

Little Hands at Work and Play Parent Handbook

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Introduction

Philosophy

Little Hands at Work and Play believes “loving and learning are one”. We know that learning begins at birth and the first few years of life are the most important years mentally and physically for your child. Little Hands provides a loving environment that enhances our age appropriate and developmental curriculum. We would be delighted to have your family join ours.

Children need a lot of love and encouragement as they continue to learn new things. Praise and understanding from both our staff and parents helps children develop the self-esteem they need to be successful and confident in life.

Mission Statement

We know that learning begins at birth and the first few years of a child’s live are the most important. Little Hands at Work and Play provides a loving environment that enhances our age-appropriate and developmental curriculum.

Vision Statement

Little Hands at Work and Play strives to be Omaha and Council Bluff’s leader in quality education.

Guiding Principles

- Providing a quality education
- Partnering with integrity
- Providing excellent customer service
- Building trusting relationships
- Providing a loving, caring, and safe environment for every child
- Recruiting and retaining the highest quality staff

Modified Montessori Method

Little Hands at Work and Play curriculum is based on a Modified Montessori program. In the Montessori method everything is very organized and has its own place. We use a blend of traditional teaching: letters, numbers, colors, shapes, social interactions, and the Montessori Method. Montessori is based on a child-oriented classroom where the children have many choices and are encouraged to do what they can for themselves. The teachers do not “teach” in the traditional sense of the word. They show the children how to do things rather than instructing. They teach by example rather than just using words. The children learn facts and are taught how to learn for themselves. Montessori provides a framework where intellectual and social discipline goes hand in hand. Self motivation plays a big part in children learning at a pace they are individually comfortable with.

Developmentally Appropriate Activities

Various experiences will be provided within each age group to promote school-readiness and development.

Infants (birth to 18 months in Omaha and birth to 24 months in Council Bluffs)

- Visual Stimulation – bright colors, interesting shapes to observe
- Social Interaction – playing and sharing with other children
- Motor Skills and Muscle Development – building with blocks, shape, sorting, catching and throwing
- Language Development – interaction with teachers and other children
- Exploring their Senses – touch, smell, taste and hearing
- Trust in Adults – relationships with caregivers

Toddlers (18 months to 3 years in Omaha and 24 months to 3 years in Council Bluffs)

- Social Interaction – playing and sharing with other children
- Gaining Independence – teaching and allowing children to do things on their own, with help if needed
- Learn to Explore and Experiment – discovering things in their environment and thinking about how they work
- Learn to Deal with Emotions and Frustration – hitting, biting and throwing
- Matching and sorting colors
- Fine Motor Skills – puzzles and blocks
- Understanding Quantity – one block, two dolls
- Exploring Senses – tasting, feeling, smelling and hearing sounds in their environment
- Language Development – understanding the most simple sentences spoke to them, learning to speak in three to five word sentences and carrying on simple conversations.

Preschool (3 years to 5 years)

- Colors and Shapes – recognizing and naming primary colors, recognizing basic shapes
- Numbers – recognizing 0 to 10, using numerals 0 to 10 in counting, comparing quantities to determine more or less, identifying pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters
- Language – experimenting with writing independently, pretending to read, listening and responding to literature being read, recognizing letters, recognizing first and last names, following simple directions
- Concepts – understanding big and little, long and short, up and down, in and out, hot and cold, night and day
- Motor Skills – able to run and jump, throw a ball, clap hands, building with blocks, compete simple puzzles, draw and color
- Social Emotional Development – knowing home address and phone number, playing and sharing with other children, putting toys away and helping with chores, able to work independently.

Policies

Admittance Requirements

Our centers can accommodate children six weeks and up. We recommend that you tour the facility and enroll your child/children in person. It is the policy of Little Hands to not keep a waiting list at our centers. We take families on a first come, first serve basis.

All enrollment forms must be complete and the appropriate registration fee should be received before your child/children begins their stay at Little Hands. The state requires immunization records for all children. A doctor or nurse must sign immunization forms. Families who are enrolled in or applying for state childcare assistance will need approval from the state before your child/children may begin.

Ambassador Program

Little Hands at Work and Play is sensitive to the cost of childcare and has developed the Ambassador Program. This program allows all customers the opportunity for free childcare throughout the year. Hand our referral cards to friends and have them turn in these cards at the time of enrollment. When their child has finished their fourth week at Little Hands, you earn one free week of childcare. This offer is available for every referral.

Child Abuse and Neglect

As your childcare providers, we have the unique opportunity to become familiar with your children's individual physical appearance, personalities, habits and routines. Suspicions as the child's well being may arise if there are marked changes in behavior, appearance or routines. Little Hands at Work and Play has developed a procedure in accordance with State Law.

1. Educate Staff about the types of child abuse and neglect.
2. Aid employees in identifying indicators of child abuse.
3. Report suspected abuse in accordance with State Law.

Safety and Security

To ensure your child's safety while attending Little Hands we have a coded door to which only the parents are given the code. You will be given the code after all the enrollment forms and registration fees have been turned in. If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up the child, we will require photo identification. Please notify the Director if your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent or guardian. We welcome parents and guardians to call or visit our center at any time. All other visitors to our centers are required to see the Director. Parents must sign their child in and out each day at the sign in sheet area. This is another way that we ensure your child's safety.

Hours of Operation and Attendance

Be aware of the hours of operation at the Little Hands where your child will be attending. You will be assessed a late fee if your child remains after closing. The late fee is \$10.00 for every 15 minutes that your child remains in our care after we have closed. If your child will not be attending for the day, please call the center by 9:00 A.M.

Little Hands is closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. You will be notified in advance of any other center closings at least one week prior to the day we will be closed. Your regular payment is required every week regardless of whether your child attends or not. You will receive one week of vacation each year to be used when your child is not in attendance. Your vacation week must be used all at one time.

Payment Policy

Payment is due the Monday of the week of service. Any payment received after Monday incurs a late fee of \$10.00 per day. A fee of \$35.00 will be assessed for all returned checks. Please give two weeks notice if you will be withdrawing your child/children.

Tuition and Fees

A one-time non-refundable registration fee will be required. Please check with the director at your location for details about the registration fee. Full time rates cover a minimum of five hours per day. Full time rates are based on a four or five day week and include meals and snacks while your child is in attendance. Part time rates are based on a three day week. Parents will be notified of any rate changes. Rate changes may occur annually. Due to staff scheduling, we will require your regular payment even when your child/children are absent. The same will apply to full-time and regular part-time. If a center for a holiday or natural disaster, your normal rates will apply.

Snow Days

On dangerous snow days, cancellations will be announced on local radio and television stations. If the weather conditions become hazardous while the centers are open, the vans will pick your children up from schools if schools are let out early. If downtown businesses close due to dangerous conditions look for Little Hands to close.

Meals

Some Little Hands locations participate with the Nebraska and Iowa and Adult Care Food Program and meet all of their guidelines. Balanced meals are served daily. Parents of infants will need to provide any food, bottles or formulas they will need for the day if they are not yet eating table food. Treats brought by families to celebrate special occasions are allowed. Please notify the Director prior to bringing special treats. Homemade treats are allowed with the permission of the Director. If you would like your child to follow a certain schedule or special menu, please provide the Director with that information in writing. Recommendations for special diets will be required in writing from your doctor.

Illness

Your child should not come to the center with the following conditions:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Red or mattering eyes (pink eye)
- Head lice
- Nits
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Skin rash

Little Hands has a not nit policy. If your child has nits or live lice they cannot return to the center for 24 hours after treatment. Children will be checked before re-admittance to the center. A child whose hair contains nits or live lice will be sent home immediately.

If your child is sick, please have alternate plans to keep your child home. If they become sick during the day, you will need to have someone available to pick them up. Failure to pick up a sick child, within a reasonable amount of time, will result in a call to local authorities. After an illness children may be admitted with a written letter from the doctor. This policy is to protect your child and other children.

Medication

If your child requires medication, you must sign a medication form. This gives us permission to administer the medication.

- Medication must have the original label on it.
- Provide specific times the medication must be given, in writing
- All over the counter medications must have the child's first and last name, current date and the expiration date of the medication
- On special procedures, specific written instructions are required
- The staff may need special training for some treatments and procedures

Emergencies

In an emergency situation, Little Hands will call 911 first, and then notify the parents. Current emergency phone numbers are required for your child's file. Please update your child's file with the Director any time you have changes.

Transportation

Some of the Little Hands centers provide transportation to and from select schools. Please review with your Director if transportation is available and to what schools. One qualified staff member always accompanies children during the transportation to and from school. All children will be required to be restrained during transportation. Children four to six years of age will be required to be in an approved car seat. Permission forms to transport children must be signed at enrollment, and permission slips for specific trips must be presented prior to field trips.