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LITTLE ACORN DAY SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Little Acorn! The first part of this handbook contains information that explains Little Acorn's school policies and procedures and specific information about the preschool (Little Acorn Day School, serving 2-1/2 to 5 year olds). With the last portion, beginning on page 20, you will find specific information about the Sprouts Toddler Program (serving 1 to 2-1/2 year olds).

CONTACT INFORMATION

WEBSITE: www.Littleacorninc.com

PRESIDENT/OWNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LITTLE ACORN INC.

TIANA TRAYLOR
WK: 206-236-0480
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LOCATIONS: LITTLE ACORN DAY SCHOOL
8236 SE 24TH ST. NORTH ANNEX RM 1
MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040

LITTLE ACORN SPROUTS
8236 SE 24TH ST. NORTH ANNEX RM 4
MERCER ISLAND, WA 98040

LITTLE ACORN INC. TAX ID NUMBER: 68-0509420

STAFF AND LICENSING

Little Acorn Inc. is owned and operated by Tiana Traylor. Both centers are licensed by the State of Washington, DSHS. Tiana has an MA Degree in Human Development and an AA Degree in Early Childhood Education, along with 20+ years of teaching experience.

We at Little Acorn, use a team-teaching approach and are very fortunate to have a highly qualified and well educated staff. Each year staff attend workshops and classes to further their knowledge of early childhood education and care. Most importantly, they maintain a strong commitment to offering the highest quality loving care and education to our students.

Little Acorn Day School is licensed by the state of Washington and meets all healthy and safety standards as required by the Washington State Department of Health Services.

PHILOSOPHY

We at Little Acorn believe that each child is a unique and competent individual, with his/her own strengths and qualities, and that all children come equipped with a natural and intense curiosity about life. As your child enters our school, our first objectives are: (1) To build a strong, supportive friendship bond with each child; a warm rapport that communicates a shared sense of joy in each effort and accomplishment and (2) To provide a reinforcing, physically and emotionally safe environment, in which children will be encouraged to actively explore, experiment, and express themselves, at their level, in a wide variety of ways.

Music, art, science experimentation, book making and story writing, academics (presented in a multi-sensory fun way), creative dramatics, games, walking field trips, special visitors, and family events are included in our presentation of curriculum. This reflects our most basic belief that children learn most through a hands-on, self-discovery process. We believe that it is through the sharing of this process, with caring friends, that each child's natural zest for learning and self-esteem is nurtured and enriched.

We believe in positive reinforcement as a powerful tool in teaching important central values in early childhood. Cooperation, kindness, self-initiative, and perseverance and are the skills we reinforce at every sighting. Communication, creativity, and problem-solving are developed as children practice these basic skills that will lay the strong foundation for life-long learning.

And finally, we believe strongly in the power of the parent-teacher partnership in offering the best care and education for your child. Each one of us has unique and important contributions to share with one another and with the children. So, we would like to welcome you as a vital and cherished member of an important team! We invite and appreciate all of your help and expertise and hope that you will feel free to share with us any ideas, skills, information, comments, and/or concerns you have throughout the year.

PROGRAM GOALS

Development of: Love of school and learning, Self-esteems and competency, Independence and Responsibility, Social Skills...(How to work cooperatively with others, use of courtesies, empathy, expression of needs, interpersonal problem solving), Social Awareness...(Acceptance of different cultures, viewpoints, differently abled people, taking care of our planet and respecting all living things), Physical motor skills, Language skills for self-expression and communication, Creativity, Mathematical and Scientific Thinking.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admission to the Little Acorn Day School is granted on a first-come, first-serve basis *after* the following priority list has registered: Returning students, siblings of returning students, alumni, students with full-time working parents. Parents living or working on Mercer Island have priority enrollment. Little Acorn reserves the right to balance the classroom populations with respect to male/female and older/younger children. All children are welcome and will be admitted regardless of race, sex, national origin, special needs, religious preference, or parent or guardian's sexual orientation. Little Acorn will make reasonable accommodations for children with special needs. Children are accepted for full time, part-time, and drop-in care once they

are enrolled. There is a two day minimum enrollment required, i.e., you have to pay for all day but you may pick up your child at any time before your agreed upon pick up time.

Admission to Little Acorn Day School and Little Acorn Sprouts requires a tour of the school, completed admissions forms (downloaded from this website), a one-time non-refundable registration fee and a non-refundable last month tuition deposit. Your deposit will pay your last month tuition when you give us your 60 day notice.

Little Acorn Sprouts is licensed to serve children ages 1 to 2-1/2 years and the preschool is licensed to serve children 2-1/2 to 6 years. A limited number of openings in the preschool are available for children under age three, on a trial basis. Once accepted, enrollment constitutes a commitment for the entire year, including summer. The preschool program is a two to three-year program designed to fully prepare children socially, emotionally, physically, and academically for kindergarten entrance and success. Most children stay enrolled until they graduate from Little Acorn and enter into formal kindergarten. If withdrawal from Little Acorn is necessary, a sixty day notice is required.

When you turn in your registration materials and deposit, you will be provided an ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire). You will be required to complete this form and return it on your child's first day of attendance. Little Acorn will score the ASQ and report the results back to you within 90 days. This will give us, and you, a baseline data on your child's development so far, so that we can begin building your child's skills right away!

HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Acorn is open from 7:00am-6:00pm, Monday through Friday. Our goal is to maintain a 1:7 teacher/child ratio in the preschool and a 1:4 ratio in the Sprouts. After you advise us of your child's planned attendance for the coming month, we schedule our staff's working hours and our program needs based upon that projected enrollment. Therefore, we ask that you please let us know both your schedule of days as well as the approximate time of arrival and departure for your child.

If your schedule should change, please notify us as soon as possible. Also, please call if your child is sick or will not be attending for any reason.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF

When bringing your child to school, it will be necessary for you to walk your child into the classroom and hand him/her over to a staff member. In addition, you must sign your child in and out with the appropriate date, time of arrival and departure, using your full signature. Please let us know who will bring and who will pick up your child. Children WILL NOT be released to persons not authorized on the child's registration form without written permission from the parents.

DAILY PROGRAM

When you arrive at Little Acorn Day School, you and your child will be greeted by one of the staff members. After your child has taken off his or her outdoor clothes, put away his/her lunch box, washed hands, then said good-bye, he/she may join the others in free play and explore the various learning activities and interest centers that have been prepared for his/her arrival. Please leave your child at school no later than 9:30am for morning preschool. It is disruptive for the rest of the class as well as the student if the student misses the morning greeting circle with his/her teachers and peers. During this circle, we sing, bond, and discuss the day's choices.

If there are any changes in your schedule, a different telephone number for the day, someone different picking up, or any special needs your child has, please let us know verbally and in writing in the daily parent/teacher communication log book located next to the sign-in sheet.

PRESCHOOL SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00-9:00	Arrival, breakfast, center play, individual attention
9:00-9:30	Outdoors
9:30-9:45	Morning snack
9:45-9:55	Greeting Circle (hello song, story, introduction to the morning activities)
9:55-10:55	Learning Centers and Pre-K academic groups
10:55-11:00	Clean Up
11:00-11:30	Music and Movement Circle
11:30-11:55	Outdoors
11:55-12:05	News Circle (calendar, weather, attendance, news (show and tell))
12:05-12:35	Lunch
12:35-1:00	Potty / Diapers / Stories
1:00-2:30	Nap / Quiet Activities (Please void drop off & pick up between 1 & 2:30)
2:30-3:30	Wake up, potties, Outdoors
3:30-3:45	Wash, snack
3:45-4:00	Story and introduction to afternoon project
4:00 - 5:00	Project / Games / Center Play
5:00 - 5:15	Potty/ wash / Last snack
5:15 - 6:00	Outside (weather permitting) / Dance Party / Gross motor games Individual attention / Stories / Departure

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Little Acorn uses *The Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies Gold* because it gives us a reliable process for ensuring that our teaching meets the Top State Curricular standards while still being flexible enough to allow us to practice Emergent Curriculum, which includes following the child's lead and adapting learning experiences for the needs of each child.

The Creative Curriculum is a hands-on, project based curriculum that is perfectly aligned with the *WA State Early Learning Guidelines* and is recommended by *Early Achievers*, the Washington State Early Learning Quality Rating System, in which we participate. *The Creative Curriculum* also includes levels from Birth through 3rd Grade, making it possible for us to assess and plan for children whose abilities fall outside the normal range of development, such as children with developmental delays and children who are functioning beyond their peers, in the gifted range.

In addition to implementation and guidance from *The Creative Curriculum*, our highly skilled Teachers plan daily based on the developmental needs and emergent interests of the individual children enrolled. Activities are individualized so that each child is comfortably challenged and encouraged to move to the next level of development, but is never rushed. The curriculum is thematic/literature based and integrated so that, for example, if children are studying insects, they may be finding them outdoors, reading and writing about them, representing them in art in a variety of ways, singing and dancing about them in music, doing a play about them in drama and building obstacle courses or homes for them in blocks or carpentry.

The following components are included in the preschool curriculum:

Social Skills: The goal is for children to form deep and meaningful friendships with their peers, to be able to work cooperatively within a learning community, and to be able to get their needs met in a way that respects the rights of others. Through puppetry, storytelling and ongoing direct guidance and instruction, children are taught the following concepts:

- School rules of "Be kind" and "Be safe"
- use of courtesies and empathy
- Social justice concepts such as fairness and inclusion of those with differences
- Common empowering phrases to get needs met, such as, "Could I play too?" "When can I have a turn?" and "Stop, I don't like that." And how to seek the teacher's help when your words fail to work.
- The process of negotiation which includes; identifying the problem in terms of the needs of both parties, brainstorming possible solutions, agreeing on a plan of action, and following through with that plan.

Language, Literacy, and Drama: Children are introduced to current quality literature as well as traditional fairy tales and folk tales. Children are encouraged to dictate their own stories and books which are recorded by the teacher and then read to the class. Children are given many opportunities to enact both familiar stories and stories of their own creation. They are encouraged to illustrate these stories and to create scenery and dialogue for dramatic play production. As this process unfolds, children gain a deep understanding of the connection between the written and spoken word. And, as they show an interest, children are taught the alphabet and beginning phonics so they can begin to write on their own.

Math Skills: Children are introduced to counting and other beginning math concepts such as sorting and classifying, measuring, comparing, graphing, adding, and subtracting. The hands-on "Math Their Way" curriculum as well as *The Creative Curriculum* are utilized. The Math Their Way curriculum involves experiences using manipulative materials to concretely explore and represent numerical and spatial concepts. In addition, everyday math concepts as well as critical thinking are integrated into almost every part of the school curriculum.

Science: Children are offered many experiences with the natural world around them both indoors and out. As they learn to be close observers of detail and begin to try and represent what they see in pictures, writing, language, dance and building, they gain a deeper understanding of their surroundings. The science program includes the following components: Study of insects, spiders, birds, reptiles, rocks, plants, light and shadows, magnetism, various liquids and solids, our daily sensory table center filled with enticing objects and natural

substances from our world, our Light Table Magnetic Building Center and Science Exploration Table, as well as focused, small group science experimentation and instruction. Observation, prediction, and classification skills are modeled and encouraged.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math: As children explore our STEM specific materials such as ramps, balls, and hollow blocks, the Science skills of observation, prediction and experimentation are again utilized and honed, as children decide how they will use technology (the tools) to solve engineering and math problems posed by the materials and problem-solving challenges set forth by skilled teachers.

Art: Little Acorn views life as art and children as amazing and capable expressionists. Children are introduced to a wide variety of art experiences designed to help them gain mastery over the materials. With repeated experiences using the tools of an artist, children become more and more able to creatively self-express by using art as a language to represent the world within and around them. In addition, as children begin to represent the things in their world, their understanding of those things is deepened and enriched. The art program at Little Acorn includes the following elements:

Drawing: Through visual aids and movement, children are introduced to a concept developed by Mona Brooks, known as "Monart." Children are introduced to five basic elements of drawing. As they study various aspects of the world around them, children are encouraged to find and observe these elements so they can learn to represent whatever they see by breaking it down into manageable components. Children are offered experiences using wide and fine tip markers, pastels, colored pencils, chalk, and etching materials. They are also offered experiences drawing and writing in shave cream, salt, finger paint, and wipe-off markers and crayons.

Painting: Through puppetry, children are introduced to painting processes as they use a variety of brush sizes, textures and printing materials. Children use liquid tempera paint, tempera cakes, liquid water color, glitter paint, luminescent paint, finger paint, and fabric paint. Students are encouraged to paint at the table, the easel, and outdoors, and to cooperatively paint scenery for dramatic play.

Forming: Children work with porcelain clay, Model Magic, and play dough; as always, moving developmentally from exploration to expression and from simple to more complex forms.

Collage: Children work with a wide variety of papers, even making their own at times, while learning to incorporate tools and techniques such as hand-tearing, crimping, folding, cutting, pasting, stapling, taping, hole-punching and paper fastening. In collage, children will also be using 3-D materials such as wood and wire, sticks, shells, bells, dried flowers, rocks, etc.

Music: Children participate daily in rich music experiences that include singing, rhyming, rhythm instrument play, creative movement with and without props, song writing, and beginning folk dance. Teachers lead children in music using guitar, voice, recorded music, and visual aids. Children are encouraged to contribute their own ideas during the music and movement circle. In this way, they use music as another language for self-expression.

Outdoor Play: On our big beautiful playground, with climbers, giant sand box, and play village, children are offered a wide variety of experiences designed to encourage and enhance large muscle development including balance and coordination. Opportunities abound for running, jumping, hopping, climbing, peddling, swinging, ball handling, and hop scotch.

PLAY

It is important for any good, developmentally appropriate preschool program to say a few words about the importance of play. Play is a child's way of learning. It is work for the child, and s/he expends great energy in this activity constructing his own knowledge.

In play, children: think creatively, practice critical thinking, use problem solving, teach themselves, are independent, feel powerful, feel in control of their environment, are cooperative, don't need incentives, are spontaneous, have fun, and are totally involved... in learning. Through play, the child meets new situations, sets out to understand them, and in the process, gains new understanding and skill in problem solving. Children need time to explore. They need time to practice developing skills over and over again.

According to Dr. Brian Sutton Smith, the conditions for self esteem are:

- 1) Recognition - knowing you belong
- 2) Risk taking - intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual (getting to know the spirit of everyone you come in contact with).
- 3) Uniqueness
- 4) Having mentors and models (with kids and for kids, never in power over them).
- 5) Sense of responsibility - being productive, having a sense of humor, being satisfied with oneself.

ALL THESE CONDITIONS EXIST IN PLAY!

In addition, current research shows that when comparing early childhood programs based on play vs. academics, children from programs based on play do better academically and more go on to universities. There has also been research that shows a 70% incidence of depression in adults coming from childhood academically accelerated programs.

RELIGION AND HOLIDAY POLICY

Little Acorn has no religious doctrine or curriculum. Above all, Little Acorn seeks to be inclusive and sensitive to the cultural heritage and practices of all students and their families. Therefore, we generally celebrate Halloween, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Birthdays, and other non-secular holidays. We generally celebrate Christmas (in a non-secular way) and any other holidays that the children in our classroom celebrate in their home culture, such as Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, etc. (this list depends on your input from year to year, so please let us know what you prefer).

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Little Acorn Day School rules are simple and clear: "Be safe." and "Be kind." Each child deserves to spend his/her day in harmony with respectful peers and teachers. Teachers use a

pro-active verbal and non-verbal (smiles, pats, high-fives, etc.) positive reinforcement approach to highlight and encourage safe and kind behaviors. In other words, teachers use children's names and descriptions of positive behaviors whenever they observe these behaviors occurring. In addition, there is direct group instruction on positive pro-social behavior. Using puppetry and classroom scenarios, the children are taught a common language of empowering phrases to use with one another to get their needs met in a way that respects the rights of peers. There is also individual on-going peer coaching. Teachers play with the children while reinforcing "good friend" behavior such as sharing, helping, cooperating, complimenting, etc.

When unkind or unsafe behavior does occur, it is handled in a positive, constructive manner. Because we have such a wide range of ages, corrections for inappropriate behavior are matched to the child's developmental level.

All children are reminded of the rules, the rationale (specifically covering what was done wrong and why it was wrong). Then, they are "redirected" with choices for more appropriate behavior. As children gain verbal and problem solving skills, they are guided through the negotiation process. This process involves defining the problem in terms of the needs of both parties, brainstorming solutions, making a plan, and following through with that plan.

If the behavior is repeated, children are given a warning. If it happens again, children are asked to go to a quiet area until they are "ready to ...(appropriate behavior is stated here)." Children are in charge of deciding when they are "ready to."

If the behavior becomes a recurring problem, parents will be called for a conference, where we will work together to understand the problem and devise a behavior plan to correct it. If all avenues are explored and the child continues to exhibit behavior that is unsafe or disruptive to the other children, then, as a last resort, he/she may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Little Acorn does not use any form of corporal punishment, or shaming. Children are under "voice authority" only, used in a respectful and firm, but loving manner. The state licensing regulations also require that parents use no form of corporal punishment while on school property.

MEALS

Three snacks are prepared at school each day: A morning snack at 10:00am, and afternoon snacks at around 3:30 and 5:00pm. Lunch is at around 12:00 and is provided by the parent. Children are supplied with a daily source of vitamin C and a source of vitamin A three times a week. All snacks consist of fresh fruits or vegetables, and at least one other nutritious food group. The foods are low in saturated fats, salt, and sugars. Milk or water is offered with every snack and orange juice is offered one time per week only as recommended by DSHS. (Physicians want children to drink more water and say that juice is really sugar water with little nutritional value, and offering it lowers the child's desire to drink the water their body needs).

Each week, various foods are substituted, depending upon the season, to encourage the use of new and different foods, and for various cooking projects.

Breakfast is provided, in the Day School, for children arriving before 8:30am if they have not yet eaten. If for some reason, your child has not eaten breakfast and arrives after 8:30am, please advise our staff so that arrangements can be made for your child.

Your mandatory monthly food fee pays for Little Acorn to participate in a nutritious and delicious hot lunch program created from scratch each day with kids in mind, including vegetarian and allergen free options. The hot lunch program is serviced by *Farestart.org*, a community outreach program that trains the homeless to be great food service workers. *Farestart* services most of the schools in the area serving hot lunches.

PLEASE BE SURE TO NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE!

WHAT TO BRING DAILY

Please supply the following items on your child's first day, each clearly marked with your child's name:

-Bag or pillow case with two changes of clothes to store in cubby (including shirt, pants, underpants and socks)

(Extra clothing is required by licensing in each child's cubby even if fully potty trained).

-A Bag of Diapers or pull-ups that are re-closeable, and box of wipes, if needed

-Napping Items: If child will nap at school, please provide...

-small blanket

-pillow case for storing nap items

-special stuffed animal or lovey (optional)

-small camping or throw pillow (optional)

Napping items need to be taken home and laundered once per week.

-Rain boots and Rain slicker in cubby for wet days

-Shoes with rubber soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Flip-flops, slippery dress shoes and slippery cowboy boots are not allowed).

-Sweater or jacket for early fall and spring

-Winter coat, head covering, and gloves when cold weather is here

-Shorts, swimsuit, towel and water bottle during summer months

-A bottle of sunscreen with your child's name (In sunnier months, please bring your child with sunscreen applied in the morning and we will re-apply in the afternoon).

If your child is in the potty training stage, we may require more than two changes of clothes.

Please be sure to check your child's cubby daily for soiled clothes and art work. If there are soiled clothes, this means you will need to replace the extra clothes in your child's cubby as well, on the next time you return. Also, be sure to check your child's file and the dry erase or chalk board for teacher/parent reminders and daily communication. Sprouts parents will also want to check their child's daily info. posted behind the changing table.

Since preschool is a place for your child to have as much independence as possible, and also to do lots of messy projects, please try to send clothing your child can handle him or herself and clothing that it is ok to get messy in.

The Washington State Department of Health recommends that children riding tricycles, wagons, and scooters wear bicycle helmets. If you wish your child to wear a helmet while riding at school, you will need to provide one from home.

Please label everything with your child's name!

TOYS

Our school rule is that "home toys stay at home and school toys stay at school." An exception is made for comfort toys such as special stuffed animals, etc. for nap time and toys that are "models" of real things, such as trains, fire trucks, baby dolls, etc. for "news time". News time is what we call show and tell. Items suitable for News Time are the afore mentioned "models" as well as non-toys such as books, tapes, theme-related objects, something the child has made, objects from science and nature, photos, and oral stories about the child's life.

NAP / REST TIME

Nap / Rest time is scheduled from 1:00-2:30pm in the preschool. Children who are designated "nappers" by the parents are expected to sleep or rest, on their mats, for at least one hour. The lights are out and restful background music is provided. The "non-nappers" are doing quiet activities with the teacher, in the other half of the room.

As children waken, they are invited to leave the nap area one at a time to go to the potty, then on to a little outdoor play and then snack. Children are allowed to remain asleep for as long as they choose unless a specific wake-up time is requested by the parents.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Little Acorn will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving Day and Friday after
Veteran's Day	Christmas eve, Christmas, and the Day after
President's Day	Independence Day
Memorial Day	

Two days in October or November (Thursday & Friday) for annual teacher training conference (dates TBA each year by August 31st)

Two days at the end of August for annual cleaning and refurbishing.

The Director will post reminders on the parent reminder board before all closures.

EMERGENCY AND SNOW CLOSURES

Little Acorn follows the Mercer Island Public School Emergency late start and closure schedule. In the event of MISD late start, Little Acorn starts at the same time they do. If MISD is closed, Little Acorn is also closed.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon receipt of the paperwork, registration fee and deposit of your last month's tuition, we will place your child's name on the official enrollment list. At that time, we will give you additional registration materials. Below is a list of the forms that must be completed PRIOR to your child's attendance in our program.

- *Child Care Agreement
- *Registration Form
- *Family History
- *Permission to participate in School Activities and Receive Emergency Medical care
- *Health and Immunization History
- *Child Information Form
- *Food Allergies
- *Early Achievers: Parent/Guardian Consent for On-Site Evaluation
- *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)" (provided by your child's classroom Teacher)

FINANCIAL POLICY

- 1) Enrollment requires a one-time only non-refundable registration fee and last month tuition deposit. This fee stands as long as your child is continuously enrolled in the program.
- 2) There is an annual insurance fee for each child, due in February each year.
- 3) Tuition is due on or before the 1st of each month. A 10% late fee is charged for any tuition received after the 5th of each month. A bank fee will also be assessed for any checks returned for insufficient funds. The fee will be whatever the bank is currently charging for NSF checks.
- 4) There is a 5% discount for the least expensive child when paying the monthly rate for two children.
- 5) Because we are a small center and our costs do not vary with individual absences, we cannot make adjustments in fees. We do not allow make-up days, or give vacation credits. Additions or changes to your contracted monthly schedule will be charged at the drop-in rate.
- 6) All monthly fees are due in advance. Drop-in care is available for pre-registered students only and drop-in fees are due at the end of each day in which drop-in care occurs. Please date your check or envelope with the DATE of the DROP-IN payment.
- 7) LATE PICK-UP Policy: Children must be picked up by 6:00pm. A Steep late charge will be assessed which must be paid upon picking up your child. Consistent lateness after that hour will be cause for dismissal from the program. Please see LITTLE ACORN INC. PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM 1: LATE PICK-UP FEE SCHEDULE for specific late fee amount.
- 8) A sixty day notice, in writing, is required when leaving Little Acorn, or when reducing the number of days you are enrolled. If no notice is given, you will be held responsible for the following two months tuition.

9) Fees will increase annually. Please note there is an additional 10% charge for children in the Day School under age 3. Please refer to rate sheet for current tuition amounts and drop-in rates.

DROP-INS AND ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

If your child will not be coming to Little Acorn on a day that he/she is regularly scheduled to do so, please call us no later than 9:00am, so that the staff will know how many children to plan for that day.

Drop-in care is scheduled on a space-available basis. If you wish to schedule drop-in care we can pencil you in at any time, but if there is no space available, you will need to call before 9:00am on the day of the drop-in so we can check for last minute cancellations.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are celebrated at Little Acorn Day School during morning circle or just prior to lunch. If you bring treats, they must be from an approved food source (this means, unfortunately, they must be store-bought). Treats will be served following lunch.

Please let us know your preferred celebration date and we will provide you with the Birthday Story and Star of the Day hand-outs to be completed by you, before that date. On the celebration date, your child will receive a crown and a gift bag from the teachers. The child will walk around the sun and the teacher will read the story of each year of their life, and the Star of the Day info. from the hand-out. The birthday child and parent/s are welcomed to share special collections, hobbies, photos, or any other special things and/or talents during this celebration. Some families enjoy donating to the school; a toy, a game, or a book with your child's name inscribed in it.

POTTY TRAINING POLICY

Diapers and wipes are supplied by the parent. Learning to use the potty is an important part of a preschooler's development. Children may use the potty any time during the day and are always changed as needed. We also have schedule "potty times" throughout the day. During potty times, children in training are given reminders if that is all that is needed, other children who are not independent yet are asked to come to the restroom or potty together and give it a try. Children in training are also read potty training books and are encouraged with specific praise that highlights the intrinsic rewards of being "dry" being "big" and becoming "independent."

During the potty-training period, we ask that you send children in pull-ups or training pants, with clothing that is easy for him/her and the teacher to manage.

Pull-ups must be the type that open on the side and are re-closable for easy access. We suggest elastic waist sweat pants of leggings, etc. Tights, overalls, onesies, and belts are difficult for children to handle when attempting potty training success.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Each day when you arrive, your child will be given a brief health check, and our staff will talk with you about any symptoms of illness noticed. You will also be informed, via "ouch report" in your file, of any minor accidents involving your child. If there is a major problem, such as a major injury or your child becomes ill at school, you will be called immediately.

ILLNESSES

We do not have the staff or facilities to care for children who are ill, including children with contagious colds. Therefore, we must ask that you keep your child at home if he or she shows any of the following signs of possible infection or contagious disease.

- Signs of a new cold; fever, cough, runny nose, watery eyes, sore throat, etc.
- Diarrhea
- Inflammation of the eyes
- Abscess
- Draining sore or burns
- Rash (until cause is diagnosed and determined non-contagious)
- Headache or head pain
- Excessive irritability
- Child verbally indicating he/she doesn't feel well

Since we are unable to isolate a sick child for a long period of time, it is important that you be prepared to have your child picked up immediately and make arrangements for alternate care. Our most frequent problem is the common cold and flu. In the case of a cold, we are requiring that children spend at least one day at home if your child meets at least two of the following criteria:

- The first-third day of the cold
- Active, runny nose and/or eyes
- Cough
- Lack of personal hygiene skills, i.e., ability to wipe nose and cover mouth and wash hands afterwards
- Behavior; ie., irritability, fatigue

*Research has shown that hand washing upon arrival to school greatly cuts down the spread of infection. **It is required by licensing that your child and school staff, wash their hands each day upon entering school, before and after toileting, and before and after eating.***

IMMUNIZATIONS

Up-to-date immunization records are required by the Health Department. If you do not have your records available when you register, your child will not be able to attend until this requirement has been satisfied.

MEDICATION

We will give your child medication ONLY if it is a prescription from your child's doctor, or otherwise authorized by you, in writing, with a full signature, and times, reasons for meds, amounts of administration. The Health Department also requires we insure the following:

- All medications must be in the original container labeled with:
- Child's full name, name of medication, dosage, frequency, and duration
- Prescription medication must have the original pharmacist label
- Non-prescription medication must have the manufacturer's original label. The dose and frequency must be stated on the label and the medication must be for the age and weight appropriate for the child.
- All medications must be given to staff and stored in our locked containers

PLEASE DO NOT PUT ANY MEDICATIONS, VITAMINS, COUGH DROPS, ETC. IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH BOX, COAT POCKET, OR CUBBY!!! TEACHER'S MUST HANDLE ALL OF THESE!!

EMERGENCIES

The following emergency procedures will be used at Little Acorn:

In case of sudden illness or injury, the teacher will administer first aid. We will then notify you at once. If we are unable to contact the parent, we will call one or both of the two individuals you have listed to be contacted in case of emergency. If your child requires professional emergency medical care, we will call 911 and, if required, your child will be transported to Overlake Hospital by ambulance.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In case of an emergency such as an earthquake, snow or windstorm, Little Acorn is prepared to care for your child for up to 48 hours. We have a supply of water, granola bars and canned fruit on the premises as well as tons of other fresh and boxed snack food. In addition, each child is required to supply an earthquake kit in a gallon-sized zip lock bag containing the following:

-Letter of comfort, Family photo, Solar blanket (can be purchased at Fred Meyer or Target and other camping stores or departments), Pair of socks, Large Garbage bag, wipe ups, food bar, bottle of water.

We have regularly scheduled earthquake and fire drills so that our staff and your child will be aware of the proper emergency procedures.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

All directors and staff are required by Washington State Law and Licensing to report immediately to Child Protective Services, any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

FIELD TRIPS

Walking field trips and/or in-house special visitors are scheduled approximately once per month, during the school year. Written notification will be given to all parents via parent info board. All families are welcome to attend all special events, however, a parent or guardian must attend with their child if it is not his/her regularly scheduled day to attend Little Acorn.

PARENT / TEACHER COMMUNICATION AND CONFERENCES

At Little Acorn, we have an open-door visitation policy so you are welcome to visit and stay with your child any time of day except during nap time. We also encourage you to check in with the teacher daily, at drop-off and pick-up times. In addition, we schedule the following communications during each school year:

- A Fall Parent-Orientation meeting where we show slides of all the children and discuss your goals for your child
- A first-quarter ASQ meeting where we share with you the results of the questionnaire you completed upon entry, your child's progress so far, and our goals for your child's next steps.
- A formal Parent-Teacher conference in January or February each year.
- A late spring written progress report

CHILD TRANSITIONS

There are a couple of times at Little Acorn where your child will experience transitions from one program to next. We have the following transition routines in place to help your child with these important changes:

- When your child begins school at Little Acorn Sprouts, we recommend a "Slow Start transition". This is described in detail in the *Welcome Letter* you will receive upon registration. It is a drop-off/ pick-up schedule that begins with pick-up prior to nap time and increases hours past nap time.
- When your child registers for the Day School, we recommend you bring him/her once or twice for an hour or so, prior to starting, to meet the teachers and start to feel comfortable in the classroom.
- When your child transitions from the Sprouts to the Day School, we recommend the child visit the Day School for an hour or so each day during the week prior to transitioning. The Teachers will arrange this for you when you let us know you are ready to move up.
- When your child moves on to Kindergarten, we send out a parent questionnaire to all children graduating so you know who will be attending your child's school, we have a graduation ceremony, provide you with the records and assessment data to give to your child's new school, and finally, we send your child off with a graduation certificate and the memory book of photos they've narrated and accumulated over their entire stay at Little Acorn.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Information to parents and notices about events are posted on the parent bulletin board or dry erase board. Written information is placed in the parent files next to the entry way. **PLEASE CHECK THESE SOURCES EACH DAY AS YOU DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP YOUR CHILD!** Remembering to read news bulletins, curriculum calendars, daily chalk board reminders, and attending the scheduled family events, are important ways to stay informed and connected to your child's school.

In addition, we strongly encourage parent participation. we welcome and value your sharing of:

- Specific skills and/or knowledge
- Volunteer time in and out of the classroom
- Donations of materials
- Help with field trips, special functions, fund-raisers
- Help with play yard maintenance and equipment
- Any suggestions you have to share

Our door is always open for parents to come and play and/or observe. However, please try not to conference with teachers during the active school day. If you have special concerns or just wish to chat, please call us at school to arrange a time, or you may call Tiana for the Day School and Denise for the Sprouts.

**LITTLE ACORN
SPROUTS TODDLER PROGRAM
PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM**

Little Acorn Sprouts is located at:
Mercer View Community Center
8236 SE 24th St.
North Annex, Room 4
Mercer Island, WA 98040
(206) 232-0940

Little Acorn Sprouts is a state licensed childcare with an excellent play-based program including a highly individualized curriculum.

Our mission is to provide excellence in education and loving care, while building confidence, competence, and creativity in an environment that is safe, loving, peaceful, stimulating, and beautiful. The Sprouts Toddler classroom is located on the campus of the beautiful new Community Center at Mercer View, tucked in the lower campus corner, between the main building and Luther Burbank Park. There is no through traffic, which provides for ultimate safety and security.

The Sprouts Program is open 7:00am to 6:00pm, year around, and serves children 1 to 2-1/2 years of age. Program options are for full time care for: 5 days (M-F), 3 days (MWF), or 2 days (T/Th, M/W or W/F depending on availability). Maximum enrollment is 14 children with a teacher:child ratio of 1:4. Priority enrollment is given to Mercer Island residents, followed by Mercer Island Business owners and employees.

CURRICULUM

Little Acorn uses *“The Creative Curriculum” by Teaching Strategies Gold*. We also follow a rich tradition of early childhood models and practices and believe in incorporating the very best aspects of those influences, which include but are not limited to: Howard Gardners’ Theory of Multiple Intelligences, The Hundred Languages of Children (world renowned Reggio Emilia early childhood model), Jean Piaget, Eric Erickson, and Lev Vygotsky’s developmental psychology theories, and some ideas of Maria Montessori.

The most important aspect of the Little Acorn Sprouts Curriculum is that it puts the **child-in-relationship** at the center of its program planning. This relationship includes:

The Child’s relationship with the caregiver: The teacher is always warm, responsive, loving, respectful, encouraging and observant. Teacher’s faces light up when greeting and interacting with the children in their care because they recognize that **the children are the most important part of our school!** At the heart of the teacher/child relationship is the teacher’s responsiveness to the needs and initiations of the individual children in his/her care; the teacher’s goal is to develop and maintain a continued warm and nurturing rapport that communicates a shared sense of joy in each experience, effort, and accomplishment, and which says to the child, “You are loved, and you are special. I’m here for *you*.”

Since toddlers are sensory-motor beings, as the teacher interacts with the child, he/she provides for and facilitates daily experiences designed to encourage the whole child's growth and development. The teacher includes activities that involve all of the child's senses. Toddlers are read to, sung to, danced with, cuddled, and surrounded in language. They are provided with opportunities to see, hear, taste, touch, smell, move, and explore the world around them at their own natural pace. In addition to planned activities and experiences designed to enhance learning and deepen relationships, regular times of routine care such as feeding and diapering are used as powerful opportunities for further interaction and learning.

The Child's relationship with the environment: The classroom environment is the child's home away from home and therefore has a homelike atmosphere. It is warm, inviting, and culturally inclusive; with soft spaces to cuddle, and stimulating, challenging safe spaces for children to crawl, climb, explore, and express themselves in a wide variety of ways. As they do this, connections are being continuously formed in their brains that will empower them to become curious, life-long learners.

The classroom is arranged in playful learning centers and the curriculum is carefully planned by the primary care-giver after individually observing and interacting with each child at play. Then, using documentation and assessment to plan activities and experiences that allow for continued growth and practice in all key aspects of that child's current development. Next, these activities are scaffolded to encourage and facilitate the child's natural movement into the next level of development.

The Child's relationship with peers: Kind and inclusive relationships with peers are purposefully encouraged and nurtured by the teachers at Little Acorn to provide the child with maximum opportunities for social growth. Teachers are exemplary models in relationship as well as direct teachers and facilitators of positive daily interactions through play, puppetry, and incidental teaching.

The Parent's relationship with the Teacher: Little Acorn considers the parent/teacher partnership to be an integral part of its programming. This partnership is valued and nurtured by daily oral and written communication. Toddler's daily care schedules are planned and frequently updated by the parent/teacher team, to be most responsive to each child's individual needs. Little Acorn considers the fact that this may be the parent's first introduction to their child's formal education process and therefore encourages parent participation and involvement that research has shown will later continue when their children enter public school.

The Teacher's relationship with his/her workplace and co-workers: Little Acorn feels that happy and peaceful employees make happy and peaceful caregivers who will want to continue teaching at Little Acorn for many years. Therefore, we offer employee benefits such as paid personal leave and vacation, medical benefits, continuing training in CPR, First Aid, and Early Childhood Education, competitive salaries, annual raises and generous bonuses. Little Acorn also provides a richly equipped, peaceful, responsive, and pleasant work environment; where teamwork, positive communication, and appreciation of initiative and cooperation are key components.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers are trained to touch base with parents both at drop-off and pick-up times if at all possible. Parents also have access to a daily written report of their child's day which includes information about the child's day, what they ate, when they were changed or taken to the potty, and how long they napped. In addition to these general forms of communication, please always feel free to call the Director with any questions or concerns you may have.

WHAT TO BRING

MEALS

Your mandatory monthly food fee pays for Little Acorn to participate in a nutritious and delicious hot lunch program created from scratch each day with kids in mind, including vegetarian and allergen free options. The hot lunch program is serviced by *Farestart.org*, a community outreach program that trains the homeless to be great food service workers. *Farestart* services most of the schools in the area serving hot lunches.

DIAPERS AND CLOTHING

Parents provide and refresh, as needed, all diapers, diaper wipes, pull-ups and changes of clothing. Each child should keep at least two changes of clothing in their cubby at all times. **Pull-ups must be the kind that open and re-close and DO NOT require removing child's shoes and pants to change them.

NAP ITEMS

Little Acorn provides napping cots only. Parents provide a crib sheet , one nap-time stuffed animal or other soft comfort item and a small blanket , in a pillow case with all items, including pillow case, marked with your child's name. Please take home your child's bedding at least one time per week for laundering and return them on your next attendance day.

TOY POLICY

Little Acorn provides a wide range of toys and play activities so we kindly request all of your child's personal toys remain at home, with the exception of one nap-time cuddle toy.

POTTY TRAINING POLICY

Our goal is to be, as always, responsive to your child's needs and developmental readiness. The following are signs that your child is emotionally and physically ready to begin the potty training process: Longer periods of dryness in between wet diapers, especially waking dry from naps. The child communicating with the parent and teacher that they are wet or soiled. The child is willing to cooperate with adult guidance and suggestion. At the point where your child is showing signs of readiness, teachers will work with parents to being the process.

A typical potty training process would look something like this:

- Just before the child is ready, teachers begin to talk up the idea of going to the potty while they are changing the child
- Teacher asks child if he/she would like to sit on the potty.
- When the child begins to do this, they will switch to pull-ups or training pants.
- At the pull-up and underwear stage, more frequent trips are made to the potty to engage the muscle memory in the process
- Soon, we will pick a day to say goodbye to diapers and move to underwear. (pull-ups may still be used at nap time until the child shows consistency with waking dry and unsoiled).

SPROUTS SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

As always, schedule and curriculum at the Sprouts Program remain flexible to allow for responsiveness to individual needs.

7:00-9:00am	Arrival, Wash Hands, Breakfast, Individual Attention
9:00-9:30am	Outside Time
9:30-9:45am	Bathroom, Hand washing, Snack Time
9:45-10:15am	Discovery Centers Play
10:15-10:25am	Clean-up, Prepare for Outside
10:30-11:00am	Outside Time
11:00-11:15am	Music and Movement Circle
11:15-11:45am	Bathroom, Hand washing, Lunch
11:45-12:00am	Quiet Activities, Story, Nap Time
12:00-2:45pm	Nap Time, Quiet Activities
2:45-3:00pm	Wake up, Bathroom, Handwashing, Snack
3:00-3:30pm	Outside Time
3:30-3:40pm	Circle Time / Story
4:40-4:50pm	Clean-up
4:50-5:30pm	Bathroom / Hand washing / Last Snack
5:30-6:00pm	Individual Attention / Stories / Free Play

BITING POLICY

As children begin to cut their teeth and learn how to communicate, somewhere between the ages of 1 and 2 years, they sometimes go through a biting stage. At Little Acorn, the safety of the children is our number one concern, so we supervise the children as closely as possible.

However, if biting does occur, we will first shadow the biting child in order to jump in and help the child find alternative methods of teething and/or communicating, before the biting actually occurs. Children of this age are not usually biting out of frustration or aggression, but rather bite to satisfy an urge and they don't understand the consequences of what they are doing. Our goal, as always, is to empower the child to be successful while keeping everyone in a safe and nurturing environment. We do this by teaching and modeling new skills for the child, positively reinforcing positive behaviors and by re-directing negative behaviors.

We sincerely hope your child is never the biter or the bitee, but if this does occur, we will work closely with both children and parents involved, to create a plan that will break the biting cycle. If biting does occur, both parent of the biter and bitee will be notified of the incident. If biting

occurs more than twice, the parent may need to pick up their child for the day, in order to try and interrupt the cycle and keep everyone safe.

**LITTLE ACORN INC. PARENT HANDBOOK
ADDENDUM 1
LATE PICK-UP FEE SCHEDULE**

This addendum to the Parent Handbook is meant to override any late fee amounts stated in the Parent Handbook. The current fee for pick-up after closing time at 6:00 pm, is as follows:

\$40.00 for the first 15 minutes or fraction thereof, and \$20.00 for each additional 5 minutes or fraction thereof.

All late pick-up fees are due at the time of pick-up and payable to the teacher in charge of your child, who is now considered your babysitter because Little Acorn is closed.

Though we understand that real emergencies sometimes occur, this policy is meant to strongly discourage pick-up after closing time in an effort to respect the personal time and evening plans of our dedicated and hard-working teachers.

Peace and Thanks,

Little Acorn Inc.