



# Parent Handbook

## Come Grow with Us

2800 4th Avenue North  
Billings, MT 59101  
(406) 245-1311

[www.littleseedsbillings.org](http://www.littleseedsbillings.org)

Revised 2025

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>WELCOME.....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE .....</b>                               | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>OFFICE INFORMATION .....</b>                                 | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>LITTLE SEEDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....</b>                     | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>PARKING.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>ATTENDANCE.....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| DROP OFF .....  | 5         |
| PICK UP .....   | 5         |
| VACATION AND SICK DAY POLICY .....                              | 5         |
| HOURS AND HOLIDAYS.....   | 5         |
| <b>LITTLE SEEDS FEES.....</b>                                   | <b>5</b>  |
| OVERTIME CHARGES .....  | 6         |
| PAYMENT.....  | 6         |
| SCHOLARSHIPS .....  | 7         |
| <b>SPECIAL NEEDS .....</b>                                      | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>HARASSMENT/NON-DISCRIMINATION .....</b>                      | <b>7</b>  |
| SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....  | 8         |
| RECOURSE.....   | 8         |
| <b>PARENT INVOLVEMENT .....</b>                                 | <b>9</b>  |
| PARENT GRIEVANCES.....  | 9         |
| PARENT VISITATION.....  | 9         |
| GUEST VISITATION .....  | 9         |
| <b>HEALTH AND SAFETY .....</b>                                  | <b>10</b> |
| ILLNESS .....   | 10        |
| MEDICATION .....  | 10        |
| EMERGENCIES .....   | 11        |
| NUTRITION .....   | 11        |
| INFANT/TODDLER SAFE SLEEP POLICY .....                          | 12        |
| <b>CHILDREN’S BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE .....</b>                       | <b>13</b> |
| <b>CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS.....</b>                            | <b>14</b> |
| <b>LITTLE SEEDS CURRICULUM .....</b>                            | <b>15</b> |
| LITTLE SEEDS – 2 YEARS AND UP .....                             | 16        |
| LITTLE SEEDS – UNDER AGE 2 .....                                | 20        |
| <b>DISCHARGE FROM LITTLE SEEDS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER .....</b> | <b>21</b> |
| <b>PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....</b>                              | <b>22</b> |

## Welcome

Thank you for choosing Little Seeds. We look forward to the opportunity to participate in your child's growth and development.

This handbook provides information about our policies and procedures. Please set aside some time to become familiar with this handbook. It will be helpful in answering many questions that arise. We recognize, however, that no handbook can answer every question. If you do not find an answer to your particular question in this handbook, or if you would like a particular policy or procedure clarified, please feel free to ask the Director or Assistant Director. We will be glad to help you answer every question.

## Statement of Purpose

*Little Seeds Early Childhood Center* provides a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate program which fosters active learning, support for the whole child, and a child-friendly environment.

We foster positive feelings of self-worth as each child discovers the value of their unique individuality.

We provide a stimulating environment and varied activities to aid the child in desirable growth and development of his/her language, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities.

- We encourage opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility to self and to others.
- We provide guidance to develop constructive non-violent methods for resolving conflicts.
- We provide opportunities to learn through play experience.
- We provide opportunities for creating and wondering.
- We embrace teamwork.
- We respect and support families.
- We respect and appreciate diversity.
- We actively listen and seek to understand.
- We communicate openly and productively.
- We use resources creatively and responsibly.

*Little Seeds Early Childhood Center* staff will strive to provide the highest quality childcare and an educational service that encourages each child's development, while assuring our parents/guardians' peace of mind in the care and service we render.

Little Seeds is a state licensed, not-for-profit center. Little Seeds enrolls children without regard to gender, race, national origin, economic or religious background.

## Office Information

The Little Seeds' phone number is 406-245-1311. Messages can be left on the answering machine outside of office hours.

The Little Seeds office hours are from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, or any time by appointment.

The main entrance to Little Seeds is on Broadway Avenue and is equipped with a punch code entry. The code will be changed at times for security reasons. You will be notified in advance of any change in the code and be given a new code card in your mailbox. If you cannot get inside, please call the Little Seeds office.

Each family will receive notifications in their child's cubby and through an account on our computer sign in. Please check your mail at least once per week and read ProCare messages. All bills and notes will be placed in these cubbies or on ProCare.

Little Seeds does not provide transportation to or from the Center. Children must be brought into the building. Staff members are not allowed to receive children outside of the building.

## Little Seeds Board of Directors

The Little Seeds Board develops and oversees the policies and programs for young children at this center. You may contact the board at [littleseedsboard@hotmail.com](mailto:littleseedsboard@hotmail.com).

## Parking

Parents/guardians and children will enter Little Seeds through the main doors on 28th Street (Broadway) and use the interior steps to their classrooms. Parents/guardians may park in the drop off spaces available at this location while taking children to and picking children up from classrooms.

## Attendance

We request that you drop off your child no later than 10:00 a.m. as most of our classes have field trips and other activities that your child/children may miss/be late for otherwise. We will not accept drop off past 10:00 a.m. unless notified ahead of time as it affects the classroom teachers and our center's cook.

For days that will not be routine for you and your child/children, please plan to inform your teachers of planned absences, late drop-offs, and early pickups in advance. Please notify the office no later than 9:00 a.m. of any unplanned absences or tardiness.

We ask for your cooperation with our attendance policy in order to:

- Enable Little Seeds to provide accurate staffing with consistency, ensuring sufficient staffing ratios in each room with consideration for staff needs (planned vacation, appointments, sickness, unexpected absence, etc.).

- Ensure an accurate count for meals and snacks so that there is enough food for each child with minimal waste.
- Enable staff to plan to minimize disruptions with mealtimes, naps, field trip considerations, etc.

### **Drop Off**

Please ensure that there is a teacher in the room when your child is dropped off. This is also an opportunity to share any updates or concerns you may have regarding your child. Please leave coats, hats, boots, and other necessities in their cubby.

### **Pick Up**

Please make sure to let the teacher know you are picking up your child. At the end of the day, they may be in a different classroom with different teachers. Please check their cubby for any notices or for clothes that need to be washed.

### **Vacation and Sick Day Policy**

We ask that parents/guardians call the office directly (not just their child's/children's teacher) when their child is sick and will not be attending the center for the day so we can plan for meals.

Three (3) weeks of vacation or sick leave and eight (8) holidays have already been accounted for in the flat fee total. Accordingly, the parent/guardian will not see an adjustment in the total bill for the month in the event of a vacation or a sick day.

### **Hours and Holidays**

Little Seeds is open year-round, Monday - Friday from 6:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Little Seeds will be CLOSED on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If the holidays land on a Saturday or a Sunday, we will be closed the Friday before or Monday after. You will receive information if the center closes at any other time.

### **Little Seeds Fees**

There is a nonrefundable \$150 per child registration fee when you enroll. Little Seeds also has an annual Facility Fee of \$100, assigned to every child's bill in September. This covers classroom expenses and annual office paperwork.

Little Seeds offers a monthly flat fee for all classrooms. Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, which are posted on our monthly menus, as well as standard baby foods and Sam's Club brand of formula are included in the flat fee at no additional charge.

In June of each year Little Seeds will send out enrollment contracts. This will be a contract from you stating the days and times that the child will regularly be attending Little Seeds for the next school year. You will also be given a new emergency contact form and any other MT Childcare Licensing forms that need to be updated annually.

The following fee schedule is based on 238 days in a year (261 working days per year – 3 weeks (15 days) vacation/sick leave – 8 holidays). Little Seeds is a full- time center only.

**Infants, Pre-Toddlers (6 months-18 months)**

- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$1025.00** (Updated 5/9/25)
- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$1050.00** (As of 10/1/25)

**Toddlers**

- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$900.00** (Updated 5/9/25)
- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$925.00** (As of 10/1/25)

**2/3 Room & 3/4 Room**

- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$825.00** (Updated 5/9/25)
- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$850.00** (As of 10/1/25)

**Pre-K Room**

- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$800.00** (Updated 5/9/25)
- Full Time Monthly Fee **\$825.00** (As of 10/1/25)

**Sibling Discount**

- 2 or More Children **\$50** discount per month

**Overtime Charges**

An overtime charge of \$20.00 per child will be made for any time your child is at Little Seeds past 6:00 p.m. This will go up by \$10.00 per child for every 15 minutes more that your child is not picked up.

**Payment**

Please make checks payable to Little Seeds. All checks are to be given to the Director or Assistant Director, dropped in the locked drop box located next to the office, or mailed to the center. After hours, please place checks in the locked drop box. Please do not send checks with your children or give them to the teachers.

If a check is returned by your bank there will be a \$25 handling fee assessed to your bill. You will be assessed a \$25 charge for a second check that is returned by your bank, plus any bank fees charged by the bank. More than two returned checks will result in a review by the Little Seeds Executive Board.

*A two-week notice will need to be given to the center when the child will no longer be attending. If the center does not receive a two-week notice, the family will not have any of their fee payment refunded. If you have not paid, you will be billed for the two weeks.*

Periodically may become necessary to increase fees to keep up with expenses and salaries. In the event it becomes necessary to do so, Little Seeds will give parents/guardians notice of any increase in fees 60 days before the new rates go into effect.

Prepayments for contracted services are due on the 1st day of each month. Payments not received by the 10th of the month will be assessed a \$10 late charge. If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, the parents/guardians will be asked to keep the child home until the bill is paid in full. If payment is not received within 30 days after the original payment due date (the 10th of the month), your child will be removed from the center and your bill will go to collection.

### **Scholarships**

Little Seeds accepts Best Beginnings scholarships through the HRDC.

The Best Beginnings program requires certain attendance thresholds for full reimbursement of Daycare tuition. If a family does not meet the required attendance threshold necessary i to cover the monthly tuition costs for their child for any month, the family will be required to pay the difference in the amount due to Little Seeds for that month.

### **Special Needs**

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the state or local agency where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

### **Harassment/Non-discrimination**

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Little Seeds will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Such harassment may include, for example, jokes about another person's protected status, and/or kidding, teasing, or practical jokes directed at a person based on his or her protected status.

This policy applies to conduct occurring in Little Seeds' place of business. Further, these prohibitions apply not only to the spoken or written word but also to e-mail, text messages, and social media posts.

The prohibited conduct also includes, but is not limited to:

- Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening, use of hate words (such as the n-word), hostile, offensive, aggressive, or intimidating acts that are based on a person's protected status.
- Epithets, slurs, rude or offensive comments not based on a protected status but intended to belittle, intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass another.
- Written or graphic material circulated within or posted within the workplace, on company time or using company equipment by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites, etc., that shows hostility toward a person or group because of their protected status.

The harassment policy applies to social media posts, tweets, etc., that are about or may be seen by other employees, customers, clients, competitors, etc.

## **Sexual Harassment**

All Little Seeds employees, other workers, and representatives (including parents/guardians and visitors) are prohibited from sexually harassing employees and other covered persons based on that individual's sex or gender. Sexual harassment may include subtle and not so subtle behaviors, may be directed towards individuals of the same or different gender, and may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing," "practical jokes," jokes about obscene printed or visual material, staring, leering or whistling, insulting or obscene comments or gestures and physical contact such as patting, pinching or brushing against another person's body.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is implicitly or explicitly made a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the individual; or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Prohibited Sexual harassment also includes, but is not limited to:

- Harassment directed toward a person because of gender.
- Propositions or pressure to engage in sexual activity.
- Sexual assault.
- Display of magazines, books, or pictures with a sexual connotation; and
- Any harassing behavior, whether or not sexual in nature, directed toward a person because of the person's gender, including, but not limited to, hazing employees working in nontraditional work environments.

## **Recourse**

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:



- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Parents/guardians are expected to report all cases of harassment or discrimination to the Executive Director of Little Seeds immediately.

If a parent/guardian or visitor is accused of harassment, the Executive Director will conduct an investigation and take appropriate action, up to dismissing the family from attending Little Seeds Early Childcare Center.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parents/guardians are welcome to share ideas and concerns concerning their child with the Executive Director and staff. Parents/guardians may request a parent-teacher conference to discuss any concerns. We encourage parents/guardians to ask questions in order to become informed about the policies and procedures of the center. Conferences may be scheduled with the child's teacher and/or the Director at the parent's written request. Social and educational events are scheduled throughout the year to encourage staff and parent/guardian interaction.

## **Parent Grievances**

When a parent/guardian has a grievance or challenge with a Little Seeds teacher, they are asked to try to resolve it directly with the teacher. If that is not possible, the concern should be brought directly to the Executive Director, who will take appropriate action to address the situation or concern.

## **Parent Visitation**

You are always welcome to visit the classrooms. Since the teacher's first responsibility is to the children, do not expect a conference while classes are in session; the Director, however, is available to discuss any problems, concerns, or joys you may have. Conference schedules can be arranged between teachers and parents/guardians at mutually convenient times during the year.

Changes at home can affect a child's behavior at Little Seeds. Please share with us any information which will make us more sensitive to your child's needs.

## **Guest Visitation**

Parents/guardians may have approved pick up contacts in their profile. Please notify the teacher and Executive Director if an unfamiliar person will be in the center to help with pick up or drop off. They must have a photo ID file or have come in with the parents/guardians in advance to be approved to pick up or visit a child at the center. Unknown guests will be asked to leave the center immediately.

## Health and Safety

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to the staff at Little Seeds. With enrollment, you must file the State of Montana Certificate of Immunization with us. In addition, parents/guardians of children under the age of 24 months will be required to maintain a Physical Exam Verification form, updated regularly by their physician. These will be kept on file at the center.

### Illness

If any symptoms of illness, such as the flu or a communicable disease, appear during the day. The office will contact you at that time and will ask that you pick your child up. We will do our best to separate your child from others if we are able while we await your arrival.

According to the Montana Department of Public Health, you must keep your child home if he/she has any of the following:

- a fever or has had one in the previous 24 hours.
- a heavy nasal discharge.
- a constant cough.
- is fussy, cranky, or generally out of sorts.
- diarrhea or has had it in the previous 24 hours.
- symptoms of a possible communicable disease - usually sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, and abdominal pain, plus a fever.

It is Little Seeds' policy for any sibling of a sick child to also remain at home during this time to avoid passing the sickness to other classrooms and children at the center.

If a child is suspected of having head lice, the Director will notify the parent/guardian and the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. The child may return three (3) to five (5) days after the first treatment for head lice and/or as soon as no lice or nits are present. The length of the child's absence will be determined by the Director on a case-by-case basis.

It is necessary to be adequately staffed for all of the children who are scheduled, whether they are present or not. If your child is ill or will not be attending for any reason, please notify us by 10:00 a.m.

Please notify the center immediately if your child does have a communicable disease. Little Seeds will assume the responsibility of notifying families of children who might have been exposed at the center. A note or a call from the doctor's office releasing the child to return to the center is necessary in these cases.

### Medication

Little Seeds' staff will administer prescribed or over-the-counter medication. A *Permission to Administer Medication* form must be completed when a parent/guardian brings in any medicine. All medicine must be in the original container. This includes, but is not limited to, diaper creams and sunscreen lotions. Each medication form must have the following information in its entirety:

- child's full name.

- date(s) medication is to be administered.
- time(s) medication is to be administered.
- amount to be administered; and
- must be signed and dated by parent/guardian

## **Emergencies**

Our staff is concerned with the safety of your child. We teach children how to use toys and equipment safely, how to cross streets, safety in hallways, and how to respond if approached by a stranger. Our rules are based on good safety practices. Your support of this expected behavior will reinforce your child's learning and respect for safety rules.

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

If your child becomes injured at Little Seed their injuries will be assessed by staff and you may be called to let you know of their injuries or if medical assistance is necessary. First Aid will be provided to any child consistent with recommendations from the American Red Cross.

These policies include but are not limited to procedures for handling medical emergencies, including calling the Emergency Montana Poison Control Center at 1(800) 222-1222 when a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substance. Emergency Medical Services may also be called depending on the severity of injuries sustained.

In case of a medical emergency the Little Seeds' staff will notify the office and notify the emergency contact listed on the child's emergency form. 9-1-1 will be called if necessary. Children will not be released to anyone other than the custodial parent/guardian unless we are notified verbally or in writing each time.

## **Nutrition**

Nutrition is an important part of good health. Children need well-balanced meals in order to meet their daily energy needs and to help them build strong bodies and minds.

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack will be provided to all children. These meals will be at no additional charge because of our participation in the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences. This program provides partial reimbursement to Little Seeds for meals that meet certain nutritional requirements. Due to Little Seeds' participation in the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program, which accommodates food allergies, outside foods are not allowed in the center for scheduled meals. To accommodate special dietary needs, the Montana CACFP requires a Special Meals and Accommodations Form to be on file and updated annually. Special treats are allowed to be brought into the center to celebrate birthdays; however, Little Seeds is a peanut/nut free facility.

Parents/guardians of enrolled children will be asked to fill out Family Income Verification Forms. These are kept confidential and are on file at the center. The information on these forms will determine the rates at which the center is reimbursed.

### **Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby for whom no cause of death can be determined based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where the baby died, and a review of the baby's clinical history. Childcare providers can maintain safer sleep environments for babies that help lower the chances of SIDS. Montana law requires that childcare providers caring for children 24 (twenty-four) months of age or younger implement a safe sleep policy, share this information with parents/guardians, and participate in training. In the belief that proactive steps can be taken to lower the risks of SIDS in child care and that parents/guardians and child care providers can work together to keep babies safer while they sleep, *Little Seeds Early Childhood Center, Inc.* will practice the following safe sleep policy:

### **Safe Sleep Practices**

- 1) All employees working in the Infant Room or employees who may potentially work in the Infant Room will receive training on the infant Safe Sleep Policy.
- 2) Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep unless there is a signed sleep position medical waiver on file. A waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib and the waiver filed in the infant's file.
- 3) The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be placed on their back to sleep, but when babies can easily turn over from the back to the stomach, they can be allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- 4) The center will follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics. However, childcare staff can further discuss with the parents/guardians how to address circumstances when the baby turns onto their stomach or side.
- 5) Visually checking sleeping Infants. Sleeping infants will be checked every 15-20 minutes by assigned employees, who will be especially alert to monitoring a sleeping infant during the first weeks that the infant is in childcare and will:
  - Check to see if the infant's skin color is normal, watch the rise and fall of the chest to observe breathing, and look to see if the infant is sleeping soundly.
  - Check the infant for signs of overheating, including flushed skin color, body temperature by touch, and restlessness.
- 6) Steps will be taken to keep babies from getting too warm or overheating by regulating the room temperature, avoiding excess bedding, and not over-dressing or overwrapping the baby.

### **Safe Sleep Environment**

- 1) Room temperature will be kept between 68-75°F and a thermometer will be kept in the Infant Room.
- 2) Infants' heads will not be covered with blankets or bedding. Infants' cribs will not be covered with blankets or bedding. A sleep sack may be used instead of a blanket.
- 3) No loose bedding, pillows, bumper pads, etc., will be used in cribs. Any infant blankets will be tucked in at the foot of the crib and along the sides of the crib mattress.

- 4) Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping. Pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep.
- 5) A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used.
- 6) Only one infant will be in a crib at a time. The exception to this is during evacuation in an emergency or in practice drills.
- 7) No smoking is permitted in the Infant Room or on the premises.
- 8) All parents/guardians of infants cared for in the Infant Room will receive a written copy of the Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep Policy before enrollment.
- 9) To promote healthy development, awake infants will be given supervised "tummy time" for exercise and for play.

## Children's Behavior Guidance

We feel that it is important to provide a positive, safe environment for your child. Below are guidelines for behavior that we use at Little Seeds.

- Ensure that each child is provided with a positive role model of acceptable behavior.
- Tailor discipline to the developmental level of the child.
- Redirect children and groups away from problems and toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
- Encourage children to be responsible for their behavior through choices and problem solving.
- Protect the safety of children and staff persons.
- Provide immediate and direct age-appropriate related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

*\*\*Little Seeds staff does not in any way endorse or use any form of negative discipline. Corporal punishment will not be used at Little Seeds.*

At Little Seeds we realize that children have many and diverse needs, and that not all settings work for all children. Therefore, we reserve the right to remove a child from the center at any time that, in our judgment, his/her, the staff's, or other children's safety is being compromised.

If it does become necessary to discuss your child's behavior, you will be asked to attend an informal meeting with the Director and possibly the child's teacher. Please realize that this is a team effort to provide your child with the best possible placement. We will work with you as a team to problem solve for the child's best interests.

### **Biting**

Although biting isn't abnormal in that one out of every ten toddlers and two-year-olds does it, it is a very disturbing and potentially harmful behavior that the staff discourages from the start. Staff will use positive discipline, offering the child an alternative to biting (biter toy, wet washcloth, alternative to feelings). If the child bites another child or teacher three or more times in a day, they will be asked to leave for the rest of the day. We will also set up a conference with the teacher,

parents/guardians, and Director to assess the situation and problem solve. Little Seeds approaches each child on an individual basis. In some instances, a child may be removed from the center.

### **Weapons/Violent Play**

There is a strict policy of not allowing any weapon play at Little Seeds. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection is used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If a child brings an actual weapon including, but not limited to, a gun, knife, or other weapon to Little Seeds, the weapon will be confiscated, and the parents/guardians of the child will be called in immediately. Bringing a weapon to Little Seeds is grounds for immediate termination from the center. If a child brings a toy weapon to Little Seeds, it will be placed out of sight and sent home on the same day with a note explaining the policy.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

### **Clothing and Possessions**

An extra set of clothing must be kept in each child's cubby. Please make sure that these are seasonal. If your child is not toilet trained, please send diapers, wipes, and rash cream.

Little Seeds is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged property. Little Seeds does not launder personal belongings. These are to be taken home each Friday to be laundered at home and returned at the start of the next week.

Please mark the inside of any removable clothing items (jackets, sweaters, boots) with your child's name. Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. We will go outside whenever possible, so please dress children accordingly.

Except for toys that are needed in the early days of attendance to ease transition worries, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home. If an item is brought to school, we cannot be responsible for it. It must be shared and must have the child's name on it. A book that may be interesting to all children may be brought and shared with the class, but we ask that it be left for several days.

Guns, ropes, knives, war toys, and other toys that encourage rough and violent play are not permitted at the center.

Comfort toys: bears, blankets, and so forth may be brought as needed. Please store these items in the child's cubby.

Pets, interesting nature items, and many other things can be welcome additions to our classroom. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing anything. Permission slips are required from all parents/guardians of children in the classroom prior to bringing in a pet.

## **Little Seeds Curriculum**

We encourage the development of each child's unique talents and capabilities in a safe, happy, nurturing environment. In all classrooms, a center-based, thematic approach is used to address the physical, social/emotional, academic, sensory, and personal needs of the children we serve. Centers that are typically found in early childhood classrooms include library, writing, dramatic play, discovery, and art. Throughout the center we strive to create an experiential approach to learning that allows each child to construct his or her own understanding of the world.

Our center cares for ages 6 weeks through age 5, and when they are ready for kindergarten (if a child is not ready, the parents/guardians should communicate with the center, see page 18 under *Preschool*). In our preschool classrooms, teachers create weekly lesson plans that target development in the following areas: Social/Emotional, Physical, Language, Science/Math, and Personal Skills. The activities and centers within the 3/4 classroom are designed to prepare students for active participation in the Preschool classroom, while Preschool events boost children's school-readiness skills. Listed below are sample objectives from each of the curricular areas:

### **Social/Emotional Development**

- Expresses self verbally
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults
- Works independently
- Develops solutions for problems
- Takes turns and shares
- Maintains self-control

### **Physical Development**

- Runs, marches, jumps, hops
- Uses scissors, pencils, and glue
- Completes simple puzzles
- Throws and catches a ball
- Writes letters and numbers

### **Language Development**

- Recognizes and generates rhyme
- Understands concepts of print
- Knows letter names
- Recognizes and generates speech sounds
- Understands spatial relationships
- Experiences a wide variety of music and art

### **Science/Math Development**

- Explores unknown concepts

- Identifies numbers in print
- Counts by rote
- Knows colors and shapes

### **Personal Skills Development**

- Takes responsibility for belongings
- Assists with classroom chores
- Uses table manners
- Knows personal information
- Buttons, zips, ties, snaps

### **Spiritual**

- Learn loving, respectful, and caring ways to relate to each other.
- Makes safe choices and be allowed to explore own creativity.
- Learns forgiveness so children can forgive themselves and others, to learn confidence so they can try again.

Please feel free to visit with the Little Seeds' staff if you have further questions regarding your child's educational needs.

### **Little Seeds – 2 years and up**

This is a time of rapid growth and development. Little Seeds uses developmentally and age-appropriate learning activities for children. While our curriculum is designed keeping in mind the physical and intellectual developmental characteristics of 2-to-5-year-olds, there are certain milestones that most preschoolers should achieve before they begin kindergarten.

The curriculum includes child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively.

### **Preparation for Beginning Days**

To help your child have a happy first day, we would like to suggest the following:

- Talk about Little Seeds in a positive way. Name specific activities to which your child can look forward and tell your child their new teachers' names.
- Plan your schedule so that your child can be rested, unhurried, and relaxed the first morning.
- Expect your child to go to Little Seeds happily and to have a good time. Your own insecurity will be sensed quickly.

### **Learning Centers**

Our center is equipped with learning centers which will include differing activities as the weekly themes are presented.



Children have free choice and are encouraged to participate in a variety of centers.

Learning centers may include the following:

- block and truck center
- home living center
- creative arts book corner
- science and nature music
- woodworking sand and water play
- manipulative toys seasonal activity
- computer occupational manipulatives

### **Schedule**

Children need a routine to follow, and we strive to balance active and quiet times. The actual time allotted to an activity may vary, but the order in which things are done is important because it gives children a feeling of security and independence.

Classroom activities revolve around weekly and monthly themes. Parents/guardians receive a monthly calendar outlining these plans.

Outdoor activity is incorporated into the daily schedule as the weather permits.

The schedule for indoor and outdoor activities will include the following (times vary with each age group; specific schedules will be available from each teacher):

- **Breakfast:** 8 to 9 am
- **Creative free play:** 9 to 10 am and 3 to 3:30 pm – free choice, time of social interaction, crafts, learning centers
- **Conversation time:** ½ an hour in the morning, includes sharing ideas, experiences, seasonal interests, experiment
- **Lunch:** 11 am to 12:30 pm
- **Snack time:** 2:45 to 3:30 pm – milk or 100% juice and a wide variety of nutritious foods, good conversation and manners
- **Active period:** one hour in the morning and 4 to 5 pm. Includes any of the following: games, rhythms, songs, creative expression, dramatic interpretation; field trips; gym; indoor or outdoor playground
- **Quiet time:** Any of the following: presentation by outside resource person, stories, finger plays, group discussion, show and tell, and songs.

### **Naps and Quiet Time**

All children will rest on mats during the designated time (12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.). Older children who "no longer need a nap" will rest on a mat for 40 minutes and then will have planned quiet activities separate from the resting children. Mats will be available for sale in the office; otherwise, you will need to provide a cover and blanket for your child that will be sent home weekly to be washed and returned.

## **Multimedia**

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select movie, television, and computer game titles based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show or to play computer games. All multimedia must have a rating of G, PG, or E and must possess an educational theme. Children are limited to the amount of multimedia used or viewed:

- Televised programs are limited to transitioning into/out of naptime in the 2/3 room.
- Movies are shown occasionally in the 3/4 and Preschool rooms and are rated G or PG.
- Occasional computer usage is incorporated into the Preschool curriculum.

## **Birthdays**

We celebrate birthdays during the snack period. You may supply a treat on your child's birthday. In keeping with our nutritional guidelines, we suggest you choose a nutritious snack for birthday treats. Arrangements for treats should be discussed in advance with your child's teacher. Special recognition will be given to the birthday child. Please do not send favors or gifts.

## **Classrooms**

### **Preschool (4–5-year-olds)**

*\*\*Little Seeds typically goes through age 5, when children are eligible for kindergarten. Students eligible for kindergarten will participate in graduation and end enrollment in our center that August. Any family choosing to NOT start elementary school will be required to receive a special exemption from the Board of Directors. The exemption request must be filed by July 1st. Exemptions will be only given for a maximum of a one-year period and will immediately expire if the child reaches the compulsory age to attend elementary school.*

### **Expectations**

- Child must be at least 4 years old
- Children are trying to carry on conversations
- Can ask and answer questions
- Has a longer attention span
- Can speak clearly
- Knows colors
- Says ABC's & recognizes some letters and numbers
- Recognizes name, recognize shapes
- Can state how they feel (happy, sad)
- Can dress self
- Plays cooperatively
- Can fold paper & trace, hold pencil, use scissors
- Uses the toilet independently

### **Curriculum:**

- Language Arts:

Patterns, sequence, comparisons, draw people with body parts, imaginary play, speak in complete sentences, understand now, then, future, size, sing familiar songs, tell a story, and rhyming words

- Self-Concept:

Body parts, empathy towards others, weather words and appropriate clothing

- Math:

1-10 one on one correspondence, simple addition, and classifying

- Large and Small Motor Skills:

Catch, throw, bounce, and kick ball. Walk heel to toe, balance on one foot, string beads, small puzzles, and dot-to-dot

### **3–4-year Olds**

#### Expectations

- Has to be potty trained and start to wipe independently (we will help by coaching, and we suggest providing flushable wipes)
- Must be at least or almost 3 years old
- Be able to play & socialize with other children
- Be able to follow directions
- Child needs to be socially, emotionally, developmentally, and academically ready for this class.

#### Curriculum:

- Learn right left
- Count to 20, recognize and write numbers 1-10, count objects to 10
- Know colors and shapes
- Recognize Name and be trying to write name.
- Traces words
- Hold pencils, scissors, and crayons correctly
- Able to verbalize name, address, phone number, and birthday
- Use 8-10 words in a sentence
- Create a story by looking at a picture or relate what they did the night before
- Will learn cognitive, social, language, science, math, large and small motor skills for their age level

### **2-3 Year Olds**

#### Expectations

- Has to be 2 on day they finish their transition
- Feed self with utensils and drinks from covered cup
- Sits in chair for meals and activities
- No drinking bottles and no pacifiers

### Curriculum

- Singing alphabet
- Counting to 20
- Shapes & colors
- Small motor skills (coloring, painting, scribbling)
- Large motor skills (kicking, throwing, slides, climbing)
- Listening skills and focusing on projects
- Following directions
- Singing songs, finger plays, stories, dancing

### **Little Seeds – Under Age 2**

According to state licensing requirements for centers, all children under the age of two (2) years must be in a separate area from older children.

Infants remain in the Infant room for the day, except for occasional outside trips in a stroller, and while transitioning to the pre-toddler room. Toddlers have additional opportunities for activities outside their room. After children have their second birthday, they will join the next age group.

### **Schedules**

Infants will be on their own individual schedules as discussed between parent(s) and caregivers. A *Daily Schedule for Infants* form, completed by parents/guardians, will be the posted guideline. Each day, parents/guardians will receive a *Daily Report for Infants* form which the caregivers have completed.

All infants will have opportunities each day for freedom of movement. An infant who is awake will have individual personal contact and attention (held, rocked, talked to, and played with) on a regular basis. Playpens, walkers, and swings will be used on a limited basis.

### **Classrooms**

#### **Toddlers (16 months-2 years)**

##### Expectations

- At least 16 months old by the time they finish their transition
- Walking
- Attempting to eat with a spoon
- Able to sit in a chair to eat
- Off the bottle and using a pacifier only at nap

##### Curriculum:

- Table manners-sitting at table and using utensils
- Small and large motor skills.
- Use paints, colors, markers, building blocks
- Kicking balls, jumping, and running

- Using words to express themselves and repeat words, colors and animals etc.
- Read books, sing songs and dance to music.

### **Per-Toddlers (9-18 months)**

#### Expectations

- Starting to transition off the bottle when they turn one
- Starting to decrease the use of the pacifier. Try to give it to them only at nap time.
- Early-stage crawling and mobility

#### Curriculum:

- Art, walks, large motor room and playground.
- Age-appropriate toys
- Listening to music and dancing, singing, reading books,
- Small and large motor skills

### **Infants (6 weeks - 9 months)**

*\*We love our infants and spend time with them to keep them safe and interactive in our space. We listen to music and play, sing and rest.*

## **Discharge from Little Seeds Early Childhood Center**

Families may be asked to leave Little Seeds Early Childhood center if they do not follow Little Seeds' policies as listed in this Parent Manual. For minor offenses, they may receive a warning, but more severe offenses such as discrimination, harassment, or overdue payment may result in immediate discharge.

## Parent Acknowledgment

Please read the Parent Policy Handbook, sign this page and return it to the Little Seeds office.

I/We have read, acknowledge and agree to *Little Seeds Early Childhood Center, Inc.* Parent Policy Handbook. Please sign and return it to office.

Mother Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Father Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Little Seeds reserves the right to change and /or modify any of these policies giving you, the parent(s) thirty (30) days advance notice.