

LATCHKEY CHILD SERVICES, INC.

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 environment that is beneficial to the children's safety, health, and welfare while enhancing their educational experience.

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 essential 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. A thorough background investigation is conducted on all staff prior to hiring. Personal and business references, criminal history, and sex offender backgrounds are checked. Each individual is fingerprinted and is not allowed to work directly with the children until the complete results are received.

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 & First Aid, annual Blood-borne Pathogen BBP, health and safety training. In addition, our staff is trained in early childhood development to ensure 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 offer 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 curriculum contains weekly lesson plans that are appropriate to meet each child's developmental levels. Lesson plans include the following activities each week: R.A.D. (Reading Adventure Day); Art Expression and Crafts; Music & Movement; STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math), Nature Exploration; Outdoor Physical Activities; and character-building development games & activities. Each week lesson plans are centered on a theme to help keep it fun, challenging, and interesting for the students. Weekly theme focus is concentrated on a specific *Oklahoma Early Learning Guideline (ELG)* concept area and a character-building concept.

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 & 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 bi-monthly celebrations, a citizenship award ceremony monthly, and have the opportunity to experience and learn from a variety of guest speakers.

Program 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. depending on the site.

Please check with Latchkey's main office or the individual site for actual program operation times because this can change from year to year. Individual program hours of operation are posted at each individual site location and can be found on our website, www.Latchkey.us.

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 address, instructions on how to secure a space for your child, and how to access the building.

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, Emergencies, or other Unforeseen Situations

In the event of bad weather, hazardous road conditions or other emergencies & unforeseen situations: please watch local programming. If your child's school district is closed, Latchkey will also be closed. Regular scheduled tuition payments are due as normal during these occurrences.

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 and be at least four (4) years old
- 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 (preferred method of payment)
- Return all of the above to the Latchkey staff at your school or to Latchkey's main office or enroll online
 - 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. A **payment-processing fee** will apply - addressed in pages to follow.

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 1st 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:

- 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.

- 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

- When Tuition and Payments are Due

Weekly tuition payments are 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.

- 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 per year, you may be required to pay with certified funds (cash, money order, etc....).

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WEEKLY CONTRACT RATES

Client agrees to and understands the following stipulations:

- Enrollment in Tuition Express (TE), auto-pay, with weekly deductions on the 1st business day of each week that school is scheduled to be in session
- 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 scheduled 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 (those receiving state childcare assistance excepted)
- 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 no additional charge for using miscellaneous intersession days or weekly pre-scheduled school closures unless you use these weeks. There is a \$10.00 per day non-attendance fee if you fail to attend once you have reserved a space (those receiving state childcare assistance accepted). Unscheduled out-of-school days may carry an additional care fee if care is available

OKDHS STATE ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT

- No Enrollment Fee
- Co-payments are due the 1st 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

Intersession Days

Intersession days are days during the school year when there is no class. Latchkey provides care on most of these days. We consolidate programs to use fewer locations on these days. Clients must reserve space with Latchkey's office prior to the intersession date (additional fees may apply).

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.

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.

Arrivals and Departures

Authorized Persons

When enrolling your child in Latchkey, a *Child Information Form* is completed which lists 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.** Only the person that enrolled the child may make changes to the Child Information Card, this includes adding or deleting an authorized pick up persons. In the event that you need to have someone pick up your child that is not on the list, you must contact the Latchkey office and you will be asked a series of security questions for identification purposes. You will also be asked to add the person to the Child Information Card and initial.

Building Access

When a child is enrolled with Latchkey, a four (4) or five (5)-digit client ID number is assigned to the family. This client number is your identifier to gain access to the program site when the building is secured (doors locked). Parents are provided with a business card that has the Latchkey site and main office phone number. You will call the Latchkey site telephone number and give the ID number to our staff in order to gain access. It is important that this number be given to anyone authorized to pick up your child(ren). Site staff and Latchkey's main office (finance department) have access to your ID number should you forget the number. If calling the Latchkey main office, you will be asked a series of security questions before the number will be released to you.

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 Card*. 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 Process

Each day parents or authorized persons are required to:

- When dropping off, parent must walk the child inside
- Make sure their child is signed-in upon arrival
- Inform the staff of any necessary information
- Notify the site staff or contact Latchkey's main office if your child is going to be absent
- When picking up, parent must come inside, 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

NOTE:

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.

Tracking Attendance

Latchkey Roll Sheets lists the name of each child enrolled that is expected to attend daily. Latchkey staff monitors the attendance closely. Head Counts are conducted in both the morning and the afternoon programs hourly and as needed from program start time to end time daily. If a child does not arrive at the designated time in the afternoon when school is dismissed, Latchkey site staff begins the following search procedure:

- Verify with the school's office that the child was at school all day or if he/she was checked out early
- Check with the school teacher to see if child stayed late in class
- Contact the parent and Latchkey's main office
- Last step if none of the above result in locating the child, call 911 to report missing child

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 incident/injury report form will be completed 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 and complete an incident/injury report

Exposures, Illness, Medication, & Parent Notification

Allergies & Medical Conditions

All allergies and medical conditions must be noted on the *Child Information Card*. The site staff and the main office are to 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

Latchkey monitors the children's health and parents are notified when necessary. Should your child(ren) be exposed to any infestations or communicable disease exposures, **all parents are notified**. This information is confidential, and names are never released to other parents as to the source of the exposure.

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

- Fever of 101 degrees or higher or sore throat with swollen glands accompanied by fever
- Vomiting (normally two or more times in four hours) and/or Diarrhea (normally three or more times)
- Undiagnosed body rash (not heat rash) or draining skin wounds that cannot be contained by bandage
- Acute illness, severe pain, yellowish skin, or eyes, or becomes lethargic for no apparent reason
- Severe and/or persistent coughing causing child to turn red or blue in the face
- Any other infectious/contagious illness, eye discharge, evidence of head lice, etc...

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

Your child may return to the program once they are free and clear of the symptoms and/or a doctor has released them from care. Documentation and or verification of treatment may be required before your child is allowed to return.

Medications

Medication including application of sunscreen and/or insect repellent is not be given or applied 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 noted on the label. Parents must 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.** Staff receive annual Blood-borne Pathogen (BBP) training on proper means of disposing medical waste, syringes, needles, etc.

Behavior and Guidance

Behavior Policy

Latchkey makes every effort to recognize and encourage acceptable behavior. Consistent rules, following a daily routine, clear direction with explanations, 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. Each individual child's understanding and stage and level of development determine methods applied. 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
- If the child leaves the Latchkey program site without permission
- 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 and/or children
- When 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
- For non-payment/delinquent payments or continued late pick-up

Guidelines for Specific Needs Instructions

Your child's safety is our top priority! We need your assistance to help achieve this objective. Should your child have ANY individual specific needs involving care such as behavior and guidance issues, special dispensing or monitoring of medication(s), communication barriers, allergies, (food, medications, materials, etc.) Latchkey requires the following information at time of enrollment:

- Complete information on the appropriate sections of both the *Family Enrollment* and *Child Information cards*
- Provide medical documentation on official letterhead
- Provide specific written instructions and/or list of items that apply or actions that are to be taken
- If your child attends an intersession (including ones at their home school) provide Latchkey staff with specific written instructions each day of the intersession on the provided form

Latchkey is committed to meeting the needs of as many children as possible, recognizing that the needs of the majority cannot be compromised in order to meet the needs of a singular child. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the necessary information and documentation listed above at time of enrollment and at any other time as deemed necessary.

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 require 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.

Child Abuse Reporting

Latchkey programs are licensed by OKDHS-OCCS and by law, our staff are required to report suspected child abuse &/or neglect. Oklahoma law required that should anyone suspect child abuse that you report this to the Department of Human Services. (Title 21, Oklahoma Statutes, Section 846) Child Abuse Hotline phone number and information are posted near the parent sign-in/out area at each program site.

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. Please make sure that children are dressed for the weather.

Parent Communication

Latchkey welcomes parents in the program at any time throughout the day. Some fun events for the family include Back-to-School night, Donuts for Dad's, Tea Time with Mom's, and quarterly parties. Latchkey staff communicates daily happenings with parents regularly and periodic parent conferences are scheduled. 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. Compliance file is located at the back of the Parent Crate. The purpose of the compliance posting and compliance file requirement by OKDHS is meant to improve *parent communications*.

Compliance Posting Notice to Parents

This notice is displayed on or near the sign-in/out area during program operation. Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) provides this notice to Latchkey.

Miscellaneous Information (continued)

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled two (2) times each school year, once in the fall and once in the spring, 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. Each program has an individual space for the student's personal belongings. 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 and Meals

Snacks provided by Latchkey meet OKDHS-OCCS requirements outlined in APENDIX LL on page 125 of the requirements for child care programs book. Latchkey provides snack for each child attending our afterschool program. Approximate serving time is 3:45 p.m. All Latchkey programs operate in elementary schools that provide breakfast for the students. Latchkey staff monitor students in our program when eating breakfast. Fees for breakfast are not included in your tuition. Latchkey provides morning snacks for student's not eating breakfast with the school. Meals and snacks from home are allowed.

Tornado, Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills

Emergency drills are conducted each month in both the before and after school programs. Latchkey's staff is trained in fire safety, use of fire extinguishers, tornado preparedness, and other emergency and evacuation procedures. In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, Latchkey monitors the local news stations and uses the national weather service radio to keep site staff informed. Parents are notified of an emergency evacuation and in the event of a lockdowns. An outlined Emergency Preparedness plan specific to your site location is posted on-site and parents are informed of the process during parent orientation when you enroll your child(ren). In addition, parents are notified of utility (electric, water, gas, etc.) outages that disrupt the program for an extended time.

Toys, Electronic Devices, and Cell Phones from Home

There is a variety of fun activities for the boys and girls. Toys from home, cell phones, and electronic devices are not allowed in the program unless they are for a special project or planned activity. Should you feel it is necessary 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. Students that do not keep cell phones or other items from home in their backpacks will have them taken and placed in the Latchkey cabinet. Parent will be called and informed, by our staff, that the item(s) were taken from the child and can be retrieved when they pick up their child. Latchkey is not responsible for broken, lost, or stolen items.

Transportation

Latchkey does not transport students. The exception is only in an emergency when no other alternative exists. Field trips are not part of Latchkey's program plan.

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.

Latchkey Child Services, Inc.

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