

---

# **Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School, LLC**

## **Family Handbook**

---

Updated January 2024

## **Center locations and contact numbers:**

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School SP1

132 Chester Road  
Springfield, VT 05156  
802-885-7899

Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School SP3

307 South Street  
Springfield, VT 05156  
802-885-8484

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:**

Executive Director and Owner - Susan Coutermarsh

Phone: 802-591-0089  
Email: [suzyc98@gmail.com](mailto:suzyc98@gmail.com)

Human Resources - Justine Steele

Phone: 802-281-2457  
Email: [just.m.steele@gmail.com](mailto:just.m.steele@gmail.com)

Program Operations Manager - Olivia Sandreuter

Phone: 860-575-2451  
Email: [ostahl717@gmail.com](mailto:ostahl717@gmail.com)

## WELCOME!!

Dear Families,

Hello! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to my center. It is my goal to offer a safe and happy environment for all children.

All Suzy's Little Peanuts centers are state-licensed centers. Many of the policies that are outlined pertain to state regulations. *It is extremely important that all areas that require information or permission from you are filled out completely.* Before a child starts at any of my centers I must have all of the appropriate paperwork in my possession.

We began as a home-based childcare provider in 1998. In 2001, we became a licensed center. We now have locations in Ascutney, Bellows Falls, Brookline and Springfield, Vermont. We have 5 STAR, NAEYC accredited facilities. 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 breakfast, lunch and snacks to all families regardless of income.

SLP has an open-door policy and encourages parent communication with classroom teaching staff and Directors. We also encourage you to reach out to myself, or my upper administration team whenever questions or concerns arise. My centers have been created for the benefit of children, families, and the community and therefore we are willing to support in a variety of ways and encourage you to reach out. We also encourage families to stop by the facility at any time during open hours. Please see the director or a member of our admin team upon arrival for a visitor's pass.

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, and takes proactive steps to address discrimination.

I look forward to having your child in my center and working with you.

Sincerely,

Suzy Coutermarsh

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

802-591-0089

# About Us

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

Suzy's Little Peanuts strives to provide a safe, academically challenging social environment for children to thrive in.

## **Our vision...**

All children deserve a positive and quality early education experience that will prepare them to succeed both within the school system and within the community. In order to provide this quality education Suzy's Little Peanuts is dedicated to educating children through highly trained and qualified staff who stay up to date on early childhood development and standards. 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 (MTSS), Responsive Classroom and Second Step. We believe, as Piaget did, that children go through stages in their development. Our job as providers is to support children in the stage that they are in, and supporting their growth throughout each stage.

Through all stages, social interaction is a key element in our facility, as children often learn best by following the example and peers and teaching staff. We use the Second Step program to teach children positive social skills such as fair ways to play, how to enter a group and problem solving skills.

We communicate our philosophy through both our indoor and outdoor environments. Our atmosphere is calm and cheerful, welcoming play and social interaction. We set up our classrooms according to a creative curriculum. This means that our classrooms are set up in centers. We have a home living area, dramatic play, block area, tabletop toys, music, discovery area, art area, technology and library. These centers encourage learning through a play based process. We believe that children learn many things from books, therefore we have books in all of the centers and often spend time reading to children. 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, as our children grow and change. 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 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, 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

**Holidays:** We are closed on certain days throughout the year. Please see our annual calendar for specific dates for closings.

**Admission & Enrollment:** All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, in addition, the enrollment fee and first 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.

In the event you are being added to our wait list, an application fee of \$20 is due in order to hold your spot on the waitlist.

A one-week, non-refundable tuition deposit is required for each child enrolled. This deposit will be held without interest and will represent tuition payment for the first week's tuition.

Based on the availability and openings, our facilities admit children from 6 weeks to 8 years (Brookline to age 12) of age. We do not hold open slots for long periods of time.

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.

If your child has an identified special need, 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 in a child's file. 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.

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, audiotope, 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 teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. In the event that teachers 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:

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

All teaching staff participate in a full onboarding process. This process includes an 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, guidance, 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 caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by SLP.

**Child to Staff Ratios:** Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which 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 additionally encourages you to come, contact us, etc any time you feel necessary!

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

**Daily Communications:** Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child’s activities and experiences at the center upon request. We use various modes of communication at our centers including daily activity sheets, the daily connect app, phone calls and emails. Please talk with your child’s teachers about which method works well for your family.

At the beginning and end of each day, families and educators can have the opportunity to connect about the child’s day or any noteworthy items. If something is pressing, please don’t hesitate to reach out in between drop off and pick up hours! Educators can schedule time during the day, particularly during nap time to connect with parents as well!

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

**Newsletters:** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking.

**Email:** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so we can use this as another method of communication when applicable.

**Family Visits:** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children.

**Conferences:** Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and 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. We will also go over your child's ASQ and if they are a PreK student their TS Gold.

**Publicity:** Occasionally, photos 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.

## Curriculum and Learning

**Learning Environment:** We provide a rich learning environment with curriculums that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

**Curriculum and Assessment:** SLP uses the Handwriting Without Tears and Foundations curriculum as well as Second Step, a social and emotional curriculum. As a Pre-K partner for Vermont Schools, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress using Teaching Strategies Gold so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. 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. We use the OUNCE scale assessment tool for infants and toddlers under 24 months of age.

The goal of child assessments is to use results to improve our overall classrooms and program.

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 lessons plans posted in each classroom.



**Outings and Field Trips:** Weather permitting; we conduct supervised outdoor play each day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family. And all family members wishing to chaperones must complete background checks beforehand.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Car seats will be used and provided by each family during field trips and they will be properly installed in our van or in staff-owned vehicles.

**Transitions:** Your child's transition into child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

**Transition from home to center:** Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

**Transition between learning programs:** Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new program.

**Transition to elementary school:** Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

**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. They are not allowed to have anything other than a pacifier in their cribs. Soft items will not be permitted in their cribs.

Caregivers/teachers directly observe infants by sight and sound at all times and check on sleeping infants every 15 minutes. Infants will always be placed in cribs to sleep.

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age, participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities. Our rest time is from 12 – 2:30 and all

children are awake by 2:30. As children approach kindergarten they may need to be weaned from napping. Please communicate with us about this when the time comes.

**Toilet Training:** The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher 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. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns. Please let us know what methods of encouragement you are using at home so we can create a consistent environment for toileting.

## Guidance

**General Procedure:** SLP is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help them develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

**Challenging Behavior:** Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at **Suzy's Little Peanuts Day School** has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

**Physical Restraint:** Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may hold a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

**Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families:** If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. 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. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **Enrollment/ Tuition/ Fees**

**Application and Enrollment:** Families who are considering Suzy's Little Peanuts are welcome to stop by to visit. Formal tours must be scheduled in advance. Our application process is as follows:

To be considered for enrollment families must submit our enrollment packet pages 1-5, and a \$20 application fee. Our application fee helps to defray the cost of tours and processing paperwork.

Families who are given the option to go on our waiting list have 2 business days to accept a space on the waiting list. Suzy's Little Peanuts cannot give accurate time-lines in regard to length of time a family will be on the waitlist. The waiting list works on a first come first serve basis. Families with children already in the center and staff will receive priority.

Only parents or legal guardians can enroll a child. Names and contact information must be provided for both parents regardless of parent involvement.

Applications for enrollment can be picked up at the center and are also available on our website. Enrollment will not be complete without a visit to the center, and proper documentation and fees.

Each May we complete a file review at which time you update your child's forms including immunization records. There is an annual paperwork & supplies fee of \$10 that will be billed to your tuition amount of the 1<sup>st</sup> week of June.

**Tuition and Late Charges:** Please note that tuition is based on the age of the children, not the classroom in which they are enrolled.

Families will be notified by July each year of any scheduled tuition increases.

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. 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, we reserve the right to suspend care and/or terminate our contract with you immediately.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 14 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a third party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

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*.

In the event a family receives financial assistance, this is the family's responsibility to keep 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, and if there is a credit this will be kept until the end of the year to offset any fees accrued.

**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 then SLP will remain open unless administration states otherwise.

**Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges:** All returned checks will be charged a fee of \$30. Two or more returned checks will result in your account being placed on "cash or money order only" status.

**Late Pick-up/Early Drop-off Fees:** Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$1 per 1 minute will be accrued beginning at your contracted pick up time. Also, if you drop your child off before their contracted time, you will be charged \$1 for every 1 minute before your contracted time. Failure

to meet scheduled times on a consistent basis and therefore, breaking the contract, could result in separation of care.

## Attendance and Withdrawal

**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 be sure to notify us of changes in schedule as soon as possible. Please remember tuitions are 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.

**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.

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.

**General Procedure:** Please do not drop-off your child prior to your contracted time. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in using the Procure system.

Please do not pick up your child after your scheduled time. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by your contracted time. For families contracted to arrive at 6:30 am or pick up at 5:30 pm, please note that we are licensed from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm and cannot legally care for children outside of these times and families are not permitted inside of our facilities outside of our operating hours.

Parents are asked to drive with caution in the parking lot. Please be aware of other drivers and possible children. Per VT Statues, please do not leave your vehicle idling while dropping off or picking up your child/dren, in circumstances of extreme heat or cold weather you may leave your vehicle idling.

All children must arrive prior to **9:30 am** (excluding children only attending school age afternoon program). If you require a later drop-off time periodically to accommodate appointments, please give your child's classroom teacher as much notice as possible. Our classrooms thrive on consistency and routine within our schedules and drop-offs outside of normal hours are distracting and cause many children distress while taking the teachers attention

off the group. Failure to arrive prior to 9:30 am on a consistent basis could result in separation of care.

Only parents, guardians and people on your child's pickup list can pick up unless you have notified the center that another person will be picking up. If the person picking up is unfamiliar to the center staff they will be asked for a picture ID. We are a locked facility, so without proper identification people will not be allowed to enter the building (or pick up a child).

It is most often easiest on children to have a quick drop-off routine. Children thrive on routine and consistency. We recommend that drop offs happen quickly once you enter the classroom because children often find separation to be challenging and the less build up leading to the separation the less anxiety that children feel. All staff members are sensitive to the feelings that occur during drop-off and they will do their best to create a post drop-off routine that will eventually allow your child to feel comfortable separating from you. You will be notified if your child does not calm down after a reasonable amount of time.

**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 and Release Contacts. 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 and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

**Right to Refuse Child Release:** We may refuse to release children 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. 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.

**Please note that all SLP staff are mandated reporters and are required to report all suspected child abuse and neglect to DCF.**

## Personal Belongings

**What to Bring:** Children should always come prepared for the weather and with close toed shoes. In the winter they should have jackets, snow pants, hats, gloves, and snow boots. In the summer they should have cool weather clothing, sun screen, sun hats (if wanted), etc.

- **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 additionally bring a blanket and small stuffie to be used at nap time.
- **Toddlers:** At least two 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.

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 \$2.00 per day.

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 on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

**Toys from Home:** We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center 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.

## Nutrition

**Foods Brought from Home:** We request that you do not bring food from home into our center. For celebrations, you may provide a snack to share but we request one week's notice.

**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:** If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification must come from the child's doctor.

**Meal Time:** At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. 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 caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking 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/teacher.
- 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.

### 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).

**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 physical should be received before but must be received no later than days after your child begins 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.

\*\*Masks must be worn at all times.

**Allergy Prevention:** Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us 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 health policy below:

- *Note the majority of the below policies and/or a variation of these policies is applicable to employees as well.*
- **The following symptoms/illnesses/diseases will exclude your child from care:**

<b>Illness/Disease &amp; Incubation</b>	<b>Signs/Symptoms</b>	<b>Exclusion &amp; Return</b>
<b>Cold/ Flu/ COVID Symptoms</b> *See COVID below*	Runny/stuffy nose, scratchy throat, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, and fever.	Exclude if multiple symptoms. Return when 100% symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication OR a doctor’s note clears them to return and child feels well. *See COVID below.*
<b>Cough</b> *See Pertussis and RSV below*	Dry or wet cough, runny nose, sore throat, throat irritation, hoarse voice, barking cough.	Exclude if severe cough, rapid and/or difficult breathing, wheezing(if not already evaluated & treated, Cyanosis. Return when symptoms are 100% resolved or a doctor’s note clears them to return and child feels well.
<b>Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)</b> 12-72 hours	Red or pink, itchy, watering painful eyes, sensitivity to light, green or yellow discharge, swollen eyelids, eyes stuck shut in the morning.	Exclude until ALL discharge is gone or antibiotic is taken for 24 hours.
<b>Diarrhea</b> 14-16 hours	Abnormally loose or frequent stools (2 or more times in a 24 hours period) and/or that cannot be contained in the toilet or diaper.	Exclude until symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.

<b>Difficult or Noisy Breathing</b>  *See Pertussis and RSV below*	Stuffy nose, sore throat, cough, mild fever, chest discomfort, gasping, cyanotic, drooling, wheezing, whistling sound while breathing, space between ribs retracts while breathing, irritable and feel unwell.	Exclude if fever accompanied by behavior change, looks or acts very ill, has difficulty breathing, blood red/purple rash not associated. Return when symptoms have greatly improved, diagnosed by a doctor and child feels well.
<b>Fever</b>	100.4 F temperature or higher	Exclude until symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.
<b>Head Lice</b> Eggs hatch in 7 days/1 week (multiply quickly)	Severe itching, small lice eggs (nits), bumpy rash on nape of neck, behind ears and/or crown of head	Exclude until the child and household have been treated and ALL nits have been removed.
<b>Mouth Sores</b>  *See Strep throat/Scarlet Fever below*	White patches on tongue & along cheeks, pain on swallowing, fever, painful yellowish spots, swollen neck glands, cold sore, reddened swollen painful lips, painful ulcers on cheeks or gums.	Exclude after diagnosis, if drooling steadily, unable to participate. Return when diagnosed by a doctor and child feels well.
<b>Rash</b>  *See Chicken Pox, Scabies, Impetigo, Measles, Ringworm, Hand, Foot & Mouth and Rosella below*	Could be different with every case. Determining the cause of a rash requires a competent health professional evaluation.	Exclude if rash occurs with behavior change, has oozing/open wound, has bruising not associated with injury, has joint pain, tender red area of size, unable to participate. Return after a doctor has diagnosed, treatment given and child feels well..
<b>Vomiting</b>	Vomiting, stomach pain	Exclude until 100% symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication and the child feels well.

- **If your child is unable to participate in our program’s activities or they have multiple symptoms they will be sent home.**
- 
- 
- **Please let us know ASAP if your child is diagnosed with any of the following.**
- **The following are contagious illnesses that we need to post for all families:**

<b>Illness/Disease &amp; Incubation</b>	<b>Signs/Symptoms</b>	<b>Exclusion &amp; Return</b>
<b>COVID Symptoms</b>	Fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of smell or taste, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea	Exclude until 100% symptom free AND have received 2 negative rapid tests (2 yrs and older) OR a negative PCR test (under 2 yrs). Please see our COVID Guidelines for POSITIVE test results.

<b>Chicken Pox (Varicella)</b>	Fever, skin eruption with blister like lesions	Exclude until all the blisters have dried.
<b>Hand, Foot &amp; Mouth</b> 3-6 days	Small blisters with reddened base primarily on hands, feet, mouth, tongue, buttocks or throat	Exclude during acute symptoms and lesions are not weeping. Return when child is eating normally and feels well.
<b>Impetigo</b> 1-10 days	Blisters, crusts, scabs on skin which are flat and yellow may be weeping.	Exclude until antibiotic taken for 24 hours and lesions are no longer weeping and forming a yellow crust.
<b>Measles</b>	Fever, red eyes, cough, spots on tongue and mouth, blotchy rash 3rd & 7th day, usually lasting 4-7 days	Exclude from the time of initial fever until 4 days after the rash appears.
<b>Meningitis</b> 1-10 days	Fever, headache, vomiting, chills, neck pain or stiffness, muscle spasm, irritability	Exclude until a doctor gives permission to return after treatment.
<b>Pertussis</b>	Irritating cough can last 1-2 months, often has a "whooping" sound	Exclude until an antibiotic is taken for 5 full days.
<b>Ringworm</b> 4-10 days	Red, scaling, itchy, circular lesions	Exclude unless on prescription and lesions are coverable
<b>RSV</b> 1-10 days	Fever, runny nose, cough, and sometimes wheezing	Exclude until 4 days after symptoms start, fever free 24 hours and can tolerate normal activities.
<b>Roseola</b> 9-10 days	High sudden fever, runny nose, irritability, followed by rash on trunk	Exclude until fever free for 24 hours and child feels well.
<b>Scabies</b> 2-6 weeks-initial exposure 1-4 days- reexposure	Mite burrows under skin. Red, itchy rash tends to be in lines or burrows usually on wrist, elbow creases or between fingers.	Exclude for 24 hours after treatment is completed.
<b>Strep Throat/ Scarlet Fever</b> 1-3 days	Red, painful throat, fever, rash	Exclude until taken an antibiotic for 24 hours and no fever.

- \* This list does not include everything that would exclude your child\*
- \*\*All of the above are a result of or in consideration of VT CDD regulations.\*\*
- 
- \*\*\*Please note the above is subject to change according to CDC, VT Dept of Health, and CDD.

## Safety

**Clothing:** Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily play happens outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

**Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play:** Please see our 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.

**Injuries:** Safety is a major concern in child care and 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.

**Biting:** Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

**Respectful Behavior:** All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

**Smoking:** 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.

**Prohibited Substances:** 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. 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.

**Child Custody:** Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

## Emergencies

**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.

**Suspected Child Abuse:** We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

**Child car seats:** Employees cannot buckle children into car seats or install them into vehicles not owned or operated by Suzy's Little Peanuts. We are able to tell and show guardians or pick-up people how to install child car seats and how to buckle them and tighten the straps but cannot physically do it ourselves. Staff can install and fasten car seats when using SLP owned or operated vehicles to transport children on field trips.

Thank you for reading our family handbook, we are excited to welcome you to our family and look forward to our time together! As always, please let us know of any questions or concerns!

**COVID: 19 additional adaptations (if/when the state is no longer in this pandemic the following will no longer be in affect)**

\*\*\*Daily health checks will be conducted - including asking the following:

Has the child been in contact with COVID-19?

Does the child feel well?

Check temperature with clean hands and non-contact thermometer

\*\*\*Children diagnosed or waiting results can return when they have been 10 days without symptoms OR receive negative test results.

\*\*\*If multiple symptoms begin while at school the child should be sent home as soon as possible, while waiting they will be kept separate. One staff member will be in charge of the child, upon the child's departure, staff will wash their hands, necks and any other shown skin and change their clothes.

\*\*\*Children with symptoms, diagnosed or waiting for results can return when they have been 10 days without symptoms and medication OR receive negative test results.

\*\*\*If a child or staff member is confirmed with COVID: 19 we will close the building as soon as we have those results, and keep the building closed a minimum of 48 hours, and decontaminate the center and resume operations the next business day, after completing the 48 hours (unless the Vermont Department of Health issues different guidance). Any persons who have had close contact with the individual who tested positive should also be tested and remain out of the center until they receive negative test results or are 10 days without symptoms and medication.

\*\*\*Meals are served by staff, children cannot serve themselves.

\*\*\*Visitors are not permitted.