



Little Acorns Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

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Little Acorns is a non-profit preschool started in September 2013 as a community outreach of Green Tree Church of the Brethren in Oaks, Pa. Though we are a Christian school, Little Acorns Preschool admits students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin.

Curriculum

Little Acorns offers traditional half-day preschool programs for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. Our curriculum supports the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and has been developed incorporating the recommendations of area school districts. We believe children come to the love of learning through play and hands-on experiences.

Educational Programs are 3 hours in length from 9:00 am – 12:00 noon. Daily activities include:

Center Time: Opportunity to explore seven different classroom play areas designed to strengthen skills in all developmental areas. Center areas include: Pretend play, Building, Sensory, Art and Writing, Math and Science Discovery, Games and Puzzles, Book Corner

Circle Time: Interactive time giving the children an opportunity to strengthen their use of language and listening skills. It includes activities such as exercise, finger plays, songs, and music appreciation. Opportunities for classroom jobs are provided.

Group Time: Large and small group instruction time incorporating language arts, math, fine and gross motor skills, science and/or social studies through various theme related activities.

Snack: Students share conversations with their peers while enjoying snacks.

Story: A time for children to strengthen listening comprehension skills while listening to theme related books and stories

Movement: Time to move and giggle while developing gross and fine motor skills. This is also a time where we work on those important social/emotional skills of getting along with peers, taking turns, and solving conflicts that come up during play. Little Acorns is fortunate to have a fenced playground, a covered pavilion, and lots of open space for outdoor play, as well as a large indoor gym facility available for use when the weather prevents us from getting outside.

Ways the preschool programs are enhanced...

Lunch Bunch: Lunch Bunch is an after school lunch and play group which offers music, cooking, science, crafts and/or stories while providing peer socialization from 12 noon – 1:15 pm.

Special Programs: Different events are scheduled throughout the year such as visits from the local fire company, guest readers, Perkiomen Valley Watershed Conservancy, SPCA, etc.

Admission Policies and Tuition Rates

Families may request a specific class. However, class assignments are never guaranteed. The director will determine class placement based on a variety of items (class size, personalities, teacher suggestions, etc.).

Preschool Program

Children should be 3 by **August 31st** of the year they are enrolling

Class is held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9:00-12:00

Class size is limited to 10 children. There is one teacher and one assistant conducting this class.

Tuition: \$353 per month (\$397 per month for 4-day program)

Pre-K Programs (4-5 Year olds)* These classes also offer a positive experience for those children who are age appropriate for Kindergarten but need a “gift of time.”

Children should be 4 by **August 31st** of the year they are enrolling

Pre-K Class is held Monday Through Thursday 9:00 – 1:15. Class size is limited to 14 children. There is one teacher and one assistant conducting each class.

Tuition: \$397 per month

Please Note: Tuition rates are based on an annual tuition, which is divided into 9 equal monthly payments. The fact that there will be holidays, inclement weather days, and absences due to illness has been calculated into the overall tuition and does not change the tuition rate for a single month.

Lunch Program

Our Pre-K students eat lunch at 12:00. Lunch is to be sent to school by the parents. We are not able to keep lunches refrigerated or to heat anything up so please plan accordingly. Make sure to include a beverage as we do not have a source of drinking water in the classrooms.

Enrollment Forms

The Director will provide several forms that are necessary for enrollment. All completed forms are due by **August 1st** and must be on file before the child begins attending classes. These include:

1. Registration Form
2. Child Health Summary/Immunization record (from Physician)
3. Emergency Form
4. Child information Form
5. Permission for Student Pick Up

6. Photo Release Form

It is necessary to keep Little Acorns Preschool informed of any changes in addresses or telephone numbers. It is also important to notify the director of any changes within the family unit and to provide copies of court orders.

Registration

Families may register by completing the Registration Form and submitting it along with the \$80 registration/activity fee. The registration/activity fee is non-refundable.

Payment Schedule

The first Tuition Payment is due August 1, 2024. Tuition is due one month in advance on the first day of each month, **August through April**. A late fee of **\$10** will be added to your account if your tuition is not paid by the 10th of each month. Payments can be made in the form of a check or cash (exact amounts only please). Checks should be made out to **"Little Acorns Preschool"** and be mailed to the school mailing address (be sure to include the box number-874) or you can give your payment directly to your teacher at dropoff or pickup. Cash payments should be in the exact amount due and put in an envelope marked with your child's name. **Please do not put tuition payments in your child's backpack.**

Withdrawal Policy

If you must withdraw from school, a 30-day written notice to the director is required. You will be responsible for the full 30 days of tuition from the date of the written notice.

Immunization and Health Records

The ***Health Care Summary*** and a copy of the Immunization Record must be completed and signed by your child's physician and returned to school within 60 days of starting school. All records must be current and must be updated when your child receives additional immunizations. If there is a medical reason for missing immunizations, we must have a signed statement from your doctor. If a parent opposes immunizations, we must have a notarized statement. The school reserves the right to refuse admission to a student who is not up to date on immunizations.

Arrival and Dismissal

Prompt arrival of your child for the start of class is appreciated. We are not able to take children any earlier than the scheduled class time. The doors will be open promptly at 9:00 am. Please wait with your child in the parking lot until the double doors to the school are open indicating you can walk your child to the building. The glass doors to the lobby area are locked during the school day. At pickup, parents should wait in the parking lot. Children will be called from the classroom to meet the individual picking them up. It is expected that children will be picked up on time. We do understand that circumstances

occur when people are unavoidably delayed, but this should be an exception not a common occurrence. We also ask that you please contact the school if you will be late picking up your child. Please do not pull your car up to the building entrance and make sure to walk your child to the doors.

Students will be released to a parent or an authorized adult. Families must complete the **Child Pick Up Form** prior to the first day of school, listing people authorized to pick up your child. A note or a phone call giving the teacher permission is required when someone not listed on your form is picking up your child.

Once a child has been released to a parent or guardian, the child ceases to be the responsibility of Little Acorns Preschool.

Unscheduled School Closings

Occasionally classes will be canceled due to inclement weather. Little Acorns Preschool follows the **Local School Districts** for weather-related closings. check the Little Acorns Preschool Facebook page for school closures. The director will also send out an email and Remind notification to all families regarding school closing. Please do not call the school to check on school closings.

Late openings due to weather may also affect Little Acorns Preschool. If we would need to delay opening you will be notified via e-mail and the school Facebook page. In the event of the school needing to close while in session, parents will be notified by Remind and will be asked to pick up their child.

First Aid

Little Acorns staff is first aid and CPR trained. In the event of any injury or illness, staff will administer first aid. If the staff decides it is an emergency situation, 911 will be contacted to provide emergency first aid. If necessary, the emergency medical service may transport your child to a medical facility of your choosing. A parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made. Staff will not transport children. All expenses related to an emergency are the parent/guardian's responsibility. The **Emergency Contact Form** must be completed prior to the first day of school.

Illness

When illness occurs, common sense and sensitivity to your child's needs will often provide the best basis for your decision. Children should not be sent to school – and will be sent home – if any of the following conditions are apparent:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing, sneezing and/or nose drainage

- Severe pain reported in the head or stomach
- Unidentified rashes
- Contagious diseases including, but not limited to: chicken pox, roseola, influenza
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye), until treated for at least 24 hours
- Throat infections, until treated for at least 24 hours
- Suspicion of impetigo, lice, ringworm or scabies until treated
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Loss of taste or smell

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you immediately to come and pick him/her up. **Please keep your contact phone numbers up to date on your enrollment form.** If your child will miss school for any reason please let us know via phone or email so we are not wondering and worrying about where your child is.

Communication

Family Orientation will be held before the beginning of the school year. Parents and children will be invited to take a tour of the classroom

Each month you will receive a newsletter. This is the primary communication between your child's teacher and you. It will list activities, sharing days, school closures and other important information. **Please read what your child brings home and keep it handy for quick reference.**

There will be one scheduled parent/teacher conference for our Pre-K students during the school year in January. Your child's progress will be shared at that time, along with a written report. A written progress report will also be issued at the end of the school year. Families are encouraged to contact the teacher at any point during the school year if questions or concerns arise.

Communication between the families and teachers is a major key to your child's success.

Snack

Please send your child to school with a spill-proof water bottle and snack. If your child stays for lunch, make sure your snack is packed **separately** from their lunch. We do not have a source of drinking water in the classroom. Your child's snack should be something that they can eat without assistance.

Birthday Celebrations

If you would like to send in a special treat for a snack on your child's birthday, please check with the classroom teacher to establish the best day to do this and check on allergy issues

that may be present in the classroom. We sing “Happy Birthday” to all students on the session closest to the child’s birthday. To protect the feelings of all children, the school staff will not distribute birthday party invitations unless there is an invitation for each child in the class.

Allergies

Families must notify staff in writing of any food, or life threatening, allergies. Please submit action plans created by your physician and any medication, which may need to be kept on hand in the event of an emergency.

Clothing

School Bag

Each child will need a school bag (large enough to contain a folder) to carry crafts, extra clothes, lunch box, paintings and other school information home from school. Please put your child’s name on their bag. A backpack or reusable tote bag works well.

Dress for Play

Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing that is okay to get dirty. Children are encouraged to participate in all activities. Please do not send your child in open-toed sandals or Crocs.

Weather permitting; we will have time outside each day. The amount of time spent outside will depend on the weather. Children will play outside in the winter, when appropriate, so please send in hats, mittens, etc.

Smocks will be available while painting, and washable paint and craft materials are utilized, however little people still get messy, hence it is best to send them to school in things that are okay to get dirty.

Please send in an extra change of clothing and underwear to be kept in your child’s classroom at all times. Please label ALL pieces of removable clothing and footwear.

Toileting

Students are not required to be toilet trained. Generally, children will not need to be changed during the duration of class. If the child has a bowel movement we will change them. ***If they are still in diapers or pull ups, please provide extra diapers or pull-ups that open on the sides and wipes in their backpack.*** We are happy to help as much as we can with toilet training. Again, once your child has transitioned to underwear,

please provide extra clothing in your child's backpack. **Children are not eligible to participate in Lunch Bunch until they are toilet trained.**

Behavior Guidance and Discipline

Every child has a right to physical and emotional safety. An important aspect of our classroom settings will be the prevention of problems by providing a safe, loving environment with developmentally appropriate activities and routines. The staff will encourage children to develop self-control by reinforcing and modeling appropriate behavior. Children will be guided through problem-solving and conflict resolution skills. They will be encouraged to talk about problems and conflicts when they occur and brainstorm possible solutions. When necessary, staff will intervene and offer suggestions for resolving conflicts or redirect problem behavior. Corporal punishment is NEVER used as a form of discipline.

If persistent challenging behavior continues, a conference will be set up between the parents, teacher and director, creating a plan of action to correct the challenging behavior. If attempts to correct the behavior are unsuccessful and progress has not been made, it may be an indication that the child is not ready for participation in a preschool setting. Little Acorns Preschool may require that a child be withdrawn from our program if the well-being of a child or classroom remains at risk after the staff has attempted strategies to improve the situation.

Medication

Little Acorns Preschool will not administer medication. Staff will give medication for emergency treatment only. Please administer antibiotics or over-the-counter medicines prior to coming to school. If your child requires an EpiPen for use in an emergency, you will need to have a form completed by your doctor and supply the EpiPen with the prescription attached.

Special Needs

Parents/Guardians are responsible for informing the preschool when their child has special medical concerns, conditions, needs or allergies so that Little Acorns Preschool can provide appropriate care and support. Parents will be asked to share the IFSP and/or IEP with their teacher and director. Due to the length of our day and classroom size, please arrange to have visits with Instructional Aides or other visitors from the IU at home whenever possible

Grievance Procedure

Should a situation arise that you, the parent/guardian, see as a problem or need, please notify your child's teacher. If the situation is not resolved to your satisfaction, or you feel it is a matter for the director, please contact the director.

Open and ongoing communication between parents and staff is essential to our school and programs and we encourage you to share your concerns with us.

Opportunities for Family Involvement

Parents/Guardians are welcome to come in during a session after setting up a date/time with the classroom teacher. We encourage parents/guardians to participate in any of the following ways:

- Reading a story
- Sharing information about their career or hobby with the children
- Sharing information about family and/or cultural traditions
- Coming to special family events scheduled throughout the year (Example: Year-End Celebration)
- Coming to parent-teacher conference
- Serving as a substitute classroom aide: parent volunteers may be asked to serve as substitute classroom aides in the event of a teacher or aide's absence. A \$20 tuition credit will apply for each day the parent substitutes. If you serve as a substitute you must be willing to submit to PA child abuse and criminal clearances. Little Acorns will cover this expense. Please see the director for more information if you are interested in serving in this way.