



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thank you for choosing Little Scouts Preschool as the early childhood program for your family. We are pleased to be working with you and thank you for the opportunity to watch your child grow and learn.

Little Scouts provides an environment where children can grow and learn at their own pace. Through our play-based curriculum, we can individualize our teaching to best meet the needs of each child and each family. We support children's independence and aim to foster a life-long love of learning. We are committed to striving for excellence in the field of early childhood.

Ongoing, two-way communication between home and school is critical to making this a positive experience for you and your child. Each classroom has customized communication systems that are geared to the individual ages of that room. We rely upon parent feedback on how a child is progressing at home and ask that parents share any concerns or suggestions that they have with the staff. In addition, parent-teacher conferences will be conducted once a year in each classroom.

Again, thank you for choosing us as the program for your family. We understand that you are entrusting us with your child, and we take that trust very seriously. If there is anything that I can ever do for you, please do not hesitate to call.

We are so happy to have you as part of our Little Scouts Community!

Heather Monzingo

Heather Monzingo
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO LITTLE SCOUTS

HISTORY

Lake Forest High School's Little Scouts began as the result of a survey given to the Lake Forest High School faculty in 1996 requesting their suggestions on ways to improve LFHS. Several faculty members mentioned the need for quality childcare for their children. The Board of Education decided it was a needed service. They had rooms available at West Campus and the paperwork could be monitored through the Community Education Department. Little Scouts was opened with the agreement that it would need to be self-supporting through the tuition that was collected from the parents using the facility. Once opened on October 7, 1996, Little Scouts received many requests from people who lived and worked in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff to make it available to the general public. In 1996 Little Scouts opened with one classroom of 3 and 4-year-olds. With younger siblings of current students came requests to expand to a wider range of ages. In the fall of 1999 Little Scouts expanded to include two-year-old children. In the summer of 2001 Lake Forest High School's West Campus closed. Little Scouts found a new home at Grace United Methodist Church in Lake Bluff. While in its new location Little Scouts opened its doors to infants and toddlers in the fall of 2005. August 2008 brought Little Scouts full circle and we moved back to Lake Forest High School's West campus where the program has continued to grow and thrive. Throughout the relocation and expansion of programs, Little Scouts has remained a safe, nurturing, and motivating place for children to attend.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Little Scouts program is to serve the Lake Forest High School faculty and the surrounding community. Our goal is to provide a safe and happy environment where children can grow and learn. We encourage creativity, critical thinking skills, and cooperation to accomplish common goals. The Little Scouts staff is dedicated to providing the best possible care and instruction in an environment that is stimulating to children and encourages exploration and independent thinking. We feel that play is children's work, and we support the seamless integration of literacy, science, and math concepts through theme-based learning activities.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that play is children's work. In a structured yet nurturing environment Little Scouts offers quality care and developmentally appropriate activities for children six weeks to five years old. At Little Scouts, we are dedicated to creating a nurturing, stimulating, and welcoming environment for all children. Our unique program incorporates a variety of educational theories, while always keeping the child's best interest in mind and allowing for hands-on, experiential learning. We employ a holistic approach of early childhood education. We believe that when we expose children to different environments and various learning experiences, we allow them to explore their self-awareness and gain a sense of the world around them. Once they leave our Preschool, they're fully prepared for the next stage of their young lives.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All student records (including medical, psychological, behavior, and family history) are kept confidential and not released without written parental consent. Little Scout Staff may see files for information that will help them

better understand and serve the needs of your child. The Health Department and Department of Children and Family Service officials may have access and are required by law to occasionally review center files.

OUR STAFF

We understand that what matters most in a high-quality early childhood program are the teachers. To assure that the philosophy of Little Scouts is carried out; an experienced educated professional Early Childhood Director is directing and supervising the Early Childhood Program. The Director of Little Scouts reports to the Chief Operating Officer at Lake Forest High School. All Little Scouts staff are employees of Lake Forest High School. The Early Childhood Teachers are selected for their educational background in Child Development and their sensitivity to the individual needs of the young child. In keeping with our anti-bias philosophy, Little Scouts feels strongly about the need to have a diverse staff. Our teachers consist of different ages, gender, many religions, various nationalities, and a variety of abilities.

Our teachers all have training in Early Childhood Education as well as previous classroom experience with young children. They all have CPR, First Aid, and Abdominal Thrust maneuver instruction. All of The Little Scouts staff participates in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and current research in the field.

The ratio of teachers to children at any one time will not exceed:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u>
Infant	1	4
Toddler	1	5
2	1	8
3-5	1	10

THE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH AT LITTLE SCOUTS

Little Scouts believes that each child is a unique individual who brings their personality, temperament, learning style, family background, and rate of growth to our program. Our environment, curriculum, and staff respond to these differences through a developmental program that enhances each child's growth while challenging the child's interest in and understanding of their world.

A developmentally appropriate program allows infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to experience their environment through their senses, through physical movement, and through social interaction - first with a nurturing adult and then with peers. As the child moves toward developing language, Little Scouts provides conversation, simple books, puzzles, and music. Space is provided for play to develop gross motor skills.

As children get older, they are ready for greater activity and movement with an emphasis on large muscle development. Language development continues to be particularly important, and stories, music, and verbal interaction with peers increase. Positive relationships are the foundations that enable all learning to occur. At Little Scouts, we value and nurture these relationships, between children and teachers, teachers and families, and children with their peers.

Little Scouts designs curriculum to be responsive to each child's level of maturity and development. For example, toddlers will explore blocks by touching them and putting them in their mouths. Later, simple stacking of blocks may occur, and then more complicated structures may appear, incorporating other toys, such as cars, small people, or animals. Blocks of different sizes and shapes will be introduced at different times during this process. Blocks are not set up in a pattern for a child to copy. This enables each child to feel successful about the product.

The following are descriptions of the developmental tasks of childhood and our developmental goals, which occur and are assessed according to a child's individual growth.

- **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Social development refers to a child's ability to interact with people. Relationships are the bedrock or foundation for all positive social and emotional developmental milestones. For toddlers, this interaction involves many new skills, including turn-taking, sharing, and communicating with others. Some of these skills may be difficult for young children, but with proper modeling and open-ended activities, the child will learn to incorporate these skills into his or her social interactions. Examples of activities that serve to develop social skills include dramatic play, block construction, sensory play as well as structured games like "Duck, Duck, Goose," "Ring Around the Rosie," and "Musical Chairs." For infants, this social interaction involves such skills as visual and verbal communication, cause and effect relationships, and imitation.

Over the preschool years, children are developing their self-identity and their ideas about others. They are gradually figuring out that they are like other people in many ways and different from others. Children's learning experiences in these early years can help them to form a strong, positive self-concept and grow up to respect and interact comfortably with people different from themselves. As a part of our anti-bias philosophy Little Scouts provides books, dolls, toys, and wall decorations (paintings, drawings, photographs) that reflect diverse images that children may not likely see elsewhere. We encourage the children to discuss differences among people and talk positively about each child's physical characteristics and cultural heritage.

Emotional development is just that, the development of emotions. Any activity in which a child experiences happiness, sadness, self-esteem, insecurity, calmness, and uneasiness and is positively responded to by a caring adult will encourage emotional development.

Social and emotional readiness can be taught and nurtured most effectively when children are young. Because preschool is a prime setting for obtaining social and emotional competence, social/emotional development is an important focus for our program.

- **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Cognitive development refers to the mind and how it works. It involves how children think, how they see their world, and how they use what they learn. Cognitive development, from a Piagetian perspective, involves children's creation of increasingly complex relationships that result in a more complex framework for

understanding reality. This framework is constructed through the child's interactions with the environment. Such interactions may include matching, sorting, problem-solving, and block construction. Matching and sorting develop classification skills, problem-solving develops cause-and-effect relationships, and block construction develops spatial relationships.

- **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Physical Development includes children's gross (large muscles) and fine (small muscles) motor skills. The two overall goals for physical development are:

Achieving gross motor control: moving the large muscles in the body, especially the arms and legs, consciously and deliberately. Gross motor control includes balance and stability; movements such as running, jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping; and physical manipulations such as throwing, kicking and catching.

Achieving fine motor control: using and coordinating the small muscles in the hands and wrists with dexterity. As these fine muscles develop, children can perform self-help skills and manipulate small objects such as scissors and writing tools. (The achievement of fine motor skills generally lags gross motor development.)

- **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

Language is an important aspect of a child's life that allows the child to 1) encounter a wider world of ideas, 2) to shape his/her talk, and 3) to express his/her thoughts. Language development occurs in a variety of ways including, everyday speech, reading, and singing. Through the constant repetition of these three activities, a child learns language. Some activities that foster language development are reading, singing, fingerplays, and dramatic play.

- **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Creativity is the child's ability to use his/her mind in different or more flexible ways. Creative development occurs through such activities as art and dramatic play. Through open-ended art activities such as easel painting or collage making or sensory play, a child can express him/herself. Creativity is also enhanced through dramatic play. Dramatic play begins with using one object to represent something or someone else. As a child's creativity grows, so does the imagination that allows them to pretend to be something else. Through fantasy play, the child rehearses life experiences and roles.

DEVELOPMENT SCREENINGS

At Little Scouts Preschool, we are excited to partner with families in fostering the best possible learning and growth opportunities for our children.

- **CHILDREN AGES 0-5.5**

We encourage parents to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3) through the Easter Seals website. This simple yet effective developmental screening tool is available free of charge at

<https://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/free-confidential-online-child-development-screening>

Scan this QR code with your phone and it will take you directly to the site.



The ASQ-3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaires) is a simple tool that helps parents understand how their child is growing and developing in areas like talking, moving, problem-solving, and getting along with others. It's easy to fill out and free to use on the Easter Seals website. By completing it, you can see what your child is doing well and if there are any areas where they might need extra support. This information can also help teachers work with you to support your child's growth. It's an easy way to learn more about your child and help them shine!

To make the process as collaborative as possible, you may choose to involve your child's classroom teachers in filling out the ASQ-3. Teachers can contribute insights based on what they observe at school, working together with you to create a well-rounded perspective on your child's development. If you are interested in having your child's teachers participate, simply add their email address where it asks for you to "List others assisting with completion of the questionnaire." The questions are simple, and should take about 15 minutes to fill out. Results are emailed to you within 2 weeks.

- **CHILDREN AGES 3-5**

In addition to the ASQ- you may choose to have your child participate in free developmental screenings available through your local school district. These screenings can help identify potential areas where a child may benefit from additional support or services. If you're unsure where to start, we are happy to assist you in finding the appropriate contact information for your school district's screening services.

Please reach out if you have any questions-we encourage all of our families to take advantage of these free resources!

SECTION 2: OPERATIONAL POLICIES

HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Scouts is open from 6:45 a.m. until 5:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. ***We respectfully ask that you arrive prior to 5:10PM in order to leave time to gather your child's belongings.***

Little Scouts follows Lake Forest High School's calendar year except for days marked LFHS teacher in-service days (Little Scouts will remain open). Little Scouts closes on most national holidays such as Labor Day, Martin Luther King Day, etc. We also close for two weeks in the winter and a week for Spring break. We do remain open in the summer but close for a week and a half in August that will be announced at the beginning of each school year. A Little Scouts calendar is available to all families upon enrollment. You do not pay for winter break, spring break, Thanksgiving break and the weeks you do not attend in the summer. You will not be charged when Little Scouts is closed for 3 or more days in a row. You are expected to pay for various holidays throughout the year such as Labor Day, MLK Day, and President's Day. If your child is absent or sick you will not be reimbursed for those days missed, nor may you "make-up" that day. **If space is available**, you may have the option to add an additional day at the daily rate.

If Lake Forest High School is closed due to unsafe weather conditions, Little Scouts will also be closed. Once we accept children and schools close early due to weather, we will remain open until all the children are picked up. However, we respectfully ask that parents try to pick up their children as soon as possible. Should there be a delay in the opening time of public schools, the opening of Little Scouts will be delayed by the same amount of time. We will use our Brighwheel Alerts to notify staff and families of unexpected closes and other urgent notifications.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents are responsible for seeing their child into and out of the building each day. You must sign your child in each morning and sign him/her out, with your full signature, at departure time through our Brightwheel App. Please remember for Little Scouts to accept legal responsibility for your child, your child must be signed in by the person bringing him/her to school and signed out by the person picking him/her up each day. If you wish to have someone other than yourself pick up they need to be on the authorized pick up on the Brightwheel App. At any time you may add or eliminate people on the authorized list. Anyone picking up your child must be authorized to do so and present photo identification when picking up your child. We will not release your child without your consent and a valid ID.

When you drop off your child, we ask that you:

- Sign him/her in through Brightwheel
- Help your child remove their outerwear and place it in your child's cubby
- Assist your child in hand washing. This will help keep all of the children healthy
- Always say goodbye- it is important that you say goodbye to your child every day. We know that this can be hard at times. However, by acknowledging them when you leave, you are helping to instill a sense of safety and security for your child.

ARRIVAL TIMES: Although you may bring your child anytime after 6:45 a.m. we do ask that the full-day children are here no later than 9:30 a.m. so that the classroom teachers can begin their group time activities without the disruption of children arriving once it has begun.

APPOINTMENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: Whenever possible, we ask that appointments be scheduled at the beginning or end of the school day. Leaving school and returning later can be difficult for young children, as it disrupts their routine and the flow of the classroom.

If your child is picked up before the scheduled rest time, we ask that they remain home for the rest of the day rather than returning after nap. Returning for only the last part of the afternoon can be challenging, as classmates are already settled into their afternoon routine and many are beginning to prepare to go home.

DEPARTURE: Parents will pick up all children from their respective classrooms. ***If you are picking up more than one child please arrive in enough time to get to both classrooms and gather your child's belongings by 5:15 p.m.***

Children are not allowed to leave the classroom to meet a parent. Parents must walk with their child to exit the building and remain with their child in the parking lot. Once in the parking lot please stay with your child and be alert of other cars entering and exiting the lot. At no time should a child be left unattended outside or in the parking lot. This has been established for the safety of the children.

LATE PICK UP

It is your responsibility to have your child picked up from Little Scouts on time. If another authorized person is picking up your child you need to notify them of our closing time and a late fee will incur upon late pickup. Little Scouts closes promptly at 5:15 for Full-day classes and 12:30 for Half-day classes. We expect that families will not be arriving exactly at closing time, as that will not leave enough time to gather your child and their belongings. **The late fee policy is as follows:**

- If you find you are in an emergency situation and cannot arrive at Little Scouts on time please send a message through the Brightwheel App to make us aware of your situation.
- If you will be more than 5 minutes late you will need to find an alternate person that is on your authorized pick-up list to pick up your child.
- Each family will have 1 warning. After 1 warning you will be charged \$1.00 per minute. A note will be added to Brightwheel and the charge will be added to your next month's invoice.
- After 3 late pick-ups, you will need to meet with the director to discuss your need for alternate pick-up plans.
- After 5 late pick-ups, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute.
- Chronic lateness- more than 10 late pick-ups will result in a one-day suspension.

If your child has not been picked up by 5:45, we will begin to contact the emergency backup people. If no one can be reached, your child will be released to the care of the Lake Forest Police Department.

Your child will only be allowed to leave with a person whose name is on file as an authorized pick-up person. If a person not on the list is asked to pick up, we will need verbal or written consent from the family to release the child. The person will be REQUIRED to show identification before the child's release.

If the parent/guardian arrives intoxicated or under the influence of drugs in the opinion of the provider, all reasonable steps will be taken to avoid releasing the child to that person and an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. If an emergency contact cannot be reached, we will call a cab for the parent. If the parent should refuse this offer, the Police will be called, given the car license plate number, and informed of a suspected impaired driver.

PARENTS' ROLE IN SEPARATION

We encourage all parents to ALWAYS say goodbye when leaving their child at Little Scouts. This builds and maintains a trust relationship with your child. As part of this leave-taking process, Little Scouts suggest parents develop a routine that may include, smiling, kissing, hugging, or waving, and saying goodbye. It is particularly important to be positive at this time. You should leave your child with a positive message saying something like, "I will come back to pick you up later," This is not a time to verbalize your worries. Your positive and decisive attitude will help your child feel secure and that things are in control.

At the time of separation, it is normal for children to cry and cling to the parent. Some children need a security object (blanket or toy). The staff is always prepared to comfort your child. We try hard to assist parents with the separation while not stepping in too early. We ask that you let the teachers know when you are ready for them to step in and assist. We will wait until you let us know that you are ready to leave. Some children do well with quick drop-offs while others need a little longer.

Please feel free to message through Brightwheel to check on your child as well. If you would like to visit your child, however, and you are not taking your child home with you we ask you to observe discreetly through the door or from a distance. If your child sees you most likely they will want to leave with you and become upset which is disruptive to their friends as well as the classroom routine.

DISCIPLINE

Part of the Little Scouts' developmental philosophy is to encourage a child's positive self-image and self-confidence. We strive to teach children acceptable ways to change their behavior in ways that will not damage their sense of self-worth. Therefore, at Little Scouts, respect for others is always demonstrated. Part of a child's growth is learning to balance their needs with those of other people. In doing so children feel good about themselves and become more independent. Children also feel more secure when they have consistent limits which are established in a nurturing environment. Through staff words and actions, the child realizes how this

behavior, positive and negative, makes other children feel. Thus, each discipline situation is a learning experience.

Philosophy on discipline - Discipline is setting guidelines for appropriate behavior. It is based on respect and implemented with kindness and consistency. We feel it is necessary to be clear in defining expectations and guidelines. We are consistent in implementing the rules; follow through with praise for those who follow the rules and consequences for those who do not. Self-discipline is a learned behavior and is based on respect.

Why do we need discipline?

- To ensure the safety of children in care while away from their families
- To teach self-discipline as opposed to motivation by fear of punishment
- To ensure that there is a reasonable relationship between the inappropriate act and the consequence.

Steps of Discipline that we follow:

1. Clearly discuss and define expectations and room rules. (We don't hurt people, feelings, equipment, or belongings.
2. Verbally reward good behavior
3. Verbal warning. (Children know by this point that the reason we have rules is to keep everyone safe and happy. A teacher may say, "Walking feet please," If it doesn't stop, "XX, please walk")
4. Redirection. Give the student two choices predetermined by the teacher. It empowers the student to have some control of his environment and encourages the student to live with the consequences of his/her choices.

In case of tantrums or behavior that is upsetting or endangers other children, removal of the child from the situation and area is best until he/she can calm down and talk about why they are upset. (if a secluded area is not available in the room, a visit to the Director's office may be used) The teacher will help facilitate a solution and conclusion to the outburst by getting the child to express his/her feeling in words.

5. Consequences related to the occurrence may be necessary. (i.e. taking privileges away) Children are often asked what they could do now to make the situation better. If a student refuses to play with a toy or in a play area properly, the area or toy may be off-limits.
6. Notify parents there is a problem that we need to address. (If you do get a phone call at work we do not expect you to punish the child when you pick him up. We just ask that you talk to your child about why they were having trouble and reinforce the need to follow rules.) The children need to know that the parents and teachers are in support of each other. One will not "save" the child from the other and allow for manipulation of the situation or revoke consequences.
7. Time outs: time outs may be used when a child becomes extremely disruptive or is hurting another child in the classroom. Time is limited to the age of the child. For example, a 2-year-old would be in a time out for no more than 2 minutes, a 3-year-old for 3 minutes, etc.

Finally, we believe that communication between home and school is vital to ensuring the best possible program for all children. If at any point you have concerns about your child's behavior either at home or at school, please

feel free to set up a conference with your child's teachers. In turn, we will do the same. We will communicate with you regularly regarding your child and make you immediately aware of any discipline concerns. If we find that a certain behavior becomes ongoing, we will set up a conference with you to discuss the situation and to work together to come to a solution. We intend to always assist a family and child in discovering the cause of a behavioral challenge and to work together for a solution.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR IN ALL CHILD CARE SETTINGS BY ALL PRESENT ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear; threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom; abusive or profane language; any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child or an adult are prohibited.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICIES

To ensure that our school environment remains safe and comfortable for families, children, and staff, we ask that everyone adhere to these policies. No verbal or physical abuse is to be displayed toward any child or adult within the center. Any display of inappropriate behavior will be addressed immediately. All members of the center staff are mandated reporters, and any sign of physical or mental abuse of a child must, by law, be reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Weapons of any kind are prohibited. DCFS screens all staff for criminal background.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

Communication between parents and Little Scouts is shared in a variety of ways. All our classes use the Brightwheel application. You will sign in through the app as well as receive progress throughout the day. You will also be able to connect with your child's teacher through Brightwheel. If there is any information you would like them to know you can email the Director, your child's teacher, or send the information through Brightwheel. You are also welcome to arrange a meeting or phone conference with the teachers. All classes have a weekly communication that details the theme of the week and some of the activities so that you know what is happening in the classroom for the week. This helps parents communicate with their children about what they can expect or what took place during the day when they were apart.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We welcome parent involvement at any level that feels right for you. We have an open-door visitation policy for families enrolled in Little Scouts. You may come into the room at any given time without notice to the teachers. We invite parents to join us on field trips. The more adult hands available, the better! Although we understand parents have busy schedules, so please do not feel an obligation for adult participation. Please understand that the teachers will implement the discipline in the classroom if needed and assist children in using words to resolve conflicts between students. If a parent observes a student acting inappropriately, please express your observation/concern to the teacher so he/she can discuss it with the children. Please understand that there may have been other interactions that you did not witness previously and that is the reason the teacher is the most appropriate individual to deal with the situation.

We love to have parents visit the class as guest speakers. Their children are very proud to introduce their parents to their friends and happy that you took the time to be there. Parents have come to talk about their culture, occupations, or share a musical talent.

Once a year each class holds a family night where the whole family is invited to come to Little Scouts. It is also a casual setting to meet the families of the friend your child has made in class. Your children appreciate you taking the time to be there.

We partner with students from Lake Forest High School for a number of family parties each year. These parties take place in our large motor room, typically between 4-5. They are a drop-in style, and you can stay for as long or a little as you like. We encourage you to bring siblings if the timing works out!

Parent conferences with teachers are in the fall and in the spring to discuss the growth and accomplishments of your child during the school year. Conferences can also be held at the request of a parent or teacher throughout the year. The conferences will take place in the morning or late afternoon without children present. ***Please inform Little Scouts of events, which may affect a child's feelings and/or behavior, i.e. parental absence from the home, a new sibling or adult in the home, a family death (pets included), or even a special trip.*** Strong communion is the foundation of the relationship between the family and the school.

TRANSITIONS

Little Scouts follows a school year calendar, which means that all classrooms (with the exception of our Tiny Scouts and Wanderers rooms) transition to the next class together at the beginning of the school year in August. Room placement is determined by age, not ability. We use a September 1st cut off date to determine ages for our preschool classrooms.

The transition from our Tiny Scout room to the Wanderers room happens between 14-15 months. The Tiny Scouts teachers will work with each family to determine a transition plan which includes having your child spend increasingly longer periods of time in the Wanderers classroom. In addition, they will discuss the transition from bottles to sippy cups, cribs to cots, and other important developmentally appropriate transitions.

All these class transitions lead up to the biggest milestone—entering Kindergarten. In May, our Pre-K Trailblazers celebrate how far they've come since starting at Little Scouts. We read books and learn songs about moving on to kindergarten, and we wrap up the month with a **Ready-for-Kindergarten Celebration**, honoring the Pre-K class with a short ceremony and songs.

DRESS

We suggest your child be dressed for school in comfortable, washable play clothes. We want the children to feel comfortable having fun painting, running around outside, and playing in the texture bins without having to worry about getting their clothes ruined. In the summer, sandals are not safe for running and climbing. We

request that a pair of gym shoes be left at Little Scouts. If this is not possible, please send your child in gym shoes daily. We plan to go outside every day that the temperature (or wind chill factor) is 20 degrees or higher and it is not raining. Therefore, PLEASE dress your children to go outside. Once we have a frost, make sure your child has a coat, hat (that covers the ears), mittens, boots, and snow pants. A spare set of mittens and socks are useful if they go outside in the afternoon as well as the morning.

TOYS FROM HOME

With the exception of toys that are needed to help ease your child's transition from home to school, **we ask that all toys be left at home.** Please do not allow your child to bring toy guns or weapons. All items from home should be labeled with your child's name. Lake Forest High School's Little Scouts cannot be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items at school.

NUTRITION

Morning snacks, lunch, and afternoon snacks are served to the full-day classes. Snacks consist of items such as cereal and milk, cheese and crackers, pretzles and fruit, etc. Snack is served with water. We try to avoid items high in sugar except on special occasions. Our lunch is catered by A Taste for Kids and served by the director or teachers in the classrooms on disposable plates. The director maintains the food and sanitation certificate, and each of the teachers maintains a food handlers certificate. Menus are distributed every month to the parents and are always posted in each classroom and on the hallway bulletin board. Each day the children have a serving of meat, fruit, vegetable, carbs, and milk offered to them. We do not force children to eat food but we do encourage children to try the food.

Parents are welcome to bring a special treat to share with classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Treats must be store-bought in their original sealed package or from a health department inspected kitchen bakery.

ALLERGY

Little Scouts environment is a PEANUT FREE environment which means we do not serve peanut products or nut products to the children nor do the adults eat food items with peanuts/tree nuts in the classrooms. We ask that any food brought in from the outside for special occasions has ingredients that are "nut-free". If your child has additional food allergies, please talk with the director about how Little Scouts can best support your child. Our food caterer is happy to provide allergen free lunches for the most common allergies such as dairy, gluten and egg and sesame. Depending on the severity of the allergy, we may require entire classroom to avoid certain foods for birthday snacks, and parties.

TOILET TRAINING

Children in our Explorers and Adventurers classrooms are not required to be toilet trained. When your child shows signs of readiness, we are happy to partner with you in the process—but training must begin at home. Before we begin supporting potty training at school, your child should be consistently using the toilet at home, recognizing when they need to go, and able to pull their pants up and down independently.

Please speak with your child's teacher before starting the process so we can work together to ensure consistency. While we are prepared for occasional accidents, children should not be sent in underwear until they are mostly accident-free at home. Frequent accidents in underwear may require a return to pull-ups, as repeated clean-ups pose a health concern in group care.

Our bathroom is equipped with child-sized toilets, so we do not allow personal potty chairs or seat inserts from home. For home use, we recommend toilet seat adapters rather than floor potties, as they make for an easier transition to school routines.

We understand that all children do not develop at the same rate. While it is not required, it is highly suggested that your child is toilet trained by the time they enter our Pathfinders room. We do not have a diaper changing table in the room, and when one of our teachers needs to take a child out of the room, to change a diaper or pull-up, that changes our classroom ratio. We **HIGHLY** encourage our families to work on toilet training in the Adventurers' room and/or the summer before they enter the Pathfinders room.

FIELD TRIPS

Our Trailblazers take at least 1 field trip annually out in the community to enrich the children's lives with new experiences. These trips are always planned and a separate permission slip needs to be filled out to participate. There is usually an additional fee to cover the cost of tickets and the bus ride. Parents are welcome to come and help chaperone. We appreciate the extra supervision for Little Scouts children so we prefer younger siblings are left at home.

CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS

We view holidays as a reason to celebrate, have fun, and learn about different cultures all around the world. If you have visited or lived in another country and would like to share pictures of children celebrating a holiday in that country or talk about your experiences please speak with your child's teacher or the director to arrange a time to do so. Although we do spend many weeks learning about various holidays we do not teach or talk about any religious aspect of any holiday. We will talk about customs and traditions but not the religious meaning of the holiday or any other religious reference. We approach holiday celebrations in an inclusive and non-biased manner.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Some circumstances may warrant extra attention for some children in terms of development while they are enrolled at Little Scouts. We welcome and support parents who need supplemental services for their children that complement or extend our approach so children can grow and thrive. If special services are necessary, a meeting will be set up with the parents and staff to discuss the special services and discuss Little Scouts' ability to meet the needs of the child and develop a plan.

If your child will be coming to Little Scouts and already has an IFSP (Birth-three years old- Individualized Family Service Plan) or an IEP (3-5-year-old - Individualized Educational Plan) a meeting will be set up with the Director and the classroom Teacher to discuss that plan before enrollment to discuss if we can meet your child's needs.

Each situation is unique and specific in terms of what different children need and so a thoughtful approach is required.

It is not unusual for young children to be receiving educational or special services outside of school. The school must have access to any information from these outside services which would help to facilitate the child's adjustment to preschool as well as to maximize his/her educational and social experience.

To facilitate the child's success in our center, Little Scouts will ask that the parent sign a release of information to allow the Early Childhood Director to receive reports from professional service providers and communicate directly with them. This exchange would enable the center to:

1. Understand the child's needs and help the child.
2. Be consistent with the approach taken by the family and outside consultant/professional.
3. Focus on those developmental areas which require the most attention.

All information exchanged will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No information will be sent to any other school, agency, consultant, or therapist without the parents' written permission.

PUBLIC ACT 100-010 PREVENTING EXPULSION OF CHILDREN BIRTH-FIVE

At Little Scouts we are committed to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all children. This act emphasizes the prevention of expulsion of children from birth to five years of age in early childhood programs. We firmly believe that every child deserves a fair chance to learn and grow, regardless of their unique circumstances. Our transition policy ensures that children and families receive the necessary support and resources to prevent expulsion and address challenging behaviors. We work collaboratively with families, educators, and specialized professionals to develop individualized behavior support plans, implement positive behavior interventions, and provide ongoing coaching and training. By fostering a supportive and understanding atmosphere, we strive to create an inclusive community where every child can thrive and reach their full potential. In cases where it is determined that a child's unique needs are better suited to be met in a different program, we understand the importance of a smooth and seamless transition. Our transition policy includes provisions for assisting families in finding and transitioning to a program that can better cater to their child's specific requirements. Our primary goal is to ensure that every child receives the appropriate care and educational environment that best suits their individual needs, promoting their growth and success.

PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEOTAPING, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Photographs/ videotapes of children participating in Little Scouts programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, brochures, social media (Little Scouts Facebook Page and the District Instagram Page), our Little Scouts website (www.littlescoutspreschool.com) or other publicity materials. Full names will never be used. Your permission to take photographs/videotapes of your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this Center Policy Handbook. A permission slip will be provided to state whether you agree to these terms.

GRIEVANCES / PARENT FEEDBACK

Little Scouts strives to make sure that our program meets the highest standards and the needs of our families each day. Our growth is dependent on parent feedback. Please feel free at any time to share your thoughts and ideas with the teachers in the room or the Director. We will do all that we can to incorporate your feedback into our program. If you have felt as if you have addressed the issue with the classroom teachers and it has not been resolved, please bring your concern to the director so that we can assist you.

STAFF AS WEEKEND BABYSITTERS

Little Scouts understands that teachers may be used for private babysitting purposes. Little Scouts does not assume any liability for use of staff members in this capacity. Staff members are not permitted to make babysitting arrangements during their work time or to allow babysitting to interfere with their work performance. If you need to make babysitting arrangements, please do so outside of Little Scouts. Little Scouts strives to hire quality staff and train them intensively. They are here to benefit all the children. Any family that attempts to hire a staff member for a position that will conflict with that staff member's duties or position at Little Scouts will be dis-enrolled immediately and family deposit forfeited.

SUMMER SESSION AT LITTLE SCOUTS

Our summer session runs from early June through early August and offers a playful, relaxed extension of our school year program. While daily routines remain familiar, summer brings more time outdoors, seasonal projects, water play, and fun surprises.

Due to adjusted enrollment and staffing, your child may be grouped differently than during the school year. Each classroom is led by one of our year-round (12-month) teachers, ensuring consistency and a familiar presence. They are joined by college and high school support staff who bring fresh energy, creativity, and enthusiasm to the program.

There is a separate registration for summer. Families will be asked to confirm their child's summer schedule in advance. We do not bill for pre-arranged absences when submitted by the posted deadline. A summer calendar will be provided with important dates, closures, and special events. Little Scouts takes a short break between the summer session and the new school year for teacher development, deep cleaning of classrooms, and for our year-round staff to rest and recharge. Please check the calendar for the exact length of this break, which is typically 5-8 days.

SECTION 3: HEALTH AND SAFETY

HAND WASHING POLICY

Children and staff are required to wash their hands with soap and water when they enter the building from the outside, before handling any food, after each use of the bathroom (or changing soiled clothes), and after coughing or sneezing. Parents PLEASE encourage your child and assist him/her in washing hands as part of the morning drop-off routine.

SECURITY

We take all of the necessary precautions to keep your babies out of harm's way. The Little Scout outside doors are locked at all times for the safety of our students and staff. Our school requires a key fob for entry. We regularly practice safety drills such as fire and tornado, and we have a comprehensive safety plan designed by the director of safety at Lake Forest High School.

ACCIDENTS

If your child has an accident at school that requires attention (i.e. Ice pack, wash with soap and water, bandage, etc) the teacher supervising at the time of the accident will fill out an accident report on Brightwheel describing what happened, the time, and the first aid given.

If a wound is more than a small bump or scrape, the teacher may call you during the day so you are not surprised at pick-up time with the appearance of a bandage or bruise. They will discuss the severity so you can determine whether you want to pick up your child early, and whether or not you prefer to take your child to be seen by a physician.

If an accident is serious (i.e. student unconscious, bleeding profusely, compound fracture, etc.) 911 will be called. Parents will also be notified immediately. The director or staff member will accompany a child to the hospital until the parent arrives. Staff members are not allowed to transport students in their cars.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Parents are required to provide three local emergency contacts on the enrollment form. These people should live close by and be able to get to school within **30 minutes**. Emergency contacts will be reached when parents are unavailable and your child is sick, injured, or still at school after closing. If changes ever need to be made, you have the ability to do that on the Brightwheel platform, or reach out to your classroom teachers and we can make any changes necessary. Once again, it is of the utmost importance that these numbers are kept current.

MEDICAL FORMS

It is required that your child has an updated physical with a completed immunization record before attending Little Scouts. The information needed is listed on the enrollment forms. Keep us informed of special medical problems. The Lake County Health Department requires that each child have a completed physical dated not more than six months before entering into the program. The physicals are good for two years before the child needs a new one. Immunizations must be current according to the age of each child. The infant and toddler rooms will need to update their immunization records each time they receive an additional immunization.

INSURANCE

Lake Forest High School carries insurance to cover the building, the employees, and the children while they are attending school programs and activities. Individual medical insurance for students needs to be covered and paid for privately with family policies.

ILLNESSES

Maintaining health and preventing the spread of contagious infections are responsibilities shared by parents and the staff at Little Scouts. The following guidelines are for the protection of ALL children.

- The staff at Little Scouts will decide as to whether a child can/cannot attend school based on the child's ability to participate in group care and our sick policies.
- In the instance that your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you immediately. A fever of over 100.4 degrees, one episode of vomiting, three episodes of diarrhea in 24 hours, or eye drainage will constitute immediate pick up of your child. In an attempt to prevent the spread of illness, your child may be moved out of the classroom to the Director's office for isolation from the other students.

You will be required to pick up your child within 30 minutes of notification. Children will then need to be symptom-free, without the use of medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that emergency contacts in Brightwheel are updated and that a parent or emergency contact is reachable at all times. The emergency contact name that you designate will be called if you are unreachable. We will attempt to contact the parent/guardian for 15 minutes and then will begin calling emergency backup persons.

HEALTH FAQ'S

WHEN CAN I EXPECT MY CHILD TO RETURN TO LITTLE SCOUTS?

- Fever: once their temperature has been normal for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Covid-19: We follow the current guidelines of IDPH for exclusion
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye): after 24 hours of treatment AND resolution of discharge.
- Strep throat: after 24 hours of treatment AND 24 hours' fever-free.
- Persistent congestion, persistent cough: once your physician determines your child is not contagious or your child has received appropriate treatment and is no longer infectious.
- Whooping cough: after completing 5 days of antibiotic treatment.
- Measles: 4 days after the rash is completely gone.
- Mumps: 9 days after parotid gland swelling starts.
- Diarrhea: once having formed, non-loose stools or medical provider indicates that the cause of diarrhea is non-contagious, and your child is well enough to participate in all activities without risk of dehydration.
- Vomiting: after 24 hours without vomiting.
- Head lice or scabies: the day after the first treatment.
- Impetigo: after 24 hours of treatment if the affected area is covered.
- Chickenpox: typically, 6 days after the rash began and lesions are crusted over.
- Mouth sores: when health care provider says your child may return.
- Other serious, communicable diseases noted in the IDPH Code: after the health care professional states that it is safe for the child to return to a childcare setting.

***Please report any of the listed illnesses to your child's teacher so that a health alert can be sent to the classroom families. All parents are asked to follow the guidelines listed above. Please be considerate of other families and children when determining whether or not your child should attend school.

ABSENCE

If your child will not be attending Little Scouts on a scheduled day, please send a message on Brightwheel or email your child's teachers/director. **If your child is not scheduled for the day but has contracted a contagious illness we would appreciate a phone call so that we may notify the other families in your child's room.**

MEDICINES

Necessary medications may be administered to a child at school upon completion of a Medicine Release form filled out by the parent. Prescription medications should be labeled with the child's name, directions for administering the medication, dose, the date, the physician's name, the drug store or pharmacy, and in its original container. Pharmacists are usually happy to give you two containers if you ask for them. Then one can be kept at home and one can be brought to school with just the quantity needed to be given at school. Aspirin, Tylenol, or any other fever reducer cannot be given to reduce a child's fever at school. Please notify your child's

teacher if your child has received any medication before coming to school for the day. Sunblock, insect repellent, and diaper ointment are treated as medicines. They all need to be given to the teacher and put away, out of the reach of children for safe storage. Do not leave them in your child's cubby or locker. Cough drops are also medicine and cannot be dispensed without written medical consent.

BITING POLICY

Each case is dealt with on an individual basis. Extreme and numerous biting incidents may lead to suspension and possible enrollment termination. After 3 bites, in one day, the parent will be called and the child will be sent home. At that time the parent of the biter will meet with the teacher and director to go over a plan of action. If the child continues to bite and is sent home 2 more times, the director will evaluate the situation and work with the parents to find a suitable solution. We treat all children as individuals but we are also sensitive to the needs of those children in the group and the anxieties of the families of a child coming home bitten frequently. Due to privacy acts, we ask that you not request staff members to reveal the name of the biter.

SUNSCREEN

Please apply sunscreen each morning during the sunny months of spring, summer and fall. During these months, please provide Little Scouts with your desired brand of sunscreen labeled with your child's name. We will reapply after nap if we go outside.

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL POLICIES

- Tuition at Little Scouts is billed monthly and is due on the 24th of each month. We use a Annualized tuition model, where your rate is based on your child's total schedule attendance days for the school year, then divided into 10 equal payments. This annualization includes unpaid breaks such as Thanksgiving, Winter, Spring and Summer. You are expected to pay for various holidays throughout the year such as Labor Day, MLK Day, and President's Day. **If your child is absent or sick you will not be reimbursed for those days missed, nor may missed days be "made up"**. Any additional charges (such as late pick-up fees) will be itemized on the monthly invoice.
- A \$100.00 per child registration fee is charged annually and will be added to your Brightwheel invoice when registration is collected. A child cannot be placed on the classroom roster until remittance of the registration form. The registration fee is non-refundable with the exception that Little Scouts does not have space available.
- We use Brightwheel as our billing platform. Tuition is annualized, so there is no change from month to month. Payment is remitted by automatic credit card charge, except for families using payroll deduction. A \$25 fee will be assessed for any declined credit card charge. Lake Forest High School and Lake Forest Elementary School employees are encouraged to pay through payroll deductions.
- It is presumed that the child is enrolled for the full academic year. If withdrawal from the program or change in schedule is necessary, a **30 day written notice is required**. If notice is given under 30 days, the family is responsible for the remaining tuition. Failure to complete a full academic school year will result in a loss of priority for the following academic school year. Re-enrollment is subject to availability and requires a \$100.00 registration fee even if it is within the same school year.
- Tuition receipts and tax statements can be accessed through the Brightwheel App.
- Tuition fees are listed separately and vary between programs, the number of days, and the length of day you attend. Add-on days and extended days are subject availability and Director's approval. Any additional added days, which would apply for any day your child is not regularly scheduled, you will be charged a single day rate. Any extended days, for our half-day students, will be charged the difference of a single full-day rate.

VACATIONS/HOLIDAYS/SNOW DAYS

Little Scouts follows The Lake Forest High School District 115 calendar year. Little Scouts closes on most national holidays such as Labor Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, etc. We are closed for two weeks in the winter, a week for Spring break and a week in August. The Little Scouts calendar is available to all families upon enrollment and it is always available through Brightwheel.

If Lake Forest High School is closed due to unsafe weather conditions, Little Scouts will also be closed. Once we accept children and schools close early due to weather, we will remain open until all the children are picked up. However, we respectfully ask that parents try to pick up their children as soon as possible. Should there be a delay in the opening time of public schools, the opening of Little Scouts will be delayed by the same amount of time. We will use our Brightwheel Alerts to notify staff and families of unexpected closes and other urgent notifications.

SUMMER BILLING POLICY

During our summer session, tuition is calculated based on the number of days your child is scheduled to attend. We multiply the total number of days by the daily classroom rate, then divide that total into two equal payments—one due in June and one in July.

If your child will be out for any pre-arranged days (such as vacations or special summer activities), you will not be charged for those days **as long as you submit the dates to the Director by the deadline—typically June 1.**

Please note that this billing flexibility is offered only during the summer session. During the school year, tuition is based on your child's weekly schedule and is not adjusted for absences.

DIS-ENROLLMENT POLICY

Lake Forest High School and Little Scouts Child care center reserves the right to remove a student or family from the program for the following reasons:

1. When pick-ups are chronically late and late fees do not seem to make a difference in the effort to arrive on time.
1. Failure to pay for services as outlined under the tuition section in the parent handbook. If you get one month behind in payments you may be asked to keep your child at home until payments are caught up to date. Two months behind is a reason to replace a student's spot with a person on the waiting list. Payment in full with late fees included is expected for the entire two months.

Permanent dismissal is rare and not considered if a reasonable compromise can be met.