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### **Narrative Description of School Organization**

#### **Overview**

Early childhood education is vital to the healthy development and future success of all children. John Hopkins University published a study in which they stated, “Simply put, a child’s early years lay the foundation for all that is to come. In recent years, researchers have learned that the human brain develops the vast majority of its neurons, and is at its most receptive to learning, between birth and three years of age. In fact, the intake of new information is critical to the formation of active neural pathways (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).”

Gibson County has very few options for early childhood education, even less that offer childcare, and none that offer tuition assistance programs. Besides financial burden, guardians claim that the biggest challenge when considering Preschool/Pre-K programs is transportation. Since most programs are only half day, students must be transported by their guardians to local daycares and babysitters before and after classes. Working families often opt not to send their children to Preschool/Pre-K at all, and instead leave them at daycare for a full day of care. These daycares do not typically provide the academic, social, spiritual, and emotional preparation children need to succeed in school.

Children that attend quality Preschool/Pre-K programs and are exposed to educational opportunities throughout early childhood are more successful throughout their educational careers. Beth Meloy, Madelyn Gardner, and Linda Darling-Hammond reported in a recent study to influence policy makers to support early childhood education programs, “Well-implemented programs support substantial early learning gains and can have lasting impacts throughout school.” By providing quality learning opportunities, Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., can make a lasting impact on the lives of the children of Gibson County, Indiana, as well as the community at large.

In becoming a non-profit Preschool/Pre-K and childcare facility, Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc. will be able to offer rates drastically lower than surrounding for-profit

centers such as Toyota Children's Center. By comparison, a month of tuition at Toyota Children's Center will cost a family in Gibson County over \$1500 in tuition fees, whereas Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc. will offer the same enrollment for \$600. Tuition assistance programs and scholarships will bring the fees down even further for qualifying families in need.

It is the mission of Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., to provide Christian Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Childcare to all children in need of services. We are dedicated to meeting the spiritual, academic, social, and emotional needs of the children and families of Gibson County, Indiana, and the surrounding communities. We focus on the health, growth, happiness, and overall well-being of each child entrusted to our care! We are honored and blessed to be a part of each precious life that we serve!

## **Education**

The Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., once approved for tax exemption status as well as established as a registered childcare ministry, will offer a program that provides a quality, Christian-based, early childhood education program as well as full-day child care. This will enable working families to leave their children at one location all day where they will receive a quality education and be prepared for their future educational careers.

The facility will seek to provide two classrooms dedicated to Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten classes. These classes will begin in mid-August and end in May each school year. They will be half-day programs, three hours per session. Two classes, a morning session and afternoon session, will be offered each day. Students will be able to attend childcare services when not in class to allow working guardians to leave them at the school building all day. This will also create an environment of consistent learning opportunities for all students. Licensed lead teachers will be staffed in all classrooms with assistants based on number of enrollment to provide for appropriate teacher to student ratios.

Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., will offer full day childcare services for children of all ages. This will help families to send all of their children to one location, and provide an educational foundation from infancy through school-age. Childcare services will be held in classrooms separated by age groups. Staff will be educated in best practices and educational curriculums that meet the needs of each age group. Childcare rooms will be tailored to suit the unique physical, social, educational, and emotional needs of each age group. Summer enrichment programs will be held to support the development of school age children and ease the summer-slump that many students experience when they are not exposed to learning opportunities for the three month break.

Childcare programs will include an educational curriculum overseen by licensed teachers. Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc. will strive to provide additional services to children in childcare. These services will include foreign language enrichment, sign language instruction, music classes, physical education activities, art exploration, and science experimentation. Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc. may also provide extra-

curricular services such as tutoring, after-school programs that promote spiritual and emotional well-being, and family support services.

Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., will strive to provide a strong, Christian foundation for all children in care. Christian curriculum programs will be utilized as part of the educational programs for children of all ages. Parents and guardians will be encouraged and educated through support, materials, and publications that promote the importance of strong faith and prayer in family life. Parenting techniques will be offered and parental support will be available for families in need. Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., will strive to outreach to spread the message of the Gospels to the surrounding community. It will seek out areas of need and involve students and families in the service opportunities.

## **Future Goals**

### **Expansion of Offered Services**

Expanding the services offered at Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., will be the primary goal for the first several years. Several programs and areas of learning will be sought after through donations and grant writing:

- Imaginative dramatic play areas will be added in each Preschool/Pre-K classroom. Dramatic play centers are excellent learning environments for children of this age group. Preschool and Pre-K programs will customize dramatic play centers with the change of each theme and season.
- An outdoor playground environment that includes equipment for students of all ages will be developed. The playground will include areas for gross motor movement, music exploration, a mud kitchen, water and sensory play, and art.
- An indoor playground environment will be created that includes equipment for students of all ages. This playground and gross motor movement equipment and space will be utilized anytime the weather is not conducive to outdoor play.

### **Elderly Connection**

It is a long-term goal of Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., to seek out the needs of the elderly in the Gibson County area and involve them in the program. The benefits of interactions between the elderly and the young are incredible for both age groups. Numerous studies have linked social interaction with decreased loneliness, delayed mental decline, lower blood pressure, and reduced risk of disease and death in elders. Socializing across generations has also been shown to increase the amount of smiling and conversation among older adults, according to one Japanese study from 2013. These intergenerational interactions also enhance children's social and personal development. Children are prone to feel more comfortable around those with disabilities and impairments of all kinds than their peers who lack such experiences.

The board may continue to research the need for such programs in the Gibson County area. It may reach out to local nursing home facilities, social groups for the aged, and

other programs that might be supportive of developing ideas for creating opportunities for intergenerational activities.

#### Tuition Assistance Goal

It is a goal of the Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc., to be able to provide tuition assistance and scholarship programs to all students in financial need. The goal is to increase the amount and quantity of scholarships provided until all qualifying students are able to receive assistance. This will be accomplished through fundraising and sponsorship programs. The Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc. board will determine the amount and distribution of scholarship funds. In order to qualify for the Tuition Scholarship Program, the applicant must meet the following eligibility requirements:

Reside in Gibson County, Indiana

Have a child currently enrolled in Little Miracles Learning Center, Inc.

Meet the income eligibility guidelines below:

#### Income Eligible

Family Size	(Income does not exceed)
2	\$44,055
3	\$55,440
4	\$66,825
5	\$78,210
6	\$89,595

For each additional family member, add \$11,440