



# **Childcare Services & Policy Manual**

**Link Learners' Academy  
Holiday Camps  
Summer Camp Connect**

**Last Updated: 08/01/2024**

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**Thank you for considering The Link for your childcare service needs. This packet has pricing, policies, procedures, and rules that make up The Link Learners' Academy and all of The Link's full-day camps. You will be required to sign a registration form that indicates that you have read and understand this information.**

### **Exemptions**

- The Link has been granted exemption status by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services regulation under HRC §42.041(b) (14).
- 40 TAC§745.115-Government Entity  
(3) Municipal
- The TDPS will be responsible for investigating complaints of unlicensed childcare and for referring other complaints to the municipal authorities or to the local police authorities.
- The TDPS will not regulate these programs nor be involved in any complaint investigations related to the program

### **Objectives**

- To provide children with opportunities to experience a variety of recreational activities which include sports, games, arts and crafts, education, drama, special events and field trips.
- To provide an encouraging atmosphere emphasizing positive development of physical skills, emotional growth and self-confidence.
- To provide a safe environment.
- To teach children how to spend their leisure time wisely; in an effort to meet the emotional, physical, and social needs of the child.

### **Contact Information**

**Program Site:** 6750 Baker Blvd. Richland Hills, TX 76118

**Main Desk Number:** 817-616-3738

**Website:** [www.thelinkrec.com](http://www.thelinkrec.com)

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# The Link Learners' Academy (After School Program)

## Link Learners' Academy (After School Program) Hours of Operation

School Days	Times
After School	Dismissal-6:30

\*The Link does not pick-up students on unscheduled early release days (ex. Closing early for weather)

## Link Learners' Academy Eligibility Requirements

Children must be enrolled in kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of enrollment to register in The Link Learners' Academy. Students are no longer eligible to enroll in The Link's childcare services once they have completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students must also be enrolled at the following schools to be eligible for bus services during the school year:

Birdville Elementary  
Mullendore Elementary  
Jack Binion Elementary  
Cheney Hills Elementary

\*Students not enrolled in one of these schools must have their own transportation to enroll in the after school program

## Link Learners' Academy Highlights

- Transportation from school back to The Link
- Low student to staff ratios
- After school snack
- Gym and park time
- STEM activities
- Games and crafts
- Payments drafted weekly

### Link Learners' Academy Fees

<u>Link Learners' Academy</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Payment Plan Available</u>
After School Care	Call for pricing	Yes

### Link Learners' Academy Program Payments

You will be required to set-up automatic weekly payments through a debit or credit card. Payments are made on Mondays for the following week. A 3% processing fee will be applied to all electronic payments. To avoid a 3% processing fee, payments must be made with cash prior to the draft date.

Your first payment will be a non-refundable deposit. This deposit will guarantee your child's spot. Your deposit will be applied to your final week of service assuming there are no outstanding balances left on your account.

All after school payments are due on Mondays (7 days in advance) for the following week of service. A late payment will incur an additional \$10 NSF Fee.

### Link Learners' Academy Program Cancellation Policy

Parents or legal guardians must provide The Link a 7-day written notice. No refunds will be issued once payment has been processed.

\_\_\_\_\_ End of The Link Learners' Academy Section \_\_\_\_\_

# Holiday Camps and Summer Camp Connect

## Holiday Camps and Summer Camp Connect Hours of Operation

Camps	Times
Camp Hours	7:30 am-6:30 pm

## Eligibility Requirements

Children must be 5 to 12 years old by the first day of camp. A child is no longer eligible to utilize The Link's child care services once they have completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (Some exceptions may apply).

## Camp Highlights

- Gym and park time
- Board games and video games
- Arts & Crafts
- Low child to staff ratios
- Two field trips included per full week of camp (no field trips for single day camps)
- Morning and afternoon snack included

## Camp Fees

<u>Camp Fees</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Payment Plan</u>
Single Day Camps (7:30 am-6:30 pm)	Call for Pricing	No
Holiday Camps (7:30 am-6:30 pm)	Call for Pricing	No
Summer Camp (7:30 am-6:30 pm)	Call for Pricing	Yes
Drop-In Day (7:30 am-6:30 pm)	Call for Pricing	No

## Seasonal Camp Payments

Payment is due, in full, for all single day and holiday camps at the time of enrollment. There are no payment plans and spots cannot be reserved until full payment has been made. A 3% processing fee will be applied to all electronic payments. To avoid a 3% processing fee, payments must be made with cash.

### **Summer Camp Payment Plan Option**

Unless paying in full, you will be required to pay a \$20 non-refundable deposit plus set-up an automatic payment plan. Full payments are drafted 7 days prior to the start of camp. Each deposit will be applied towards the balance due for each camp. Missed payments will result in a \$10 NSF fee being applied to the account balance. A 3% processing fee will be applied to all electronic payments. To avoid a 3% processing fee, payments must be made with cash prior to the draft date.

### **Full-Day Camp Cancellation Policy**

Parents or legal guardians must provide The Link a 7-day written notice in order to cancel or withdrawal from any camp without penalty. All deposits will be forfeited.

### **Drop-In Registration**

Parents may not drop-off their child without payment. Drop-in registration is only allowed if space is available. Parents can secure a daily drop-in spot starting at 4:30 pm the day prior to the day of service (Friday at 4:30 pm if camp starts on a Monday). We recommend calling The Link to check on drop-in availability. If a child is dropped-off without completing registration, then the parent or legal guardian will be contacted to return immediately or make payment over the phone. An additional \$10 penalty will be applied for improper enrollment. If camp is full or payment is not received, and the child is unable to be picked-up, then the proper authorities will be called.

\_\_\_\_\_ End of Holiday Camp and Summer Camp Section \_\_\_\_\_

# Standard Policies and Procedures for all Childcare Services

## Drop-Off

Parents or legal guardians must enter the building to sign-in their child each day.

### Designated Drop-Off Times

**Camp Drop-Off:** 7:30-9 am

\*Families are responsible for calling and confirming a new drop-off time if the designated drop-off period is missed.

## Pick-Up

Only adults listed on the child's registration form will be allowed to pick up participants. The authorized adult must enter the building and sign-out their child in order for the staff to release them.

In addition, adults must bring a valid, state issued I.D. card to verify their identity. The "Head of Household" listed on the child's registration form is the only person allowed to make changes to contact information or the authorized pick-up list. Should the form run out of blank spaces, the head of household will be required to fill out a new registration form.

### Designated Pick-Up Times

**After School Pick-Up:** 3:45-6:30 pm

**Camp Pick-Up:** 3:45-6:30 pm

\*Please confirm designated pick-up times with your after school coordinator or summer camp director each week.

### **Specific Policies for Full-Day Camps:**

- All children should be signed in at The Link by 9 am to guarantee bus transportation to the park or field trips.
- Please do not plan to pick-up your child before 4:00 pm on field trip days. If your child needs to be picked-up earlier please check with The Link coordinator to make sure we can accommodate your request. Otherwise parents will need to make other accommodations for that specific day.
- Parents who have missed the bus and want to drop-off their child at the off-site location must get approval from Link management before doing so.



### **Late Pick-Up**

The Link Learners' Academy and all camps end at 6:30 pm.

Starting at 6:30 pm, parents will be charged \$10 for every 10 minutes late. Late fees accumulate from 6:41pm until the parent or authorized pick-up person arrives. Payment should be made at the front desk. Once payment is made please be sure to obtain a receipt to show the counselor on duty while signing out your child. Late payments not made the night of service will automatically be charged to their account the following day. Counselors will call the authorities if they have not been able to make contact with a parent by 7:00 pm. Repeat offenses may result in expulsion from the program.

### **What to Bring**

The following items have been approved to bring to The Link:

#### **After School Program**

Backpack  
Bottle of Water  
School Materials  
Lunch Box and/or snack  
Jacket/Sweatshirt  
1 Book  
\$5 or less

#### **Full-Day Camp**

Backpack  
Bottle of Water  
Swimsuit, Towel, & Sunscreen (designated days)  
Lunch Box and/or snack  
Jacket/Sweatshirt  
1 Book  
\$5 or less

Please label all of your child's belongings with their name.

### **What NOT to Bring**

Children are not allowed to bring toys, electronics, blankets, pillows, or animals of any kind. Cell phones are not permitted, but can be left inside their backpack. Link staff reserves the right to collect these items and hold them until the end of the day.

All personal belongings will be stored in common areas where all students can access it. Because of this, The Link is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen property. Please do not bring any items that your family could not live without.

### **Dress Code**

Children must always have on appropriate attire and athletic, non-marking shoes to participate in The Link Learners' Academy or camps. Children that do not have closed-toe shoes will not get to participate in any gym or outdoor time.

### **Swim Days**

The Link may chose to go swimming during summer camp (unless otherwise stated) at either the City of Hurst or City of Watauga. Each pool location has zero-entry areas that allow children to play in the water without getting lower than 18 inches deep, as well as, other areas that go down to 3.5 feet deep. Children that have not learned to swim must wear a lifejacket at all times. If a child is required to wear a lifejacket and chooses not to wear it then they will not be allowed into the water. Please inform us in writing should your child be required to wear a lifejacket. The Link recommends providing your own lifejacket.

Children should bring a bag or backpack on swim days that includes: swimsuit, towel, goggles (not mask) if needed, sunscreen, and flip-flops or sandals if needed. Please do not send your children with swim toys or flippers as they are prohibited at each pool.

Counselors are not allowed to help apply sunscreen to any part of a child's body, except for the face. With that said, counselors can and will suggest to children where to apply or re-apply sunscreen if needed.

At the end of each swimming session, campers will change into their dry clothes.

### **Field Trips**

The Link is scheduled to go on two field trips per one full week of camp (unless otherwise stated). Campers are to be at The Link by 9 am on field trip days. Parents who have missed the bus and want to drop-off their child at the off-site location must get approval from Link management before doing so. The Link will not have staff to watch children at The Link while the rest of camp is off-site.

### **Staff to Student Ratios**

The staff to student ratio requirement for children ages 5-12 may not exceed 1:22 (state standard). The Link will work to maintain a ratio no greater than 1:15. For field trips and off-site swimming, the ratio will be closer to 1:10.

### **Daily Groups**

Throughout most of the day, children will be split into groups of no more than 30 when and if feasible. Ideally our groups will be divided by age, but accommodations could be made for individuals with maturity or developmental needs.

## **Media and Entertainment**

The Link will show and utilize PG and E10+ rated movies and games throughout camp and The Link Learners' Academy. In addition, we kindly ask that each family take the time to discuss what types of games are allowed and not allowed to be played with their children. This topic is important because The Link does travel to field trip venues that may or may not have arcade games that are not suitable for each family's individual requirements.

## **Weather Guidelines**

The Link will use the following guidelines to determine when it is appropriate to play outside. Chart does not apply to swim or water days.

### **Stay Inside**

Below 32 degrees  
Above 100 degrees

Wind-Chill below 32 degrees  
Heat Index above 100 degrees

Red Air Quality +

### **20 Minutes or Less**

Between 32-40 degrees  
Between 95-100 degrees

Orange Air Quality after 11 am

### **OK to PLAY**

Between 40-95 degrees  
Yellow-Green Air Quality

## **Health and Wellness**

- Children shall have and maintain immunizations in accordance with those required by the Texas Department of Health for public school attendance according to age.
- All children must be fully potty-trained. Staff may not assist with children when using the bathroom. It is recommended that all children bring an extra set of clothes in their bags. Children who have consistent accidents may be removed from the program.
- Our programs are designed for well children. Parents should leave their child at home if the child has a temperature or has a communicable illness. Children showing signs or symptoms will be removed from the program and should not return to the program until they are deemed well by a physician.
- When an injury occurs, an incident report shall be filled out immediately after the incident and given to the recreation supervisor. In the case that an injury cannot be remedied with basic first aid, staff shall call 911 or parents based on the nature of the injury. Copies of all incident reports must be formally requested through an "open records" request.

## **Medications**

Medications will only be administered with a parent consent form. Prescription medications shall be left with staff in their original container, labeled with the child's name, date, directions and the child's physician's name. Medication can only be dispensed only as stated on the bottle unless stated in written form.

Non-prescription medicine with the child's name and date on the medication will be treated the same as prescribed medicines. Both types will be entered onto the medication form.

### **Support Services**

Our goal is to provide safe, high quality programs in an environment where every child can thrive, grow, and have fun. To ensure success, we must work with you to maintain open and clear communication at all times so that we can deliver a positive experience for your child while they are in our care. Although the Link cannot provide a 1:1 staff to child ratio, we welcome the opportunity to work with you on a solution for your child's needs.

In some cases it may be necessary to evaluate if our programs are the right choice for your family. Completing a registration form is not a guarantee of admission to our program.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

#### **Link Learners' Academy**

Afternoon snack is scheduled to be served between 3:30-4:30pm. Snacks normally consist of crackers or chips. Parents are always welcome to send their children with a peanut-free snack from home. Snacks can only be eaten during snack time.

#### **All camps**

Morning and afternoon snacks are always included. Morning snacks will consist of cereals, pop-tarts, or breakfast bars.

Children are required to bring their own sack lunch for all camps. Staff will be unable to refrigerate or heat up individual lunches so please plan accordingly. You may also purchase a lunch from The Link for \$7 should you not want to pack or forget to bring a lunch. The Link lunches consist of a Lunchable, fruit, and chips.

Afternoon snacks are provided during camp. Snacks normally consist of crackers or chips. Parents are always welcome to send their children with a peanut-free snack from home. Snacks can only be eaten during snack time.

The Link does have drinks and concessions available for purchase. We strongly encourage you to not send your children with money should they not be allowed to make purchases. The Link is not responsible for holding, saving, or spending each child's money brought from home.

### **Special Occasions**

The Link supports celebrating your child's special occasions. With that said, The Link will only allow store-bought cupcakes or cookies to be served to each individual child as they leave for the day. Every child should have the opportunity to take home a treat, so please check with staff to see how many children there are before making any purchases.

### **Parent to Child Contact**

When a parent needs to contact their child, the parent should call The Link's childcare cell phone or front desk. Link staff will relay the message to that child. If a parent is needed, Link staff will contact the parent to discuss the situation and allow the child to speak to their parent. We do not allow children to call parents without staff supervision or from their cell phone.

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

Texas state law requires that staff report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

\_\_\_\_\_ End of Standard Policies and Procedures Section \_\_\_\_\_

# Behavior Rules and Procedures

## Discipline Philosophy

Parents, we believe that guidance is something that should be positive and approached in a fair and caring manner, consistent with the developmental needs of each individual child. With that said, all children are entitled to a safe and harmonious environment. The safety rules and structures of the program are in place to provide a safe and consistent program. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding policies or their implementations please contact the recreation supervisor by phone or email.

## General Rules

While attending The Link's after school program or full-day camp all children are asked to comply with The Link's rules. In order to maintain a safe environment, we ask that you please review them with your child.

1. Follow all directions the first time they are given.
2. Be respectful to all Link counselors, Link staff, and other children.
3. Keep hands, feet, inappropriate comments, and objects to yourself.
4. Refrain from damaging Link property.
5. Move appropriately throughout The Link and other off-site venues.
6. Comply with any and all other rules set forth by The Link.
7. A child is not allowed to use their electronics, personal cell phone or The Link's phone unless it is deemed an emergency. In this case, staff will first make contact for the child. Link management reserves the right to adapt this rule on a case-by-case basis.
8. Children must use furniture correctly, only sitting where designed and no standing or climbing on any furniture, counter, game table or walls.
9. Running is only permitted outside, in the gym, and on special occasions in the community rooms, then only with supervision.
10. Bouncing or throwing balls is only permitted outside, in the gym, and on special occasions in the activity rooms, then only with supervision.
11. Children must take their jacket outside when the temperature is below 50 degrees. Children who do not have a jacket will not be allowed to go outside.
12. In addition to the **general rules** already outlined above, The Link reserves the right to warn, suspend, or dismiss children from the program if:
  - They require an inordinate amount of attention from the staff thereby causing inadequate levels of supervision for the remainder of the participants.
  - The child's behavior poses a danger or threat to themselves, other children, counselors, or staff.
  - Their behavior is determined to be inappropriate
  - Their parents yell at or use inappropriate language with counselors or Link staff in front of children

- For any reason within the discretion of The Link manager.
- The child's registration form has incorrect information or is not up-to-date.
- They show disrespect to Link counselors Link staff by actions or words.

### **Discipline and Expectations of Rules**

The Link has set forth expectations for how it expects it's staff to handle all disciplinary issues.

- No Link employee may strike a child for any reason
- Children will not be threatened with physical punishment
- Discipline will be handled in a mature and fair manner
- Children will be told WHY they are being disciplined
- Morning snack, lunch, or afternoon snack will never be denied as a punishment
- Children who wet their clothing will not be shamed or punished

*\*Continuous accidents may result in removal from the program*

### **Discipline Procedures**

The Link is committed to providing a safe, positive, and structured environment for all children. While we are not a school, appropriate student behavior is still expected.

The Link will make every effort to communicate with parents when a disciplinary action needs to be taken. Please know that all rules will be reviewed with students prior to implementing consequences. It is imperative that both children and parents understand the expectations as well as the potential consequences.

The following are the steps The Link will take to try to redirect a child's behavior.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verbal warning</li> <li>2. Loss of a privilege or timeout</li> <li>3. Removal from the classroom</li> <li>4. Parent contact</li> <li>5. Note home</li> <li>6. Suspension from program               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1<sup>st</sup> offense – 1 day suspension</li> <li>b. 2<sup>nd</sup> offense – 3 day suspension</li> <li>c. 3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Parent/Staff conference to determine continued enrollment</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Permanent withdrawal from all childcare programs</li> <li>8. Immediate notification of authorities if appropriate</li> </ol> | } | <p>Steps 1-4 will reset daily</p> <p>Steps do not reset after step 5</p> <p><i>Continuous behavior problems may result in a parent conference</i></p> |
|---|---|---|

Please understand that some actions warrant immediate parent contact and/or suspension. Please note that if your child is suspended, fees will not be refunded.

\_\_\_\_\_ End of Behavior Rules and Procedures Section \_\_\_\_\_