

 **Little Acorns Preschool**

**Parent Handbook**

**2019-2020**

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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](http://www.greentreecob.org/) 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.

Programs are 3 hours in length from 9:00am – 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, fingerplays, 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 healthy snacks provided by the school.

**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 – 2 pm. Lunch Bunch is offered **Monday through Thursday.**

**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.).

**3 Year Old Program**

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

 Class is held Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-12:00

Class size is limited to 12-14 children.  There is one teacher and one assistant conducting this class.

Tuition: $170 per month

**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

There are 2 Pre-K classes. One is held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 – 12:00. The other is held 5 days a week Monday-Friday 9:00-12:00

Class size is limited to 14-16 children.  There is one teacher and one assistant conducting each class.

Tuition: $195 per month for the 3 day class; $295 per month for the 5 day class

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 (up to 2 for each class), and absences due to illness has been calculated into the overall tuition and does not change the tuition rate for a single month.

**Lunch Bunch**

 A Lunch Bunch option is provided **Monday-Thursday from 12-2pm**. The fee is $10 per session. If you plan to use the Lunch Bunch option you may pay the fee when you drop your child off in the morning or pre-pay a “Lunch Bunch” punch card for $50 which gives you a slight discount (6 sessions for the price of 5). If paying in cash, please use exact amount. No change is available. You must send lunch and beverage with your child. We are not able to keep lunches refrigerated or to heat anything up so please plan accordingly.

**Enrollment Forms**

The Director will provide several forms that are necessary for enrollment. All completed forms are due by **August 31st** 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 $60 registration/activity fee. The registration/activity fee is non-refundable.

***Payment Schedule***

The first Tuition Payment is due August 1, 2019. 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 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 place payment in the locked box by the classroom door.

***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 prior to the first day of 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 lobby area until the double doors to the school hallway are open indicating you can walk your child into class. The glass doors to the lobby area are locked once all the children are in class; they will be unlocked approximately 5 minutes prior to dismissal. Parents should wait in the lobby area. 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.

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 cancelled due to inclement weather. Little Acorns Preschool follows the **Spring-Ford Area School District (Closing number 308)** for weather-related closings. Listen to early morning radio or TV or check the Little Acorns Preschool website for school closures. The director will also send out an e-mail to all families regarding school closing. Please do not call the school to check on school closings.

**Late openings** due to weather will generally **NOT** affect Little Acorns Preschool. We generally open by 9:00 AM, as usual. If we would need to delay opening you will be notified via e-mail and the school website. In the event of the school needing to close while in session, parents will be notified by phone and will be asked to pick up their child. Each class will be allowed 2 unscheduled closings per school year. If more than the allowed days are missed they will be made up on dates/times determined by the director.

***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
* Severe cold with 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

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 e-mail so we are not wondering and worrying about where your child is.

***Communication***

A **Classroom Day** is held prior to the first day of school and is a great opportunity for the families and children to meet their new teacher as well as become familiar with the classroom and other classmates.

**Parent Orientation** is held in September and is an important time for the teacher and director to provide information to families.

Each month your child will bring home 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. This information is on the school website. **Please read what your child brings home and keep it handy for quick reference.**

There will be one scheduled parent/teacher conference 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***

Little Acorns Preschool provides all snack items, along with either 100% apple juice or water. The ***Child Information Form*** has a section where information regarding food allergy’s can be listed. If your child has extensive food allergies we can work with you on an alternative plan for your child at snack times.

 ***Birthday Celebrations***

If you would like to send in a special treat for 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 threating, 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 to carry crafts, paintings and other school information home from school. Please put your child’s name on their bag.

**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 backpack 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 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.

***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.