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2020-2021 PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO PRESCHOOL	Page 1-2
Welcome	
State Licensing	
NAEYC Accreditation	
ExceleRate Illinois	
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	Pages 2-3
History and Philosophy of Little Ones	
Little Ones Staff	
Class Hours	
HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION	Pages 3-6
We're a Team: Parents-Children-Staff	
Little Ones' Parent Group	
Room Parent/Parent Volunteer Program	
Developmental Screenings	
Parent/Teacher Conferences	
Referrals/Recommendations	
Daily and Monthly Communication	
Conflict Resolution	
Annual Parent Surveys	
CURRICULUM	Pages 6-8
Illinois Early Learning & Development Standards	
Handwriting Without Tears	
Transition to Kindergarten	
You and Me Class (Adult/Child Class)	
A Typical Preschool Day	
Lunch Enrichment Programs	
GETTING STARTED	Pages 8-11
Enrollment and Medical Forms	
Class Placement	
New Parent Orientation	
Children's Open House	
Transition Schedule for 2-Year Old Classes	
Separation and Transition	
School Supplies	
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	Pages 11-13
Important Arrival Information	
Important Dismissal Information	
Carpools	
Absences and Late Arrivals	
Parking Lot	

Cell Phones
Clothing
Items from Home

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Pages 14-16

Discipline Policy
Program Management Strategies
Biting Issues
Meeting Children's Special Needs

MISCELLANEOUS

Page 16-18

Food Policy
Toy Policy
Pest Control Procedures
Lawn Care Pesticide Application Procedures
Radon Testing
Lead in Water Testing
Smoking
Handguns/Firearms
Insurance Information
Emergency School Closings
Release of Information
Toilet Training
Signs Your Child is Ready to Wear Underpants to School
School Pictures

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Pages 18-19

Holidays
Birthday/Special Day Program

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Pages 19-21

Illness and Medication
Vision and Hearing Screenings
Security
School Emergency Procedures
Accidents/Emergencies
Reporting Abuse

PAYMENT POLICIES

Page 21-22

Tuition
Pam Stern Scholarship Fund
Cancellation Before the Start of School Year
Cancellation After the Start of School Year
Discontinuation of Services

Welcome to Preschool

Choosing a quality preschool program is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. We, at Little Ones, take your decision seriously and are committed to living up to the important responsibility of providing a quality preschool program for your child. Our mission is to maintain a caring and nurturing environment in which your child can learn and develop. Preschool to a young child means time: time to look, time to grow, time to feel, to touch and to learn. Preschool means children working together and making new friends. And, it is the joy of creative expression, the fun of experimentation, the pride in “doing it myself” and the development of self-esteem. The Little Ones Preschool curriculum is based on the developmental philosophy of Early Childhood Education, while integrating the preschool benchmarks of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Our goal is to provide children with a safe, secure and consistent environment that supports their social/emotional, physical, language and cognitive development. Our teachers respect each child’s individual needs and encourage each child to develop at his/her own pace. Throughout the year, parents are invited to participate in many special activities. Parents are also welcome to visit at any time, and staff is always available to answer questions. Just call us at (847) 272-4646.

We look forward to a wonderful year with your family!

Sincerely,
Sheree Y. Feldman
Director

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. In order 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 you choose a NAEYC-accredited early childhood program for your child, you will find a program that 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 of Illinois’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 OF LITTLE ONES

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, Mrs. Lanich 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. Mrs. Feldman had a master’s 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. Mrs. Feldman 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, Mrs. Feldman 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, creative art experiences, music, dramatic play, story time, science and exploration, gross and small motor activities and outdoor 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. We believe that children grow, experience and learn about the world in different ways and at their own pace. We are committed to enhancing each child’s development, recognizing that each child has his/her own unique style of growth and learning (multiple intelligences). All children are welcome. Enrollment is open to all children without regard to race, religion, sex, or national origin. We provide 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 to the kindergarten classroom an easy one.

LITTLE ONES STAFF

All staff members are experienced Early Childhood educators, who have four-year degrees (or more) in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Little Ones prides itself in that all classes are taught by co-teachers. Little Ones is an equal opportunity employer.

Throughout the year, the staff participates in Early Childhood conferences, workshops, and in-service training seminars in order to remain informed of current trends and research in the field. All teachers are caring and concerned individuals and are moms themselves. They know how important it is to

establish close relationships with the children in their classrooms and with their parents. The staff also maintains NAEYC approved staff to child ratios in all classrooms at all times, and all children are consistently supervised by sight and sound. The staff also works together to ensure smooth transitions from classroom to classroom and from program to program.

CLASS HOURS

Regular class hours are as follows:

<u>AGE GROUPS</u>	<u>DAYS</u>	<u>HOURS</u>
You and Me (18—36 months)	Tuesdays/Fridays	9:00-10:15 a.m.
2-day 2's	Tues/Thurs	9:00-11:15 a.m.
3-day 2's	Mon/Wed/Fri	9:00-11:15 a.m.
3-day 3's	Mon/Wed/Thurs	9:00-11:15 a.m.
4-day 3's	Mon-Thurs	9:00-11:15 a.m.
4-day PreK	Mon-Thurs	9:00-11:15 a.m.
5-day PreK	Mon-Fri	9:00-11:15 a.m.
3-5-year-old Lunch Enrichment	Mon-Fri	11:25 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
3-5-year-old extended day Spanish	Thursdays	1:00-1:45 p.m.

Little Ones operates from the day after Labor Day through the week before Memorial Day. The school basically follows the Northbrook District 27 calendar.

Home/School Communication

WE'RE A TEAM: PARENTS—CHILDREN—STAFF

Parent involvement is a vital component of our program. Both parents and teachers have important functions to serve in educating children. Children grow and learn best when families and teachers work and play together. There are many opportunities for parents, children, and staff to share ideas and experiences. Among these are the parent orientation, children's open house, parent-teacher conferences, special days, parent group, parent volunteer program, room parent program, parent-child nights, and family events. Providing positive experiences for our families is as important to us as those we provide for the children.

Parents and staff work together as a team to make the school year an exciting and meaningful one for your child. We urge you to contact us at any time if you want clarification about a program, to make suggestions or to discuss your child's experience. We would appreciate your keeping us informed of anything unusual that has happened or is about to happen in your family life (e.g. illness, parents away, death in the family, family visits, birth of a sibling, etc.). We would like to be able to support you as much as possible when you are in need. **We also have special "Book Bags" that you can check out that contain materials about significant life situations. Topics include death, birth of a sibling, divorce, moving, potty training, etc. Don't hesitate to let us know if you need support.**

In order to best serve the children, parents and teachers must strive to keep lines of communication open at all times. We are always available to talk to you about any issues and/or concerns that you might have. In order to ensure that communication about issues/concerns is productive, we expect mutual respect between parents and staff. It is important that these kinds of conversations take place outside of the classroom. When the teachers are in the classroom, they are responsible for all the children in their care. Therefore, lengthy discussions must take place at a scheduled time. This will also ensure that you receive our undivided attention. Please do not hesitate to call us to set up a time to address any concerns that you might have about your child or about the program.

If you need of a translator to enable your family to adequately communicate with the program staff and/or to understand the program policies, please don't hesitate to ask.

LITTLE ONES' PARENT GROUP

The 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 our 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

In order 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: attending parent group meetings, coordinating a class get together outside of school for families to meet each other at the beginning of the school year, 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.

We also encourage **all parents** to sign up to volunteer in their child's class at least one time during the school year. This will give you the chance to be a part of your child's learning, as well as give you the opportunity to see your child in action in his/her class, see what the preschool day looks like, and see the wonderful interactions and learning that take place during the school day. Please remember that you are also welcome to visit the school at any time during the preschool day, as well as to come in and share your occupation during our Community Helpers Unit.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

All children will be screened during the first 2-3 months of entry to the school. Little Ones uses the Ages and Stages Screening Tool. The results of the screenings are used to set up individual and classroom goals and to make any necessary recommendations/referrals. Children will be screened both in the classroom and individually by the Director or by another familiar adult trained to complete the screening. Parents will be notified in writing concerning their child's screening results.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences provide an important opportunity to share information about your child's development and school experience. Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences occur in the fall and again in the spring, and telephone conferences can be scheduled on an as-needed basis. Additional conferences can be requested at anytime throughout the year. During these conferences, your child's teachers will be sharing both their observations, as well as report on your child's functioning and progress in the classroom based on the Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment System. Unlike group administered, norm referenced achievement tests that are designed to rank and compare children; the Teaching Strategies Gold Developmental Assessment System is an instructional assessment. Its primary focus is on helping us as teachers to make

instructional decisions in the classroom. It gives us 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 us as teachers to identify children's interests and needs, follow their progress, adapt and improve curriculum and set up appropriate individual, group and program goals. We will be providing you with a copy of this checklist, which will give you a detailed overview of how your child is progressing in developing social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts and English language acquisition skills (for English language and dual language learners). This assessment tool has been chosen as this checklist corresponds to the benchmarks in the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Upon hire all teachers are trained on using this assessment tool and are also required to complete further training on child assessment through the State of Illinois. The teachers are always available to discuss any questions or concerns you might have. Just call us and we will set up a time to talk. You should not wait until conference time to discuss any questions or concerns you might have.

REFERRALS/RECOMMENDATIONS

If we feel that your child could benefit from further services, e.g., a diagnostic assessment, speech or OT assessment, etc., the staff will meet with you to discuss these concerns, make suggestions for next steps and assist in providing you with community resources. We will also follow up with you to discuss the results and implementation of any recommendations. There is also a Resource Binder located at the entryway of Little Ones.

DAILY AND MONTHLY COMMUNICATION

Daily activities will be posted on communication boards at the entrance to each class, so please make sure that you take the time to read the board daily. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's day on the way home from school. Once a week you will receive an email updating you on the week's activities. Once a month, parents can look forward to reading the program newsletter on the website, www.littleones-preschool.com. Please take the time to read these newsletters and to print the monthly calendar, menus, and suggested home activities. Don't forget to check your child's mailbox daily, as well as your email, in order to receive your child's art projects and all important program notes and updates.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Little Ones is committed to responding to all parent grievances and to resolving issues as quickly as possible. It is critical that long before conflicts arise, there already exists an environment that fosters mutual respect, tolerance and clear, honest communication. Key to the emotional health of a program is not the absence of conflict, but the quick and intelligent resolution of conflict. If your concern is a classroom issue, please first approach your child's teacher(s). The teacher(s) will most likely have the most information about the situation. By discussing issues directly with the teacher(s), you show respect and help the teacher(s) grow professionally. If your concern goes beyond the classroom or the teacher is unable to resolve your issue, please feel free, also in the spirit of respect and collaboration, to go to the Director. The Director will set up a more formal meeting to bring the parties together to resolve the issue. We are always available to listen to any of your concerns about the operation of the program and the care and education of your child.

ANNUAL PARENT SURVEYS

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 us in identifying areas that may need further attention and/or improvement. We encourage you to complete and return these surveys, as your feedback helps us grow and learn. However, please never hesitate to

approach us with feedback throughout the school year through daily conversations, conferences, or by phone. We are always open to hearing your concerns and/or recommendations.

CURRICULUM

ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The teachers at Little Ones plan their curriculum based on the Creative Curriculum guidelines that align with preschool 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 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. By following these standards, Little Ones is able to create an enriched learning environment in which children can grow and learn. If your child speaks another language other than English at home, please see your child's teachers to discuss the language used so that we can better meet your child's needs in the classroom.

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 in order to bring closure to the children's time at Little Ones and to begin the transition to kindergarten.

YOU AND ME (ADULT/CHILD)

You and Me is offered for children 18 through 36 months of age. This class offers a special opportunity for parents/caregivers and children to explore music and movement, songs, finger plays, art activities, stories and more. This is a great way for children to experience their first group time without separation from a significant adult, and also offers an opportunity for children to adjust to Little Ones before transitioning into a typical preschool class where s/he goes alone.

A TYPICAL PRESCHOOL 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 outdoor playground. Our curriculum stems 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,

science, math, cooking, gross/fine motor activities, music and creative movement. Children learn how to make choices on their own with gentle guidance and teacher direction.

Children also hold small “jobs” in class, e.g., snack helpers, flag holders, door holder, line leader and line caboose. Not only do they learn about responsibility 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 is equipped with an extensive children’s library and books are available in each class for the children to peruse at their leisure. Our curriculum is also enhanced with 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 your child’s 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 Activities/Indoor Gross Motor Activities
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 are the same in all classes. These components are Learning Centers, Circle Time, Outdoor/Indoor Gross Motor Activities and Snack Time, and of course Handwashing and Clean-up.

Learning Center time comprises the primary part of each day. Children are free to move about the many centers in their classroom. Classroom Learning Centers are age-appropriate, and may include art activities, block building, playdough, sand table, puzzles, games, manipulatives, writing, science, dramatic play, story time, music and movement, and language arts. At Little Ones children have daily opportunities to develop fine motor skills during messy art activities, such as painting, tearing or cutting construction paper, gluing, drawing, sculpting with “clay,” sponge painting, marble painting, or fingerpainting (just to name a few). Teachers encourage each child to try new and different activities, helping children learn to make positive, productive choices for themselves.

Circle Time may occur once or twice during the day—once in the morning and again close to dismissal. 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.

Outdoor activities are a part of every day, provided the temperature is at or above 25 degrees Fahrenheit. Therefore, please make sure that you send your child dressed in dry and layered clothing for warmth in the cold weather, and that you send your 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. 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, we will only apply repellents containing DEET no more than once a day and only with written parental

permission. (See medication procedures under Health and Safety-Illness and Medication.) We utilize our **Indoor Gym** when the weather prevents outdoor play. In addition to developing gross motor skills through the daily use of indoor or outdoor equipment, the children have the opportunity to participate in other activities, such as making nature collages, parachute fun and snow painting.

Snack Time is a favorite time of the day and Little Ones takes nutrition seriously. Nutritious snacks are served daily, which include milk, water, crackers, cereals, fruit, yogurt, etc. These choices are based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Children wash their hands before and after snack and clean up afterwards. You will receive notes during the year requesting that you send in a specific snack. We thank you in advance for your assistance. The snack menu is always posted at the front of the building and on the website.

Please notify us if your child has any food allergies. If your child will need special snacks due to food allergies and/or religious reasons, we are happy to support his/her needs. These needs will also be posted in the classroom, so that all teachers and volunteers will be aware of your child's needs. You will also be required to provide written instructions as to what your child's needs are, so that we can put a plan in place. If your child requires special snacks, please see us to set up a plan.

LUNCH ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Little Ones offers lunchtime enrichment programs for 3-5-year olds. These classes offer the children the opportunity to explore their interests and talents. Little Ones provides nutritional child-friendly lunches that have been prepared in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. Children in the 3–5-year old programs can enjoy these options. Care is provided during the transition from program to program. See the lunch enrichment flyer for more information on the class offerings and fees. The lunch menu is always posted at the front of the building and on the website.

GETTING STARTED

ENROLLMENT AND MEDICAL FORMS

Enrollment forms must be completed and on file at Little Ones by the first day of class in order for your 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 (newly enrolled children)
- Certified Copy of your Child's Birth Certificate (newly enrolled children)

In order 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 you need the original back, please let us know and we will copy it and return the original to the parent or guardian 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. We are 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 30-day time frame. 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.

A medical form must be completed and signed by your child's physician, or by a delegated nurse or physician's assistant. State licensing standards require that every child enrolled in our program have an updated medical history on file with an up-to-date record of immunizations, including a TB test with results. These immunizations are based on the recommendations of the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Academy of Family Practice. All children must also have a lead questionnaire on file and must have had a lead screening if they reside in an area defined as high risk by the Illinois Department of Public Health in its Lead Poisoning Prevention Code. All medicals must be updated every two years. **For a child who is first entering the program, a medical exam must be dated within 6 months of starting.** These regulations are set by the state and designed to protect all the children in our program.

If your child is overdue for any routine health services, we will need evidence of an appointment for those services. If for some reason your pediatrician feels that any of the indicated tests/immunizations are unnecessary or not in the best interest of your child due to health reasons, s/he should attach a letter to that effect. Parents who object to immunizations, physical exams/or other medical treatment 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 any 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 children 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. We regret that we cannot give credit/refunds for days missed if children need to be out because they are under immunized.

It is to your child's benefit to keep us up to date with current phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. A full understanding of your child's medical background and history will allow us to best serve and accommodate your child. **Therefore, it is imperative that you notify us of any and all allergies that your child might have and educate us on any and all precautions that we must take while your child is in our care.** If there is information that is not covered by our enrollment forms that you believe will give us a more comprehensive understanding of your child, please discuss it with us. All health information is strictly confidential, except in the case of a medical emergency and or in the case of a request by regulatory authorities.

Due to DCFS requirements, we cannot allow any child to begin school until all enrollment and medical forms are on file. This includes all allergy and medical action plans, allergy paperwork, medication waivers and any and all medications required to meet those needs.

CLASS PLACEMENT

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

NEW PARENT ORIENTATION

It is very important that all new parents attend the New Parent Orientation. Refer to your calendar for the day and time. This program gives parents the opportunity to hear about the program philosophy and goals, schedule and routine, separation and transition and ask any questions they might have.

CHILDREN'S OPEN HOUSE

Prior to the start of school, your child will be assigned an open house visit. This visit will allow your child the opportunity to meet the teachers, meet some new friends, find a coat hook and have his/her picture taken. You will receive notification of your child's assigned open house visit closer to the beginning of the school year.

TRANSITION SCHEDULE FOR 2-YEAR OLD CLASSES

In order 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.

Your child's time will be assigned closer to 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

Your 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 needs your help to facilitate a successful transition. We recognize that separation is an individual experience and encourage transition into our 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, we request that parents/caregivers plan to remain available during the first couple of weeks of school in the event your child needs you. Please be assured that we recognize that this kind of separation is often as difficult for parents as it is for children. We hope that you will feel comfortable sharing your feelings and thoughts about this time with one another and with us. We welcome you to stay with your child until you feel comfortable. We are always available to you as we are to your children.

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 to want to avoid them. But we believe because they arouse such strong feelings, hellos and good-byes provide valuable learning for all children. Your child can learn about trust when you say goodbye and return as promised. Your child can learn what it means to be a separate person with deep attachments to others.

Remember the following:

- (1) Make sure to always say goodbye, even when it is tempting to sneak away; staff will be there to help.
- (2) Reassure your child that you will return when class is over.
- (3) Once you say good-bye, don't prolong it; otherwise your child will feel your hesitation to leave.
- (4) If your child needs a reminder of home, such as a family photo, security blanket, or a transitional object from home, see his/her teachers to make a plan. We will encourage your child to leave the item in his/her backpack where s/he can check on it to make sure it is "safe."
- (5) You might plan a special lunch for after school during the first days of school.
- (6) Arrive a little early for pick-up during your child's first days of school. **Please do not arrive late.**

Be confident that your child is in good hands and that we will call you if necessary. You are also welcome to call us to check on your child. Remember that transitions can be hard for all of us.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

On the first day of school, please send your child to school with the supplies listed on the supply list. All school supplies (except extra clothing & family photograph) will be combined and utilized by the entire class. Your child's teacher(s) may request additional supplies for special projects throughout the year. Please make sure that your child has a large backpack, labeled with his/her name, to take home artwork and teacher notes and to transport winter outerwear. This backpack should be brought to school everyday.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

IMPORTANT ARRIVAL INFORMATION:

- Our doors will be open five minutes before class begins. Before that time the teachers will be preparing for your child's school day; therefore, this time is very precious.
- An adult must escort all children into the building.
- Your child's hand should be held at all times in the parking lot.
- Families should enter and depart from the school using the school entrance on the south side of the building.
- Always escort your child to bathroom down the hall to wash hands his/her hands, and then separate at the door to the classroom. Make sure that a teacher is aware of your child's presence before you leave.
- If the class goes out to play first, ensure that your child is dressed properly for the great outdoors. The only exception is special visitor days when the class will go out at a later time. If the class goes out later in the morning, your child should have appropriate clothing on hand.
- **Please label all clothing with your child's name.**
- Please be on time. 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 your child or family has special needs, please don't hesitate to contact us to set up alternative procedures.

IMPORTANT DISMISSAL INFORMATION:

- At dismissal time the children will be seated at the classroom tables.
- Sign your child out (and circle your name on pick up list) and wait at the door until the teachers release your child.

- Children can only be picked up by authorized adults listed on the child's pick-up form. A photo ID will be required until the staff becomes familiar with that person. If a person who is not listed on your pick-up form is picking up your child, we will need **written authorization** to release your child to that person and we will need to see a photo ID. In this case please do not call, as we cannot accept verbal authorization, even if the other adult is known to us. This policy is a state law. Please inform anyone picking up your child of these procedures so there will be no misunderstandings. Understand that all these rules are in place to protect your child.
- The staff will not release your child to an authorized pick up person if s/he believes the person is impaired and unable to adequately care for your child. When there is doubt, the staff is trained to err on the side of safety and will offer to call another person from your authorized pick up list. If the person in question chooses to get in a car (with or without your child), the staff will immediately notify the police.
- **Please make sure that your child does not exit the building without holding your hand.**
- Please be on time to pick up your child. Your child will be very upset if all the other children are gone and s/he is still waiting. Also, our teachers have families and responsibilities to attend to and must leave on time. If, due to an emergency, you will be late picking up your child, please call us at (847) 272-4646, as soon as possible. It will be comforting for your child to know that you are on your way.
- **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. Be advised that the trains that traverse east Northbrook will sometimes delay traffic, so plan accordingly. If a parent is over fifteen minutes late, we will try to contact both parents and all emergency contacts listed on the child's intake and emergency card for up to an hour. Therefore, it is imperative that parents keep their emergency contact information up to date at all times. If, after an hour, we 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. We will do our best to keep your child comfortable and calm until the situation is resolved. Please be aware that this issue will only be discussed with a parent or guardian and will never be discussed with the child at any time.

CARPOOLS

We suggest that you bring your child to school personally until s/he feels established and confident before you begin a carpool plan. The school does not sponsor carpools and we encourage you to limit the number of children in a carpool to three. Don't forget to sign out all the children in your carpool before you leave.

ABSENCES AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you know your child is not going to be at school or is running late, please call us at (847) 272-4646 as soon as possible in the morning.

PARKING LOT

Enter the parking lot through the driveway located at the east side of the building and exit through the driveway located on the west side of the building. Please park in the lot near the school doors located at the south side of the building. Do not leave the car running when you come into the school and do not leave children in the car unattended! Also, do not leave purses or expensive belongings in the car. **We know you will always exercise great care in the parking area and suggest a speed of no more than 5 MPH.** Always use child safety seats for children and seat belts for everyone in your vehicle.

CELL PHONES

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 help keep our little ones safe while also obeying this law by not using hand-held cell phones while driving to or from school or while driving in the parking lot. Remember your children are watching and your good example helps them learn respect for rules and regulations. Please share this information with your designated drivers, such as nannies, relatives, and neighbors before they drop off or pick up your child.

CLOTHING

School is fun and having fun means getting messy! Therefore, children should be dressed in comfortable clothes that can get dirty. Though we try our best to prevent clothing from getting dirty, it can happen, and we are all happier when we do not have to worry about ruining special clothing. Weather permitting (temperatures above 25 degrees Fahrenheit), we play outdoors. Please dress your child according to the weather conditions of the day. Be sure that jackets, hats, mittens, boots and snow pants are sent with your child when the weather indicates. We recommend mittens instead of gloves, shoes with Velcro closures rather than laces, and half-pant nylon snowpants rather than the bib type. Experience has taught us that the 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 your child feel capable and learn independence. Please send your child in gym shoes, not sandals, crocs or dress shoes, so that they are always safe on the play equipment. Please do not send your child to school wearing a necklace, scarf, hood strings, mittens connected through the sleeve, dangly earrings or dog tags, as they can catch on the slide or other play equipment and cause injury. If any such item escapes your notice, we will ask your child to place it in his/her backpack until dismissal. On snow days if your child goes outside first, please don't forget to send shoes in a plastic bag in your child's backpack. The bag will be used for wet boots so that the inside of your child's backpack does not get wet. It is best if your child wears shoes inside the classroom, as boots can be a tripping/slipping hazard. **Please label every item of clothing.**

It is also important that your child comes to school with clothing that is easy to pull up and down in the bathroom. Please no “difficult for little hands to fasten” belts, snaps, buttons, or overalls. Help your child feel capable and self-sufficient by dressing him/her in clothing that can be pulled up and down easily in the bathroom. Choose function over fashion for your child's clothing. If a toileting accident should occur, we will assist your child in changing into his/her extra clothing. Make sure that you provide us with the indicated extra set of clothing and that you replace it when it is used. There is nothing more embarrassing than a child who has an accident but has no extra clothing. This set will be used for quick changes due to wetness from mud puddles, water play or from a bathroom accident.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Except for a security item for the first days of school, **please leave all toys and playthings either in the car or at home.** Please refrain from toys or dog tags hanging on backpacks. At school, items from home often become the subject of arguments, aggressive behavior and hurt feelings. Our 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 your child learn and grow and many opportunities to work on sharing at school. If your child brings toys to school, the toys will be placed in your child's 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.**

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICIES

DISCIPLINE 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. In fact, in the first couple of weeks of school the rules will be posted in the classroom and reviewed with the children. The teachers will communicate their behavioral expectations in a language that children can understand in order to redirect inappropriate behavior. In an effort 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 a child to develop internal control of his/her behavior, rather than as a means of punishing a child who has acted inappropriately. Our 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.

Discipline Issues for Parents: Please never strike your child, even in the name of discipline. Do not humiliate your child by disciplining him/her in front of classmates and teachers before, during, or after school. A calm discussion of the issue at home and appropriate sanctions will have a better effect on your child. Local experts have workshops/lectures for parents who feel they may need assistance with discipline methods.

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

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Little Ones works with families of children who experience difficulty in the program. Our 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 and/or provide the family with a list of community resources. 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; and 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 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 Early Childhood 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, our goal 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, we encourage the child to use his/her words, not his/her body, to communicate. We are particularly concerned with the bitten child and will provide immediate comfort. We will always treat both parties with dignity and respect. We try to be proactive in preventing future biting instances by observing and supervising the child with the biting behavior and by redirecting the child away from situations that might make him/her 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 in the classroom. Then the staff and family will meet in order 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 unsuccessful, 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 feel 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, we have exhausted all our resources for preventing the biting, and we feel that the biting is jeopardizing the safety of the other children; we will work with the family to find an alternate placement that may better meet the child's needs. As always, our goal is to provide support for all children and families.

If you would like more information about biting, we have several articles available, so please do not hesitate to ask.

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). We support 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. We will work with families and specialists to provide proper care and education for each child with our current staffing. If the current staffing is not sufficient to meet the needs of a child, then the 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, we shall inform the family of our concern. We will cooperate 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 parents. When a child has already been evaluated by outside professionals and/or a school district, then we expect parents to share with us the most recent evaluations (including IEP's or IFSP's), so that we can work together to achieve agreed upon goals.

MISCELLANEOUS

FOOD POLICY

In order to provide a safe environment for our children with food allergies, we ask that you refrain from bringing in open packages of food. This means not allowing your child and child's siblings to come in eating food items at drop-off and pick-up. For those of you who may not be aware, the results of a child even being in the same room with an item that s/he is allergic to can be lethal. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

TOY POLICY

In order to provide a safe environment for our children, toys are carefully selected based on safety and age group of children. We also regularly check the toy recall list posted on The Illinois Department of Public Health website for products that may pose a safety hazard to children. Please see parent board located at the entrance for a list of monthly toy recalls.

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. **Please note that all regular cleaning supplies used in the classrooms are non-toxic.**

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 childcare 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 to parents or guardians upon request.

LEAD IN WATER TESTING

The State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires that all licensed childcare facilities serving children under 6 years of age housed in a building constructed on or before January 1, 2000, have any water consumed by the children for drinking purposes 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.

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 does not provide medical insurance coverage 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.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of an emergency closing of the school due to extreme weather conditions, parents will be notified by email or by Remind 101 (if you sign up for this option). Sign up information for Remind 101 will be sent out in the beginning of the school year. Parents can also check online at the Emergency Closing Center site at www.emergencyclosings.com. 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, parents will be notified by phone. **There are no refunds or make-up days for preschool or enrichment classes due to any and all emergency closings.**

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Your child's records will only be shared with the teaching staff assigned responsibility for the care and education of your child, as well as any legal guardians. We will not release or discuss your child's records with anyone else unless you provide signed, dated, specific written instructions. 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.

We will share informal information about your child's day with the person (such as a nanny) who regularly brings your child and picks him/her up unless you object in writing. We assume a child's caregiver will relay such information to you, acting as your agent. However, we will call you with any major concerns.

TOILET TRAINING

If your child is not potty trained, please let us know and make sure that we have extra diapers (no pull ups please) on hand, as well as a container of wipes. We ask that you not send your child in pull-ups, as pull-ups require more time for changing as they require staff to fully undress your child during the changing process. This means that other children needing to be changed are required to wait. Diapers should be disposable and should be kept in your child's backpack. Since the program is a short day, we do not have specific diaper changing times; however, if we find that your child has a soiled diaper, we will change him/her. **If your child will be staying for lunch program and s/he is not toilet trained, please notify us so that we can check him/her for diaper changing or toileting needs.** Please let us know when you feel your child is ready to begin toilet training. Together we will work out a plan that will help us all make this a pleasant experience for you and your child.

SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS READY TO WEAR UNDERPANTS TO SCHOOL

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

1. Follows simple directions
2. Stays dry for two or more hours at a time
3. Communicates when s/he needs to go potty
4. Pulls pants up and down independently
5. Expresses the desire to wear underpants
6. Has limited accidents and makes you aware if s/he has had one
7. Is willing to try to go potty on a public toilet

It is imperative that your child be able to do **all of the above** before you send him/her to school in underpants. We want potty training to be a positive experience for everyone involved. If your child is ready, please notify us before bringing him/her to school in underpants so that we can make a plan together. We will recommend that you be the first to take your child to the toilet at school so that s/he can be most comfortable. If your child is a boy, please let us know if he 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 we work together on this skill.

SCHOOL PICTURES

A professional photographer will take class and individual photos, and the photos will be available for purchase. Ninety percent of the photos are terrific; however, if you do not like your results, please call the photo studio directly. They will be happy to reschedule a photo shoot at their studio.

Special Celebrations

HOLIDAYS

Our philosophy 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. Our 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. We invite each family to share their unique traditions and holidays with us, so that the program can be representative of all families. We look forward to learning from each other. Please contact your child's teacher or the Director if you would like to plan a time to share a particular celebration with your child's class.

BIRTHDAY/SPECIAL DAY PROGRAM

We always celebrate birthdays with a special crown and a song and a cheer for the birthday girl or boy at snack time. We try to keep birthdays simple, so that our school program continues smoothly. Parents are invited to spend snack time and a circle time with their child's class. Please make sure that you set this up in advance with your child's teacher(s). Sign-up sheets will be available at the beginning of the school year. At that time, you will be provided with a handout of suggestions of how to celebrate this time with your child and his/her classmates. Due to our children with allergies, since birthday treats do not fulfill licensing standards for healthy snacks, since there tends to be many non-nutritious sugary treats and since there tends to be a lot of waste, we ask that you **not** send in a treat. We will serve our scheduled snack for the day. Summer birthdays may be celebrated as "unbirthdays" or "half birthdays." If you are looking to spend more time with your child and his/her classmates, please see your child's teacher(s) to sign up for a volunteer day.

When inviting your child's classmates to celebrate a birthday outside of school, parents should consider inviting all classmates so that no child feels excluded. **In order to prevent confusion and/or loss of invitations, party invitations must be sent out by mail.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY ILLNESS & MEDICATION

Your child should not be sent to school if s/he is ill or overly tired. If your child is not healthy enough to participate in both indoor and outdoor play, s/he should not be in school. Please phone Little Ones as soon as possible to inform us that your child will not be attending. Also, it is important that Little Ones be notified if your child has a contagious disease (e.g., pink eye, strep throat, chickenpox, etc.)

SYMPTOMS that indicate that your 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 classroom activities

This policy is in place to protect your child and all the other children in the class. **Also, your child should remain home until s/he has been symptom free for 24 hours.** Our goal is to create a safe and healthy environment for all children. Therefore, we reserve the right to make the final decision about whether your child belongs in school. If we find that your child is sick and/or unable to participate in the regular classroom activities, we will remove him/her from class, will make him/her comfortable in a supervised location away from the other children, and will contact you immediately to arrange pick up. Your child must be picked up within a half hour of our call.

We will notify you if there is an incidence of any contagious disease.

If your 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 your child's name. These guidelines also apply to sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper and hand

cream. All medications are kept in the office out of the children's reach. Please see the Director to complete the necessary paperwork.

If your child requires special care due to a medical issue, an adult must be trained on the care and management of the medical issue and that adult must be on the premises whenever your 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 are provided for children 2 years, 11 months of age and older.

SECURITY

The security of the children in our program is our top priority. We take a number of measures to ensure that your child is safe during every minute of the day. All children are supervised by sight and sound at all times. The outside doors of the school are locked after class begins. Of course, teachers and children can exit from the building at all times. If you arrive after class begins, please call the school number, so we can let you into the building. Teachers are equipped with walkie-talkies at all times in order to be able to communicate any needs/concerns with the Director. The building/parking lot is also equipped with a state-of-the-art security system.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of the necessity to evacuate/lockdown the building due to the threat of a fire, bomb scare, or other building emergency, the following procedures will be followed:

- In the case of an evacuation, the children will be evacuated through the nearest exit and will be escorted to a safe distance from the building. Children will remain outside of the building until the fire/police department informs us that it is safe to reenter. At that point in time, children will be escorted back into the building. Parents will be notified about all evacuations.
- In the event that the children must be kept out of the building for an extended period of time, they will be escorted to the Northbrook Park District Leisure Center next door, unless the police/fire department recommend otherwise. In this situation, parents will be notified by phone and may be required to pick up their child.
- In the case of a lockdown, the emergency lockdown procedures will be put in place. The building will remain on lockdown until the local law enforcement agency gives the all clear. At that point in time, children will be released to authorized pick-up people listed in their files.
- In the case of a tornado, the emergency tornado procedures will be put in place. The staff and children will remain in "safe" spots in the building until weather conditions clear. At that point in time, children will be released to authorized pick-up people listed in their files.
- In order for the children and teachers to be prepared in case of an emergency, practice drills are conducted. Fire drills are conducted monthly, lockdown drills ("safety drills") are conducted twice a year and tornado drills are conducted during tornado season. These are recorded for licensing review.

ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES

When minor accidents occur at school (i.e. scraped knees, paper cuts), your child's teacher(s) will fill out an accident report, which you will be asked to sign at pick-up indicating that you were notified.

In the event that a child becomes seriously ill or seriously injured, a staff person trained in first aid will assess the situation and take the necessary action. If the child needs immediate medical treatment, public safety officers will be notified by staff calling 911. First aid will be administered, and the parents will be contacted. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the child's Authorization for Pick Up will be notified, in the order listed. If emergency personnel deem it necessary to transport the child to the emergency room, a staff person will accompany the child. This staff person will bring along the child's file and stay with the child until a parent or emergency contact person arrives. In order to secure proper treatment for your child, health records will be shared with emergency personnel. An incident report will be completed for the parent's review and signature. Staff will follow universal precautions as recommended by the Cook County Department of Public Health. Parents are expected to assume responsibility for any resulting expense. The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision.

REPORTING ABUSE

The State of Illinois requires that all staff working with young children be trained in awareness of the signs of child abuse and neglect. We are obligated by law to report any suspected cases of abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services Hotline.

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. Please note that all employees undergo background checks before employment.

PAYMENT 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 to be 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 and all payments are nonrefundable. Payments should be mailed to the school address, placed in the payment box located on the front table or made by Quick Pay by Zelle to sheree@littleones-preschool.com. Do not give payments to teachers.

Families with special circumstances, must make alternate payment arrangements with the Director in advance.

Since we do not have office staff, we do not send out bills, and prompt payment is a necessity. There is a \$10.00 late fee for payments received after the tenth of the month and a \$25.00 late fee for payments received after the 15th of the month. There is also a \$25.00 charge for returned checks. If you have an unexpected financial situation, please speak to the Director. **We have a limited number of scholarships/reduced tuition openings for families experiencing financial stress. Please don't hesitate to ask for a scholarship application should the need for scholarship arise.**

Preschool is closed for some institute days, legal holidays and Beth Shalom closings in observance of the Jewish holidays. Please note that the calendar is revised annually to compensate for the days that we will be closed to ensure that your child enjoys the same number of school days every year. Prices reflect the number of school days and school closings. We regret that we cannot give credit for additional days that your child is unable to attend school due to illness or vacation or emergency school closings.

PAM STERN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Pam Stern Scholarship Fund is a fund that was created to honor our friend and colleague Pam Stern. She 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. You 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, new baby, etc., or even to express sympathy upon a death. Please see the Director if you need financial support and/or you would like to support the fund.

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 4 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 at Little Ones 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 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.**

THANK-YOU! We're looking forward to a wonderful year!