Great Escape

Early Learning Center

Parent Handbook

2025-2026

Revised: August 2025

Littleton United Methodist Church

5894 S. Datura Street

Littleton, CO 80120

(303) 794-0707

September 1, 2025

Dear Great Escape Parents and Families:

Thank you for entrusting your child’s learning and development to the Great Escape Early Learning Center, an outreach ministry of Littleton United Methodist Church. What your child learns today prepares him or her for the future and creates a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning.

At Littleton United Methodist Church, we believe every child is made in the image of God, and every child is created good. We look forward to seeing the growth that your child experiences as we encourage each child with love, compassion, and respect – and it is so fulfilling to see the children learn to share these traits in life as well! We are focused on the development of the “whole child,” understanding that all development areas (social, emotional, intellectual, and physical) are interconnected and essential.

Great Escape is licensed by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood and is a Level 4 rated Colorado Shines program. One of our goals is to provide a high-quality program offering many different experiences for your child(ren) to succeed. We offer low child-to-teacher ratios and always maintain appropriate supervision as required by the State of Colorado.

We are excited for you and your children to be part of our program and will hold all of you in our prayers throughout the 2025-2026 school year. We look forward to our partnership with you, and please know that our doors are always open to be of service to you and your family. And, if you do not already have a faith community, we welcome you to come and join us for worship, study, and/or outreach!

We also invite our families to join us for many gatherings throughout the year and ask that you come volunteer in the classroom whenever possible.

There are many schools to choose from in the Littleton area and we thank you for choosing Great Escape!

God be with you—

Becca Schrank, Director

Amy Hunter, Assistant Director
Great Escape

Rev. Chris Carr, Senior Pastor

Littleton United Methodist Church

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## Great Escape Early Learning Center

### Welcome

Welcome to Great Escape Early Learning Center at Littleton United Methodist Church. We are glad you have chosen to join us! We hope your whole family will enjoy the program and the friends you make here. This handbook outlines Great Escape’s goals, policies, procedures, and practical details that make each school day a happy and successful experience for your child(ren). Please contact the Director if you have questions.

All parents/guardians will be asked to sign an online form stating that you understand and agree to the policies, parental responsibilities, and procedures of all Great Escape programs that are outlined in this handbook.

### Purpose

Great Escape is an outreach ministry of Littleton United Methodist Church (hereafter referred to as LUMC) dedicated to providing parents two, three, four or five day a week programs meeting the needs of children in a safe, caring, positive, loving, Christian atmosphere. Great Escape was started over 35 years ago as a Parent’s Day Out Program and is now a Level 4 certified Colorado Shines facility. Great Escape is also a Colorado State Universal Pre-Kindergarten and Colorado Childcare Assistance provider.

### Mission

Our programs include faith-based curriculum aligned with Colorado Developmental Guidelines and are designed to meet student needs at each stage of development. Each day incorporates planned activities and self-directed play, which contribute to the individual child’s socialization, enjoyment, and success.

**Program Goals**

Great Escape strives to provide a caring, safe, and secure environment, to foster lifelong learning and to develop each child’s God given gifts. Great Escape provides an experience for the child to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Great Escape creates an environment that is supportive of the child’s actions and language while giving opportunities for choices, decision making, and problem solving to build confidence in each child’s abilities.

### Staff

Qualified staff members are identified through examination of their formal education, training, and/or work experience in early childhood education as defined by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Great Escape provides annual training for all staff in Pediatric First Aid, Pediatric/Adult CPR and Universal Precautions, Child Abuse Reporting, Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma, and FEMA Disaster Training. In addition to those topics listed above, all staff members are required to annually complete 15 hours of continuing education on early childhood educational topics to retain their qualifications. Background checks on staff members are conducted by the Colorado Central Registry, Colorado Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to confirm no history of child abuse or felony charges prior to being hired as part of our program.

### Licensing and Requirements

Great Escape is licensed by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. We are bound by its rules and regulations. We are inspected annually by Arapahoe County Health Department and South Metro Fire/Rescue. A copy of our license is posted at the entrance of the program and inspection reports are maintained in the Director’s office. Great Escape currently holds a Level 4 rating through the Colorado Shines Program.

**Abuse and Reporting**

Staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect and are trained to recognize signs of abuse. In accordance with the law, any staff member, or parent, who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which could result in abuse, shall immediately report the circumstances to the Director. Any such report will be made available to the County Department of Social Services and the local law enforcement agency.

**Family Support**

At Great Escape we believe that supporting healthy families is as important as supporting your child’s growth and education. If your family is in need of resources regarding food, health care, mental health support, or is experiencing any sort of trauma or disruption, your child’s teacher, the center director, or center assistant director can provide information on programs that can help. If you feel your child may need extra support during difficult life events, we are here to help meet their needs both physically and emotionally.

## Tuition and Fees

### Traditional Day Program

#### Toddler Program

* Two days per week: $455/month
* Three days per week: $655/month
* Four days per week: $820/month
* Five days per week: $955/month

#### Preschool Program

* Two days per week $435/month
* Three days per week: $620/month
* Four days per week: $785/month
* Five days per week: $920/month

A 10% tuition discount will be given for (the oldest child(ren) if multiple children are enrolled).

Active LUMC members (parents and grandparents) will receive a 10% tuition discount.

A $150 per child or $200 per family non-refundable enrollment fee is due upon enrollment in the program.

Tuition is due the first program day of the month. A $25 late fee will be assessed for accounts not paid by the 10th of the month. If the 10th falls on a closure day (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday), tuition is due the last day attended prior to the 10th by 3:00 pm

Tuition may be paid by: Check, Cash or Zelle, or via ACH through the ELV Parent App

Payment may be dropped off at the school or mailed, and received by the due date, to:

Littleton United Methodist Church

Attn: Great Escape

5894 South Datura St.

Littleton, CO 80120

If tuition, plus late fee, is not paid by the close of a given month, then the child(ren) may not attend until tuition is current.

Full monthly fees are due regardless of attendance (sick, vacation, etc.) Invoices are sent by email to the email address on file. Returned checks accumulate a $20 fee and require a cash payment to update your account.

### Extended Day Program

Extended day tuition is $9.50/hour.

### Summer Program (June – August)

Our summer program is typically held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from June through August. Summer enrollment begins in April and tuition will be published at that time.

## Program Age Guidelines

Great Escape places children in classrooms based on their age for kindergarten. We do our best to split the classes according to that age.

### Traditional Day Program – 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

#### Toddler Program

Children must be walking independently to enroll.

#### Young Toddlers (12 months – 24 months)

Our focus for this age is to create a safe, loving, and comfortable place for the child to attend. Stranger anxiety is developmentally appropriate at this age so an environment where the children are at ease and feel as though they can move about the room safely is provided.

Love and security to a child at this age is vital to the healthy development of the child; much of the day will be spent giving as much comfort and reassurance as possible. Language development is the secondary emphasis of this class. The teachers reinforce language development with the children and introduce them to new words and sensory experiences through music, stories, talking, and exploration.

These classes have craft, story time, recess, music, snack, and many other opportunities to engage in language development and other communication building skills throughout the day.

#### Toddler Program (2 – 3 years old)

While introducing structure and schedule into daily routines, the primary focus remains on language development in both the Lamb and Pony classes. Consistency in scheduling increases the child’s comfort level in the classroom. Having a schedule will also help with daily transitions and anxiety that new classroom experiences can create.

Teachers will incorporate more fine motor skills such as craft time and playing in centers. Two and three-year-ol’s require numerous guided activities to understand and master expectations. Opportunities are also planned so that students explore their classroom and meet new friends. Sharing is an important classroom skill to learn at this age. It takes time and positive reinforcement for children to understand working in groups and positive peer interactions.

#### Preschool Program (3 – 5 years old)

Children must be toilet trained to enroll in the preschool program.

As we build stamina for structure, schedules and communication, classroom teachers encourage independent choices. Teachers will work with children on letters, numbers, and colors. Scissors are introduced to the children for classroom work. Self-expression is very much encouraged between the children. Teachers reinforce manners and listening to each other. There are content specific tactile centers throughout the classroom for independent play.

Hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and seeing allow the child to socialize and make sense of the world around them. Activities are centered around exploring senses and building vocabularies to communicate experiences and support ongoing efforts of language development. We work on helping the child to talk about experiences, describe objects, communicate feelings, label differences, relate ideas, define concepts, and make up stories. Using open-ended questions encourages problem solving and investigation.

Socializing and making friends are also a big part of our day. Parents have an opportunity to participate in parent teacher conferences twice a year. The Pre-Kindergarten classroom focuses on individual student growth and preparation for future kindergarten programs.

#### Pre-Kindergarten Library Field Trips

The Pre-Kindergarten class takes an initial field trip to Bemis Library in late September. This trip allows the children to learn about library use. Follow up trips to Bemis Library allow the children to check out their own library books and practice using the library system. Children will learn about different genres of literature throughout the year and discover which ones they enjoy most.

#### Pre-Kindergarten Graduation

In May, the Pre-Kindergarten students will hold a graduation ceremony. Graduation is typically 30 minutes in length. All parents and family members of the graduates are invited to attend this ceremony, and each child will receive a diploma from Great Escape. This is the time where we congratulate each child for their hard work and let them know just how proud we are of their accomplishments! A short reception follows the ceremony.

### Extended Day Program

Parents have the option to enroll in our extended day program for one, two, three, four or five days per week. Before and/or after care is offered in addition to our traditional day. The before care program runs from 8:30 – 9:30 am and the aftercare program runs from 3:00 – 4:00 pm. The Extended Day program is open to all children in the program. This is **NOT** a drop-in program.

### Summer Program

Summer program is open to all ages and runs from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. during the months of June, July, and August. This is **NOT** a drop-in program.

### Attendance Policy

Students may attend Great Escape in the following combinations of days.

* Monday/Wednesday
* Tuesday/Thursday
* Monday/Wednesday/Friday
* Tuesday/Thursday/Friday
* Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
* Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday.

## Personal Belongings NEEDED by Children

To maintain health and safety standards, toys from home are not allowed at Great Escape.

### Young Toddler Class

1. Lunch and no-spill cup (NO BOTTLES) labeled with child’s name. Water cup MUST contain unflavored water. Flavored water is not permitted as Great Escape may have students with allergies to the flavoring.
2. Lunch must consist of independent finger food because toddlers are expected to feed themselves.
3. Fitted crib sheet as required by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
4. Blanket
5. Change of clothing to include socks and shoes labeled with child’s name – all one-piece outfits should have a snap crotch.
6. Diapers
7. Backpack (to hold personal belongings)
8. “Lovey” – a soft comfort item to help with transitions and nap
9. Drinks cannot be given during naptime

### Toddler Class

1. Lunch and no-spill cup (NO BOTTLES) labeled with child’s name. Water cup MUST contain unflavored water. Flavored water is not permitted as Great Escape may have students with allergies to the flavoring.
2. Lunch must consist of independent finger food because toddlers are expected to feed themselves.
3. Fitted crib sheet as required by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
4. Blanket
5. Change of clothing to include socks and shoes labeled with chld’s name.
6. Diapers if needed. If using pull-ups, they must be the style with tabs.
7. Backpack
8. If your child is toilet training, please notify the teacher and inform them of the procedures you are following at home.

### Diapering

Diapers will be changed as needed. Diaper ointment is considered a topical medication and can only be applied with written permission from the parent. Sanitary standards including the use of gloves as required by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood are followed when diapering a child. Parents or guardians MUST provide diapers on a regular basis. If you do not provide diapers, you will be CHARGED $5.00 for a pack of 5 diapers used by the program. Classroom teachers will provide a note when diapers are running low.

### Toilet Training (Young Toddler / Toddler Program Only)

Our teachers will make no attempt to toilet train children until they are able to verbalize or otherwise indicate the need for help manage their own clothing and be able to access toileting facilities. Teachers and parents should work together to identify when toilet training is appropriate for the individual child. Toilet learning/training is most successful when there is an implementation plan between the caregivers and parent/ guardian. Doing this will provide continuity for the child.

### Preschool Class (Must be toilet trained)

1. Lunch and water bottle labeled with child’s name. Water bottle MUST contain unflavored water. Flavored water is not permitted as Great Escape may have students with allergies to the flavoring.
2. Change of clothing to include socks and shoes labeled with the child’s name
3. Fitted crib sheet as required by Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
4. Blanket if wanted/needed.
5. Backpack

### Pre-Kindergarten Class (Must be toilet trained)

1. Lunch and water bottle labeled with child’s name. Water bottle MUST contain unflavored water. Flavored water is not permitted as Great Escape may have students with allergies to the flavoring.
2. Change of clothing to include socks and shoes labeled with the child’s name
3. Fitted crib sheet as required by the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. (No blankets)
4. Backpack

### Clothing

**Closed toe shoes** (sneakers) are required at Great Escape. Sandals, crocs, dress shoes and flip-flops are not allowed as the playground has a pea gravel base. If your child comes in in appropriate shoes you will be called to bring sneakers. Children should wear clothing that allows freedom of movement and allow for messy projects. If a child wears a skirt or dress, shorts are required underneath. Colorado weather is unpredictable--children should come to school prepared. Heavy jackets, hats, boots, and mittens are necessary on wintry days.

### Lunch

Parents MUST provide lunches as per the USDA food guidelines to include a grain, a protein, a dairy, and a fruit/vegetable. Please place your child’s labeled lunch box in the classroom lunch basket upon arrival. All foods should be prepared in independent, child size portions, cut-up/sliced/peeled and in **non-breakable containers** for easy and safe eating. Please remember that we do not re-heat lunches, therefore lunches must be able to be eaten cold or they can be brought in a thermos to keep them warm. Please limit sending candy or sugary desserts. Teachers are directed to provide the nutritious foods from the child’s lunch box first. Staff will monitor lunches sent and provide a note to you if components are missing on a regular basis. If the program needs to provide lunch components a fee will be charged.

Teachers supervise lunchtime. Any remaining food that will not create a mess in the now un-refrigerated lunch box will be left for you to determine what was eaten. Food cannot be shared. Please do not allow your child(ren) to eat leftover lunch until they exit the facility. Lunch boxes are NOT refrigerated after the lunch period is over.

### Hand Washing

Soap and water hand washing is essential to successful disease prevention. Children are required to wash hands upon arrival, before meals and snacks, after using the toilet, after wiping their nose or sneezing on their hands, etc. All staff members are required to wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after assisting with toileting, after their own toileting, after any diaper changes, after wiping a child’s nose or their own nose, before preparing or serving food or snacks, and before administering medication, etc. Help us set a good example and teach your child(ren) how to wash their own hands properly and thoroughly. Great Escape uses anti-microbial soap for hand washing.

### Nap/Rest Time

A rest period of at least 30 minutes is required for all children. The 30 minutes must be uninterrupted such that a child can fall asleep. Staff are not allowed to prevent a child from sleeping during these 30 minutes. Quiet activities are permissible after the first 30 minutes. This allows staff to work individually with children and families regarding the amount of sleep children need in our care. Children cannot be forced to sleep. Children who do not sleep after 30 minutes are allowed to move to another area and provided with quiet toys, books, or puzzles. Classes use nap mats that are sanitized daily. All children are required to bring a fitted crib sheet daily for nap/rest times. Nap items must be taken home at the end of the child’s school week and brought back when the child returns to school the following week. It is the parent’s responsibility to make sure that their child’s nap sheets and blankets are washed. Shoes must be left on during nap, as is required all day to meet state safety requirements.

## Behavior/Discipline

Great Escape strives to provide instruction and classroom procedures that places high priority on the safety and well-being of its program participants. All staff members are trained on positive practices that ensure behavior is guided in a constructive manner. To accomplish this mission, we work to:

* Cultivate positive staff, child, and parent relationships
* Communicate daily with families regarding their children
* Encourage family involvement in positively guiding behavior concerns
* Create and maintain socially and emotionally respectful early learning environments
* Implement teaching strategies supporting appropriate student behaviors while facilitating pro-social peer interaction among young children
* Utilize positive behavior intervention techniques to redirect student actions where necessary.
* Provide individualized social and emotional intervention supports for children in need. This includes but is not limited to developing, adopting, and implementing a team-based behavior support plan to reduce challenging behaviors from escalating.

Redirection techniques will be utilized in the event of an unwanted or unsafe behavior. Should this redirection be unsuccessful, the child will be removed from the activity and given time to self-regulate. This may result in a behavior report to be shared with parents. After three behavior reports, a conference with the teacher, center director and the parents may be warranted to develop an individualized behavior plan for the child. Every effort will be made to respond to challenging behaviors through implementation and modification to such plans. Should the unacceptable behaviors continue, Great Escape may determine that our facility in not best suited to care for the child and suggest an alternative placement to best meet the child’s needs.

Great Escape will use Child Find services when we feel that they are needed for preschool aged students and Developmental Pathways for infants and toddlers. If we feel that a child needs more assistance, the staff at Great Escape will conference with the parents and supply them with the information needed, along with a contact at Child Find, or Developmental Pathways.

Great Escape Staff will take the following steps to support all children in our care:

* Assess each child and make observations to supply families with information regarding development.
* Document all interactions and report findings to the Program Director.
* Classroom Staff and Director will meet with the family to provide information regarding their child’s needs.
* A behavior plan will be created with the family to help support the child at home and in the classroom setting.
* Individual goals will be created to help support the child and family both at home and in the classroom setting.

## CCCAP (Colorado Child Care Assistance Program) Policies and Procedures

NOTE: The policies in this section only apply to those students enrolled through the State of Colorado CCCAP program.

### General

Great Escape will only start child(ren) on the start date listed on the county letter authorizing care. If a parent brings the child(ren) before the start date, the parent will be responsible for the private pay daily rate. Great Escape does not accept verbal authorizations from the counties as proof of program approval. All authorizations must be in writing. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that they have a current authorization, a pinned CCCAP code, and that they contact the county if changes are needed in authorization.

### ATS System

Parents are responsible to login into ATS located in the Great Escape hallway and sign their children in/out every day. If a parent forgets to login/logout, Great Escape can login/logout the child with the understanding that the parent/guardian will need to approve the login into ATS.

### Parent Fee

Parent fees are due by the 10th of the month unless other arrangements have been made. If not paid by the 10th of the month, or the date agreed on in advance, the parent fee will be considered late, and your account will incur a $25 late fee. Childcare will be discontinued until the balance due, including late fees, is paid in full. The parent fee is due every month regardless of the child’s attendance.

### Absences

If a child(ren) is absent for more than 3 days a month, Great Escape will report the absences to the family’s case worker. This excludes planned absences and/or sick time which is communicated to Great Escape. If a child is absent more than 3 consecutive days with no communication to Great Escape, child(ren) will be dis-enrolled and reported to the family’s case worker. If the family wants to return to Great Escape, the private pay tuition rate must be paid for the days missed (after the allocated 3 days).

### CCCAP Daily Tuition

CCCAP Daily tuition is $72.50 per day for our full extended program, which runs from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

## Operations

Great Escape’s school year program operates from September through May, Monday-Friday. The summer program operates the months of June, July, and August three days per week. Great Escape is closed for major holidays. Please refer to the school calendar in this handbook.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

Great Escape admits students in compliance with Colorado statutes prohibiting discrimination.

### Interpreter Policy

Great Escape will provide an interpreter if needed to enhance communication with parents and/or guardians. The Translation and Interpreting Center (303-996-0976) will be used to enhance communication with families who require this service.

### Final Enrollment

Great Escape **MUST** have the following enrollment forms submitted before participating in the program.

* Child Information Form (submitted online)
* Child Liability Release and Emergency Information (submitted online)
* Pick-up Permission (submitted online)
* Handbook/Photo Approval (one per family) (submitted online)
* Certificate of Immunization (provided by physician)
* Health Status which includes documentation of a hearing, vision, and dental screening (completed by physician)
* Medication Administration (signed by physician and parent)
* Topical Preparations (submitted online)

All forms must be kept current!

### Withdrawal

Two-weeks written notice to the Director is required in the event of a withdrawal from the program. If less than two weeks is given, the two-week prorated tuition will still be due.

### Dis-enrolled Child Policy

Great Escape reserves the right to disenroll any child for the following reasons:

* Non-payment or late payments of tuition and fees.
* Noncompliance of Great Escape policies as outlined in this handbook.
* Child has special needs which we are unable to be accommodated with current staff.
* Physical / verbal abuse of staff or other children by parent/guardian or child.
* Non-disclosure of medical information.

### Children with Special Needs

Admission of children with special needs complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and reasonable effort is made to accommodate the child’s needs and to integrate the child with other children. Admittance will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Children with special needs, such as emotionally, developmentally, or physically challenged, will be accepted if it is determined that:

1) The child will benefit from our program.

2) The staff can meet the individual needs of the child.

3) There will be no adverse effect on other children through direct behavior.

4) The child does not redirect extra staff time needed from other children.

After evaluation, we may admit special needs children on a trial basis of one month. During this time, we will work closely with the child’s parents and any other person(s) responsible for the child’s growth and well-being. At the end of one month, the director and child’s teacher will meet with the parents to determine if we are able to adequately care for the child within our current staffing patterns.

Note: Our program is located on the lower garden level of the LUMC facility and every attempt will be made to accommodate student need

### Transition Policy

Great Escape understands that transitions for young children can be difficult, therefore in order to ease transitions, the program provides the following support.

#### New Child to Great Escape Transition

1. Great Escape has a Back to School night in August to provide an opportunity for enrolled families to meet the staff and ask questions about the program.
2. One-on-one tours are conducted by the Director or Assistant Director on an appointment only basis.
3. Parent/Guardians of students enrolled in the program are required to complete a Child Information Form which is provided to the classroom teachers to provide insight into each child.

#### Classroom to Classroom

1. Great Escape’s policy is to maintain the children in the same classroom for the entire school year and then move to the next higher age class the following year. Circumstances do arise were the classroom teacher and director feel a child may benefit from being moved to a higher age classrom during the school year. Parents or guardians will be consulated before making a transition.
2. Insight into each child’s needs will be shared between traditional day classroom and extended day classroom staff.

#### Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten Transition

To help the family and child transition into kindergarten, Great Escape has a graduation ceremony and reception at the end of May.

### Absenteeism

Please notify the Great Escape Office (303) 794-0707 any time your child is going to be late or absent. There are no make-up days or refunds for absences.

### Door Lock Policy and Times

Great Escape doors are always locked. Great Escape utilizes Door#1 off the main parking lot for access to the facility and Door#L1 for access to the program hallway. All families are provided key fobs to access the facility through Door#1. Door#L1 always remains locked (Fob reader is RED). Staff will open the door 8:30 - 8:45 am and 9:30 - 9:45 am for morning drop-off and 2:50 - 3:05 pm and 3:40 - 4:05 pm for afternoon pick-up. If you are not able to drop-off and pick-up during these times, please call the GE office number of (303) 794-0707 and program leadership will open the door.

### Parent Responsibilities Drop-Off and Pick-Up

* Morning Drop-Off Routine
* Hang backpacks
* Put lunch and water bottles in designated areas
* Sign in children using classroom TABLET. Each parent has been assigned a PIN number which is the last four digits of your cell phone number. This system generates a class roster which is used for accurate head counts during fire drills, field trips, recess, etc. Please have whomever is dropping the child off sign into the automated system.
* Wash children’s hands
* Children adjusting to a new environment may cry at drop-off time. This is normal and we realize it can create anxiety for the parents and the child(ren). Our trained teachers will comfort your child. Parents can assist in the adjustment process by minimizing drop off time and quickly leaving children in the care of our staff members.
* Any forgotten items (blankets, lunches, etc.) a child may need during the day should be delivered to the Director or leadership member on duty to avoid reentry into the classroom by parents.
* Afternoon Pick-Up (3:00 pm for traditional day/ 4:00 pm for extended day)
	+ Sign your child out using the classroom TABLET.
	+ Collect their items
	+ Please exit the building before opening lunch boxes or giving any snack

A Late Fee of $1.00 per minute per child begins accumulating at 3:06 pm for traditional enrollment and 4:06 pm for aftercare enrollment. Late fees will be assessed on the following month’s invoice. Parents need to have their child(ren) and belongs and out of the building by the pick-up times stated above

Two staff members are required to stay on the premises until all children have been picked up by an authorized adult. Only authorized persons, or parents, will be permitted to pick children up. Parents indicate on the Pickup Permission Form who will be picking up the child(ren). If there are ANY changes to the Pickup Permission Form, a new form must be completed online and submitted.

If you know that you will be late picking up your child(ren), please call the Great Escape office. While we know emergencies arise, a late fee will still be assessed.If an unauthorized person will be picking your child up in an emergency, you MUST speak directly with the Director or Assistant Director to give verbal permission and we will verify picture identification of any person unfamiliar to staff before releasing your child(ren). If verbal permission has not been given, then we will **NOT** release the child.

If your child(ren) has not been picked up by 4:45 pm and attempts to contact persons on your emergency card have failed, the Director or leadership member on duty will notify the Colorado Department of Early Childhood and the police. The child(ren) will be placed in their care.

### Primary Care Policy

We have a Primary Care Policy, where each child stays with the same teacher throughout the day. This policy assists with the social emotional development of the child and minimizes change throughout the day.

### Daily Child Identification

Parent or adult guardians are required to clock their child(ren) “in” upon arrival and “out” upon pickup. As children transition in and out of the classroom, children are counted to ensure the entire group is present. Periodic counts during classroom time are also carried out for your child’s safety. Please call or email if your child will be missing from class. Prior to staff leaving for the day, a review of the sign in/out log will be completed to ensure all children have been picked up.

If a student is missing at any time, attempts will be made to locate the child and authorities will be notified immediately. See Lost Child Policy.

### Confidentiality and Retention

Great Escape will maintain confidentiality of all records. These records must be available, upon request, to authorized personnel of the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. Records are maintained for three years before being destroyed.

### Program Evaluation

Families will be given the opportunity to evaluate the program, staff, facility, and our ability to meet your needs. The evaluations are beneficial to the quality of our program. Thank you for taking the time to complete and return your evaluation.

### Visitors

Visitors (parents, guardians, prospective families, therapist, and licensing agencies) are welcome at Great Escape but must notify the Director ahead of time. Visitors will be required to sign in at the front desk at entrance with their name, date, time, and purpose of visit and be prepared to show proper identification.

### Parking Lot

Please navigate the parking lot safely and obey all signs related to speed, crosswalks, no parking, etc. Use sidewalks and crosswalks and avoid walking across the parking lot. If you see anything unusual in the parking lot please report it to the director immediately.

### Immunization/Health Status

Children enrolled in Great Escape are required to have current immunizations and a physical evaluation by a physician on file. The immunization record must include the month and year the immunization was administered. The immunization record or a signed immunization exemption form must be received prior to the child’s first day of school. The health status record shall indicate the child’s abilities and / or limitations to participate in a regularly scheduled preschool/toddler program.

The Statement of Health form must be signed and dated by a health care professional who has examined the child within the last 12 months if the child is 2½ years or older, or within the last 6 months if the child is between the ages of 12 months and 2½ years of age.

Per Social Services, the program has the right to refuse a child’s admittance if the Statement of Health form is not submitted. Parents should also note that not all children in our facility have been fully immunized.

### Medication

We do not administer non-emergency medication at Great Escape. Please administer medicine at home before your child comes to school or make arrangements to come to Great Escape if specific timed dosage is required. All medication must be in the original container with the child’s name on it. Emergency medication (epi pens, inhalers) prescribed by a doctor will be stored in a classroom backpack. The teacher always has the backpack in their possession. Emergency medicine requires an action plan from the doctor describing when and how the medication should be administered along with the Medication Authorization Form signed by a physician and parent. The classroom backpack is always out of reach of the children. All staff are trained by a certified nurse consultant and able to administer emergency medication.

### Sunscreen Policy

In accordance with licensing requirements, Great Escape requires all parents to apply sunscreen to their child(ren) before they start the day. The Colorado Department of Health recommends using sunscreen with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. If you forget your sunscreen, Great Escape will have Rocky Mountain Sunscreen at the front desk for you to apply to your child. **It is the parents’ responsibility to apply sunscreen on their child.**

### Inclement or Excessively Hot Weather

In the event of extremely cold (below 20°F with wind chill) or excessively hot temperatures (above 90 degrees), strong winds, snow, or rain; children will be kept indoors and away from the elements. As such, please provide adequate coats if cold and hats if sunny.

### Sick Child Policy

Children may not attend Great Escape if they have had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

* Fever of 101°
* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Pertussis
* Runny nose with cloudy mucus
* Unidentified rash on body or face
* Unidentified discharge from eyes or ears
* Visibly swollen neck glands
* Signs of conjunctivitis (pink eye)
* Or any disease that has not expired its period of communicability

Please keep your child home if they complain of sore throat or earaches, have any unusual change in physical appearance or behavior such as: listlessness, irritability, flushed face, headache, lack of appetite, etc. This will greatly help us keep our facility a healthy place to be!

Staff performs a “visual screening” of children upon arrival and will not allow a student appearing ill, as per the list above, to remain in the classroom.

Parents will be notified to pick up their child(ren) immediately if your child(ren) becomes sick while at Great Escape. Examples are vomiting, diarrhea, fever, lethargic, etc. Sick children will be isolated until picked up. If we cannot reach an emergency pick-up person, one staff member will be assigned to monitor the child at a fee of $15 per hour until the child is picked up. The fee will be assessed on the following month’s invoice. If a child is sent home, they may NOT return the following day but may return on the 2nd day if they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness, such as but not limited to hepatitis, measles, strep, mumps, chicken pox, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia, whooping cough or shigella, you MUST notify Great Escape immediately. We are required to file a report with the Health Department, post warnings and hand out confidential exposure notices to parents of children with confirmed exposure. Confidentiality will be maintained.

If your child has been exposed to a communicable illness outside of the program, you are required to notify the Director. The Director maintains the discretion of barring the child from the program for the duration prescribed by the child’s physician or by the local Health Department.

### Accident or Injury of a Child

An emergency release and waiver of liability form, completed and signed by a parent, is required for enrollment.

Procedures for injury at the Great Escape facility or on a field trip:

* For Life Threatening or Serious Injury
* 911 will be called immediately.
* Parents will be notified.
* If parents are not available, persons on the release and waiver of liability form will be called.
* If ambulance transportation is required, a staff member will accompany the child until a parent or guardian arrives.
* The emergency release and waiver of liability form will be pulled and taken with the child for medical information.
* Great Escape reports to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood in writing immediately after any accident or illness requiring medical treatment by a physician or other health care professional or hospitalization – within 24 to 48 hours.
* Parents will receive a copy of the Accident Report completed by the teacher and Director.
* For Non-Life Threatening or Minor Injury (scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc.) at the Great Escape facility or on a field trip:
* Staff member will attend to the child.
* By law only soap, water and adhesive bandages may be applied.
* Parents will receive a copy of the Accident Report completed by the teacher and Director.

### Allergies

Our facility is considered a “PEANUT FREE” and “Allergy Aware” zone. Due to the number of food allergies, students may not share their lunches with others. Individual classrooms may have other food restrictions if a severe allergy in present. If your child has an allergy, additional health forms are required. Please speak to administration regarding this matter.

Teachers are supplied with a list of children with allergies, specifically the inability to consume certain food or beverages. The list will also be maintained in the Great Escape office.

### Birthdays

All birthdays will be recognized within the classroom. Please coordinate with the classroom teachers if you choose to send an unopened, store-bought treat to celebrate your child’s birthday. Classroom teachers must be aware of ingredients to account for any food allergen exposure.

### Snacks

Snacks which meet USDA guidelines, as per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood regulations, will be provided daily to all classes. Parents do not need to provide snacks. Snacks will include healthy offerings such as apple sauce, cheese sticks, fresh fruit, veggies, yogurt, graham crackers, goldfish, etc. If your child has an allergy or intolerance for certain foods, you are required to provide a healthy snack option for them.

## Closures and Emergency Procedures

An emergency is an unexpected event that places life and/or property in danger.

The Director, Assistant Director, or leadership member on duty in their absence, will coordinate action plans for all emergencies. Staff members will follow the Great Escape emergency protocol and the LUMC Preparedness Plan. Staff members must always carry the TABLET sign-in device and emergency backpack. The emergency backpack contains emergency supplies and contact information for all students, which allows the staff to conduct accurate counts of children and to notify parents in the event of an emergency. Parents will be notified by telephone, email, or text if an emergency develops.

If a parent cannot be reached, the Emergency Information sheet will be used. Parents should always keep Emergency Information up to date for the protection of their child in the case of illness, injury, or emergency.

### Program Closures

Great Escape will be closed for Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break, New Year’s, Martin Luther King Day, President’s Day, and Spring Break. The Director has the authority, in inclement weather, or for student safety, to close the school. Parents will be notified via email, Facebook, and/or phone if a closure happens during the school day. A parent may be asked to assist with making the calls. Sufficient staff will remain to guarantee the safety and comfort of all children until picked up.

On days of inclement weather, a decision on closure will be made by 7:30 am Parents will be notified similarly and through Denver Channel 9. Staff will be notified via phone, text, or email.

Tuition will not be refunded or credited due to snow or emergency closures as the program pays staff for these days.

### Safety Drills

Safety drills are held on a regular basis, as required by the South Metro Fire / Rescue, to ensure staff and children understand safety & security procedures. All classes and staff members participate in drills. A log of safety drills with date, time and type of drill is maintained in the Director’s office.

Staff members will follow the posted procedure, located in the classroom near the doorway, for the appropriate check being practiced.

### Hold – IN YOUR ROOM, CLEAR THE HALLWAYS

There may be situations that require students to remain in their classrooms. For example, an altercation in the hallway may require keeping students out of the halls until it is resolved. A medical issue may require only one area to be cleared, with halls still open in case outside medical assistance is required. There may be a need for students who are not in a classroom to proceed to an area where they can be supervised and remain safe.

The emergency protocol for HOLD is doors will be closed and locked. No one will be allowed in the hallway. Classroom activities will continue as normal. Children on the playground will be brought indoors. The Great Escape leader in charge will notify staff via radio or cell phone when it is safe to return to a normal school day mode and move around the facility.

### Secure Perimeter – GET INSIDE, LOCK OUTSIDE DOORS

A secure perimeter is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building. Whether due to violence or criminal activity in the immediate neighborhood, or a dangerous animal in the playground area, SECURE uses the security of the physical facility to act as protection.

The emergency protocol activated is where all outdoor activities move inside, and all exterior doors are secured. Planned activities may continue but restricted to the building interior. Exterior facility doors are locked, and regular activities continue within the building. Children on the playground will be brought indoors. The Great Escape leader in charge will notify staff via radio or cell phone when it is safe to be outside the facility.

### Lockdown – LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SITE

A lockdown is called when there is a threat inside the building. From parental custody disputes to intruders to an active assailant, LOCKDOWN uses classroom and school security actions to protect students and staff from the threat.

The emergency protocol prevents movement within the facility. Staff and children will remain in place and doors secured until advised by immediate responders that the threat has been neutralized. Immediate responders may advise and escort staff and children to a designated safe room. In the event of a lockdown, no persons will be allowed in or out of the building for the duration of the lockdown.

Exterior, hallway, and classroom doors will be closed and locked. Staff will turn off lights and direct students to sit quietly so they are out of the line of sight through windows and glass in doors. All curtains and blinds will be shut. Students will not be excused from the classroom for any reason.

Staff will clear all children from the hallway, play areas, etc. and secure themselves in the nearest, safest classroom or the Way Station if a group is on the playground. Classrooms will remain locked, and windows covered until safety has been restored.

Each classroom will be contacted via text to ensure all students are accounted for. Staff will communicate back to program leadership via text to maintain silence. Parents should not call the classroom teacher as they are focused on your child’s safety.

In the event of a lockdown, no persons will be allowed in or out of the building for the duration of the lockdown. No exceptions will be made. Parents will be notified by telephone or e-mail when it is safe to pick up their child/children at LUMC or a reunification site.

### Evacuation – TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION

EVACUATE is called when there is a need to move people from one location to another. Most often, evacuations will be necessary when there is a fire, heating/ventilation system failure, nearby gas leak, or bomb threat.

The emergency protocol for evacuation from the building is staff will take children and visitors to the nearest exit and muster in the designated safe area in the northeast corner of the parking lot. If the weather is inclement, children will be taken to the Way Station building. Staff will check each classroom area, including bathrooms as well as all other facility areas currently being used by the program at the time of the evacuation. These same persons will go to the designated safe area and perform a second head count utilizing the TABLET sign-in/out device to verify everyone is out of the facility. No one will be allowed to re-enter the facility until the appropriate authorities give the clearance to enter.

### Shelter

SHELTER is called when a specific protective action is needed based on a threat or hazard. Hazards could be tornado, earthquake, hazardous materials, or other local threats.

The emergency protocol for Shelter is moving to the nearest designated safe room or hallway until notification or determination that the situation has been resolved.

Upon notification from authorities that weather or other shelter-in-place emergency is present, children will be guided to the designated safe hallway or room. Staff will seat the children with their back to the wall (as able), for the duration of the alert and remain in this location until directed to return to your classroom.

Staff will contact parents to pick up the children if the authorities feel the children may be safely released and are unable to complete their class day. Parents will be instructed where to pick up their child.

The Director, at any time, may cancel classes until it is safe to resume. All parents will be notified of such action if the situation occurs.

### Reunification

If an emergency event requires Great Escape to evacuate the property, all children will be taken next door to the Bradley House, 5844 S. Datura Street. Children will be reunified with parents and/or guardians at this location. Parents/guardians must have proper identification for reunification to take place.

### Emergency Release of Children

If an emergency release of children from Great Escape is necessary, parents will be notified of pick-up instructions. Notification may be made via telephone, email, text, school website, or Denver Channel 9 news. Students will be released only to persons listed on the student’s emergency contact sheet. A photo ID will be required of everyone, no exception. NO student will be released to a friend, neighbor or relative unless they are on the emergency contact information sheet. No phone calls or notes granting permission for others to pick up children will be accepted.

### Missing Child(ren)

Parents and the program share responsibility to insure the presence and safety of each child.

**Parent’s Responsibility**

1. Parent or Guardian will contact Great Escape to report absences or late arrivals.
2. Parent or Guardian will follow sign-in/sign-out procedures.
3. Parent or Guardian may not leave a child in a classroom without a staff member.
4. Late arrival for a field trip requires that the parent and the teacher notify the Director that the child has joined the class on the field trip.

**Program’s Responsibility**

1. Children are never unsupervised. Staff aides cannot be left alone with children per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood regulations.
2. Head counts will be conducted several times per day by classroom staff during transitions.
3. One adult is leading the line of children while one adult is at the end, ensuring no children are left behind.
4. Lead teacher reviews the sign-in/sign-out form daily.

### Missing Child

Upon discovering a child is missing, the Teacher will immediately begin a search and inform the Director. The Director immediately activates our action plan to include:

1. All available Great Escape and LUMC staff will search for the child(ren) for 10 minutes.
2. After 10 minutes, the police (911 Emergency) will be notified.
3. Immediately thereafter, the parents will be notified.
4. The search will continue until police arrive and have taken over the program’s action plan.

The Director is required to submit a written report to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood immediately regarding any lost child or situation where local authorities have been contacted.

## Parent Teacher Conferences

Pre-school parents will receive two progress reports annually (November and April) and can schedule a conference on two occasions by signing up for a time slot that works with to their schedule. During this time, parents and teachers will discuss how transitions are supported for each child from the home to school setting, and in April from the current to the new classroom. Toddler parents will receive two evaluations (fall and spring) and can schedule a conference by signing up for a time to meet with their child’s teacher. Parents fill out an information form as part of their child’s enrollment. This form gives the staff important information about the child and allows staff to prepare and discuss transitions during conference times.

## Special Programs

Throughout the year Great Escape offers special events centered around holidays along with music programs and outside discovery.

### Music & Movement

A teacher-lead daily music activity is offered to all children enrolled. Our music teacher incorporates singing, movement, instruments, and listening activities.

The Great Escape children perform two Music Programs (Christmas and Spring) in which the children sing songs they have learned for an audience of family and friends. The program is thematically based, and each age group performs songs related to the theme. The program will be held in the Sanctuary of LUMC with a reception immediately following in Grant Fellowship Hall. All children will perform together on one night. We ask that all parents stay for the entire program. Please be respectful to the children who are performing and not talk with those around you. We also ask that, if possible, please leave your little ones at home. This is a night for your Great Escape child to spend some special time with family.

### Chapel

Chapel Time is a monthly enrichment led by the Director of Children’s Ministries. Short lessons follow a scope and sequence introducing faith concepts and Bible stories while coordinating with the Great Escape calendar of curriculum through songs, stories, prayers, and blessings.

### Field Trips

On-site field trips will take place daily to the music room, playgrounds, indoor recess in Grant Fellowship Hall and monthly trips to the Chapel. All these field trips are within LUMC property, but outside Great Escape facility.

Off-site walking field trips will be taken by the Preschool classes to Gallup Park, Bemis Library and Littleton Historical Museum. All children must have signed permission slips before attending. Parents/Guardians will be required to sign and return the Liability Release form prior to the field trip. Chaperoning parents are needed to accompany each class. Field trips are within walking distance of Great Escape.

### Movies & Videos

Occasionally, short, age-appropriate videos/movies may be shown in the classroom during rest time or as an enrichment activity. If a video will be shown that day, it will be displayed next to the sign-in/sign-out TABLET device in the morning. At the beginning of the year, parents sign a permission form for video viewing.

Circumstances arise when parental pre-approval is impossible (extreme weather changes, cancellation of a special event, etc.). All videos/movies will be rated G and less than one hour in length and will be watched either in the classroom or in the Children’s Area Theater.

Toddler classes (Bunnies, Ducklings, Lambs, and Ponies) will not be shown videos/movies as per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood regulations that television and video viewing is prohibited for children less than three (3) years of age.

## Communication

### Facebook Page

Great Escape has a Facebook page that we update with events and activities that are going on in the program. We encourage all our families to like us and visit us on Facebook to ensure you are up to date.

### Weekly E-mail

Staff members will send weekly classroom specific emails every weekend informing families of the upcoming week’s events and activities. It will also provide information about the upcoming curriculum themes and extra fun events coming up in the weeks ahead. Please make sure to fill out the proper forms so to make sure you are on the e-mail list.

### Monthly Newsletter

A newsletter will be sent via email during the first week of the month to inform you of events happening at Great Escape and Littleton United Methodist Church. Please take time to read these as newsletters are our main source of communication with our families.

### Parent Communication Board

The Parent Communication Board is located on the wall opposite the double glass door entrance. Check this board daily for updated information and notices.

### Parent Resource Center

The Parent Resource Center is located near the Parent Communication Board. The Center contains information on community resources along with parenting and childcare books.

### Great Escape Advisory Board

The Great Escape Advisory Board is the governing body of the Great Escape Program. The primary responsibilities of the Advisory Board are to formulate the purpose, policies and plans for Great Escape and provide guidance in the execution of the plans.

### Concerns

You are an essential part of this program. We strive to work with you in whatever ways we can to make this program a wonderful experience for you and your child(ren). Classroom concerns should be addressed with the teacher(s). Program concerns should be addressed with the Director. If needs are still not being met, the Director will present the concerns to the Great Escape Advisory Board and work to resolve your concerns

If you have a complaint concerning the licensing of this facility, please contact the following:

Colorado Department of Early Childhood

710 S. Ash St.

Denver, CO 80246

(800) 799-5876

We hope you have a terrific year!

## Great Escape 2025-2026 School Year Calendar

August 27 - Meet Your Teacher Night

September 2 - First Day of School

October 2 - Fall Picture Days

October 15 and 16 - Donuts with Dad

October 29 and 30 - Halloween Parade

November 26 – 28- Thanksgiving Break GE Closed

December 11 - Christmas Music Program

December 22 - January 2 Christmas Break GE Closed

January 5 - School Returns

January 19 - MLK Day GE Closed

February 16 - President's Day GE Closed

TBD - Spring Picture Days

March 23- 27 - Spring Break GE Closed

April 16 - Spring Music Program

April 17 - Closed Friday for Early Childhood Conference

April 27 - May 1 Teacher Appreciation Week

May 6-7 - Muffins with Mom

May 19 - Pre-K Graduation

May 21 - Last Day of School

May 22 - June 1-Great Escape Closed

June 2 - Summer Program Begins

June 29th-July 3rd - Great Escape Closed

July 7 - Summer Program Resumes

August 20 - Summer Program Ends