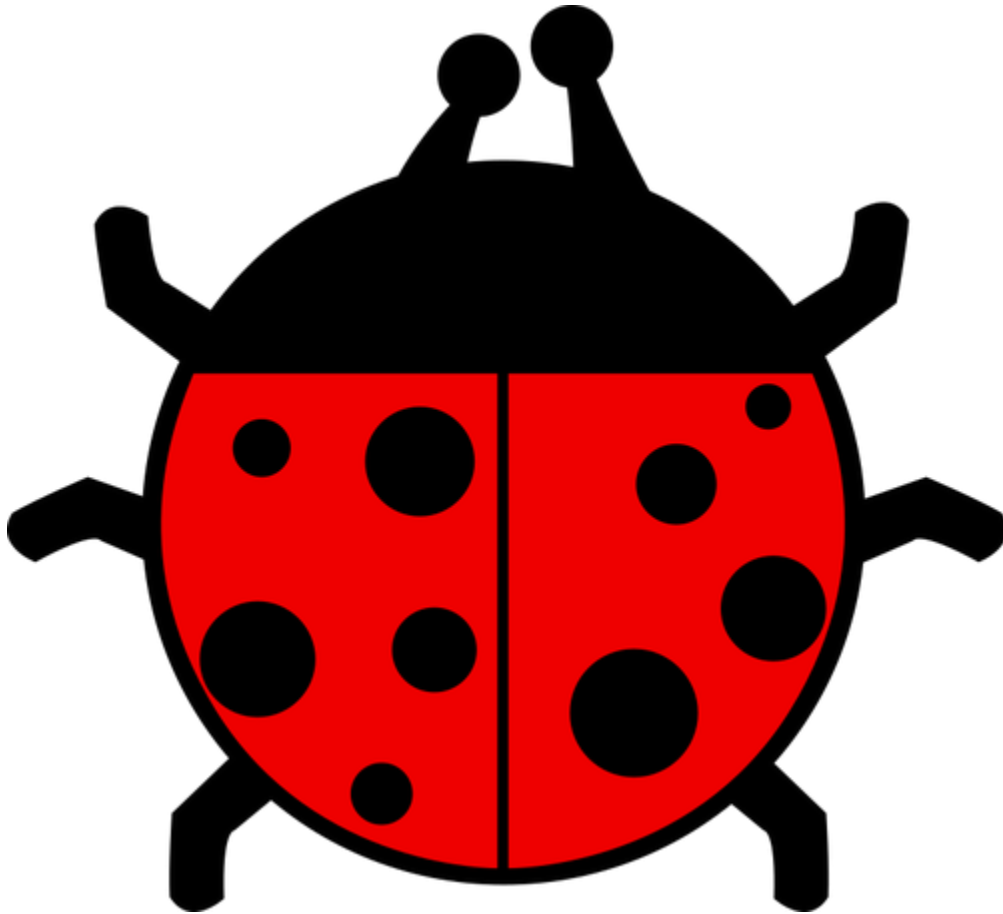


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Little Explores Nursery School & Daycare Center LLC Parent Handbook



Director
Simon Solomon

Assistant Director
Stephanie Ferrara

331 Route 32 North
New Paltz, NY 12561

Littleexplorersdaycare331@Gmail.Com
(845) 256-2299

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***“The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience.”
-Eleanor Roosevelt***

Your Child’s Safety:

Little Explorers Nursery and Daycare Center holds the safety of our children as the highest priority. This handbook contains several sections with specific information about safety procedures and policies. We encourage all our families to participate in constantly improving our safety procedures by sharing ideas and concerns. Please take the opportunity to review all the policies in this handbook and discuss questions with our director.

Licensing and Credentials:

Little Explorers has been licensed with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services since August 2007. Our owner is a mother of two and has over ten years’ experience in daycare as both assistant and teacher. All of our staff members have been fingerprinted and cleared a criminal background check. Our staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. All staff that work at Little Explorers are mandated reporters. Any staffs who suspect child abuse/maltreatment are required to call and report it. They are not required to discuss it with the director. If at any time you notice a threat to health or safety, please alert the Director immediately so that we may remedy the problem. Although we recognize the importance of family, we do not have siblings spend time in each other’s classrooms.

Admission:

Enrollment at Little Explorers is ongoing, and we accept applications all year. We are currently accepting students between the ages of six weeks and twelve years old. Admission to our program is based on space and completion of necessary paperwork. If space is currently unavailable for your child, we will place you on a waiting list and contact you as soon as an opening becomes available.

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The paperwork needed is attached to this handbook and must be completed prior to your child's first day of attendance. For the health and safety of all at the center, immunizations and health forms are a higher priority. If paperwork is not completed, we will assume you do not want the spot even if a deposit has been paid. If you do not start when you reserved a spot for, you risk the chance of losing it. We will not hold spots. We will not secure spots over the summer. In order to maintain your spot in September, your child must keep their normal schedule throughout the summer or we cannot guarantee your spot. If your child is not at the center by 10:00 am, they will be marked absent unless we are notified.

Operating hours and Tuition:

The Center is open from 6:30am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. We offer full and part days as well as a before and after school program. We are closed for all major holidays. During a pandemic, we may need to close periodically due to the health and safety of staff and students. This will be determined case by case. Our summer hours are 7:00-6:00.

- **Registration Fee:** There is a \$150 non refundable registration fee per year.
- **Other related fees:** In order to provide a quality program with proper materials and supplies, we must employ sound business practices. The related fees are required by sound business practices and must be adhered to:
- **-Tuition Late Fee:** There will be a \$50 fee per day on all weekly and monthly tuition not paid on time.
- **-Returned Check Fee:** Any check returned for Insufficient Funds or nonpayment will be charged a \$75 fee. If a check is returned, you will be required to pay a bank check or cash.
- **-Late Pick-Up Fee:** For the first 5 minutes late picking up your child, there will be a \$25 fee per child. There will be a \$10 fee for each 5 minutes thereafter.

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- **-9 1/2 or more:** Any child who attends the center for 9 and a half hours or more will be charged an additional fee of \$35 per day.
- **- Security Deposit:** When registering, you are required to pay a two-week nonrefundable security deposit in addition to the Registration Fee. All deposits are nonrefundable. They will be returned within 30 days. All late fees, late payment fees, etc will be deducted from your deposit before returning the balance. -All tuition will increase each July. Rates will increase depending on minimum wage increases and other additional increases. You will not receive your deposit back if there is a break in tuition for whatever reason, late payments, discounted tuition for whatever reason and other kinds of fees associated with your account. Effective July 2024, we will no longer be accepting DSS.

Payments:

All families must pay through Brightwheel or cash. You can pay weekly or monthly. All payments are due at the beginning of the week. We require a 30-day written notice for all students leaving the center. You are still responsible for payments once notice has been given. All tuition must be paid in full before the 30 day notice is up. If your child is out sick, our center is closed due to inclement weather or holidays or any other reason, you are on vacation, payment is still required. Those who do not give a 30-day notice will void any reimbursement of their security deposit regardless of the reason. Any billing questions or disputes must be submitted in writing within 45 days of the invoice date. After 45 days, charges will be considered accepted and final.

****Any family who has not paid full tuition all along will forfeit their deposit. If the center is closed for whatever reason for ANY period tuition is still required. Parents are required to pay full tuition when the center is closed for ANY reason.***

- **Infant Prices:** We require a two-day minimum to register for this program. The cost is \$97 per day.

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- **Toddler Prices:** There is a two-day minimum to register for this program. The cost is \$58 for a half day program. Our half day program is from 9-12:30. Our full day program is any hour under 9 1/2. The price is \$87 per day if not potty trained and \$84 if potty trained.
- **Preschool Prices:** There is a two-day minimum to register for this program. The cost is \$58 for our half day program. Our half day program is from 9-12:30. The price is \$96 per day if not potty trained and \$84 if potty trained. All Pre K students should not wear diapers.
- **Before and After School Prices:** Whether your child comes before school, after school, or both, the cost is \$48 per day. If they do not come on a day, they are registered with us, you are still responsible for payment. If there is a 2-hour delay, early dismissal, or no school, the cost is \$84 per day. For only Before school care is \$25 per day, and for only After School care would be \$30 per day. We cannot guarantee a spot for your child if it is not a snow day or scheduled New Paltz holiday due to ratios. We will do our best to accommodate all children all the time. We do not offer this program during the summer.

***All the children must be registered for set days. Due to ratios and staffing, it is difficult to switch days throughout the week but we will do our best to be flexible. We do not allow you to switch days for whatever reason. If you need any extra day, if we can accommodate you, you may add additional days.**

Policies and Procedures:

- **Arrival:** Little Explorers is open at 6:30am. If you will be late or your child is out, we ask that you call the Director to let us know, 845-256-2299. All children should arrive no later than 9:30 or they will be considered absent. We ask that parents provide us with a Pickup/Drop off schedule to ensure we are properly staffed. If your child is going to be needing care outside of your scheduled times please ask to make sure we can accommodate the change in your child's schedule. When driving from New Paltz, you CANNOT make a left hand turn into the building. You must use an alternative route.

- **Pick-Up:** Please be sure that the person picking up your child is on the “Authorized Pick-Up List”. We will be happy to add names to your list with a signed note from you. Should you know that you will be arriving late, please call in advance so that we may inform your child and alleviate any potential anxiety it may cause.

****For the safety of the children, we ask that you do not allow them to walk in on their own or remain in the parking lot unattended at any time. Please advise us in advance if there are any special circumstances we can help with.***

Communication: Caring for your child is a team effort at Little Explorers. We realize that the family is the most important influence in a child’s life, and we strive to encourage communication between our staff and our families as much as possible. There will be regularly scheduled conferences with your child’s teacher, but we know that children do not develop according to the timing of parent-teacher conferences. Please leave a message with your child’s teacher any time you would like to talk and decide to meet. Each child (except for infants) will receive a report card twice a year. Both the infants and toddlers will receive Daily Reports (Through Brightwheel) to help and encourage communication. We want our parents to know what their child enjoyed each day at our center. If there is something that the teacher and parent need to discuss, it will be dealt with in private, not through the daily reports. Please download the Brightwheel App and we will add you to your child’s class.

Toys and Possessions from Home: Little Explorers provides a wide variety of toys and activities for our children. We discourage toys from home because we do not want your child to lose their favorite toy as well as avoid hurt feelings or conflicts with other children. The sharing of toys and activities provided by Little Explorers is an opportunity for the children to learn about sharing and cooperation.

****At no time will we allow anyone to bring in toys which resemble a weapon or are associated with violence.***

Clothing: We recommend you dress your child comfortably, simply, and appropriate for the season. Children will be playing and creating with messy

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materials sometimes, and even with a smock, clothes can get messy. An extra set of clothing (labeled with your child's name) should be left at the Center in case of accidents.

Coat Hooks and Mailboxes: An area will be provided and labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's area each day for artwork, projects, or letters from the Center.

Birthdays: Our children deserve to celebrate their special occasions. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at the center, please let us know in advance. We need to know if you will be bringing in a snack to share so we can check for food allergy conflicts within the class. Parents are invited to stay and share in the celebration with their child's class.

Naptime: Most children will nap between 1-3pm. Each parent must provide a crib sheet, blanket, and pillow. All items must be labeled and in a nap bag which should be labeled. Please bring your child's nap stuff home weekly to be washed. All the children except for our infants sleep on cots. Infants are not allowed to have any toys/sound machines/etc with them in their crib during nap time.

Sunscreen: We ask that all parents apply sunscreen before your child comes to school daily. If you would like us to reapply it in the afternoon, please provide it in a labeled bag along with the permission slip.

Diapers/Wipes: Please provide diapers and wipes for your child. You will be notified by staff when you will need to bring more in for your child. Please label both packages.

Health:

We trust that you are the best judge as to whether your child is well enough to attend school. At Little Explorers, we have objective criteria that our staff follows consistently to ensure the health and safety of all at the Center. There will be times when your child may become sick at school or begin showing symptoms and will

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need to be sent home. Any child out sick for more than two days must return with a doctor's note and approval from the Director/Acting Director. Children must remain out of the center for 24 hours after vaccines.

- A temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees F
- Feel feverish or have chills
- Cough
- Loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue/feeling of tiredness
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headaches
- Nasal congestion/runny nose

****A child must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Your child must remain home for the first 24 hours on antibiotics. This is done so you can monitor your child, give them 24 hours to rest, and prevent further illness.***

Please be prepared to pick up your child if he/she should become ill at the Center. If you are not available within an hour after the call, please have other arrangements in progress. Little Explorers will consult several resources for illness information. The NYS Dept. of Health is a website that is frequently used as well as our Health Care Consultant and various other local Pediatricians.

Medications: We will not administer any medication however we will administer an inhaler with an Asthma Plan and doctors note.

****Your child be vaccinated to attend as per NYS OCFS Regulations. You must provide an updated medical and immunizations yearly.***

Emergency Procedures: In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted immediately. Please be sure to fully complete the blue emergency card that is part

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of your enrollment packet. Also, be sure to provide us with any changes in contacts throughout the school year. We will handle all emergencies with the care they deserve and will alleviate any anxiety by communicating with you immediately. Our staff is trained in First Aid and CPR.

Discipline and Guidance: At Little Explorers, discipline is viewed to teach children and not to punish them. Our methods of positive discipline teach children about limits and expectations in the classroom, how to maintain self-control, and how to be an effective problem solver should conflict arise. Appropriate techniques will be used with different age groups to help children eliminate unproductive behaviors. Our teachers will focus on the *behavior* of the child and not their personality. The objective is to teach, not to punish. Parents are encouraged to become part of their child's positive discipline at the Center by communicating with the teachers about incentives and successful behavior modification techniques used at home. Any child that is a threat to the health and safety of others will have a conference scheduled with the teacher, parents, and the Director to discuss an appropriate course of action. Children that pose a persistent threat to health and safety will be removed from the program.

Dismissal from the Program: To maintain an environment appropriate for children to learn and play, as well as maintaining sound business practices, a child may be removed from Little Explorers Nursery & Daycare Center Program for any of the following reasons:

- Continuous (everyday basis) threat to health and safety
- Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees
- Failure to comply with the policies contained in the Parent Handbook and/or Contract
- Not following center policies
- Not labeling

Withdrawal/Program Changes: You must inform us in writing *thirty days* in advance of withdrawing your child or making changes from the program. During those thirty days, you are still responsible for payments. We want to give families

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on the waiting list an opportunity to decide to register should a spot become available. All students must give a 30 day notice for dropping any days.

Toilet Training: Our staff will assist and encourage children in the toilet training process. We understand that it is an ongoing process, and each child has their own motivators and fears when it comes to using the toilet. Please share your ideas and experiences from home so that we may better serve your child. Your child will not be considered potty trained until they are accident free daily.

AM/PM Snack: Little Explorers provides daily AM and PM snacks, though families are always welcome to pack their own snacks from home if they prefer. Parents must provide lunch daily, and a microwave is available for warming meals for Toddlers/Pre-school. Please alert us to any food allergies or dietary restrictions. All lunch boxes, water cups, food containers, and bagged snacks must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. Glass bottles and containers are strictly prohibited, and no food may be left at the center overnight, as any leftover items will be discarded at the end of the day.

Lunches: When sending your child's lunch, please pack an ice pack when necessary since we do not have a refrigerator excluding infants. Also, please pack any warm items in a thermos where they will be preheated and ready to eat, food should be prepared for the child to be served. It is a NYS Regulation that states that children under the age of 18 months cannot have their food heated in the microwave. If your child is under 18 months, we are not able to heat up anything in a microwave. We are a **Nut Free** facility. Please do not pack any peanuts, tree nuts, etc. due to food allergies. We want ALL our children to have a pleasurable, safe experience here. All items must be labeled.

****Infants' food can not be heated up, per state regulations, but bottles can. We use a bottle warmer located upstairs to heat up all bottles.***

Enrichment: Your child will have the opportunity to participate in age appropriate enrichment activities. Some of these activities may include Spanish, Sign Language, Yoga, Art, and Dance. These activities will be once a week and incorporated into your child's morning schedule.

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Snow Days: In the event of inclement weather, we will close, have a delay, or close early at the discrepancy of our director. No credit will be made in the event of snow closings. A message will be placed on Brightwheel.

Transitioning Children: If your child turns 18 months during the school year, they will be moved to the toddler class immediately. Children who are older than 18 months, whose birthday falls before December 5, we will move them into the next class. If your child's birthday is after December 5, they may have to wait to be moved until the next session. In all our classes, we will provide age-appropriate activities and materials. Children are placed in programs based upon their age in accordance with NYS Regulations. As children grow and develop, they will gradually transition into the next classroom. Other factors taken into consideration include developmental progress and space availability. We will work closely with parents throughout this process to ensure a smooth adjustment for your child.

2025 Center Closings: Our facility will be closed on the following days: If the holiday falls on a weekend, we may close on Friday or Monday. This also does not reflect snow and or emergency days.

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the day after Christmas
- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day or the day observed
- President's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Veteran's Day
- Juneteenth
- Early closing 2 Fridays in the summer

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****Payment is still required when the center is closed, or your child does not attend. No credit will be given, and days cannot be made up. In addition, there may be snow days. This includes if the center is closed for a pandemic or any other reason.***

Rules:

- EVERYTHING MUST BE LABELED: This includes all food items as well as personal items
- Toys associated with weapons and violence is not allowed in the center.
- Running in the parking lot presents a safety risk
- All families must download Brightwheel and enroll
- No families may privately text staff during their workday. You can communicate through the app..
- All students must arrive no later than 9:30am or they will be considered absent for the day.
- We must be provided with a drop off and pick up schedule that we ask that you abide by, and if there are any changes that need to be made to your schedule we ask that you ask 24 hours in advance, so we can make sure we can accommodate your child.

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I have read the updated Parent Handbook and I agree to all Little Explorers policies. I understand them entirely.

Child's Name:

Parent's Signature:

Date:
