

Little Apples Day Care & Learning Center
Parent Handbook
Information, Policies, and Procedures

Little Apples has been owned and operated by the Szelog Family since 1993. The Hooksett center opened in 1996. We are currently licensed (#04923) for 80 children. We have an open-door policy and welcome parents at any time. Little Apples welcomes all children! We are committed to providing early learning experiences that support the full access and participation of every child of varying abilities. We believe that each child is unique. We gladly work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential. When necessary, we can provide reasonable accommodations to maintain enrollment for children with special needs.

Programs of Care

Little Apples has programs to meet the individual needs of each child. Children are placed into the program most closely aligned with their age at enrollment. Some of our programs offer more than one grouping.

- Infants – 12 weeks to 12 months
- Young Toddlers – 13 months to 20 months
- Older Toddlers – 18 months to 35 months
- Preschool – 36 months to 48 months
- Pre-Kindergarten – 48 months to kindergarten (must be at least 48 months of age)

Each of our programs use a whole child play-based curriculum. Each area of development is covered to ensure children are meeting their developmental, academic, and social goals. Our curriculum is based on play as children learn best through both natural and intentional play experiences. Our teachers frame their curriculum to be entirely play-based to help children reach their highest potential while having fun!

Registration

Families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waitlist may be maintained for individual classrooms/age groups as necessary. Children will be accepted from the list on a first-come first-served basis. Siblings of enrolled children will be given priority for enrollment.

Upon enrollment, a non-refundable deposit of the child's first week of tuition is required. Without the registration deposit paid, Little Apples does not guarantee enrollment.

Each child must have an updated physical and immunization record at the time of enrollment. The registration packet must be filled out completely and returned prior to the child's start date. Little Apples will not assume care of the child until all necessary paperwork and fees are received.

Little Apples requires **all** children to be vaccinated prior to enrollment to protect the health and safety of all children and staff at our center. Our center is happy to work with families if a disability-based accommodation is needed. We ask parents to provide additional information and documentation about the disability to gain a better understanding of the need for our center to make a policy exception.

Tuition

Tuition is due on Friday by noon for the upcoming week. For families paying with cash, please give it to a staff member and get a receipt. Cash payments without a receipt do not count towards the account balance. Little Apples accepts cash, credit card, or debit card. If parents choose to do automatic payments from their credit or debit card, please contact the Director to set up the payment authorization. Please note there is a 2.5% checkout fee added to all tuition payments. A 2.5% cash discount is provided for families paying with cash for their child's tuition. Please see the Director for more information or any questions regarding payment. Weekly tuition secures the child's enrollment at Little Apples regardless of their attendance. If the child misses school for any reason, including but not limited to vacations, sick days, pandemics, government shutdowns, or snow days, their tuition must still be paid. If a problem should arise regarding tuition payment, please make immediate arrangements with Linda or the Director. There is a \$10 per day late fee for payments received after 12:01 PM on Friday. Little Apples does not allow families to carry a balance between weeks.

Withdrawal of Enrollment

Parents may withdraw their child from the program at any time. A two-week written notice that the child will no longer be enrolled at Little Apples is required. Tuition is due during the child's two weeks. Parents who fail to provide a written two-week notice are responsible for tuition for the two weeks. If families decide to re-enroll their child at Little Apples, registration and deposit fees will be due. Information from accounts with an outstanding balance at the time of departure will be sent to the National Credit Bureau for collection.

Little Apples is open year-round. If parents choose to remove their child for the summer or any part of the year without paying tuition, we cannot guarantee a spot. If parents withdraw temporarily, they must re-register and repay the deposit. We will be happy to add the family to our waiting list if there is no availability.

State Assistance Program for Child Care

For children enrolled in the state assistance program for tuition, the parent is responsible for paying the full price of the first week prior to starting to secure their spot at registration. Parents are responsible for all weekly tuition payments until the state links the child to Little Apples for payment. Additionally, parents are responsible for any balance remaining after the state's contribution – referred to as the “weekly copayment”. Parents receiving state assistance must sign the attendance clipboard weekly to maintain compliance. Please contact the Director with any questions.

Hours of Operation, Attendance, and Late Policy

Little Apples is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 PM year-round. Upon registration, parents indicate what time their child will arrive and depart daily. Little Apples schedules staff in each classroom according to those times and we must follow State of NH regulations regarding staff-to-child ratios. We ask that families adhere to the times enrolled for. Please notify the Director in writing of any schedule changes with at least a two-week notice. Not all schedule changes will be accepted or accommodated.

If the child has not arrived by 9:00 AM, they will be marked as absent for the day. Any child who does not attend for two consecutive weeks without notification shall be considered withdrawn from the center. As Little Apples is both a learning center and child development center, our teachers work hard to plan curriculum and activities designed to ignite the child's imagination and foster their growing skills. If the child will arrive later than 9:00 due to an appointment, please let the Director know as soon as possible. Drop offs after 11:00 will not be accepted. Parents are asked to pick up their child no later than 5:00 PM as the center is scheduled to close promptly. Please arrive in enough time to get the child ready for departure. Parents and children in the center after 5:00 PM will be charged a \$3.00 per minute late fee. If, for some reason, the child's pick-up person is delayed, please call the center and inform the closer as soon as possible. The late fee of \$3.00 per minute will be assessed and is payable **immediately** to the teacher who remained overtime with cash. Please do not add this amount to the weekly tuition. If not paid immediately, \$10.00 per day late fee must be paid to the staff member who stayed. If the child is picked up late 3 or more times, they will be withdrawn from Little Apples.

Drop off and Pick-up

The center opens daily at 7:30 AM. Our opening staff arrives early to open school and prepare for the arrival of the children. Please do not bring the child in to the building prior to 7:30 AM, even if lights are on or a staff member is present. A parent or authorized adult over the age of 18 years of age must accompany children when they are being dropped off or picked up. Please enter the building with the child, put away their coat, lunch, and any other items they may need for the day in their cubby, and contact a teacher before leaving. For security reasons, please do not share the door code.

Anyone picking up a child who is not the parent must be 18 years of age and show a photo ID. A photocopy will be made and placed in the child's file. Little Apples requires written permission from the parent if a different person is picking up. In an emergency, parents may notify us by calling the center. Please note we are not able to accept a note from the pick-up person.

At pick-up, please contact a teacher before leaving with the child, especially if we are playing on the playground. Please do not pick up the child over the playground fence – gates must be used.

Procure App

Little Apples utilizes the Procure app for parents to sign their child in and out from the program. Upon enrollment, each parent will receive an invitation to join Procure and will receive a unique PIN to use. Each authorized emergency contact will also receive a unique PIN. Please do not share the PIN as they are linked directly to individuals.

At drop-off and pick-up, parents must enter their PIN into the kiosk at the front desk. This allows us to always keep a digital record of all the children in our care. Children who are not signed in will be signed in by the admin team.

Any individual picking a child up from the program MUST have their own PIN.

Procure will also be utilized to store emergency contact information for each child at our program. This includes but is not limited to the following: the child's full name, date of birth, address, primary caregivers, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts. Procure will also store immunization records for the children.

Holidays

Little Apples closes for several holidays throughout the year. These holidays are subject to change. Parents will receive an annual copy of the holiday closing list. In addition, if the center is open on a State or Federal holiday, and we project our attendance to be less than 10%, we may decide to close early or close completely for that day. Tuition is still payable for the days we are closed due to holiday.

Cancellation/Delayed Opening/Early Dismissal

Little Apples has an obligation to our families to be open each weekday. There are times when unforeseen circumstances result in closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal. We try very hard to avoid any inconveniences to families' schedules. Every snow event presents differing factors we must consider in our decision to remain open. If at any time the risk to our staff, the children and our families outweigh our obligation, we may have to adjust the center operating hours accordingly. If we decide we must have an early dismissal, we will notify by phone or let families know at drop off that morning. All changes in operating hours will be present on the center's Facebook family group and on the Procure app. If we open after the 7:30 opening time, please do not enter the building prior to the announced opening time. Please note that tuition will still be due.

Custody

Under the laws of the State of New Hampshire, parents listed on their child's birth certificate have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right. We must ALWAYS have a copy of any court documents on file at Little Apples. Examples of accepted documents include but are not limited to current restraining orders, a sole custody decree, and a divorce decree stating full custody. Without documentation, Little Apples may release the child to either parent, providing the parent documents their paternity/maternity (including but not limited to Photo ID, child's birth certificate, DNA test results, or court documents.)

Forms found in the registration packet including the Child Care Emergency Information Form must be filled out by the parents or legal guardian and always kept on file. If custody changes during enrollment at Little Apples, we must have a copy of legal documents before ANY parental information can be changed. If there is any existing custody issue and court documents are filed, we must have a copy on file.

Collaboration with Other Professionals

Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers, and others. Little Apples welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the early childhood classroom environment. The child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. Little Apples supports the teacher's participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

Toilet Learning

We are eager to work with parents in the toilet learning process. Please have a conversation with the child's teacher to come up with the best plan for the child. Toilet learning is an individualized process for each child. Please see the Director for more information.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Parent and Teacher conferences can be held at any time during the school year and will be offered to parents annually. Please see the Director or Linda to schedule a conference if interested. Open communication is key to help establish a positive provider-parent relationship. Classroom staff will post the classroom's curriculum in addition to any center or community activities and updates. Teachers will keep parents informed of their child's daily activities or needs by daily notes placed in the child's cubby or on whiteboards maintained in each classroom. If there is something parents wish to discuss one on one with the teaching staff, the Director, or Linda, please let us know.

Rest Time

Every child is given time to rest their bodies and relax during the day. The children are offered a scheduled rest time from 12:00 to 2:00 PM daily. They are not required to sleep but are provided with a mat to rest on. If after one half hour, they have not fallen asleep, they will be given a quiet activity on their mat. The lights are dimmed and soft music is played to help the children relax and rest.

Each child is required to have a crib sheet and blanket for rest which is provided by the parent/guardian. Please provide these items at the start of each week and bring them home at the end of the week to wash. If a child does not have these items, the parent will be contact to bring them in. Please refrain from bringing pillows, stuffed animals, or other bulky items. All nap items **must** fit in the child's nap bucket.

At times, the rest time staffing ratio may be reduced by one staff member in each class. This may occur if the total number of staff required to maintain ratios are on the premises and the ratio of awake children is no more than half the number of children. This will only happen in the classrooms where the children are 24 months of age and older. Please see the Director or Linda with any questions.

Extra Clothes & Seasonal Considerations

For infants and toddlers, please provide at least **3-4** full changes of clothing that are labeled with the child's name and stored in their cubby. For preschool and pre-kindergarten children, please provide at least **2** full changes of clothing, including extra socks and extra underwear, even if the child is fully toilet trained. If the child does not have a spare set and requires more clothing, the parent will be contacted and asked to bring a new set in. We do not keep spare clothes on hand and we are unable to borrow from other children.

All classrooms have outside time planned in their daily schedule. Beginning in late fall through early spring, children must have labeled hat, mittens, boots, warm coats, and proper snow gear daily. Please feel free to leave them in the child's cubby! If the child does not have these items, we will contact the parent to bring them in.

In the summer months, we ask that parents apply sunscreen to their child before arrival in the morning. We will reapply as necessary during the day using a sunscreen that is at least an SPF 30. Please note that only "rub on" sunscreens are permitted – NO AEROSOLS. Parents provide sunscreen for use on their child at Little Apples. The children are offered opportunities to drink water throughout the day. Our building is climate-controlled year-round.

Toys from Home

Please do not bring toys from home into the center. Each of our classrooms is fully furnished with developmentally appropriate toys and materials. Toys from home create distractions and often get lost or broken. Please leave toys from home in the car or at home to avoid conflict or loss. Toys from home found in cubbies or the classrooms that are causing distractions may be placed in the office until parent pickup.

Food and Snacks

Little Apples does not provide snacks or a lunch to children in our care. Please send at least 3-4 nutritious snacks and a lunch each day. We have no restrictions for food in our center (i.e. peanuts or eggs) and parents are welcome to send whatever food they wish. Our staff is not able to heat up lunches or snacks in the microwave. Please utilize a Thermos for hot items and an ice pack to keep cold items fresh. All items must be labeled with the child's name.

Emergency Procedures

Safety is our priority at Little Apples. We practice due diligence and prevention during every moment of the day. In any emergency, parents will be notified immediately. Please keep emergency, home, and business numbers current and notify us of any change. **All accidents and injuries will be documented and relayed to parents.** We document accidents and injuries, noting time of incident, what child was doing when injury occurred, and type of injury on an accident form signed by supervising staff, the Director, and the parent. Our staff is certified in Infant and Child First Aid and CPR. If there is a serious emergency, we will immediately call 911 and notify parents with a phone call. In the event we must evacuate the center and are unable to return to the building, all staff and children will walk to State of the Art Storage located at 1160A Hooksett Road or to Shooter's Outpost at 1158 Hooksett Road. We will contact all parents from that location. Little Apples has created an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to address any emergency that may happen. The Director or Linda can provide a copy for those interested. All staff is trained in our EOP and COOP annually and whenever necessary and each document is updated and revised as necessary.

Little Apples will utilize the Procure app with our families in addition to telephone communication to communicate updates during emergency situations. In the case of a situation where reunification procedures are necessary, photo identification will be required for any approved guardian picking up a child from Little Apples as designated on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

Health Policies

Upon enrollment, the child must have a child Health Form completed and signed by a physician on file. This form must be updated yearly **and** after any immunizations are administered. Children **CANNOT** attend Little Apples without documentation on file.

Please keep the child home if he/she is ill. We regularly disinfect and sanitize classroom surfaces, toys, and other materials and practice sanitary hand washing and diapering procedures, but with such a large number of children that we care for on a daily basis, germs will prevail. The only way to keep illness at a minimum for everyone is to keep children at home and comfortable when they are exhibiting symptoms of illness. For any communicable disease or illness, the child will need to be treated for 24 hours or as directed by the physician before their return to Little Apples.

For the protection of all children and or staff, the child will be sent home or may not attend Little Apples if they present any of the following symptoms:

1. An axillary temperature (under the arm) of 100.4 degrees or higher in addition to another symptom. If the child is sent home with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, they must be kept home until they are fever free for 24 hours without a fever reducing medication.
2. Two episodes of uncontrollable diarrhea or one episode of vomiting not induced by activity. Child must be symptom free for 24 hours before return.
3. Rashes or skin lesions that are undiagnosed by a physician. This includes diaper rash which is bleeding. Child must have a physician's note to return stating that the rash is not contagious.
4. Drainage of the eyes that is suspected to be conjunctivitis. A note from physician is needed for return. Children who are determined to have conjunctivitis may not return until the mucous from eyes has been clear for 24 hours and medication has been administered.
5. Drainage of green mucous from nose or eyes.
6. If the child is uncomfortable and inconsolable and is unable to follow the daily schedule and activities.
7. Uncontrollable coughing and/or wheezing.
8. Unusual or extreme fatigue and lethargy.

If the child is scheduled for a surgical procedure, we ask for their safety and comfort that they remain home at least one full day following the day of the procedure. Upon their return to Little Apples, please provide us with a note from the physician stating that they are healthy and able to resume activities with no limitations or restrictions.

We are not able to keep children indoors during our scheduled outdoor time if they are not feeling well. If they are not well enough to be outside, they are not well enough to be at Little Apples. We appreciate cooperation with these policies and our efforts to keep Little Apples as healthy as possible.

For a child sent home with any pandemic related symptoms, please seek professional physician's advice prior to returning to Little Apples.

Medications

Children who require medication must also have a completed and signed *Permission to Administer Medication Form* on file, for each medication, including over the counter medications. All medication must be in its original container prescribed to the child, have the prescription label attached, and must list the doctor's name, dosage, prescription date, and name of the medication. These forms must be updated by the child's physician. Medication must be handdelivered by the parent/guardian to the Director or the staff member in charge at the time of drop off. Medication must be sent home with the child each night. Please DO NOT leave medication in cubbies or lunch boxes.

Little Apples will NOT administer ANY over the counter medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor and has a doctor's note. Little Apples will not administer any medication for children to provide relief while in our care. If the child needs medication to participate in our daily routines, it is best for them to stay in the comfort of their home.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling, and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be provided training on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the Director and the child's teacher as necessary. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian during enrollment or transition to another program or school without first receiving the written permission of the parent/guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect or when information is subpoenaed by the court.

Mandated Reporting

Per State of New Hampshire RSA 169-C:29-39, any licensee, permittee, child care personnel, or other person involved with a program who suspects that a child is being abused or neglected is mandated to report the suspected abuse to the Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) at 1-800-894-5533.

Staff members of Little Apples are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

Challenging Behavior & Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are at times reasons we must expel a child from our program. We will do everything possible to work with the family of the child to prevent this policy from being enforced.

WHEN A CHILD IS HAVING A BEHAVIOR PROBLEM IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Staff will reassess classroom environment and activity involvement
- Staff will use positive methods and language while disciplining children and will praise appropriate behaviors → Staff will consistently apply consequences for not following rules
- Child will be given verbal warnings
- Child will be given time to regain control
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally regarding disruptive behaviors
- The Director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian may have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. If appropriate, there will be a recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation and/or recommendation of evaluation by local school district.

SCHEDULE OF SUSPENSION

If after the actions above have not worked or if the behavior is putting other children's safety at risk, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting a suspension. A suspension action is meant to be a period so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the suspension. The

parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return to the program.

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

An expulsion will occur when either the child's behavior (1) does not respond to a suspension OR (2) if the behavior is a risk to risk to other children's welfare or safety. If the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her. There may or may not be a notice dependent upon the severity of the behavior.

If you have questions or concerns regarding our policies outlined in this handbook, please contact the Director or Linda and we will be happy to help in any way.

Thank you for choosing Little Apples as your family's early learning center!