



Parent Handbook  
Children Under Two

## Introduction

Welcome to Little Sprouts Academy! We look forward to watching and assisting your child learn and grow in a positive nurturing atmosphere.

## Mission

Little Sprouts Academy provides a safe and nurturing environment for your child to learn and grow to their full potential through enriching experiences! Our Academy incorporates fun and exciting nature inspired, self-directed learning environments, Montessori inspired curriculum taught by passionate teachers, healthy organic and natural food, and an eco-friendly toxic free environment. Every aspect of Little Sprouts Academy was meticulously planned with your child's best interests in mind! We focus on collaborating with parents so that our professional teachers can cater to each child's individual needs and help them grow and expand mentally, emotionally, and socially at their own pace.

## Goals & Objectives

- To foster and inspire a love of learning through the use of hands on Montessori inspired teaching methods and enriching experiences
- To help children develop their self confidence through the existence of a positive nurturing environment that encourages persistence
- To promote the use of manners and enhance children's values through hands on experiences
- To develop a strong academic foundation
- To develop and refine life skills which will establish independence
- To Empower self discipline
- To create a clear set of classroom expectations to encourage responsible safe behaviors and freedom within limits

## Admission

Children Under 2 (Seedlings, Sprouts & Stalks Classrooms)

Children may begin attending Little Sprouts Academy once they have turned 6 weeks old. Classroom Transitions are based on development. Parents will receive no less than a 2 week notice when their child will transition to the next classroom. A handout which will indicate any changes that will accompany their new classroom. Our teachers will have a sit down meeting with each other to discuss the child entering/exiting their classroom and any specifics they may need to know.

### Toddler Program (3K)

Our Toddler Program is for children who are two by January 1st and are developmentally ready to be taking only one nap throughout the day, and begin working on establishing their independence.

### Preschool Program (4K)

A child must turn 3-years-old by September 1st, 2018 and be completely toilet trained in order to be admitted into our Preschool Program. This includes fully going to and from the restroom without assistance. The teacher(s) may not assist your child in wiping themselves. He/she may guide your child through the steps and provide direction but may not physically help your child to wipe.

## Arrival/ Departure

It is your responsibility to sign your child in and out from their classroom each day. If your child is attending only program they are to arrive at 8:00am each morning. If your child is attending before and after program care they are to arrive no later than 7:45 for breakfast, or by 8:00am for the start of program.

Children are expected to arrive at school on time. It is a distraction to the class and makes it difficult for your child to transition into the school day when they do not arrive on time. Parents should call in the morning whenever their child will be out for the day, and let the office personal know as soon as possible for longer term absences.

Please do not allow your child(ren) to enter or leave the building unattended or open gates or doors. You must accompany your child at all times until you leave them in the care of their teacher and they are in their classroom. We are not responsible for them during pick up and drop off.

## Pick-Up Policy

Each child must be picked up by their legal guardians unless prior notice is given and the individual picking up your child is on the approved pick-up list on file in the office. Children are expected to be picked up from school on time. Late pickups are disruptive to our classroom routine, and often create anxiety for the child who is picked up late. Children who are attending only Program are to be picked up at 11:50am, and children who are staying at Little Sprouts Academy for full days are to be picked up no later than 5:30pm. Children who are not picked up on time will be charged a late fee of \$10 per 5 minute interval, or any fraction thereof, per child.

## Curriculum

Little Sprouts Academy's teachers plan activities and provide children with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and enrichment experiences. Sensory-based and self-directed learning through the Montessori Method and nature exploration are major components of our program. We have a prepared environment that offers carefully chosen developmentally appropriate toys and self-correcting materials which are organized to support maximum growth and exploration through open ended organic play. Our areas of study include sensorial, math, practical life, science, language, culture / geography and music / art. We celebrate the uniqueness of each child and allow children to develop at their own pace. We "follow the child" by observing them and modifying lessons and materials to best suit their interests and skill level. In addition to this program your child will enjoy various enriching classes and activities such as music & movement, art, nature walks, gardening, cooking classes, and American Baby Sign Language.

## Dress Code

Children should come to school dressed in clothing that is comfortable and allows for large motor activity. Please consider that the children will be involved in many hands-on activities using paint, glue, etc. and spend a large majority of their time outside exploring. Please dress your child with the understanding that they may get dirty. All clothing and other belongings that are brought to school should be clearly labeled with your child's name. If you do not wish to label items directly on the tag please label with a piece of masking tape. Your child's teacher will check their supply of clothes regularly and send home a notice if they need additional items. Any soiled clothes will be placed in your child's locker in a plastic bag to be taken home and laundered.

### Stalks Classroom:

Children in our Stalks classroom must wear socks with rubber dots or soft sole shoes with grips when inside to prevent slipping. They must keep flexible hard sole shoes at school for time spent outdoors. This is a safety requirement to protect their feet from injury.

### Preschool & Toddler Programs:

Independence is a key component of our program so we ask parents to consider sending clothing that children can dress themselves in.

Children's shoes should also set them up for independence. Although we will practice tying regularly within the classroom it is a more developmentally appropriate option for children to come in slip on shoes or shoes with velcro rather than laces. Children must wear closed toed shoes with a back strap for safety, and shoes must be worn at all times for a safe and quick exit in case of an emergency or fire drill.

We do great deal of exploring the outdoor environment and therefore require that a pair of rain boots also be present at school during all months when there is no snow on the ground.

## General School & Classroom Rules

- Walking feet are to be used indoors and down the outdoor ramp & steps
- Indoor voices are to be used at all times when inside school
- Keep your hands to yourself, no aggressive behaviors will be tolerated
- Respect classmates and do not disturb those who are working
- Respect others personal belongings
- Use manners at all times
- Take care of the classroom by using works for their intended purpose and cleaning up after yourself
- Do not touch doors or gates, they are to be opened by adults only. Please help us to enforce this rule at pickup & drop-off

## Supervision of Children

The student to teacher ratios are as follows:

Age	Teacher	Children
0-2	1	4
2-3	1	7
4-5	1	12
6 +	1	17

## Take Home Folders

Children will each have a clear take home folder located in their art file in their classroom. Your child will place this folder into their backpack at the closing of program time. It is parents responsibility to empty this folder each evening and return to school empty in their backpack/ locker. Artwork, classroom announcements and other important paperwork will be present in this folder.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are very special for our students and we enjoy celebrating them at school! Since Little Sprouts Academy places a strong value on healthy and organic options it is important that birthday treats also reflect this. If you plan to bring in a special treat to celebrate (which is completely optional) we do need to be made aware at least a week in advanced and snacks must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a healthy option with a fruit or vegetable
- No Corn Syrup in ingredient lists
- Should contain limited refined sugar
- No artificial colorings or preservatives
- Apples or Dairy must be Organic

Examples: Ants on a Log, Organic Apples & Peanut Butter, Chocolate Covered Bananas, Fruit or Vegetable Pinwheels, Fruit Popsicles, Trail Mix, Chips & Humus... etc. Please ask for a handout from the office if you would like a printed copy of our Birthday Treat Guidelines.

## Inclement Weather

Any extreme weather closings will be announced on our Facebook page. If you would like to receive automatic no-reply texts of closings please be sure to apply to these at time of enrollment.

## Starting the School Year

At Little Sprouts Academy, our emphasis begins with the development of strong, warm, trusting relationships. The first days of the year are filled with new experiences, people and expectations. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as possible. We ask parents to work with the teachers and school in creating a bridge between home and school and to help your child establish trusting relationships with their new teachers, by staying consistent with our school rules & routines.

## Separation

Helping children to comfortably say goodbye to their parents is a key component in the program and may be a big step for many of our little learners. In order to ease the process, parents and teachers must work together to create a bridge between home and our school, and openly discuss the process. The building of a relationship between parents and teachers is the foundation for the child's positive experiences in school. For this reason, we ask parents to visit your child's new classroom and attend the "Meet the Teacher" event with your child. During this time, their teacher will ask questions to enable them to better know your child before the school year and full separation begins.

Parents must say "goodbye" to their child and tell him/her when they will return. Parents may NOT "sneak out" in order to prevent the child from crying during separation. Although the crying may make the goodbye harder on parents it is a symbol of their healthy attachment to you, and it is healthy for children to fully understand what is going on and be able to express their emotions. Leaving without saying goodbye to your child will also cause them to fear any possibility of unexpected departure, and does not support the trust that you are trying to build with your child. It is also important to establish a routine when saying goodbye to your child. A routine with a clear goodbye helps children to understand what to expect and become comfortable with saying goodbye.

## Child Guidance

Children's behavior will be guided by setting clear limits and rules for children. Children may always work freely within the consistent rules of their classroom. We will talk with children about expected behaviors and model those behaviors consistently for them. We will state positively what children can do and undesirable behavior will be redirected to another activity. Children will be given a wide variety of age-appropriate activities to choose from and will be given the attention they need before they demand it. Behavior management will be for the purpose of helping children develop self-control, self-esteem and respect for others. Children are redirected to safe physical activities and are involved in discussion about safety concerns, when necessary.

When a child is distraught, staff will work to calm and comfort the child, in ways that are appropriate for the child's age and personal disposition. This may include acknowledging their fear, sadness, or conflict; distracting them by offering them a drink or redirecting them to another activity; or talking calmly with the child about how s/he is feeling.

## Daily Routine

Until children turn 2 years old we follow their quest

### Preschool & Toddler Program Overview

6:30am-8:00am- Before School Program

8:00am-12:00pm- Toddler & Preschool Programs

12:00pm-5:30pm- After School Program

### Daily Schedule Breakdown

6:30am-7:15am- Arrival

7:15am-7:45am- Breakfast

8:00am-8:30am Morning Meeting

8:30am-9:30am Work Time

9:30am- Morning Snack

9:45am-11:30am- Outdoor Activities

11:30am-12:00pm- Closing Meeting

12:00-12:30pm- Lunch

12:30pm-2:30pm- Nap or Rest time  
2:30-3:00pm- Afternoon Snack  
3:00pm-3:30pm- Enrichment Courses  
3:30-4:00pm- Work Time  
4:00pm-5:30pm- Outdoor Activities

## Outdoor Time

We believe that the outdoor environment is just as important as the indoor space. Not only is it healthy for children to get fresh air it aids in the development of social and gross motor skills which help to strengthen a child's body and mind. While outdoors children will have the opportunity to participate in at least 15 minutes of teacher-led physical activity. Children will also be allowed free time for large muscle and gross-motor development on a variety of developmentally appropriate fixed play equipment and portable equipment (such as balls and tricycles) to allow mastery of balance and coordination & peer engagement. Our outdoor area also seeks to give children a place to explore and learn about nature through sensory experiences. Alternative large muscle indoor activities will be offered when weather does not permit going outside.

Children, including infants and toddlers, will go outdoors twice daily when weather permits, so dress your child appropriately for the weather. The children may be kept indoors during inclement weather such as any of the following:

- Heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F.
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below for children age 2 and above
- Wind chills of 20 degrees F. or below for children under age 2

## Nutrition

Little Sprouts Academy provides breakfast, morning snack, lunch & afternoon snack to all children in attendance at the times identified in the daily schedule. School-aged children will be offered an afternoon snack upon return from school. Children will eat family style and will be allowed to serve themselves beginning at 2 years old. As caregivers we make sure the food we provide is healthy, nourishing and understand that it is a child's role to decide whether and how much to eat. Mealtimes will include meaningful conversation and will promote social interaction, encourage good table manners, and develop sound nutritional habits. Our staff model health eating behaviors in the presence of children, eating the same foods as children and refraining from eating or drinking unhealthy foods in front of children. Children will be expected to clear the table once they are 2 years old. We have a 4 week rotating menu that features organic and nutritious



meals and snacks that meet USDA Guidelines. All food is prepared onsite in our school kitchen. No child will ever go longer than 3 hours without nourishment.

## Infant and Toddler Feeding

Children younger than 12 months must be served formula or breast milk, unless written direction is on file from the child's health care professional. All bottles and commercial baby food must be labeled with your child's name and dated. Babies will be held for bottle-feeding. Bottles will never be propped and unused formula or breast milk will be disposed of immediately. Formula and Baby food will not be provided.

## Food Allergies

If your child has food allergies parents must notify the center in writing, and provide a doctors note indicating the allergy. Food allergies will be discretely posted in the classroom and the kitchen. In most cases we can accommodate food allergies but substitute items may need to be provided depending on the Allergy.

## Bugspray & Sunscreen

Little Sprouts Academy will apply sunscreen and bug spray that is supplied by parents to students on an as needed basis, up to two times per day. As a natural minded school we do not allow bug sprays containing DEET and highly encourage mineral sunscreen.

## Illness Policy

We are not authorized to care for mildly ill children. Children who are ill are not to be brought to the center. This includes any children who have received fever reducing medication within the last 24 hours. The following are examples of children who are ill:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees F. or higher.
- Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred more than once in the past 24 hours
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or pink eye
- An unidentified rash
- Has not been on a prescribed medication for 24 hours or continue to have symptoms of illness
- Has a constant, thick colored nasal discharge

If a child should become ill or seriously injured while at the center, parents will be contacted immediately. Sick children will be isolated within sight and hearing and made as comfortable as possible. Children should be picked up as soon as

possible, within 1 hour. If the child is not picked up within one hour, the emergency contact person on the child's enrollment form will be called.

Children may return to the center when they are fever and symptom free, have been appropriately treated, or have been given medical approval to return to child care. We will follow procedures on personal cleanliness and communicable diseases stated in licensing rules and the guidelines for exclusion of children from child care as adapted from the Division of Public Health.

## Medication Policy

Little Sprouts Academy will administer only prescription medications as long as parents have completed the Medication Authorization form. We will not administer any over the counter medications.

All medicine must be in its original container, bearing the label with child's name, dosage and administration directions. Additionally, prescription medication will bear the name of the doctor and pharmacy. It will be stored in a medication box that is inaccessible to children. Medicine requiring refrigeration will be kept in a covered, labeled container in the refrigerator.

We will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization. If a dose is missed we will not double up. You will be notified and the missed dosage will be documented in medical log.

## Lost & Found

With so many children working on their independence skills it is sometimes difficult to keep track of clothing and other belongings. It is important that each article of your child's clothing and all personal belongings is clearly labeled to prevent losing items. A lost and found area will be located on the front desk outside of the office. Items that are not claimed after a reasonable amount of time may be kept for school use or donated.

## Holidays

There is a non-denominational Christian religious component to our program and we feel that values and manners are of utmost importance. We offer meal-time prayers, and celebrate religious holidays. We celebrate the following occasions: Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Columbus Day, & Halloween.

## Field Trips

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trip requiring the use of a vehicle. A form outlining the date, time and destination of the field trip will be given to parents. No child may participate in a field trip without the signed permission form from parents. Children who are unable to attend a field trip will be given the option to stay home or remain at the center under staff supervision if possible.

## Invoices & Forms

Each family will have any important forms put in their student's take home folder for review. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask your teacher or the office.

Payments and forms for the office can be placed in the black drop box located in the vestibule or handed directly to office personnel. Receipts will be provided at the end of each year and can also be provided upon request.

## Enrollment Forms

We are required to keep the following forms on file for each child enrolled at Little Sprouts Academy:

1. Admission Application
2. Enrollment Contract
3. Health History & Emergency Care
4. Emergency Contact Form
3. Authorization Form
4. Financial Agreement Form
5. Health Report
6. Immunization form or copy of immunizations
7. Children Under Two Detail Form
8. Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

## Star of the Week

Children will get the chance to be recognized as the star of the week once each school year. Information will be sent home with families 2 weeks prior. A Family member of our star of the week will be invited to eat lunch with our star and participate in closing meeting.

## Show & Share

During the school year there may be pre-arranged show and share days. If your child would like to bring a toy/item from home to share with the class please be aware of the following guidelines:

1. Toys/items may not promote violence in any way (no weapons or figures holding weapons)
2. Children can only bring one toy/item for show and share
3. Toy/item must be small enough to fit in their locker
4. There will be designated time for children to share and play with their toy/item. Please help us by making this understood and placing their item in their locker at the start of the day.

## Meet your Teacher Night

At the beginning of each school year Children & Parents will have the opportunity to meet their Teacher, see their classroom and drop off any personal belongings that will be kept at school.

## Nap Time

Parents and teachers will work together to support the developmentally appropriate nap needs of each child. A consistent nap time routine is crucial to our classroom success. Parents will be expected to have a consistent bedtime routine at home to aid in their child's success at school. Children will be asked to stay on their cot during rest time from 12:30pm-2:30pm. We will not wake children at the conclusion of rest time but will discuss with parents if their child is consistently wanting to sleep much longer than 2:30pm or if they are tired throughout the day.

## Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are held twice each school year. Once in the fall and once in the spring. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time throughout the year.

## Progress Binders

Little Sprouts Academy maintains a progress binder on each student in our classroom. Children are never graded, or compared to each other, rather binders show the individual growth of each child through written narratives and portfolio samples.

## Christmas Concert

Little Sprouts Academy will begin hosting a Christmas concert every year. Parents and relatives will be encouraged to attend to support their Student's progress at Little Sprouts Academy and celebrate Christmas through prepared songs, dances & fine art.

## Graduation Ceremony

At the closing of each school year our toddlers & preschoolers will participate in a graduation ceremony in full caps & gowns. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all that they have accomplished through they year and acknowledge their hard work!

## Observation & School Tour

All families looking to enroll their children at Little Sprouts Academy are highly encouraged to participate in a center tour and observe in a classroom prior to enrolling their child.

## Waiting List

If there are no openings you may have your child placed on our waiting list. You will be contacted as soon as a spot becomes available and will have 2 weeks to enroll your child by turning in their admission application and non-refundable tuition deposit, before the spot is filled by the next child on the waiting list.

## Withdraw or Discharge

Parents must give a 2 week written notice of their intent to withdraw their child(ren), and will be required to pay for those 2 weeks whether or not children continue to attend. All outstanding fees must be paid.

Should Little Sprouts Academy decide to terminate a child's enrollment, the parents will be notified verbally and in writing.

If both Little Sprouts Academy and parents decide to discontinue enrollment a 2 week notice prior to discharge and written agreement must be signed by both parties. Parents will be required to pay for those 2 weeks whether or not children continue to attend. All outstanding fees must be paid.

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read and agree to all guidelines & rules indicated in the parent handbook. I acknowledge that the parent handbook can be accessed at any time by going to:

[www://LittleSproutsAcademyLS.com/forms](http://www://LittleSproutsAcademyLS.com/forms)

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_