

Little Seeds
Early Childhood
Center, Inc.
Parent Policy Handbook

"Come Grow With Us"

2800 4th Avenue North
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 245-1311
www.littleseedsbillings.org
Revised September 2011

Office Information

The Little Seeds phone number is 245-1311. Messages can be left on the answering machine before 6:45 a.m., and after 6:00 p.m.

The 2/3 or 3/4 room staff will answer incoming calls before and after scheduled office hours.

The Little Seeds office hours are from 8:00 - 5:00, Monday through Friday, or any time by appointment.

Each family will have a mailbox outside of the office. Please check your mail at least once per week. All bills and parent notes will be placed in these mailboxes.

The Broadway entrance is equipped with a punch code entry. The code will be changed at times for security reasons. You will be notified in advance and will be given a new code card in your mailbox.

Parent Acknowledgment

Please Read Parent Policy Handbook, Sign This Page And Return It To Little Seeds Office.

I/We have read, acknowledge and agree to Little Seeds Early Childhood Center, Inc. Parent Policy Handbook. Please sign and return to office.

Mother Signature _____

Father Signature _____

Guardian Signature _____

Little Seeds reserves the right to change and /or modify any of these policies giving you, the parent(s) thirty (30) days advance notice.

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Statement of Purpose

We offer learning experiences for children of this community, under the leadership of qualified teachers. We will provide for each child:

- * encouragement in fostering positive feelings of self-worth as each child discovers the value of their unique individuality.
- * a stimulating environment and varied activities to aid the child in desirable growth and development of his/her language, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities.
- * opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility to self and to others.
- * guidance to develop constructive, non violent methods for resolving conflicts
- * opportunities to learn through play experience
- * opportunities for creating and wondering.

Little Seeds is a State Licensed, Not-for-Profit Center

*Little Seeds does not provide transportation to or from the Center. Children must be brought into the building. Staff members are not allowed to receive children outside of the building.

Little Seeds Curriculum

We encourage the development of each child's unique talents and capabilities in a safe, happy, nurturing environment. In all classrooms, a center-based, thematic approach is used to address the physical, social/emotional,

academic, sensory, and personal needs of the children we serve. Centers that are typically found in early childhood classrooms include library, writing, dramatic play, discovery, and art. Throughout the center we strive to create an experiential approach to learning that allows each child to construct his or her own understanding of the world.

In our preschool classrooms, teachers create weekly lesson plans that target development in the following areas: Social/Emotional, Physical, Language, Science/Math, and Personal Skills. The activities and centers within the $\frac{3}{4}$ classroom are designed to prepare students for active participation in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom, while Pre-Kindergarten events boost children's school-readiness skills. Listed below are sample objectives from each of the curricular areas:

Social/Emotional Development

- Express self verbally
- Engages in conversations with peers and adults
- Works independently
- Develops solutions for problems
- Takes turns and shares
- Maintains self-control

Physical Development

- Runs, marches, jumps, hops
- Use scissors, pencils, and glue
- Completes simple puzzles

- Throws and catches a ball
- Writes letters and numbers

Language Development

- Recognizes and generates rhyme
- Understands concepts of print
- Knows letter names
- Recognizes and generates speech sounds
- Understands spatial relationships
- Experiences a wide variety of music and art

Science/Math Development

- Explores unknown concepts
- Identifies numbers in print
- Counts by rote
- Knows colors and shapes

Personal Skills Development

- Takes responsibility for belongings
- Assists with classroom chores
- Uses table manners
- Knows personal information
- Buttons, zips, ties, snaps

Spiritual

- To learn loving, respectful, and caring ways to relate to each other.

- To make safe choices and be allowed to explore own creativity.
- To learn forgiveness so children can forgive themselves and others, to learn confidence so they can try again.

Please feel free to visit with the Little Seeds staff if you have further questions regarding your child's educational needs.

It is necessary to be adequately staffed for all the children who are scheduled, whether they are present or not. If your child is ill, or will not be attending for any reason, please notify us by 8:00 a.m.

Overtime Charges

An overtime charge of \$10.00 per child will be made for any time your child is at Little Seeds past 6:00 p.m. This will go up by \$10.00 per child for every 15 minutes more that your child is not picked up. It is suggested that you pick up your child by 5:55PM.

Payment

Please make checks payable to Little Seeds. All checks are to be given to the Director or mailed to the center. After hours please slide checks under the office door. Please do not send checks with your children or give them to the teachers.

If a check is returned by your bank there will be a \$10 handling fee assessed your bill. The second check that is returned by your bank will be assessed a \$25 charge. More than two returned checks will result in a review by the Little Seeds Executive Board.

A two-week notice will need to be given to the center when the child will no longer be attending. If the center does not receive a two-week notice, the family will not have any of their fee payment refunded. If you have not paid you will be billed for the two weeks.

Prepayments for contracted services are due on the 1st day of the month. Payments not received by the 10th of the month will be assessed a \$10 late charge. If payment is not received by the 15th of the month the parents will be asked to keep the child home until the bill is paid in full. If payment is not received 30 days after the original payment due date (the 10th of the month), your child will be removed from the center and your bill will go to collection.

Hours and Holidays

Little Seeds is open year round, Monday - Friday from 6:45 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Little Seeds will be CLOSED on the following days: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. If the following days land on a Saturday or a Sunday, we will be closed the Friday before or Monday after. You will receive information if the center will close at any other time.

Behavior Guidance

We feel that it is important to provide a positive, safe environment for your child. Below are guidelines for behavior guidance that we use at Little Seeds.

1. Ensure that each child is provided with a positive role model of acceptable behavior.
2. Tailor discipline to the developmental level of the children.
3. Redirect children and groups away from problems and toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
4. Encourage children to be responsible for their behavior through choices and problem solving.
5. Protect the safety of children and staff persons.
6. Provide immediate and direct appropriate related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.

**Little Seeds staff does not in any way endorse or use any form of negative discipline. Corporal punishment will not be used at Little Seeds.

At Little Seeds we realize that children have many and diverse needs, and that not all settings work with all children. Therefore we reserve the right to remove a child from the center at any time in which we feel that he/she, the staff, or other children's safety is being compromised.

If it does become necessary to discuss your child's behavior, you will be asked to attend an informal meeting with the Director and possibly the child's teacher. Please realize that this is a team effort to provide your child with the best possible placement. We will work with you as a team, to problem solve for the child's best interests.

Biting

Although biting isn't abnormal in that one out of every ten toddlers and two-year-olds does it, it is a very disturbing and potentially harmful behavior that the staff and parents discourages from the start. Staff will use positive discipline offering the child an alternative to biting (biter toy, wet washcloth, alternative to feelings). If biting becomes aggressive we will place an extra staff in the room to "shadow " the child. If the child bites another child or teacher three or more times in a day they will be asked to leave for the rest of the day. We will also set up a conference with the teacher, parents and director to assess the situation and problem solve. Little Seeds approaches each child on an individual basis. In some instances a child may be removed from the center.

Parking

Parents and children will enter Little Seeds through the main doors on 28th Street (Broadway), and use the interior steps to their classrooms. Parents may park in the spaces available at this location while taking children to and picking children up from classrooms. Please do not drop children off in the kitchen for breakfast. It is important that they check in with the teacher first.

Registration

There is a nonrefundable, \$50 per child registration fee.

Fees

There is a nonrefundable, \$50 per child annual renewal fee assigned to every child's bill every September. This covers classroom expenses and annual office paper work.

Little Seeds offers a monthly flat fee for all classrooms.

Please remember that breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack, which are posted on our monthly menus, as well as standard baby foods and Kirkland brand of formula are included in the flat fee at no additional charge. This represents a significant savings on your overall bill.

Vacation and Sick Day Policy

Parents will have three weeks of vacation or sick leave and eight holidays already subtracted from their flat fee total. In the event of a vacation or a sick day the parent will not see an adjustment in the total bill for the month. Each month will have the same flat fee based on the arrangements between the parent and the center.

Little Seeds Fees

The following is based on 238 working days in a year, (3 weeks vacation/sick & 8 holidays removed). Little Seeds is a full- time center only.

New Fees (07/01/2011)

Infants, Pre-Toddlers & Toddlers

Full Time Monthly Fee \$660.00

2/3 Room & 3/4 Room

Full Time Monthly Fee \$550.00

Pre-K Room

Full Time Monthly Fee \$525.00

Sibling Discount

2 or More Children \$50 discount per month

Pre-K Only 8:30– 11:30	
2 Days a Week	\$125.00
3 Days a Week	\$155.00
5 Days a Week	\$275.00

Curriculum hours are from 9:00 - 11:30 M-F.
This program is only offered in our Pre-K Class.

Families taking an extended leave of absence may choose to pay the \$50 registration fee before they leave. This will help to reserve a spot when they return, when the center has a spot available.

In August of each year Little Seeds will send out enrollment contracts. This will be a contract from you stating the days and times that the child will regularly be attending Little Seeds for the next school year. You will also be given a new emergency contact form to complete.

Families who use the center only in the summer months will have no sick or vacation time.

Nutrition

Nutrition is an important part of good health. Children need well-balanced meals in order to meet their daily energy needs, and to help them build strong bodies and minds.

Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack will be provided to all children. These meals will be of no additional charge because of our participation in the USDA Food Program,

administered by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences. This program provides Little Seeds partial reimbursement for meals that meet certain nutritional requirements.

Parents of enrolled children will be asked to fill out Family Income Verification Forms. These are kept confidential, and are on file at the center. The information on these forms will determine the rates at which the center is reimbursed.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, and Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Health and Safety

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to the staff at Little Seeds. With enrollment, you must file the State of Montana - Certificate of Immunization with us. In addition, parents of children under the age of 24 months will be required to maintain a Physical Exam Verification form, updated regularly by their physician. These will be kept on file at the center.

If any symptoms of illness, such as the flu or a communicable disease appear during the day, your child will be isolated immediately from the other children. The office

will contact you at that time and will ask that you pick your child up.

According to the Montana Department of Public Health you must keep your child home if he/she has any of the following:

- * has a fever, or has had one in the previous 24 hours
- * has a heavy nasal discharge
- * has a constant cough
- * is fussy, cranky, or generally out of sorts
- * has diarrhea or has had it in the previous 24 hours
- * has symptoms of a possible communicable disease - usually sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, and abdominal pain, plus a fever

Please notify the center immediately if your child does have a communicable disease. Little Seeds will assume the responsibility of notifying families of children who might have been exposed at the center. A note or a call from the doctor's office stating permission for the child to return to the center is necessary in these cases.

Little Seeds staff will administer medication prescribed or over the counter. A Permission to Administer Medication form must be completed when a parent brings in any medicine. All medicine must be in the original container. This includes diaper creams, and suntan lotions. Each medication form must have the following information in its entirety:

- child's full name
- date/s medication is to be administered
- time/s medication is to be administered
- amount to be administered
- signed and dated by parent/guardian

Our staff is concerned with the safety of your child. We teach how to use toys and equipment safely, how to cross streets, safety in hallways and how to respond if approached by a stranger. Our rules are based on good safety practices. Your support of this expected behavior will reinforce your child's learning and respect for safety rules.

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aide.

If your child becomes injured at Little Seeds their injuries will be assessed by staff and you may be called to let you know of their injuries or if medical assistance is necessary. First Aide will be provided to any child consistent with recommendations from The American Red Cross. These policies must including but are not limited to:

- (a) procedures for handling medical emergencies, including calling the Emergency Montana Poison Control Center at 1(800)222-1222 when a child is suspected of having ingested any poisonous or toxic substance. Emergency Medical Services may also be called at that time depending on the severity of injuries sustained.

In case of a medical emergency the Little Seeds staff will notify the office and notify the emergency contact listed on the child's emergency form. 911 will be called if necessary.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the custodial parent unless we are notified verbally or in writing each time.

Clothing and Possessions

An extra set of clothing must be kept in each child's cubby. Please make sure these are seasonal. If your child is not toilet trained please send diapers, wipes, and rash cream.

Little Seeds is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged property. Little Seeds does not launder personal belongings. These are to be taken home each Friday to be laundered at home and returned at the start of the next week.

Please mark the inside of any removable clothing items (jackets, sweaters, boots) with your child's name. Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. We will go outside whenever possible, so please dress children accordingly.

Except for toys that are needed in the early days of attendance to ease transition worries, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home. If an item is brought to school, we cannot be responsible for it. It must be shared and must have the child's name on it. A book that may be interesting to all children may be brought and shared with the class, but we ask that it be left for several days.

Guns, ropes, knives, war toys, and other toys that encourage rough and violent play are not permitted at the center.

Comfort toys: bears, blankets and so forth, may be bought as needed, please store these items in the child's cubbie.

Pets, interesting nature items, and many other things can be welcome additions to our classroom. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing anything.

Parent Visitation

You are always welcome to visit the classrooms. Since the teacher's first responsibility is to the children, do not expect a conference while classes are in session, but the Director is available to discuss any problems, concerns, or joys you may have. Conference schedules can be arranged between teachers and parents at mutually convenient times during the year.

Changes at home can affect a child's behavior at Little Seeds. Please share with us information which will make us more sensitive to your child's needs.

Little Seeds Two Years and Older

Preparation for Beginning Days

To help your child have a happy first day, we would like to suggest the following:

*Talk about Little Seeds in a positive way. Name specific activities to which your child can look forward and tell your child their new teachers names.

*Plan your schedule so that your child can be rested, unhurried and relaxed the first morning.

*Expect your child to go to Little Seeds happily and to have a good time. Your own insecurity will be sensed quickly.

Learning Centers

Our center is equipped with learning centers which will include differing activities as the weekly themes are presented.

Children have free choice and are encouraged to participate in a variety of centers.

Learning centers may include the following:

block and truck center
creative arts
science and nature
woodworking
manipulative toys
computer

home living center
book corner
music
sand and water play
seasonal activity
occupational manipulatives

Schedule

Children need a routine to follow and we strive to balance active and quiet times. The actual time allotted to an activity may vary, but the order in which things are done is important because it gives children feeling of security and independence.

Classroom activities revolve around weekly and monthly themes. Parents receive a monthly calendar outlining these plans.

The schedule for indoor and outdoor activities will include the following, (times vary with each age group - specific schedules will be available from each teacher):

*breakfast (8-9 a.m.),

*creative free play - free choice, time of social interaction, crafts, learning centers (9-10 a.m., 3-3:30 p.m.)

*conversation time - sharing ideas, experiences, seasonal interests, experiment (½ hour a.m.)

*lunch (11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

*snack time - milk or 100% juice and a wide variety of nutritious foods, good conversation and manners (2:45-3:30)

*active period - any of the following: games, rhythms, songs, creative expression, dramatic interpretation; field trips; gym; indoors or outdoor playground (1 hour a.m., 4-5 p.m.)

*quiet time - any of the following: presentation by outside resource person, stories, finger plays, group discussion, show and tell, and songs.

Naps and Quiet Time

All children will rest on mats during the designated time (12:30 - 2:30p.m.). Older children who "no longer need a nap" will rest on a mat for 40 minutes and then will have planned quiet activities separate from the resting children. Mats will be available for sale in the office, other wise you will need to provide a cover and blanket for your child that will be sent home weekly to be washed and returned.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays during the snack period. You may supply a treat on your child's birthday. In keeping with our nutritional guidelines, we suggest you choose a nutritious snack for birthday treats. Arrangements for treats should be discussed in advance with your child's teacher. Special recognition will be given to the birthday child. Please do not send favors or gifts.

Little Seeds - Under Age Two

Grouping

According to state licensing requirements for centers, all children under the age of two (2) years must be in a separate area from older children.

Infants remain in the infant room for the day, except for occasional outside trips in a stroller, and while transitioning to the pre-toddler room. Toddlers have additional opportunities for activities outside their room. After children have their second birthday, they will join the next age group.

Schedules

Infants will be on their own individual schedules as discussed between parent(s) and care givers. A Daily Schedule for Infants form, completed by parents, will be the posted guideline. Each day, parents will receive a Daily Report for Infants form which the care givers have completed.

All infants will have opportunities each day for freedom of movement. An infant who is awake will have individual personal contact and attention (held, rocked, talked to and played with) on a regular basis. Playpens, walkers, and swings will be used on a limited basis.

Clothing and Possessions

If your child is not toilet-trained, please send diapers, wipes, rash cream, and a complete change of clothes.

Your child's name should be put on blankets, jackets, sweaters, and other items brought to the center.

Little Seeds is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged property.

Nutrition

Parents need to supply bottles according to the child's needs.

We provide baby food and **Kirkland** formula for infants and breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack for toddlers.

Thank you for choosing Little Seeds. We look forward to the opportunity to participate in your child's growth and development.

Little Seeds Board of Directors

The Little Seeds Board develops and oversees the policies and programs for young children at this center. Each person has a particular area of expertise but the group works together in formulating plans that benefit the children and staff at Little Seeds.

Members of the Little Seeds Board are as follows:

President- Joe Martin

Vice President- Kari Parker

Members- Cheri Johannes
Wendy Dailey
Bria Farren
Karla Hartford
Allison Johnston
Kelly Silvernagel
Gerele Pelton
Marty Carlson
Jeri Anton

Director- Pam Scharen

Asst. Director- Tiffany Silva