

Little Friends 3-5 Years

PARENT HANDBOOK

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In Little Friends our goals for young children are:

- To learn through active involvement with people, materials, events and ideas
- To become independent, responsible and confident- ready for school and ready for life
- To learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk with others about what they have done and what they have learned
- To gain knowledge and skills in important academic, social and physical areas

Children's interests and choices are at the heart of our program. They construct their own knowledge through interactions with the world and the people around them. Children take the first step in the learning process by making choices and following through on their plans and decisions. Teachers offer physical, emotional and intellectual support. In active learning settings, adults expand children's thinking with diverse materials and nurturing interactions rather than sample worksheets and directions. Our curriculum is Reggio and Highscope inspired with a focus on the natural world.

<https://highscope.org/>

<https://www.reggiochildren.it/identita/reggio-emilia-approach/?lang=en>

Teacher/Child Interactions

Shared control is central to how the teachers and children interact. Even when activities are planned by teachers around specific concepts, teachers encourage children's initiatives and choices. While teachers may look for opportunities to scaffold children's learning by introducing a new idea or appropriate vocabulary, they stay within the context of the children's play goals.

- Teachers look for natural openings in children's play and then join the child or children at their physical level.
- Teachers converse as partners with children; looking for opportunities for conversations with them about the activities they are engaged in thus allowing the dialog to continue without pressuring the child for a response.
- Teachers use encouragement instead of praise. Rather than statements that evaluate or judge, adults make objective, specific comments that encourage children to expand their descriptive language and think about what they are doing.
- Teachers encourage children's problem solving. Whenever possible, adults encourage children to solve problems for themselves. While adults could often solve the problem more easily by taking over, the goal is for children to develop their own problem-solving abilities through trial and error. When children have social conflicts, adults stay nearby to be ready to offer support as needed (but intervene immediately to stop hurtful words or actions). When necessary, adults use conflict resolution strategies to help children find a solution to their problem.

Steps to Conflict Resolution / Problem Solving

- Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. Place yourself between the children, on their level; use a calm voice and gentle touch; remain neutral rather than take sides.
- Acknowledge children's feelings. Say something simple such as "You look really upset;" let children know you need to hold any object in question.
- Gather information. Ask "What's the problem?" Do not ask "why" questions as young children focus on that what the problem is rather than understanding the reasons behind it.
- Restate the problem: "So the problem is..." Use and extend the children's vocabulary, substituting neutral words for hurtful or judgmental ones (such as "stupid") if needed.
- Ask for solutions and choose one together. Ask "What can we do to solve this problem?" Encourage children to think of a solution but offer options if the children are unable to at first.
- Be prepared to give follow-up support. Acknowledge children's accomplishments, e.g., "You solved the problem!" Stay nearby in case anyone is not happy with the solution and the process needs repeating.

Adults respect children's ideas for solving problems, even if the options they offer don't seem fair to adults. What's important is that children agree on the solution and see themselves as competent problem-solvers.

THE DAILY ROUTINE

Following a consistent routine day after day gives children the sense of security they need to make choices and take risks, which opens the door to exciting learning opportunities. There is a consistent framework for the day that provides a balanced variety of educational experiences. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small- and large- group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. Children are able to make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children. During open ended exploration time children make plans about what they would like to do (the area to visit, materials to use, and friends to play with) they have ample time to carry out their plans and/or shift to new activities that interest them. Adults participate as partners in play and reflect with children about their experiences.

We ask that parents engage with their children when they come in each morning by asking them to sign themselves in on the sign in/out wall. This allows each child to actively participate in starting their day at school.



Little Friends Daily Routine

7:30 am Centre Opens/Drop-off/Sign in

Open Ended Exploration

- Art/ Fine Motor/ Dramatic Play/ Blocks/ Literacy; Reading & Writing Centre

Tidy- Up Time

Circle Time

- A variety of teacher lead developmentally appropriate activities; music & movement/ Stories/ Puppet or Felt Board/ Dramatic Stories

Toileting/ Washing Up

Am Snack

Outside Time

- Free Play/ Exploration/ Water/ Loose Parts/ Art/ Gross Motor Activities (Biking/Walks/ Organized Games)

Lunch

Nap/ Rest Time/ Quiet Table Top Activities

Toileting/ Washing Up

Pm Snack

Open Ended Group Time

Outside Time/ Pick Up/ Sign Out

5:30pm Centre Closes

- Toileting is also done as needed outside of designated times
- The schedule is flexible timing but always the same consistent routine

At Drop-off:

- Please encourage your child to take off their own belongings and place them in their cubby. Lunch kits in the top of the cubby please and shoes in the bottom
- Find indoor shoes and put them on
- Please ask your child to take their water bottle to the water bottle bin
- Sign your child in for the day, connecting with the teachers and letting them know of how the day is going so far, how your child slept, etc.
- We ask parents to participate in helping your child sign in on the children's sign in/out wall. The planning wall is to the right of the cubbies. Your child will find their picture, then Velcro their picture to sign in and the same at the end of the day in reverse.
- Then its time to say good-bye, this can sometimes be a difficult time of day for children and their caregivers, below are some tips on how to ease this transition:

Develop a good-bye ritual

Rituals are reassuring, especially during stressful time. Plan a special way to say goodbye to your child. You might ask your child "How shall we say goodbye?" A kiss or a hug? Two hugs or one? Giving them child-sized choices allow the child to feel they have some control over what is happening to them.

Make sure to say good-bye

When leaving tell your child something positive that will happen at the end of the day when you are together again. "When I pick you up, I am going to give you a big hug and then we can go home." Regardless of how tempting it may seem, NEVER sneak out when your child is distracted. This destroys trust and will encourage your child to be more clingy in the future, not knowing when you might be leaving.

Avoid repeated goodbyes

Once you say "I am leaving now" and have gone through the special goodbye ritual, please head on your way. Stalling can make your child more fearful and clingy. If they know you are confident in their caregivers and trust them, then they will to.

Be Confident and Cheerful

Establish trust in your provider and you will be able to leave your child knowing it will be well, and your child will sense this and trust them too. Children will pick up on your mood, try not to act rushed or stressed at pick up or drop-off times.

At Pick-Up:

- Please collect all your child's belongings- sometimes this happens outside in the warmer months and it can sometimes be inside in the cooler months of the year- on Fridays please collect all their items from their cubby so the cubbies can be cleaned and sanitized.

- Make sure you have signed your child out for the day, checking for any notices that may be up in the classroom, new documentation or “Smiles of the Day!”
- Check in with the teachers to make sure you are aware of what happened that day, and all the great adventures they had!

Little Friends Policies

- **Please arrive by 9:30am each day**, this allows the children to participate in every aspect of the daily routine. This provides consistency for the children and allows them to enter into play of their choosing. For the teachers, they are then able to plan for the days activities based on the number of children present as well as give other families the opportunity for a drop in day if they have requested it. – If you are going to be late or absent, please let us know as soon as possible.
- Please have your child dressed in comfortable clothing that you do not mind getting dirty, with a full spare change of clothing in the children’s backpack at all times- we like to be able to engage in messy and outdoor play without worrying that the children will have nothing to change into; pants or shorts/ shirt/ sweater/ socks, underwear.
- We go outside no matter what the weather and we believe there is no bad weather only bad clothing so please make sure you bring appropriate attire for all eventualities.
Summer: Sun hats, running shoes, shoes or sturdy sandals (no flip flops), sunscreen
Spring/Fall : Rain boots, rain gear, hat- warm or sun hats, running shoes, jacket
Winter: Snow boots, snow suits, toques, gloves
- In the summer months please bring a bottle of sunscreen to leave at school; apply sunscreen before arriving to school and the teachers will re-apply it in the afternoon before going outside
- Please bring your child’s water bottle to school filled with water each day.
- Provide your child with a healthy lunch and snacks – if they are not interested in the meals we provide they will have something to eat instead.
- Please do not bring any sweet treats; such as cupcakes, chocolate, cookies, etc. No juice, or nuts; we aim to provide healthy whole meals and snacks to foster healthy eating habits starting from a young age.
- Please bring food prepared as your child would like to eat it; if they like apples peeled and cut please peel and cut the apples. We have a microwave available for prepared warm ups but no fridge so please put an ice pack in your child’s lunch if it is something that needs to be kept cold.
- Please communicate with your teachers if there are any changes happening in your child’s life
- Please only bring special toys from home on special Show-n-Tell days, rather than every day. It has been our experience that toys from home often get lost, mistreated or broken by other children, leaving children upset, angry or sad.

- Please bring inside shoes or slippers for you child to wear in the classroom
- Please empty your child’s cubby weekly on Fridays so we can clean and sanitize the cubbies at the end of each week. Then your child’s items can be sent home to be washed before the start of a new week- we do not launder your child’s clothing for you.
- Make sure that all your children’s belongings are labeled with their name in them, this is important for us to be able to help them identify their belongings and as we encourage children to dress/undress themselves things can often end up in the wrong cubby after or before outside time, and many people have the same items, we would hate for anything to go missing.
- Play guns, weapons and other toys that encourage aggressive play are not welcome in our classrooms.
- Please provide 3 individual photos of your child and 1 family photo; updated photos for children already attending Teddies & Toddlers please

Please contact us at anytime in the day check in or let us know of changes to scheduled pick up, we may not be able to answer right away as we are busy with the children but leave a message and will be respond as soon as possible.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understood this handbook.

Name

Signature

Date