

# Latchkey's Parent Handbook

## Welcome to Latchkey's Before & After School Programs

Thank you for choosing Latchkey. Selecting the best possible childcare solution for your child is a difficult task. We are honored that you entrust us to assist in your child's developmental growth.

### Our Commitment

We promise to devote our time and effort to ensuring that children are safe, happy, and cared for in a positive environment. We are committed to meeting the developmental needs of children through developmentally-appropriate experiences and activities, with caring and nurturing staff, while providing supervision and guidance that helps children develop their leadership and social skills.

### Getting to Know Us

#### First Priority

To provide an educational environment that is beneficial to the children's safety, health, and welfare.

#### Parent Satisfaction

Meeting the needs of as many parents as possible, recognizing that the needs of the majority cannot be compromised in order to meet the individual needs of a singular parent.

#### Open Door Policy

We invite you to drop-by any time to visit with your child or observe how his/her day is going. However, if your child is involved in an activity, we request that you do not interrupt. Keeping a consistent routine is key to successful child development.

#### Employee Opportunities

Latchkey believes in training and developing each individual staff person to his or her potential and encouraging growth within the organization. This will allow them to achieve personal fulfillment and rewards.

#### The Staff

Latchkey is very selective when choosing staff to work with your children. We use an independent security company who conducts a thorough background check on all employees prior to hiring. Personal and business references, criminal history, and sex offender backgrounds are checked.

Latchkey's staff meets and exceeds all state requirements for childcare professionals. Our staff interacts with the boys and girls in a positive manner, uses good judgment, and puts the children's best interests first.

Staff training includes Adult, Infant and Child CPR and First Aid, health and safety training, music and movement, discipline with Love & Logic and much more. Staff is trained in early childhood development so that they understand the child's individual development and ability to learn. Attention is given to promoting positive self-concepts in each child.

## The Program

Latchkey programs are set up into a variety of interest centers designed to enhance the children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Activities and equipment are selected to be fun, stimulating, and educational. Our staff follows a daily routine to ensure consistency.

Latchkey designs weekly lesson plans that are appropriate for the children's developmental levels. Each lesson plan will include the following activities each week: R.A.D. (Reading Adventure Day), Arts and Crafts, Math Activities, Music & Movement, Science and Nature Exploration, Outdoor Physical Activities and *Learning for Life* character building development. All lesson plans are centered on a weekly theme to help keep it fun and interesting for the students. Our staff encourages ideas and suggestions from the boys and girls when planning activities. In addition to the weekly lesson planned activities, the boys and girls have opportunities to relax and build friendships, work on homework and reading, and learn through fun activities that includes games, puzzles, dramatic play, building, puppets, housekeeping and more. Over and above our normal weekly curriculum and activities, the students will be involved in a variety of community projects, participate in birthday celebrations and an award ceremony monthly, and have the opportunity to hear guest speakers.

## **Enrollment, Tuition and Payment Policies**

### General Enrollment Policies

- We do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, religion, origin, or as otherwise prohibited by law
- Children must attend the school in which the program is located
- Applications are accepted on first come, first served basis
- Priority is given to full-time participants versus part-time or drop-in clients
- If a child cannot be placed in a program due to full enrollment, the child will be placed on a waiting list

### Enrollment Steps

- Complete and sign one Family Enrollment Card
- Complete and sign one Child Information Form for each child enrolling
- Provide a copy of immunization record for each child enrolling
- Complete the Tuition Express form for automatic payments (Latchkey's preferred method of payment)
- Return all of the above to the Latchkey staff at your school or to Latchkey's main office
  - If you authorized Tuition Express - you are done. The enrollment fee will be deducted once processed and weekly tuition charges will begin on the first business day of the first week of care.
  - Non-Tuition Express – you must pay the enrollment fee and the first week's tuition at the time of enrollment. Payments are not accepted at program sites; you must mail or deliver the entire enrollment packet and payment to Latchkey's main office.

#### Note:

- Enrollment fee is a per child fee (waived for state assistance children)
- Latchkey offers a discount for eligible district employees, contact the Latchkey main office for details. To qualify, Tuition Express and district employee's verification are required
- Scholarship funds are available at most sites, contact the Latchkey main office for details
- If not enrolling in Tuition Express, payments are due one week in advance and no later than Monday of the current week to avoid late fees. Co-payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> school day of the month to avoid late fees.

## Weekly Tuition

Latchkey determines the cost per child to operate quality programs with qualified staff. Latchkey does not prorate weekly tuition rates. The following stipulations apply:

### **WEEKLY CONTRACT RATES**

Client agrees to and understands the following stipulations:

- Enrollment in Tuition Express (TE), auto-pay, with weekly deductions on the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each week
- Must pay for each week of the school year regardless of attendance with the exception of weekly pre-scheduled school closures (spring, winter, other weekly breaks)
- Weekly tuition is not pro-rated and is due even during unexpected school closures due to weather or other circumstances and regardless of the number of days that your child attends
- Must provide 2 weeks advanced written notice to our main office for program changes or withdrawals
- A **payment processing fee** is assessed to clients that are unable/unwilling to meet the above TE requirement
- Payments are due one week in advance and no later than Monday of the current week. A \$10 late payment fee is assessed to payments received after the due date. This fee is assessed each week until your account is current
- There is no additional charge for using miscellaneous intersession days with the exception of weekly pre-scheduled school closures. There is a \$10.00 per day non-attendance fee if you fail to attend once you have reserved a space
- Only clients signed up to attend weekly pre-scheduled school closures are billed for those weeks. The non-attendance fee applies here as well

### **DAILY DROP-IN RATES**

Client agrees to and understands the following stipulations:

- Enrollment in Tuition Express (TE), auto-pay, is recommended. Same day or advanced payment is required. A **payment processing fee** is assessed to clients that are unable/unwilling to meet the TE requirement
- Care may be denied at any time due to capacity/staffing restraints
- There is an additional charge for using miscellaneous intersession days or weekly pre-scheduled school closures. There is a \$10.00 per day non-attendance fee if you fail to attend once you have reserved a space

### **OKDHS STATE ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT**

- No Enrollment Fee
- Co-payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> business day each month. A \$10 late payment fee is assessed to payments received after the due date. This fee is assessed each week until your account is current
- Enrollment in Tuition Express (TE), auto-pay, is recommended. A **payment processing fee** is assessed to clients that are unable/unwilling to meet the TE requirement
- Latchkey policy requires swiping the Access Oklahoma Card daily. All state clients are allowed to obtain an additional Card for any person they so designate. You shall be charged for days not swiped and/or swipe errors resulting in non-payment by OKDHS including loss of monthly premiums as a result of such non-swipes or errors

## Payment Processing Fees

Tuition Express with weekly automatic processing is Latchkey's preferred method of payment. Tuition Express offers many advantages to our clients, especially safety and security of their account information and simplicity while helping Latchkey to minimize its overhead and processing costs which then translate into lower tuition fees.

**Latchkey charges a payment processing fee per payment to all clients that are not enrolled in Tuition Express or that request special processing of their automatic payments**

### Intersession Days

Intersession days are those days during the school year when there is no class. Latchkey provides care on most of these days. We consolidate our programs to use fewer locations on these days. Clients need to reserve a space through the Latchkey main office prior to the intersession date.

### Late Pickup Fee

A late pickup fee shall be charged and collected if a child is not picked up by closing time. Late pickup fees are billed to clients on the day that the late pickup occurs. Fees accrue at the rate of one dollar for each minute late. This is a per family fee. The late party must sign the Late Pick-up Log. The proper authorities are notified if your child is left for longer than 30 minutes after closing.

### Methods of Payment

Latchkey accepts cash (however we discourage this method), checks, money orders, debit/credit cards, and *TUITION EXPRESS* (automatic withdraw from checking, savings and debit/credit cards). **Payments of any form are not accepted at any Latchkey program site.** Debit/credit cards are only accepted at the Latchkey main office in person or via telephone by the cardholder only. Latchkey does not accept temporary checks, out-of-state checks or two-party checks.

### Returned Checks

A return check fee shall be charged for any returned check or denied tuition express payment. If more than **two** checks are returned within a calendar year, you will be required to pay with certified funds (cash, money order, debit/credit card etc.) or enroll in Tuition Express for the remainder of the school year. Returned checks may only be picked-up by cash, money order, or after a successful debit/credit card transaction.

### Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship applicants must pay full regular tuition until the application has been approved and an effective date assigned. A limited number of scholarships are available. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need, determined by federal guidelines and by availability of funds. No application can be accepted from those that qualify for state assistance. Tuition Express automatic payment is a requirement to receive scholarship awards.

### When Tuition and Payments are Due

Weekly tuition is due and payable one week in advance no later than the first scheduled day of each week. A late payment fee will be charged when payment is not received by close of business on the first day of the current week. Monthly co-payments for OKDHS state assistance clients are due on the first school day of each month. A late payment fee will be charged when payment is not received by close of business on the first Monday of the month. If payment is continuously delinquent, childcare services shall be terminated.

## Arrivals and Departures

### Authorized Persons

When enrolling your child in Latchkey, a *Child Information Form* is completed which indicates authorized persons allowed to pick up your child. Only the persons listed on the card will be allowed to pick up your child and **they will be required to show proper identification.**

### Child Custody

When parents of any child attending Latchkey file for divorce or separation, a copy of a valid court order establishing superior custody rights to either parent or a third party must be provided. Unless a valid court order is provided, Latchkey will presume that both parents have equal custody rights regarding the child. Until a court order is on file, the staff will allow the child to be picked up by those listed on the *Child Information Form*. Once a valid court order establishing superior custody of either parent or a third party is received, only the superior custodial parent or a third party may alter information on the *Child Information Form*. Latchkey will strictly follow the ruling of the court order.

### Sign-in and Sign-out

Each day parents or authorized persons are required to:

- Make sure their child is signed-in upon arrival
- Inform the staff of any necessary information
- Sign-out the child and notify the staff before leaving the program
- Clients receiving DHS state daycare assistance (Title XX) must swipe their *Access Oklahoma* card *each day without exception*

Children will not be released from the playground. Please do not let your child leave the building ahead of you. Your cooperation will help to ensure your child's safety.

## Closings

### Holidays

Latchkey is closed on most major holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving & Day After, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.

### Due to Weather or Emergencies

In the event of bad weather, hazardous road conditions or other emergencies, please watch local programming. If your child's school district is closed, Latchkey will also be closed. Full tuition is still due.

## Emergency, Accident or Injury

The staff at Latchkey makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents may occur. In the event of a medical emergency or injury, the staff will do the following:

In a **non-life threatening** situation or injury:

- A staff member will administer first aid
- The child will be required to rest until he/she is able to resume normal activities
- The parent will be informed as to the injury when they pick up their child
- An injury report form will be filled out and kept on file

In a **life threatening** situation or **severe injury**:

- A staff member will stay with the child and send someone to **call 911**
- The parent will be called. If they cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to contact the child's doctor
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital or doctor's office if parent is not available and stay with the child until a parent/guardian arrives
- A staff member will contact Latchkey's main office

## Procedures for Illness and Medication

### Allergies & Medical Conditions

All allergies and medical conditions must be noted on the *Child Information Form*. The site staff and the main office should be made aware of any new allergies. We will be glad to work with families to accommodate food allergies; however, we must have medical documentation on file.

### Illness

If a child displays one or more of the following symptoms, the parents will be contacted and expected to arrange to have the **child picked up immediately**:

- Fever of 101 degrees or higher
- Vomiting (normally two or more times in four hours)
- Diarrhea (normally three or more times in four hours)
- Acute illness or severe pain
- Any other contagious illness

Until the parent arrives, the child will be isolated from the other children, supervised by a staff member, and kept as comfortable as possible.

### Medications

Medication will not be given to any child unless the parent completes the *Medication Permission Form*. All medication must be in the **original container** with the child's name, date, type of medication, amount and the time of dosage to be given clearly noted on the label. Parents are required to give the medication to a staff member so it can be stored properly. Staff will record the date, time dispensed, and the amount dispensed each time medication is administered. If medication requires food with it, crackers will be given. Medication that is to be given twice daily must be given to the child before Latchkey and after Latchkey hours. **Medication left at Latchkey without instructions or that has expired will be discarded.**

## **Behavior and Guidance**

### *Behavior Policy*

Latchkey makes every effort to recognize and encourage acceptable behavior. Consistent rules and routines, clear direction and explanations, and positive guidance and encouragement are all part of our behavior policy.

Behavior and guidance is an on-going process and a necessary component for a healthy successful life. Methods are determined by each individual child's understanding and their stage of development. Our goal is to help children learn self-control and how to be responsible for their own behavior.

Latchkey's staff receives on-going training in behavior and guidance. Conferences to discuss specific concerns are encouraged on an as needed basis between the parents, our staff, and the child.

### *Misbehavior Consequences*

At Latchkey, discipline consists of positive reinforcement, re-directive activities, and time for reflection. The use of corporal or physical punishment is NEVER permitted. Children are not subjected to verbal abuse, humiliation, or threats. Parents are notified when misbehavior occurs and of any continuing problems. Continuous misbehavior may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

### *Procedures for Continuous Discipline Problems*

1. Verbal warning to child and notification to parent when behavior is unacceptable.
2. Written warning given to parent
3. Parent/Teacher conference at the program site is scheduled in order to establish a mutually agreed upon plan for correction
4. If problems continue, services will be suspended for 1 to 3 days
5. After suspension, if the same pattern of misbehavior continues, Latchkey will encourage or require the parent to make other childcare arrangements for the remainder of the semester or school year
6. Latchkey reserves the right to skip any or all steps depending on the nature/severity of the misbehavior that occurs

### *Causes for Immediate Dismissal*

Latchkey will not continue services for a child:

- When their behavior endangers themselves or others
- When destruction of Latchkey property and/or school property occurs during the Latchkey program
- When they threaten another child and/or an adult in a manner that could result in severe bodily harm
- When behavior is consistently disruptive to the entire group and prevents the others from learning or participating
- When a parent fails to comply with our policies or compromises the safety or well being of the staff
- When their parent fails to show up for a scheduled conference to discuss the child's behavior
- If parent or guardian physically or verbally abuses another child, parent or Latchkey employee while in the program
- If the child leaves the Latchkey program site without permission
- For non-payment/delinquent payments or continued late pick-up

## Miscellaneous Information

### Attendance

If your child is going to be absent, notify the staff at your program site or call the Latchkey main office and we will relay the message. If circumstances force you to withdraw your child from Latchkey, we would appreciate advance notice. Two-week written notice prior to date of withdrawal is required in Latchkey's main office in order to avoid additional tuition fees.

### Hours of Operation

The *before school program* typically begins between 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. depending on the site and lasts until classes commence, usually between 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

The *after school program* starts when classes end, generally 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. and lasts until 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. depending on the site.

The *pre-kindergarten mid-day programs* provide care during the ½ of the school day that your child is not in class (where offered). Please check with Latchkey's main office or the individual site for actual program operation times because this can change from year to year.

Services are offered for most out of school days. Programs are consolidated and may be held at a school other than the one your child normally attends. Two weeks prior to the out-of-school date, a reminder will be distributed to parents and posted at each site with the location and instructions on how to secure a space for your child.

### Outdoor Play

Latchkey feels that children need fresh air and physical activity daily. The boys and girls will go outside daily, weather permitting, unless the temperature or wind chill is below 34 degrees or the heat index or temperature is above 98 degrees. Children will be kept inside for illness when a doctor's note is provided.

### Parent Communication

Latchkey welcomes parents in the program anytime throughout the day. Some fun events for the family includes; Donuts for Dad's, Muffins for Mom's and the monthly parties. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns and/or suggestions they may have with the program site staff. In addition, parents are encouraged to call our Corporate Office at 405-236-2069.

### OKDHS Compliance File & Posting

OKDHS requires that all childcare facilities maintain a compliance posting (NOTICE TO PARENTS) and a compliance file that is accessible to parents on demand. The purpose of the compliance posting and compliance file requirement by OKDHS is to further improve *parent communications*.

### Compliance Posting Notice to Parents

This notice is displayed on or near the sign-in/out table during program operation.

### Compliance File

This is kept in a binder in one of the Latchkey storage cabinets. Anyone wishing to view this binder is to be given immediate access as required by OKDHS.

### Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled annually to discuss the development of your child. Additional conferences may be scheduled if necessary to discuss specific concerns that arise throughout the school year.

### Personal Belongings and Clothing

Latchkey cannot be responsible for lost items. Parents will need to label their child's belongings. If your child brings money or something valuable, it is important that the staff is informed.

Accidents happen on occasion. If your child is sent home in Latchkey clothes, please launder and return them to the program as quickly as possible.

### Pictures and Publicity

Latchkey may photograph and/or video tape any special event at the program. On occasion, the news media will do stories relating to childcare and will be allowed to video tape, photograph or broadcast at our program sites.

### Snacks

Latchkey provides a snack for each child in the after school program. Approximate serving time is 3:45 p.m. Snacks from home are allowed. Pre-Kindergarteners eat lunch in the school cafeteria accompanied by our staff.

### Tornado and Fire Drills

Emergency fire drills are conducted at least once a month. Latchkey's staff are trained in fire safety and the use of fire extinguishers. Tornado drills are conducted quarterly.

### Toys and Cell Phones from Home

There are many activities for the boys and girls. Toys from home are never allowed in the program unless they are for a special project or planned activity. Cell phones are not allowed in Latchkey. Should you need to send your child with a cell phone, make sure your child understands that it must be kept in his/her backpack during time in Latchkey. Cell phones that are not kept in backpacks will be taken and placed in the Latchkey cabinet until the end of the program. Latchkey is not responsible for broken, lost, or stolen items.

### Your Child's Adjustment

It is normal for a child to have some fears about a new place. Try to prepare your child for the change as far in advance as possible. If this is the first time that your child will be away from you, he/she may be hesitant. You will find that a quick cheerful good-bye, a smile and reassurance that you will be back soon is easiest on both you and your child. Sneaking out when your child is not looking is very hard on your child. This makes him/her feel insecure.

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