



LITTLE SEEDLINGS  
CHILDCARE

# Parent Handbook



BEVERLY HILLS | BIRMINGHAM | BLOOMFIELD | GROSSE POINTE

LIVONIA: CHILDREN OF CASTLE GARDEN | LITTLE ACORNS OF BLOOMFIELD

[WWW.LITTLESEEDLINGSCILDCARE.COM](http://WWW.LITTLESEEDLINGSCILDCARE.COM)

## About this Handbook

This handbook will help to explain our daycare and our operational policies further. We reserve the right to update this handbook at any time, but we will let families know if we do. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment Agreement provided to you. On your Enrollment Agreement, you will be asked to acknowledge your receipt and agreement to the policies outlined in this handbook.

## Philosophy

Welcome to Little Seedlings Childcare. This handbook has been created so that there are no misunderstandings, and so that everyone is aware of the requirements of Little Seedlings Childcare by the State of Michigan, as well as the requirements of you, the parents/guardians. This handbook covers our childcare philosophies, business policies and expectations. Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have.

Little Seedlings is committed to creating a safe, warm, loving home childcare environment for children where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace. We want to help your child increase their confidence, and self-esteem by treating them as unique individuals, and allowing them to express themselves in a variety of facets. We strive to make your child's time away from home the best experience it can be for them as well as you, the parents.

We are committed to supporting families by maintaining open communication. Our objective is to care for your child in the same way we would want someone to care for our own children. In programming activities for the children, we follow the NAEYC recommendations, which follows a play-based learning philosophy. We develop activities centered on stories, songs, math, fine and gross motor skills, circle time, science, music, theater and arts/crafts. We strive to prepare your children for their early school years by exposing them regularly to letters, numbers, colors, shapes, name recognition, and new vocabulary. We supplement our set curriculum with our own crafts and activities that are developmentally and seasonally appropriate.

## Licensing and Accreditation

Our school is state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. Little Seedlings Childcare is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies.

Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. Additionally, Little Seedlings Childcare is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

## NAEYC Accreditation

Little Seedlings Childcare is a nationally accredited program through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation means that Little Seedlings Childcare met NAEYC's ten standards for high-quality early childhood education, has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive internal self-study, invited external professional review to verify compliance, and been found to comply with the Criteria. Little Seedlings Childcare follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct; please go to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org). Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available, and all staff receive a copy. For more information about NAEYC, you can go to NAEYC for Families.

## Behavior Guideline Policy

Our foundational goal at Little Seedlings Childcare is to help our students develop strong social and emotional skills. Instead of discipline, we use guidance. Guidance is about building an encouraging setting for every person in the group. It means helping young children understand they can learn from their mistakes, and it starts with showing them how (NAEYC).

Additionally, socially-emotionally healthy children are better able to establish and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers. To support our students in developing these skills, we take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors.

- **Our environment:** We provide children with exciting materials and engage them in activities that are appropriate for their age to keep them focused and attentive. We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity. Yet, our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs.
- **Our teachers:** We work to develop a strong rapport with each child by speaking to children calmly, especially during redirections. We help children put words to their emotions. We use social stories to help teach our students healthy social skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of young children.
- **Our families:** We communicate regularly with families to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school. We partner with families to offer support, guidance and, if necessary, connect them with experts to help give their children the best foundation for academic and life success.

We encourage understanding for basic safety and fun guidelines with all children in care to (1) be nice to themselves (2) be nice to others (3) be nice to things (furniture, toys, etc.) Easy for all ages to remember.

Along with redirection, Love and Logic reasoning is blended with Janet Lansbury to help support and promote a cooperative community for all children in care. It is our goal to help all children grow emotionally in the most positive and self-directed ways. Promoting self-awareness will help children develop social skills in a safe environment and build foundational skills required for lifelong learning.

Children 3 and under do not get time outs. When necessary, children age 3+ may be asked to “take a break” if necessary. Taking a break is not meant to be a punishment, rather an opportunity to help the child take time to calm down and try again. The cooperative community the children create while playing makes this process almost rarely necessary. However, consistently disruptive behaviors affect the entire group and are unfair to all children in care. If continual behavior problems occur which are not reasonably managed by the care provider and/or puts others at risk, parent(s) may be asked for suggested solutions and/or will be advised of the discipline problem in writing.

## **Enrollment**

The admission process begins with a tour of one or multiple locations. Children are enrolled on a first come, first-serve basis, depending on availability. Children are placed on a waitlist if there is no availability at one or more locations.

Children must be able to benefit from participation in an inclusive group setting. If, after a tour and discussion of the child’s needs, it is determined that Little Seedlings Childcare is not a good fit for the child, Little Seedlings Childcare will attempt to give resources and information about other programs that may benefit the child and family.

### **Vacations and Sick Days**

When you enroll your child at Little Seedlings, you are committing to paying for care for 52 weeks a year regardless of sick days, holidays, or vacation days where your child may not be in attendance.

### **Registration & Requirements for Enrollment**

Upon receipt of the enrollment application and payment of registration fees, the parent receives the enrollment agreement, family handbook, permission forms (photo, CACFP, sunscreen), nutrition forms (if applicable), and health and immunization forms.

On the first day a child attends school, the daycare must have in each child’s file:

- A signed Enrollment Agreement
- A completed set of enrollment paperwork
- Completed medical action plan (if applicable)

**PLEASE NOTE:** We are required to have each of these forms in our files in order to maintain our license to operate. State law requires us to exclude from school any student whose files are incomplete until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

## Enrollment Deposit

Upon enrolling your child to Little Seedlings, you will receive an invoice for an enrollment deposit via Brightwheel, which is applied toward your child's last two weeks of care. Your payment plan will be turned off two weeks prior to your child's last days with us. If your child has been with us for longer than one year, then there will be an adjustment difference in the deposit amount, which parents will be expected to pay. This increase is due to our annual tuition increase. (Example: original enrollment deposit (2 weeks' tuition) is \$639.20. The following year, the enrollment deposit is \$671.20. Parents would pay the difference of those two amounts (\$32).

## Unenrollment

Eventually, all of our Little Seedlings leave for various reasons. Sometimes it is for preschool, a family is moving, or a job change. **We require four weeks written notice**, which can be done via email or Brightwheel. Families are responsible for paying for the last month of care, the enrollment deposit will cover the last 2 weeks of your child's tuition.

## Your Child's First Day

On the first day, we ask that you send in the items listed below. Please make sure to label each item with your child's name.

### Infants:

- Diapers (name labeled on outside of package)
- 2 packs of wipes (first and last name labeled)
- Diaper cream (first and last name labeled)
- Sleep sack (if your child uses one)
- Pacifiers (if your child uses them)
- At least 3-4 pairs of extra clothes including socks
- Outside wear:
  - Winter: Hat, mittens, outdoor bunting/onesie or coat, appropriate shoes if not in onesie for winter.
  - Summer: bathing suit & sun hat
- 3-4 cloth bibs
- At least 2 bottles (first and last name labeled)
- Formula container (first and last name labeled) OR breast milk (first and last name labeled)—either brought every day or you can bring frozen bags for us to keep in the freezer. We like to have 1-2 servings in the freezer either way just in case.
- We have crib sheets, but you are welcome to bring your own. We have mini cribs for the babies.
- 4x6 picture of your family to put on your child's cubby. This can help if your child is ever missing you and helps build a sense of community with all of our children! (Does not have to be brought on the first day, but whenever you get a chance!)

Toddlers:

- Diapers (name labeled on outside of package)
- 2 packs of wipes (first and last name labeled)
- Diaper cream (first and last name labeled)
- Pacifiers (if your child uses them)
- At least 3-4 pairs of extra clothes including socks and underwear
- Outside wear:
  - Winter: Hat, mittens, outdoor bunting/onesie or coat, snow boots
  - Summer: bathing suit, sun hat, towel, sunblock
- Water bottle/sippy cup to keep at daycare (first and last name labeled)
- Cot sheet, toddler pillow, blanket, and lovey (if they have one)
- 4x6 picture of your family to put on your child's cubby. This can help if your child is ever missing you and helps build a sense of community with all of our children! (Does not have to be brought on the first day, but whenever you get a chance!)

\*Clothing should be updated periodically each season!

***Please remove your shoes when you walk past the entry carpet. Indoor "soft soled" house shoes are allowed for indoors only.***

## Hours of Operation

Little Seedlings Childcare is open from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

### Important closure days

- March 29- Good Friday
- April 1- Easter Monday
- May 27- Memorial Day
- July 1-5- Independence Day
- August 30 & September 2- Labor Day
- October 31- Halloween (\*We will be open, but will close at 3:30 PM for that day only).
- November 27- Teacher Professional Development Day
- November 28 & 29- Thanksgiving
- December 23-January 1- Christmas Break (We will reopen Thursday, January 2, 2025)

*The teachers at Little Seedlings are paid a weekly salary, and so the holidays are days that we require our Little Seedling families to pay for, even though we will be closed.*

*When the licensee of the home goes on vacation, they are under no obligation from the state of Michigan to shut down. They will, however, notify parents ahead of time that they will be leaving their children in the care of her teachers. These will be teachers that you and your children will already be familiar with, and they will hold the required CPR and screening requirements mandated by the State of Michigan. Little Seedlings will always be in the appropriate adult/child ratio.*

***It is always our priority to be dependable care for our families, however, unexpected circumstances do arise. In the event we are not able to maintain the child to teacher ratio due to teacher illnesses, we will need to close. We do our best to exhaust all teacher options before coming to this decision.***

**\*Snow Days:** If the two closest school districts to the home are closed (Birmingham/Bloomfield/Royal Oak, Livonia/Plymouth-Canton/Northville, Grosse Pointe/Lake Shore/Detroit), we will also be closed. Depending on the severity, and timeline of the weather, a delayed start or early pickup is possible. We do our best to utilize this option over closing for the entire day. The safety of our families and teachers is extremely important to us.

**\*Power/ Utility Outages:** Little Seedlings is unable to operate without utilities (Electric/Gas/Water). If Little Seedlings were to ever lose these services during the day, we will alert families immediately. We allow one hour for services to be restored before we will require all children to be picked up.

## Arrival and Departures

Children must be signed in and out upon their arrival and departure daily using the Brightwheel App. We ask that if your child is not going to attend care as per usual, that you inform us by 8:00 am. This will help us plan activities for the day. When your child does not attend daycare, you must message on Brightwheel to let us know the reason – if it is a communicable illness, we are required to record this in case of other cases breaking out.

If someone besides a parent will be picking up your child, please let a teacher know upon arrival or through the Brightwheel App. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child and we were not informed of this change, we will have to contact you to confirm that this pick up is permitted, as well as see a picture ID of that individual to confirm their identity.

If a family is repeatedly late, our operating times are simply “not a good fit” for their family, we reserve the right to terminate care. Late fees must be paid in cash/Venmo before care is given the following day.

***Late pickup fees: 5:01 pm - 5:10 pm \$10 per child. After 5:10 pm \$2 per minute/per child***

## Snack and Mealtimes

Healthy, balanced meals are just what growing bodies need! Breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snacks are provided to all students daily. Lunch will always include a protein, a grain, some fruit, and a vegetable. All children under 2 will be offered whole milk at lunchtime. Children over 2 will be offered 1% milk unless a parent prefers otherwise. We will make sure our lunches are healthy, while still being attractive to your child to eat. We encourage the children to try new foods regularly, but we will never force your child to eat anything.

Due to the potential risk, children will not be laid down to rest with a bottle/sippy cup, nor will the bottle/sippy cup be propped. Children cannot walk around the classroom with their bottle/sippy cup. We will work with our families to ensure our students are offered fluids from an open cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.

## **Special Dietary Needs**

We can provide allergy-friendly alternatives with documentation from a doctor for students with food allergies or intolerances. If you would like to provide your child meals from home, please reach out to us to discuss. If you choose to provide meals from home, please make sure all foods are cut appropriately so as not to be a potential choking hazard (ex- grapes should be quartered). Even if your child can eat the food without issue, we have to keep all the children in our care safe. We ask that you not send snack foods, candy, or gum with your child as this can cause difficulties within the classroom.

**\*Infants must be able to successfully accept bottles when they begin at Little Seedlings.**

## **Rest Time**

All children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep; however, we have a very busy and stimulating morning, so most toddlers and preschool-aged children will nap when given a relaxing and quiet space to do so. If a child does not fall asleep after a short rest, they are given quiet activities within the nap room. We will not require a child who is not tired to sleep, we also will not deny sleep to a child who is tired. If a child seems to be outgrowing their nap, they may have outgrown our program.

There are always teachers within the nap room during naptime observing by sight and sound. We do not use mirrors, video, or sound monitors in place of sight and sound supervision.

## **Personal Belongings**

To prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, please label ALL items brought from home with your child's name. Within each classroom, each child has a hook and/or cubby assigned to them. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

## **Clothing and Shoes**

A full day at our school includes fun activities like singing, painting, playing indoors and out, dancing, and eating, so we recommend easy-fitting, washable clothes.

Children should come dressed in comfortable clothing that parents are comfortable with them getting dirty. A spare change of clothes is required for all children in case of soiling of clothes. Children under the age of 3, and those who are potty-training require at least two changes of clothing (including socks). We want to keep your children happy and comfortable.

Please also remember that whenever weather permits, the children are taken outside for 1-2 hours per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable and don't miss out on outdoor play



- Two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. Clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name
- Appropriately layered clothing to keep warm in cold weather, including mittens or gloves, caps, hoods, or hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, socks, and warm, waterproof outerwear
- Sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection or clothing that protects skin

### **Diapers and Wipes**

Parents of children in diapers and of children who are toilet training must provide an ongoing supply of diapers, wipes, and additional necessary clothing. If your child is wearing pull-ups, it is helpful to send in the type with Velcro sides. This allows us to help your child change without having to take off their pants and shoes. Cubbies and coat hooks should be checked daily for items that need to be laundered.

### **Belongings from Home**

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day. Special objects such as a blanket, soft toy, or a stuffed animal are okay for rest time. Please leave other toys and belongings at home, as bringing a treasured object to school can create tension between children and stress for children and staff if something is lost or misplaced.

Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, shields, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at Little Seedlings Childcare. All personal electronics (except augmentative communication devices) brought to school must be stored in the "off" position in the child's cubby. We cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged personal belongings.

## **Communication and Family Involvement**

### **Brightwheel App**

We communicate with parents using the Brightwheel App throughout the day and ask that both parents have the app downloaded to their phone. You will receive updates with information and photos of your child throughout the day. Expect about 2 photos a day and messages throughout the day. Do not feel that you need to respond to each message, however, you are certainly welcome to. This is a little window into your child's day that we are happy to share with you. Please do not turn notifications off on the Brightwheel app. We pride ourselves on our responsiveness to parent phone calls and Brightwheel messages. We expect this same level of responsiveness from all our parents when we are contacting you.

***All communication & correspondence with Little Seedlings teachers regarding the care of the child should be done via Brightwheel. The only time text messaging is permissible is when you are corresponding with a teacher about private babysitting.***

## Health and Safety

We all know that safety comes first! At Little Seedlings Childcare, our first goal is to keep children safe, which starts with paying attention to every detail - big and small. Every day, you can be confident that your child is in the very best hands.

### Illness Policy

We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from school will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your child. Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea and/or vomiting, have nasal mucous discharge that isn't clear, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child needs to stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at school.

Little Seedlings Childcare has established guidelines in accordance with state child care law and other best practices concerning sick children. In case of a communicable disease or condition, and at the discretion of Little Seedlings Childcare, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children. If the child's health deteriorates at some point in the day, the parent will be contacted to come to pick them up.

If a child is too sick to attend daycare, please keep them home. We do not have a "sick room", and the best place for a child to be recuperating from an illness is at home. If your child experiences any of the following, please keep them home until these symptoms are gone, or your child is well enough to participate in normal everyday activities:

- Fever greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees F
- Excessive drainage from the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears
- Red discoloration to the whites of the eye(s)
- Skin rashes as they are difficult to diagnose unless seen by a physician
- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing or a deep, hacking cough
- Yellow discharge from the eyes
- An unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing
- Lice or nits
- If your child(ren) is sent to daycare with any of the above listed symptoms, or develops these symptoms during the day, they will be sent home. **Children should NEVER be medicated and sent to daycare (i.e., given Tylenol/Motrin to break fever)**

***Please arrange for back-up care when your child is sick.***

### Medications

All medications are stored in a closet that is inaccessible to children. Children are not given any

medication without a parent's written consent using the State of Michigan LARA BCAL-1243 permission form. This form must be completed by the parent for each medication. An interruption in medication will require a new permission form. All medications must be in their original bottles with original labels. Teachers will indicate to parents in written form the date, time and dosage of medicine given at each administration.

Since this form must be completed before medication can be administered, we are unable to give your child a dose of Motrin or Tylenol if they happen to need it unexpectedly during the day.

For prescription medication, only the directions on the bottle will be accepted for administering the medication. And in all instances staff need to know when the child received his/her last dosage of the medication, to ensure medication is given at appropriate times consistently. With any prescription antibiotics, children may not return to care until they've had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious, and are ready to participate comfortably in the full child care day.

*It is always helpful if you can provide Little Seedlings Childcare a doctor's note, when applicable.*

### **Insect Bites and Bee Stings**

We encourage families to provide bug spray, bracelets, stickers, and any other type of bug repellent in order to prevent your child from getting insect bites while they are playing outdoors.

*\*In the instance that your child is stung by an insect (bee, wasp, etc.), you will be notified immediately, and asked to pick up your child from daycare and to monitor them closely.*

## **Topical Creams and Sunscreen**

Parents and guardians may give a Little Seedlings Childcare standing authorization to apply over-the-counter topical ointments, topical teething ointment or gel, lotions, creams, and powders, such as sunscreen diapering creams, baby lotion, and baby powder, to their child, when needed.

The over-the-counter topical medications form must be completed before we can administer these medications. Please apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at daycare. Little Seedlings Childcare staff can reapply sunscreen in the afternoon before going outside.

## **Cleaning and Sanitation**

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at Little Seedlings Childcare. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried daily upon arrival and departure.

## Toilet Training

We are more than happy to encourage potty training, as long as the child shows signs of readiness. One of the most important signs of readiness is when a child can communicate the need to use the potty. We strongly encourage parents to officially kick off potty training with a three-day home training approach. (We will be happy to provide more information on this). For sanitary reasons, underwear should not be worn without a waterproof layer until accidents are reduced to a manageable amount for our teachers to successfully handle in a group care setting.

## Biting

Biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for toddlers, however every child deserves to feel safe in our care. When a child develops a biting habit, the teachers will be sure to communicate each incident in full detail to parents. Each incident will be documented on Brightwheel with an accompanying photo. We have multiple methods of working with children to overcome this behavior, and have successfully worked through this stage with multiple children. Unfortunately, if the biting becomes frequent and presents an extreme safety issue to the other children in our care, we will need to work with the family to find alternate childcare arrangements.

## Pacifier Use

Children are allowed pacifiers as a source of comfort throughout the day as needed, and also at nap time. Parents and teachers will need to work together when the time comes to stop/limit pacifier use. When that time comes, we request that parents and teachers use the same established pacifier rules at home/ school to provide consistency. (ex: pacifier only at nap time)

## Mandated Reporting Requirements

It is our mission to ensure all children in our center are safe and well cared for, not only while they are at our center, but always. Michigan law requires everyone who works directly with children to report suspicions or evidence of child neglect or abuse to local law enforcement. Those who fail to report can be held accountable under the law. The law prohibits interference with an individual's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Our daycare will offer full cooperation during the investigation of the reported incident.

If there is any abuse or neglect suspected of any children in our care, we are required to report it to Child Protective Services (State of Michigan). Please be aware also that children will NOT be released under any circumstances to impaired individuals. If we have reason to believe that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.

## School Policies

### **Babysitting**

Teachers often babysit privately for Little Seedling families. This is done totally separate and with no affiliation with Little Seedlings Childcare. All payments and correspondence should be kept separate.

### **Vacations and Sick Days**

When you enroll your child at Little Seedlings of Beverly Hills, you are committing to paying for care for 52 weeks a year regardless of sick days, holidays, or vacation days where your child may not be in attendance.

### **Summer Care**

This policy is for families who would like to keep their child home during the summer months (typically parents who are teachers). If we are able to find a child to enroll for the summer only, we will still require a good faith holding fee of \$50 a week. This is to ensure your child will return in the fall. If we are unable to find a child to take that summer spot, families will have to choose to either pay the full tuition rate throughout the summer months, or unenroll at the beginning of summer with no guarantee of an opening in the fall.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We love birthdays here at Little Seedlings! We will sing the “Happy Birthday” song and celebrate with decorations! You are more than welcome to send in treats (cookies, cupcakes, brownies, popsicles, etc.) for your child to celebrate with their friends. Please be mindful of allergies and double check with your child’s teacher beforehand regarding appropriate treats to bring in.

### **Termination of Contract**

Unfortunately, there may be times when a family childcare setting is simply not a good fit for A family or child. Little Seedlings reserves the right to terminate care at will.

## Code of Ethical Conduct

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, please go to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).