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STAFF HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO LITTLE ONES

Welcome to Little Ones Preschool! The staff at Little Ones is a wonderful group of teachers with a strong tradition of community service and education. Staff members at Little Ones inherently understand, love and respect children. They work to bring out the best in each child, try every approach to meet each child's needs and inspire children to learn.

This handbook has been developed so that all Little Ones' staff will have clear and consistent information concerning his/her role in our program. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly and familiarize yourself with our program, regulations and teacher responsibilities. Little Ones may, at any time, without having to consult anyone, and without anyone's agreement, change, suspend or discontinue any or all such handbook policies, benefits or procedures (except the "At Will" policy), in whole or in part, with or without notice, and shall make all final decisions as to their meaning and application.

STATE LICENSING

Little Ones is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and is designed to meet or exceed licensing standards.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION



Little Ones is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This national association has developed standards that define and recognize high quality early childhood programs. The accreditation process is a rigorous, voluntary process, which includes an intensive self-study involving children, parents and staff; collection of information; and classroom observations by a NAEYC representative. To receive accreditation, a program must meet the strict criteria that have been outlined by NAEYC. The process carefully considers all aspects of the program-including relationships with children, curriculum, teaching, assessment of children's growth and development, health and safety, teachers, partnerships with families and the community, physical environment, and leadership and management. When a program is accredited, the program has made a commitment to excellence for young children and families. Since this prestigious recognition is not granted to all early childhood programs, Little Ones is proud to display the NAEYC torch.

EXCELERATE ILLINOIS

Little Ones also carries the Gold Circle of Quality from ExceleRate Illinois, the state's quality rating and improvement system for early learning and development providers. Programs at the gold level have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and staff training and

education. ExceleRate Illinois establishes standards for helping young children develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills and take steps to make positive changes. Little Ones is proud of this accomplishment as well.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Little Ones Preschool is a nondenominational, private preschool, which has served young children and families in the Northbrook area since 1966. Little Ones was founded by Patricia Peifer and Nora Robertson, two visionary women who were trained at the British Infant School in England. They created a curriculum that allowed young children to learn and flourish in a nurturing environment through "Praise, Love, and Approval." Mrs. Peifer continued on after Mrs. Robertson's retirement, and in 1986 she chose teacher Wendie Ihrke for the directorship for 10 more years. In 1995, Mrs. Ihrke brought Deborah Lanich on as director. Mrs. Lanich had often visited the school since 1982 as the state licensing representative and was familiar with the program and philosophy. In March of 2000, Deborah and her staff received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In December 2000, Sheree Feldman took over the directorship of Little Ones. Sheree has a Masters Degree in Speech and Language Development, with emphasis in Early Childhood, and had been an Early Childhood Director/Educator since 1987. A resident of Northbrook with 3 children of her own, she knew the challenges and joys of raising young children. Sheree promised to continue the nurturing, developmental program established in 1966 by Mrs. Peifer and Mrs. Robertson and promised to continue to live up to the high standards set forth by NAEYC. In January of 2015, Sheree and her staff received the Gold Circle of Quality from ExceleRate Illinois, which recognized Little Ones as having met the highest quality of standards in Early Childhood education.

Little Ones' curriculum follows the Creative Curriculum guidelines and focuses on exploration and experimentation within a play and social environment, while integrating the benchmarks of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Daily activities include facilitated play through learning centers, creative art experiences, music, movement, dramatic play, story time/literature, math & science, gross and small motor activities and outdoor/indoor gross motor play. There is a healthy balance of structured and unstructured activities during each preschool session. Through play and problem solving, children learn the basic skills necessary to achieve—academically, creatively, socially, physically and emotionally. Little Ones believes that children grow, experience and learn about the world in different ways and at their own pace. All children are welcome. Enrollment is open to all children without regard to race, religion, gender, or

national origin. The curriculum provides experiences that expose children to a variety of cultural experiences that encourage the development of values such as respect for diversity, giving, sharing and learning to be good friends. The children's days are filled with rich learning experiences that will make the transition from classroom to classroom and from program to program, including, kindergarten, an easy one.

This kind of educational experience begins with mutual understanding between the family and school. The staff works to help children develop the skills and self-confidence necessary for living in a complex, changing world. The teachers also understand that to be truly meaningful, educational experiences should support and enhance parents' relationships with their children. A vital part of the teachers' role is to communicate and work with families to develop mutual, realistic expectations for learning and behavior.

LITTLE ONES PROGRAMS

Little Ones offers programs for children 18 months to 5 years of age. The following programs are offered: adult child classes for children 12-35 months of age and preschool programs for children 2-5 years of age.

Little Ones also offers lunchtime enrichment programs for 3-5 year olds. These classes offer children the opportunity to explore their interests and talents. Offerings include learning and movement activities, as well as a snack/lunch that has been prepared in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. Children in the morning and afternoon 3-5-year-old programs can enjoy these options. Care is provided during the transition from program to program.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

HIRING

Little Ones is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of color, race, gender, nationality, religious affiliation, age, marital status, veteran status, etc. Salaries are based on professional qualifications, e.g., degree and credit hours in education, as well as years of experience teaching preschoolers.

Little Ones complies with the U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Services requirements for determining eligibility for employment in the U.S. New staff also serves a probationary period of 2 months. During that time, the Director assesses the employee's physical and psychological competence for working with the children, families and other program staff.

At hiring each staff member is expected to provide the school with the following paperwork:

- (1) EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION/RESUME
- (2) SIGNED TEACHER AGREEMENT (to be done yearly)
- (3) THREE CURRENT REFERENCES. These must include the date and full name, address, and phone number of the person giving the reference. These letters may be professional or character references but may not be written by relatives or current employees of Little Ones.
- (4) OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS
- (5) DCFS MEDICAL FORM. When hired, the employee must provide a medical that is not more than 6 months old, that is signed by a physician licensed in the State of Illinois and that includes the physician's State License number. The medical must include a TB test with results completed within the last 6 months as well. A TB test can be obtained from a regular physician, OB/GYN or a free local clinic. Staff must also have documentation of one DTAP and 2 MMR's or proof of immunity to MMR. **An updated medical and TB test must be supplied every 2 years.**
- (6) DCFS #508 FORM
- (7) CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF THE DCFS MANDATED REPORTER CLASS WITH SIGNED MANDATED REPORTER FORM
- (8) CURRENT CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION OF FOOD HANDLER COURSE
- (9) CURRENT CPR AND FIRST AID CERTIFICATE FOR INFANT, CHILD & ADULT
- (10) AUTHORIZATION FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK. Employees who have not been fingerprinted must be fingerprinted at DCFS authorized facility, which the Director will help locate. Employees who have been previously fingerprinted need to complete a transfer form to have their fingerprints transferred to Little Ones. Employment is contingent on a cleared background check.
- (11) STATE & FEDERAL TAX FORMS
- (12) I-9 FORM (and copy of 2 valid ID'S).
- (13) NEW EMPLOYEE DCFS SIGN-OFF
- (14) AGREEMENT to comply with Staff and Parent Handbook policies (to be done yearly)
- (15) SUBSTITUTE AGREEMENT (if applicable) (to be done yearly if applicable)
- (16) EMERGENCY CONTACTS (to be done yearly)
- (17) SIGN-UP OR REFUSAL FOR SIMPLE IRA (to be done yearly)
- (18) REGISTRATION ON GATEWAYS OPPORTUNITY SITE (to be done yearly)

The Director will keep an accurate, confidential personnel file for each staff member. This file will include all documentation required upon hiring, as well as records of staff evaluations and self-evaluations, in-service records, and records pertaining to any disciplinary actions. Personnel records are the property of the school. Access to personnel records is limited to

the staff member and the Director. All files are kept in a locked cabinet in the office to ensure confidentiality. It is every teacher's responsibility to update their Gateway Training Membership and ensure that the Director receives any in-service training records, proof of any continuing education and required medical updates. **Please note that all new teaching staff are required to complete the New Staff Orientation before they will be allowed to work with the children.**

Flexibility- When hired, each staff member is assigned a specific room and will be given an initial schedule that meets the needs of Little Ones at that time. Due to the critical importance of proper staffing in the classrooms, the Director may need to change a teacher's assigned schedule or room to meet the programmatic requirements of the program. The Director appreciates staff's flexibility to the needs of the program.

ORIENTATION/TRAINING/STAFF MEETINGS

Throughout the year, there are a variety of opportunities for professional growth. These are provided for all staff, including substitutes, and include the following:

- Fall staff orientation
- New staff orientation (required for all new staff before working with the children)
- Monthly staff meetings
- CPR and First Aid Training
- Early Childhood conferences such as "NAEYC" (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) & "CAEYC" (The Chicago Association for the Education for Young Children)
- Other inside and outside training opportunities (based on needs and desire of staff)
- Opportunities for coaching and mentoring
- Continued work on positive communication and teamwork
- 5 hrs. of Gateway approved training

Note: The Department of Children and Family Services requires a minimum of 15 clock hours of continuing professional training per year, and ExceleRate Illinois requires at least 5 hours of Gateway approved trainings per year. Little Ones offers staff time to complete staff training and expects staff to be committed to continuing education, as each teacher's participation makes us all a better staff.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR SUPPORTING SPECIAL NEEDS

All teachers and assistant teachers will have specialized college-level course work or professional development training that prepares them to work with children who have special needs. The course work or training may include core courses that cover these topics or courses addressing these topics specifically.

The coursework and training includes:

1. Family-centered practice;
2. Atypical development and common health problems;
3. IDEA and other applicable laws;
4. Children's and families' rights under these laws;
5. Roles and responsibilities related to the IEP and IFSP;
6. Strategies for supporting inclusion;
7. Strategies for modifying and adapting curriculum, schedules, materials, and instruction to meet individual needs;
8. The referral and assessment process; and
9. Community supports and resources.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

The teaching staff is encouraged to continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and to work to improve the conditions of children and families within the program, the local community or region, and beyond. Teaching staff is encouraged to participate in formal and informal ways in local, state, or regional public awareness activities related to early care by joining groups, attending meetings, or sharing information with others both at and outside the program. This is accomplished by providing staff with information concerning the following:

- Supporting and responding to current issues and concerns
- Attendance at annual NAEYC conference
- Attendance at annual CAEYC conference
- Attendance at annual GOEYC conference
- Attendance at local workshops, e.g. Illinois Action for Children, Children's Home and Aid
- Working cooperatively with Northbrook library
- Director's monthly meetings with other local Early Childhood Directors to share ideas about best practices and staff professional development
- Completing Gateway approved trainings
- Working closely with Congregation Beth Shalom to coordinate community outreach

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Staff members are hired for the school year, which begins with set up and orientation the week before Labor Day and runs through the week of Memorial Day with clean up. Staff training and set up take place the week before Labor Day, and children begin their classes the day after Labor Day. All teachers work as teams. Classes are taught by two or three teachers/assistant teachers depending on the size and the needs of the class.

Teachers:

General Description: Teachers are responsible for the care and education of a group of children as part of a teaching team. Teachers plan and implement the curriculum, assess the needs of each individual child and work with parents to promote healthy development. Teachers report directly to the Director.

Essential Functions: Teachers must have sufficient mobility and strength to be able to lift a 40lb. child off the floor/ground, be able to be at eye level with the children, and be able to quickly reach an endangered or hurt child at a distance of 60 ft. Teachers must be able to speak fluent English. Teachers must have vision and hearing adequate to maintain visual and/or auditory contact with the children at all times.

Primary Responsibilities:

To establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment:

- (1) Maintain appropriate room arrangement to support the goals of the classroom.
- (2) Maintain a safe environment. Notify Director of any hazards observed. This includes making sure that there is no hot coffee/tea in the building and that liquids or foods hotter than 110 degrees are kept out of children's reach.
- (3) Supervise children primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight, e.g., in the bathroom.
- (4) Maintain an orderly learning environment. Leave classroom and closet clean and organized for the next class.
- (5) Promote healthy eating practices.
- (6) Communicate necessary information to Director and parents to ensure safety and well being of all children.
- (7) In case of injury of a child, administer first aid, complete accident report, inform Director, inform parent(s), and return signed report to Director to be placed in child's file.
- (8) Take attendance daily and be aware of the number of children in his/her care at all times.
- (9) Ensure that all children are signed out daily by authorized pick-up people.
- (10) Maintain proper sanitation rules and practice universal precautions.
- (11) Post and closely monitor all allergy alerts pertaining to children in the class.

To support social and emotional development and provide positive guidance:

- (1) Create an environment and plan activities that are conducive to developing positive self-esteem and social skills.
- (2) Plan and implement culturally diverse experiences.

- (3) Use and promote positive guidance techniques. (See Behavior Guidance)
- (4) Provide a wide variety of activities that promote creativity, individual expression and problem solving.
- (5) Establish routines with smooth transitions.
- (6) Communicate with children with respect to their developmental level.
- (7) Encourage children to be independent.
- (8) Encourage children to recognize and express their feelings appropriately.
- (9) Create and maintain a clean and orderly classroom that sets consistent, realistic limits and expectations.
- (10) Relate to children at eye level.

To create an environment that supports physical and intellectual development:

- (1) Provide a balance between child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities.
- (2) Provide a balance between quiet and active learning activities.
- (3) Provide an environment that facilitates learning at a variety of levels.
- (4) Involve children in planning and implementing learning activities.
- (5) Provide integrated curriculum that meets the needs of each individual child.
- (6) Plan and implement experiences that promote development of language and emergent literacy.
- (7) Plan and implement activities that promote learning of number concepts.
- (8) Use equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor activities that promote physical development.
- (9) Use the outdoors as a part of the learning environment and interact with the children when outdoors.
- (10) Be sensitive and responsive to individual needs and developmental differences of each child.
- (11) Focus on activities that provide the process rather than the product.

To establish positive and productive relationships with families:

- (1) Promote communication with parents through regular informal contact, especially children in your primary caregiver group.
- (2) Encourage parent participation in classroom and program, e.g., volunteer days and special days.
- (3) Provide methods for families to share their familial and cultural backgrounds.
- (4) Use informal and formal (conversations during arrival and dismissal, parent conferences, phone conferences) methods of communication to express an understanding of each child as an individual.
- (5) Relate observations of children to parents and offer support for dealing with children at different developmental stages.
- (6) Provide positive end of the day communications and save concerns for time that is set up for the parent(s) outside of classtime.

- (7) Build and maintain children's anecdotal records, portfolios and developmental forms in order to prepare for parent teacher conferences.
- (8) Develop an understanding of and respect for different cultures and parenting styles.
- (9) Build relationships by attending all family programs and parent orientations.
- (10) Remember to suggest that parents sign-out book bags as needed, e.g., new baby, death, divorce, potty training, moving, etc.
- (11) Offer the possibility of a translator if needed to be able to communicate effectively.

To maintain a commitment to professionalism/community:

- (1) Promote the program's philosophy and educational objectives.
- (2) Meet with teaching team at least weekly to plan curriculum and to discuss children's growth, development and individual children's needs
- (3) Support the program's code of ethical conduct (NAEYC).
- (4) Develop partnerships with community resources, e.g., social workers, school districts, therapists, etc.
- (5) Arrange substitute coverage when absence is unavoidable.
- (6) Engage in on-going professional development.
- (7) Attend staff meetings, curriculum-planning meetings, and in-service training provided at Little Ones.
- (8) Support the professional growth of other staff members by sharing materials and information and providing helpful feedback and encouragement.
- (9) Meet annually with the Director to review growth and set goals (based on self assessment and Director evaluation)
- (10) Be on time and prepared for class.
- (10) Keep personnel file complete and up-to-date.
- (11) Resolve conflicts professionally.
- (12) Integrate preschool benchmarks of The Illinois Early Learning Standards.
- (13) Comply with and maintain all licensing and NAEYC standards.

Qualifications: A teacher must be at least 18 years of age and have a Bachelors Degree in ECE or a related field with at least 36 semester hours in early childhood education, child development, elementary education or early childhood special education that encompasses the following: child development and learning of children birth through kindergarten; family and community relationships; observing, documenting, and assessing young children; teaching and learning; and professional practices and development, including relevant field-based experience.

Assistant Teachers:

General Description: Assistant teachers have the same responsibilities as teachers with the exception that they take direction from the teacher(s) and they are not responsible for documentation of children's progress or parent communication. The assistant teacher's prime responsibility is to support the teacher and to keep the children safe. Assistant teachers report directly to the Director.

Essential Functions: See Teacher's Descriptions

Primary Responsibilities: See Teacher's Descriptions

Qualifications: An assistant teacher must be at least 18 years of age and have at least an associate's degree in ECE or a related field (60 college credits), with at least 30 semester hours in early childhood education, child development, elementary education or early childhood special education that encompasses the following: child development and learning of children birth through kindergarten; family and community relationships; observing, documenting, and assessing young children; teaching and learning; and professional practices and development. If the assistant teacher needs additional credit hours, then s/he must be willing to enroll in classes and gain the required hours.

Student Aides/Volunteers:

General Description: Student aides/volunteers assist teachers in implementing the program. An aide/volunteer works under the direct supervision of his/her supervising teachers at all times.

Essential Functions: To support the teaching staff

Primary Responsibilities: Varies according to what position the aide/volunteer fills.

Qualifications: An aide/volunteer must be at least 18 years of age and qualify for the position s/he is filling.

Substitutes:

General Description: Substitutes assist the teachers in implementing the program. A substitute works under the direct supervision of his/her supervising teachers at all times.

Essential Functions: To support the teaching staff

Primary Responsibilities: Varies according to what position the substitute fills, as well as educational background, experience and length of time substituting at Little Ones

Qualifications: A substitute must be at least 18 years of age and qualify for the position s/he is filling.

Director:

General Description: A Director is responsible for implementation of the school's mission and for the development, implementation and maintenance of the program to provide quality care and education for the children.

Essential Functions: A Director must be able to speak fluent English and have vision and hearing adequate to observe and supervise children and staff. S/He must have sufficient mobility and strength to be able to lift a 40lb. child off the floor/ground, be able to be at eye level with the children, and be able to quickly reach an endangered or hurt child at a distance of 60 ft.

Primary Responsibilities:

To select and support appropriate personnel:

- (1) Solicit, interview and select staff appropriate to implement the school's mission.
- (2) Supervise the staff utilizing a staff development model including setting goals, identifying resources, monitoring progress and annual evaluations.
- (3) Complete annual review of wages and salary scale.
- (4) Complete periodic review of personnel policies.
- (5) Plan and facilitate monthly staff meetings.
- (6) Develop and implement in-service training programs based on staff's evaluations, needs and interests, program evaluations and Director observations.

To oversee the implementation of a quality program:

- (1) Ensure the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment.
- (2) Maintain an on-going program of activities that promote the optimal growth and development of the children.
- (3) Schedule assignments of staff.
- (4) Ensure substitute teaching is arranged as needed.
- (5) Supervise the ordering and storage of supplies and equipment.
- (6) Maintain all records in accordance with school and government policies including: personnel records, medical records, staff evaluations, children's records, and attendance records of children and staff, etc.
- (7) Ensure that the school complies with DCFS, NAEYC and fire and sanitation regulations.
- (8) Arrange for enrollment of children consistent with the policy of equal racial, cultural, and economic opportunity.

To maintain the school in a solvent financial position:

- (1) Ensure the school's financial solvency by setting the budget and monitoring expenditures.
- (2) Review fee schedules annually and adjust as appropriate to the community.
- (3) Collect all tuition and fees.
- (4) Ensure appropriate payment of bills and payroll.
- (5) Keep accurate and complete financial records.

To maintain positive community relations:

- (1) Establish and maintain positive relations with parents.
- (2) Represent school to the following: the community and government agencies, childcare and education coalitions, and other local businesses.
- (3) Keep informed about public policy issues and community needs as they relate to early childhood education.

Qualifications: A Director must be at least 18 years of age and have at least a Bachelors Degree in ECE or a related field with 24 semester hours in Early childhood, child development, elementary education, or early childhood special education and 9 semester hours in administration, leadership or management. If these qualifications are not met, the Director must provide documentation of having achieved a combination of formal education, experience and relevant training equaling at least 100 points by the values assigned to meet the qualifications identified in the NAEYC Accreditation Criteria. A Director must also have training and/or experience relevant to early childhood program administration with demonstrated skill in human resource development and financial management.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

COMPENSATION

Little Ones recognizes the importance of fair compensation in attracting and retaining a high-quality staff. Compensation is set according to a salary scale based on level of education, number of credit hours in education, years of experience, and performance appraisals. Every effort is made to continue increasing the amount of money available for staff compensation and benefits. Each staff member is paid according to the number of sessions that s/he teaches each month. Payment is made on the last day of the month, with the exception of the month of May when payment is made after cleanup. Staff will receive a pay date schedule at the beginning of the year. All teachers are paid for the number of extra hours that are indicated in their teacher agreement. Teachers will not be paid for any sessions that they do not fulfill.

BENEFITS

- (1) Retirement Plan-Little Ones offers a Simple Retirement Plan option. Any staff member (excluding substitutes and enrichment staff) may choose to be a part of this program at any time, and Little Ones will match 3% of the employee's yearly salary. See the director for more details.
- (2) Support in researching professional education and training, as well as salary increases based on credit hours earned.
- (3) At the end of the school year, staff members will be reimbursed 10% of the cost of tuition for any of their children who attended Little Ones. Staff members must complete the full school year to be eligible for this benefit.
- (4) Workman's Compensation Insurance is carried by Little Ones and covers injury or illness arising out of and in the course of employment. Any accident or illness resulting from bodily injury incurred while working should be reported immediately to the Director.
- (5) Social Security and Medicare benefits provide a source of supplemental retirement income. Federal law requires that each staff member contribute a certain percentage of each paycheck for Social Security and Medicare. Little Ones matches the contribution dollar for dollar and forwards the total amount to the federal government to be credited to the social security account of each staff member.
- (6) Unemployment Compensation Insurance is a benefit for which Little Ones pays the entire cost. Payments are made from this fund to unemployed persons who qualify under the provisions of the law.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Each teacher is eligible to receive a performance appraisal and salary review once a year. Salary increases will be determined based on his/her performance evaluation. Also, every year parents are given two written surveys to complete, one in the fall and one in the spring. The results of these surveys are communicated to both parents and staff and assist in identifying areas that may need further attention and/or improvement.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CAREER DEVELOPMENT: Little Ones considers staff development a critical component of the school's success. This philosophy is reflected in ongoing professional development opportunities, such as CPR & First Aid Training and other in-service training and job-related tuition reimbursements. It is expected that every teacher will work with the Director in identifying specific interests, abilities, and goals. Professional education and training will be provided during the school year and all staff is expected to attend. With prior approval, the school will reimburse for a portion of the cost of attending professional conferences and/or the tuition for attending classes in Early Childhood Education.

Reimbursement will be discussed on a case-by-case basis and will be provided when the conference and/or class has been completed, and in the case of a class the class must be passed. The Director will also assist staff in applying for grants to offset a portion of the costs for continuing education.

PROMOTIONS: When a job opportunity becomes available, the position will be filled from within Little Ones' staff when possible. To be considered for a specific position, please submit a request in writing to the Director. Jobs will be awarded based on an individual's ability to meet the requirements of the position, previous job performance, references and education.

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

Little Ones recognizes that child abuse and neglect are serious problems that affect not only a child's education, but also the child's physical and emotional well-being. All staff members are classified as mandated reporters by the state of Illinois and are expected to report any incidents, which cause reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, to the Department of Children and Family Services. If a staff member is reasonably suspicious that a child is being abused or neglected, s/he is expected to call the child abuse hot line and make a report. Inform the Director of the situation as soon as possible, so that s/he can provide assistance if needed.

Please note that staff who report suspicions of child abuse/neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm. Staff can refer to [A Manual for Mandated Reporters from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#) for more specific details and procedures.

If there were to be any allegations of child abuse or neglect concerning a staff member, a formal investigation would take place. The staff person would be given a temporary leave until the investigation is completed and a decision concerning continued employment can be made.

CUSTODY ISSUES

Since the families that we serve are sometimes faced with conflicts that lead to custody disputes, teachers may be approached by parents and/or their attorneys to give a statement regarding the care of a child. **Under no circumstances should a teacher give his/her opinion or make a statement concerning the care of a child, unless s/he is legally required to do**

so by subpoena. Refer all such inquiries to the Director. Teachers do not want to put themselves in a position where they could be held personally liable by someone involved in a legal dispute.

CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT/RESIGNATION

AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT: All employees of Little Ones are employed "at will." As a result, either an employee or Little Ones may terminate employment at any time, for any reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice. However, it is our sincere hope that our employees' relationship with our program will be a mutually rewarding experience which both of us will want to continue. A teacher's departure during the school year is disruptive to the children and the program and is strongly discouraged. If resignation is unavoidable, please inform the Director in writing at least one month prior to the planned departure date.

Teachers should inform the Director of their plans for returning or resigning for the upcoming school year by December or early January in advance of the upcoming school year. Teachers should also inform the Director of their first, second and third choices for classroom placement for the upcoming school year. The Director will attempt to honor each teacher's wishes as much as possible when assigning classes.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Little Ones prides itself on its exceptional staff. Everyone does such a great job working with the children, parents, and each other. However, in any group of people there will be times when disagreements occur. If a substantial problem occurs with a parent or other staff member, a teacher should:

- Make every effort to resolve the problem with that person.
- Keep the problem confidential, involving only those people whom it directly affects and no others. Grumbling to other staff only lowers morale. Instead, please deal with the problem directly with whomever it involves.
- Make every effort to ensure that the problem is not affecting the children in any way.
- Bring a problem that is not resolved to each person's satisfaction to the attention of the Director. The Director will provide support towards helping the parties find a resolution.

HARASSMENT

Little Ones is committed to providing a work environment that ensures that all staff members are treated with respect and dignity and that is free from all forms of discrimination, including all forms of harassment. General harassment or sexual harassment, whether committed by staff members, parents or other non-employees, will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests

for sexual favors and other verbal, physical, nonverbal, or visual communication or conduct of a sexual nature.

Any staff member who feels s/he is being harassed, either generally or sexually, should attempt to work this problem out with the person committing the behavior. If this does not alleviate the problem, inform the Director immediately. Any staff member who observes or becomes aware of a potential harassment situation is also urged to report it to the Director. The school will take immediate and appropriate action once the Director becomes aware of a possible situation. This action includes a timely, fair, and thorough investigation. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment will be taken if it is found that harassment has occurred.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Little Ones provides a safe workplace for all employees. One of the reasons Little Ones conducts background investigations is to reduce the risk of hiring individuals with a history of violent behavior.

Prohibited Conduct: Little Ones does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress.
- Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another employee.
- Possession of a weapon while on Little Ones property or while on Little Ones business.
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

Reporting Procedures: Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to the Director. Reports can be made anonymously, and all reported incidents will be investigated. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. Little Ones will actively intervene at any indication of a possibly hostile or violent situation.

Individual Situations: While we do not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform the Director if any employee exhibits what could be a sign of potentially dangerous behavior. Such behavior includes:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace.
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger.
- Making threatening remarks.
- Sudden or significant deterioration of performance.
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior.

Employees at Risk: The Director will identify and maintain a list of employees who have been determined to be at risk of becoming victims of violence, because of the nature of their job or because they are subject to harassment, violence, or threats from a non-employee. The Director will design a plan with at-risk employees to prepare for any possible emergency situations.

Dangerous/Emergency Situations: Employees who confront or encounter an armed or dangerous person should not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Employees should remain calm, make constant eye contact and talk to the individual. If the Director can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering the safety of the employee or others, such notice should be given. Otherwise, the confronted employee should cooperate and follow the instructions given.

Enforcement: Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Non-employees engaged in violent acts on the employer's premises will be reported to the proper authorities and fully prosecuted.

PROBATION, SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

At the discretion of the Director, the following actions can cause a staff member to be placed on probation, suspension, or to have his/her employment terminated.

- (1) Acts of child abuse or neglect of any type. Refusal to report reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- (2) Refusal to work cooperatively with other staff.
- (3) Refusal/lack of ability to fulfill daily expectations and on-going responsibilities.
- (4) Not fulfilling the expectations set forth in the teacher agreement.
- (5) Breaching confidentiality of information regarding children, families, or other staff members.

- (6) Drug and/or alcohol use on the job.
- (7) Sexual harassment of any staff member or parents. (See Sexual Harassment)
- (8) Other behavior determined to be grossly detrimental to the welfare of the children, families, staff and/or the program in general.

Should a problem arise with an individual staff member, the Director will privately bring the problem to his/her attention. Depending on the seriousness of the situation and any applicable state law, the director may:

- (1) Provide the staff member with time and assistance to correct the problem.
Facilitate meetings with the affected party (ies) to restore agreement and harmony.
- (2) Place the staff member on probation. The staff member will continue to work but may be expected to meet regularly with the Director to address the status of the situation. Documentation of probation will be placed in the staff member's personnel file.
- (3) Place the staff member on unpaid suspension. The staff member will not work for whatever period of time is deemed necessary to investigate the situation and make a permanent decision about continuing employment. Allegations of child abuse or neglect would fall into this category. During this time, the Director will make every effort to keep the staff member's job available should s/he return to work.
Documentation of suspension will be placed in the staff member's personnel file.
- (4) Severe misconduct/negligence will be cause for immediate termination.

FINAL PAY/RETURN OF PROPERTY

If for some reason a staff member leaves Little Ones, s/he must return all property, including but not limited to, materials such as manuals/handbooks and key(s).

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES

It is Little Ones' policy to provide verification of employment, job title, and dates of employment in response to requests for employment references. If a teacher provides Little Ones with a signed written authorization and release, factual, non-subjective information may be shared as a reference. The written authorization and release must state that the teacher releases and indemnifies Little Ones and the individual providing the reference from any liability associated with the reference. Little Ones may release information to cooperate with legal, safety, and medical officials who need to know specific employee information. Written authorization will not be needed under these circumstances.

GENERAL POLICIES

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Little Ones' program is based on the *Creative Curriculum* guidelines and recognizes each child as a unique individual. Within that context, the goals and objectives for each area of curriculum and development are used to create curriculum that meets the preschool benchmarks of The Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. How each child reaches these goals and benchmarks will depend on the child, his or her teachers and the classroom environment that is created.

An integral part of our philosophy recognizes children's play as their work. Children are constantly learning through their play, and our job is to plan activities that will maximize their learning. Activities should be designed to develop each child's physical, language, math, cognitive, literacy, and social and emotional skills, as well as his or her creativity and imagination. Our greatest challenge is to recognize where each child is developmentally in each of these areas and to plan activities accordingly to meet each child's individual needs.

SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

Little Ones' educational program is based on the developmental needs of children, as well as meeting the benchmarks of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. A fundamental goal of our program is to provide each child with a safe, nurturing and consistent environment in which to grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. Our classes allow time for group and individual play, both in our classrooms and on our indoor and outdoor play areas. Our curriculum themes stem from the cycle of the calendar, as well as from the interests of the children. These themes are incorporated into all classroom activities, including creative art experiences, language arts, dramatic play, story time/literature, science, math, cooking, music, creative movement, gross and small motor activities, and outdoor/indoor gross motor play. Children learn how to make choices on their own with gentle guidance and teacher direction.

Children also hold small "jobs" in class: snack helpers, flag holders, door holder, line leader and line caboose. Not only do they learn about responsibility in the classroom and taking turns, but they also learn to recognize their names, as well as other children's names, by referring to the job board.

Little Ones has an extensive children's library but does recommend that teachers supplement with books from the Library. We have books available in each class for the children to peruse at their leisure.

We also provide special "community helper" visitors who come to Little Ones during the

year to teach the children about their occupations, as well as about safety, health and the outside world.

A typical day at Little Ones includes a variety of theme-based activities. Children benefit and thrive when they experience a consistent daily schedule, with a consistent set of peers and teachers.

Here's what the day looks like:

9:00-9:50 a.m.	Welcome/Handwashing/Learning Centers
9:50-10:00 a.m.	Clean-up
10:00-10:15 a.m.	Circle Time
10:15-10:30 a.m.	Handwashing/Snack/Handwashing
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Outdoor /Indoor Gross Motor Play
11:00-11:15 a.m.	Closing Circle/Goodbyes

While each classroom teacher determines the appropriate schedule for the class, the components of the day should be the same in all classes. These components are Learning Centers, Circle Time, Outdoor/Indoor Gross Motor Play and Snack, and of course Handwashing and Clean-up.

Welcome time occurs at the start of the day. Make sure to greet children and parents each morning. The greetings at the beginning and end of each day are very important. In the process of greeting the families, make sure to do a health check on each child. Teachers should ask the parent (or adult bringing the child in) about any signs of illness, e.g., bumps, cough, rash, runny nose, or red eyes. Staff can gently suggest that a parent keep an out-of-sorts child at home where s/he can be most comfortable. If you have any questions, call the Director over for assistance. Teachers should help the children with coats, etc, but only as much as needed, as one of the goals is for the children to develop self-help skills.

Handwashing occurs at the beginning of the day and very often throughout the morning/afternoon, unless the class goes outside first. Studies have shown a substantial decrease in colds and flu in schools where teachers and children wash their hands immediately after they arrive each day. State health regulations dictate that teacher(s) in the classroom help each child wash his/her hands before beginning activities. (See Handwashing Procedures) After a child washes his/her hands, make sure the child is assisted in getting involved in the play. Many preschool children do not know where they want to play or how to enter ongoing play, so teachers need to be aware and available to those children.

Learning Center Time (formerly known as free play) should comprise the primary part of each day. Children should be free to move about the many centers in the classroom. Classroom Learning Centers should be age-appropriate, and may include art activities, block building,

playdough, sensory table, puzzles, games, manipulatives, writing, science, dramatic play, language arts, etc. Teachers should encourage each child to try new and different activities, helping children learn to make positive, productive choices for themselves. Each of the centers should remain stimulating and inviting to the children throughout the year and should reflect the curriculum theme, as well as support individual, group, and program goals. Learning Centers should be well defined in each classroom so that children can easily locate and use them. During learning center time, teachers should take the time to observe the children's play and watch for chances to extend their play. Teachers should encourage more in-depth play, encourage children to try something new, and/or incorporate an academic skill into the activity. For example, a teacher who sees a child building a zoo with blocks might engage the child in thinking about what animals s/he could add, help him/her write "Zoo" and other signs, help him/her count how many animals s/he has added, write down a story the child has dictated about the zoo, etc. Learning Center time is a time for teachers to observe and be a part of the play, not a time to take care of teacher tasks. The Learning Centers and some examples of ideas include the following:

- **WRITING CENTER-** The writing center should include a small table and chairs, magazines, newspapers, paper, pens, pencils, markers, erasers, perhaps an old keyboard, computer or telephone, envelopes, etc. The center can change from being an office, to a book publishing company where kids make their own books, to a post office, to a sign making store, etc. **Don't forget that writing utensils should also be visible in other areas of the classroom.**
- **BLOCK CENTER-** The block center should contain a regular stock of wooden blocks (both large and small), as well as transportation toys, traffic signs, tools, photographs of buildings and architecture, etc. This center can change by changing the materials and environment - it can be a place to build buildings, a huge road, homes of all sizes, or the blocks can be used to measure people, toys, or the entire room. Change the pictures on the walls to create a new feel to the area - watch what happens! Also, add different things to build with, e.g., cans, boxes, tubes, etc. **Writing utensils should also be available in the block area.**
- **ART CART-**The art cart should contain a wide array of supplies, which are available to the children at all times and of their own choosing. These materials should include paper in different sizes/textures/colors, crayons, markers, stampers & ink pads, scissors, collage materials such as feathers, sequins, beads, yarn, popsicle sticks, glitter, and other recyclable materials, etc. Children's creative artwork should be displayed with care at the children's eye level. A beautiful way to display 2-dimensional art is to frame it with a construction paper border.
- **EASELS-**The easels should also be open every day for creative art and dictation and the materials should be varied often.
- **READING CENTER/LIBRARY-** The reading center should be a cozy place for

children to read. A bookshelf with a variety of books (which are changed often), colorful posters, and comfy sofa/chairs should all be a part of the book center. Books should be kept in good repair and facing up and forward in the rack. Children should be taught care of books and even be a part of repairing torn pages, etc.

- **MANIPULATIVE CENTER/TOYS & GAMES-** The manipulative center will have a variety of math games, puzzles, and other small motor toys, all located in a shelving cabinet. This center should be located near a regular sized table, as children will need space to spread out while they play. The bins that the toys are in should be well labeled with a picture of the toy and the printed name of the toy. At the beginning of the school year, teachers should present each manipulative toy/game to the children, showing them different ways to play with them and teaching them how to care for them.
- **SCIENCE CENTER-** The science center should be a table or shelving unit with lots of materials for discovery and exploration. Some examples of science center items include: plants, pets, magnifiers, shells, leaves, pinecones, a nest, anything from nature, examples of different textures, smells, sounds, sights, tastes, etc. A sensory table should also be in the room, where the children can measure, pour or even discover hidden treasures. A sensory table should also be utilized daily and tied into the curriculum.
- **DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER-** The dramatic play center should have a wide variety of props and materials for pretend play and dress up. There should be a kitchen set-up with pots, pans and food, a supply of dress-up clothes, and other "pretend" materials. This center can change from being a restaurant, to a grocery store, to a kitchen, and beyond. Try to tie this area into your curriculum. **Writing utensils should also be available in the dramatic play area.**
- **MUSIC AND MOVEMENT-**The music and movement area is usually located in the circle time area. There should be a CD player, CD's with a variety of different kinds of music, a variety of musical instruments and other kinds of materials to support music and movement (e.g., scarves, ribbons, etc.).

Clean-up Time provides a wonderful learning opportunity for preschool children. This time gives the children the opportunity to learn responsibility, to sort, to learn cause and effect, and to learn to work as a team. **A five-minute verbal warning should be given before clean-up time.** This will give the children an opportunity to complete their play and get ready for the upcoming transition. If you have children that have more difficulty transitioning, s/he may need a personal warning and/or more time to prepare. Using songs and games have proven helpful in ensuring a smooth transition. All children should assist with clean-up. If you have toy bins and shelves labeled and teach the children how to clean up at the start of the school year, clean-up time can be a wonderful learning experience for young children. Some children

who find clean-up overwhelming do better when directed to clean-up a particular area or a particular set of items, e.g., the blocks.

Circle Time may occur once or twice during the day—once in the morning and again close to dismissal. The lead teacher of the day is responsible for the circle activities and the lesson of the day. Circle Time provides an opportunity to bring the whole class together, to set the mood for the day, to read a story, to sing songs and chants, to introduce special projects, to teach a song or fingerplay, to talk about the weather or to encourage the children to share something special with the group. A closing circle can also provide closure for the day. Veteran teachers, as well as curriculum books in the office, are available to help you plan circle. Remember that circle time is not always a good time for the other teacher(s) to be preparing, as many times the other teacher(s) is/are needed to assist with the circle activities, in providing a lap for a child to sit on or for helping a child who has difficulty sitting. **Also, remember to keep circle time appropriate, limiting the time and activity to the needs, developmental level and interest of the group.**

Snack time is always a favorite time of the day. Nutritious snacks are served daily, which include milk, water, crackers, cereals, fruit, yogurt, vegetables, etc. These choices are based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Try to remember that if you have children staying for lunch, NAEYC recommends that meals and snacks be at least 2 hours apart (but not more than 3 hours apart), so try to keep that in mind when planning your schedule. Tables must be washed and then sanitized with a bleach water solution before snack is served. The teacher must wash his/her hands and then use food-serving gloves when direct contact with food will take place. In that case, the food serving gloves should only touch the foods and nothing else. The snack helpers must wash their hands before setting up snack.

The snack menu is always posted at the front of the building, in the classrooms and on the website. All leftover snacks must be closed in zip lock bags in the original containers and dated with the date of opening. All leftover milk must be dated and stored in the refrigerator. All snacks and/or milk with expired dates will be discarded.

Please make sure that all teachers, including substitute teachers, are aware of all children's food allergies/food limitations, which are posted in the snack serving area. Due to our children who have severe allergies to nuts, teachers should also make sure not to bring any foods in the building that have traces of nuts, and not allow families to bring in any opened food products. It is also imperative that you serve an allergy child's snack with separate gloves to avoid contamination. All outside foods brought in for children with allergies must also be store bought in unopened containers and must be checked in by the Director. The Director will be responsible for checking these

snacks for allergens, for dividing the special snacks into individual servings, and for labeling them with the child's name and date of opening.

Due to choking hazards, children under the age of four should not be served the following: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Foods should be cut into pieces no larger than one half-inch square for children under three years of age.

Snack should be set up before the children are invited to the table, so that there isn't too much time waiting. Make sure the children wash their hands before snack and that they sing their "snack" song before eating. Teachers should sit with the children and eat snack to facilitate conversation and to model proper table manners. Children should be encouraged to serve themselves, as much as possible, as well as clean up after themselves.

All children/staff should wash their hands before and after snack. **In classrooms where there are no sinks, wipes are acceptable after snack only.** Tables should be washed after snack and any and all food should be swept off floor. Due to licensing laws and our children with food allergies, no outside foods are allowed. Parents do receive notes during the year requesting that they send in a specific snack. These snacks are either whole fruits or vegetables or foods that are store-bought, unopened and nut-free. **The Director must check all outside foods before they are served or placed in the food cabinet and will be responsible for washing and cutting any fruits or vegetables.**

Outdoor activities are a part of every day, provided the temperature is above 25 degrees. If the weather is such that the children cannot go outside, the **Social Hall/Teen Lounge** will be utilized. Based on the wind chill and/or other weather conditions, including smog or other air pollution alerts, the Director makes the final decision about outdoor play and/or the length of outdoor play. During sunny warm days, the children's play in the sun will be limited. When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect-borne disease, staff may only apply repellents containing DEET (supplied by the child's parent) no more than once a day and only with written parental permission.

Teachers should make sure to closely follow the outdoor/indoor gross motor schedule. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions (See Outdoor attire); otherwise they should not go out. If your class goes out first, we ask that the parent/caregiver bring the child dressed and ready to go out. If your class goes out last, make sure that you leave enough time, especially in winter, for the children to get dressed. Since teaching self-help skills is part of our program, it is important that the children have time to practice these skills. Expect that it can take almost 20 minutes just to suit up for outdoor play in the winter and try to have fun with it.

Remember, it is important to ensure safety and facilitate play outdoor on the playground, as well as indoor in the social hall/teen lounge. **Teachers should strategically station themselves around the play area in order to view all areas of play, should remind the children to use equipment safely and should interact with the children at play.** Help the shy child interact with others; redirect the energetic child to play constructively and discover changes in nature with the children. The outdoor/indoor gross motor time can also be used to collect items for nature collages, to play with the parachute, to play organized games and/or to have fun with snow painting. If teachers model and facilitate creative play, the children will have a strong foundation to build upon. Every class should clean up the toys before leaving the indoor/outdoor area. Please make sure that the toys are put away in an organized fashion and that all bins on the playground are securely closed.

If a child needs to use the bathroom, please alert the Director by walkie-talkie and s/he will take the child back and forth.

Outdoor attire We ask parents to dress their child according to the weather conditions of the day, and that jackets, hats, mittens, boots and snow pants are sent with their child when the weather indicates. We recommend mittens instead of gloves, shoes with Velcro closures rather than laces and half-pant nylon snow pants rather than the bib type. Experience has taught us that children feel proud of being able to dress themselves to go out and play and proud to be able to remove the outerwear when they come back inside. Each of these types of clothing helps a child feel capable and learn independence. We also ask parents/caregivers to send their child in gym shoes, not sandals, crocs or dress shoes, so that s/he is always safe on the play equipment. We also discourage the wearing of any necklaces, scarves, hood strings, mittens connected through the sleeve, dangly earrings or dog tags, as these can catch on the slide or other play equipment and cause injury. If any such items escape their notice, it is our responsibility to ask the child to place it in his/her backpack until dismissal. On snow days, we ask that each parent send shoes in a plastic bag in their child's backpack. It is best if the children wear shoes inside, as boots can be a tripping/slipping hazard. The plastic bag should be used for the wet boots, so that the inside of the child's backpack does not get wet.

Parents are also asked to send their child dressed in dry and layered clothing for warmth in the cold weather, and to send their child dressed in sun-protective clothing and with sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 and higher (applied at home) in the spring.

Closing circle/goodbyes is also an important time to provide closure for the day. A circle time at the end of the day is a great way to say good-bye to the children, to talk about what the children did for the day and to talk about what the class will be doing for the

next class time. After collecting their belongings, the children should sit at the tables or on the rug and wait for a parent (or other authorized adult) to come to pick them up. One teacher should sit with the children and the other teacher should supervise sign-out/pick-up.

At least once per week at pick-up, teachers should connect with every parent in his/her attachment group and tell the parent something that their child has accomplished that week. Be specific, e.g., don't say "Johnny had a good day today." Rather say, "Johnny spent a lot of time building a huge block structure with a friend." **Save all concerns for a time outside of class and away from the child and other people.** If a parent works, then that parent should receive an email update about his/her child's progress at least once every week or every other week based on the parent's needs.

CLASSROOM RESPONSIBILITIES

DAILY & ONGOING

Teacher Arrival & Prep Time: All teachers are expected to arrive at least 30 minutes before class begins to have the classroom set up and ready for the children when they arrive. Teachers should park at the far east side of the lot and should check teacher mailboxes at the beginning and end of each day.

State licensing requires that every teacher wash his/her hands upon arrival each day. Paints should be mixed and at the easels, ready with brushes and paper. Toys, playdough, manipulatives and games should be set up and varied each session according to the curriculum theme. The learning center areas are more exciting if they are changed regularly with input from the children and teachers. **Make sure that all purses and teacher supplies are stored out of reach of the children.**

Departure at the End of the Day: Teachers should always leave classrooms and closets clean and orderly for the next class time. Teachers should wash tables and other surfaces and then sanitize with bleach water solution. They should make sure that the snack and playdough crumbs are cleaned up after each class. Paints should be covered at the end of the day and brushes should be washed. All materials should be stored neatly on the appropriate shelves. If teachers have taken anything out of the curriculum boxes or office to use during class, they should return them to the place where they found them. If the classroom will not be used for enrichment, chairs should be stacked on the tables. All chairs and toys should be sanitized weekly. On Fridays, all easels and paints should be put away. Cleaning should follow NAEYC and DCFS guidelines.

Appearance: Little Ones is committed to treating Early Childhood teachers as professionals. Teachers are required to present themselves in a manner that allows comfort, flexibility and ensures safety as they perform their job, while at the same time allows them to be viewed with credibility by a parent or visitor. Appropriate clothing and jewelry are essential.

Division of Responsibilities: If each staff member is responsible for a couple of set school tasks on a daily basis (and during special events), things will run smoothly and without confusion. Little Ones' staff motto is "Many Hands Make Light Work!" Each staff person in a classroom should pitch in until all tasks are complete, sharing before and after class tasks equally.

Courtesy: The children are at school for a very brief time. The staff's job is to actively involve them while they are in our care. We all love to talk, because we are all so interesting and fun, but teacher chatting needs to be limited to before or after class.

Attendance: Attendance charts must be marked daily, and teachers should always be aware of how many children are in their care at any point in the day.

Sign-out/Pick-up: Sign-out sheets must be completed daily for compliance with DCFS standards. Teachers should make sure their sign-out sheet is located on a clipboard with a pen in a visible location. It is imperative that teachers make sure they see with whom each child leaves each day, that the child is signed out and that the person's name in the authorized list is circled. A child can only be released to individuals with whom the parent has given written authorization. If someone a teacher doesn't recognize comes in to pick up a child, the teacher should ask for a picture ID and see if that person is listed on the child's pick-up list or if there is a note authorizing that person to pick up for the day. If there is a note, that note should be attached to the pick-up sheet for the day. If a parent wants to make a permanent change/addition to his/her child's pick-up, have the parent see the Director. Please see the Director with any questions or concerns about pick-up. When the need arises to ask for a picture ID, explain that in addition to it being a state law, that Little Ones takes the safety of the children very seriously. Usually adults understand. Teachers should check their sign out sheet to make sure that it is complete at the end of each session, including the circling of the individual who picked up each child, before placing the sign-out sheet in the Director's mailbox.

IMPORTANT: Staff should not release a child to an authorized pick up person if s/he believes the person is impaired and unable to adequately care for the child. When there is doubt, staff should err on the side of safety and offer to call another person from the authorized pick up list. If the person in question chooses to get in a car (with or without the child), the staff should immediately notify the police and provide a description of the car.

Carpools: We suggest that parents bring their children to school personally until the child feels comfortable and confident before beginning a carpool plan. The school does not sponsor car pools and encourages parents to limit the number of children in a carpool to three. The pick-up person in a carpool needs to remember to sign out all the children in the carpool.

Absences:

Vacation Days - To take a vacation day, teachers must notify the Director in writing. **TEACHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING THEIR OWN COVERAGE!** The school has a substitute list and other teachers will often substitute for each other. Make sure to inform the Director and all co-teacher(s) about the day(s) off and who is substituting. See the Director for assistance with coverage and try to give at least 2 weeks notice if possible.

Sick Days - If a teacher is sick, that teacher should stay home. S/he must inform the Director as soon as possible BEFORE the scheduled work shift. Please call the Director on his/her cell phone. If the teacher can arrange coverage, that would be great. If the teacher is too sick to take care of coverage, the Director will take care of it. All teachers should follow the policies and procedures noted under the Children's Health and Safety section of the Staff Handbook as far as reporting any illness to Little Ones and returning to work. This will help to keep the school environment safe and healthy.

Leave of Absence-In the face of adversity, our staff is wonderful about pulling together and supporting one another. Anyone needing to be absent for a significant period of time due to a personal/medical problem or family emergency may arrange to take an unpaid leave of absence. If any teacher is in need of referrals for medical and/or emotional support, including stress management, s/he should not be hesitant to ask. Little Ones has a list of resources and referrals in the area. Little Ones also supports the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The Director will make every effort to make the teacher's current position available to him/her upon his/her return.

Phone/Cell Phone: Teachers should refrain from making and receiving personal calls/texts during work time. If a teacher receives or needs to make an important call/text during work time, s/he should notify the Director to cover in the classroom, so that the teacher can go into the office to place or receive the call/text. Teachers should refrain from using cellular phones while teaching. Unless it is an emergency, please save all phone calls/texts until after class. If a teacher needs to leave the room, s/he should make sure to inform the Director, so the Director can step in, and should return as quickly as possible. FYI- The State of Illinois prohibits use of a cell phone while operating a vehicle in a school zone area unless it is in "hands-free", voice-activated mode. Please obey

this law by not using hand-held cell phones while driving to or from school or while driving in the parking lot.

Children's Files: It is each teacher's responsibility to check children's files, which are located in the file cabinet in the office. Each teacher should read his/her children's files in their entirety, taking special note of any medical issues, food allergies, behavior issues, developmental issues, dietary restrictions or ANYTHING that will affect the child, the class, or the staff during school hours. If there is an important issue, such as a food allergy or medical concern, it is the teacher's responsibility to inform his/her co-teachers and any other staff members, e.g., substitutes, that will have contact with the child.

These allergies will also be posted in a visible location in the classroom to eliminate the chance of error. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any files, reports or documents regarding a child's progress, admission, health or discharge without prior Director and written parent approval.

Confidentiality: As professionals, all staff members are expected to maintain confidentiality of all information regarding the children, their families and other staff members. Staff should refrain from commenting about children, families, or other staff members in the presence of other adults or children at or away from school. Children's records will only be shared with the teaching staff assigned responsibility for the care and education of that child, as well as any legal guardians. Children's records will not be disclosed or discussed with anyone else unless there is signed, dated release with specific written instructions from the child's legal guardian(s). Any information that is released should be copied and placed in the child's file. The only exceptions would be in the case of a medical emergency and/or in working with regulatory authorities. In those situations, appropriate records would be shared. All records will be kept in the Little Ones Office, which is locked at the end of the school day, and all records will be disposed of after five years.

Informal information about a child's day will be shared with the person (such as a nanny) who regularly brings and picks up a child, unless a parent objects in writing. This should only be positive information about the child's day. Any concerns, no matter how minimal, should only be shared with a child's parent. A parent who does not pick up should also be contacted by phone concerning any incidents that require first aid, no matter how minimal.

Primary Caregivers (formerly called attachment groups): As the year begins and new faces appear, teachers will acquaint themselves with the children. A natural bonding usually occurs between the teachers and certain children and/or parents. After the first month, teachers will choose children to become part of their primary caregiver group and should choose children and/or parents with whom they feel that they have made a connection. Primary caregivers are primarily responsible for the children in their group.

They observe and document any necessary information for conferences, prepare a portfolio for those children and prepare the children's developmental forms. It will also be their job to connect with each of those parents at least once a week either at drop off and/or pick up. If they do not have the opportunity to speak to those parents in person, it will be their job to prepare and email update at least every other week. Parents should also be given the opportunity to ask any questions they might have. Professionalism is expected in all verbal and written communication, and that same level of professionalism is expected to be returned to all staff. **All communication about concerns must be documented in the child's file.** Although teachers are assigned definite children to be responsible for, teachers are also responsible for the whole group and are required to attend to all children's needs when necessary. If there is a cultural/language barrier, the program will make every attempt to try to find someone who understands the culture and/or speaks the language to assist with the communication. This may mean finding a translator. Please see the director for a list of resources.

Anecdotal Records: Each classroom teacher is required to keep anecdotal records on the children in his/her primary caregiver group. Each teacher will be provided with an anecdotal record keeping book to use in order to track the learning standards. It is also important for teachers to closely observe and document children's behavior. This might include who the child plays with, what are his/her favorite activities, is s/he adept at getting involved in the play and in entering play with other children, is s/he able to sit for circle, how does s/he deal with separation and transitions, etc. If a teacher is unfamiliar with anecdotal record keeping, s/he should ask for help.

Assessment of Children: NAEYC requires that all children be screened using a formal tool within the first 3 months of starting school. This will enable staff to refer any children who might need further testing and support early in the school year. Children will be screened both individually and in the classroom by the Director or another familiar adult trained to complete the screening. Parents be notified in writing concerning screening results.

During the school year, children's development will continually be assessed through the use of informal observations, monthly anecdotal records, portfolios, 4's journals, etc. Children will also be more formally assessed using the Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment System twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. These results will be shared with parents at parent teacher conferences, and parents will be given a copy of this assessment. Teaching teams should meet at least once a week to interpret and use the assessment results to shape teaching and curriculum plans to the needs and interests of the children. If a teacher has any concerns about a child, s/he can recommend further assessment to be completed by the Director. A parent must give written permission for this testing to be completed. The results of this testing will be used to provide further

documentation of the child's development and/or to make teacher/parent recommendations. All results will be strictly confidential and will only be released with written parental permission. All concerns will be communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner and parents will be provided with documentation and explanation of the concerns, as well as suggestions of goals for the classroom and at home. Next steps and/or information about community resources will be provided if necessary. Staff will follow up to discuss the results of any further assessments and will implement any recommendations. In the case of a language barrier the assessment may need to take place with someone who the child is familiar with who can speak the child's language.

Bleach Water/General Sanitation: Every class will be provided with its own spray bottle with a DCFS required bleach water solution - which will be changed daily. The Director will make sure that this happens. Bleach bottles must be labeled "bleach water" and must be kept out of the reach of children at all times. The bleach water should be used to wipe down tables before and after mealtimes. All other cleaning and sanitation must follow the NAEYC and DCFS guidelines. Sprays, chemicals and/or deodorizers should not be used when children are on the premises. All regular cleaning supplies used in the classrooms must be non-toxic. **Toys put in children's mouths (or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions), must be washed with detergent, rinsed off, sanitized with bleach water and then allowed to air dry.** This bleach solution consists of one-teaspoon of bleach for every gallon of water. Children shall not share items placed on their heads.

Care of Materials: The classroom and all its contents are the teachers' responsibility. Children in the class should be made a part of this responsibility as well and should be taught about care of materials. This includes keeping toys sorted in their proper containers, keeping art materials clean and ready to use, keeping books in good repair and arranging them properly on the shelves, etc. Closets, teacher materials, and shelves should also be kept well organized. Remember that lost pieces are frustrating for children, and that we set an example for the children on how to care for the materials. Please return all supplies to original locations. Staff should remove all broken/unsafe toys or items from the classroom and make sure that blind strings are out of the children's reach at all times.

Items from Home: Except for a security item for the first days of school, we ask that children leave all toys and playthings either in the car or at home. At school, items from home often become the subject of arguments, aggressive behavior and hurt feelings. Teachers cannot keep track of personal toys, nor do they have the time to search for a toy from home if it becomes lost. Little Ones provides a wide variety of materials designated to help children learn and grow and many opportunities to work on sharing at school. If a child brings toys to school, the toys should be placed in his/her backpack. Gum and candy are not permitted, as they are choking hazards. Under no circumstances should weapons, war toys or violent plastic critters be brought to school.

Playground/Classroom Clean Up: All teachers are responsible for assisting in cleaning up the classrooms and playground after their use. The last class outside should make sure that the sandbox is covered, all toys are put away and that the playground bins are closed.

Accident and Incident Reports: Any time an accident or incident occurs, **regardless of the severity**, an accident/incident form must be filled out and UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS must be used. (See Universal Precautions) These forms are available in each classroom and **MUST BE COMPLETED ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE INCIDENT OCCURS**. First aid kits are located in each classroom, and one is also included in the bag for indoor play. In addition, parents must be notified of the accident immediately at pick-up and must sign the report. If a parent does not pick up, the teacher should write on the bottom of the accident form who the copy was given to and then give the original to the Director to call. With any incident involving the face or head, a bite, or any major accident, the parent should be called immediately. Please inform the Director of any accident immediately.

Infection Control: The Department of Children and Family Services has mandated that universal precautions and appropriate handwashing procedures be followed to minimize spread of infection and to establish procedures to be used in an emergency or crisis. **PLASTIC GLOVES** should be used by staff when changing soiled clothes and when performing first aid. (See Universal Precautions, Handwashing Procedures, and Emergency Procedures)

Communication: Thorough, open communication (between children, teachers, parents, and each other) is essential to the success of a program. Teachers are expected to communicate with their co-teachers and the Director regarding any behavior issues, health issues, parent issues, etc., that arise with the children, staff or parents. During the course of the day, if a teacher needs a short break due to stress and/or inability to fulfill teaching responsibilities, s/he should make sure to inform the Director, so the Director can step in until the teacher is able to return.

WEEKLY

Lesson Plans: When writing lesson plans, teachers should refer to the Creative Curriculum/Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment System standards. Please see the section on Curriculum for Curriculum Goals and Objectives on which to base the curriculum. Teachers should be sharing lesson plans and consulting on children's progress and interests at least once a week in order to continue to align curriculum and teaching practices.

MONTHLY

Staff Meetings/Staff Training: Staff meetings are held at least once a month during the school year. Since there are so few, it is imperative that all teachers attend. Also, teachers are required by DCFS to obtain 20 clock hours of continuing education, with at least 5 hours of Gateway approved training. Sometimes, teachers may be asked to prepare something to bring to a meeting/training. Teachers should make every attempt to attend all meetings and should notify the Director in advance if s/he is unable to attend.

ANNUALLY

Annual Set-Up & Clean Up: During orientation week, there will be time allotted for the set-up of each classroom. Materials and learning centers should be organized keeping in mind the school philosophy, as well as how children play. At the end of the year, all toys, materials, and furniture should be thoroughly cleaned, sorted, and stored.

SUPERVISION: Supervision to promote growth and learning is a two-way street. This can occur in a number of different ways, from private meetings to in-classroom observations and discussions, to informal give and take between Director and teacher. All teachers and assistant teachers will be evaluated annually by the Director. Evaluation forms are based on the responsibilities listed under Job Responsibilities and will be distributed well in advance so that staff can become familiar with the criteria. Evaluations are confidential and are based on Director observations, self-evaluations, staff evaluations and program evaluations. Written results are given to each staff member and copies are placed in each staff member's file.

CURRICULUM

Little Ones uses Creative Curriculum to create an enriched learning environment. This curriculum meets the benchmarks of **The Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards**. The Illinois State Board of Education developed these standards with the assistance of hundreds of educators. These standards are essential for designing effective preschool curriculum, since they represent an agreed upon agenda for teaching and learning. The Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards recognize the interconnection of emotional, social, cognitive and physical development and learning. The benchmarks include learning in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Physical Development and Health, Fine Arts, English Language Learner/Home Language Development, and Social/Emotional Development.

Creating an enriching curriculum that will provide the children with a year full of stimulating experiences is one of the ultimate challenges and opportunities for teachers. Teachers are provided with curriculum ideas for the month. Then it is each teacher's responsibility to take these ideas, as well as any ideas of his/her own, and plan lesson plans. **Teachers should also remember to listen to the children in their class, as the**

children's interests should play a major role in curriculum plans. Teachers are also encouraged to share ideas with each other. There is a wealth of information within each teacher's own experiences, so by sharing ideas and brainstorming together teachers are able to create the most well-rounded curriculum.

Little Ones curriculum is based on "Themes" that may last 1, 2, 3 weeks or more. Once each teacher knows what the "theme" is, the teacher's job is to plan a wide array of activities that will satisfy the goals and objectives in all the curriculum areas. In planning daily lesson plans, each teacher should refer to the long-term goals for the age group, the preschool benchmarks for the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards/Goals Teaching Strategies Gold, as well as the Weekly Activities/Interest Centers Form (Addendum V) to ensure that all areas of curriculum are being included.

Some "buzz-words" to keep in mind when planning curriculum:

Process art: The importance in early childhood art is not to create a product - but instead to enjoy and experience the process of the creation. No two children's projects will turn out the same if children are allowed to be truly creative! The least amount of preparation by the teacher, the more process the project. Teachers should try to build the "process" concept into the other areas of the classroom as well. Teachers should use real objects as models when possible and pictures of real objects when real objects are impossible. **Teachers should never use teacher made models.**

Print-rich: Teachers should create an environment full of print for the children to use and discover. Magazines, books, maps, writing materials, envelopes, stamps, etc. should be available to the children every day so that when THEY want to learn, THEY can. Toy bins and hooks should be labeled, and children's dictation should be taken as much as possible.

**Recipes and curriculum ideas: Refer to the Addendum I for curriculum ideas and recipes.

HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS

Little Ones integrates the Handwriting Without Tears program to develop writing skills. This program is a developmentally appropriate, multi-sensory, child-friendly program to develop literacy skills. The program appeals to a variety of learning styles and offers cognitive, social and motor skill benefits. The program uses all the senses to teach directionality, vocabulary and imitation, positioning and sequencing skills. Children move, touch, feel and manipulate real objects as they learn the habits and skills essential for writing. These opportunities prepare the children for more formal handwriting instruction in kindergarten.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

The staff at Little Ones keeps in close contact with many of the kindergarten teachers in the area to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. The staff also integrates many transitional activities at the end of the school year to bring closure to the children's time at Little Ones and to begin the transition to kindergarten.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

PARENT GROUP

Little Ones Parent Group is composed of parents with children enrolled at Little Ones. The goal of the group is to assist the teaching staff in providing excellent programming for the children. The parent group supports staff in many ways, including:

- Reviewing programs and policies, and recommending change
- Planning and Coordinating Special Events
- Coordinating Teacher Gifts

The Parent Group also supports parents by listening to concerns and questions and, when appropriate, raising these issues with staff. All Parent Group meetings are open to all parents who have children enrolled at Little Ones.

ROOM PARENT/PARENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

To create a sense of community at Little Ones, we ask that at least two parents sign-up to be room parents for their child's class for the school year. These parents will help to support the teachers, families and school. Responsibilities include (but are not limited to) the following: coordinating a class get together outside of school for families to meet each other at the beginning of the school year, attending Parent Group meetings, assisting with family programs or making class phone calls, coordinating a class get together outside of school for families at the end of the school year, and coordinating teacher gifts at holiday time and at the end of the year.

Parents are also encouraged to sign up to volunteer in their child's class at least one time during the school year. This gives parents a chance to be a part of their child's learning, an opportunity to see their child in action in class, a chance to see what the preschool day looks like, and an opportunity to see the wonderful interactions and learning that takes place during the school day. **Please remember that parents are also welcome to visit the school at any time during the preschool day.**

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year, usually November and April. Conferences provide valuable opportunities for teachers to share insights into each child's unique development with his/her parents. In addition, teachers often gain important information from parents. Anecdotal records, portfolios and developmental forms provide teachers with valuable insight in preparing for conferences. Teachers should conference as a team. Parents sign up for 10-minute conferences with 5 minutes in between. Teachers should make every effort to watch the time and stay as close as possible to the schedule. Other conferences, including phone conferences, can be scheduled on an as-needed basis at anytime during the year.

During conferences, staff should share their observations, as well as report on each child's functioning and progress in the classroom based on the Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment System. The primary focus of this tool is to help teachers to make instructional decisions in the classroom. It gives teachers the opportunity to find out what the children are learning, how well they are learning it and what skills they have begun to master. It also assists teachers in identifying children's interests and needs, following their progress, adapting and improving curriculum and setting up appropriate individual, group and program goals. At conferences, teachers provide parents with a copy of this checklist, which gives parents a detailed overview of how their child is progressing in the following areas of development: Social/Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, The Arts and English Language Acquisition. This checklist is a wonderful tool as it directly corresponds to the benchmarks in the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Upon hire all teachers will be trained on using this assessment tool and will also be required to complete further training on child assessment through the State of Illinois.

If there is a language barrier, the program will make every attempt to find someone who speaks the language to assist in the communication or will find an alternate means of communication, which may include finding a translator.

DAILY/WEEKLY/MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

Daily activities are posted on the communication board at the entrance to the classroom before the doors open at the beginning of the day. Documentation should be explicit and yet brief. This information gives parents/caregivers the opportunity to discuss their child's day on the way home from school. Once a week, teachers write an email describing the week's activities. This summary communicates all that the children are learning, including the standards, and should include photographs. All other important communication to parents, e.g., reminders, notes, etc., will also be done by email. Touching Base calls will

be made in October. **All parent communication goes through the Director.**

Monthly Updates: Once a month, parents receive a link to the updates for the month.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

HOLIDAYS

The philosophy at Little Ones is to celebrate holidays in a way that helps children learn and develop respect for all cultures. Celebrations are planned to be fun and developmentally appropriate, keeping the activities simple for the children. Holiday celebrations include a wide range of traditions from many cultures and do not assume that all families share in the same way. All family traditions will be respected. Teachers should reach out to families and encourage them to share their unique traditions and holidays with the class so that the program can be representative of all families.

BIRTHDAY/SPECIAL DAY PROGRAM

Birthdays are celebrated with a special crown, a song and a cheer for the birthday child at snack time. Birthday celebrations are kept simple, so that the school day proceeds as normal as possible. Parents are invited to spend snack time and a circle time with their child's class. Teachers should check monthly for upcoming birthdays in the class and make every effort to contact parents of the birthday children to set up their visits in advance. Sign-up sheets will be available at the beginning of the school year. At that time, teachers will be provided with a handout of suggestions of how families can celebrate this time with the class, e.g., bringing in a song/story to share, making a special board, etc. Since birthday treats do not fulfill licensing standards for healthy snacks, since they tend to be non-nutritious and sugary and since there tends to be a lot of waste, parents are asked **not** to send in treats. The regular scheduled snack will be served on special napkins. It is recommended that if a family wants to do something special in honor of their child's birthday that they pick out a special book/puzzle/small toy, etc. to donate to their child's class. What better way to honor their child's special day! Summer birthdays may be celebrated as "half birthdays."

When inviting classmates to celebrate a birthday outside of school, parents are encouraged to invite all classmates so that no child feels excluded. To prevent confusion and/or loss of invitations, party invitations must be sent out by mail. **This means parents should not place them in the children's mailboxes at school.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

According to the concept of universal precautions, all human blood and certain body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV and other blood borne pathogens. According to National Health and Safety Performance Standards, the following procedures for infection control shall be used:

Spills of body fluids (i.e. urine, feces, saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge and injury or tissue discharges) shall be cleaned up immediately as follows:

- (1) Hands must be washed and dried well before and after any situations requiring universal precautions.**
- (2) For spills of blood or blood containing body fluids, vomitus, urine and feces, areas should be cleaned with detergent, rinsed with water and then disinfected using our pre-made bleach solution.** Gloves shall be used in these situations unless the amount of blood or body fluid is so small that it can be easily contained by the material used for cleaning.
- (3) Persons involved in cleaning contaminated surfaces shall avoid exposure of open skin sores or mucous membranes to blood or blood containing body fluids and injury or tissue discharges by using gloves to protect hands when cleaning contaminated surfaces.**
- (4) Blood-contaminated material and diapers shall be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie or covered receptacle.**
- (5) Staff should not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal matter.**
- (6) In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sink before using them to prepare food.**
- (7) Water Table Sanitation: Children must wash hands before and after water play, must not drink the water, and cannot participate if they have sores on their hands. Water must be fresh, must be disposed of right after use and must be changed between different classes.**
- (8) When a sink is not available and there is no time to get to a sink, teachers use hand sanitizer instead of handwashing.**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

ILLNESS & MEDICATION

A child should not be allowed at school if s/he is ill or overly tired. If a child is not healthy enough to participate in both indoor and outdoor play, s/he should not be in school. We do ask that parents/guardians phone Little Ones as soon as possible to communicate that their child will not be attending and so that we can notify other families if their child has been exposed to a contagious disease (i.e. pink eye, strep throat, etc.)

SYMPTOMS that indicate that a child should remain at home:

Fever of 99.5 degrees or above orally (98.5 degrees under the arm) within the last 24-hour period

Heavy green nasal discharge

Persistent cough or sore throat

Stomachache, diarrhea, or vomiting in the last 24-hour period

Any unusual rash

Red or runny eyes

Lethargy or inability to participate in the normal classroom activities

This policy is in place to protect every child in the class. **Also, a child should remain at home until s/he has been symptom free for 24 hours.** Little Ones' goal is to create a safe and healthy environment for all children. Therefore, the school reserves the right to make the final decision about whether a child belongs in school. If the staff find that a child is sick and/or unable to participate in the regular classroom activities, the child will be removed from class, will be made comfortable in a supervised location away from the other children, and the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to arrange pick up. A sick child must be picked up within a half hour of the call.

If a child requires medication while s/he is at Little Ones, a medication consent form must be completed. In addition, all medications must be in their original containers and labeled with the child's first and last name. These guidelines also apply to sunscreen, insect repellent and diaper cream.

If a child requires special care due to a medical issue, an adult trained on the care and management of the medical issue must be on the premises whenever that child is at school.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

Little Ones will ensure that vision and hearing screening services are provided annually in accordance with the Illinois Department of Public Hearing and Vision Screening Codes and the Illinois Child Vision and Hearing Test Act. These screenings will be provided for children 2 years, 11 months of age and older.

HANDWASHING PROCEDURES

Staff shall wash their hands routinely and frequently with soap and water upon arrival at school; after using the bathroom or helping a child in the bathroom; after changing a diaper; after handling body fluids, e.g., wiping or blowing nose, coughing, or handling mucus, blood or vomit; after handling items soiled with body fluids or wastes; after cleaning; after

handling an animal; after handling or caring for a sick child; before and after eating; before preparing, handling or serving food; before and after administering first aid/medication; upon coming in from the playground; when moving from working with one group to another and after emptying garbage or cleaning. **Staff must use liquid soap and running water and need to wash hands for 20 seconds. They must wash back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails; and must dry hands with paper towel and turn off faucet with a paper towel.**

Children shall wash their hands routinely and frequently with soap and water upon arrival at school; before and after snack or lunch; after using the toilet or having diaper changed; after handling an animal; after handling body fluids, e.g., wiping or blowing his/her nose, coughing, or handling mucus, blood or vomit; before and after using the water table; after touching items soiled with a body fluids or wastes; before snack set-up; before and after cooking or other food experiences; and after outdoor play. **Children must use liquid soap and running water and need to wash hands for 20 seconds. They must wash back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails, and must dry hands with paper towel and turn off faucet with a paper towel.**

When a sink is not available and there is no time to get to a sink, teachers/children will use hand sanitizer instead of handwashing.

DIAPER CHANGING PROCEDURES

For children who are not yet toilet trained, parents should have disposable diapers (not pull ups) and wipes on hand at school. A teacher should notify the director if a child needs to be changed and should assist the child in getting his/her diaper and wipes from his/her backpack or cubby so the child is ready to be changed. **Staff should check for signs of wet or soiled diapers every 2 hours, and all children who stay for lunch program will be checked for diaper changes and/or toileting needs due to the extended day.** The director will have his/her hand on the child at all times while the child is on the changing table and will follow the posted diaper changing policies. The diaper-changing table will not be used for any other purpose except for changing diapers; therefore, nothing will be temporarily placed on this table. Soiled diapers will be placed in plastic bags and disposed of in a diaper pail that is a hands-free device. This container should be kept closed and not accessible to children. Soiled clothing should be placed in a plastic bag to be sent home to be cleaned by the parent. Staff members whose primary function is preparing food should not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.

SIGNS A CHILD IS READY TO WEAR UNDERPANTS TO SCHOOL

A child is ready to come to school in underpants when s/he can do the following:

Follows simple directions

Stays dry for two or more hours at a time

Communicates when s/he needs to go potty

Pulls pants up and down independently

Expresses the desire to wear underpants

Has limited accidents and makes adults aware if s/he has had one

Is willing to try to go potty on a public toilet

It is imperative that a child does all the above before a parent sends the child to school in underpants. The goal is for potty training to be a positive experience for everyone involved. If a child is ready, the parent should notify staff before bringing the child to school in underpants so that staff and parents can make a plan together. Staff should recommend that the parent be the first to take the child to the toilet at school so that the child can be most comfortable. If the child is a boy, parents should be asked if the child stands at the urinal or toilet or sits on the toilet. This is a very exciting milestone for a child, so it is very important that staff and parents work together.

FOOD POLICY

To provide a safe environment for children with food allergies, parents/staff are asked to refrain from bringing in open packages of food. This means that children or siblings should not enter the building eating food items at drop-off and pick-up. The results of a child even being in the same room with an item that s/he is allergic to can be lethal.

TOY POLICY

To provide a safe environment for children, toys are carefully selected based on the safety and age group of the children. The toy recall list on The Illinois Department of Public Health website is checked regularly for all recalled products that may pose a hazard to children and any and all of these products are immediately removed from the premises. This list is posted on the parent board and is updated monthly.

SMOKING

Little Ones is a smoke free facility; therefore, smoking or use of tobacco products in any form on or near the premises or near the children when engaged in an activity away from the center is prohibited.

HANDGUNS/FIREARMS

Handguns/Firearms are prohibited on the premises of Little Ones, except in the possession of a peace officer.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Little Ones Preschool does not provide medical insurance coverage for children for accidents or injuries that occur while attending or participating in any activity at or sponsored by the school. Therefore, parents are expected to assume responsibility for any resulting expense. The program does carry liability insurance.

SECURITY

- The security of the children is of utmost importance. The following are security tips to be used throughout the day:
- **CHILDREN SHOULD ALWAYS BE COUNTED.** When the class leaves the room, when the class goes to and from the social hall and playground, or when the class goes to the hallway bathroom. **Children should be counted as they go through each doorway before that door is closed. COUNT! COUNT! COUNT!**
- All children must be supervised by sight and sound at all times.
- **THE OUTSIDE DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT ALL TIMES, EXCEPT AT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE.**
- The door should never be opened to any unknown person. The Director should be notified, and s/he will make the decision of when to allow an outside person entry to the building.
- **TEACHERS SHOULD KEEP A WALKIE-TALKIE WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES.**
- **ALL STAFF HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO QUESTION ANY UNKNOWN PERSON ON THE BUILDING PREMISES.**

IMPORTANT ARRIVAL INFORMATION:

- The school doors will be open ten minutes before class begins.
- An adult must escort all children into the building.
- Every child's hand should be held at all times in the parking lot.
- Families should enter and depart from the school using the south doors.
- The adult who brings the child to school should escort the child to the bathroom and wash the child's hands. The only exception is the children who go outside to play first.
- Classroom doors should be opened five minutes before class and the teacher should guide the child into the classroom to hang up his/her belongings and backpack on the designated hook and to begin his/her day.
- The adult who brings the child should make sure that a teacher is aware of the child's presence before the adult leaves.
- If the class goes out to play first, ensure that every child is dressed properly for the

great outdoors. If the class goes out later in the morning, every child should have appropriate clothing on hand.

- **Parents should be reminded to label all clothing with their child's name.**
- Parents are asked to be on time, as it can be very uncomfortable and disruptive for a child to enter the room when activities and/or Circle Time are already under way. If being late becomes a consistent issue, parents/caregivers should be gently reminded on the importance of being on time.
- The Director should be informed immediately if a parent is not using a car seat and/or leaving children unattended in the car. Staff is always open to getting children out of the car at arrival time and/or taking children out to the car at dismissal should the need arise. The safety of the children is of utmost importance.

IMPORTANT DISMISSAL INFORMATION:

- At dismissal time the children should be seated at the classroom tables or on the rug with one teacher while the other teacher dismisses the children one at a time at the classroom door.
- Every child should be signed out by an authorized adult and the adult also needs to circle his/her name on the pick-up list.
- Children can only be picked up by authorized adults listed on the child's pick-up form. A photo ID should be required until staff becomes familiar with that person. If a person who is not listed on the pick-up form is picking up the child, written authorization by the parent/guardian is required to release the child to that person and that person need to provide a photo ID. This policy is a state law.
- The staff should not release a child to an authorized pick up person if s/he believes the person is impaired and unable to adequately care for the child. When there is doubt, the staff should err on the side of safety and offer to call another person from the child's authorized pick up list. If the person in question chooses to get in a car (with or without the child), staff should immediately notify the Director who will notify the police and provide a description of the car.
- Parents are asked to make sure that no child leaves the building without holding an adult's hand.
- Staff should inform the Director if s/he becomes aware that a parent is not using a car seat and/or leaving children unattended in the car. Staff is always open to getting children out of the car at arrival time and/or taking children out to the car at dismissal should the need arise. The safety of the children is of utmost importance.
- **Late Fee Policy:** There will be a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, beginning at release time, for a parent who has been late at least three times. This fee must be paid to the Director of Little Ones before the child returns to class. If a parent is over fifteen minutes late, every attempt will be made to contact both parents and any emergency contacts listed on the child's intake and emergency card for up to an hour. If, after an

hour, staff have been unable to reach an authorized pick-up person, the Northbrook Police Department will be contacted. The on-site Director will be responsible for the child's protection and well being until the parent, authorized pick-up person or outside authorities arrive. Staff will do their best to keep the child comfortable and calm until the situation is resolved. Please be aware that this issue should only be discussed with a parent or guardian and should never be discussed with the child at any time.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire Drills are conducted monthly and are indicated on the calendar. When a fire drill occurs, teachers take their children, as well as their attendance chart, out the designated exit and a safe distance from the building. Teachers should periodically review the emergency exit signs posted in each classroom. Children should be counted before leaving the classroom area, along the way and after meeting in the parking lot. **COUNT-COUNT-COUNT!** Make sure that the outside doors are closed behind the last class to exit. Teachers should remain calm and keep the children calm. Director will take the emergency phone list and the phone. No one reenters the building until the Director gives the "all clear" signal. If for some reason reentry is not possible, the staff will escort the children over to the Northbrook Park District Leisure Center and parents will be called to pick-up.

TORNADO WARNING PROCEDURES

A tornado warning will be announced by the Director once a month during tornado season. All children and teachers will go to the designated area and children will be assisted to sit against the wall away from windows and doors. Children will assume the "tornado" position. This means that children will sit facing the wall with their heads in their laps and hands covering their heads. Doors to designated areas should be closed. Children should be counted before leaving the classroom area, along the way and after meeting in the designated areas. **COUNT-COUNT-COUNT!** Teachers should remain calm and keep the children calm. The Director will announce the "all clear" signal when it is suitable to re-enter the classroom.

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

In case of a bomb threat, teachers should assemble the children in an orderly fashion, grab their attendance book, count the children, and then exit the building. All classes should exit through the closest emergency exit. All classes should meet on the south side of the building in the parking lot. Children should be counted along the way and after meeting in the parking lot. Teachers should remain calm and keep the children calm. No one re-enters the building until the appropriate authorities have issued the "all clear" signal. If for some reason reentry is not possible, the children will be escorted to the Northbrook Park District Leisure Center and parents will be called to pick-up.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

In order to be proactive, it is imperative that outside doors be kept locked at all times, except at arrival and dismissal time. Staff should never open the door to any unknown individual. If there is an intruder in the building, lockdown procedures will be put in place by announcing "Active Intruder-Intruder in the building" on the walkie talkie. Staff should remain calm, gather kids into classroom (or safest lockdown location), lock and secure both doors, close the shades, turn out the lights, and gather children in cubbies away from windows and doors. **Cell phones should be turned to vibrate and walkie-talkies should be turned off.**

The Director will call authorities, but just in case s/he is unable to do so, any teacher can also make the call to 911. When making the call staff should identify him/herself, describe what is happening and where the situation is happening. The teacher should not hang up until instructed to do so by the emergency contact. S/he may ask for your cell number.

Staff should stay in lockdown until Director opens the door. Staff never open the door to anyone no matter what. When the threat is over, staff should follow the directions of local law enforcement. Children's emergency contacts will be called, and children will only be released to persons listed on their emergency contact list on their emergency card or in their file. They should be signed out as always. Practice drills will be conducted twice a year.

In all the above emergencies, the Director will grab the portable phone and the children's emergency cards. Parents will be notified concerning any need for evacuation.

PEST CONTROL PROCEDURES

Preventative procedures will be followed that consist of good sanitation, management of waste, building improvements and modifications, etc., to control pests. Pest control procedures shall follow the regulations as communicated by the Illinois Department of Public Health ("Structural Pest Control Act"); and all pest control shall be administered when children are not present and under the supervision of a certified pest control technician. Nontoxic, biological, natural, or mechanical pest control methods will be used when possible. When chemical pesticides are necessary, products that are the least harmful to human health and the environment will be used. Parents and staff will be given written notification at least two business days prior to the application of pesticides on school property, unless an emergency arises and then they will be notified in a timely manner. The Director will keep records for all pest control issues and remedial actions.

LAWN CARE PESTICIDE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Lawn care pesticide procedures shall follow the regulations as communicated by the Illinois Department of Public Health ("Lawn Care Products Application and Notice Act"). A

pesticide-free turf care program will be utilized when possible. When chemical pesticides are necessary, products that are the least harmful to human health and the environment will be used and will be applied when children are not present. Parents and staff will be given written notification at least two business days prior to the application of pesticides on school property, unless an emergency arises and then they will be notified in a timely manner. The Director will keep records for all lawn care issues and any treatment applications.

RADON TESTING

The State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires that all licensed child care facilities hire an IEMA-Licensed Radon Measurement Professional to test the radon level in the building. This testing must be completed every three years and will be posted next to the DCFS License on the parent board located at the entryway to Little Ones. Copies will be provided upon request.

LEAD IN WATER TESTING

The State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires that all licensed child care facilities that serve children under 6 years of age housed in a building constructed on or before January 1, 2000, and have water consumed by the children for drinking purposes, have their water tested for lead levels by an IEPA-certified laboratory. Test results and mitigation plans for any faucets with lead levels of 2.01ppb or above will be posted next to the DCFS License on the parent board located at the entryway to Little Ones. Copies will be provided to parents or guardians upon request. Retesting will follow guidelines set forth by DCFS.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All staff should become familiar with, periodically review, and follow the program's emergency procedures:

- (1) Emergency evacuation plans posted at both exits.
- (2) The school's Risk Management Plan. (See Director)
- (3) Location of first aid kits, Epipens and AED's.
- (4) Emergency Procedures for an Injured Person on next page. **Universal Precautions.**
- (5) Posting of children's allergies in classrooms.
- (6) Code to alert another adult to call 911 for emergency assistance. "Lock Down with Intruder."

EMERGENCY MEDICAL INSTRUCTIONS

By law the only emergency treatment permitted is listed below:

- Cuts: Wash with soap and water and cover wound. Call parent/spouse if indicated and then call physician if necessary. If heavy bleeding, use gloves and apply light compress.

- Bruises: Person should rest. Cold, wet cloth should be placed over area.
- Splinters: Wash with soap and water, remove (if it can be removed with tweezers), and cover area with bandaid. If it is a child and it cannot be removed without breaking the skin, wash with soap and water, cover with bandaid, and let parent remove at home.
- Nosebleeds: Person should remain in sitting position (so blood may exit). Apply steady pressure by placing fingers on either side of the nose. Bleeding should subside within 15 minutes. If not, the parent/spouse or physician should be called. Person should rest following a nosebleed.
- Possible Concussion: Following a fall, person should be kept warm and quiet. Parent/spouse and possibly 911 should be called if necessary. Better to err on the side of caution.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE FOR INJURED PERSON

Situation should be appraised before providing emergency treatment. Stay should remain calm and notify Director immediately. If more extensive emergency treatment is necessary:

- (1) One teacher should stay with the staff person/child, who should not be moved.
- (2) Another teacher should notify the Director by walkie-talkie.
- (3) Director should call 911 and then pull injured staff person's/child's file with medical and/or emergency information. If it is a child, his/her emergency card should be pulled.
- (4) Director should call spouse/parent and explain what happened and that the injured person will be transported to Glenbrook Hospital (657-5800). Director will call a substitute teacher if necessary. If spouse/parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be notified, in the order listed on the staff person's/child's emergency list.
- (5) One teacher or Director should accompany the person to the hospital, bringing the staff person's/child's file and should remain there until the spouse/parent arrives. The person's health records will be shared with emergency personnel.
- (6) Staff should follow universal precautions as recommended by the Cook County Department of Public Health.
- (7) One of the teachers should fill out an accident report or an incident report form. These forms must be completed on the same day as the incident.

DENTAL EMERGENCIES

It is imperative that dental emergencies be handled correctly.

Tooth Knocked Out of Mouth

- (1) If possible, tooth should be saved for reimplantation. If the tooth is dirty, it should be rinsed under tap water, holding it by the crown. It should not be

- scrubbed. Sink should be plugged so that the tooth will not be lost down the drain.
- (2) Tooth should be eased back into the socket. (Not recommended for preschooler)
 - (3) The tooth should be held in the socket while the person is being transported to the dentist.
 - (4) If reimplantation at the tooth site is impossible, the tooth should be held in the person's cheek or under the person's tongue until s/he is transported to the dentist.
If there is danger of the tooth being swallowed, as with a young child, the tooth should be placed in the person's saliva or in a glass of milk or water.

Tooth Hit and Still in Mouth

- (1) If the tooth is fractured (broken), the person should go/be taken to the dentist as soon as possible. The root of the tooth or surrounding bone may be broken.
- (2) If a tooth is injured, broken or loosened, the dentist should be contacted immediately by the child's parents or by the staff person by him/herself.

Toothache

- (3) Mild mouthwash, warm water or warm salt water may be used to rinse the mouth.
- (4) The person should go/be taken to the dentist as soon as possible.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of an emergency closing of the school due to extreme weather conditions, staff/families will be notified by email or by the Remind program if the person/family signs up for this option. Sign up information for the Remind program will be sent out at the beginning of each school year. The Emergency Closing Center site at www.emergencyclosings.com will also have accurate up to date information. If the weather has forced the closing of Northbrook elementary schools, Little Ones will also be closed. If the school needs to be closed due to other reasons, all staff/families will be notified by phone, by the Remind program and by email. **There are no refunds or make-up days for preschool or enrichment classes due to emergency closings.**

DISCIPLINE & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT POLICIES

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Little Ones' goal is to create an environment that allows each child to develop self-control and assume responsibility for his/her behavior, while ensuring the safety of all children. The staff will communicate their behavioral expectations in a language that children are able to understand in order to redirect inappropriate behavior. To support the emotional development of children, limits will be set in a calm and reasonable manner. Little Ones does not use corporal punishment.

Positive discipline teaches children about limits, how to maintain control over their bodies

and how to problem solve in the event of a conflict. Little Ones views discipline as a means of teaching children to develop internal control of their behavior, rather than as a means of punishing children who have acted inappropriately. The goal is to encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature individuals who can make responsible choices and accept the consequences of such choices.

Please see the Director for articles, referrals, and/or local workshops on positive discipline.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES

Little Ones' behavior guidance techniques follow both DCFS and NAEYC guidelines. Disciplinary procedures are loving and positive with the goal being to help each individual child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his/her actions. In summary, the following techniques and principles should be used in our program:

- Observation and prevention. Being proactive by avoiding crowding, waiting, and frustration helps prevent unacceptable behaviors.
- Setting rules with the children, writing them down, and posting them in the classroom.
- Using language that the children can understand to redirect inappropriate behavior.
- Having a wide variety of activities (avoiding boredom) and enough toys (avoiding pressure of sharing limited toys)
- Finding out what came before the unacceptable behavior. Understanding the whole story before assisting the children in conflict resolution. Try to encourage the children to solve the problem as much as possible.
- Using lots of praise for specific positive behaviors, "I like the way you helped your friend," etc., instead of "good job" or "good boy/girl."
- When negative behaviors occur, being clear with expectations and deciding on a logical consequence. For example: If a child hits another child after his/her toy has been grabbed away, say "Hitting hurts! What can you do to let Johnny know that you don't like it when he grabs your toy?" If necessary, provide him with the words to use. Then turn attention to the child who grabbed and say, "It was David's turn. What would you like to tell David so that you can have a turn?" Help Johnny get involved with another activity until it's his turn. Be positive and as private as possible.
- Redirecting or distracting the child to an alternate activity. (Especially appropriate for 2-year olds)
- Using a "Work it out" table. If a child is feeling frustrated, angry, or upset, let him/her pound playdough or draw his/her feelings on a picture at a "Work-

it-out" table.

- Not using "time-out."
- **ADULT BEHAVIORS THAT ARE NEVER ACCEPTABLE INCLUDE: Screaming; inflicting physical pain (like hitting, spanking, or pulling); inflicting emotional abuse (like ridiculing, blaming, teasing, name-calling, threatening, or humiliating); or using coercion (like rough handling, restraining, physically forcing a child).** The staff role in behavior guidance is to model and teach the development of self-control, positive methods of conflict resolution, and good communication skills. Staff are expected to guide children with kindness, respect, and by listening, assessing, and understanding. Staff who resort to the above listed unacceptable behaviors will be terminated immediately and, as required by law, the incident will be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline.

For more information on behavior guidance, please see the Director.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Little Ones works with families of children who experience difficulty in the program. Little Ones' goal is to provide a safe environment for all children. If a child displays ongoing disruptive behavior, Little Ones may take the following action:

- (1) The Director may ask an Early Childhood Consultant to observe the situation. Staff and family will confer, and a behavior management plan will be agreed upon. Positive guidance techniques will always be used.
- (2) If Step One is unsuccessful, the family will be required to meet with the Director and support staff; another attempt will be made to correct the disruptive behavior. The Director, staff and family will discuss the next steps if progress does not occur.
- (3) Suspension: (a) When the previous procedures have been followed and sufficient progress has not occurred, the child may be suspended from the program. (b) The Director may immediately suspend a child at any time if s/he exhibits behavior that is harmful to him/herself or others. In such a circumstance, the parent/guardian may be called to pick up the child from school. Suspension may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period of time.
- (4) If the staff decides that Little Ones cannot adequately meet a particular child or family's needs, the Director will be available to assist the family in finding a setting that can better meet those needs. As always, the goal at Little Ones is to provide support to all children and families.

BITING ISSUES

Instances of biting can occur in 2-year-old classrooms. Very young children tend to communicate a lot with their bodies, act quickly, and many times act spontaneously. They are not always able to distinguish between what is perceived as loving and what hurts. Reasons for biting range from exploration to frustration, to teething, to lack of language—just to name a few. Biting does not necessarily mean aggression towards another child. When a bite occurs, the child who bit will be encouraged to use his/her words, not his/her body, to communicate. Staff will be particularly concerned with the bitten child and will provide immediate comfort and will always treat both parties with dignity and respect. Staff will try to be proactive in preventing future biting instances by observing and supervising the child displaying the biting behavior and by redirecting the child away from situations that make s/he want to bite. In addition, both sets of parents will be contacted and made aware of the incident.

When children bite, each situation is unique. Therefore, children who exhibit biting behavior must be managed on an individual basis. If a child's biting is of concern to the staff, the following steps will be followed.

- (1) The Director will observe the class. Then the staff and family will meet to develop a written plan.
- (2) If the above plan is unsuccessful, it is not unusual to ask the family to seek outside assistance.
- (3) If outside assistance is not successful, it is not unusual to ask the family to keep the child home for a day or even a week or two until the biting behavior dissipates.
- (4) If the above steps do not work, and the staff feels that additional support staff is indicated, the family would be financially responsible for providing additional support staff that meet the standards of Little Ones.
- (5) In the event that a child's biting behavior persists, all resources for preventing the biting have been exhausted, and staff feel that the biting is jeopardizing the safety of the other children; staff will work with the family to find an alternate placement that may better meet the child's needs. As always, the goal is to provide support for all children and families.

MEETING CHILDREN'S SPECIAL NEEDS

Little Ones recognizes the need for and supports early intervention and attempts to address the concerns of families of children with special needs (e.g. physical, behavioral, cognitive). Little Ones supports the right of each child to play and learn in inclusive early childhood programs to the fullest extent; consistent with the best interests of all involved. Staff will work with families and specialists to provide proper care and education for each child with the current staffing. If the current staffing is not sufficient to meet

the needs of a child, then that family will be financially responsible for providing additional support staff that meets the standards of Little Ones.

If, after working with a child and family, the child does not appear to be benefiting from the program, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, the family will be notified of the concerns. Staff will work closely with the family and appropriate specialists to determine the child's current needs, identify the setting and services most suited to meeting those needs, and assist the family in placing the child in an appropriate setting.

Close communication with parents is essential to providing quality care and education. If staff feels that a child should be evaluated, such recommendations will be made to the Director and then communicated to parents. When a child has already been evaluated by outside professionals and/or a school district, then parents are expected to share the most recent evaluations (including IEP's or IFSP's) with Little Ones, so that staff and parents can work together to achieve agreed upon goals. It is imperative that staff develop working relationships with families and specialists so that there will be consistency for the child.

FAMILIES GETTING STARTED

CHILDREN'S ENROLLMENT AND MEDICAL FORMS

All children's enrollment forms must be on file at Little Ones in order for a child to attend. These forms include:

Family Profile Form/Family Profile Update

Authorization for Pick-Up

Program Permission Form

DCFS Medical Form

Childhood Lead Risk Assessment Questionnaire

Emergency Card & Medical Insurance Information Card

Parent Handbook Receipt Form

Child Care Choices Pamphlet Receipt Form

Certified copy of child's birth certificate (to comply with The Missing Children's Records Act {325 ILCS 50/5})

To comply with The Missing Children's Records Act, The Department of Children and Family Services requires that a parent or guardian of a child enrolled for the first time provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate within 30 days of enrollment. If the parent/guardian needs the original back, it will be copied, and the

original will be returned no later than the end of the next business day of receipt. If a certified copy of a birth certificate is not available, the parent or guardian must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate. Little Ones is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if a parent or guardian fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the first 30-days of school. At that point in time, the parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the report and will be given an additional 10 days to comply by submitting the required documentation.

Parents who object to immunizations, physical exams/or other medical treatment on religious grounds must sign a written waiver, which will be part of their child's permanent record. The name, address and phone number of the child's certified practitioner must be on file at the school.

If a vaccine-preventable disease is recorded in the United States that causes concern for the Director for the children and families at Little Ones, the following steps will be taken: The parents of any under immunized children will be given the choice of either immunizing their children or having them tested for immunity. If the parents choose not to do either of the above, whether for medical reasons or for religious reasons, they may be asked to withdraw their child(ren) from the program. This decision will take into account the recommendations of the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as issues like the severity of the outbreak, the number of pregnant moms and infants that come in the building, and/or any other concerns for the safety and well being of all involved. This determination will not be made lightly and will be reached with the sole intent to ensure the health and safety of the staff, children and families who attend Little Ones. Credit/refunds cannot be given for days missed if children need to be out because they are under immunized.

Please also note that in the above situation, staff may also be asked to provide proof of immunization or proof of immunity, and that if the CDC recommends that staff be immunized or re-immunized, then staff may be required to do so. All health information is strictly confidential, except in the case of a medical emergency and or in the case of the request of regulatory authorities.

Due to DCFS requirements, children and staff members are not allowed to start school until all enrollment and medical forms are on file.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Little Ones reserves the right to determine the appropriate class placement of children.

NEW PARENT ORIENTATION

All new parents are encouraged to attend the New Parent Orientation. This program gives parents the opportunity to hear about the program and ask questions.

CHILDREN'S OPEN HOUSE

Prior to the start of school, every child will be assigned an open house visit. This visit will allow each child the opportunity to meet his/her teachers, meet some new friends, find a coat hook and have his/her picture taken.

TRANSITION SCHEDULE FOR 2-YEAR-OLD CLASSES

To ensure that the first school experience for 2-year olds is pleasant and not overwhelming, classes are shortened and divided as follows:

First 2 weeks of school

½ of the class will attend 9:00-10:00 a.m.

½ of the class will attend 10:15-11:15 a.m.

Children's times will be assigned before the beginning of the school year.

Regular class hours of 9:00-11:15 a.m. begin the 3rd week of school.

SEPARATION AND TRANSITION

A child's initial adjustment to preschool is extremely important to the success of his/her early childhood experience. For many children, this will be the first experience away from home. Some children will be returning after being away for the summer, while others will be entering new classrooms with new children and teachers. But for all, this experience represents a beginning, and staff is very important in facilitating a successful transition. Little Ones recognizes that separation is an individual experience and encourages transition into the programs gradually. It is important for parents and teachers to give children sufficient time and support to help them move from the primary relationship with parents to a trusting, secondary relationship with teachers. Therefore, parents/caregivers are asked to remain available during the first couple of weeks of school in the event their child needs them. Please be aware that this kind of separation is often as difficult for parents as it is for children. Parents should be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about this time with one another and with us. Please also note that **parents are welcome to stay with their child until they feel comfortable leaving.**

Learning to separate from and reunite with people we love is a life-long process. Hellos and goodbyes can bring out deep feelings in everyone involved. Some of these feelings can be

uncomfortable, and it is natural for people to want to avoid them. Because they arouse such strong feelings, hellos and good-byes provide valuable learning for all children. Children can learn about trust when they say goodbye and reunite as promised. Children can learn what it means to be a separate person with deep attachments to others.

Remember the following:

- (1) Make sure parents/caregivers always say goodbye, even when it is tempting for them to sneak away.
- (2) Reassure the child that the parent/caregiver will return when class is over.
- (3) Once a parent/caregiver says good-bye, encourage him/her not to prolong it; otherwise the child will feel the parent/caregiver's hesitation to leave.
- (4) If a child needs a reminder of home, such as a family photo, security blanket, or a transitional object from home, make a plan with the parent/caregiver. When possible encourage the child to leave the item in his/her backpack where s/he can check on it to make sure it is "safe."
- (5) Encourage the parent/caregiver to plan a special lunch for after school during the first days of school.
- (6) Make sure parents/caregivers are reminded to arrive a little early for pick-up during their child's first days of school.
- (7) Make sure that someone calls the parent/caregiver to give him/her an update of the child's progress.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

On the first day of school, each child will be bringing in the supplies listed on the class supply list. It is the teachers' responsibility to check in these supplies. These school supplies (except extra clothing & family photograph) will be combined and utilized by the entire class, so all supplies should be handed in to the Director.

PARENT PAYMENT, SCHOLARSHIP FUND & CANCELLATION POLICIES

TUITION

The last month's tuition and registration fees are paid at the time of registration and are non-refundable. The remainder of the tuition is made through tri-annual payments, due July 1st, October 1st, and February 1st (8 months divided into 3 payments). A monthly payment plan is available for an additional administrative fee of \$5 per month. Tuition is due on the first day of the month. Payments should be mailed in or placed in the payment box on the front table. Payments should not be given to teachers.

Families with special circumstances can make alternate payment arrangements with the

Director.

Since Little Ones does not have office staff, bills are not sent out and prompt payment is a necessity. There is a \$10.00 late fee for payments received after the tenth of the month. There is a \$25.00 late fee for payments received after the 15th of the month. There is a \$25.00 charge for returned checks. If a family has an unexpected financial situation, they are encouraged to speak to the Director. Scholarships/reduced tuition openings are available for families experiencing financial stress.

Preschool is closed for some institute days, legal holidays and Beth Shalom closings in observance of the Jewish holidays. Please note that the school calendar is revised annually to compensate for the days that Little Ones is closed to ensure that the children enjoy the same number of school days every year. Prices reflect the number of school days and school closings. For that reason, credit cannot be given for additional days that children are unable to attend school due to illness or vacation.

PAM STERN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Pam Stern Scholarship Fund is a fund that was created to honor friend and colleague Pam Stern. Pam was an esteemed teacher at Little Ones for ten years before she died of lung cancer in March of 2010. This fund enables families who are dealing with financial issues to be able to send their children to preschool. Parents and staff can support this fund by making donations to the fund, and/or by purchasing cards to acknowledge an event in someone's life. These cards can be purchased for \$5.00 each and are a nice way to honor a birthday, graduation, birth, etc., or even to express sympathy upon a death.

CANCELLATION

CANCELLATION BEFORE THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

If a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw a child prior to the start of the school year, the parent/guardian must provide written notice of intent to withdraw. A refund of amounts paid, excluding the registration fee, will be provided if both of the following conditions exist on the day that written notice is received: (1) All classes within that "age band" appropriate to the class in which the child was enrolled must be full, e.g., You and Me, 2 year olds, 3 year olds, 4 year olds. (2) There is a child on the waiting list for a class (in the appropriate age band) who accepts the offer to be enrolled and pays the appropriate amount due. If the classes within the age band are not full or if the spot is not filled by someone on the waiting list at the time of withdrawal, no refund will be issued.

CANCELLATION AFTER THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

If a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw a child after the school year has started, the parent/guardian must provide written notice of intent to withdraw at least four weeks

prior to the child's last day. Refunds will be determined based on the information indicated in the cancellation section above.

DISCONTINUATION OF SERVICES

In the event the Little Ones staff determines that enrollment or continued participation of a specific child and/or family is not appropriate, Little Ones reserves the right to discontinue service. In such a circumstance, any unused portion of service fees paid to date will be refunded. Little Ones reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons including, but not limited to, the following: not observing the rules of Little Ones as outlined in the parent handbook; the child has special needs which cannot be adequately met with current staffing; physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by adult or child; safety or well being of staff, children or families is jeopardized; non-payment of fees. **There will be no credits/refunds for missed days or cancellations due to a child being under immunized.**

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Little Ones is a great school with a strong staff that is committed to the program and community. Little Ones strives to teach tolerance and respect for other cultures and beliefs to the children, and that same respect must be given to staff as well. It is important that each staff member take the time to learn from one another. Working together as a team requires optimism, positive responses to new ideas and a love for children and fellow human beings.

There is no place for criticism, backbiting, or negativity at Little Ones. Staff should remember to speak carefully when asking questions or expressing concerns to a co-worker. As staff focus on each child's individual development, staff needs to focus on his/her own professional and personal development as well. Staff should promote camaraderie, to learn from differences, and to celebrate commonalities. Little Ones is a place for love, joy and learning and staff needs to strive to keep this spirit throughout the school year!

ADDENDUM I

SOME IDEAS FOR THE "BASICS" THAT YOU MIGHT ENJOY IN YOUR CLASSROOM:

THINGS TO USE FOR PAINTBRUSHES/CREATIVE PAINTING:

Q-tips	make-up brushes	spray bottles w/ diluted paint
feathers	cotton balls	
tree branches	eye droppers	
squeegees	bubble wrap prints	
ink stamps	vegetable stamps	
marble rolling	golf ball rolling	
sponges	lego stamping	
finger painting	plastic animal feet stamping	
string painting	straw painting	

EASY TO MAKE MODELING MATERIALS:

Cooked Clay

Ingredients:

2 C. Salt	2/3 C. Water and later 1/2 C. cold water
Food Coloring	1 C. Cornstarch

Materials:

Saucepan	Bowls
Spoons	Measuring spoons & cups

Procedure:

1. Put food coloring into the 2/3 C. water. Mix salt & water in saucepan and stir over heat three to four minutes.
2. Remove from the heat and add the cornstarch and remaining water.
3. Stir until smooth. When cool, it's ready to play!

Note: Clay will not keep for more than a few days.

Baker's Dough

Ingredients:

1 C. flour per child	1/2 C. water per child
food coloring	

Materials:

Bowls	Spoons	Measuring spoons and cups
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Procedure:

1. Let children mix 1/2 C. water with food coloring. Then mix 1 C. flour and stir until it's the consistency of playdough.
2. Play! (If dough is too sticky, let the children add a little flour.)
(This dough can air dry within 24 hours if you want to save the sculptures.)

Moon Craters

Ingredients:

1/2 C. liquid starch 2 C. rock salt
1/2 C. glue mixed with food coloring

Materials:

Spoons Bowls Cardboard

Procedure:

1. Mix liquid starch with 2 C. rock salt and 1/2 C. glue plus food coloring.
2. Let kids freely pile onto cardboard to create a three-dimensional structure (it will crystallize and dry hard).

Detergent Painting

Ingredients:

1 C. detergent 1/8 C. water mixed with food coloring

Materials:

Cardboard, boxes, or bags bowls
spoons measuring cups eggbeater

Procedure:

1. Mix detergent with the colored water.
2. Beat with eggbeater until it gets smooth, shiny, and stiff.
3. Let children pile mixture onto boxes, bags, or cardboard. It will stick and pile up.

Goop

Ingredients:

1/2 C. cornstarch 1/2 C. water mixed with color

Materials:

Trays, bowls, spoons food coloring
measuring cups

Procedure:

1. Mix the cornstarch with the colored water.
2. Pour the mixture onto trays for the child and watch what happens.
3. Add more cornstarch. What happens? More water. What happens?
4. Reuse mixture as needed.

Cornstarch Modeling Mixture

Ingredients:

1 C. salt 1/2 C. of boiling water
1/2 C. cornstarch food coloring

Materials:

bowls pan spoons
measuring cups brushes heat source

Procedure:

1. Mix salt, cornstarch, water and coloring in pan.
2. Heat over low heat, stirring constantly until mixture is too stiff to stir.
3. When cool, knead until smooth.

Note: This mixture will not dry well.

Playdough

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3 C. flour | 3 TBS. cream of tartar or alum |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. salt | 3 C. water plus food coloring |
| 3 TBS. oil | |

Materials:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| measuring cups and spoons | heat source |
| foil or wax paper | tools |

Procedure:

1. Mix all the ingredients and place over low heat.
2. Stir often until it is the consistency of mashed potatoes.
3. Turn out onto waxed paper and allow to cool.
5. When cool, let children knead and then play with a variety of playdough tools.
6. Store in airtight container.

Kool-Aid Playdough

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 5 C. flour | 6 TBS. vegetable oil |
| 1 C. salt | 1 TBS. Alum |
| 4 C. boiling water | 4 small PKG unsweetened Kool-Aid |

Materials:

- Bowl
Measuring cups and spoons

Procedures:

1. Mix together flour, salt and Alum.
2. Add Kool-Aid and oil to water. Stir until dissolved.
3. Combine dry ingredients with wet ingredients.
4. Knead until cool.
5. Store in airtight container or ziplock bag.

"Puffy Paint" Recipe

Ingredients:

- Equal parts of white (Elmer's) glue, white BioColor foam paint or shaving cream, and liquid watercolor

Materials:

Ziplock bags or cups with popsicle sticks

Measuring cups

Procedures:

1. Mix ingredients in ziplock bag for sensory experience.
2. Then cut a small corner to squeeze the "puffy" paint out (like a pastry chef).
3. Let it dry "puffy" without touching.
4. Or you can mix it in a cup with a Popsicle stick to use as a painting tool to drip the "puffy" paint with. Again, let dry puffy.

Variations:

Use any color BioColor foam paint mixed with glue.

Rainbow Stew

Ingredients:

1/3 C. sugar

food coloring

1 C. cornstarch

4 C. cold water

heavy ziplock bags

tape

Materials:

Pan/spoon

Heat source

measuring cups

4 containers

Procedures:

1. Mix sugar, cornstarch and water in pan.
2. Heat until it begins to thicken, stirring constantly.
3. Cool.
4. Divide mixture into 4 containers and then add different color food coloring to each.
5. Add 2 heaping tsp. of each color into heavy duty ziplock bag,
6. Seal and tape bag closed.
7. Children can knead bag, mixing the colors into rainbow stew.

This recipe is perfect for the child who does not like to get his/her hands messy.

ADDENDUM II

EDUCATIONAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

CHILD DEVELOPMENT GOALS-2-3 YEAR OLDS

These goals are based on an extensive review of the most current research and professional literature in the field of early childhood. These skills also correspond to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

Social/Emotional

- To regulate own emotions and behaviors
- To establish and sustain positive relationships
- To participate cooperatively & constructively in group situations

Physical

- To experiment with different ways of moving
- To sustain balance during simple movement experiences
- To demonstrate gross-motor manipulative skills
- To demonstrate fine-motor strength and coordination

Language

- To listen to and understand increasingly complex language
- To use language to express thoughts and needs
- To use appropriate conversational & other communication skills

Cognitive

- To demonstrate positive approaches to learning
- To remember and connect experiences
- To match similar objects
- To use symbols and images to represent something not present

Literacy

- To demonstrate beginning phonological awareness
- To demonstrate beginning knowledge of the alphabet
- To demonstrate beginning knowledge of print and its uses
- To comprehend and respond to books and other texts
- To demonstrate beginning emergent writing skills

Mathematics

- To use simple number concepts and operations
- To explore and describe spatial relationships and shapes
- To make simple comparisons between objects

The Arts

- To explore the visual arts
- To explore musical concepts and expression
- To explore dance and movement concepts
- To explore dramatic play

CHILD DEVELOPMENT GOALS-3-5 YEAR OLDS

These goals are based on an extensive review of the most current research and professional literature in the field of early childhood. These skills also correspond to the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

Social/Emotional

- To regulate own emotions and behaviors
- To establish and sustain positive relationships
- To participate cooperatively & constructively in group situations

Physical

- To demonstrate traveling skills
- To demonstrate balancing skills
- To demonstrate gross-motor manipulative skills
- To demonstrate fine-motor strength and coordination

Language

- To listen to and understand increasingly complex language
- To use language to express thoughts and needs
- To use appropriate conversational & other communication skills

Cognitive

- To demonstrate positive approaches to learning
- To remember and connect experiences
- To use classification skills
- To use symbols and images to represent something not present

Literacy

- To demonstrate phonological awareness
- To demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet
- To demonstrate knowledge of print and its uses
- To comprehend and respond to books and other texts
- To demonstrate emergent writing skills

Mathematics

- To use number concepts and operations
- To explore and describe spatial relationships and shapes
- To compare and measure
- To demonstrate knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology

To use scientific inquiry skills

To demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of living things

To demonstrate knowledge of physical properties of objects & materials

To demonstrate knowledge of Earth's environment

To use tools and other technology to perform tasks

Social Studies

To demonstrate knowledge about self

To show a basic understanding of people and how they live

To explore change related to familiar people and places

To demonstrate simple geographic knowledge

The Arts

To explore the visual arts

To explore musical concepts and expression

To explore dance and movement concepts

To explore dramatic play

ADDENDUM III

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

1-6 Months

Typical Play Development

Regards adult's face and smiles

Attempts to reach for a rattle held above their chest

Beginning to feed self a cracker

Resists toy being pulled away

Visually tracks a moving toy from side to side

Keeps head in the middle when watching faces

Fine Motor

Follows a moving object with eyes

Plays with hands together

Reaches for an object and grasps rattle

Speech and Language

Sucks and swallows well during feeding

Quiets or smiles in response to sound or voice

Vocalizes with cooing sounds

Laughs and squeals

Begins to use consonant sounds in babbling, e.g. "dada"

Begins to eat cereals and pureed foods

Gross Motor

Supported sitting, holding head steady

Rolls from back to tummy

On tummy, holds head and chest up

While standing with support, accepts entire weight with legs

6-12 Months Milestones

Typical Play Development

Shy with strangers

Plays pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo

Turns several pages of a chunky (Board) book at once

Beginning to drink from a cup (no lid)

Explores and examines an object using both hands

Fine Motor

Eyes follow a dropped toy

Bangs objects together

Hands objects from one hand to another

Picks up Cheerio with thumb and index finger

Speech and Language

Responds to simple commands, e.g. "come here"

Imitates speech sounds

Increases variety of sounds and syllable combinations in babbling

Looks at familiar objects and people when named

Begins to eat junior and mashed table foods

Meaningful uses of “mama” or “dada”

Gross Motor

Sits without support

Pulls self to stand and holds on

Walks holding onto furniture

May stand momentarily

Creeps on hands and knees with alternative arm and leg movement

12-18 Months

Typical Play Development

Plays ball with another person

Indicates wants/needs (without crying)

Drinks from a cup (no lid or help)

Helps with getting undressed

Stacks two objects or blocks

Fine Motor

Imitates scribbling with a crayon

Puts objects in/out of a container

Builds a tower of three blocks

Places circle/square in a form board

Speech and Language

Chooses an object from a group of two

Identifies 2-5 body parts

Brings requested toy from another room

Five-word vocabulary

Imitates words

Gross Motor

Walks alone, although s/he may stumble or fall on occasion

Climbs on furniture or stairs

Avoids obstacles when walking

18-24 Months

Typical Play Development

Uses a spoon, with little spilling

Helps in house, simple tasks

Removes garments

Fine Motor

Imitates a vertical stroke with crayon

Builds a tower of 5-6 blocks

May begin to use one hand more

Nests 4 or more cups/boxes

Speech and Language

Understands simple questions

Imitates animal and car motor sounds

Puts two words together

Asks simple questions: "What's that?"

30-50 word vocabulary

Gross Motor

Kicks a ball in proper direction

Beginning to run with some coordination

Jumps off floor with both feet

24-30 Months

Typical Play Development

Beginning to put on clothing

Beginning to wash and dry hands

Beginning to separate from mother

Beginning to play interactive games

Fine Motor

Imitates horizontal and vertical lines

Able to place a circle, square and triangle when board is reversed

Imitates a train of cubes

Takes things apart and puts them together

Speech and Language

Understands action words

Points to smaller body parts

Understands 300 words

Carries out a 2-step command

Uses 2-3 word combinations

50-100 word speaking vocabulary

50% of speech is understandable

Gross Motor

Squats and returns to stand with good control

Goes up and down stairs using railing (two feet per step)

Runs with good balance

Walks backward pulling a toy on a string

Throws a ball overhand with control

30-36 Month

Typical Play Development

Puts on clothing

Washes and dries hands

Beginning to button

Plays interactive games - tag

Fine Motor

Combines the horizontal and vertical when building with blocks

Can do simple puzzles

Holds crayons with fingers rather than whole hand

Builds a tower of 9-10 blocks

Can string at least 4 one-inch beads

Copies circles and imitates a cross on paper

Speech and Language

Identifies colors

Understands common objects

Carries out 3-step commands

Gives first and last name when asked

Knows if a "boy" or "girl"

100-200 word vocabulary

90% of speech is understood

Gross Motor

Pedals tricycle

Walks up and down stairs (one foot per step)

Hops on 1 foot, 2 hops

Jumps with 2 feet

Attempts a somersault