

# Handbook for Families

## 2018-2019

Revised July 2018



**PMLC**

*Love, Laugh, Learn*

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Christen Blythe, Director

# Welcome!

We welcome you to Precious Moments Learning Center, LLC (PMLC), and to the partnership we will share during these early school years.

The need for good quality early education is great, and PMLC strives to meet that need by providing nurturing educational experiences. As a participant in the Arkansas Better Beginnings Program, PMLC has chosen to meet quality standards that are substantially higher than the minimum requirements. Our goal is to help your child explore and begin to understand the world around us and to lay the foundation for future academic pursuits.

We are also a Conscious Discipline center. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline provides a transformational, whole-school solution for social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation. It is specially designed to make changes in the lives of adults first.

This handbook includes program policies and important information you will need as we share this year. We hope you will read the handbook carefully. If you have questions, please call us.

Please talk to us often. Thank you for choosing PMLC. We're glad you are here!

Warmly,

Christen Blythe

(501) 286-7970

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Your child's teachers are \_\_\_\_\_

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# About Our Program

## Purpose

The purpose of Precious Moments Learning Center, LLC is to provide a safe and caring environment in which each child can play, learn, and grow.

## Our Philosophy

We believe...

- That children learn by using their senses and by moving.
- That each child learns and develops at his/her own pace.
- That children learn through language and rapidly developing their language skills.
- That preschool children need hands-on experiences with a wide variety of materials
- That families and program staff are partners in supporting the child's development and learning.

## Attendance & Tuition

Our Center is open Monday- Friday, from 6:00A.M. to 6:00P.M.

Our staff work very hard to plan lessons and activities for your children. It is best that they attend school daily. Children miss out on so much when they do not attend regularly. However, if your child is going to be absent, please call and let us know.

If your child is going to be dropped off after 9:30A.M., you must contact us to let us know when he/she will be expected. Sometimes days are planned by teachers based on the number of children in the classroom, and we need to know if your child will be late so he/she will be included in that plan. Also, we do our lunch count at 9:30 A.M., if your child is not here for the count he/she will not have a tray for lunch, unless you have called.

We expect children to be picked up by 6:00P.M. Two things happen when you are late picking up your child. First, your child becomes anxious about why you are late. Second, staff (who have responsibilities after children depart and who have lives outside of the center) may have to stay at school past their scheduled time and are late for their evening commitments.

**YOU WILL BE CHARGED \$1.00 FOR EVERY MINUTE YOU ARE LATE PICKING UP YOUR CHILD AFTER 6:00PM.**

Parents must still pay for a full week even if their child did not attend that week. Please remember there are other parents on the waiting list to get into a high quality childcare center.

All tuition is due Monday before your child attends PMLC for the week. (or Tuesday if Monday is an observed holiday). NO EXCEPTIONS. **Guardians will be charged \$10 per child every day a payment is late.** PMLC reserves the right to discharge your child from PMLC if payments, including late fees, are more than three days late.

## **Nutrition & Meals**

Our program serves two meals and one snack per day. There is no charge for these meals.

Breakfast	Before school care	6:30 – 7:00A.M.
	6 weeks-5 years	7:30 – 8:30 A.M.
Lunch	6 weeks – 2 years	10:30A.M.
	3-5 years	11:00A.M.
Snack	6 weeks – 3 years	1:30P.M.
	4 -5 years	1:30P.M.
	After School Care	4:00P.M.

We expect all children to participate in our meal program. If you send a meal for your child, it **MUST** meet the nutrition requirements of the US Department of Agriculture.

\*Note: If your child is dropped off after breakfast, please provide their meal. Breakfast will no longer be served after 8:30A.M.

### **Food Allergies**

Please notify your child’s teacher if your child has food allergies. You will need to bring a statement from your child’s doctor confirming the food allergy and including any special instructions or emergency procedures. Menu items with equivalent nutritional value will be substituted for allergy-causing foods. You may also need to fill out a more detailed Special Health Care Plan for your child.

### **Staff**

Precious Moments Learning Center takes pride in our staff members. Each staff member will go through two very thorough orientations before employment and will receive a health & safety training before they begin working.

All staff members are required to participate in on-going training in child development and early childhood education throughout each school year.

The center director initiates a background check on every new employee, as required by current licensing requirements. In addition, references from previous employers are required.

## Curriculum

Our activities are planned around your child's individual needs, abilities, and interests. Because children learn through their senses and by moving, it may not look like school to you! Teachers use play experiences to help children learn skills and concepts. Activities encourage exploration, creativity, and problem solving. The staff works with children to enhance their learning and development in all areas: social-emotional, physical, language/literacy, and intellectual.

Our center has chosen to use Adventures in Learning for our three to five year olds. Adventures in Learning is a comprehensive curriculum for children. Three early childhood educators, Dot Brown, Beverly C. Wright and Trude Puckett, spent more than a year developing this curriculum. Their credentials include: Masters of Education degrees in early childhood emphasis; instructors of early childhood courses; monitors, evaluators, supervisors and mentors in preschool classrooms; evaluators of curriculum for children from three to five; registered trainers in the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Registry; and certified Pre-K ELLA trainers.

We also use Conscious Discipline, which was created by Dr. Becky Bailey, an internationally renowned expert in child developmental psychology, Conscious Discipline® is built on the premise of developing discipline *within* children rather than applying discipline *to* them.

The Conscious Discipline process applies equally to parents, child care givers, educators, and patient caregivers. It can be pictured as a pyramid with four stages: understand the brain states; learn your seven powers as adults; discover new ways to connect members of your family, classroom, or team; use the seven skills of discipline to respond to events in new ways.

For our eighteen to thirty-six month old children, we use the Adventures for Toddlers Curriculum. It was developed by the same education specialists and approved by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

For the 6 week- 18 month old children, we use the Early Learning Standards, which is a developmental framework designed to support the youngest children in reaching their full potential in school and in life.

## Educational Care Plan

- All classrooms use developmental rating scales to assess children's developmental milestones.
- If a teacher has a concern about a child's evaluation, he/she will meet with Christen Blythe, director.
- Christen will then look over the evaluation and observe the child.
- If she feels there are concerns that should be addressed, Christen and the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents. At this time we will recommend further evaluation and discuss some ways to work on goals and objectives that might help the child.
  - Local Companies to contact for additional service
    - Allied Therapy; 1500 Wilson Loop; Ward, AR 72176; (501) 941-5630
    - Reaper Physical Therapy; 2918 Hawkins Drive; Searcy, AR 72143; (501) 279-9255

- Wilbur D. Mills Educational Service Cooperative (Ron Copeland, EI Coordinator); Beebe, AR 72012; (501) 268-8696
- We welcome therapists at PMLC. The Center workroom is provided to them, so they can have a quiet place to work with the children.

## **Children with Special Needs**

PMLC accepts all children. No child is denied enrollment due to special medical, health, or developmental needs. We will work with special services providers to ensure that your child has the support needed to foster development. If extra staffing is required for your child, it will be provided at the parent/guardians expense.

## **Rest**

Children are offered an opportunity to rest after lunch. Children have sleeping cots labeled with a number. Each child is assigned a specific cot. Children need to bring a small blanket and a crib sheet from home. Children are not required to go to sleep. Non-sleepers may rest quietly with a book, while lying on their cot.

## **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is not just recess, but is an extension of our indoor learning opportunities.

All children will play outdoors every day, weather permitting. The length of outdoor play times is adjusted according to the weather. Factors such as humidity and wind are considered in determining whether children will be able to play outdoors and how long they will stay out. Children are required to go outdoors, even if it is muddy. Please dress your child appropriate for this. You may also leave extra shoes or rain boots at the center for your child to use on muddy days.

- If children are healthy enough to be at the center, they are healthy enough to go outdoors.
- Please dress your child for the weather, especially cool mornings in fall and spring.
- Sneakers with socks, or other similar shoes, are best for running, climbing, and enjoying the outdoors.
- At enrollment, parents sign a consent form for sunscreen and bug spray, provided by the parent, to be used as needed.

## **Health**

### **Illness**

For the good of all children and the teachers, your child must stay home if he/she is ill. If symptoms appear during the day, we will call you to pick up your child immediately.

If your child is exposed to a contagious illness, we will send a notice home with your child or contact you by phone or e-mail. Please let us know if your child has been exposed to a disease away from school so that we can watch for symptoms.

State health regulations require that children with the following symptoms be excluded from the child care center:

- Fever over 101•F
- Diarrhea (2 or more watery stools in a 24-hour period).
- Vomiting (2 or more occasions with the past 24 hours).
- Rash that is not obviously associated with diapering, heat, or allergic reactions to medications.
- Sore throat if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
- Sever coughing leading to gagging, vomiting or difficulty breathing.
- Pink Eye
- Untreated scabies, head lice or the presence of nits
- Multiple sores in the mouth with drooling
- Ring Worm
- Impetigo

If your child is sent home for any of the above reasons, PMLC required a doctor's note before returning.

**You have one hour to pick-up your child for any of the above symptoms after PMLC's first contact attempt. If you fail to pick up your sick child within the allotted hour PMLC reserves the right to terminate services.**

## **Medical Care Plan**

- All parents are required to complete an enrollment packet, which includes information on a child's disease history, current medications, and child development needs.
- If a child has special allergies or medical conditions, the guardian must complete a special health care plan.
- Allergies/Medical conditions are confidentially posted in every classroom and kitchen.
- We require all full and part-time staff to become trained in CPR/First Aid.
- All medication must be handed to a staff member and medicine form must be filled out. DO NOT PUT MEDICATIONS IN YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK
- All medication is kept in a lock box in the staff workroom. It can only be administered if parents completed a medicine form.
- Emergency/life saving medications (i.e. Epi pens) must be at PMLC if child is present

## **Immunizations**

Every child in the Center must be fully immunized or obtain documentation for meeting requirements for exemption. A photocopy of the child's current immunization record is required at the time of enrollment. Please remember to provide a new copy if your child receives additional immunizations during the school year. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in termination of your child's enrollment.

## **Medication**

If your child is on a medication, you must fill out a consent form that allows PMLC to administer that medication. The director or assistant director administers all medication.

## **Injuries**

Minor injuries will be treated with appropriate first aid and you will be informed about them on an accident report. You will be called to the center immediately if your child sustains a more serious injury. In cases that we perceive to be potentially life threatening, we will call an ambulance to transport your child to a medical facility and will direct you to meet the ambulance. All costs for the ambulance and medical fees are the responsibility of the child's family.

## **Safety and Emergencies**

### **Transportation**

PMLC will provide transportation to and from select elementary schools in the Cabot School District. If a child is six years of age or weighs 60 lbs. they are no longer required to sit in a booster seat. Please indicate in enrollment packet if you want your child in a booster seat. All staff who transport children are trained in transportation safety.

### **Release of Children**

No child will be released to persons not authorized by a parent or guardian. We must have written authorization of changes in transportation. **If we have any doubt that the person picking up your child has not been authorized by a parent or guardian, we will not release the child until we contact you.**

### **Emergency Procedures**

Evacuation procedures for fire and other emergencies are practiced monthly. Severe weather drills are also conducted every month. When severe weather is in the area, the director monitors weather reports and alerts staff to be prepared to quickly move children to safety. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. The staff knows and periodically reviews procedures for other emergencies, such as an intruder or a shelter-in-place alert.

In the event PMLC staff must evacuate the grounds our safe location is at Christen's home. If this were to occur, we would relocate all staff and children to her home and contact all parents with pick-up instructions.

### **Weather-related Closings**

We do our best to determine inclement weather closings based on the road/weather conditions near the Center. However, we do have staff that travel to our center from surrounding areas, so this also requires the director to consider the staff's safety when traveling to the Center. We will do our best to provide one hour advanced notice of any inclement weather closings.

DHS also requires childcare facilities to close if we experience a power outage for more than 30 minutes.

Closings will be announced on the PMLC Facebook page. You may also call to verify if the Center is open. If the closing is announced in the middle of the day, PMLC will contact you and you will be asked to pick up your child immediately. Tuition is still due, even if we are closed for inclement weather.

## Abuse Reporting

Our teachers are required by state law to report suspected child abuse/maltreatment. This includes non-accidental injuries, such as welts, bruises, cuts, burns, scratches, and broken bones. Suspected sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect are also reported. Child neglect is defined as abandonment, lack of food, utilities, shelter, or lack of supervision.

Teachers are trained to recognize indicators or possible abuse. If they fail to report suspected abuse/maltreatment, teachers can be charged with a Class C misdemeanor. Reports are confidential and are considered allegations until an investigation is completed. The phone number for the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-482-5964.

## Interviews by DHS and Other Agencies

Any staff member or children in attendance may be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, by the Division of Child and Family Services, and/or by law enforcement officers for the purpose of investigations or to determine compliance with licensing requirements. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

## Children's Needs

### Clothing

Children in our programs are active and creative. So that your child can fully participate in all the activities, please follow these guidelines when dressing your child for school.

- Children can easily manage clothing for toileting: fasten and unfasten buttons, zippers, snaps, buckles
- Clothing is washable and durable enough to permit vigorous play
- Clothing is inexpensive so that soiling, damage, or loss will not cause great concern
- Shoes are sturdy and protect the child's feet. Sneakers (with socks) are the best choice. Flip flops, sandals, and open toed shoes can be hazardous.
- Clothing is appropriate for the weather conditions. Children will spend time outdoors every day. Be sure to send jackets, sweaters, coats, gloves, hats as needed.
- ALL clothing needs to be labeled with your child's name. PMLC is not responsible for lost clothing items or damaged clothes.

**Change of clothes at school.** Every child must have a complete change of clothes at school (socks, underwear, shirt, shorts/pants/skirt, and shoes). Please check periodically to see if your child's change of clothes needs replacing. If a change of clothing becomes necessary during the day, the soiled clothing will be placed in a bag with your child's name on it.

### Toys

PMLC offers a wide array of materials for the children to explore. Please leave all personal toys at home. It is often difficult for children to share their personal toys with a group and the toy may get lost or broken. **Since we do not permit personal toys/Electronics/ETC. , PMLC will not be responsible for any lost or broken toys/Items.**

### Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special occasion to share with friends. If you would like to provide a simple celebration for the group, please plan the date in advance with your child's teacher. Any items must be store bought. Sorry the law does not allow any homemade foods.

## **Behavior Guidance**

### **Conscious Discipline:**

The Conscious Discipline process applies equally to parents, child care givers, educators, and patient caregivers. It can be pictured as a pyramid with four stages:

- **Understand the brain states** (the base of the pyramid)

Discover how to use the latest brain research to break out of the instinctive habit of disciplining children the same way you were disciplined as a child.

You'll also be able to help children progress from physical or verbal aggression to calm self-regulation, freeing them to make better choices and empathize with others.

- **Learn your seven powers as adults**

Among these powers is your ability to see discipline as an opportunity to teach rather than a disruption... and to stay in control of your own actions, creating a safe environment for your children.

Consider: an adult who is out of control is perceived by a child as a threat to his or her safety. As part of this stage, you'll learn how to self-regulate your own emotions and actions.

- **Discover new ways to connect members of your family, classroom, or team**

Building stronger connections in your family, classroom, or team will increase their willingness to solve problems together rather than fight against each other.

Many parents and teachers are delighted to find that attention seeking behaviors in children are automatically reduced at this stage, which isn't surprising since most people crave connection more than attention.

- **Use the seven skills of discipline to respond to events in new ways**

If you've ever struggled to keep a child focused on an idea or task, you'll be delighted to find that changing your own responses can help children boost their learning skills.

Your new ways of responding will also help children develop kindness and self-respect, honor those different than themselves, solve problems with compassion, and grow into responsible adults.

Our goal is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self-control. Our program is designed to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences and to build trusting, respectful relationships. A well-planned schedule, classroom arrangement, and curriculum, along with a well-trained staff, significantly reduces instances of inappropriate behavior. However, when children do make mistakes in behavior, we use the following guidance techniques.

- Tell the child what he/she CAN do
- Give choices whenever possible, but only when the child really has a choice
- Support children in learning to solve their own problems and work out conflicts
- Re-direct a child to another activity
- Help children learn how to play with friends
- Time-Out when over the age of two.

Physical punishment and threats are never used by parents or staff at the Center.

### Limits of Behavior

You may not physically or verbally harm others.

You may not hurt yourself.

You may not hurt toys and equipment.

Any other behavior the Center deems as inappropriate

### Pattern of Inappropriate Behavior

One or all of the following actions may be required:

- Management/Teacher will meet with guardian to discuss:
  - Behavior Plan
  - You will be required to talk to your child on the phone to correct inappropriate behavior.
  - You may be required to come to PMLC to discuss inappropriate behavior with your child face to face
- Contact outside sources who specialize in behavior guidance.
  - A-State ( Behavior Help)
  - Conscious Discipline Specialist
- If extra staffing becomes required for your child, it will be provided at guardians expense.

## **Family-Staff Partnership**

### **Confidentiality**

All information about children and families is considered confidential. Staff members and volunteers will maintain the confidentiality of each family and of each child's educational records.

### **Communication**

We use a number of methods to communicate between center and your family.

- Facebook (@pmllearningcenter)
- Instagram (pmllearningcenter)
- Pinterest (pmllearningcenter)
- Youtube (search PMLC)
- Talk to your child's teacher at drop-off and pick-up time.
- Read special event notices posted on parent bulletin board or that are sent home.
- Read the information on the parent bulletin board.
- Read the center newsletter that is sent home every month.

- Enjoy the photos, children’s work, and other documentation of children’s activities. These are posted in your child’s room and throughout the center.
- Check your child’s cubby or folder for notices.
- Talk with you in a parent-teacher conference.
- Visit the center! You are welcome to drop by any time.
- You may request a conference with your child’s teacher or director at any time.

## **Daily Arrivals and Departures**

**A parent or authorized adult must accompany children into and out of your child’s classroom at all times, and must sign children in and out.** Arrival and departure times are very busy; for safety, please hold your child’s hand in the parking lot.

Drop-off and pick-up times are opportunities to exchange information with our staff. As staff members are greeting children, parents often have lots of information to give us. Please help us do a good job—if it’s important for us to know, write it down and hand it to a staff member.

Registered sex offenders are not allowed on any School or Child Care Center property. If you have a friend or family member that is a registered sex offender, he/she cannot pick up/drop off children.

## **Meetings and Special Events**

Family events will be planned throughout the year. We encourage your family to participate in these special activities. Notice of these events will be in the newsletter, posted on the parent bulletin board, on Facebook, and a note will be sent home.

## **Photographs and Video**

Teachers use digital cameras and digital video to record children’s activities. Documentation of children’s activities is used for families to see what their children are doing in the center, and also for children to recall what they have been doing. You will see photographs through the center. Video may be used occasionally during meetings or special events.

Photographs and video may also be submitted occasionally to the local newspapers to inform the community about our program. Our staff may also share photographs and video with other teachers in professional meetings, classes, and workshops. We may also use photographs of your children on our website or Facebook page.

During the enrollment process, parents will sign a release for their children to be included in photographs and video.

If you choose for your child not to be included in photographs and videos, staff will exclude him/her. However, we are not responsible if your child is in a photograph/video created by non-staff members.

## **Enrollment & Re-Enrollment**

### **Eligibility**

We accept all eligible applicants until our maximum enrollment is reached. To review eligibility requirements, contact the center director

## **Enrollment Forms**

Parents must complete all the necessary forms.

### Forms Required:

- Child's Personal Data Sheet
- Emergency Contact Form
- Photography/Video Release form
- Tylenol Permission Form (if child is under 2)
- Baby Information Sheet (if child is under 18 mo.)
- General Information
- Enrollment Agreement
- Informed Consent Form
- Copy of updated Immunization Records
- Parent Handbook Signature Page
- Free & Reduced Price Meal Application
- Child Care Food Program Enrollment Form
- Obligation to Serve (if child is under 1)
- Shaken Baby Syndrome Acknowledgement (if under 18 months)
- Copy of Guardian(s) driver's license
- Annual Registration Fee

## **Withdrawal**

If your child will be withdrawing from our program before the end of the school year, we require two weeks written notice. This allows us to help your child prepare for a new experience. Also, we can notify another family who may be waiting for a place in our program. If PMLC does not receive the required two weeks notice in writing you will still be responsible for two weeks tuition/fees.

## **Re-Enrollment**

Each year in August, we will have a re-enrollment time, where you can enroll your child for the next school year. New enrollment packets will be given out and must be returned by the deadline, with your child's re-enrollment fee to maintain their spot with our center.

Dates the Center will be closed during the 2018-2019 school year:

September	3	Labor Day
November	22-23	Thanksgiving
December	24-25	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
December	31	New Year's Eve
January	1	New Year's Day
May	27	Memorial Day
July	4	Independence Day