



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.

We serve infants, 6 months through 24 months. We serve children 2 years to 6 years old in our preschool program. A child must be primarily potty trained prior to entering the preschool program. We offer a toddler program. A child who is between 18 months and 36 months of age may participate in the toddler program with written permission from the child's authorized representative. No child in the toddler program shall be placed in the preschool program before the age of 30 months without written permission from the child's authorized representative.

Our infant, toddler and preschool programs are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Full-time and part-time schedules are available.

Referral Credit Program

We understand that many parents look to friends and neighbors with greater experience to help them with the important decision about which school to send their child to and your positive referrals are very important to us. If you refer a family to Little Acorns Montessori, Quail Hollow Montessori, or Coast Redwoods Montessori, when they begin attending you will receive a referral credit of \$100. Please help us to thank you by letting us know when you refer a family, and by encouraging the family to note on their application that you referred them.

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

Change Fee - For every change in start date or schedule of a reserved spot a change fee may be charged. In addition, a change fee will apply to currently enrolled students for 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 act as a deposit which will be applied toward the account balance 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 Deposit – 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 deposit 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 deposit will be due, which will be the difference between one month of tuition and the waitlist deposit already paid. If the start date is less than 30 days in the future the waitlist deposit 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 the first day of school. If you paid a registration fee less than six months prior to the start of the school year, you are exempt from this fee for one school year. Current registration fee is posted on our rate sheet.

Annual Registration Deposit

We begin planning enrollment for the preschool class in April for the coming school year. We put out a summer and fall participation form, on which you are asked to let us know if you plan to have your child out for the summer, and if your child will be returning for the next school year. In order to hold your child's place for the coming school year, a non-refundable Registration Deposit equal to one month of tuition at the rate for the coming school year, for the schedule your child will be attending, is due along with the summer/fall participation form at the end of March. When your child begins attending as planned in the new school year, the deposit will be applied toward the first month's tuition. A Change fee would apply if you change your schedule from that reserved for the new school year. The Registration Deposit is non-refundable so if your schedule is reduced, you will not receive a refund for the difference between the Registration Deposit and the new schedule rate for the first month of school.

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 of service. 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 payment online through www.myprocare.com and through the Procare mobile application. 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. Missed days of care may not be "made up" by attending on a different day.

Late Pick-up Fee – Half-day children need to be picked up at 12:15 or 1:00, depending on the program they are enrolled in. Full-day children need to be picked up no more than 9 hours after drop off, and no later than 5:30pm. 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 (50% of the week's tuition). You may use vacation credit for two weeks of vacation during each school year (September 1 through August 31). **During our summer session, (June, July and August) you may take 4 consecutive weeks or more off, pay no tuition, and hold a place to return to by paying the annual registration deposit.

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. You can also access your account through myprocare.com.

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, doing laundry or providing fresh cut flowers for the classrooms. Once a year we have a "Facility Support Day" on a weekend when families come to help with minor maintenance and beautification projects and you could earn nearly half of your hours on this one day. Check out the Parent Participation board for ideas, sign-up sheets and recording form. There is a fee of \$15 per hour charged for parent participation hours not completed.

In September, or during your first month of attendance if your child begins after September, a deposit of \$15 per hour for half of your parent participation requirement will be charged to your account. Whenever you turn in a Parent Participation Form recording hours completed, we will credit your account at the rate of \$15 per hour of participation. A note in the memo line of the credit will identify how many hours you have left to complete. In January a deposit for the second half of your parent participation hours due will be charged to your account. You will have until August 15 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. Children must be dropped off by 8:50am. We appreciate your punctuality. If you arrive after 8:50 you may be turned away, or asked to return at a less disruptive time. Please communicate with the teacher in advance, preferably 24 hours, if you need to drop-off or pick-up your child at a special time so that the teacher may be prepared to help the child with minimal disturbance to the group. **Continued late arrival may be grounds for termination of care.**

Upon arrival a teacher will greet you at the door and assist your child to put their things away. Please encourage your child to carry their own things as they are able.

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, make changes in person to your child's emergency contact form, or send a request through Procure. 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. Please use the Procure application to sign your child in and out daily. If an approved person, other than a parent, picks up, the teacher will sign the child out with a note on who picked up the child.

Arrival and Departure Times

Infants 6 months-18months (Chipmunk Class)

Full Time 8:00 – 5:30 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 8:00 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

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

Toddlers 18 months-30 months (Squirrel Class)

Full Time 8:00 – 5:30 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 8:00 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

Morning Session 8:00 – 12:15 Children may arrive between 8:00 and 8:50 and leave at 12:15. *If a child has a sibling in the Fox Class they may be picked up at 12:30.

Preschool 2.5 years – 6 years (Fox Class) *must be out of diapers, except for nap time.

Full Time 8:00 – 5:30 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition. Children may arrive between 8:00 and 8:50 and leave after 3:00.

Morning Session 8:00 – 1:00 Children may arrive between 8:00 and 8:50 and leave at 1:00.

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 put on and take 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.

Children need to have sturdy, comfortable shoes so that they can develop coordination and balance, and to limit accidents caused by slipping or unsecured shoes. Do not send children to school in flip flops, ill-fitting shoes or high heeled shoes.

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, book or cartoon 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 at least one 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 check extra clothing occasionally to be sure that it still fits, and that we have plenty available. **Be sure to LABEL everything!**

Necklaces must have quick release closures. Necklaces can be a suffocation hazard so they may only be worn at school if they have a magnetic quick release closure.

Rain Suits – Each child will be required to supply a one piece rain suit during the rainy season, along with suitable outdoor shoes and alternative indoor shoes to change into. Rain suits allow the children to play on wet ground and play structures keeping them dry and comfortable.

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. Please do not send your child with a nap toy that makes noise. 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. **You will be charged a \$25 replacement fee if your child’s nap sack is lost or destroyed.**

For infants, please supply a fresh standard crib sheet for each day that your child will attend in a week, along with a small blanket (for a child over 12 months) or sleep sack. Please provide a bag to store your linens in at school. We will send home the used sheet each day.

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 when the children go outside anytime after 12:00pm when the children are playing in the yard.

Food Service Policy

Our toddler and preschool programs include nutritional snacks provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon. For infants, parents provide all food. Please see the infant supplement to the Parent Handbook.

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 in the Squirrel Class is eaten around 11:45 a.m. and in the Fox Class at 12:30pm. Children 18 months through 6 years old 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 themselves. Resealable 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 or silicon 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, granola bars with chocolate, etc. These items will be removed from lunches.
- We encourage you to avoid "pouches" and instead choose whole cooked or raw fruits and vegetables.
- No juice will be served at school. Please do not provide juice containers in your child's lunch. We will provide water.

A child's lunch should be well balanced, containing a protein, a grain, 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)	Tortilla or corn chips
Whole Nuts	Popcorn
Cherries with pits	
Celery sticks (may be cut in ¼ inch cubes)	
Hot dogs (may be cut in quartered slices)	

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. 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. 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 ensure that your child is not offered foods on their allergy/restriction list, we cannot guarantee 100% compliance.

Toys and Sharing

Please leave personal toys at home. They generally create an unwanted distraction at school. However, some classrooms have a sharing time when children can bring non-commercial items that support the themes and curriculum to present or “share” at circle time. Look for information from your child’s teacher regarding any 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. Please provide one 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 timeline and post this personal history in the classroom for all to view. We invite you to come and take part in your child’s birthday circle.

Birthday circles will take place at our 12:00pm circle in the Fox Class. Please check with your child’s teacher to confirm a date and time. Children are welcome to bring a SMALL treat to share with their friends. Please consider low sugar, low food coloring options like all fruit single stick popsicles, mini muffins, fruit and cream, small meringues, or individual ice cream cups are nice choices. You might also consider savory treats like a thin slice of pizza or your child’s favorite snack cracker. 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 limit the sugar content!

Squirrel and Chipmunk Class teachers may not use this format, but will honor each child’s birthday. 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. Keep in mind that part of going on field trips is gaining independence and feeling of ability in the wider world. Giving your child a chance to go on a field trip without you is valuable for their development. Therefore, once we have enough drivers, we may decline additional parent chaperones, or we may specifically request a child’s parents do not attend if they have attended other field trips. Separate permission is obtained in writing for these trips. Please provide an age-appropriate car seat for each child attending a field trip. There will generally be a donation requested to cover field trip fees. We reserve the right to not to include a child in a field trip if we feel that they will not be safe, for themselves or others, outside of the school environment. Children not attending the field trip will not have care during the hours of the field trip. Squirrel and Chipmunk 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. However concerns should never be discussed in front of the child. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, in November and April. The director or a teacher, or a parent may request an additional conference at any time, if needed.

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, Flu or COVID 19:** Has a fever of 100 F or above or has had a fever within the last 24 hours. Child will be required to stay out for 2 school days following the onset, and allowed to return after they have a normal temperature for at least 24 hours without medication and other symptoms have significantly improved.
- **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 health management situations as noted below. We do not currently offer gastrostomy 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 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 store a child's 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.
 - EpiPen Jr., unexpired.

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 a 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 "You 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 a teacher, 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 using a digital Incident Report delivered through the Procure mobile application and will include the 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 and earthquake 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 request that each family, upon joining the school community, donate either 6 cans of emergency food or 6 containers of water.

Communication

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

Procare Application The quickest way to contact your LAM team is generally by using messaging in the Procare mobile application. And this is the primary way that will contact you as well, both for individual and for group messages.

Written Notices For important things like vacation dates, conference requests or special pick-up times, please provide a written notice. Written notices can be emailed, sent via Procare messaging or documents, handed to the teacher or placed in the "In Box" by the office.

Phone Parents can call us any time, but we are not always available to answer the phone. If there is not staff available to answer the phone, you can leave a message, but you will be more likely to get a timely response by sending a message in the Procare application.

Newsletter We deliver a monthly electronic newsletter via email to inform the LAM community about the month's focus and activities as well as upcoming events like potlucks, holiday closures, field trips, etc. **The newsletter is one of our main vehicles 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 class information is generally sent through Procare.

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 and sent via Procare. The calendar is available on our website in both pdf and Google calendar formats.

E-mail The center's email address is LAMpreschool@gmail.com. While emails are generally checked daily, for urgent communications, please use Procare or the phone or give a note to a teacher.

LAM Community Contact List LAM families are listed in a LAM Community Contact List. We publish cell phone numbers 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
Durable child sized furnishing and shelves

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. There is a helpful section on our website called "Child at Home" on the top navigation bar. It has suggestions for independence at home and also has some resources from our parent education sessions.

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
- The Absorbent Mind, Dr. Maria Montessori

Use Our Teachers as a Resource

Our directors and 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 5 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 at least 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. The admission agreement will be generated after we have received all the other forms listed below.

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, and notes TB risk factors.

Emergency Medical Consent

Immunization Records Current immunizations are required for enrollment

Parents Rights

Personal Rights

Caregiver Background Check Information

School Supplied Sunscreen Permission

Permission for School Personnel to sign in/out your child

Permission to text parents

Other forms, as requested by the school

30 Day Notice

30 days 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 30 days, 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.

Infant Program Supplement to Parent Handbook

At LAM we have created a special learning environment for 6 to 24 month old children with a variety of age-appropriate activities to practice large and small motor control, early sorting and classification and language development. We use role modeling to help the children learn to respect others. We do not use high chairs, swings or other containment equipment. We focus on toys and activities that require the child to be actively engaged in manipulation and observation. We do not use any electronic entertainment gadgets nor do we watch any television or videos. Infants will not go on any field trips.

The infant program is open from 8:00am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. Full-time and part-time schedules are available. We do not offer any additional services and do not utilize any consultants or community services in this program.

All toys and furnishings in the infant environment are disinfected each night, as well as during the school day as needed. We do our best to limit exposure to disease, but symptoms of illness usually occur after the child has been contagious.

Infant Needs and Services

During the enrollment process, LAM requires an opportunity to observe the child in the center environment prior to acceptance, to ensure that there are no obvious special needs that LAM is unable to accommodate. In addition to the other forms required from all families, infant families are required to complete an Infant Needs and Services Form prior to attendance. The Infant Needs and Services Plan must be updated by the parent, teacher and director quarterly, or more often if there has been a significant change in the child's needs. Infant families are also required to complete an Individual Sleeping Plan (Lic9227) prior to attendance.

Arrival and Departure

Full Time: 8:00-5:30 Children may receive up to 9 hours of care with full-time tuition.

Morning Session: 8:00 – 12:15

Please be aware that you may be walking through the preschool classroom during class or nap time, and try to have a minimum impact on the classroom.

Daily Schedule

Below is a general schedule. Each day may be a little different based on the needs of the children.

8:00 – 9:00	Indoor open play during drop offs. Breakfast
9:00 – 9:30	Art and table jobs
9:30 – 10:30	Snack time and prepare for outdoor time
10:30 – 11:30	Outdoor time
11:30 – 11:45	Circle time and prepare for lunch and nap
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 – 2:30	Rest time
2:30-3:00	Putting away nap items and diapers
3:00 – 3:30	Afternoon snack
3:30 – 4:00	Art, music and circle time. Prepare for outdoor time.
4:00 – 5:00	Outdoor time
5:00 – 5:30	Indoor open play during pick-ups

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. 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. Each child must have clothing appropriate for outdoor play in a variety of weather. Each should have shoes, socks, pants, a shirt, and a jacket or sweatshirt and a one piece rain suit depending on temperatures. A hat is optional but encouraged.

Please provide extra clothing labeled in case of messes or accidents. Provide non-skid socks or soft shoes for indoor use.

Diapers

Please provide diapers for your child. Mark the package with your child's name. You may provide whole sleeves which will be stored at the center. We use an average of 6 diapers during a full day of care. You may choose to use cloth or disposable diapers but must provide a wet bag to store them in and we are unable to rinse them. Soiled diapers must be picked up daily. You may provide an over-the-counter diaper rash cream. We must have a medication authorization form completed for diaper cream, non-school sunscreen, and any other non-prescription or prescription products you want us to administer at school, and the medication must be provided in the original container and marked with the child's first and last name. LAM will provide wipes. You may provide wipes if you prefer a different brand.

Naps

Please supply a fresh crib sheet for each day that your child will attend in a week, along with a pajama and/or small blanket, depending the age of the child. Children under 12 months must have a pajamas that allow arms and legs to be separate and move freely. Children over 12 months may use a blanket. You are required to take home and wash all bedding and pajamas at the end of each week.

Children under the age of 12 months sleep in cribs, unless a parent requests other sleeping accommodations. Children may not have any stuffed animals or loose blankets or toys, other than a pacifier with nothing attached to it, in the crib with them. Children over 12 months old sleep on mats on the floor, allowing them freedom and independence to get up by themselves when they awake. They may use a blanket.

We log observations of sleeping children every 15 minutes, noting whether they are asleep on their back, stomach or side, and if and when they awaken. These logs are maintained at the facility for 3 years.

Food Service

All food and drink required by a child enrolled in the infant classroom must be provided by the parent. We provide a basket for each child for refrigerated foods. Dry, canned and jarred foods may be stored in the child's cubby until opened. All foods must be labeled with the child's full name and the date provided. Please provide a variety of foods. We will feed infants every 2 to 3 hours. Our standard policies regarding sugar, food coloring and choking hazard foods apply to the infant classroom.

Parents need to provide all bottles that may be needed during the day. We can handle breast milk, or mix formula for you. Please provide formula in an unopened container, clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Foods must be ready to serve. We do not have a food prep area in our classroom. We can warm foods.

Discipline Policy

In the infant program we provide close supervision and utilize only the following discipline techniques:

- **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. We stay very near the infants in order to be able to physically intervene quickly to prevent an accident or incident from occurring.

- **Positive Redirection** – We use distraction and redirection to interest the child in a positive alternative to disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Children respond much better when asked to DO something as opposed to being told NOT to do something.

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.