



VERNON HILLS PARK DISTRICT LITTLE LEARNERS CHILDCARE PARENT HANDBOOK



Little Learners
CHILDCARE 
AT VERNON HILLS PARK DISTRICT

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Letter from the Supervisors

Dear Parents and Children,

Welcome to our family! Our program offers a relaxed and casual setting geared to the needs and interests of each child and parent who is a part of our school. We try to take into consideration individual differences and special abilities, as well as a wide diversity of family cultural patterns.

This parent handbook was written to clarify our operating policies and procedures. Please review the contents of this book carefully. You are responsible for reading and understanding its contents. If you should have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact us.

We thank you for choosing our program and look forward to providing a loving and nurturing environment to assist with your child's growing development. We look forward to the school year ahead.

Sincerely,

Your Little Learners Childcare Supervisors

Our Mission and Statement of Purpose

Mission Statement

To promote diverse community-based recreational opportunities by providing a variety of programs, services, facilities, and natural spaces to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Vision Statement

Addressing the lifelong leisure needs of all Vernon Hills residents.

Philosophy and Goals

We believe in creating an environment that will inspire each child to reach his/her fullest potential in the areas of social, emotional, physical and academic development. Our curriculum is developmentally appropriate according to each child's needs and is designed to meet the following goals:

1. To support and strengthen the family unit, focusing on:
 - Strengthening each family's sense of community with other families
 - Helping families work and play together
 - Supporting each family's efforts to build good values in children

2. To help children develop to their fullest potential, focusing on:
 - Self-awareness, confidence, and self-worth
 - Interpersonal relationships
 - Values development
 - Academic achievements
 - Physical skills
 - Health and nutrition

3. To provide childcare in a caring, safe, positive environment, focusing on:
 - Making sure that all children are safe
 - Broadening children's and parent's understanding of their community, country and world

About Our Facility

Hours of Operation

Our center is open Monday - Friday from 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Emergency situations may arise where we may be required to adjust the hours of operation or close down the facility for the day. Some of these emergencies may include loss of power, temperature problems in the facilities or inclement weather.

Enrollment Opportunities

Each family has different childcare needs. At the Little Learners Childcare, we offer full and part week care for children ages 2 and up. See our Childcare Supervisors for pricing and further information.

Center Closings

Our childcare center will be closed on the following holidays*:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

*Subject to change

Inclement Weather

On days of heavy snowfall or extreme weather conditions, we may close the Center. Please check local TV and radio stations for closing announcements. Closings will be listed on the Emergency Closing Center website at www.emergencyclosingcenter.com.; search for Little Learners Childcare at Lakeview. You may also register on this site to receive email alerts.



You will be notified if the Center closes early due to weather conditions and if emergency pickup is necessary. Tuition is based on the total yearly cost of the program, and the weekly fee is a breakdown of this cost. Therefore, no tuition adjustments are made when the Center is closed for legal holidays or other absences such as weather, low attendance, temperature problems in the facility, or loss of power.

Security

At The Little Learners Childcare, we ensure each family a safe and secure learning environment for their child. Security measures are taken at each facility to protect all the children in our care. When dropping off or picking up your child at the Center, the adult must sign the child in or out and make contact with a Little Learners Childcare staff member.

In your Registration Packet you will be required to list a minimum of two names, addresses and phone numbers of persons who are authorized to pick up your child in case of an emergency. You must notify us in writing any additional people whom you authorize to pick up your child. Anyone picking up your child must show a pictured identification before we can release your child. It is our policy that no one under the age of 18 is permitted to pick up a child. Please refrain from bringing unnecessary people into our Center to pick up your child. Visitors and siblings must stay with the parent or authorized pick up person that they have entered the center with.



In the case of divorced or single parent families, it is important to indicate who the custodial parent is. The custodial parent may be required to provide the Supervisor with a copy of legal documentation. This document will be kept confidential in your child's file. No information regarding a child or family will be released without a signed release from the parent. DCFS and the Lake County Health Department regularly review the children's files.

Arrival and Departure

Upon arrival at our Center, all parents/guardians/adults are required to:

- Sign their child in on our daily sign in/out sheets
- Make direct contact with the teacher in the classroom where they are dropping their child off
- Notifying teachers to any changes in their child's day e.g. change of departure time, person picking them up, medical issues
- Wash their child's hands
- Fill out portion of daily sheet (infant room only)

Upon departure from our Center, all parents/guardians/adults are required to:

- Sign their child out on our daily sign in/out sheets
- Make direct contact with the teacher in the classroom where they are picking up their child
- Check their child's mailbox/cubby for any correspondence

A child will not be released to anyone that is not a parent, guardian, or listed on the authorized pick up form. You may add in writing to this list at any time. We will require picture identification from any adult who is not known to the staff.

All persons picking up a child must be 18 years of age.

Prayer

We provide care for families of various backgrounds and cultural beliefs. For that reason we recognize and celebrate diversity at our facility. Our program is designed for children to learn, to care and respect for others regardless of religious beliefs. We do however; recite a manners poem before each meal.

Staffing

Our teachers are all caring professionals who are committed to the development and education of young children. Our staff must meet Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) requirements for their positions at the center and all are encouraged to continue their education. All staff members must participate in 15 hours of in-service training each year. In addition, staff members receive CPR, AED and First Aid training as well as specialty training offered by the Vernon Hills Park District.

All staff members at the Little Learners Childcare are Mandated Reporters. If staff members suspect possible abuse including physical, sexual and emotional or neglect, the staff must notify the Illinois Department of Children and Family Service (DCFS). All procedures by DCFS will be followed.

Licensing

The childcare programs are based on compliance with DCFS licensing Standards, Child Care Act, and by recommendation from the State Fire Marshall, Local Fire Department, the Lake County Health Department and the Illinois Child Care and Adult Food Program.

Classroom Grouping

All classes are divided according to the child's age, social and developmental abilities. The ratios of children to staff are based on DCFS's guidelines. They are as follows:

4:1 for Infants

5:1 for Toddlers

8:1 for Two year olds

10:1 for Three - Five year olds

20:1 for Five - Twelve year olds

When ages are combined the ratio is followed for the youngest child in the group.



Proof of Child Identity

The Little Learners Childcare is mandated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Service for the safety and protection of your child. You will be required to sign the Proof of Child Identity statement in your registration packet stating the following:



I understand that I must provide a **certified copy** of my child (ren)'s Birth Certificate within the first 30 days of enrollment of the Little Learners Childcare. The center will make a duplicate and return the original certified copy no later than the end of the next business day. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, I will submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate.

I understand that the Little Learners Childcare is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30 day time frame. The Little Learners Childcare will notify the parent or guardian in writing that the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement has been notified as required by law, advising the parent or guardian that he or she has 10 additional days to comply by submitting the required documentation.

I understand that the Little Learners Childcare will report to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content.

I understand that the Lake Little Learners Childcare will flag the record of a child enrolled who is reported by the Illinois State Police as a missing person, and shall immediately report to the Illinois State Police any request concerning flagged records or knowledge as to the whereabouts of any missing child.

Curriculum

Our Curriculum

The Little Learners Childcare follows a High/Scope approach. High/Scope is an “active learning” method to educating children from birth to young adulthood. Developed in 1962 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, the High/Scope approach is now used in tens of thousand's of preschools and Head Start programs around the world. The High/Scope approach blends the knowledge of Jean Piaget and the constructivist theory with practical teaching experience in the classroom and other educational settings.

Children Learn by Doing

Active learning—the belief that children learn best through active experiences with people, materials, events, and ideas—is a central tenet of the High/Scope approach for all age levels. The effectiveness of the High/Scope preschool approach has been documented in over three decades of research. In addition, the High/Scope approach includes assessment tools that help teachers, administrators, and caregivers monitor each child's developmental progress, pinpoint the strengths and weakness of their program, and communicate effectively with parents and other decision makers about children's accomplishments. Unlike many traditional test-based assessment systems, which target narrow, selected skills, High/Scope's assessment materials focus on the broad range of children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities as determined through actual child observation

Daily Schedule*

6:30-8:30	Arrival /Combine with other classrooms /Free Choice Activities
8:30-9:00	Greeting Time and Hand Washing
9:00-9:30	Breakfast
9:30-10:00	Large Group/Circle Time, etc.
10:00-10:40	Small Group/Art, Science, etc.
10:40-11:20	Work Time/Free Choice Activities
11:20-11:45	Outside Time/Large Motor
11:45-12:30	Hand Washing/Lunch
12:30-1:00	Bathroom
1:00-3:00	Naptime
3:00-3:30	Hand Washing/Bathroom/Snack
3:30-4:00	Large Group/Circle Time, etc.
4:00-5:30	Work Time/Free Choice Activities Outside Time/Large Motor Small Group/Art, Science, etc. Afternoon Enrichment Programs Combine with other classrooms
5:30-6:00	Inside Activities/Departure

*Activities and times vary per classroom

Infant schedules are based on each baby's individual needs.



Health and Nutrition

Nutrition

Throughout the day, we provide a nutritional and healthy breakfast, afternoon snack and a hot catered lunch for your child. A child may not bring any food into the center unless your child has any dietary restrictions. If so, you must submit a letter from your physician. Please also indicate them on your registration form. Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and are available upon request.

Parents in the infant classroom have the option of using the iron fortified formula provided by the center or bringing in their own formula or breast milk. If they choose to bring their own, they may either bring formula in its original packaging or daily premade bottles. Regardless which option, parents must provide clean, sanitized, labeled bottles daily. All formula will be made per manufacturers recommendations unless otherwise advised in writing by a physician.

When your child has a birthday, we would like to help celebrate. We welcome any treats you would like to provide. We ask that any food brought to the Center to share with the other children be store bought. This policy also includes treats for party days.

Drinking Water

Disposable cups for individual use are made available to the children throughout the day. The facility shall make water is also offered to infants and toddlers at frequent intervals.

Food Program

The Little Learners Childcare may participate in the Food Program: Civil Rights, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Sponsor Responsibilities, Public Notification. "The Child and Adult Food Program is available to all children without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, age or national origin. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA - related activity write to: Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302".

It is a requirement that all parents fill out eligibility and enrollment paperwork annually.

Diapering

Children will be changed every two hours in the designated diaper area. If a bowel movement occurs, they will be changed immediately. Disposable diapers and wipes are preferred to be used at the Center. Cloth diapers may be used in cases of medical issues. Parents must provide all diapers and wipes. A daily report will be given informing parents on diaper changes, participated activities, and how your child ate and slept. All classrooms with children in diapers have a changing table available and separate garbage receptacle for soiled disposable diapers and wipes. Guides are posted in these classrooms on proper diaper changing procedures. Receptacles will be emptied, washed and sanitized daily. If a child requires cloth diapers, a separate receptacle will be provided to store the soiled diapers. Parents will be required to take home all soiled cloth diapers daily or the center will dispose of them.

Toilet Training

Most children are not ready to be trained by 24 months. However, if your child is showing signs of bladder control, physical readiness and instructional readiness, then the center can begin the toilet training process. There shall be a parent/staff consultation prior to considering toilet training. Children will be taken to the bathroom and placed on a potty-chair, potty seat or regular toilet. These options will be discussed with parents at the consultation. The child's progress will be noted on their daily report.

Potty chairs, potty seats and toilets are cleaned and sanitized after each use with the appropriate bleach water solution. All classrooms shall have separate bleach water bottles in their bathroom stored out of the reach of the children.

When an accident occurs, the child's clothing will be double bagged in plastic and sent home. If the soiled clothing is not taken home upon the child's departure it will be disposed by the center. Linens or any other cloth materials owned by the center will be washed immediately.

Hand Washing

We want to help teach your child valuable hygiene skills. We require that your child wash their hands before eating, after bathroom visits and at any other appropriate times. Parents can help us to help eliminate the spread of disease by washing their child's hands before entering the classroom. This is a requirement from the Department of Children and Family Services.

Bathing

Your child may require a tub or sponge bath for bodily cleanliness after a diaper changing, a bathroom accident or other such circumstances. You will be notified verbally and on your child's daily sheet.

Radon Testing

In compliance with DCFS and the state of Illinois, our Center is tested for Radon every three years. Results of this testing is posted in the childcare office.

Pesticide Policy

A monthly inspection is done by Anderson Pest Solutions and no chemicals are used during our hours of operation. If it is necessary for chemical application this will be done a minimum of 3 hours before children enter the facility. Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children will be removed from the area before pesticides are applied. You may request written notification if and when chemicals are used. Additional inspections may be made if needed.

Personal Items

After a busy morning at our Center, your child will need time to rest. Our children have a rest time from 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. where they rest on small cots in their classroom. Children will need a cot-sized blanket for naptime and may choose to bring a special blanket or sleep toy for rest time. Blankets and any sleep toys should be taken home and washed each Friday. Please let your child's teacher know if your child has a special blanket, pillow, sleepy toy etc. that needs to go home each night. Infants may nap on their own personal schedules.

Because of our fun filled days of painting, singing, dancing, and both indoor and outdoor play, we suggest that your child is dressed for fun! Messy explorations can be part of our busy day so we ask that each child has a complete set of extra clothes, just in case.

Some of our classrooms participate in "Show & Tell" or "Sharing Time". These activities give your child a chance to share something special to them with their friends. Please let your child's teachers know if your child brings in an item to show so it will not get lost or broken. The Little Learners Childcare is not responsible for damaged or lost articles. Please, no guns, war toys or other toys of destruction. *These items are not allowed in our school.* Unless it is a special day, we ask that you cooperate with us by not allowing your child to bring toys or other items from home.

Jewelry

For the safety of our children and with recommendations from DCFS and our nurses, children are not allowed to wear necklaces for either medicinal or cosmetic purpose. Jewelry will be limited to stud posted earrings.

Weather and Outdoor Play Time

Playing outside is very important to the health and physical development of young children. Therefore, it is very important that your child is always dressed appropriately for the weather. This may include: snow boots, mittens or gloves, hat and snow pants or suit. The children will be outside on a daily basis. In the winter months, children will not go outside when the temperature is 20 degrees or below with the wind-chill factor. In the summer months the children will not go outside if the temperature is over 100 degrees with heat index.



We ask that all parents provide sunscreen and insect repellent for their child during the summer months. Due to medical reasons, the Little Learners Childcare cannot provide these items. If your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities, a written note from the physician must be provided. Also, for safety reasons, please provide closed-toed shoes for outside play.

Medical Information

Illness

We ask for your cooperation in maintaining the level of “wellness” at our Center. Parents can assist in keeping our Center healthy by making sure that their children are in good health before coming to the Center and feeling fit before returning after an illness. Children with fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, congestion, persistent cough or sore throat with fever etc. should be home until they are well. If your child has signs of illness, please keep them home. The ill child is not up to a full day of activities and he/she spreads his/her illness to other children. Please assist us in keeping our Center healthy by helping to control the spread of communicable illness. Please review the guidelines below:

Your child will be placed in isolation and sent home if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- A temperature of 101 degrees and higher
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Nasal discharge or discharge from the eyes or ears
- Lethargic or lack of well being due to illness

If your child has a contagious disease, PLEASE report this to the center immediately.

Examples:

- Step throat, Scarlet fever
- Pin Worm, Ring Worm
- Head Lice, Scabies
- Measles, Mumps, Chicken pox
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Impetigo

All contagious diseases reported will be posted in the classroom and information will be available to parents upon request.

Before returning to the center your child should be:

1. Feeling well and fit for a complete 24 hours.
2. Free of temperature for 24 hours. This means 24 hours of a temperature of 99 degrees or below WITHOUT medication.
3. Free of vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
4. Must be on any antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
5. On a prescription eye drop for 24 hours after pink eye.
6. Home from the center a minimum of seven days from the last crop of chicken pox.

The Little Learners Childcare can require a Physician’s note for your child to return to the center if they suspect that your child is ill. Any time your child visits the physician for illness or accident, please obtain and submit a physician’s note for them to return to the center with diagnosis and treatment plan.



Medication for Your Child

Regulations for medication at the childcare center:

1. Medicine must bear a current prescription label with child's name, date, directions for administering, physician's name, prescription number, and name of drug store or pharmacy.
2. When dosage is "as needed or # of times per day" parent must return written permission of exact dosage on physician's letterhead.
3. A completed Little Learners Childcare Medication Authorization Form must be filled out weekly by the parent.
4. OVER THE COUNTER, NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION MAY only be administered at the Center when accompanied by signed physician's note on letterhead and a completed Little Learners Childcare Medication Authorization Form.

Note: Failure to comply with the regulations above will result in medication NOT being administered. In such case, parent will be notified to come to the center to administer the medicine.

It is understood that medicine prescribed by a physician once, twice, or three times a day WILL ONLY BE GIVEN in accordance with the following criteria:

- Once a day (every 24 hour dose) will not be given at the Center.
- Twice a day (every 12 hour dose) may be given at the Center only once per day. This will depend on when the last dose was given.
- Three times a day (every 6 hour dose) may be given twice at the Center. This will depend on when the last dose was given.

Medication will be stored in a covered, labeled container. The parent is responsible for removing unused medicine from the Center at the end of the treatment.



Illinois Child Vision and Hearing Test Act

For children age 3-5, the center will annually provide hearing and vision screening services in accordance with Illinois Department of Public Health's Hearing and Vision Screening Codes (77 Ill. Adm. Code 675 and 685) and the Illinois Child Vision and Hearing Test Act.

Special Medical Conditions

For the safety of the children and the staff, any medical condition that requires blood testing administration must be treated in a private area not located in the classroom or in the presence of any children. This does not apply to the administration of medication in emergency situations (e.g. epi pen or auvi-q for severe allergic reactions.)

Allergies

The Little Learners Childcare requests the cooperation of our parents to partner with us in promoting a safe environment for children with food allergies. Our Childcare will attempt to accommodate each program participant who has such an allergy and has identified the following operational practices for everyone to follow:

- Parents with children who have a food allergy should identify the child's specific allergy(ies) in their registration packet and notify the staff as soon as possible concerning the details of the allergy.
- Once a severe or life-threatening allergy is identified, the parents and treating physician of the allergic child must complete a Food Allergy Action Plan for review and comment by Childcare Manager or Supervisors.
- If a child(ren) with severe or life-threatening food allergies enrolls in our childcare, we will ask all families to cooperate by refraining from bringing any food that contains any ingredients identified in the Food Allergy Action Plan. We recognize that this may be an inconvenience for children's food choices, but the few extra minutes you spend could save a child's life.
- Staff will do their best to monitor foods that may pose a potential harm to the allergic child. However, since many items may be without their original packaging (or since trace amounts of an allergen may not even be disclosed on a list of ingredients), it is impossible for childcare staff to inspect every food item from every child to ensure compliance.
- Parents should promptly notify the Childcare Supervisors of any change in their child's allergic condition(s).

Medical Forms

The Department of Children and Family Services requires that each child have a completed Illinois Department of Public Health Certificate of Child Health Examination form dated not more than six months prior to entrance into our program. Health forms are valid for two years. A returning student's child health exam cannot be dated more than two years.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has released a set of guidelines on when to immunize young children. They are as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Vaccination</u>
<u>Birth:</u>	<i>Hepatitis B (#1)</i>
2 Months	Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DPaT) Hemophilus B (HIB) Inactivated Poliovirus (IPV) Pneumococcal (PCV)
4 Months	Hepatitis B (#2), DaPT, HIB, IVP, PVC
6 Months	Hepatitis B (#3), DTaP, HIB, IVP, PVC, Influenza (yearly)
12-15 Months	<i>DPT, HIB, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) Varicella</i>
4-6 Years	<i>Hepatitis B Series, DTaP, IPV, MMR (#2), PVC, Hepatitis A Series</i>

All immunizations must be current according to the age of your child. Lead screening and TB testing may also be required for children ages 1 through 6 years of age. You must give documentation for any and all immunizations that have been given to your child while enrolled in our program.

Medical Injuries

If your child is injured at school parents will receive a communication report explaining the incident. Staff may also decide to call parents depending on the severity of the injury. Parents will be called for incidents where a child hits their head.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, every effort will be made to notify the parents immediately. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency people listed on the registration form. 911 may be called for medical emergencies before we contact parents due to the nature of the injury or illness. The parent or guardian of the child is responsible for any costs associated with the emergency. All emergency procedures and first aid will be followed regardless of religion. The staff will administer first aid to a child on a limited basis for minor accidents. In the registration package you will be asked to sign a form giving permission to staff to administer first aid regardless of religion. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. Staff will complete an accident report for injuries.

Other Emergencies

In case of fire, severe weather or other emergencies, it is crucial that children react in a safe and orderly fashion. Children participate in regular drill and practices so they will know what to do in an actual emergency. Should an emergency arise we will notify you.

Insurance

The Vernon Hills Park District has general liability insurance that covers up to \$3,000,000.00 per child per occurrence.

Social Expectations

Adjusting

A child's first day can be filled with anxiety for parents too. Feel free to call throughout the day to see how your child is doing. Parents are always welcome to call or drop in at our Center.

Each child will react differently to new situations.

Sometimes a child does wonderfully on the first day because everything is new and exciting, but may become anxious the second day when he or she realizes that this is going to be a new routine. Most children need two or three weeks to adjust fully to a new environment. The best support a parent can give is to be enthusiastic, encouraging and patient. If you need reassurance or suggestions for helping your child to feel comfortable, talk with your child's teachers or Childcare Supervisor. They are there to help support you and your child.



Discipline

We use large amounts of positive reinforcement and redirection and encourage problem solving through discussion in a group setting or individually. Our goal is to encourage self-discipline within each child. After several attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, if the child still demonstrates an inability to benefit from the care offered by the Center or whose presence is detrimental to the group, the child shall be discharged from the program. In all instances when a center decides that it is in the best interest of the child to terminate care, parent and staff will meet to discuss options, including referrals to other agencies or facilities. The goal will be to meet the needs of the child.

Behavior

In the event that a child's behavior progresses to the point that he or she poses a threat to himself or others, PARENTS WILL BE CONTACTED AND MUST REMOVE THE CHILD FROM THE CENTER FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY! If a child and/or a parent are at risk of harming themselves or others, or fail to follow the rules and regulations of the Center, the child will be withdrawn from the program. Parents will be given a minimum of a one-week notice to find other arrangements.

Courtesy towards the Little Learners Childcare staff, parents and children is expected at all times from the child and parent. Corporal punishment and/or verbal abuse of any kind are not permissible on Vernon Hills Park District property.

Biting

We are all aware that biting will occur in groups of young children for a variety of reasons. While the staff will do everything they can to prevent such incidents, the swiftness with which young children react, cannot always be stopped! When the staff and the Childcare Supervisor conclude, after EVERYTHING possible has been tried, the parents will be requested to attend a parent/teacher/director conference to attempt to work on the problem from all ends. At that time, a probationary period will be set in writing, giving a two week observation period to note any behaviors that can be changed by working both at the center and at home. In certain instances this probationary period can be extended. During this time if excessive biting continues, the decision will have to be made if the child is able to remain enrolled in the Center. Sometimes, a short exclusion from group care solves the problem. Other times, it is advisable to have the child in a much smaller or one on one situation.



Communication

Keeping parents informed is an important aspect at the Center. We feel exchange of information between parents and staff provides insights for both. Knowing what your child is doing during the day helps you reinforce and encourage the same topics and activities at home. It also helps so our teachers can better provide for a child's needs if they are aware of situations at home. It is vital that you inform us of any changes happening in your family. Changes at home may include, moving, hospitalization of a sibling or alterations in parent's relationships etc. These may influence the way your child relates to others. Written observations on your child will expand your understanding of your child and what he or she is like away from you. What we provide are personal commentaries and/or assessments. Parent/Teacher conferences are conducted in a formal or informal format.

We understand that due to staffing, you may not see your child's teacher on a daily basis. To support communication, all our childcare staff has email addresses and each classroom has a phone with a direct line. Feel free to contact them at your convenience. However, please keep in mind that they are with your children and might not be able to respond immediately.

We encourage parents to approach our teachers with any questions or concerns about their child. If you do not feel you are getting a satisfactory answer, please feel free to discuss it with the Childcare Supervisor or Childcare Manager

Parent Involvement

Involvement of parents in our programs is essential. Your cooperation with all policies and procedures is extremely important to us. Take every opportunity to talk with the childcare staff about your child. Ask your child about their time spent in our program each day. You can also volunteer to help with your special talents we all possess. Parents and teachers together can help their child develop to his or her full potential.

Parents can get involved by volunteering to help on field trips, social events, fundraising events, presenting to children or staff and donating time to the classrooms. See your Childcare Supervisor for more information.

Absence

We do not deduct days missed from your tuition fee. When you enroll, you are reserving the time, space, staffing and provisions for your child, whether they attend or not. In some cases your child may be required to attend at least 4 out of 5 days each week. Regular attendance is encouraged to establish a routine for your child. If your child is not meeting our attendance requirements your child may be dismissed from our programs.

We ask that all children be in attendance by 9:30 am. All parents must contact the center before 9:30am if their child will be late or not in attendance that day. Occasionally events occur when your child's class will not be in their classroom after 9:30. (e.g. field trips, swimming, park visits etc.) Because we follow strict ratios, if your child will be late you may be required to transport them to their classroom location.

If your child will be home due to illness, we ask for your cooperation in notifying the center of any communicable illness. Excessive absences may result in dismissal from our program. If your child is absent more than 5 days in a row without notifying the center they will automatically be dropped from the Center.



Dismissal

Dismissal from the Center occurs if a child is not ready for a group experience. The Childcare Manager and Supervisor will give the parent advance notice of dismissal and offer assistance in finding other arrangements. Other reasons for dismissal include: unpaid tuition and fees, consistent late pick up time, failure to keep your child's physical and or immunizations current and failure to comply with other center policies including the behavior policy.

Financial Responsibilities

Enrollment Fee

A non-refundable deposit will be required at the time of enrollment. The primary reason for this fee is to reserve a spot in our childcare program and the fee will be applied to your first week's tuition payment.

A two-week written notice is required when withdrawing a child from the program. If you drop from the program, you will be considered a new client and may be reassessed the non-refundable deposit.

Tuition

Tuition is based on the total yearly cost of the program. The weekly fee is based on this yearly cost. Therefore, no tuition adjustments are made when the center is closed for legal holidays or any absences, including suspensions or early dismissal. When you enroll, you are reserving the time, space, staffing and provisions for your child whether they attend or not.

You will be billed weekly on the first business day of each week. All tuition payments shall be automatically charged to a credit or debit card. Upon enrollment you will fill out a Payment Acknowledge Form explaining your payment options.

From January through December, two-weeks of vacation will be allowed with written notice to the Center's Supervisor or Manager. Vacation days must be consecutive and a minimum of one week of your child's enrolled days. You will be charged half of your tuition rate to hold your child's spot. If you choose to plan a lengthy absence or vacation you may pay full tuition to hold the spot or disenroll your child and re-enroll them when an opening is available. Please contact the Childcare Supervisor or Manager for more information.



Like every other home and business, the Vernon Hills Park District operates on a budget. We count on receiving payments on time so we can make purchases needed for our Center and pay salaries. At the end of each month your tuition must be paid in full for your child(ren) to continue in the program. All services must be paid before they are received. If you become delinquent in your payments, you will be required to pay the delinquent payment, late fees and the next week's service or your child may be disenrolled from the Center.

Sibling discounts are available, contact the Childcare Supervisors for more information.

Late Pick-up Fees

Children become upset when parents are late picking them up. Additionally, the Little Learners Childcare faces staffing and licensing issues when parents are late. Therefore, you will be charged a late pick up fee of \$1.00 for every minute you are late in picking up your child(ren). The late fee must be paid in full before the child(ren) can return to the program. DCFS only allows our Center to operate within certain hours. If you are later than one hour after the Center closes and the Little Learners Childcare staff is unable to contact anyone on your Emergency Contact list, the local police department will be called and you must pick your child up from the police department.

Additional Opportunities



Field Trips

Our Center takes seasonal offsite field trips to promote exploration of the world around us. These trips may be an additional cost to parents to cover admission and transportation. Parents will be notified in writing as well as required to fill out permission slips in order for their child to attend. All safety precautions are taken. See the Childcare Manager or Supervisor for more information.

Special Events

Our Center hosts several special events where your entire family is able to meet other families in a social setting. To add to our curriculum, the teachers add special events, visitors and activities for the Center and their classrooms to enhance each child's learning.

Transportation

Parents will be required to give permission for the Little Learners Childcare Staff to take their child on walking trips/buggy rides in the area. Permission will also be granted to allow Childcare Staff to accompany child using District rented school buses for field trips and local transportation. We do not provide any transportation to or from a family's residence.

Swimming

Children in our older two classrooms are able to take advantage of the Lakeview Fitness Center's zero depth pool and participate in designated "free swim" on scheduled days throughout each month. DCFS requirements and ratios are followed during "free swim".

Program Classes

Can't fit swimming lessons into your busy schedule? Have your 3-5 year old child take swimming lessons with his/her friends during the day at our Center. Classes are offered for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Other Vernon Hills Park District programs may be available for children in our Center.



Code of Conduct

The teachers are required to follow a professional Code of Conduct. Parents must also adhere to the following health and safety procedures while on Vernon Hills Park District property.

Parents should not abuse children or staff including:

- Physical abuse—strike, spank, shake, slap
- Verbal abuse—humiliate, degrades, threaten
- Sexual abuse—inappropriate touch or verbal exchange
- Mental abuse—shaming, cruelty

Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and may be cause for immediate dismissal. Parents will respond to staff with respect and consideration and treat everyone equal regardless of sex, race, religion or culture.

The police will be called for anyone attempting to pick up a child while possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Smoking or using tobacco in the presence of the children enrolled is not permitted.

Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life and any kind of harassment in the presence of the children is prohibited. Parents will portray a positive role model for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity while on Vernon Hills Park District property.

Parents may not ask employees to transport children in their vehicles.

Parents may not leave children unsupervised on Vernon Hills Park District property.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

Please be advised that you are responsible for all the information in this handbook and will be required to sign a form stating that you have read and understand these guidelines that have been set forth, or you will be asked to leave our program.



The Vernon Hills Park District reserves the right to change existing policies or introduce new policies pertaining to Center operations at any time with two weeks prior notice to families.

Little Learners Childcare COVID-19 Procedure Changes

Addendum

We are following DCFS standards, IDPH guidelines, as well as recommendations from the CDC, Lake County Health Department and our Park District Risk Management Agency in order to try to keep your children safe under our care. While we are taking serious safety measures, ultimately you as your child's parent/guardian must exercise your discretion about whether a public childcare setting is appropriate for your child at this time given that there is no vaccine for COVID 19, no herd immunity, and no known treatment. We appreciate your trust in our care and cooperation as our procedures may change based on any updated recommendations from the agencies listed above

Below are updated procedures and center changes that will occur due to COVID-19. Please keep in mind that these procedures will take additional time to carry out and your patience is valued and necessary for a smooth transition to the new business operations. As always, we want to keep everyone safe and healthy while still providing quality care and education in a fun, friendly environment. Thank you for your dedication to Little Learners Childcare and the Vernon Hills Park District.

Due to DCFS restrictions our hours of operation are currently 7:30 and to 5:00 pm.

In regards to drop off and pick up procedures we will have designated staff referred to as:

- Screening Staff: Teachers that will provide your daily wellness screening and sign in assistance.
- Receiving Staff: Teachers that will escort your child to their classroom.
- Classroom Staff: Teachers welcoming children into their designated classroom.

DROP OFF PROCEDURE

Drop off and pick up will happen in the vestibule of the Lakeview Fitness Center. At this time parents may not enter the child care wing. Drop off is from 7:30-8:45 am. It's not a problem for you drop off your child/children off after 8:45 am, you will just need to call your child's classroom to alert their teacher of their arrival and we will then come out to meet you. If you have 2 children enrolled, it's not necessary for you to call both classrooms. In this case please call your oldest child's classroom upon your arrival. We continue to ask that all children be dropped off by 9:30 am. Pick up will occur between 3:00 and 5:00pm.

During drop off only one parent/guardian is allowed in the vestibule at a time. All parents must wait in the marked drop off/pick up line outside of the main entrance 6 feet apart or in their car until a staff member is available to help them. Whenever possible the same adult should be the designated as drop off/pick up person for your child.

Everyone over the age of two must wear a mask or face shield during drop off and pick up. This includes parents/family members, children over two and staff. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing face coverings for everyone in their family during drop off.

At drop off, a staff member will assist you in completing a wellness screening, temperature screening and daily sign in. If you or your child register a fever of 100.4 f or higher, your child will not be allowed to stay. There will not be flexibility applicable, unless an up to date physician note is provided, specific to the individual and flagged wellness concerns. More details are provided in the Little Learners Childcare Health Policy Addendum.

The receiving staff will escort your child to their classroom where they will wash their hands and begin their day. In addition to saying goodbye at the door, you are welcome to wave at the classroom windows and call and or email throughout the day.

PICK UP PROCEDURE

Parents will be asked to call their child's classroom when they arrive at the center.

A designated staff member will get your child from their classroom and wash their hands. They will then escort your child outside. For the safety of your child please exit your vehicle and meet them in drop off/pick up area located on the sidewalk.

CLASSROOM PHONE NUMBERS

- Snuggle Bugs/Infants 847-996-3494
- Bumble Bees/ Toddlers & Twos 847-996-3495
- Sprouts/ Twos & Threes 847-996-3496
- Super Stars/ Threes, Fours & Fives 847-996-3497

GENERAL CHANGES

Staff and children will be assigned to a specific room and they will not mix with any other groups. Assignments will be made by age.

As determined by DCFS, children over two years old will be required to wear a face covering when arriving, departing and when they are in any common area such as the hallway. Recently, Governor Pritzker has mandated it necessary for children to wear face coverings whenever possible. No child will be forced to wear a face covering. Face coverings will not be worn during snack, lunch, outside or at nap. You will be asked to provide a freshly laundered face covering each day for your child to enter and exit the school. We will have face covering available for the children to wear while they are at school.

Staff will wear face covering or face shields at all times in the presence of children, except when eating or outside. They may also remove them when in an environment where they can maintain six feet social distance from others, out of the classroom and away from children.

No backpacks, tote bags, pillows, sleep toys (ie: "lovies", stuffed animals) or toys will be allowed from home. Items allowed at the center will be limited to an extra set of clothes, one small blanket for naptime, diapers, wipes and sunscreen when applicable. All items shall be brought in a disposable bag.

Infants may bring supplies such as bottles, formula, food, and other infant necessities in a non-porous diaper bag. You will be instructed to wipe down your diaper bags with disinfectant cloth during the check in process.

For children with allergies or dietary restrictions, parents may continue to bring meal and or milk supplement with approval from the Director.

All staff members will be vigilant with their own hand washing as well as with the children's hand washing.

All classrooms and toys will be sanitized hourly throughout the day, especially commonly touched items such as door knobs and light switches.

Bathrooms, potty chairs, sinks and diaper tables will continue to be thoroughly sanitized after every use.

Any toys put in a child's mouth will be removed for sanitizing immediately. For infant and toddler children, teething toys shall be removed for sanitizing once discarded by a child.

All soft plush toys that can harbor germs and cannot be readily cleaned will be removed from classrooms.

Cot and crib sheets will be washed daily.

Cots and cribs will be placed at least 6 feet apart.

Playground time will be scheduled to allow 30 minutes between groups when possible. If less than 30 minutes, playground equipment will be disinfected between groups.

Hand sanitizer will be provided in every room and individually to each teacher to carry with them. All hand sanitizer will be kept out of reach of children.

Signs are posted throughout the center describing ways to prevent the spread of germs. Including pictorials on how to wash hands.

Staff will receive COVID-19 related training to ensure all District policies and procedures and DCFS standards relative to COVID-19 are upheld.

Tours, field trips, special visitors and swim lessons will be discontinued until further notice.

In order to maintain these guidelines LLCC will not operate understaffed, in the event that staff are unable to work due to illness or COVID-19 isolation and certified staff is not available to substitute. Additionally, if the minimum number of children is not met to operate classrooms may close, or hours may be affected.

Little Learners Childcare Health Policy Addendum for COVID-19

Related Illness

COVID-19 is considered a reportable infectious contagious or communicable disease. Due to the severity of COVID-19 there is zero tolerance regarding procedures relative to the information below.

If your child shows signs or symptoms that are associated with COVID-19, you will be notified immediately and you or an emergency contact will be expected to pick up your child within one hour. Your child will be removed from their classroom and will be isolated with a designated staff member until you arrive. When you arrive, call the Childcare Director at 847-996-3486 and your child will be walked outside to your vehicle.

Parents are required to notify the LLCC Director if a child is diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been known to be in contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. Any child diagnosed with COVID-19 or having been in contact with persons diagnosed with COVID-19 will be excluded from the center.

LLCC will follow all recommendations as laid out in the 'COVID-19 Interim Exclusion Guidance Decision Tree' provided by the Illinois Department of Health.

If at any time a physician confirms the cause of their fever or other symptoms is not COVID-19 and approves your child as being fit to return to LLCC, the child may return. They must present a physician's note stating your child is no longer communicable and may return to childcare.

If any staff or child who tests positive for a reportable illness such as COVID-19 the child care director will immediately notify DCFS, Lake County Health Department, and VHPD Risk Manager by phone and follow up in writing by the end of day. The Director will also, notify every staff member and enrolled family either in person, by phone or email as quickly feasible. Information given will relate directly to the illness and classroom affected. No personal information will be shared.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at our facility, and it is deemed necessary to close this will be determined in partnership with the Lake County Health Department. The Vernon Hills Park District Executive Director, VHPD Risk Manager and other designated staff will assist the Lake County Health Department with contact tracing as needed.

Daily Wellness Screenings will be conducted prior to allowing anyone into the building including, but not limited to all staff, children, parent/guardian, cleaning staff, and authorized representatives of DCFS or other official departments (ex: Illinois Health Dept. Representatives) that enter the premises.

A designated staff member will conduct your wellness screening upon arrival at the center. After a visual check for symptoms such as flushed cheeks or cough, you will be asked a series of questions that will include but are not limited to:

- Does your child have fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, and/or any gastrointestinal concerns (e.g., abdominal, pain, vomiting, and diarrhea)?
- Is anyone in your child's household experiencing sign of illness?
- Has your child come into contact with anyone who has tested positive with COVID-19?

A touch-less temperature scan will be performed upon arrival for child and adult dropping off. If your child has a fever of 100.4 or higher they will not be permitted to stay and LLCC cannot provide child care. If the adult dropping off has a fever of 100.4 or higher they may not leave the child at LLCC.

COVID-19 INTERIM EXCLUSION GUIDANCE¹
Decision Tree for Symptomatic Individuals in Pre-K, K-12 Schools and Day Care Programs



Send home or deny entry (and provide remote instruction) if **ANY** of the following symptoms² are present: Fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain from unknown cause, new congestion/runny nose, new loss of sense of taste or smell, nausea, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches.
Medical Evaluation and Testing are Strongly Recommended for ALL Persons with COVID-Like Symptoms.

Status	Evaluated by Healthcare Provider	Return to School Guidance	Quarantine for Close Contacts?	Documentation Required to Return to School
A. COVID-19 diagnostic test Positive (confirmed case) OR COVID-like symptoms without COVID-19 testing and exposed to confirmed case (probable case)	YES / NO	Stay home at least ten ³ calendar days from onset of symptoms AND for 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) AND improvement of symptoms.	YES	Release from Isolation letter (if received from their LHD) provided by the parent/guardian or staff person, notification via phone, secure email or fax from the LHD to the school, OR other process implemented by your LHD
B. Symptomatic individual with a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test <i>Negative COVID-19 diagnostic tests are valid only for the date on which they are collected; specimens collected 48 hours prior to symptom onset, after symptom onset, or while symptoms are present are acceptable for determining school exclusion status.</i>	YES / NO	Stay home until symptoms have improved/resolved per return-to-school criteria for diagnosed condition ⁴ . Follow provider directions, recommended treatment & return to school guidance as per school policies and IDPH Communicable Diseases in Schools .	NO	If staff/student is a close contact to a confirmed case, the school is experiencing an outbreak, or the LHD is requiring validation due to community transmission levels, documentation of a negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test result is needed. In other situations, a negative RT-PCR, rapid molecular (rapid PCR) or negative antigen test is acceptable.
C. Symptomatic individual with an alternative diagnosis without a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test	YES	Stay home until symptoms have improved/resolved per return-to-school criteria for diagnosed condition ⁴ . Follow provider directions, recommended treatment & return to school guidance as per school policies and IDPH Communicable Diseases in Schools .	NO	If testing is not performed due to the clinical judgment of the healthcare provider, a medical note is needed to return to school/day care documenting that there is no clinical suspicion for COVID-19 infection and indicate an alternative diagnosis with exclusion consistent with this diagnosis
D. Symptomatic individual without diagnostic testing or clinical evaluation <i>Individuals may move to Columns A, B, or C based on results of diagnostic testing and/or clinical evaluation.</i>	NO	Stay home at least ten ³ calendar days from onset of symptoms AND for 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) AND improvement of symptoms.	Household Member (e.g., Siblings, Parent) ⁵	After the ten-day exclusion, a note from parent/guardian documenting that the ill student and/or household contacts are afebrile without fever-reducing medication and symptoms have improved
E. Asymptomatic individual who is a close contact⁶ to a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case	NO	Stay home for 7-14 calendar days ^{7,8} after last exposure to the COVID-19 case. Local health departments must authorize early release from quarantine. <i>If COVID-19 illness develops, use the ten-day isolation period³ guidance for a COVID-19 case from the onset date. Testing is recommended.</i>	NA	Release from Quarantine letter (if received from their LHD) and negative PCR lab result if applicable ^{7,8} provided by the parent/guardian or staff member, LHD notification via phone, secure email or fax to the school OR other process implemented by your LHD

¹ Based on available data and science, schools must make local decisions informed by local context in consultation with their local public health department. This chart should be used in conjunction with the Public Health Interim Guidance for Pre-K-12 Schools and Day Care Programs for Addressing COVID-19.
² New onset of a symptom not attributed to allergies or a pre-existing condition.
³ Severely immunocompromised or severely ill: may need to isolate for 20 days as per guidance from the individual's infectious disease physician.

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⁴ If the individual has been identified by public health for quarantine or knows they are a close contact to a case, the quarantine period must be completed.
⁵ Consider quarantine for other close contacts if there was poor adherence to social distancing or use of face coverings.
⁶ Contacts to close contacts of a case do not need to be excluded unless the close contact becomes a confirmed or probable case.
⁷ Quarantine options: Complete a. 14 days, OR b. 10 days with no symptoms, OR c -for ADULT STAFF ONLY: 7 days with no symptoms and a negative SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR test. Specimen for testing must be obtained within 48 hours of Day 7. Last exposure date = Day 0. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>
⁸ Molecular testing (PCR) is recommended for individuals ending quarantine at Day 10 after exposure; may be required by LHD.



Supplemental Guidance: Considerations for School Nurses and Healthcare Providers

1/4/2021
Interim
Guidance,
Subject to
updates

Box A. Assessment of Symptomatic Persons

Consider the following when assessing symptomatic students/staff:

Are symptoms new to the student/staff person or are they a change in baseline for that individual?

Does the symptomatic individual have any of the following potential exposure risks?

Did the student/staff have an exposure to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in the past 14 days?

Is there a household or other close contact with similar symptoms who has not been yet classified as a confirmed or probable case?

Is there a household member or other close contact with high-exposure risk occupation or activities (e.g. HCW, correctional worker, other congregate living setting worker or visitor)?

Did the student/staff member have potential exposure due to out-of-school activities (private parties, playing with friend groups, etc.) or have poor compliance with mask wearing and social distancing?

Do they live in an area of moderate or high community transmission? (as defined in the [Adaptive Pause Metrics guidance](#)¹)

Do they have a history of travel to an area of high transmission in previous 14 days?

Is there an outbreak in the school or has there been another known case of COVID-19 in the school building in the last 14 days or are there other students or staff in the classroom or cohort currently out with COVID-19 symptoms?

Box B. Clinical Evaluation for Children with Symptoms of COVID-19

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pediatric-hcp.html>)

Consider the individual's risk of exposure. See Box A.

No Exposure Risk Identified & resides in County with Minimal County Transmission¹

Has Exposure Risk and/or Clinical Suspicion for COVID-19

If no known close contact to COVID-19 case and no other exposure risks, testing and exclusion for COVID-19 may be considered based on level of clinical suspicion and testing availability.

Alternate diagnoses should be considered, and exclusions based on usual practice. (Isolate until at least 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medicine)

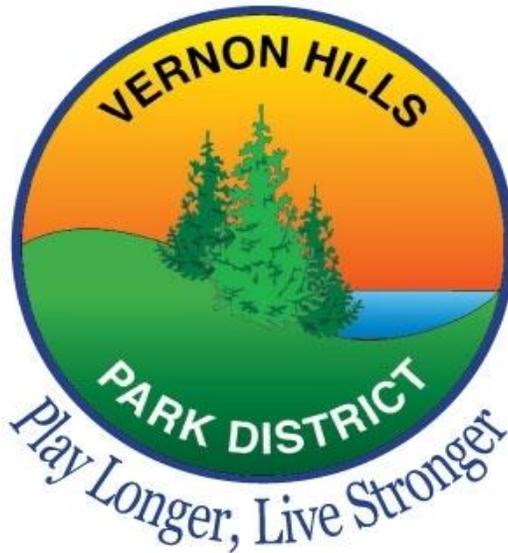
Isolation
COVID-19 Testing Recommended

TESTING

PCR or antigen (Ag) testing is acceptable.

- If an Ag detection test is negative and there is a high clinical suspicion of COVID-19, confirm with PCR (see Column B, pg. 1), ideally within 2 days of the initial Ag test.
- If RT-PCR testing is not available, clinical discretion can be used to recommend isolation. Test result is only valid for the day of specimen collection.

¹ Adaptive Pause and Metrics: Interim School Guidance for Local Health Departments. Available at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IDPH-Adaptive-Pause-Metrics.pdf> and CDC Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html#thresholds>
Resources:
• COVID-19 Testing Overview <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>
• Isolation and Quarantine: CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>



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