

PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Little Acorns Daycare

Our Current Staff

Joy Merrihew *Director Marilyn Herbert *Administrator
Lori Valente Janet DeMaio Yolanda Deltoro
Dora Stoll Eileen Rowe Georgette Jahn
Beverly Jannone Kathy Trabucco Kathy Banz

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Little Acorns Daycare! The day care and pre-school are designed to give parents peace of mind. Our program's mission is to serve the families in our community. We provide opportunities for the children to learn and think responsibly. They will also learn how to handle their lives with initiative and self confidence.

Little Acorns is a licensed center governed by the Department of Public Welfare. The site is a Keystone Star site. The director is a graduate of The Juilliard School of Music and a college professor who teaches courses throughout the county to all daycare workers. Our administrator is pastor of Praise and Mercy Fellowship, the building which houses Little Acorns.

The daily activities of Little Acorns Daycare will promote the development of social competence, large and small motor coordination, computer skills, and academic readiness all designed to create a positive feeling of self-esteem in each individual child. Attention to the children will be specific to their relative age groups and levels of maturity.

All of the materials and the play equipment in the center will be used to effectively push forward each child's academic and physical development.

The methodology of Little Acorns will be interactive. Your thoughts, comments, questions and complaints are not only welcomed but encouraged.

SEPARATION....

Children often separate from parents, yet some take a little extra time to adjust to being without a parent at the beginning. After the first, it often helps to depart quickly, assuring the child that you will be seeing them soon. Children who cry upon arrival usually stop shortly. Should your child be unhappy, he will be comforted until he is ready to engage in activities with his friends. In the event the child cries for a prolonged period; and there is a problem, we will call you. This is usually not necessary as children are naturally attracted to the materials and activities going on. If your child appears to need support, it may be suggested that the parent stay awhile for reassurance. Parents are encouraged to talk in a happy and positive way about their leaving and assure them of their return later.

We realize that difficulties could exist during these first few weeks. We understand any anxiety and encourage you to call if you have any questions during this time or any time in the future. If a child is still experiencing anxiety after a few weeks, we will want to discuss it with you to evaluate the situation.

If your child has never been without you, it would be a good idea to make arrangements to leave him with friends or babysitter now and then so he will get used to being away a bit and learn that he will see you again.

SOME SUGGESTIONS...

Please develop the attitude that our center is a happy place and that the teachers are friends. Avoid using them as a threat with remarks such as “ You better not do that at Little Acorns” or “ Don’t let your teacher see you do that,” etc.

Dress your child in simple and comfortable clothes. Clothes should be washable and easy for the child to handle especially in the bathroom. Play clothes are fine. Please encourage him to put on and take off outer clothing and hang it up on the hall hook by himself. All outer garments (including hats, mittens, boots, etc.) should be plainly marked with the child’s name. This is very important. (Unmarked clothing can cause difficulties, especially when there may be the same kinds of jackets present.) It is helpful when shoelaces are tied in double knots. (Smocks for painting are provided by the school.) Sneakers or shoes with rubber soles are advised. Party shoes and slip-ons are not safe for our climbing equipment and running.

TO HELP US MAINTAIN A HEALTHY SCHOOL, for all children, please observe these suggestions:

- 1. If you suspect the onset of a contagious disease or if your child has an infectious cold, please play it safe and keep him home for at least 24 hours. (the first few days of a cold are considered infectious). If he has a communicable disease, kindly call us the same day you find out; i.e., conjunctivitis, impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox, head lice, etc.**
- 2. If your child has a fever, do not send him back until he has had a normal temperature for 24 hours.**
- 3. If your child has a rash, please keep him home 24 hours to see if it develops into something else.**
- 4. Chicken Pox-child must be kept home until scabs are completely dry.**
- 5. Please call if your child has and extended illness.**
- 6. Once the child is symptom-free, or a physician indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or herself or to other children, the child may return to school.**
- 7. We go outdoors every day ‘weather permitting’. However, please realize that all staff members are needed on the playground to supervise, and we cannot leave a child indoors in the event you feel your child should not go out.**

CARE OF ILL CHILDREN

Children will be excluded from care if:

- 1) The child’s illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities.**
- 2) The illness requires more care than the child care staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.**
- 3) Keeping the child in care poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.**

If the child care staff are uncertain about whether the child’s illness poses an increased risk to others, the child will be excluded until a physician or licensed nurse practitioner notifies the child care program that the child may attend. Children whose illness does not meet any of these conditions listed above do not need to be excluded.

ADMISSION AND PERMITTED ATTENDANCE

Specific conditions that do not require exclusion are:

- 1. Children with conjunctivitis (pink eye) that have a clear, watery eye discharge and do not have any fever, eye pain, pus coming from the eye, or eyelid redness.**

2. Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior.

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF SHORT TERM ILLNESS

Senior staff will decide whether a child who is ill will be permitted to come for the day or remain in the program. If a child appears mildly ill, but will be staying for the day

1. The caregiver will document illness with symptoms, date, and time.
2. The caregiver and parent will discuss treatment and develop a plan for the child's care. The child's health care provider should be contacted if the caregiver has questions or does not understand the instructions provided by the health care provider.
3. If the child is too ill to stay in child care, the child will be provided a place to rest until the parent arrives. The child will be supervised at all times by someone familiar with the child.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Some communicable diseases must be reported to public health authorities so that control measures can be used.

1. Joy Merrihew will obtain an updated list of reportable diseases from the local or state health authorities annually and will share with parents.
2. While respecting the legal boundaries of confidentiality of medical information, Joy Merrihew will notify the appropriate health department authority about any suspected or confirmed reportable disease among the children, staff, or family members of the children and staff.
3. Families of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reportable condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of the local health department.

BIRTHDAYS...

We will celebrate each child's birthday on his/her own birthday. (If it falls on a weekend, it will be celebrated on the school day closest to the actual birth date). You may send in one item for snack for all children on that day. Some suggestions- Jell-o in individual paper cups, or ice cream cups. **Just one item please-not paper products or favors.** Please do not send cake or chocolate cupcakes. **Kindly check with the staff (about 2 weeks ahead) regarding the date and what you plan to bring.** The child will have special privileges and jobs on "his or "her" day. Summer birthdays will be celebrated.

SHARING YOUR TALENTS...

If you have an occupation (i.e., nurse, fireman, policeman, etc) hobby, play an instrument or would like to teach something etc., which you would be willing to share with the children during the day, please let us know. Maybe you would like to read a story, prepare the snack, or play a game...or just observe.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

Arrivals and Departures:

Children must be escorted by an adult into and out of the building by use of the front door. The adult **MUST** sign the child in/out daily. If relatives or friends occasionally pick up the child, these persons must be designated in the emergency contact form. Children will be released to persons designated by parents only. Designated persons must have identification.

Payments:

Payments are due on a weekly basis on the Friday **BEFORE** the week of service is provided unless other arrangements have been made with the Director. A late fee of \$5.00 per week will be added to bills not paid within two days of due date. Weeks containing holidays or snow days will require full payments.

Meals and Snacks:

Little Acorns is enrolled in the Child Food Program which means nutritious meals throughout the day. We have two cooks on staff who prepare each meal in accordance to the USDA rules. Our meals are tasty and we serve hot as well as cold meals. Meal times are breakfast at 7:00 am for school-age, 8:00 am for daycare, morning snack 10:00, lunch 12:30, afternoon snack is 3:30 for daycare, 4:15 for school-age. If you wish to send a certain snack in with your child, there must be enough for the entire population. Please check with staff for special events, we are happy to accommodate birthdays and other special days.

Medical Forms:

State regulations require us to maintain a medical record on each child and for the child to have a current physical examination. Parents must submit the completed medical form before or on the first day your child begins our program. For every year your child is enrolled, he/she must submit an updated physical form.

Medication:

There are some medical problems which may require medication while a child is attending our program. The Department of Welfare mandates that the parent must sign the medication log each day. The medication must be in its original container with the child's name, name of medication and physician's name. The parent must bring the medication in a Ziploc bag.

Mats and Cots:

Children who nap will be provided with a personal mat and/or a cot and blankets for resting. Babies have their own crib with sheets. Each child has their own sheets/blankets that they keep for the entire week. They are laundered every weekend.

Hours of Operation:

Little Acorns is open Monday-Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Children should be picked up promptly to avoid late fees. Late fees will begin at close of business day. Late fees will be charged in 15 minute increments, \$15.00 every 15 minutes (i.e. 6:01 to 6:15 = \$ 15.00 , 6:16 to 6:30 = \$ 30.00.

Absences:

You are obligated to pay for any days your child is scheduled regardless of absence due to illness; a paid holiday falls on that day, or for any other reason your child does not attend on his regularly scheduled day.

After one year of attendance, full time children will be granted 5 vacation/sick days to be used consecutively. Parents must inform the owner two weeks prior to the use of this time in order for it to be valid.

Questions:

The director will be happy to answer any questions. Please call between the hours of 7:45 and 1:00.

Clothing:

Little Acorns has safe, interesting play areas outdoors. Children enjoy walking, writing their names in the dirt, tending our garden and discovering nature. Children should dress appropriately for the weather. We are outside every day except on rainy or extremely cold or hot days. On snowy days we encourage snowman building. **ALL CHILDREN WILL GO OUTSIDE EVERY DAY.** If you do not wish your child to go outside, he should stay home until he is able to participate.

Discipline:

Discipline practices at our school are based upon a philosophy of positive guidance. We help the children learn to work out their problems together rather than depend on the teacher. Children actively participate in the setting of the rules. We are consistent about acceptable behavior. We praise good behavior, hopefully demonstrating that unacceptable behavior lacks fun. We will do what we can to avoid the “time away” scenario, however, if unacceptable behavior persists, a child may be separated from the group for a period of time equaling that of his/her age. Since Little Acorns is affiliated and housed in the church Praise and Mercy Fellowship, the children will learn Christian morals and behavior.

Little Acorns has the right to dismiss any child enrolled in the program for reasons relating to inappropriate behavior or aggressiveness towards others.

PROCEDURE FOR CHILD TRANSITIONS

FROM ONE CLASSROOM TO ANOTHER:

One month prior to the transition:

- *teacher does individual assessment
- *teacher has conference with parent
- *Parent receives transition letter
- *Parent is introduced to new teachers
- *Parents visit new classroom

Three weeks prior to the transition:

- *Child begins visiting his/her new classroom
- *Length of visits increases weekly

When planning a transition from one classroom to another consider:

- *Parents and staff should work together as a team in preparing the child for a transition to the next age group
- *At conference time be sure to discuss skills the child has mastered and areas still being worked on
- *Transitioning more than one child at the same time

FROM CHILD CARE TO KINDERGARTEN:

When preparing a child for transition to Kindergarten:

- *Host a parent meeting to discuss the transition
- *Plan a parent night where parents receive information about kindergarten registration, discussions about parent conferences
- *Consult with local school districts to find out their expectations
- *Arrange for children to visit their new school, ride the bus, meet their teacher and visit the classroom
- *Learn about kindergarten classroom procedures (walking in the kindergarten line, raising your hand, etc)
- *Buddy up with current kindergarten children to hear about their experiences

INFANTS: AGES 6 WEEKS THROUGH 13 MONTHS

Our infants are nurtured and lovingly cared for by experienced care givers, who encourage each infant's growth and well being.

Infants are held, played with, and adored. They participate in daily activities designed to encourage attainment of developmental milestones.

We try to maintain each infants individual schedule. We strive to provide care for each infant as if they were our own.

We encourage parents to provide as much detail as possible regarding your infant's care and developmental progress so we can give them the best care possible.

It is Little Acorns policy that after you have signed your child in, to then wash their hands under running water. This will help to limit the spread of outside germs throughout the center.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Our infant's growth is encouraged through various ways such as:

- *tummy time
- *visual stimulation
- *auditory stimulation
- *gross motor activities
- *supervised exploration
- *fine motor activities
- *outdoor time
- *plenty of love and affection

PARENTS WILL NEED TO SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING:

- *Diapers, wipes, diaper cream
- *One bottle
- *2 seasonally appropriate changes of clothes
- *Pacifier (optional)

ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED AND IN A BAG

LITTLE ACORNS PARTICIPATES IN THE CACFP FOOD PROGRAM. THIS MEANS THAT WE PROVIDE THE FORMULA AND FOOD FOR YOUR BABY(A GREAT SAVINGS FOR PARENTS)

WHO ARE THE YOUNGER TODDLERS?

Younger toddlers are children ages 13 months and walking to approximately 22-24 months.

Young toddlers focus on self help skills, such as walking, climbing, sitting, self feeding, and socialization.

They are encouraged to explore their environment and begin learning to share with their peers.

TRANSITION FROM INFANT TO YOUNG TODDLER

If your child is “moving up” we like to introduce them to the younger toddler class a few weeks before they actually transfer classes.

This process is done by integrating them with the younger toddler class for increasing amounts of time.

You can help with this transition by visiting the young toddler room, and talking with the care givers with your child present.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Young toddlers nap approximately from 1pm-3pm daily. They participate in a variety of activities that encourage growth and meet state learning standards for this age group.

It is the policy of Little Acorns that upon arrival, each child washes their hands under running water, and that their parent supervises.

This will help with the transmission of outside germs.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to communicate with the teacher daily regarding progress and day-to-day needs. Your teacher will provide you with a written communication sheet describing the day’s events and requesting supplies if needed.

You may call throughout the day to check on your child’s progress. We suggest drop off times be brief, so your child can assimilate with his peers as quickly as possible.

For longer discussions regarding progress or development please see Ms. Joy to schedule a conference at your convenience.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?

*Seasonally appropriate change of clothes

*Diapers, wipes, diaper cream

*One sippy cup or bottle

*sunscreen

*pacifier

ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED AND CONTAINED IN A BAG!

OLDER TODDLERS

Older toddlers (22 months-36 months) continue to master self help skills and begin to really focus on learning social skills and socially appropriate behaviors.

Older toddlers learn about themselves and their effect on others and their environment.

Children in this classroom participate in daily activities that encourage growth and development and meet state learning standards, including gross and fine motor skills activities, block play, dramatic play, arts and crafts, music and movement, and outdoor play.

Older toddlers nap on cots from 1pm-3pm daily. We ask that you sign your child in and out daily. It is also the policy at Little Acorns that upon arrival, each child washes their hands under running water, and that their parent supervises. This will help with the transmission of outside germs.

TRANSITION

We help children transition from the young toddler class by having them spend a few hours a day in our classroom for a meet and greet time and to be shown the routine.

The older toddlers and threes get the opportunity to interact with each other throughout the day. Because the rooms are right next to each other, transition from one class to the next is usually a smooth process.

We will make every attempt to accommodate them and their individual needs. Parents can help with this transition by giving them the reassurance that they need and communicating with the center.

In any transition your child will face, the parent's role is the most influential. If children are new to Little Acorns, we will help them adjust to our fun filled day.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to communicate with the teacher daily regarding progress and day to day needs. Your teacher will provide you with a written communication sheet describing the day's events and requesting supplies if needed.

You may call throughout the day to check on your child's progress. For longer discussions regarding progress or development please see Ms Joy to schedule a conference at your convenience.

Each child has an assigned cubby for paperwork and schoolwork that requires your attention.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?

- *Seasonally appropriate change of clothes
- *Sippy cup
- *Diapers, wipes, diaper cream
- *sunscreen

ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED AND CONTAINED IN A BAG!

THREES

Threes are encouraged to make that leap to "big kid" by being introduced to structure and routine. They are also working on toilet training skills that will facilitate their advancement to pre-school.

They participate in a variety of daily activities to encourage growth and development, such as structured and free play, dramatic play, music and movement, outdoor excursions, arts and crafts, circle time and more!

Threes are encouraged to recognize concepts, such as action and re-action, rewards and consequences. Our monthly lesson plans involve more educational components such as letter, numbers, shapes, and colors.

Threes nap on cots from 1pm-3pm. We ask that you sign your child in and out daily. It is also our policy at Little Acorns that upon arrival, each child washes their hands under running water, and that their parent supervises. This will help with the transmission of outside germs.

TRANSITION

We have the child visit their new room hours at a time. After the parent has initiated potty training, we encourage their child's advancement to become a "big kid". Every child is excited to be joining the pre-k group downstairs.

Please schedule a time to meet with the older teacher to discuss concerns and progress.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to communicate with the teacher daily regarding progress and day-to-day needs. Your teacher will provide you with a written communication sheet describing the day's events and requesting supplies if needed. You may call throughout the day to check on your child's progress. For longer discussions regarding progress or development please see Ms. Joy to schedule a conference at your convenience.

WHAT DO I BRING?

- *Pull-ups, wipes
- *Seasonally appropriate change of clothes
- *sunscreen

PRE-SCHOOL

WHAT TO EXPECT

The Pre-School classroom awaits the 3, 4 and 5 year old student. It is the policy of Little Acorns that upon arrival, each child washes their

hands under running water, and that their parent supervises. This will help with the transmission of outside germs.

Each child has a cubby assigned to him or her. Please check it daily for any creations or notes home. There are certain hours that classes are intermixed, but the majority of the day will be spent in the assigned class working hard to meet state learning standards and expected developmental milestones.

The pre-school class utilizes both playgrounds daily. They continue their educational pursuits with expanded circle time and increasing structure.

TRANSITION

When a child is transitioned for the Threes to the Pre-K classroom, we like to have the children spend a few hours a day in our classroom for a meet and greet time and to be shown the routine.

This transition can be difficult for some and easy for others. If your child is new to our center, we will help them adjust to our fun filled day and encourage parents to communicate frequently with the teacher to ease transition.

WHAT DO I BRING?

*seasonally appropriate change of clothes

*sunscreen

ALL ITEMS MUST BE LABELED AND IN A BAG!

COMMUNICATION

All parents are encourage to check their students' cubby daily for information. If you require an extended conversation regarding progress or other issues, please schedule a conference with Ms. Joy at your convenience.

SCHOOL AGE

Our school age program provides care before and after school, as well as early dismissals, delayed openings, school closings (for weather) and school district holidays. All students must be signed in and out. They are picked up and dropped off by public bussing in front of the Center.

All students must wash their hands upon entering the building. Students are encouraged to work on homework, or play organized activities. When there are school closings, art projects and scheduled activities are provided for their day. We have two playgrounds that our school age children can use.

TRANSITION

Our experienced staff will help your child meet their school year with success by helping them with their morning and afternoon routine.

In the morning, bussing for the middle school arrives around 7:25 and the elementary bus arrives around 8:30.

In the afternoon, the busses arrive at 3:15 and 4:15 respectively. Breakfast and afternoon snack are provided. Please remember to call the center if your child will not be attending so we are not holding busses or frantically calling to locate a child if they are in your care.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

*In contrast to pre-schoolers, school age children have a greater attention span and a marked desire to follow through and bring projects to completion.

*They are adventurous and highly curious

*There is a growing determination to demonstrate an awareness of the differences between reality and fantasy.

This is seen through the use of riddles and jokes.

*The older they get, the more they wish to focus on real tasks that have real, concrete goals and consequences, as opposed to abstract activities

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Rules are very important. They look for rules, learn rules, tell others what the rules are and break rules.

*Peer groups become more influential. They will often sacrifice their own interests in order to be with or participate with others

*The peer group is an important arena where children not only learn to form friendships, but also how to have conflicts and resolve them

STAKEHOLDERS AT LITTLE ACORNS DAYCARE

- *ALL PARENTS OF ENROLLED CHILDREN
- *ALL STAFF MEMBERS
- *DELAWARE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
- *PRAISE AND MERCY FELLOWSHIP
- *ATLANTIC HEALTH OF NEW JERSEY
- *SKYLANDS PEDIATRICS
- *DR. GARRISON
- *CCIS OF PIKE COUNTY
- *ASSISTANCE OFFICE OF PIKE COUNTY
- *KEYSTONE STARS
- *COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN
- *CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
- *PENN STATE COOPERATIVE

I have read and accept the guidelines of the Parent Handbook.

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Parent's Signature

