience for your child. Our assessments tell us how your child has progressed, display what your child can do, and show us what your child is interested in.

Parent Teacher Conferences

We know that your child's developmental and educational goals are important to you. For this reason, we schedule one on one times with your child's teacher to discuss your child's growth and academy experience. You will have the opportunity to schedule parent teacher conferences at designated times throughout the year.

Teachers

We hire only the best and most committed staff at Lionheart. Our staff meet state licensing requirements and undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including background check. Staff are certified in Pediatric First Aid, Pediatric CPR, and Universal Precautions. Quality early childhood teachers are actively engaged in continuing professional development and benefit from ongoing training to update their skills and knowledge. Our teachers follow state guidelines for on-going professional development and have various resources provided to help them with their continuing education.



LICENSING

We are state-licensed and regularly inspected to make sure every aspect of our academy meets or exceeds standards. Our academies are subject to inspection by local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. If state or local child care licensing regulations differ from the procedures outlined in this handbook, the more stringent of the two always applies. A copy of the licensing standards is available for review at Lionheart Children's Academy upon request.

The most current licensing inspection report will be posted in the front office area. Additional questions can be directed to the Academy Director.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Our goal is for all children to thrive in their classroom each day. Consistency is important in a child's development. To create a consistent, uninterrupted environment for our children and teachers, we ask that all children be dropped off by 9:00 am. To assist each child in transitions and preparing for the day, please notify us if your child will be arriving after 9:00 am. This will enable teachers to prepare activities, food, and make any schedule adjustment necessary for your child to feel welcomed when they arrive. If your child is dropped off after 9:00 am, academy leadership may walk your child back to the classroom to limit the disruption to the classroom.

It is critical that you notify your child's teacher or Academy Director of any special instructions or needs for your child's day. These special instructions include but are not limited to: early pick up, alternative pick up person, change in behavior which needs to be observed and/or any general issues of concern we should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Children must be under direct adult supervision at all times while on the premises. Parents/guardians are responsible for signing their children in and out through our kiosk at drop off and pick up. A parent/guardian must accompany each child into the classroom and confirm that the child is under adult supervision before leaving. This ensures that each child is safe and supervised at all times and encourages daily communication between families and staff.

Parents or guardians are responsible for children once they are checked out at the end of the day. Children will be released only to parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names are listed as authorized to pick up your child.

If we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is threatening or endangering the safety and/or well-being of the child, pick-up will be refused, and we will attempt to contact the other parent/guardian or authorized persons. If alternative arrangements cannot be made, the local child protective services agency and/or police will be called, as required by state licensing.

Lionheart Children's Academy reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

LATE PICK UP

Please allow enough time to arrive at the academy to pick up your child, and leave the academy by closing time. If you know you can't arrive on time, please arrange to have your child picked up by another adult who is authorized to pick up your child. If, in the case of an emergency, you either cannot pick up your child on time or must send one of your emergency contacts, please call and notify the academy leadership immediately. A late fee of $15.00 for every 15-minute increment after closing that your child is in our care will be charged to your account. Late fees are due in full with the next tuition payment.

If your child is not picked up at closing time and you have not contacted the academy:

- We will attempt to contact you and individuals you have authorized to pick up your child.
- If we can't reach you or another authorized person within 30 minutes after closing, we will contact Child Protective Services and/or the appropriate authorities, based on local child care licensing regulations.
- Your child will remain safe and well cared for. We will provide them with activities and snacks as needed.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS & CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day in their classroom. Unless requested for show and tell, please leave toys at home. Bringing a treasured object to the academy can create tension between children and could potentially be lost or misplaced.

We stay informed about recalled toys, equipment and furnishings. If a recall affects anything within the academy, the item(s) will be immediately removed and if necessary, replaced with an item that is not under the recall. Recalls will be posted to keep families informed as well.

Children 18 months and older are able to bring a special blanket, soft toy of stuffed animal that is appropriate for rest/nap time. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time. Please make sure that item is small enough to fit in your child's cubby or backpack and that there are no small parts on the item (buttons or glued eyes). All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by staff for safety and appropriateness, and may be prohibited if deemed inappropriate or unsafe.

Sometimes learning can be messy. Weather permitting, children are engaged in outdoor play daily which can also be messy. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, durable, comfortable clothing.



When dressing your child, please be aware of our child dress policy:

- Please do not dress your child in overalls or clothing with difficult closures. They can present challenges for children when going potty.
- Coats and hats must be provided in the winter months.
- Be sure shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap. To keep everyone safe, flip-flops, sandals, and shoes with wheels are not allowed. Shoes are required for all walking children. The most appropriate and safest type of shoes for participation in academy activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.
- Children are required to have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the academy at all times. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear and socks. We highly recommend you keep an extra pair of shoes at the academy also. Please see our potty-training policy for additional information on children that are potty training. Please see our potty-training policy for additional clothing requirements/needs for children who are currently potty training.
- All clothing items must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, and gloves.

The academy is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing and other personal property brought into the academy. We take reasonable precautions to be certain that all children's belongings are well cared for, but please keep in mind that less-than-clean clothes at the end of the day are a sign that your child was actively engaged in learning.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

Children are placed in a classroom based on chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Each classroom is different to fit the developmental needs of the children in the class. Our goal is to place each child in a developmentally, age appropriate environment to ensure the best possible learning experience.

Daily schedules are posted in each classroom for you to see. This is a valuable tool to guide and direct our day. The daily schedule will vary by classroom and will be updated seasonally or as needed, so please check the schedule regularly.



CELEBRATIONS

We love to celebrate special occasions and children's birthdays. We want your child to feel special and loved. If you would like to bring a special birthday snack, please notify your child's teacher one week prior to the date. We ask that all food items be store-bought, peanut-free and include an ingredient list so we can be accommodating to any allergies or dietary restrictions in the classroom.

Holiday events are scheduled throughout the year, and we welcome parent/family involvement by way of providing party supplies or volunteering during the festivities. Sign-up sheets will be posted in advance of an event so that you have the opportunity to participate.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE & SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We believe that a child's social and emotional growth is just as important as their academic success. As children grow, they are learning how to understand their feelings, manage their emotions, relate to others, and make responsible choices. These skills take time to develop, and children need patient, loving guidance as they learn.

That's why we use Conscious Discipline, a research-based approach to social-emotional learning and behavior guidance. Conscious Discipline helps us understand that all behavior is a form of communication and that even challenging moments can be opportunities to teach valuable life skills.

Rather than relying on punishment or rewards, we focus on connection, safety, and teaching. When children feel emotionally safe and connected to the adults around them, they are more capable of learning, cooperating, and regulating themselves.

Our positive guidance strategies include:

- Praying with and for children
- Building strong, nurturing relationships with each child
- Helping children name and manage their emotions
- Teaching children how to solve problems and express their needs
- Giving children the opportunity to try again and make a better choice
- Offering calming strategies and quiet spaces when needed, and modeling how to rejoin the group when ready
- Redirecting behavior with kindness and consistency
- Adjusting routines or environments to better support the child

If you ever have questions about our approach to guidance or how your child is growing socially and emotionally, we welcome those conversations. We are in this together and deeply honored to walk alongside you and your child during these early years.

Our staff does not use corporal punishment. We also ask that while on our grounds, you refrain from using any form of guidance that is not consistent with our academy's positive guidance approach or licensing regulations.

We welcome families as partners in teaching children about socially appropriate behaviors. As your child's most influential teacher, we may occasionally ask for your help working out solutions to behaviors happening at the academy. If there are challenges or concerns about your child's behavior, the teacher or academy leadership will have conversations with you. We will discuss strategies to address the challenges we are seeing. We will also keep you informed of your child's progress.



Health & Safety

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Our foremost priority is the protection of children. We are committed to the safety of children and our legal responsibilities as mandated reporters. As required by law, everyone working directly with children are mandated reporters and required to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to law enforcement and child protection services, as well as state child care licensing agencies. Mandated reporters are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents or guardians prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. The particular state child protective service agency involved will determine appropriate action and may investigate the situation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse/neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. We will cooperate fully with all appropriate authorities.

All academy employees are mandated reporters and required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Throughout the year, our employees receive training on the prevention, response, and identification of child abuse and neglect.

MEDICAL RECORDS

As part of your child's enrollment process, we will need current medical information for each child prior to their start date. Please submit his/her most current immunization records, hearing/vision screening results and any other medical records, as required by state law and licensing requirements. Your academy can provide you specific information on what is needed. These records need to be updated annually, when new immunizations are given or as required by state law or licensing requirements.



CHILD ILLNESS POLICY

We know that managing the demands of work can be challenging when your child is ill. We strive to limit the spread of communicable disease in our academy and are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these situations. If your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, please notify academy leadership. When we are informed that a child or staff member has an infectious illness, notification of the illness will be posted for families. The name of the child/staff person with the illness will remain confidential. We understand it can be difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work, but exclusion from the academy is sometimes necessary. Excluding an ill child reduces the transmission of illness. The academy is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child while they are ill.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Academy Director by 9:00 am. Please let the academy know what your child's symptoms are so we can track illnesses throughout the academy. Mild illnesses are common among children, and infections are often spread before any symptoms arise.

Should your child become ill while at the academy, they will be removed from the classroom and kept in an area where there will be no direct contact between them and other children. For your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of spreading illness, you will be contacted and asked to pick-up your child within 45 minutes. If you are unable to pick your child up for any reason, it becomes your responsibility to arrange for alternate pick-up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form.

To reduce the spread of illness and maintain the health of all children at the academy, we may temporarily exclude your child from attending the academy if they are ill. In general, an individual must be symptom and fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication in order to return. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease, rash, or continuing symptoms, a note from the child's medical provider may be required before your child can return. If you have any questions or need more information on a specific illness or criteria for return, please ask your Academy Director.

We reserve the right to require health care provider clearance or make updates to these policies as needed to help keep everyone in our academy safe. We also reserve the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the academy leadership believes the child is too ill to participate.

Reasons we may exclude your child from care include but are not limited to:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities, such as going outdoors.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful disease to others.
- Severely ill appearance.
- Fever of 100 degrees or higher.
- Diarrhea; watery stools that exceeds two or more stools.
- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Vomiting more than two times.
- Mouth sores with drooling.

- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours; intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs of illness.
- Rash
- Skin sores weeping fluid and on an exposed area that cannot be covered.
- Conjunctivitis (defined as pink eye) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until antibiotic treatment has been started.
- Strep throat (or other streptococcal infection) until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice or nits.
- Rubella until seven days after the rash appears.
- Scabies until treatment has been started.
- Chicken pox until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually six days after onset of rash).
- Pertussis (whooping cough) until five days after start of antibiotics.
- Mumps until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles until four days after onset of rash.
- Hepatitis A virus.
- Tuberculosis until the child's medical provider or local health department states the child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.
- Covid.

In the event of a serious accident or illness at the academy, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your enrollment packet has you provide a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick-up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and also supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

We value your child's health and recognize that preventing the spread of infectious diseases is an important part of our role. We actively monitor the health and well-being of all children in our care. When we are notified that a child or an employee has a reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local health department. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures. That could include:



- Sending the child home or continuing to exclude them from care if they are already at home.
- Requiring documented evaluation and treatment by the child's health care provider.
- Notification to families of other children in our academy and staff members. In the case where we have to notify others, we will only notify of the illness. The child's identity will be kept confidential.
- Notification of local health authorities such as the health department.

If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the program due to illness will be made by the academy.

In order to help us prevent the spread of infectious diseases, we need you to inform us within 24 hours or the next business day after a child or any member of their immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the state board of health. We will keep you informed of any instances of contagious diseases affecting children who may have had direct exposure at the academy, and will immediately report such diseases to the local health authorities where required by law.

CHILD INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS

Safety measures are in place to ensure your child's safety while at Lionheart. These measures include: safety policies and procedures, staff training, classroom observations, and building and playground inspections. In spite of all our efforts, accidents sometimes happen. If your child is injured at the academy, you'll receive an Incident/Accident Report at pick-up time outlining what happened and our response.

Please be aware that our staff is trained in CPR and first aid. Our staff will respond to the incident and determine if additional medical attention is needed. If a serious medical emergency occurs, the child will be immediately taken to the hospital by ambulance, accompanied by a staff member. A staff member will contact you (or a designated emergency contact if you cannot be reached).

If you have to seek medical attention for something that occurred at our academy, we provide a Supplemental Student Accident Program through our insurance company to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses not covered by your medical, dental, or accident insurance. If you have questions about this program please ask your Academy Director.



ENVIRONMENTAL & FOOD ALLERGIES

If your child has allergies, please inform your Academy Director and list the allergen information on your enrollment packet so we can take the right precautions to protect your child's health. For the safety of your child, Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the academy with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's medical provider, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medications, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with our medication policy and state requirements. A list of children's allergies with photos is posted in all the classrooms throughout the academy, including the kitchen. Employees are trained on how to consult and use the list.

Contact with peanuts, including products containing traces of peanuts or oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe peanut allergy. Our academy is peanut-free. This means we do our best to keep peanut products out of the academy. All families and staff are asked to carefully monitor product ingredients to avoid peanut-containing products.

MEDICATION

Whenever possible, we recommend that you administer medications at home. To help with medication scheduling, you may consider asking your health care provider for prescriptions with 12-hour dosages. Medication, which includes prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) oral medications, lotions, and ointments will be given in accordance with state licensing requirements and the policies below.

- You must complete all required medication authorization paperwork provided by your Academy Director.
- Medication must be signed in daily on the medication log.
- Medication must be in its original container, in a clear bag along with the proper dosing device. Clearly label the container and bag with your child's first and last name.
- Prescription medication must include a prescription label with your child's name, dispensing instructions, a current date, and printed information about any possible side effects.
- For nonprescription medications, we must follow the manufacturer's directions on the label unless you provide written instructions from a physician that say otherwise.
- If a child is taking a new medication, the first dose must be given to the child at home so that parents/guardians can observe the child for any side effects.
- If a child is taking a medication and the dosage changes, a new medication authorization form will need to be completed and signed. Prescription medication will require an updated prescription or a note from the child's medical provider.
- Do not store medication including ointments, lotions, and lip balms in diaper bags, lunch bags, backpacks, or any other personal belongings. All medication must be given to the front desk.
- We do not mix medication with food, formula, or juice, nor will we dispense any medication in a bottle or cup.
- Medication, other than life saving medications such as inhalers, epi-pens, breathing treatments, must be taken home on Friday or the last day of the week the child will be in attendance. Lifesaving medication will need to be replaced and taken home when it expires.
- Expired medication will not be administered.
- Medication can only be given to the person listed on the prescription.
- In order for us to administer topical nonprescription medications, including sunscreen, you'll need to complete an Ointment Authorization Form.
- We do not administer injections for children (except for EPI pens).



NUTRITION & GROWING HEALTHY EATERS

At Lionheart, we believe in nurturing the whole child – mind, heart, and body. Nutrition is an important part of that mission, and early childhood provides a unique opportunity to foster healthy habits and positive food relationships that lay the foundation for lifelong wellness. Our Nutrition Services team develops rotating seasonal menus that nourish growing bodies while encouraging children to build confidence in trying new foods and discover new favorites along the way. Menus are regularly refreshed to reflect seasonal availability and continually enhance the nutritional experience we provide. Updated copies are shared with families each month so you know what your child will be enjoying.

Each meal and snack is carefully planned to support children's growth and development and thoughtfully prepared and served in accordance with applicable state licensing, food safety, and nutrition program requirements. To support this approach, outside food is generally discouraged except when approved as part of an accommodation plan or otherwise permitted by academy policy. Families requesting a meal modification for a medical condition or allergy should request the appropriate accommodation form from their academy prior to enrollment whenever possible. Please discuss any additional dietary needs or other non-medical preferences with academy leadership so we can determine whether reasonable accommodations may be available. We do, however, encourage children to bring a reusable water bottle daily to support healthy hydration, as fresh drinking water is available throughout the day.

We look forward to partnering with families to help every child develop healthy habits and positive food relationships.

Last updated 07/2026



NAP AND REST TIME

For healthy growth and development, it is essential for children of all ages to have time to nap or rest during the day. There are requirements from state on how long each child must nap or rest. If your child is still awake after resting quietly for about an hour, we'll offer them a quiet activity to help them relax. We provide sleep mats or cots for each child not in a crib. We ask that you provide a small travel pillow and blanket or nap mat that can roll up to keep on hand for your child. Please label all nap items with your child's first and last name.

For infants, please see our Safe Sleep Policy below.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP

Infants sleep based on their needs and the individual schedule created by you in partnership with your child's teacher. We take safety seriously and we follow licensing and the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding safe sleep for infants.

- Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. Some babies may not like sleeping on their back initially but quickly adjust.
- Infants who fall asleep outside of their crib will be gently picked up and placed on their backs in their crib to continue their nap.
- We use a firm mattress and tight fitting sheets that meet current safety standards.
- Except for a pacifier, we do not allow other objects in the crib with the baby. The pacifier cannot have a stuffed animal or clip attached to it.
- We do not allow any soft items in the crib with the baby. Blankets, toys, stuffed animals, pillows or any other items besides a pacifier are not allowed in the crib with the baby.
- Infants are checked on regularly while they are sleeping.



INFANT BOTTLES

In order to maintain consistency from home to the academy, and to meet the individual needs of the babies in our care, babies will eat according to their own schedules. Fresh formula or breast milk and baby food will need to be supplied to the academy daily.

- Bottles need to be prepared at home and brought to the academy ready to feed.
- All bottles should be capped and labeled with your child's full name.
- Staff use visual and verbal check procedures to be certain all infants receive the correct bottles.
- To avoid uneven heating and the risk of burning children, microwave ovens are not used to heat infants' bottles or food.
- To avoid contamination, all leftover contents of bottles are discarded after 60 minutes (unless the child is still feeding). All bottles are sent home at the end of the day.
- We strongly recommend against glass bottles to avoid broken glass on the floors our babies crawl on.

BREASTFEEDING

If you breastfeed, we will provide you with a comfortable environment while you're nursing. We are here to support you. In addition, our academy is equipped to handle your expressed breast milk. Milk must be in bottles labeled with the child's full name. Please discuss your needs with your Academy Director so they can ensure we provide the right support for you and your child.

DIAPERING & POTTY TRAINING

Diapering

Parents are responsible for supplying diapers, diapering creams, and wipes. Please label all items with your child's first and last name. You will be notified when supplies require replenishing. Children's diapers will be checked at least every two hours (or more if required by licensing). They will always be checked when the child wakes up and will be changed when soiled or wet.

Potty Training

Close communication between parents and staff is key during this important developmental stage. Consistency at home and at the academy is vital to successful and positive potty-training experiences. Children learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them. When your child shows an interest, you and your child's teacher will discuss how to work together to encourage potty training. We're committed to working with your child, so potty training can be accomplished in a positive, developmentally appropriate manner.

Child should be prepared and exhibit clear signs of readiness for potty training. Readiness indicators are:

- Child stays dry at least two hours at a time and is dry after naps.
- Child can follow simple instructions.
- Child can walk to and from the bathroom and help undress.
- Child seems uncomfortable with soiled diaper and wants to be changed.
- Child asks to use the potty.
- Children must be supervised during potty training, and shall be encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.

The following guidelines will be followed when potty training:

- Children should consistently wear pull-ups or training pants during this time.
- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing, including underwear, for children to change into in the event of a potty accident.
  Any extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families will regularly be advised of their child's progress.
- For sanitary reasons, potty chairs are not allowed.
- Parents should be prepared to follow through with potty training at home.
- Children should be encouraged to become independent (i.e. pulling up and down pull-ups/ underwear).

NOTE: Soiled clothing will be returned to parents daily in a sealed plastic bag. We are unable to launder clothing soiled as a result of potty training.



BITING

Biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior, commonly seen in infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Children are sensory learners and often explore orally. Impulse control can also lead children to bite as a way of making their needs known, especially before their language skills are fully developed. It is not something to blame on children, families, or teachers, and most young children will try biting at least once. Still, when it happens, it can be frustrating and upsetting for everyone involved. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future.

When biting does occur, we will care for and help the child who was bitten while helping the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment but rather on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting and redirection. We encourage you to talk to your child about this behavior, but we also caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, will not be understood by the child. If the biting isn't improving, strategies for change will be developed. That may include a behavior support plan created in partnership with you.

When a child bites another child, an Incident Report will be written for each child, keeping both identities confidential. Staff will communicate with each family involved. If you have any concerns regarding a biting incident, please talk to your child's teacher or your Academy Director.

EMERGENCIES & EVACUATION PROCEDURES

We make every effort to be prepared for potential emergency situations. We regularly schedule and practice emergency evacuations as required by local child care licensing regulations. In addition, evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. Please be aware of the procedures and evacuation location in the event of an emergency evacuation. If an emergency requires evacuation, we'll notify you as soon as the children have been relocated to a safe area.

EMPLOYEE VACCINATION

We have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases optional, left to the employee's own judgement. Vaccines that we currently recommend our employees receive are Influenza (annually) and Pertussis. If the employee is not exempt from having these immunizations, we recommend that employees consider these immunizations.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is an important part of keeping children safe. We will supervise children in our care at all times. Teachers will have knowledge of each child's needs and supervise accordingly. Each child will remain in physical proximity of sight and sound of their teacher both inside and outside the academy. Each classroom will maintain name to face including transitions inside the academy to provide consistent supervision at all times.

School Age Children will be supervised as soon as they enter our care either at drop off or when they arrive on the bus. A name to face including transitions will be maintained in our School Age classroom. School Age children will be allowed to use the restroom with proper supervision or a restroom pass. They will be checked on if they do not return every 5 minutes. A school age child may be designated as a helper to go to the front desk or another classroom inside the building to grab something. The task will take no longer than 5 minutes and the child will be given a hall pass and records will be kept on name to face regarding their location.

ACADEMY SAFETY

We share space with our church partners. During the week, the church will have people on the premise, as will we. Following the academy safety policies is important to protect our children and respect our church partners.

Access to the Building

Please do not allow others in the door when you arrive or leave. The academy has secure doors for the safety of our children. Please do not share your access code or key fob. If someone is authorized to pick up your child and they don't have a code, we will let them in the building.

Supervision

To ensure that children are properly supervised, we ask that you not use your cell phone while in the building. When you are dropping off and picking up, the supervision of your child is your responsibility. This is also an important time to engage with your child.

Restroom Use

- Bathrooms attached to classrooms are designated for child use only.
- In general, bathrooms in Lionheart common areas are for staff and child use only.
- The church normally has adult designated restrooms that parents can use.
- Please see your Academy Director for clarity on which restrooms are for adults.

No Smoking

Smoking or tobacco use, in any form, including vaping, is prohibited in the academy and on premises; this includes on or near the playground. Also, disposal of smoking paraphernalia on church property is prohibited.

Hot Beverages

To prevent accidental spills and harm to the children, hot beverages or liquids are not permitted in the academy classrooms. Please leave your morning coffee in the car when dropping your child off at the academy.

Weapons

Firearms, explosive devices, knives, and other weapons are not permitted. Family members, students, and anyone dropping off or picking up a child are asked to secure any weapons before entering the academy, regardless of a valid permit to carry such weapons. Bringing weapons into the Academy may result in immediate removal from the premises and dismissal from the program.



Policy & Procedures

REGISTRATION

To apply for enrollment at Lionheart Children's Academy, you must complete the enrollment application and pay a non-refundable registration fee. The registration fee is valid for the original start date agreed upon between you and the Academy Director. Any changes to the originally agreed upon start date may void the registration fee and additional costs may be incurred. Please discuss this with the Academy Director if a change in start date is needed.

ENROLLMENT

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed tuition agreement, registration fee, medical records, and signed Parent Handbook receipt. All of these items must be turned in prior to your start date.

Annually, you will be required to pay a re-enrollment fee and review and update enrollment paperwork as necessary. Please remember to provide the academy with additional updates as needed and/or as required by licensing (change of emergency contact or medical information, including allergies, etc.)

INCLUSION

Lionheart Children's Academy understands and knows that every child is made and loved by God and to that end, seeks to do all we can to include every child regardless of physical or mental limitations (or regardless of special needs or disability). Prior to enrollment, parents/guardians are asked to provide documentation regarding the student's needs or disability to allow reasonable accommodation while ensuring the welfare and education of all students in the academy.

Parents/Guardians may be asked to sign a release of information form allowing for information to be shared between Lionheart Children's Academy and other professionals and/or agencies providing services for the student. Parents/Guardians are asked to cooperatively work in partnership with the academy and other professionals working with the student. This may include regular conferences to discuss the student's progress, assessments, evaluations, and following recommendations that may benefit the student or classroom environment.

If a child has any special medical or learning needs, the parents/guardians will meet with the academy leadership and/or student's teacher prior to enrollment to ensure the student's family, academy leadership, and teachers are in agreement on how to best serve the needs of the student.

Academy Special Accommodations:

- If specific therapies are needed during the day while the student is in care, the academy will provide space to accommodate the sessions if the facility has availability.
- The academy will seek to provide materials and resources in the parent's/child's primary language.
- The academy will provide opportunities for culture inclusiveness by hosting culture events throughout the year and/or inviting the family to share culture heritage with the school family.



TUITION

Weekly tuition is due every Monday for the current week and monthly tuition is due on the 1st of the month. Tuition must always be paid in advance. Tuition is due and required to hold a child's spot regardless of a child's absence from the program for any reason.

For your convenience, we accept checks, debit cards, money orders, and credit cards (no cash will be accepted). A 3% card processing fee will be applied to all card payments (Credit, Debit, HSA/FSA etc). There will be a $25.00 fee charged for any check returned by the bank. If a check is returned, you must pay by cashier's check, money order, or credit card.

If tuition is not paid by the Monday, a late fee will be added. If your tuition becomes a balance past Wednesday, your child's enrollment will be suspended, and the balance must be paid in full for the child to return.

All legal guardians are required to sign a Tuition Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in Lionheart Children's Academy. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. That person is responsible for ensuring all payments are made on time and in full. Lionheart will work directly with the primary payer only to resolve any billing complications.

A re-enrollment fee (determined by start date in your first year) and a summer activity fee are charged each year. If you disenroll for any reason during the year, a new registration fee is required to re-enroll. Notice of intent to withdraw a child must be given to the Academy Director at least 2 weeks in advance and in writing.

DISCOUNTS

We offer a sibling discount for one or more siblings enrolled at the same time. The oldest sibling's tuition is discounted by 10%. Families with 3 or more children enrolled at the same time will receive a 10% discount on the oldest child and 5% discount on the next oldest child. Remaining siblings will pay the regular tuition amount.

When Lionheart Children's Academy offers discounts, the discount only applies to tuition, not our fees (re-enrollment, summer and late pick up). Discounts cannot be combined with any other offer.

AUTHORIZED CONTACTS

When you first enroll and complete the enrollment application, you will also list your emergency and authorized contacts. This authorizes specific individuals to pick up your child and to be contacted in the case of an emergency. You are responsible for maintaining accurate, complete, and current information for all contacts at all times.

Written authorization must be on file at the academy prior to your child's release to anyone. For the safety and security of your child, telephone requests are not allowed. If a telephone request is made, we will ask you to email or text a picture of the request in writing with your signature and date.

We will not release a child to any authorized or emergency contact younger than 18 years of age. People authorized to pick up will be required to show government-issued photo ID if the academy leadership has not met them previously. This is to ensure that children are being released only to people who are authorized. This policy allows everyone to feel more secure and confident that we're aware of who may and may not pick up your child.

Last updated 07/2026



ABSENCES AND VACATION CREDITS

We schedule our staff based on the daily attendance. If your child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or other family activities, please notify the academy by 9:00 am. If your child is usually transported from elementary school to our academy by our bus, please be sure to notify us of your child's absence at least an hour before school releases.

Our goal is for your child to thrive in their classroom each day. To assist each child in transitions and preparing for the day, please notify us if your child will be arriving anytime other than their normally scheduled classroom hours. This will enable teachers to prepare activities, food, and make any schedule adjustment necessary for your child to feel welcomed and expected.

After being enrolled for three consecutive months, you will be eligible for 2 weeks of vacation credits to use in a calendar year. Vacation credits are 50% off your regular tuition. They must be used as a full week when used. Unused vacation weeks do not rollover and each calendar year, on the anniversary of your start date, you are given two weeks.

If you receive a vacation credit, your child may not attend any portion of that week. Vacation credits are only available for full weeks of absence and cannot be applied to partial weeks or individual days.

If you withdraw for any reason, the three-month waiting period starts over before you earn your vacation credits.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

We schedule our teachers based on the daily enrollment need. If you would like to change your child's scheduled days permanently or temporarily, a written request to academy leadership should be made at least two weeks in advance. If the requested schedule is not available, parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available. If you have an emergency and need to alter your child's schedule, do not hesitate to contact academy leadership.

HOLIDAYS

Lionheart Children's Academy is closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February Professional Development
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- August Professional Development
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Day after Christmas

Our academy hours and closure dates are set and posted annually but may change at any time. In addition to holidays, we close for two Professional Development Days each year, in February and August. We believe in investing in our teachers so that they are equipped to invest fully in your children. Please refer to your academy year calendar for the specific days of the current year.

Last updated 07/2026

EMERGENCY AND WEATHER CLOSURES

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing or delayed opening by telephone, email, text or notification through our parent app. Please make sure that we have your current email and cell phone information so that you can be reached. Should the academy need to close in the middle of the day, the academy staff will attempt to reach you first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach parents/guardians, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify you or emergency contact person at the time of the call of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care academy. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated. The emergency evacuation relocation site is posted on the Family Information Board.

There is no tuition credit given for scheduled academy holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather, or acts of God.

DISENROLLING A FAMILY

We believe that children need to feel a sense of belonging to their academy community. We strive to create partnerships with families and support them. Despite those efforts, there may be occasions where a parent or child's actions or behavior may warrant the need to find different child care.

If a child's behavior or circumstances raise concerns, written documentation and family/teacher communications will be the first step. Transparency is important to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. We will work with a family to develop an action plan to address the concerns to help the child be successful. If a child cannot be safe in our environment, the child's enrollment may be ended to maintain a safe environment for others in our care.

In the case where we have to disenroll a child, parents are notified by a conference, phone call or in writing and will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. The Academy Director or academy leadership will assist the parents in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal, and parents are required to leave academy property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately.

We strive to maintain a respectful and joyful environment for all. We do reserve the right to dismiss any child or parent at any time without cause.



TRANSPORTATION

We provide transportation to and from area schools, as well as field trips throughout the year, on licensed, insured buses. Children are expected to follow all bus safety rules and conduct themselves in a way that does not create unsafe driving conditions. All children on the bus must wear a seatbelt. As required by law or state licensing, we will provide child booster seats as necessary. We reserve the right to deny transportation service to children behaving in an unsafe manner during transport.

All vehicles are maintained and inspected regularly and equipped with fire extinguishers and first aid kits. Drivers complete required transportation training yearly. We also review driving records for all authorized drivers.

*We do not transport children under the age of 5 years old.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips give your child hands-on, real-world learning experiences. Trips often include visits to nearby parks, museums, and other local educational sites. In order to make field trips both meaningful and safe:

- Children who have completed Kindergarten or older may be able to participate in field trips that involve transportation in a vehicle; however, eligibility is dependent on local child care licensing and transportation regulations.
- Families are notified 48 hours in advance of each field trip with the time, schedule, location, meal requirements and any extra costs that may be involved with the trip. Extra costs must be paid in advance.
- Permission slips are required for all field trips. Each trip requires a separate form describing details of the event. We must have your written permission authorizing your child to participate. Permission via a phone call or text is not allowed.
- Family volunteers are welcome on field trips, although we cannot allow you to transport your child or any other children in your personal vehicle. If space permits, volunteers may ride in academy vehicles. All volunteers must be at least 18 years old.
- All children must be transported to and from the field trip by the academy bus. Parents may not drop off their child or pick their child up from the field trip.
- A prayer of safety is said by a staff member before departure.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES & WATER PLAY

Outdoor and Active Play is not only a requirement for children, it is a key and integral part of their development. During active play children develop gross and fine motor schools, healthy body habits, creativity, decision making skills, social and emotional skills. At Lionheart children will run in our free space, climb on our equipment, engage in physical teacher led games and create their own.

The need for physical activity and outdoor play, grows with your child, the range is dependent on the developmental stage of your student and will span from 30-45 minutes. All children will be taken outside, with respect to the weather. Weather permitting is defined by Health and Human Services as: Weather conditions that do not pose any concerns for health and safety, such as a significant risk of frostbite or heat-related illness. This includes adverse weather conditions in which children may still play safely outdoors for shorter periods with appropriate adjustments to clothing and any necessary access to water, shade, or shelter.

If the weather does not permit for children to go outside, children will still engage in motor development through indoor games and play in our indoor gym.

MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

We are committed to creating and maintaining a wholesome environment. Screen time is not permitted for any child under the age of two. We will sometimes have special occasions where media is allowed. Anything over thirty minutes will be communicated in advance to give parents the opportunity to request an alternate activity for their child. When we do use media, we ensure books, music, movies, and any video games are G-rated content.

School age children who participate in Trailblazers may have scheduled opportunities to play electronic games that are provided by the program. Electronic devices from home are not permitted except as part of a specific event. Such opportunities will be advertised in advance so that children may participate. If we allow children to bring media from home and that media is deemed inappropriate, it will be kept safe and returned to the parent at the end of the day.



BABYSITTING

To prevent any conflicts of interest, we do not recommend or endorse employees babysitting for Lionheart families. If, however, an employee elects to babysit for a family, all such activities must occur outside the academy premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between the employee and the child's family. We will not be responsible for the employees conduct or quality of babysitting services, including transportation of your child(ren). Babysitting should not interfere with the employee's academy schedule.

Release of children to any of our employees requires written notification by parents. They must be listed in the same manner any other person would be listed as approved to pick up your child.

LEGAL

ADA

The academy understands and complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Gang-Free and Bully-Free Zone

We are a designated Gang-Free and Bully-Free Zone. Keeping children safe is one of our top priorities. Any gang-related activity is prohibited and is subject to increased penalty under law. Bullying of any form is not permitted at Lionheart Children's Academy. We will make every effort to correct bully-type behaviors. If the behavior does not improve, suspension and/or removal from our program can result.

Updating Information

Enrolled families can update contact information at all times without staff assistance through the 1Core Family App or by emailing the Academy.



lionheart

Christ-centered learning and *fun!*

facebook.com/lionheartchildrensacademy
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