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# **Suzy's Little Peanuts**

## **Day School, LLC**

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We are kind. We are safe. We are responsible.

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# **Family Handbook**

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Updated July 2024

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## **Center Locations and Contact Numbers:**

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School - Springfield  
132 Chester Road  
Springfield, VT 05156  
802-885-7899

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School - Brookline  
624 Grassy Brook Road  
Brookline, VT 05345  
802-365-7552

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School - Ascutney  
5075 Route 5  
Ascutney, VT 05053  
802-674-4134

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School - Bellows Falls  
20 Old Terrace  
Bellows Falls, 05101  
802-463-4795

## **Upper Administration Contact Information:**

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Human Resources - Justine Steele

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# WELCOME!

Dear Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to my center.

I began as a home-based childcare provider in 1998. In 2001, I became a licensed center. I now have locations in Ascutney, Bellows Falls, Brookline and Springfield, Vermont. All SLP sites are licensed and regulated by the Child Development Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. We are 5 STAR facilities through the State of Vermont. Additionally, we partner with school districts throughout Southern, Central and Northern Vermont, to provide high quality education through ACT 166. We are participants of the CACFP, and offer milk, breakfast and snacks to all families regardless of income.

SLP is open to full inclusion of all children. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, age, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin. We take proactive steps to address discrimination, and provide staff with culturally inclusive training throughout their career. It is my goal to offer a safe and happy environment for all. I encourage children at every age to be kind, safe, and responsible both in and outside of our care. I value safety, integrity, diversity, and empathy from all children, families, and staff.

My centers have been created for the benefit of children, families, and the community. I have an open-door policy, and I encourage parent communication with classroom educators and Directors. I encourage you to reach out to myself, or my upper administration team whenever questions or concerns arise. I am willing to support you and your family in any way possible. You are encouraged to stop by the facility at any time during hours of operation. Please see your director or a member of our administration team upon arrival for a visitor's pass.

I look forward to working with you and your family!

Sincerely,

Suzy Coutermarsh

[slpprek@gmail.com](mailto:slpprek@gmail.com)

802-591-0089

## About Us

*We are kind. We are safe. We are responsible.*

### **Our mission....**

All children deserve a positive and quality early education experience that will prepare them to succeed both within their school system and community. In order to provide this quality education; Suzy's Little Peanuts is dedicated to educating children through highly trained and qualified staff. Our staff stay informed in early childhood development, developmentally appropriate practices, culturally inclusive practices, and more. Our indoor and outdoor environments are designed to provide an enriching and challenging academic and social environment.

### **Our philosophy...**

Our philosophy at Suzy's Little Peanuts is to nurture and educate children using research based methods. We believe that children need a sense of security and consistency. They need to know that when everything else around them is changing- a provider will be there.

Our program is influenced by early childhood philosophers such as Erik Erikson, Piaget, and Vygotsky, as well as the Early Multi Tiered System of Supports (EMTSS), and Second Step. We believe, as Piaget did, that learning happens in stages. Our job as providers is to support children in the stage that they are in, and nurture their growth as they progress.

Through all stages, social interaction is a key element in our facility. We find that children learn best by following the example of their peers and educators. We use the Second Step program to teach children positive social skills such as fair ways to play, interaction initiation, and problem solving skills.

We communicate our philosophy through both our indoor and outdoor environments. Our atmosphere is calm and cheerful to welcome play and social interaction. We set up our classrooms according to a creative curriculum. We have a home living area, dramatic play, block area, tabletop toys, music, discovery area, art area, technology and library center. These centers encourage learning through a play based process. We believe that children develop their imagination, learn the basics of communication and critical thinking, letter identification, and more from books. Therefore, we value and invest a great amount of time in reading. There are many opportunities to experience the outdoors on a daily basis. Our playground is used for recess and provides lots of space for running and playing. We garden with the children each year and take advantage of every opportunity to spend time enjoying nature.

We are always growing and changing as a center. We recognize that each family is diverse and we welcome you to influence the growth and change of our center. Our doors are always open, and we encourage your family to feel at home here.

(In this handbook we refer to a family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.)

## General Information

**Hours of Operation:** We are open year round, Monday through Friday. Center hours vary per site. Specific hours of operation based on location can be found on our website page.

**Closings & Holidays:** We close at minimum once monthly for staff training opportunities and staff meetings. Our holiday closings include, but are not limited to; the New Year, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Please review our school calendar for specifics regarding closure dates and times.

**Admission & Enrollment:** All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and the first week's tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance. All families are required to apply for financial assistance (subsidy) certificates from NH or VT, those must be in place or payment must be made in full prior to starting.

Based on the availability and openings, our facilities enroll children from 6 weeks to 8 years old (Brookline to age 12). In the event you are being added to our wait list, a non-refundable application fee of \$20 is due in order to hold your spot on the waitlist for up to 6 months. As spots become available, directors will work down the waitlist and contact families as applicable.

If your child is on a ONE Plan, IEP or a medical diagnosis from a doctor, please make us aware of this. We will work with local area agencies including the parent child centers and local school districts to provide quality care to the best of our abilities.

All documents, including enrollment, CACFP, referrals, assessments, incident/accident/discharge reports will all be kept on file. Immunizations must be kept up to date. Files are kept in a locked filing cabinet or locked office. These are confidential files and access will only be granted to legal guardians of the child, immediate classroom educators, administration, licensing personal and outside resources who have been given permission to access.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:** In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. SLP provides equal educational opportunities for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided. SLP believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local

agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:

[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## Rules/Policies/Procedures

**Confidentiality:** Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

**Staff Qualifications:** Our educators are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. In the event that educators are to fulfill a role they are not yet qualified for, then they will be conditionally approved by the state and follow the varying plans to become qualified.

Typical staff qualifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Assistant Educator	CDA, Fundamentals and/or 3 ECE College Course	under a year
Educator Associate	21 ECE College Credits or Associates Degree in ECE or a related field	1 year plus
Educator	Bachelor's Degree in ECE or a related field	1 year plus

All educators participate in a full onboarding process. This process includes orientation, training, and observations. In addition, we require ongoing training, including but not limited to; child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our educators outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter and is not connected or sanctioned by SLP.

**Child to Staff Ratios:** Children are supervised at all times. All educators receive scheduled breaks, by a qualified educator, which helps reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks – 24 months	<u>1 to 4</u>	<u>8</u>
2 yrs to 3 yrs	<u>1 to 5</u>	<u>10</u>
2 years 8 months	<u>1-6</u>	<u>12</u>
3 yrs and up	<u>1-10</u>	<u>20</u>
6 yrs-12 yrs	<u>1-13</u>	<u>13</u>

**Family Engagement:** Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals. Our open door policy encourages you to visit and/or contact us as you deem necessary!

Please see your director for ways you can volunteer (please note you will need to complete a background check and all necessary paperwork).

**Communications:** We use various methods of communication at our centers including the Procure Engage app, phone calls, and emails. Please talk with your child's educators about which method works best for your family.

At the beginning and end of each day, families and educators may have the opportunity to connect about the child's day. If something is pressing, please don't hesitate to reach out with a phone call in between drop off and pick up hours. Educators can schedule time during the day, (nap time is typically most feasible) to connect with parents!

**Procure Engage:** Families must download the app to receive updated information regarding their child's day. Please note educators update through an iPad, and on occasion their day does not allow for frequent updates. However, at minimum we provide updates twice a day.

**Bulletin Boards:** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, our daily schedule, menu, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters:** Each center provides a monthly newsletter that has classroom and center specific information in addition to company wide updates. Please review our newsletter promptly for important reminders, events, changes, updates, or exciting events!

**Email:** We use email as a primary means of communication. It is required to provide an email address that you use regularly.

**Facebook Group:** We communicate reminders, closures, and pictures of activities on this private Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School page. Please ask to join and answer the questions to be admitted. Please kindly remove yourself when your child graduates out of our program.

**Website:** [www.suzyslittlepeanuts.com](http://www.suzyslittlepeanuts.com) - please review our site for most recent handbooks, documents, reminders and more!

**Family Visits:** Family participation is encouraged. We host family events, and have plenty of volunteer opportunities. Please connect with your site's director to inquire more.

**Conferences:** Parent and educator conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, areas to improve and varying styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns throughout enrollment. Additionally we

will review your child's ASQ (infant and toddler specific) or TS Gold (preschool specific). This is a great time to update contact information if necessary.

**Publicity:** Occasionally, photographs will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website or facebook page (names will never be provided). Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs. Families should never take photographs of children while in our care.

**Learning Environment:** We provide a rich learning environment with curriculums that are developmentally appropriate for the age groups in each classroom. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through areas of interest. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning.

**Curriculum and Assessment:** Our curriculums are designed to be age specific and can be adapted to the individual child's learning style and stage. We utilize Vermont Early Learning Standards as a guide to meet varying standards specific to every age.

As a Preschool partner for Vermont Schools, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress using Teaching Strategies Gold. From these observations we individualize our teaching strategies for effective learning opportunities. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources. In addition, we use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for all ages up to 60 months old. All assessments are used to help adjust our curriculum to better suit the current needs of the children within.

All lead educators are trained to conduct child assessments, through formal professional development (including TSG and ASQ training) or through administration instruction.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom and in PROCARE engage.

**Outdoor Play:** Weather permitting; children play outside in our age specific playgrounds for a minimum of one hour per day. Children are accounted for at all times. Please dress your child appropriately for the season. Closed toe shoes are required. (Sunscreen, bug spray, and clothes to get wet in for the summer. Winter boots, gloves, hats, jackets and snow pants for the winter.) Please see our state approved weather watch chart for specific details related to safe temperatures for outside play, unless deemed unsafe via this chart, we are committed to outside play each day.

**Field Trips:** From time to time, we will schedule field trips. Family members are welcome to join your child on the trip via your own means of transportation. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family. We ask that you properly install your child's car seat into the SLP van the morning of the field trip.

**Multiculturalism:** Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games,

and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

**Celebrations:** Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

**Rest Time:** Children under 1 sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs in cribs. They are not allowed to have anything other than a pacifier in their cribs. Educators directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes.

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age, participate in a quiet rest. If they do not sleep, they will be given quiet activities after 15-30 minutes of rest. Our rest time varies from classroom to classroom between the hours of 11:30 to 2:30.

**Toilet Training:** The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/educator partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. 24 months-36 months is a big potty training time.

**EMTSS (Early Multi-Tiered Support of System):** We utilize EMTSS to ensure we provide excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement that focuses on successful outcomes for all students. Through EMTSS we collaborate with families, outside support, educators, administration and more to ensure we meet the academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs of all students. In the event children are struggling with schedules, routine, peer interactions, self control, etc, we will communicate with families a process on how to provide the support to improve the situation.

**Behavior Guidance:** In the event a child displays physical or verbal aggression, we will intervene immediately to protect all of the children. If a child is harming themselves or others and it is not developmentally appropriate, they will need to be picked up and remain out of care, until a behavior plan is agreed upon that will provide safety for all involved. If this occurs we will notify AOE of the separation of care.

At SLP, physical restraint is never permitted.

**Tuition and Late Fees:** Please note that tuition is based on the age of the children, not the classroom in which they are enrolled. Tuition rates align with Vermont Subsidy rates, and will be adjusted as VT subsidy updates. Upon enrollment, families will sign contracts that align with their tuition/ copayment fee and schedules.

Contracted schedules must be adhered to at all times, variations from these schedules will result in a \$1.00 a minute fee and potential schedule change. Pick ups after 5:00 pm (center's closure) will result in late fees and an immediate schedule change.

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due weekly on the first day the child is scheduled each week, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*. If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$25 will be added to your next tuition payment. If your account has not been paid in full within 10 business days, care will be suspended until the account is paid in full.

Families that receive financial assistance are responsible to keep it current. If there is a lapse in financial assistance then tuition will be due in full each week that there is no certificate. In the event the family receives a back dated subsidy certificate, we will submit a back bill and apply the amount received to their account. There will be a \$25.00 charge for each week that is able to be back billed.

All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$30. In the event this occurs twice, the family will be required to pay via credit card in PROCARE.

## General Policies

**Absence:** If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 am for an appointment, please call the center. All children must arrive at the center before 9:30 am to avoid disruptions in the classroom routines. Please remember that tuition is due, regardless of attendance.

**Withdrawal:** A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in continued billing for the following two weeks.

**Separation of Care:** Our main goal is to always provide continuity of care and education. However, in the event of a breach of contract, or the event that we cannot meet the child/family needs, separation of care may occur. We will provide written notice of separation, and will do our best to give notice of at least 5 days prior to separation. In this circumstance, parents may contact the Parent Child Center in Springfield, VT 802-886-5242 and Winston Prouty Brattleboro VT 802-257-7852 for assistance finding applicable care and support.

**Closing Due to Extreme Weather:** Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on our Facebook page and through email by your center's director.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

**Snow Day Closures:** SLP will close due to inclement weather according to the local supervisory unions. Monitor your center's local supervisory union for updates. Please note we only close according to their closures due to inclement weather, we will open regular time if they have delays.

In the event the supervisory union is already closed (per their calendar) then SLP will remain open unless administration states otherwise.

**Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up:** Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 30 minutes we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

We ask that all adults drive with caution, and do not leave vehicles idling.

**Smoking & Prohibited Substances:** The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately. If we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, we may delay pick up. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program. We will report any situations of this nature to police and DCF as needed.

**Dangerous Weapons:** A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

**Lost or Missing Child:** In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified and we will also notify state licensing.

**Fire Safety:** Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms and smoke detectors.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed and practiced with the children and staff on a monthly basis. We conduct fire drills monthly, including one drill each year at nap time.

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

**Please note that all SLP staff are mandated reporters and are required to report all suspected child abuse and neglect to DCF. Child safety is ALWAYS our first priority.**

## Personal Belongings

**What to Bring:** Children should always come prepared for the weather and with closed toe shoes. If children are not prepared for the day, and we do not have extra items, families will be called to pick up their child or bring proper attire in. In the winter they should have jackets, snow pants, hats, gloves, and snow boots. In the summer they should have cool weather clothing, clothes/a bathing suit for water games, sun screen, sun hats (if wanted), etc. We play hard, clothes may get dirty, wet, painted on, etc. Please bring clothes you are willing to soil.

- **Infants:** 4 clean bottles, diapers & wipes, at least 2 changes of clothes per day, pacifier if needed, one crib sheet, and shoes or slippers. All bottles must be labeled. You may leave bottles at the center and we will wash and reuse them.
  - If your infant is over one they can additionally bring a blanket and small stuffie to be used at nap time on a cot/mat.
- **Toddlers:** At least three changes of clothes, or more per day if toilet training, diapers & wipes if needed, one flat/ fitted, blanket, water bottle and inside shoes or slippers.
  - Children 2 years old and over are not permitted to have pacifiers.
- **Preschoolers:** One flat/fitted sheet, blanket, at least one full change of clothes, socks and shoes, water bottle and inside shoes or slippers.
  - All preschoolers who are three and enrolled at SLP before September 1 each year will be eligible for ACT 166 and enter into the preschool classroom no later than the week of Labor Day.
  - Children who turn three after September 1 each year may remain in their current classroom until they are developmentally ready and space is available.

As children age up within our program, they can move to the next classroom when space is available and they are developmentally ready.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Bedding will be sent home weekly to be washed.

\*Please note that if center items are used, charges will be added to parent accounts.\*

Bedding \$5.00 per week.

Diapers or wipes \$3.00 per day. You can contract for diapers and wipes to be provided for \$10 per week.

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a “cubby.” Cubbies are labeled with your child’s name and located in your child’s classroom. Please check your child’s cubby or bins on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

**Toys from Home:** Toys from home are not permitted unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. Your child’s classroom will inform you of any show-and-tell activities taking place. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items from home.

We do allow a comfort item to be brought from home to be kept in their cubbies where they can access it when they need a little comfort!

## Nutrition

**Foods Brought from Home:** Food from home is not accepted for centers who serve breakfast, lunch and snack. For centers that do not serve lunch, we request that you consider CACFP requirements for the meal. CACFP requires the following components for lunch: a grain, a vegetable, a fruit and a protein. We will offer milk with lunch at all sites. Desserts sent in, will be returned home to be consumed later (as to be fair to all children).

For celebrations, you may provide a snack to share but we request one week’s notice to notify families with dietary restrictions..

**Food Prepared for or at the Center:** Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

**Food Allergies:** Written forms must be completed by a Doctor for us to accommodate food allergies. Please see your Director for an applicable form.

**Meal Time:** At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and food will be served in a unitized manner. When possible, food will be served family style, where children can serve themselves with support. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers. At least one educator is trained in first-aid for choking and is present at all meals.

### Infant Feedings:

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/educator.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies.
- Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Expressed milk



must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months.

- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.
- Babies often benefit from a small comfort item during feeding, and we encourage you to bring one from home.

### **Children 24 Months and Older:**

- No child shall go more than 3 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, pretzels, popcorn and hard candy.

## **Health**

**Immunizations:** Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

**General Health Exam/Physicals:** Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's general health exam/physical should be received before your child attends the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. Be sure the box is completed by your Doctor that indicates whether the child has conditions that can impact their enrollment in childcare.

**Injuries:** Safety is a top priority so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child may be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we contact you or an emergency contact.

**Allergy Prevention:** Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies, and provide proper documentation. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care from a doctor. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

**Medications:** All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed. All prescription and non prescription medications to be administered must be recorded on a medication form filled out by the parent.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the family. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received. We are not able to administer doses of medications that are not indicated on the package.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

**Illness:** We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive. Please see our illness policy posted in the classrooms, in entryways and on our website.