

# **Ladybug Learning Club Parent Handbook**

## **Mission Statement**

To provide a loving, Christian school environment for children, by using best, developmentally appropriate, practices. This is accomplished through small class settings of 10 to 12 children per class combined with qualified early childhood educators and parent helper support. Our small group setting allows our teachers to individualize the developmental and spiritual needs of the children.

## **History**

Ladybug Learning Club began in the fall of 2003 in the home of Jenifer Merriam. It was her goal to provide a quality, Christian preschool program for children in the Gilbert area. It was at that time that she began to further educate herself on best practices in the field of early childhood. The preschool started with only seven children the first year. Within a few years LBLC grew and moved into New Hope Community Church. It was at that time that Jenifer began hiring additional staff to join her preschool team and vision to create an excellent preschool experience. LBLC has continued to grow and now services 100+ students with a dedicated early childhood staff! It has been an incredible journey. It is Jenifer's continued vision to pursue a school of excellence in early childhood practices within the Gilbert and Christian community.

## **Christian Preschool**

Ladybug Learning Club is a Christian preschool. It is intended not only to educate children and their families on the development, social and academic needs of this age group, but also to minister to each family. Our school teaches that the Bible is the ultimate authority and that Jesus was born, died and was resurrected to take away the sins of the world. We teach that our sins are forgiven if we accept Jesus into our hearts as our personal Lord and Savior. At Christmas we will emphasize Jesus' birth and at Easter we will emphasize His death using age appropriate projects, songs, books etc. Our daily conversations and interactions with our students, parents and with one another will

reflect these beliefs. It is important to support the Christian teachings of the preschool as a registered family of LBLC.

### **Vision**

Our school vision is to create and maintain a Christian, hands-on preschool that continues to work towards best practices in the field of early childhood. This is done through creating a developmentally appropriate environment which includes highly trained teachers in early childhood practices. Our daily activities will align with early childhood research along with NAEYC and AZ State Standards. Our assessments of children will involve the whole child through the use of developmental checkpoints and daily observations.

Our school will work towards equipping all classrooms, including the play yard, with the appropriate tools and equipment to achieve our vision. Play is the work of the child and our school will work on educating parents and teachers on the research that supports this philosophy.

### **Staff**

All staff members are highly trained professionals who adhere to LBLC philosophies and programs.

### **Administration**

Jenifer Merriam is the school's Director and Owner. She is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a degree in Elementary Education. She has worked in the field of Early Childhood education for 18 years in both elementary and preschool settings. She has extensive training in early childhood practices and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Early Childhood and Curriculum. Jenifer is also a member of NAEYC.

### **Office Coordinator**

Cathy Merrill is the school's office coordinator. She has an English degree from ASU. She came to LBLC 5 years ago as a parent. While her children were in the classroom, she began working as an aide. She has worked as the office coordinator for 4 years.

### **Acting Directors**

In the event, that the Director, Jenifer Merriam is not on site, Maria Tefft and/or Cathy Merrill will serve as "acting director".

## **General Policies For Program**

### **Facility Regulated by DHS**

The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS), Office of Child Care licensure regulates Ladybug Learning Club. The license states that we may provide only part time classes during the school year. Inspection Reports are available for parents to view upon request.

DHS may be reached at:

150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 400

Phoenix, AZ 85007-3244

(602)-364-2539

(602)-364-2539

### **Report Incidents**

All incidents (i.e., car, verbal, racial, physical, etc.) are to be reported to the Ladybug office within 24 hours of the incident.

### **Hours of Operation**

During the regular school year the office is open during the following hours:

Monday and Wednesday      8:30am-2:30pm

Tuesday and Thursday      8:30am-12:30pm

Friday                      closed

The office coordinator is here M-TH only. The school phone is answered while preschool students are on campus.

### **School Communication**

When you need to contact the school by phone during school hours, please use the following procedures.

Call (480)497-4101      (480)497-4101      Ext. 9

(direct office phone) or

(480)229-5809              (480)229-5809

(this phone travels with the office coordinator/staff at all times during school hours).

By email [www.ladybuglearningclub.com](http://www.ladybuglearningclub.com) Emails are checked daily (M-F) during the school year and you can expect a reply within 24 hours.

Teachers and staff should only be contacted through the school phone or website. Staff personal email accounts or phone numbers will not be given out to families. All school and classroom communication will come from the school office.

### **Forms**

Each of our preschool programs has specific forms that must be filled out by the participating staff and enrolled families. These are required by the regulations under which the State of Arizona licenses Ladybug.

### **Notices/Fliers/Posters**

All notices, fliers, and posters must be submitted to the LBLC office for approval before being distributed or posted at the school.

### **Parent Participation**

You are welcome to visit classes at any time. The teacher may not be able to stop what they are doing to spend time with you, but know that you are indeed welcome. Feel free to stay as long

as you like. We are proud of our school and love to share classroom experiences with you.

We require that parents give one preschool day per month, helping in the classroom. This program is called the "Parent Helper" program and is an agreement made upon registering your child into the LBLC program. If a parent is unable to work in the room, please contact the school office.

Parents are also given opportunities to help with crafts and other special days throughout the year. This participation is on a volunteer basis and is not required.

### **Standards/Assessments**

LBLC follows state and national standards. We will be using the Creative Curriculum which aligns with Arizona state standards. We will also use the Creative Curriculum.net assessment tool which is recognized by the state as being developmentally appropriate for preschool aged children. More information on state standards can be found at [www.ade.state.az.us](http://www.ade.state.az.us) (look under standards and click on other standards to find early learning standards). For more information on The Creative Curriculum and The Creative Curriculum .net, please visit [www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com).

### **Discipline**

We communicate and emphasize the type of behavior we want the children to practice, and we "reward" the children when we see them exhibiting that behavior. This good behavior is rewarded with verbal praise and hugs! If a problem arises, we redirect the child to another activity. As a last resort we use a very brief "time-out". This is so the child can think about the behavior and be separated for a period of time. After the "time-out" (no more than 2 minutes) the teacher will remind the child of the appropriate behavior and have them rejoin the group. Through this process, we communicate to the child that it's the child's behavior that caused the problem and that we love and cherish them as a person. Most children do very well in a system that

rewards their efforts at self-control in this way.

### **Snacks and Nutrition**

Snacks are served as an integral part of the learning environment. Children develop social and language skills and practice small muscle development through snack activities as well as obtain nutritional benefits. Snacks will be served "family" style. LBLC provides basic snacks like vanilla wafers, goldfish and juice. We have parents donate special snack items for cooking days, classroom parties, celebration and field trips. Monthly, there will be a snack sign up for parents to donate any needed items for these special snack experiences.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays may be celebrated with special snacks. Children are encouraged to bring favorites foods which may or may not be cookies or cakes. However, the needs of individuals must be considered. Children with summer birthdays may pick a special day during the school year which to celebrate. Please see you teacher for specific day.

### **Party Invitations/Thank You Notes/Gifts**

Ladybug does not allow parents or children to distribute ANYWHERE ON SITE (includes parking lot) birthday invitations,(unless every class member is invited), thank-you notes or gifts of any type. This policy is in place to prevent hurting young children's feelings. Please mail all invitations, thank-you notes, or gifts.

### **Appropriate School Dress for Children**

We like creative activities, so children and parents come to school in "old" comfortable play clothes for participating in painting, wet sand play and pouring juice for snack. We want your child to feel free to participate in "messy" projects without fear of ruining his/her "dress clothes". Additionally, sneakers (rather than sandals) make the best play-ground shoes.

**Please bring to school each day:**

A complete change of clothing, including shoes. Please be sure all items are clearly marked with your child's name. Be sure clothing and shoes are appropriate for each season.

A backpack for your child to keep his/her change of clothing in and to carry art projects and handouts home. Be sure to label your child's belongings and the OUTSIDE of your child's backpack.

**Please do not bring to school:**

Toy guns, weapons, super hero toy figurines or "sippy" cups without built in lids.

T-Shirts - We ask that you purchase a Ladybug Learning Club (LBLC) t-shirt for your child. This shirt would be worn at all field trips and celebration days. From experience we have found that it is easier to identify our school group when dressed alike. Shirts will be available to order at the Open House.

**Show and Tell**

Show and Tell is a favorite time for students and teachers. It is a time for students to develop language and social skills as they share. Since LBLC cannot be held responsible for personal property that is lost or damaged, we recommend that students not bring valuable or fragile items for Show and Tell. Your child's teacher will notify you as to the designated Show and Tell day for your child's class. Show and Tell is canceled on field trip, celebration, special event and party days.

**Field Trips/Celebration Days**

We plan on taking one field trip or having a themed based celebration day each month when possible. You will be notified well in advance of the date, time and location. Parents are responsible to drive their children to the field trip location, and sign the child both in and out. Parents are asked to stay and help whenever possible on field trips away from the school and may

simply drop off as usual on celebration days located at the school.

Ladybug Learning Club does not provide transportation of any kind to students. For field trips away from school, we encourage parents to work out their own car pool plans when possible; drivers must be listed on your child's emergency card.

\*Occasionally the field trip/celebration day and times may be different from your child's regular scheduled preschool day or time.

\*School t-shirts are worn on all field trips and celebration days.

### Lunch Bunch

LBLC provides an after school program from 1:45-2:45pm on Mondays and Wednesdays only. In the 2009/10 School year, if enough interest exists, we will offer a Tuesday and Thursday Lunch Bunch. Lunch Bunch is designed to allow students a little more time to enjoy their Ladybug friends, games and crafts while giving parents some extra time for appointments and errands. Please see the office for specific information regarding the Lunch Bunch (LB) Program.

### Ladybug Launching Pad

This program is designed for students turning five by Feb 1st. It is the next stepping stone in the preschool program for students who meet the age requirement or have missed kindergarten. Students that do not meet the age requirement will be considered for enrollment on a case by case review. Input on cognitive and social emotional development along with former LBLC teaching staff input will be used to determine readiness for the program.

### Restrooms

Only **Ladybug staff members** may take a child to the restroom. Classroom teachers will take students at least once a day and the LBLC aide staff will assist with all restroom needs daily. The bathroom door will remain propped open while students are inside.

Parents are asked to take their child to the restroom each morning *BEFORE* signing them in each day. At the beginning of the year, teachers are expected to take students at least twice a day as they adjust to the preschool schedule.

### **Health and Safety Guidelines**

A complete First Aid kit is in each classroom, hallway and office. When a child is injured, it is the teacher's responsibility to fill out an accident report.

In case of minor injuries, the child will be cared for and parents will be told of the incident when they come for the child at the end of the school day.

In case of more serious injury, staff will first notify paramedics, then the parents of the child.

#### **Immunizations**

Arizona State law mandates that all children enrolled are required to have their immunizations up-to-date prior to starting class. Current medical documentation of child's immunization record must be on file.

#### **Medications**

Medications may be dispensed under special circumstances such as epi-pens or inhalers. Please contact the school office for the required paperwork. No medications may be stored in your child's back pack or cubby. This includes sunscreen.

#### **Infectious Disease**

Ladybug will follow the local, county and state guidelines concerning control of infectious diseases.

#### **Health Checks**

Health Checks-Health checks are the first happening of the day. If your child does not pass the health check, he or she will be sent home with parent or driver. If child is healthy, then he or

she may be signed in.

### **Illness**

Children have been kept home from school for reasons other than illness. Unnecessary absence from school may have a bad effect on a student's work habits and progress. Going to school is NOT a child's decision-it is an adult decision.

One of the problems most often confronting parents of school age children occurs when a child complains of not feeling well on a school day. A decision must be made as to whether the child stays home or goes to school.

You do not want to keep a child home if she really is not sick, but you also do not want to send a sick child to school. These hints are designed to provide guidelines to be followed until your doctor can be contacted for his opinion. Contacting your doctor should be done without delay. If you have no family physician, the name of doctors in the area can be obtained by contacting your County Medical Society. THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INTENDED AS MEDICAL ADVICE.

You child should be kept at home if he has any of the following:

**Cold** - A child with a cold and/or a deep hacking cough belongs home even though he has no fever.

**Sore Throat with White Spots** -If a child complains of a sore throat and white spots can be seen in the back of his throat or if fever is present, keep him home and call your doctor.

**Fever** - A fever is a warning that all is not right with the body. The best way to check for fever is with a thermometer. No child with a temperature over 100 degrees should be sent to school. When no thermometer is available, check the child's forehead with the back of the hand. If it is hot keep the child home until temperature can be checked with a thermometer. Do not allow the child to return to school until he has been free of fever for 24 hours.

**Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea** - Consult your doctor if your child has a stomachache, which is persistent or severe enough to limit his activity.

If vomiting occurs, keep your child home 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.

If diarrhea occurs, keep your child home 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

**Rash** - A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses, such as measles or chicken pox. A rash or "spots" may cover the entire body or may appear in only one area.

Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor has said in writing that it is safe to do so.

**Pain** - Toothache: Contact your dentist  
- Earache: Contact your doctor

**Bacterial Infection** - A child being treated for bacterial infection with antibiotics must have 24 hours of treatment before being allowed back in school, or have a physician's written approval to return to school prior to that time.

Pinkeye, an infection of the eye, usually displays redness, yellowish mucus and itching. Keep the child home and call your doctor.

The director has full authority to deny any child access to the classroom due to any illness or suspicion of contagious illness.

### **Reporting an Absence**

If your child is unable to attend school, please call the Ladybug school office to report the absence. If your child is ill, please indicate the nature of the illness. State law requires Ladybug to

record this information in an illness log.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Ladybug Learning Club carries liability insurance in compliance with the State of Arizona requirements.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire evacuation plans are posted in each room. The procedure is to go quickly to the sidewalk by the parking lot on the east side of the building. Ladybug holds monthly fire drills.

### **Visitors on Site**

All visitors are required to check in with the school office immediately entering the school. Visitors will be escorted by Ladybug staff at all times.

### **Main Doors Locked**

The main doors to each hallway will remain locked until 8:45am each day. A Ladybug staff member will open the door to greet you as you enter the building. Please take the time before school to take your child to the restroom and get health check. Once door is opened please go to your child's classroom and sign them in.

### **Play Yard**

Ladybug's general rule is that children are not allowed on the play yard outside of organized school-sponsored activities. The reason for this policy comes from concern for the safety of the children. Because Ladybug does not have staffing available to monitor the play-yard outside of school-sponsored activities, we must insist that parents help us monitor and enforce this policy. This includes playing on the flower bed and rocks in front of the play yard.

### **Sign-In / Sign-Out**

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. To better assure this safety, we require your child to be signed in and out

by a parent or authorized person. Children must be walked to their classroom and released directly to the teacher on duty. Students are not allowed to walk to the classroom unattended. Until the teacher recognizes the authorized persons allowed to pick up your child, they will be asked to show I.D. before release. State law requires that you sign your name in ink and write the times of drop off and pick up.

\*Reminder - Please pick up your child promptly. School times are 8:45 am to 11:45 am for all AM classes and 11:45-2:45pm. LLP is from 8:45am to 12:00pm daily (08/09). There will be a \$5.00 charge if you are more than 10 minutes late. If an emergency arises, please contact us at (480) 497-4101 Ext. 9 or 480-229-5809 . Children cannot be dropped off before school start time.

## **Registration and Tuition**

### **Registration**

Currently enrolled continuing families are given first choice of available classes and new families from the community are given second choice of classes on a first come, first serve basis.

In the event of over enrollment of a class, the following criteria will be used for registering children in the class.

- Children currently enrolled in program
- Siblings of children currently enrolled
- Former students of Ladybug
- General Public

### **Payment of Fees**

Each preschool program has specific fees that must be paid by participating staff and enrolled families. Tuition and fees are governed by the following policies.

Tuition is based on YEARLY rate (not how many weeks of classes are offered each month). Therefore, tuition is not altered for

scheduled days off such as Christmas, Easter, or Spring Break. For your convenience, the yearly tuition is broken into ten monthly payments.

Tuition for all classes is due on the first on each month. All monthly tuition payments received after the 5<sup>th</sup> are to include a late fee of \$25.00. There will be an additional \$10.00 fee for each day that tuition continues to be late.

If withdrawal becomes necessary, **thirty days written notice is required**. Tuition payment will be required during that 30 day period.

If check is returned from the bank for insufficient funds, closed account, or any other reason, so that Ladybug is unable to collect the funds, the person or family writing the check will be assessed \$25.00 for the returned check.

**Fees paid at registration including first payment after June 1st are NON-REFUNDABLE and NON-TRANSFERABLE.**

There is a 10% reduction in tuition for additional children in the same family. The reduction is applied to the lowest tuition. Should you foresee difficulty in meeting a scheduled payment, please contact the office coordinator.

If tuition payment becomes more than 30 days delinquent, the student enrollment will be canceled. Ladybug reserves the right to require tuition payment up front if there has been a history of financial problems.

### **Payment Procedure**

All classrooms have a tuition collection box located on the cubbies each day. Families are responsible for placing their tuition payment in their classroom box each month by or on the 1st. Each family received a payment schedule upon registering and should use the schedule for payments due and their own records. This box is also used for notes to teachers and scholastic book orders.

### Monthly Expenses:

Ladybug has expenses that need to be met every month, so it is important that monthly tuition is paid on time. The following are some examples of our many expenses:

Copies/Copier	Open Houses
Staff Training/Conferences	Office Supplies
Taxes/Licensing Fees	Kitchen/Snack Supplies
Classroom Supplies	Furniture/Equipment
Lesson Planning	Set Up/Clean Up
Rent	Insurance
Accreditation Fees	Landscaping Maintenance
School Maintenance	Utilities
Employee Related Expenses	Parent Night
Assessments	Curriculum
Celebration Days	Field Trips
Christmas Program	Pre-K Celebration
Family Picnic	Donuts for Dads
Mothers Day Program	Music Program
Story time Program	
Dues for Professional Organizations	

## Ladybug Pre-school Program

Our days will include:

- Discovery Time
- Story Time
- Academic Readiness
- Art
- Field Trips and Celebration Days
- Circle Time
- Holiday Program and Special Events
- Music and Movement
- Puppets and Flannel board
- Show and Tell
- Small group activities
- Whole group activities

Ladybug Learning Club is dedicated

to providing a successful school program

in which children are given the opportunities

to grow emotionally, spiritually, creatively and cognitively.