



### **Curriculum Background/Philosophy**

Little Gardens is based on the belief that creative play and curriculum can be merged with Early Childhood Education. Our motto, "Where Every Child Blossoms", derives from the educational philosophy that if a myriad of opportunities to learn is provided, each child will blossom. Each child will learn and grow through a variety of hands on methods engaging their five senses. Some of these methods include: the exploration of nature, drama, technology, music, language, dance, and art. As a result your child will developmentally grow in areas such as: social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language. Additionally, this method allows children to transition experiences to active learning that becomes meaningful, engaging, and creative. We believe that if a child is given a solid foundation and exposure to problem solving strategies and early literacy, they will be in the best position possible to succeed. Our focus on academic skills and our play-oriented activities offer choices to children in a fun exciting environment that both support and foster their freedom of expression, independence, self-awareness and academic excellence.

### **Purpose**

Our purpose is provide parents a safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate environment that children can grow their learning experiences and excel in their transition throughout their academic journey.

### **Staff**

Our teaching team here at Little Gardens is comprised of teachers and assistants that have a genuine love for the caring of children and have a background in child development. To ensure the safety of all of our Little Gardens, all staff members prior to employment go through a rigorous background, fingerprinting, and reference check. While employed at Little Gardens all staff members employed full time are required to attend workshops, lectures, take CPR and First Aid training, and take continuing education classes to further their knowledge in early childhood development.

## **LITTLE GARDENS PROGRAM**

### **Circle Time:**

Circle time begins our academic day. During circle time we discuss the calendar, shapes, numbers, letters, holidays, weather, families, sharing, story time, and theme of the week. Each week will consist of a theme. Children will be engaged during circle time through finger plays, songs and stories.

### **Centers**

Centers are set up to encourage children to explore different concepts, problem solving, manipulate varied materials, work together, and develop various motor skills. Centers are designed to meet the developmental needs of each group of children. Some of these centers include technology, home life, library, puzzles, building, counting, letter building, arts and crafts, music, physical activity and dramatic play.

### **Aspiring Artist**

In the Aspiring Artist program, children are engaged in art with varied materials and techniques. Children are encouraged to express themselves through their art. Art will be theme related according to the week (i.e.: season, literature, colors, etc.).

### **Phonetics**

Phonetics is the key for success in early reading skills and pre-writing. Phonemic awareness the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate letter sounds. This will determine your child's preparation for early reading and writing. This includes letter recognition, letter sounds, decoding, and blending.

### **Early Readers**

Reading is an integral part of our program. Throughout the day children will be engaged in story time as well as receive multiple opportunities to explore books from their classroom library. Pre-reading skills are through read alouds, picture walks, and story interpretations.

### **Early Writers**

Pre-Writing skills are acquired by engaging the child in multiple opportunities to write as well as utilizing multiple materials (i.e.: sandpaper, sand, pencil, shaving cream, crayons, markers, chalk etc.). Letter formation, grasping, spacing, and posture are all important skills taught through the early writer program.

#### **Feel Good Musicians**

Learning through music is both fun and effective. Children will interact with different musical instruments as well as sing-alongs and creative dance.

#### **Little Mathematicians**

Critical thinking, problem solving, analytical thinkers is what the Little Mathematician program is all about. Children will build, add, subtract, problem solve all using manipulatives. This program is designed to allow the child to build on their previous knowledge and experiences. Many parts of this program are Montessori inspired.

#### **Inquisitive Scientist**

This is a hands-on learning program on introducing basic scientific concepts: life cycle, gravity, animals, weather, etc.

#### **Playground**

Children will go outside a minimum of once per day except in extreme cold or inclement weather. While outside children will engaged in both gross motor activities (i.e.: climbing, jumping, pushing, pulling, catching, and running) and fine motor activities (i.e.: sand and water play, finger painting, and drawing).

#### **Nap Time/Quiet Time**

All children need time to wind down and rest their minds and bodies. While these times vary depending the age of the child, children in the extended day and full day program are encouraged to participate in nap and quiet time. During nap time contemporary lullabies are played to soothe the children and allow them to wind down and rest their minds. Nap time/quiet time occurs in our classrooms. Children enrolled in our program nap on cots or mats provided by Little Gardens. Parents are responsible for sending in blankets and sheets. Blankets and sheets will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered and must return the day the child returns to the program. Children that do not participate in nap time will be allowed to do quiet time activities instead (puzzles, books, and drawing).

### **18 MONTHS TO PROGRAM**

Our toddler program is developmentally designed for children 18 months to 36 months of age.

It embodies all the main components of the Little Gardens program with appropriate accommodations and modifications to develop their cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language skills. It is essential for all children to feel safe, secure, and loved. Social and emotional development is essential in our toddler program; this is implemented through finger play, nursery songs, and interaction amongst all students. Motor and social development will be implemented through floor time and encouragement of their discovery and investigation of their environment. Children enrolled in the toddler program will be automatically part of the Potty Training Program and the Little Communicator Program.

#### **Little Communicators (Language Program)**

Infant and toddlers strive to want to communicate their needs, wants, and feelings. The Little Communicators Program gives children the tools for early communication through the use of signing and body language expression. Each new sign will be given in isolation. After the child has mastered the sign in isolation the child will then learn to generalize it using the sign to express their needs in their environment. The purpose of this program is to promote language and motor skill development.

#### **Potty Training Program**

Children still in diapers are automatically part of phase one in the Potty Training program. Diapering will be done at regular intervals and specific to each child to ensure proper hygiene of diapered children. Potty Training can be a challenge with young minds. They are torn between being independent yet still need a sense of security. Potty Training **cannot** be rushed.

First phase of the program is interest in going in the potty. The second phase is the ability to stay dry for an extended period of time. Lastly the third phase is consistency. In our potty training program children will be taught indicator words for using the potty as well as exposure to literature, hygiene and routines. **Consistency and positive reinforcement are key in this program.** This means what happens in the program must happen at home for success to occur.

## **DROP IN PROGRAM**

The Drop In Program addresses an emergency situation in which childcare is needed (no more than 20 days in a calendar year). A full registration is required for your child to be enrolled in the Drop In Program. Due to the nature of the program, availability is extremely limited. A minimum of a 48 hour notice is required to ensure availability.

## **TRANSITION PROGRAM**

The Transition Program caters to parents that are interested in enrolling their child in Little Gardens. It allows a gentle transition period for children to acclimate to the program. Due to the nature of the program, availability is extremely limited and a full registration packet must be filled out prior to starting the Transition Program.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

There are two formal parent conferences. You will be notified of these conferences in advance. In these conferences, we will discuss the child's progress throughout the program, concerns, and accomplishments. Informal conferences may be made at any time with advance notice.

## **BRIGHTWHEEL**

Little Gardens has partnered up with Brightwheel to bring daily reports directly to your mobile device or computer. With Brightwheel teachers can communicate with parents with ease. Brightwheel enables teachers and parents the ability to: check-in, have daily updates, display photos of children in their appropriate programs, the ability to have notifications, messaging, and so much more. Please note updates are available at the end of the day or when the teacher has the ability to post during down periods. Direct supervision, programing, and attention is the lead priority within our classrooms.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Hours of Operation**

- ❖ Little Gardens is open from 6:30am to 6:30pm. We are open 52 weeks per year. The holiday schedule is provided yearly.
- ❖ In the case of weather related emergencies, please tune into our local news. If the East Meadow Public Schools are closed due to weather related emergencies, or natural disasters, Little Gardens will be closed as well. In addition if there are prolonged power outages, Little Gardens will be closed. This is to ensure the safety of students as well as staff.

### **Tuition Policy and Contract Cancellation**

- ❖ Payments are due on the first of the month and are on a monthly basis. We reserve the right to suspend child care to anyone who is excessively late on payments. All payments must be made on **the 1st of the month** during drop off or during pick up. Any late payments made after 6:00pm closing on the first of day of the month will incur a late fee of \$25 per each late week.
- ❖ Any checks that have insufficient funds will incur a \$35 late fee. Checks that continually have insufficient funds will not be accepted as a form of payment.
- ❖ All payments made with credit card are subjected to a 4% fee.
- ❖ Upon enrollment a registration fee of \$75 is due as is non-refundable.

### **Attendance**

- ❖ Little Gardens is an all-inclusive program; we do not pro-rate tuition for early dismissal, late drop off, days missed or days off.
- ❖ Three day program days cannot be made up or switched around for missed days or holiday closings.
- ❖ For any schedule changes a two week notice is mandatory.
- ❖ Operational hours are from 7am to 6:00pm. Please note the opening and closing of all operations is between these hours. For late and emergency pickups, all parents are required to have a local emergency back up and a notice must be sent out to the director and administrator of the designated person to pick up your child. In addition all emergency alternate pick ups must have proper id. No exceptions are made.

### **Trial Period**

- ❖ There is a two week (14 calendar days) trial period to ensure Little Gardens is a right fit your child and your family. During this trial/transition period the childcare agreement can be terminated by Little Gardens. Should you want to remove your child from the program after the trial period, a two week notice is required. Short notice will forfeit any tuition reimbursement.
- ❖ Little Gardens, reserves the right to immediately dismiss a child, if we are not able to meet the child's needs or if the child is endangering or threatening other children. In addition, termination can also be if a parent becomes aggressive, threatens, or harasses staff or other children within the program.

#### **Spot Reservation**

- ❖ Little Gardens understands circumstances may arise in which you may need to reserve a spot or a break from care due to personal matters, financial hardships, or summer session breaks. To secure a spot for your child, parents are responsible to pay half of the tuition rate until your child resumes care. A two week notice of care reinstatement is mandatory.

#### **Clothing and Supplies**

- ❖ Little Gardens is an interactive learning environment. Children are encouraged to explore their surroundings and be completely engulfed in learning through different modalities. It is important for them to be comfortable and safe.
- ❖ Due to the nature of play our Little Gardens will get dirty from time to time. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child. They should not be wearing anything that you will be worried that can't be stained, torn, or dirty. Comfort is key to ensure their complete immersion of the program.
- ❖ Sandals, dress shoes, and open toe shoes are **not permitted**. Shoes must have rubber soles. In addition, all loose jewelry or hair accessories (i.e.: necklaces, bracelets, loose clips, hair bands, etc.) are not permitted, as they are a choking hazard.
- ❖ Children must be properly dressed according to the weather. Please make sure your child comes properly dressed (warm clothes in the winter, cool in the summer) to safely enjoy outdoor play.
- ❖ Diapered children must have an adequate supply of diapers and wipes.
- ❖ Upon the first day, you must provide two changes of clothes including underwear and socks. This will remain at Little Gardens for accidents. ***Children enrolled must provide two changes of clothes.***
- ❖ Please **label** all items that belong to your child must be labeled.

#### **Drop Off / Pick Up**

- ❖ Upon arrival, each child will receive a well inspection check to verify they are free from illness and ready for the day. This inspection must be done with the parent present. Please allow five minutes for this inspection.
- ❖ In order to ensure safety and security of all children, each visitor must sign-in and sign-out daily.
- ❖ Children will only be released to an adult, age 18 or older and identified on the registration form unless there is a written notification.
- ❖ Children must hold an adult's hand walking to and from the car.
- ❖ Parents must make Little Gardens aware in advance of any alternate pick up arrangements.
- ❖ Proper identification required (Photo ID) for alternate pickups.

#### **Non Violence**

Little Gardens does not permit any type of weapon or aggressive play. It is essential that our facility provides a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment for all children. We strive and dedicate ourselves to create a play environment in which children can make positive choices and decisions to exert self-awareness and self-control through play and communication.

#### **State Inspections**

Little Gardens is licensed by The Office of Children and Family Services. We are compelled by law to abide by the strict rules and regulations set forth by New York State. We are routinely inspected in order to ensure all parents/guardians and their children that every effort is being made to meet all State regulated requirements including: correct student ratios, ongoing education program for staff, proper medical information on file for students and teachers, proper inspections on all equipment, and documentation of fire drills.

#### **Meals**

- ❖ All children are eligible for the meal program.

- ❖ For the Full Day and Extended day programs, two meals and two snacks are provided daily. For the half day programs, one snack is provided. We are a peanut-free environment. We pride ourselves on serving nutritious and safe meals to children, and our food program is in compliance with all of New York State guidelines. Parents will receive a month menu list. Children are allowed to bring their lunch but it must remain free of nuts.
- ❖ Little Gardens follow the department of health guidelines.
- ❖ Parents are responsible for feeding their child if he/she will be arriving to the program after the beginning/end of a meal.

### **Birthdays**

We love birthday celebrations and we celebrate each child's birthday. You are welcomed to bring a nut free snack for the children to share. In addition you are welcomed to be a part of the celebration.

### **Toys**

Children are encouraged to bring an item that will comfort them during nap all other toys must stay home. This is to ensure the health, safety, and harmony amongst our Little Gardens.

### **Lead Testing**

New York State Department of Health requires that all children provide proof of Lead Testing and medical immunization/health exam prior to enrollment into child care programs.

### **Medication**

According to State Regulations, Little Gardens is not licensed to administer Medication with the exception of:

- ❖ Over-the-counter Topical Ointments, Sunscreen and Topically Applied Insect Repellent, which must be provided in original container and labeled with the child's name.
- ❖ Emergency Care in Life Threatening Situations: The administration of emergency care through the use of epinephrine auto-injector devices when necessary to prevent anaphylaxis or nebulizer pump in the case of an asthma attack. A medical release must be filled out and notarized to grant Little Gardens to administer emergency care.

### **Illness**

We here at Little Gardens understand that it is unavoidable for children to contract germs that may get them sick, especially when engaged in small groups. Although we try our very best to minimize contamination of toys and the spreading of germs, it is important for our parents to understand our policies and procedures around illness. We here at Little Gardens are licensed as a "well child" family group daycare. If a child is out due to illness a note must be provided from a doctor stating they can rejoin daycare. If your child has had a fever, diarrhea or has vomited, your child must be fever free or well for a minimum of 24 hours. This is in compliance with state and health regulations and will be part of our policy and procedures. Any child who has any of the following **cannot** attend the program:

- ❖ Sign of possible moderate or severe illness including: unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing; and/or inability to function in a group setting. The attention the child requires, due to any cause, compromises the care of other children.
- ❖ A child exhibiting a fever of more than 100°F degrees axillary or more than 101°F orally: excluded for a minimum of 24 hours.
- ❖ Persistent, frequent cough that interferes with the child's activities.
- ❖ Diarrhea defined as an increase in the number of stools, compared with the child's normal pattern with increased stool water and/or decreased form (diarrhea that cannot be contained within diapers or toilet use).
- ❖ Effortful vomiting; unless that vomiting is determined to be non-disease related and the child is not in danger or dehydration.
- ❖ Rash with fever or behavior change or a rash that is possibly infectious.
- ❖ Chicken pox: 6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted. Children who receive the chicken pox vaccine should not be excluded unless they develop a rash. Rashes can develop up to six weeks after a child receives the vaccine. Rashes from the vaccine usually disappear sooner (by 1 to 2 days).
- ❖ Strep throat/scarlet fever: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- ❖ Impetigo: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- ❖ Scabies/head lice: allowed to return to child care the morning after the first treatment.
- ❖ Purulent conjunctivitis ("pink eye"): defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge often with matted eyelid after sleep and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelid or skin surrounding the eye. Exclude until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- ❖ Mouth sores associated with an inability of the child to control his/her saliva.

- ❖ Failure to comply with New York State Immunization Laws.

### **Accident Procedure**

In the course of the day, children will occasionally have accidents. In the case of an injury, including a minor accident, such as a scraped knee which may require first aid attention, an accident report will be completed. It is important that you are aware of any incident that occurs while your child is in our care, the accident report will outline exactly what happened, how your child responded and what actions were taken. In the event of a serious accident or should there be a need for emergency medical treatment the provider will do what is in the best interest of the child according to the following but not limited to:

- ❖ Administer first Aid.
- ❖ Call a parent (or emergency contact if a parent cannot be reached).
- ❖ Stay with the injured child until a parent or appointed contacted person arrives.
- ❖ Have the child transported to the Emergency Room.

In all cases of accident or injury, the provider will fill out an accident report form, which will be signed by both the provider and the parent of the child involved.

### **Evacuation Drills**

Little Gardens conducts monthly Evacuation Drills. In the event of a real emergency, all parents will be notified in accordance to the emergency card.

### **Shelter-in-Place Drills**

Shelter-in-place drills are emergency drills conducted twice a year and indoors. Typically sheltering-in-place take less than a half hour.

### **Discipline**

The philosophy of discipline at Little Gardens is on the belief that each moment is a teachable moment. Our goal is to help your child develop appropriate socialization skills as well as develop a positive self-image. We encourage children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control. In order to achieve these goals, we apply principles that build individual self-esteem and avoid actions that will frighten, humiliate or shame a child. In situations in which a child becomes a danger to themselves or others, the child will be redirected away from the other children and taught self-calming techniques. When the child calms down and is refocused, the child will rejoin the group. Violence or repeated aggressive behavior are **not permitted**. Little Gardens strives to provide a positive and nurturing environment for all children. Children that display aggressive behaviors that endanger other children on a consistent basis will be removed from the program. Behavior management techniques used in our program are:

- ❖ Redirection. In a conflict, give an alternate toy or activity to one of the children competing for the toy. Have multiples of popular toys.
- ❖ Focusing on "Do" rather than "Don't." For example, "We walk inside" instead of "Stop running inside." Offer choices: "You can either sit on the rug or at the table for story time."
- ❖ Encouraging children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, suggest using the phrase, "I was playing with that toy."
- ❖ Praise positive behavior: "Thank you for using your words." Model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example. Arrange the program space to positively impact children's behavior. For example, avoid large open spaces that might encourage children to run indoors.
- ❖ Listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. Keeping the children engaged with activities helps prevent conflict.
- ❖ For preschool and school age children, involve the children in the development of the classroom rules and consequences.

### **Confidentiality**

All educational, health records, parental information is completely confidential. A parental written request will be required in order to release a child's records, unless the request comes from a state agency or is court ordered. Staff members may be also advised on such records to ensure adequate and appropriate care.

### **Custody & Visitation Issues**

- ❖ If there are custody or visitation issues, Little Gardens must have a copy of the custody, visitation orders, or agreements. We cannot deny the release of a child to a parent without a legal court documentation such as custody or a restraining order. Without an official documentation pertaining to custody and or restraining order on file Little Gardens must grant any parent access to the child.

- ❖ All information used in the event of an emergency will be noted by the custodial parent.
- ❖ All mailings, conferences and special functions information will be sent to the attention of the custodial parent.

**Child Abuse**

We are mandated by New York State law to report any suspicions of child abuse. The hotline for child abuse is 800-635-1522.

**Brightwheel**

Brightwheel is intended as a communication between staff and parents. All notices, messages, pictures, and postings are program specific and not used for marketing or social media purposes. Parents are aware that group pictures taken of your child and posted on Brightwheel are only accessible to staff and other parents within your program. Parents that choose to sign up for Brightwheel understand that upon termination of care their account is deactivated and deleted. In addition, Brightwheel only displays information for the current month. It is the responsibility of parents to save any pictures, postings or notices.

**PROGRAM DETAILS, POLICY AND PROCEDURES**  
**PARENT/PROVIDER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Please initial items below as acknowledgement that you have received, reviewed, and understand Little Gardens policy and procedures:

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I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understand the Little Gardens Program Details, Policy and Procedures.

I \_\_\_\_\_ will/will not like to sign up for Brightwheel and understand its intended purposes and uses.

**Guardian Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Account for Brightwheel** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Account for Brightwheel** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_