

Little Friends Early Learning and Child Care Center

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Information Guide

Location

We are conveniently located on Route 125 in Freeport (122 Wardtown Road). The center is situated 3.5 miles from I-95 Exit 22 and approximately 4 miles from L.L. Bean.

Setting

The center's country setting offers ample opportunities for outdoor play. Children enjoy our large backyard, wooden play system, and four-season outdoor play house.

Philosophy

Our goal is to help every child to experience the joy of learning. We strive to teach the whole child by fostering social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. We treat children as individuals and try to help them to reach their full potential. Children learn through play and social interaction with peer and teachers. Age-appropriate, teacher-directed, early-learning activities are supplemental. The program is designed to help each child achieve age-appropriate development by kindergarten entrance.

Curriculum

A curriculum booklet is available upon request. Please see the director for more information.

Children with Special Needs and/or Developmental Delays

If a child is having difficulty and/or developmental delays (assessed by CDS), we provide supplemental support to help the child progress toward readiness. The child is given appropriate preliminary experiences to help achieve age-appropriateness. We then reinforce these initial steps with additional support, encouragement, and practice in the areas posing difficulties.

Parents are encouraged to supply pertinent developmental information prior to the child's enrollment to ensure appropriate and successful programming.

Hours

Little Friends is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Ages of Children Served

The center accepts enrollment for children ages 18 months through five years.

Ratios

We provide care for as many as eight children (with two staff members) in the infant/toddler room and as many as 14 children (with two staff members) in the pre-school room.

Qualifications

I have worked as a child-care professional for nearly two decades, including two years as an elementary-school teacher and 14 years as the owner of a day-care center. I also hold a bachelor's degree in elementary education and have two children of my own. The staff has a minimum requirement of a high-school diploma; most members have completed college coursework in education. All staff members are required to participate in training workshops and CPR/First Aid certification.

Television

We feel that children benefit from interaction and active play. Therefore, television is used at the center only for special occasions.

Parental Involvement

We welcome you to come and visit your child. Parents/Guardians volunteer to be Guest Readers, Guest Cooking Class Instructors, Guest Teachers (share an arts and crafts activities or learning game). Many parents/guardians also join the children at snack times. Little Friends understands with greater communication and sharing we can improve the child, family and school connection. We also provide monthly On Call Times, Daily Notes, and have a Staff Mailbox for enhanced communication. We encourage and welcome communication and participation in your child's day!

Daily Schedule

7:30 - 9:00	Drop off, indoor play
9:15	Morning Meeting
9:30	Morning Snack
9:45 - 10:30	Early Learning Activities
10:45	Story Time
11:00 - 11:30	Outdoor Play Time
11:45	Lunch
12:30	Transition to Rest Time
1:00 - 2:00	Rest Time for All Ages
2:00 - 3:00	Continued Rest, Transition to Play Time
3:00 - 3:45	Indoor/Outdoor Play Time (seasonal)
3:45	Group Story Time
4:00	Afternoon Snack
4:30 - 5:30	Indoor/Outdoor Free Play

Behavior-Management Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are our most effective methods. When children receive positive, nonviolent and understanding reactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. We will use positive methods of child-behavior management that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. The individual needs of each child will guide our efforts in this process.

These are our most commonly used methods of addressing inappropriate behavior:

Redirect: We try to involve a child in an appropriate activity, while distracting him or her from behavior that is problematic.

Ignore and Notice: We generally ignore negative attention-seeking behavior, but always notice and verbally reinforce positive behavior. This technique is used only when the “negative” behavior is not harmful or disruptive to the other children.

Say “Not OK”: We use the term “That is not OK” as a gentle reminder that a behavior is not acceptable at the center. We then recommend another activity that is appropriate for the child.

Offer Choices: We often give the older children a choice of two ways to alter inappropriate behavior. We suggest one option that puts the child in control and another that places the teacher in an authoritative role. Both options will ultimately discontinue the troublesome behavior.

Cool Down: The teacher may temporarily separate a child from the group for the purpose of mediation, not punishment. Children may also self-remove in order to regain self-control.

Rate Schedule

Toddler Classroom (approximate ages 18 months to three years)

Daily.....	\$41.00
Full-Time.....	\$195.00

Preschool Classroom (for children ages three through five)

*Half day (until 12 noon).....	\$26.00
Daily.....	\$38.00
Full-Time.....	\$180.00

Yearly Registration Fee

Due in September and/or time of registration.....	\$50.00
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*Half-day spots are limited. Please see director for more information and availability.

Illness Policy

Keeping children healthy and avoiding the spread of contagious illnesses is the responsibility of both staff and parents/guardians. Staff responsibilities for providing group child-care include taking special care to limit the spread of illnesses. While Little Friends cannot prevent all sickness, staff and parents/guardians can reduce its incidence and severity with good hygiene practices. Parents/guardians can support the well being of all children by keeping children at home when sick and/or showing signs of illness. Staff will notify parents/guardians and ask that ill children be picked up from the center.

Please use the following guidelines when assessing whether your child should attend the child-care center:

I. Guidelines for Exclusion from the Center

Fever: Axillary temperature (taken from the armpit) of 100 degrees or above. (Masking a fever with medication still does not change the contagious factor.)

Vomiting: If your child vomits at school, you will be called immediately to pick up your child.

Diarrhea: If your child has three or more episodes of runny, watery stools, or any occurrence of uncontained diarrhea while at the center, you will be called to pick up your child.

Cold: A child should be kept at home if symptoms include thick, green/yellow discharge, severe coughing, or difficulty breathing.

Scabies/head lice/ringworm/pinworm: Please consult a physician for treatment.

Rash/blisters/sores: Please consult a physician to diagnose any unexplained skin symptoms.

Redness/discharge from eyes: Please consult a physician to confirm or rule out pink eye.

Any physician-diagnosed contagious disease: Consult a physician for treatment and to determine a plan for inclusion.

General unwellness: The parent/guardian will be contacted if a child repeatedly complains of sore throat, stomach ache, earache, or other pain or discomfort. If a child is exhibiting unusual behaviors (specific to the child) such as lethargy or prolonged crying, a parent/guardian will be contacted to establish a plan or to be sent home.

Readiness for participation: Please do not send your child to school if he or she is unable to participate in the normal day's activities.

II. Guidelines for Inclusion/Return to the Center

Fever, vomiting, diarrhea: Children may return to the center once they have experienced 24 symptom-free hours (without medication).

Cold: Children may return with mild cold conditions only, free of signs of respiratory illness.

Antibiotics for contagious condition: A child may return after taking the medication for 24 hours.

Physician-diagnosed contagious condition: Please submit a physician's note indicating the child's readiness to return.

Unwellness: Please return the child to school only when well enough to participate in a full day's activity.

III. Determination of Exclusion/Inclusion

The final decision on whether to exclude a child from the center will be made by the center director and the staff caring for the child. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Any illness that requires greater care than the child-care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children will be a determining factor for inclusion or exclusion. Likewise, a child needing a great deal of one-on-one attention and time may jeopardize the staff's ability to provide proper care for all children and will be a determining factor for exclusion/inclusion.

Medication: We can administer antibiotics and other medication to your child only with written and signed consent.

Child-Care Agreement

I. FEE GUIDELINES

Schedule of payment

The fee is to be paid weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, by check or cash. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged for any late payment. Payment is due on the last day of the week your child attends. Exceptions will be made if your child is absent due to illness or emergency. Please plan to pay promptly upon your child's return.

Please note that all accounts are paid in advance, toward the **following** week or month of care.

The fee is still required when a child is absent due to vacation, sickness, school closings, or other personal reasons.

There is a yearly registration fee of \$50.00, due in September and/or time of registration.

The charge for returned checks is \$35.00.

Holidays and Vacations

The fee is still **required** on the following holidays and vacation times when the center is closed: Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day (July Fourth) Break, Columbus Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break (determined by the Freeport Public School calendar, including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day,) one week paid vacation in April (also in accordance with the Freeport School calendar), as well as two staff days during the months of March and June.

The fee is **not required** for the following holidays and vacation times when the center is closed: one week summer vacation in August (see the center's calendar for specific dates) and one week mid-winter vacation during the Freeport Schools' February break.

Late fee

A late or over-time fee is charged for picking up a child after the center's closing time. A charge of \$5.00 is added for the first 5 minutes and a \$1.00 a minute after the first 5 minutes. Please always call if you are going to be detained; take into consideration the driving conditions.

Part-time enrollees

If your child is enrolled on a part-time basis, we ask that you adhere to the schedule you have arranged with the center. We cannot guarantee that an opening will be available on alternate days or that you will be able to add extra days to your child's schedule. A waiting list is available for parents or guardians interested in adding an extra day. Little Friends requires a minimum of two days per week for part-time enrollment.

Child-Care Agreement

Reduction, Change of Enrollment, Withdrawal

A two-week notice is required to request a reduction, change, or withdrawal in enrollment. Please understand that Little Friends may not be able to accommodate a change in scheduling. The center is a year-round program and seasonal spots are not available.

Snow Days

Little Friends may have to close for severely inclement weather. If Freeport schools are closed, it is possible that our program will be canceled as well. The decision will be made by 6:45 a.m. Please call the center at 865-1169; the outgoing phone message will inform you of our status for the day. Information about Freeport Schools' closings is posted on Channel 6 (Storm Center!). If our outgoing phone message does not indicate a closing by 6:45 a.m., you can assume the center is in session.

Early Release/Delayed Opening

Depending on weather conditions and forecasts, the center may be opened late or closed early. Please call us at times of inclement weather for up-to-date information. If the center must close early, a staff member will contact you as soon as that decision is made. The outgoing phone message (after 6:45) will reflect only changes in our regularly scheduled program. Otherwise, you may assume we'll offer a regular school day.

Emergency Closings

The fee will be required when the center is closed due to emergency closings beyond the control of the director (severe weather conditions, power outages, health epidemics.)

II. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Notification of child's absence

Parents/guardians will call the center by 9:00 a.m. to report the absence of a child or change in schedule for the day.

Drop off, Pick up

Parents/guardians will inform the center in advance if a child cannot be brought or picked up at the regular time.

Parents/guardians must call and/or leave written permission to allow a child to be picked up by anyone other than the adults specified on the "emergency contact" form.

Please help us ease your child's transition to Little Friends each day by communicating your needs at drop-off and pick-up times. The staff is willing to assist as needed on an individual basis. We ask that parents avoid the rest time for pick-up/drop-off, as this tends to disrupt the other children. We also ask that parents strive to arrive at the center by 9:00. If you cannot drop off by 9:00, please wait until 9:30 so as not to disrupt circle time.

Cases of illness

Parents/guardians agree to pick up a sick child and/or keep a child home in case of illness. (Please see our illness guidelines.)

Appropriate dress

Parents/guardians agree to dress the child properly for the weather at all times. We will spend time outdoors each day, weather permitting. Seasonally appropriate spare clothes must also be provided to the center.

Change of contact information

Parents/guardians will report any changes in address, telephone number, email address, or physician-contact information to the center.

Materials to be provided

Parents/guardians will supply rest-time items (crib sheet, blanket, and if desired, a pillow and/or stuffed animal). Parents/guardians also agree to wash the items on the first day of each month and when needed; the items will be returned the following school day.

Parents/guardians agree to supply diapers/pull-ups, and wipes, as well as seasonal needs such as sunscreen.

The day-care center will provide snacks for the children each day. Parents/guardians agree to supply a nutritional lunch.

Child-Care Agreement

Birthdays

Each child will receive recognition on his or her birthday. Parents/guardians are welcome to send a special snack to enhance the celebration.

Written notification/withdrawal policy

Written notification will be given by parents/guardians for: changes in the child's day-care needs, vacation schedules, and administration of medications.

III. PARENTAL ADVISORY

Parents/guardians are welcome to ask for assistance at any time they feel inconvenience or at risk using the outdoor steps to the day-care center.

Parents/guardians understand that the children will engage in the following activities over the course of the year: playing on the wooden play system and swings; using sports equipment such as bats, balls, and hockey sticks; and sledding during the winter months.

Students' photographs and artwork will be displayed within the day-care center.

Email addresses of parents/guardians may also be displayed in email communication to the Little Friends community.

Parents/Guardians are asked to keep appropriate, professional boundaries with Staff including resisting a relationship through any type of Social Media with Staff.

Parents/Guardians must maintain professional boundaries with respect to confidentiality issues regarding Staff and other children at all times, including off LF premises.

IV. LITTLE FRIENDS' NOTIFICATION/TERMINATION POLICY

Written notification will be given by the day-care center for the following: rate changes, school calendar, or any proposed changes in this agreement.

Two weeks' notification will be given to parents regarding termination of the contract. Termination may occur if the terms of this agreement are not fulfilled.