



Parent Handbook

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Welcome to Little Acorns Montessori

Thank you for choosing Little Acorns Montessori (LAM). In this handbook you will find important information about our program, policies and procedures as well as ideas on how to support your child's learning experiences.

Mission Statement

LAM seeks to assist children in developing fully as individuals. Our goal is to foster competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are life-long learners.

Center Programs

At LAM we have created a special learning environment with a variety of age-appropriate activities to teach practical life skills, math, language, art, science, geography and motor skills. We use role modeling and positive discipline to help the children learn to respect others and use appropriate social behaviors. We provide a full day program with a combination of quiet and active, indoor and outdoor activities, mixed with lots of love and attention. We follow the Montessori philosophy of individualized education.

Our infant, toddler and preschool programs are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Full-time and part-time schedules are available.

Fees and Tuition Policies

Current fees are posted on our rate sheet.

Application Fee – There is a non-refundable application fee to be paid when an application is submitted.

Reservation Fee - If a program is full you can reserve a future start date and schedule by paying one month tuition for the desired schedule as a non-refundable deposit. When you start on the date and with the schedule you reserved, the reservation fee will be applied to the first month's tuition.

Change Fee - For every change in start date or schedule of a reserved spot there will be a change fee. In addition, a change fee will apply to any change planned for a date more than 30 days in the future which requires the school to reserve additional days of the week for your child. When reserving additional days for your child, the change fee will be applied to tuition fees at the time of the change. If the change does not take place when planned, the fee is non-refundable. Any change in schedule must be for at least 1 month. If more than 3 changes are made to the schedule in a school year, a change fee will be charged, to offset the administrative costs involved.

Waitlist Fee – If a program is full and you do not want to reserve a future start date, you may ask to be added to the waitlist. A non-refundable waitlist fee must be paid to be added to the waitlist. If unexpected changes in enrollment occur, children may be placed from the waitlist. The waitlist takes second priority to reserved spots. Once moved from waitlist to enrolled status, if the start date is more than 30 days in the future, the reservation fee will be due, which will be the difference between one month of tuition and the waitlist fee already paid. If the start date is less than 30 days in the future the waitlist fee will be applied toward your registration and tuition fees due.

Annual Registration Fee – There is an annual registration fee for each new and returning child. This registration fee is due by June 1st in order to hold your child's place for the coming school year. If you paid a registration fee less than six months prior to June 1 you are exempt from this fee for one school year. Current registration fee is posted on our rate sheet.

Tuition – Tuition fees are provided on our rate sheet. Tuition is charged monthly in advance of care provided. Monthly tuition is due on the 20th of the month prior to services being provided, and late if received after the 1st of the month. There is a \$35 fee for late payment.

You may pay by any time increment (weekly, bi-monthly, monthly, etc.) as long as you are making payment in advance. We offer automatic monthly credit/debit card payment for your convenience. We also offer card swipe at sign-in and payment online through www.myprocare.com. We currently do not accept American Express.

Center closure days are taken into account when we publish monthly tuition rates. To simplify monthly fees we have averaged costs over the whole calendar year so that your tuition remains the same every month. There is no reduction in tuition when a center closure day falls on one of your child's regularly scheduled days or if your child is absent for any reason, with the exception of vacation credit. Days of care may not be "made up" by attending on a different day.

Late Pick-up Fee – Half children need to be picked up at 12:15 or 12:30, depending on the program they are enrolled in. Full day children need to be picked up no later than 6:00pm. Children who are picked up late will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute. If your child regularly stays more than 9 hours a day, then the custom care rate will apply for hours over 9 per day, charged in increments of 15 minutes.

Vacation Credit - If your child will miss an entire week of his/her contracted schedule for a planned vacation and you provide two-weeks written notice of this vacation, you will be given a vacation credit equal to 12.5% of your child's monthly tuition. You may use vacation credit for two weeks of vacation during each school year (September 1 through August 31).

Custom Care – If you occasionally need additional days or hours over your contracted schedule, we can provide custom care in most cases. Please call us at least 24 hours in advance so we can determine if there is room in a particular program for your child to attend. Custom care is charged either by the hour, the half day or the day, depending on your needs. Custom Care rates are published on our rate sheet.

Invoices and Statements – LAM does not invoice, but you will receive a copy of your enrollment agreement which states your child's monthly tuition. You will also receive a monthly electronic statement, sent via email, showing invoices and payments. Please let the office know if you are not able to receive electronic statements. We are happy to provide a record of payments made for Flex spending plans, either monthly or quarterly. Each year in January we also provide an electronic statement of payments made for the entire year for tax return purposes. We are happy to provide a statement at any time that you request one.

Parent Participation

A child's family is an integral part of the child's total development and a thriving school environment. We seek to develop a partnership with families in order to meet the needs of each individual child. **We require each two-parent family to provide 14 hours of volunteer service to the school during each school year.** Single parent families are required to provide 7 hours of volunteer service. You may fulfill your hours in many ways, like helping with gardening or general maintenance projects, caring for pets, making play dough, sharing your talents, skills or cultural heritage at circle time, helping to prepare special projects, setting-up or driving on field trips and doing laundry or providing fresh cut flowers for the classrooms. Once a year we have a "Parent Work Party" on a weekend when families come to help with minor maintenance and beautification projects and you earn nearly half of your hours on this one day. Check out the Parent Participation board for ideas, sign up sheets and recording form.

In September, or during your first month of attendance if your child begins after September, a fee of \$10 per hour of parent participation due will be charged to your account. Whenever you turn in a Parent Participation Form recording hours completed, we will be credit to your account at the

rate of \$10 per hour of participation. You will have until August 31 of the current school year to complete your parent participation for the year.

Arrival and Departure

We try to limit the drop-off and pick-up times because they are disruptive to the other children in the group. We appreciate your punctuality. Please leave a note for the teacher in advance if you need to pick-up your child at a special time so that the teacher may prepare the child to leave with a minimal disturbance to the group. **If you are unavoidably late, please help your child enter and join the group quietly and unobtrusively.** Continued late arrival may be ground for termination of care.

Upon arrival please assist your child in putting their things away in their cubby and sign them in, both manually in the binder and on the computer. We encourage you to have your child put away their things themselves, helping them only as necessary. Then walk with your child to one of the teachers. Encourage your child greet the teacher with a handshake or hug and then say good-bye. The teacher will help your child with this transition if needed.

Children must be picked up and dropped off by a designated representative. Please be sure to list anyone who might be picking up children on your child's emergency authorization form. We will ask for I.D. from anyone we do not recognize before releasing the child to their care. For the protection of your child, we will not accept updates to the emergency pick up list by phone, fax or email. Please either provide a note in person with an original signature, or make changes in person to your child's emergency contact form. If there are parents who are not allowed, by legal action, to visit or pick-up the child, we require copies of the court order to be on file with us.

Parents or other representatives dropping-off or picking-up the child are required by law to record the actual time of arrival and departure each day along with a complete signature. Sign-in book for all classes is found on the counter at the front of the school. Children must also be logged in and out on the computer located at the front of the school.

Note: As stated in the admissions agreement, there is a \$1 per minute charge for late pick-ups. Too many late arrivals or late pick-ups can be cause for termination of enrollment. **Late pick-up applies after your contracted pick-up time for morning children (12:15 for Chipmunk and Squirrel, 12:30 for Fox), or after 6:00pm for full day children.**

Arrival and Departure Times

Infants (Chipmunk Class)

Full Time 7:30 – 6:00 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

Morning Session 7:30 – 12:15 Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave between 12:00 and 12:15.

Two Year Olds (Squirrel Class)

Full Time 7:30 – 6:00 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

Morning Session 7:30 – 12:15 Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave at 12:15.

Preschool (Fox Clas)

Full Time 7:30 – 6:00 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

Morning Session 7:30 – 12:30 Children may arrive between 7:30 and 8:50 and leave between 12:00 and 12:30.

Saying Goodbye

The transition from home to school can be unsettling for some children, especially in the beginning. You will help your child to feel that the school is a safe place by giving them a loving, definite and brief goodbye. While it can be heart-breaking to turn away from an upset child, we find that children usually turn their attention to those around them and settle into the interesting activities of the day very quickly once the parent has left. Usually, within a short time, the child is eager to arrive and the transition is easier for both parent and child. We will make every effort to reach out to you to let you know when your child has settled in.

Clothing

Please send your child in comfortable clothing appropriate for messy exploration. The children may be working with paint, food, sand or other materials that might soil their clothes. Encourage self-sufficiency by choosing clothing that your child can take on and off without help. For younger children, elastic waists and velcro openings are the best. Older children may be able to manage snaps, buttons, zippers and shoe laces. Please choose according to your child's age and ability.

Mark clothing with your child's name or initials to assist us in returning to you clothing that may not have made it back into cubbies during the day.

Please do not send children in clothing with representations of "super heroes" or other movie characters. We find that when these characters are brought into the classroom the children are encouraged to take on those character traits, or have excited discussions about movie plots, which can cause a disruption, and on occasion, inappropriate behaviors in the classroom.

Please keep a complete set of extra clothes at school so that your child will have comfortable clothes in case of an "accident", a spill, or water play. Please supply extra clothes in a Ziploc bag to keep clothing from falling out of the cubby and getting separated or lost. Please check extra clothing occasionally to be sure that it still fits, and that we have plenty available. **Be sure to LABEL everything!**

Naps

For each toddler or preschool child that is at school during the nap period, we will assign an LAM "nap sack". Please provide a crib sheet to cover the nap mat. You will be charged a \$25 deposit which will be credited back to your account when you return the nap sack in good condition. You may provide a small pillow with a washable cover if your child prefers. You may provide a favorite nap toy, like a small stuffed animal. Please **DO NOT** send your child with a large pillow or large stuffed animal as these items will not fit in the child's cubby. Nap sacks must be taken home and washed at the end of each week and returned on the child's next day of attendance. **LABEL ALL PERSONAL ITEMS.**

Linen Fee: If you forget your child's nap sack, we can provide a loaner. You will be charged a fee of \$1 per day that LAM provides a loaned nap sack for your child to offset laundering costs. **You will be charged a \$25 replacement fee if your child's nap sack is lost or destroyed.**

For infants, please supply a fresh, portable crib sized sheet for each day that your child will attend in a week, along with a small blanket or sleep sack. You may bring a sack to store your linens in at school. You are required to take home and wash all linens at the end of each week.

Sun Screen

LAM believes that sunscreen application is very important. It is easiest for us to apply school-supplied sunscreen to all children. You will find a Sun Screen Permission Form that allows us to apply school-supplied sunscreen in the enrollment forms packet. If your child requires a special brand of sunscreen, please be sure to

note that on your preadmission forms and also let your child's teachers know. Provide a bottle of your child's sunscreen with your child's first and last name, and the date, written on it.

Children should arrive at school with sunscreen on. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child has sunscreen on before you drop them off at school. During the sunny season, LAM staff will apply sunscreen around 12:00pm and again around 4:00pm when the children are playing in the yard.

Food Service Policy

Our program includes nutritional snacks provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Children arriving before 8:30 a.m. may bring breakfast items from home. **DO NOT SEND CHILDREN WITH DOUGHNUTS, CHOCOLATE MILK, OR OTHER SUGARY FOODS. WE WILL NOT SERVE THEM AT THE SCHOOL.** Keep these for special treats at home.

Lunch is eaten around 11:30 a.m. Children bring their lunches from home. Please provide a lunch that does not require heating or preparation by a teacher. We encourage you to pack your child's lunch in containers that the child can open himself. Re-sealable containers and zip-loc bags are very good. Try the bags with a zipper-style closure for younger children as they are easier to open and close. We ask that you provide a cloth placemat in your child's lunch box and you are also welcome to include a cloth napkin. We ask that you follow the lunch guidelines below when preparing your child's lunch.

Lunch Guidelines:

- Please do not send foods with artificial coloring or flavoring or foods with a high sugar content (for example, Go-gurt, artificial fruit chews or roll-ups that are not 100% fruit)
- Please do not send treat items like pudding, cookies, candy, etc. These items will be removed from lunches.
- No juice will be served at school. Please do not provide juice containers in your child's lunch. We will provide water and milk.

The reason for these guidelines is that many children are affected by artificial colors, caffeine and sugar.

A child's lunch should be well balanced, containing a protein, a carbohydrate, and a fruit or vegetable. Children enjoy various kinds of sandwiches or sliced meats, yogurt, pasta salad, hard-boiled eggs. You can provide hot lunch items like soup or pasta in a thermos. We can accommodate occasional warm-ups.

The following foods are not permitted for children under four years old:

Large pieces of raw carrot (may be cut in small bites)	Whole olives (may be cut in half)
Whole grapes (may be cut in half)	Blueberries
Nuts	Tortilla or corn chips
Celery	Popcorn
Hot dogs (may be cut in quartered slices)	Raisins (they are too sticky and can cause choking)

We understand that your child may eat these items at home, however, we are responsible for observing a number of children during meal periods and we need to reduce the possibility of accidental choking.

Grocery Donations – Families are asked to provide **a non-meat protein, a grain, and a fresh fruit or vegetable** about once a month for us to prepare healthy snacks. A snack calendar is distributed each month. Based on enrollment, toddler and preschool families will only provide a food every four to six weeks. If your donation day falls on a day that your child does not attend, please bring your donation on the next day that your child does attend. Food should be unprepared, and donated in original, unopened packaging from the store. Example quantities are 14 apples, 2 cantaloupes, 3 large bunches of bananas, 1 large bag of baby

carrots, 1 pound of snap peas, etc. Example proteins are 1 lb of cheddar cheese, 1 large pack of string cheese (20 pieces or more), 2 large vanilla yogurts (please no colored yogurts), 1 large container of humus, 4 packs of baked tofu, 1 medium organic nut butter, 24 hard boiled, peeled eggs. Sample grains include 2 boxes of rice or wheat crackers, 1 loaf of wheat, oat or cinnamon bread, granola with no nuts, bagels, tortillas, pre-packaged cooked pasta or rice, etc. On occasion we have time to cook oatmeal, cream of wheat, or dried noodles. If you have more than one child enrolled in our toddler and preschool programs you will be asked to provide a grocery donation for each child and will be scheduled to provide all food items on the same day to simplify your schedule.

If your child has special dietary needs, you will need to provide appropriate substitute snack items for your child on a daily basis.

Allergies and Food Restrictions

Please assist us in serving your child's food needs by providing an updated allergy/food restrictions form anytime your child's food limitations change. If your child does have food allergies or restrictions, we strongly recommend that you provide your child's daily snacks as well as lunch. Your participation in the shared snack monthly grocery donations will be waived. You may choose to have your child continue to participate in the shared snack, but, while we will do our best to insure that your child is not offered foods on their allergy/restriction list, we can not guarantee 100% compliance.

Toys and Sharing

Please leave personal toys at home. They generally create an unwanted distraction at school. However, children are encouraged to bring non-commercial items that support the themes and curriculum to share at circle time. Look for information from your child's teacher regarding planned share days.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Birthdays are important and exciting landmarks for children. In the Fox Class we will be using a special format to celebrate each child's birthday. On the child's birthday we will use a celebration designed by Dr. Montessori that helps the child to understand the passage of time. The birthday child will carry a globe around a representation of the sun once for each year old he/she is. We would also like to create a little time line, with your help. If you can provide a photo of the child at each age and a short highlight about what your child was like, what they enjoyed doing at each age, we will create a time line of their personal history. We invite you to come and take part in your child's birthday circle, but if you are unable to attend, you may provide the pictures and notes for the teacher.

Birthday circles will take place at 11:15 am in the Fox Class. Children are welcome to bring a SMALL treat to share with their friends. Small cookies, single stick fruit popsicles, or individual ice cream cups are nice choices. Store bought cupcakes tend to be 50% frosting – and that's the 50% that the children will eat, so we respectfully ask that if you would like to bring cupcakes you provide home-made mini cupcakes or order cupcakes without frosting which we will cut in half. The children enjoy sharing a treat with friends, but please remember that we have children who need to rest!

Chipmunk and Squirrel Class children may not use this format. Please check with your child's teacher for current information on birthday celebrations in these classes.

We learn about and celebrate many varied holiday celebrations. We try to focus on the social and cultural meaning of the celebration and the common images and decorations used in conjunction with the celebration. We do not address specific religious teachings.

Field Trips

The Fox Class takes a number of field trips each year to enrich the children's understanding of the world they live in. When we go on field trips, we will provide a minimum of one adult supervisor to every 5 children using parent volunteers to supplement the teaching staff. Separate permission is obtained in writing for these trip

and parents are encouraged to participate. Please provide an age appropriate car seat for each child attending a field trip. Chipmunk and Squirrel Classes do not go on field trips.

Parent Teacher Conferences

It is helpful for parent and teacher alike to take some time to talk about the child's progress and accomplishments, as well as bring up any concerns the parent or teacher might have. Parents are encouraged to speak to the teachers on a daily basis to discuss the day's events and the weekly topics with their children. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, in November and April. The director or a teacher may request a conference, if needed, to discuss a behavioral problem that is not improving. A parent may request a conference with a teacher at any time by making a written request to the director.

Wellness Policy

We try to protect the health of our school community. The staff assesses each child's health upon entering the school and will not accept a child who shows signs of illness. If a child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will request that you come and take the child home.

Please notify the school immediately if your child has an infectious disease or condition so that we can notify the other parents of the exposure.

If your child is showing any of the following symptoms they should stay home. If these symptoms appear while the child is at school the child will be sent home:

- **Fever:** Has a fever of 100 F or above or has had a fever within the last 24 hours. Child will be allowed to return after they have a normal temperature for at least 24 hours without medication.
- **Colds:** Has a runny nose (white, yellow or green discharge) and this condition is less than three days old. Shows other signs of oncoming cold: glassy or watering eyes, listlessness, etc. Children who have had a cold for more than three days, or who have a note from a physician stating that the child is no longer contagious may return.
- **Cough:** Has wet wheezy cough. Children who have had a cough for more than 48 hours, or who have a note from a physician stating that the condition is not contagious may return.
- **Eye Infections:** Green or white discharge from the eyes may indicate Pink Eye or conjunctivitis, which can be highly contagious. Children will be allowed to return after all symptoms have disappeared, 24 hours after beginning medication for the condition, or with a note from a physician stating that the condition is not contagious.
- **Sore Throat:** Evidence or complaint of a sore throat or discomfort swallowing. Child will be allowed to return once symptoms have disappeared.
- **Diarrhea:** Recurring loose stools when not food related or when associated with other symptoms of illness. Child will be allowed to return after they have had at least one normal bowel movement.
- **Other Conditions:** Other symptoms which might warrant exclusion or special attention are vomiting, unusual pain or aching, unusual listlessness or weakness, skin eruptions or rashes and headaches.

Medications

LAM staff will administer over-the-counter and prescribed medications as directed and approved with a signature by the child's parent or guardian. A medication form must be completed each time a medication is to be given by the staff. All medications must be provided in the original container, no larger than 6 oz., and must have the child's name written on them. Prescribed medications must be provided in the original container with the prescription, doctor's name, and child's name printed on it.

Incidental Health Management

LAM staff will attend to some chronic health management situations as noted below. We do not currently offer gastronomy tube care or emptying an ileostomy bag.

- **Blood-Glucose Monitoring for Diabetic Children** We will provide blood glucose monitoring for children 24 months and older. We will record test results and provide them to the parent or authorized representative. We will not be responsible for determining appropriate insulin doses based on the results but will communicate the results to the parent. We prefer to work with continuous glucose monitoring systems. Staff will NOT use hypodermic needles to administer insulin. Child must have an insulin pump or the parent or authorized representative must administer insulin shots. Staff will follow the standard precautions for handling blood and we are required to report to the State Department of Health that we are performing blood glucose tests. In order to provide this service the parent must provide the following:
 - A testing device approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration for over the counter use without a prescription.
 - A written permission form for staff to administer the test and training for the staff who will be doing so.
 - Written instructions from the child's physician on how to perform the test which must include proper use and handling of lancets, cotton balls, or other items used while conducting the test, how to determine if the test results are in the normal or therapeutic range for the child, how to identify symptoms of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia and actions to take when results are not within the normal or therapeutic range for the child, any restrictions on activities or diet that may be necessary based on test results, telephone numbers for the child's physician and the parent or authorized representative.

- **Glucagon for Diabetic Emergency** We will keep onsite a Glucagon kit onsite for emergency use. In order to provide this service the parent must provide the following:
 - Training and written directions from a person designated in writing as a competent trainer in writing by the child's physician. The competent person may be a parent or authorized representative. Proof of this training will be kept on file. Training and written instructions must include how to recognize the symptoms of hypoglycemia and take appropriate action, how to properly administer the glucagon, to call 911 and the child's parent or guardian immediately after administering the glucagon, how to recognize potential side effects of glucagon such as nausea and vomiting and the need to place the child on his or her side to prevent choking, how to review the glucagon for expiration, to document the child's file each time glucagon is administered.
 - Alcohol wipes to be used for injection site and needle.

- **Inhaled Medication** We will administer inhaled medications as needed. In order for us to provide this service the parent must provide the following:
 - Written authorization to administer inhaled medication
 - Written instructions from the physician including all of the following information: specific indications and medication pursuant to the prescription, potential side effects and expected response, dose-form and amount to be administered pursuant to the prescription, actions to be taken in the event of side effects or incomplete treatment response pursuant to the prescription, instructions for proper storage of the medication, the telephone number and address of the child's physician. These instructions must be updated annually.
 - Provide training to any staff who will be responsible for administering inhaled medications.
 - Form LIC 9166 (Nebulizer Care Consent/Verification – Child Care Facilities) documenting authorization from the child's parent or authorized representative and verification of written instructions.

- **EpiPen Jr.** We will keep onsite an EpiPen Jr. onsite for emergency use. In order to provide this service the parent must provide the following:
 - Written authorization to administer the EpiPen Jr. if needed.
 - Insure that EpiPen is not expired.

Discipline Policy

When the environment is interesting and harmonious mutual respect naturally occurs. When people treat each other with respect, there is little need to settle disputes. We have established a few basic rules that help provide an harmonious learning environment for all.

In the event of a disturbance we use the following positive discipline techniques that help the child to learn to manage their own behaviors and never make the child feel humiliated.

- **Prevention** - The most important part of our discipline plan is taking the time to create an environment that is safe and inviting, carefully explaining the basic rules of respect to each child, and modeling those rules ourselves. Transitions can be difficult for children so we prepare the children by explaining what is going to happen next, who will participate, what any special rules of the activity might be, and how we are going to move from this activity to the next.
- **Positive Redirection** - We use distraction and redirection to interest the child in a positive alternative to the disruptive behavior. Children respond much better when asked to DO something as opposed to being asked NOT to do something. For example, if a child knocks down another child's tower of blocks, instead of saying to the child, "do not knock down that child's tower," the teacher will positively redirect child by saying, for example "Can you build a tower with those blocks over there?"
- **Natural and Logical Consequences** - The teacher will determine a relevant and related consequence appropriate to the behavior being corrected and will then take the time to explain, at the child's eye level and in clear and simple language what will happen if the child persists in the inappropriate behavior. It is then very important that the teacher kindly but firmly follows through with the outcome if the child continues the behavior.
- **Talking and Negotiating** - We work with children, teaching the words to describe their feelings and encouraging them to express their needs. Children are naturally focused on their own needs and desires. We help them to work things out with other children and with teachers by expressing their needs, understanding the needs of others and trying to come up with alternatives that meet everyone's needs. In the event that a child hurts another child, we will focus first on determining the nature of the injury. Then we will work with the two children to help them verbalize their feelings and think of a better way to resolve the situation.
- **Individual Time** - If a child persists in being disruptive or hurtful, we will ask the child to work on an individual project or stay near a teacher until they are ready to participate safely within the group again.
- **Separation** - If repeated attempts at positive discipline have failed and the unacceptable behavior is causing a disruption in the classroom, the child may be removed from the classroom to be supervised by the director or center manager until they are feeling ready to participate in the group again. The director may request a conference with the parents to enlist their help in correcting the behavior. The center also reserves the right to dismiss a child if, in the opinion of the school, the child's behavior is negatively impacting the other children's learning environment or endangering anyone else at the center.

Harsh or humiliating discipline techniques such as spanking, pinching, screaming or yelling, name-calling, swearing or shame are never permitted at the center. **All adults including staff, parents and visitors must abide by this policy while in or around the center or they will be asked to leave the center.** We reserve the right to discontinue services to parents who do not abide by this policy.

Accidents or Emergencies

Every effort is made to keep children safe. However, accidents do happen. Incidents, accidents and injuries will be recorded on an Accident/Incident Report and a copy will be provided for the parent (one copy remains in the school). Included in this report are the following: name and age of child involved, date and place of accident/incident, description of event, and action taken by staff.

Should a major accident or incident occur, our staff will react immediately to administer emergency procedures as follows:

- The caregiver will administer first aid immediately if necessary.
- The Director/Administrative Staff will attempt to contact the child's parents.
- If parents or the alternate emergency numbers can't be reached, the director has the authority to call a previously designated physician and/or call 911 for treatment and/or transportation to a hospital.
- If deemed necessary, the staff will call 911 before trying to reach parents.

Disaster Plan

LAM has a disaster response plan in place. We have routine fire drills so that the children and staff will know how to respond in the event of a disaster. We have emergency lights and supplies stored on-site in the event that the children must remain at the center for a period of time.

We may request donations of emergency food supplies including canned foods and water. Parents may want to provide additional personal emergency items like a space blanket, family photos, a small flashlight or a special small toy.

Communication

Communication between parents and staff is very important and LAM is dedicated to providing a number of ways to communicate.

Phone Parents can call us any time. We try to have a staff member available to answer the phone. If there is not staff available to answer the phone, you can leave a message and we will respond as soon as possible. Phone messages are retrieved first thing in the morning daily. For important things like vacation dates, conference requests or special pick-up times, please provide a written notice. Written notices should be handed to the teacher or placed in the "In Box" by the office.

Newsletter We create a monthly electronic newsletter via email to inform the LAM community about the month's focus and activities as well as upcoming events like book donations, fund raisers, holiday closures, field trips, etc. **The newsletter is our main vehicle for communicating to parents so we highly recommend reading it each month.** If you are unable to receive it via email, please be sure to let the office know and we will provide a printed copy. Newsletters, contact list, classroom photos and other parent resources can be found on our Parent Login webpage. The password will be provided to you at the beginning of the school year and in each monthly email.

Annual Calendar We provide an annual calendar that shows center closures, dates for potlucks, conferences, field trips, etc. We make every effort to follow the calendar as is, but if date changes must be made they will be noted in the newsletter and on the classroom whiteboards. The calendar is available on our website in both pdf and Google calendar formats.

E-mail The center's email address is mindy@coastredwoodsmontessori.com, or svpreschool@comcast.net. While emails are generally checked daily, for urgent communications, please use the phone or write a note.

LAM Community Contact List LAM families are listed in a LAM Community Contact List. We publish cell phone numbers, or home phone numbers if a cell phone is not provided, and email addresses by default. We do not supply physical addresses. Please let us know immediately if you do not wish your information to be included. Information is never shared with outside agencies or individuals.

Donations

Our program is greatly enriched by family donations. Donations count as parent participation. We graciously accept donations of:

- Books
- Cut flowers and garden plants or seeds
- Outdoor toys
- Puzzles
- Cultural artifacts
- Nature Magazines
- Yard Work and Facility Maintenance

Supporting Your Child's School Experience

Independence at Home Our early childhood program focuses on giving children skills to be independent. We encourage them to pour, sweep, sponge, chop, serve and dress themselves. You can support these activities at home too.

Allowing a child to "help" can take longer and result in a mess! But it is a wonderful experience for the child. Consider setting some things up in your home to allow your child to successfully manage common tasks. For example, put milk into a smaller pitcher and allow the child to pour milk for cereal. Place snack items or fruit on a low shelf where the child can help himself. Place cups and a water container down low so that your child can get a drink without help.

Focus on Phonics It is important that a child come to understand that letters are symbols that represent sounds. This is a tricky concept, but once understood, rapid progress toward reading can occur.

In the LAM classroom we call letters primarily by their phonetic sound. In addition, we primarily work with lower case letters. When reading books, children will encounter mostly lower case letters and their transition to reading will be smoother with a solid recognition of the lower case symbols.

We encourage you to utilize these two key techniques when working with your child at home as well.

Learn More About Early Childhood Development and Education Philosophies

Below are just a few books that we can recommend if you are interested in learning more about early childhood development.

- [The Montessori Method](#), Dr. Maria Montessori
- [The Secret of Childhood](#), Dr. Maria Montessori
- [The Drama of the Gifted Child](#), Alice Miller
- [Children; The Challenge](#), Rudolph Driekurs
- [Miseducation](#), David Elkind
- [The Hurried Child](#), David Elkind
- [In Their Own Way](#), Thomas Armstrong

Use Our Teachers as a Resource

Our teachers have a wealth of training and hands-on experience working with children. Feel free to speak with them. They may be able to provide ideas for age appropriate and popular activities or games or positive discipline techniques for handling problem situations.

Schedule of Holidays and In-Service Days

We are closed for the following days annually. Please check the annual calendar for exact closure dates for this year.

Labor Day
Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving
Winter Break
Staff Development Day in January
Staff Development Day in March
Memorial Day
Independence Day
In-Service 3 days in mid August, prior to the new school year

Center closure days are taken into account when we publish monthly tuition rates. To simplify monthly fees we have averaged costs over the whole calendar year so that your tuition remains the same every month. There is no reduction in tuition when a center closure day falls on one of your child's regularly scheduled days or if your child is absent.

Admission Policies

Before a child's first day at LAM, a registration packet must be completed for each child, and the first month's tuition, and a registration fee must be paid for each child.

Forms

The following forms are required by State Licensing and must be completed and returned to us one week before the child begins attending. Children without completed forms may be dropped from the program and placed back on the waiting list.

Admission Agreement You will be asked to sign an Admission Agreement stating the child's attendance schedule. Your monthly tuition will be based on your contracted schedule.

Emergency Information This form includes very important information about whom we can contact in an emergency and who can pick-up the child. No child will be allowed to leave the school with a person not listed on the emergency card. We require a minimum of three emergency contacts.

Allergy/Food Restrictions

Directory Participation

Child's Preadmission Health History

Field Trip Release

Physician's Report This must be signed by a licensed physician and affirms that your child is free of disease, has had a TB test within the last year and identifies any special needs your child may have.

Emergency Medical Consent

Copy of Immunization Records Current immunizations are required for enrollment

Parents Rights

Personal Rights

Caregiver Background Check Information

School Supplied Sunscreen Permission

Two-Week Notice

Two weeks written notice must be given to withdraw a child from any program. Any balance due will be due and payable by the child's last day of enrollment. Tuition must be paid for the full two weeks, even in the event that our child is absent from the program.

Open Door and Non-Discrimination Policy

We invite you to drop in unannounced and visit the center any time your child is on site. Little Acorns Montessori is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Children are considered for enrollment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin or any other basis prohibited by law.

Dismissal Policies and Procedures

Failure to Pay A child may be dismissed if tuition payments are 15 days past due. LAM will attempt to readmit students once the past due amount is paid, but we cannot guarantee that space will be available.

Late Arrivals or Pick-Ups If a child is dropped off or picked up late more than 6 times, they may be dismissed from the program at the director's discretion.

Inappropriate Behaviors LAM staff understand that children will not be perfectly behaved at all times, and that they may have rough days occasionally. Teachers are committed to using the positive discipline techniques described above to help the child move toward more appropriate behavior. However if a child shows continued disruptive behaviors, including, but not limited to, use of foul language, verbally or physically abusive behavior towards teachers or other children or behavior that endangers others in the center or impacts the ability of the staff to meet the needs of other children in program, the teacher or director may request a conference with the parents and may, at their discretion, terminate enrollment at any time

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook, and welcome to Little Acorns Montessori.