

Little Earth Shepherds Preschool/Daycare



Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Excellence in Early Childhood Education



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Greetings from the Director!

We're delighted to welcome your family to Little Earth Shepherds Preschool, where we embrace the NAYCEE curriculum and a dynamic STEM approach to ignite your child's natural curiosity and love of learning.

Here at LES, we believe in challenging every child to reach their highest potential — encouraging them to think creatively, explore beyond the ordinary, and develop critical problem-solving skills that will serve them for life. Our nurturing community supports not only academic growth but also the social and emotional connections that make learning meaningful and fun.

Together, as one LES family, we inspire innovation, celebrate discovery, and cultivate a lifelong passion for knowledge. Thank you for trusting us to partner with you on this exciting journey!

About the director:

I have always been passionate about early childhood education, bringing over 20 years of experience in childcare and five years as a school director. I hold a bachelor's degree in Sociology from William Paterson University and have had the privilege of working in various educational settings, where I gained valuable insight into different curriculum models and innovative teaching methodologies.

My leadership journey began as a STEM Director, where I developed a deep appreciation for hands-on, inquiry-based learning. Working in corporate childcare facilities allowed me to experience a variety of curriculum approaches and explore new ways to enhance children's educational experiences. I also had the unique opportunity to live in Europe for six months, where I observed different teaching styles and educational philosophies. This experience broadened my perspective on early education and reinforced my belief in the importance of diverse and adaptive teaching methods.

As the Director of Little Earth Shepherds Preschool, I am excited to bring my expertise and passion to this incredible learning community. My goal is to cultivate a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can thrive, develop a love for learning, and reach their full potential. Alongside my dedicated team, I strive to implement innovative and well-rounded teaching strategies that inspire creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity.

Beyond my professional life, I am fluent in Spanish and conversational in Portuguese. I am happily married and a proud mother of three wonderful daughters. My eldest daughter is currently attending Seton Hall University, majoring in English, while my youngest daughter is a student at Little Earth Shepherds, making this center even more special to me on both a professional and personal level. My middle daughter is the tinker of the family, always creating, inventing, and exploring new ideas—a true testament to the importance of fostering curiosity and creativity in education. Our family also includes our beloved Chihuahua, Penelope.

Welcome to Little Earth Shepherds — Where Curiosity Meets Discovery and Family Grows Together!

At [L.E.S.](#), we're more than a preschool — we're a close-knit family dedicated to nurturing young minds to explore, imagine, and thrive. With hands-on STEM experiences and a thoughtfully crafted curriculum, we inspire each child to think creatively, embrace challenges, and reach their fullest potential.

Together, as one **LES** family, we celebrate every step of learning and discovery, making each day an exciting adventure filled with growth, friendship, and joy.

Our Mission Statement

At Little Earth Shepherds Preschool, we cultivate a warm, inclusive community where children are encouraged to explore, learn, and grow through hands-on STEM activities and a nurturing curriculum. Supported by a dedicated board, we strive to inspire curiosity, creativity, and confidence, empowering every child to reach their fullest potential.

Our Goal

To ignite young minds with curiosity and creativity through hands-on learning, while fostering a close-knit community where every child receives personalized attention—ensuring they never get lost in the crowd. We strive to empower each learner to embrace discovery and cultivate a lifelong passion for learning.



We are proud to participate in the Grow NJ Kids Program, a New Jersey state initiative in partnership with Rutgers University. This program is designed to promote and support high-quality early childhood education and childcare across the state.

Grow NJ Kids offers valuable resources that help participating centers regularly assess and update their educational tools and curriculum. Through this continuous evaluation process, educators ensure that their programs not only meet but exceed state standards, effectively addressing the developmental needs of young learners.

STAFF OF LES

At Little Earth Shepherds, our dedicated teaching team is the heart of our preschool's success. All our teachers are CPR certified and maintain up-to-date training hours to ensure the highest standards of safety and care. We hold monthly staff meetings to stay aligned, prepared, and work seamlessly as a team. Several of our educators bring valuable Montessori experience, and this year, some are advancing their expertise by enrolling in CDA courses to deepen their early childhood education knowledge. This commitment allows them to translate new learnings directly into enriching experiences for our LES children. Together, my team and I are passionate about nurturing young minds and creating a vibrant, supportive environment where every child can thrive.

Please see our website for more information on our staff including names and classroom placement.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2025-2026

HOURS OF OPERATION 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Mon to Fri

MONTH	Important Dates	DETAILS
September 2025	Tuesday, Sept. 3rd Friday, Sept 19th Friday, Sept. 26th	First Day of School! Bike Day Back to School Night
October 2025	wk of Oct. 6-10 Fri, Oct. 17 Friday, Fri, Oct. 24	Parent Teacher Conferences Bike Day Jack O' Lantern Contest
November 2025	Monday, Nov. 14 th Monday, Nov. 17 th Tuesday, Nov. 25 Wednesday, Nov 26 Thursday, Nov 27-28	Family Fun Night Fall Picture Day. Individuals and Class Friendsgiving Potluck 1/2 Day no aftercare! Thanksgiving! CLOSED
December 2025	Friday, Dec. 5 Friday, Dec. 19 Wed. Dec. 24	santas workshop 6-9pm (TBA) Polar Express Family Fun Night 1/2 Day NO AFTERCARE
January 2026	Mon. Jan 5th Mon. Jan 19 wk of 20-23	LES reopens for the New Year! Martin Luther King Day CLOSED parent/teacher conference
February 2026	Friday, Feb. 13 th Monday, Feb. 16	Valentine's Family Fun Night President's Day/ Staff Training CLOSED
March 2026	Fri. Mar 20 Fri Mar 27	Leprechaun Trap & Bike Day L.E.S science Fair
April 2026	Thurs, Apr. 2 Fri, Apr. 3 Fri. Apr 17	Easter Egg Hunt! Good Friday. CLOSED Bike Day

May 2026	Fri. May 8 wed. May 13 Mon May 25	Mother's Day Tea Event @ 3:00 Bike Day Memorial Day CLOSED
June 2025	Fri. June 12 Fri. June 19 Fri. June 26	Bike Day 1/2 Day Graduation Last Day Of School
July 2025	Fri. July 3 Mon July 6	4th of July CLOSED First Day Of Camp
August 2025	Mon Aug. 31st	Last day of summer camp!

Weather Related Closings

LES will follow East Brunswick School District for [weather closures only!](#) (If they close due to weather we will also be closed! We are not obliged by changes in closure dates, we are not obligated to take away federal holiday closures due to weather closures/make up days due to school closures.)

- If the district calls a delay, we will delay. LES will open at 9am for all students Before Care is then cancelled.
- If the District closes early, we **may** have early dismissal determined by the weather.

School closures, delays and dismissal changes will be communicated through the Brightwheel app. Please also sign up for alerts from the East Brunswick School District to receive additional messages on closings. Check the district home page for information.

- Please note, if the CDC or NJ State Issues a statewide closure, we will follow the government guidelines.
- If we are closed due to State Emergencies, Pandemics, & other issues beyond our control.
- Please remember **there are no refunds.**

Little Earth Shepherds Preschool

NJ State Department of Children and Families Office of Licensing INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under the provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report

them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center. Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint OOL/Information to Parents/May 2019 Page 2 of 2 investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director,

who can advise them of what opportunities are available. Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772. Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

- 1) The child is always supervised.
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- 3) Thirty minutes (30min) or more after closing time (6pm) and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the Director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that:

- 1) The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.
- 2) Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent, or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- 3) If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the 24-hour State Central Registry Hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

For school-age childcare programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instruction from the child's parent(s).

Little Earth Shepherds Preschool

Policy on the Management of Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

Once the child is symptom-free or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the center unless contraindicated by local health department or Department of Health.

EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Note: If a child has chicken pox, a note from the parent stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTING GUIDELINES

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases, can be found at:

http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf.

Little Earth Shepherds Preschool Social Media Policy

To remain connected to families at all times, Little Earth Shepherds Preschool has established Facebook, Instagram, and Brightwheel accounts. Our pages are public to those who do not possess Facebook or Instagram and Brightwheel allows for all with access to the app to view conversations and media that is posted. These pages are viewed daily and serve as a school resource.

At no time will any photos or videos depicting the children, or their families be placed on our pages unless written consent has been obtained first. Additionally, children's names will never be posted or referenced on Facebook or Instagram posts. The safety and security of our students and their families is paramount to us and for this reason, our page is limited to being used as a resource for families. Any specific or personal communication between the school and parents will be conducted face to face, via phone call, through email or Brightwheel messaging. Below, please find a list outlining the types of communication that can be found on our public pages:

- School reminders
- Emergency closures
- Symposium, Graduation, Back to School Night, and other special event information.
- Early childhood articles and information of general interest.
- Recipes, activities, and other general fun children's information.

Parents are prohibited from posting to their personal social media pages photos or videos of any other than their own without the consent of the other child's parent/guardian. In addition, staff members are also prohibited from posting to their personal social media pages any photos or videos of any child enrolled in the school.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Young children often display age-appropriate behaviors that are a normal part of their development. It is a NJ State licensing requirement to have a Discipline Policy in place that families and staff must provide a signature for receiving and must also be posted for viewing.

We will do our best to work with each child and their family should any need arise that causes concern. Most often a child needs redirection and guidance and this will be the first step we will take when dealing with any discipline issues. Developing a sense of respect for self and respect for others will be part of your child's day and will reduce disciplinary concerns. The following are some guidelines we will use:

- Be positive.
- Praise children for a job well done.
- Be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children.
- Redirect a child when observing a potential situation that is upsetting to them or the friends around them.
- Staff will set clear and consistent limits that will help children practice self-control.
- Staff will model positive behaviors towards others.

The following shall not be tolerated at any time at LES Preschool

- Staff members shall not use hitting, shaking or any other form of corporal punishment.
- Staff members shall not use abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating, or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children
- Staff members shall speak in a calm and reassuring voice.
- Staff members shall not engage in or inflict any form of child abuse and/or neglect.
- Staff members shall not withhold from children food, emotional responses, stimulation, or the opportunities for rest or sleep
- Staff members shall not require a child to remain silent or inactive, which includes "time out."
- Staff members shall not discipline children for failing to eat, sleep, or for soiling themselves
- Staff shall not withhold active play time as a means of discipline unless the child's actions or behavior present a danger to themselves or others.

In cases where immediate response is necessary, the LES Board reserves the right to take action that is in the best interest of the student, staff and school.

As always if there are any questions or concerns regarding this or any of our policies, please speak to the Director at any time.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we may have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with you in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center.

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- ❖ The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- ❖ The parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members or other parents
- ❖ The parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff or other parents.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- ❖ Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- ❖ Failure to complete required forms including child's immunization/medical records (Health record is due before admission to the center)
- ❖ Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- ❖ Verbal abuse to staff or other parents

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- ❖ Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- ❖ Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- ❖ Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children ❖ Excessive biting

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

- ❖ If the remedial actions have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be for a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the situation or to come to an agreement with the center.
- ❖ The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period ❖ The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected changes required for the child or parent to return to the center.
- ❖ The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate childcare (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED FOR THE FOLLOWING

If a child's parent(s):

- ❖ Has made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- ❖ Has reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- ❖ Has questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- ❖ Has not been given a sufficient time to make other childcare arrangements.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION

- ❖ Staff will try to redirect children from negative behaviors.
- ❖ Staff will reassess the classroom environment, appropriateness of activities and supervision.
- ❖ Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- ❖ Staff will praise appropriate behaviors
- ❖ Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- ❖ Child will be given verbal warnings.
- ❖ Child will be given time to regain control.
- ❖ Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- ❖ Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- ❖ Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- ❖ The Director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.

TUITION AND FEES POLICIES

Registration & Tuition Payments

To secure your child's enrollment for the new school year, an annual, non-refundable registration fee of \$75 is required.

For your convenience, L.E.S. Preschool/Daycare now accepts online tuition payments through the Brightwheel app. Families can also enroll in automatic monthly withdrawals to simplify the payment process.

Please note that for the 2025-2026 school year, tuition will increase by 5%. This adjustment allows us to continue providing high-quality programming, resources, and learning experiences for all students.

Please note that using the app for credit card payment will also include a 2.95% convenience fee as well as late fees (ACH transfer fee is \$2.00). These fees are charged by Brightwheel.

Late fees will be \$25.00 added to your tuition payment after 7 days past your tuition due date posted on your monthly invoice.

If your tuition is late by **20 or more days, your child will not be allowed to attend school until your debts are paid.** Payments for June and any delinquent payments must be made by June 7 or your child will not be allowed to attend.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

At L.E.S, the safety of your child(ren) is our top priority. We take pride in providing a safe environment for your kids to learn valuable life skills and grow their academic potential every single day. After much consideration and discussions with the board of L.E.S, I have made the decision to revert to the original L.E.S door protocol and remove parent access codes to our front door for the new year. It is important that our staff carefully and accurately screen anyone who is attempting to enter the building to ensure that they are both authorized personnel, as well as trusted guardians of each of our enrolled students.

In order to execute this successfully, parents will now be required to use our doorbell, call our phone number, or send a Brightwheel message at the time of drop off/pickup for your child(ren) which provides our staff with the ability to see who is requesting access to the door. A staff member will answer the door for you to dismiss your child to you or bring them to their classroom.

For Brightwheel, please send a message when you arrive to ensure your child is ready for pick up and ready for drop off.

COMMUNICATION

At Our Nest, we believe that open and consistent communication between parents, teachers, and administration is essential for your child's success and well-being.

Monthly Newsletters:

As the Director, I personally prepare a monthly newsletter that recaps the highlights and important events from the previous month. These newsletters are uploaded to Brightwheel for easy access and are also posted on the Our Nest bulletin board for your convenience.

Event Reminders:

To help you stay informed, I send timely reminders about upcoming events and special activities. Please be sure to check Brightwheel and the bulletin board regularly so you don't miss out on anything exciting happening at Our Nest.

Daily Reports:

Our staff is committed to providing daily reports on your child's activities and progress. These updates are sent through Brightwheel to keep you connected and informed every day.

Best Ways to Reach Us:

Teachers: The most effective way to communicate directly with your child's teacher is through Brightwheel.

Director (Me): You can reach me via email for any questions or concerns, but the quickest way to get a response is through Brightwheel, as I frequently monitor the platform to ensure smooth daily check-ins and updates.

Phone: Feel free to call us at 732-955-6761 during business hours.

We encourage you to use these communication channels to stay engaged with your child's experience at Our Nest. Your partnership is vital to our community!

GENERAL DAILY SCHEDULE

Our daily routine balances structured learning, play, and rest to support your child's growth and development. Key activities include morning care and breakfast, staggered snack times, rotating outdoor play alongside focused learning centers, lunch, nap/rest periods, and supervised aftercare until 6:00 PM.

General Preschool Daily Schedule

7:00 – 8:30 AM | Morning Care & Breakfast

Children engage in playtime, stories, and crafts. Breakfast is served only during this time, so please send any food your child needs before 8:30 AM.

8:30 – 9:00 AM | Supervised Waiting & Transition

After breakfast, children remain comfortably supervised in Morning Care until their classroom teachers arrive at 9:00 AM to escort them to their classrooms.

9:00 AM | Bathroom, Handwashing & Morning Routines

All students begin the day with bathroom breaks and thorough handwashing to ensure readiness for learning.

9:15 – 9:20 AM | Circle Time

Classrooms gather for group activities including greetings, calendar review, weather discussion, and setting daily intentions.

Snack Times (By Age Group):

9:30 AM: Preppers

9:45 AM: PreK3

10:00 AM: PreK4

Snacks are served in a calm, supervised setting to promote healthy eating habits and social interaction.

Outdoor Play & Learning Centers (Weather Permitting):

Outdoor play is scheduled on a rotating basis to ensure all groups enjoy fresh air and physical activity:

Preppers: 9:45 – 10:45 AM

PreK3: 10:45 – 11:15 AM

PreK4: 11:00 – 11:45 AM

While one group is outdoors, the other classrooms engage in structured learning centers focusing on science, phonics, and math. This rotation supports individualized attention and reinforces essential academic skills.

12:00 PM | Lunch

All students come together in the cafeteria for a calm and social mealtime experience.

12:30 PM | Nap/Rest Time & Quiet Activities

Children who nap are guided to their rest areas following bathroom use. Non-napping children participate in outdoor play or quiet, enriching center activities indoors.

1:30 PM | Bathroom Break & Transition to Aftercare

Children use the bathroom, wash their hands, and transition smoothly to Aftercare.

2:30 PM | Afternoon Snack

A nutritious afternoon snack is provided to rejuvenate the children.

Aftercare (Until 6:00 PM)

Aftercare offers a safe and nurturing environment with engaging activities until parents arrive for pickup.

CURRICULUM

At Little Earth Shepherds Preschool, we are innovators in early childhood education. We work closely with each child, challenging and inspiring them to reach their full potential. Our curriculum is thoughtfully aligned with NAEYC standards and enriched with hands-on STEM experiences that spark curiosity and foster critical thinking.

We recognize the vital role of art and music as powerful tools for developing literacy, math skills, and self-expression. Through engaging activities in music, dance, and art, children naturally build confidence and communication abilities.

Physical activity is seamlessly integrated into every day with access to both secure outdoor spaces and inviting indoor play areas. Our nature-based learning cultivates environmental stewardship and supports healthy growth.

For our PreK4 learners, we follow the East Brunswick curriculum to ensure they are fully prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.

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For our PreK4 learners, we follow the East Brunswick curriculum to ensure they are fully prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten and beyond.

Early Childhood Environmental Education

At L.E.S., we provide engaging, hands-on learning experiences that spark curiosity, creativity, and a love of discovery. Our program is aligned with **NAEYC standards**, **STEM principles**, and the **East Brunswick PreK-4 curriculum**, ensuring your child receives high-quality, developmentally appropriate education.

Children explore through play, hands-on activities, and outdoor learning, guided by well-prepared teachers who support growth across social, emotional, cognitive, and physical domains. Our approach helps build a strong foundation for school and life while fostering a connection to the natural world.

TV/COMPUTER/VIDEO POLICY

Students do not have direct access to technology at LES.

Exposure to technology is limited and teacher directed. Teachers will use videos, read-aloud stories, and other online resources to supplement their lessons.

Our students are primarily educated through initial whole group instruction to introduce themes and objectives and are then broken down into smaller groups to ensure more personalized instruction.

TOILET TRAINING

As toilet training is a part of early childhood development, Little Earth Shepherds will play a part in the training of your child.

We hope this will be a collaboration between us and the parents. Through our joint venture, we are positive your child will have a seamless experience between home and school.

All children who are not yet fully toilet trained will be required to send in all supplies our staff will need to work with your child.

Please dress your child in clothing that will be "toilet training friendly" and send extra clothing.

- Please remember that diaper cream is considered a medication and will require a consent form. If a child has been placed into regular underclothes and has had more than 3 accidents, we will require that the child be put back into a pull-up type of undergarment until training has been complete.

CLOTHING

Please make sure your child is appropriately dressed for the weather.

Layering is the best option as many times children feel warm or cold throughout the day.

Please also remember that we will go outdoors, weather permitting, so appropriate footwear is also necessary. As noted on the list of items to bring with your child to school, you will be required to leave a full change of clothing at school in case of emergencies.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Upon enrollment at our preschool/daycare center, your child will need a few supplies prior to their start.

Each child must have:

- A backpack large enough to carry a folder, spare clothing, snack/lunch for the day, etc.
- Spare clothes to keep in their backpack, as well as spare clothes to keep as their classroom supplies in the event of an accident.
- 1 lunchbox with AM snack, lunch, and PM snack (if provided) clearly labeled.
- 1 plain folder for notices/classwork from the teacher, director, or another staff member.

If your child needs any other supplies, please reach out to their teacher individually through email and they will notify you of anything specific that is needed for school.

NAP TIME

In accordance with NJ State regulations, all children over the age of 18 months, who attend preschool for four or more consecutive hours, must have a daily rest/sleep time for at least 30 minutes a day. We will provide a mat for your child.

Your child is also required to be provided with:

- 1 crib sized, fitted sheet
- 1 small blanket to be used, if needed
- 1 small head pillow, if needed.

All nap/rest time supplies will be sent home on the last day of each week to be laundered and returned to school for the following week.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

State law requires a complete physical examination record be on file prior to your child starting his/her first day of school. Immunization records and physical exams must be **UPDATED YEARLY AND SIGNED BY YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR**. There is no reduction in program fees for days missed due to incomplete records. State law requires that each child enrolled:

- Be fully immunized (including HIB vaccine) in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Be in the process of being fully immunized or
- Have a physician's statement that immunization is contraindicated for medical reason
- Have the parent or guardian's statement that the child has not been immunized due to religious beliefs.
- Provide documentation of a flu vaccine given between September 1- December 31 each year until the age of 59 months.

Please be sure to input your child's immunization and medical history up on the Brightwheel app for easy access to information in the event of a substitute or staff changes.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

Of course, we hope no child will have any type of injury while attending school. However, in the event of an accident/injury, state licensing regulation requires that any injury:

- from the shoulders up
- that breaks the skin.
- a fall greater than the child's height
- an injury that would require emergency services.

will require a phone call to a parent/guardian within 15 minutes of the incident. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, a message will be sent via Brightwheel.

MEDICATIONS

Please notify your child's teacher if medication was given to your child before school. For any medication to be given at school, either orally or topically, a medication consent form must be filled out completely by the parent or legal guardian. You can request a medication consent form from the Director.

Guidelines for administering medications:

Over the Counter Medication

Over the counter medication such as acetaminophen, cough syrup, Calamine Lotion, Sunscreen, Diaper Cream, etc., will be given to a child on the following conditions:

- The parent fills out a medication consent form.
- The medication is brought into school in its original manufacturer's container.
 - The expiration date on the container must be current.
- The parent requested dosage does not exceed the recommended dosage for the child's age or weight as indicated on the label of the medication. This can only be done with a signed note from your doctor.
- Medication is to be brought home when the treatment is complete. Medication not taken home will be discarded.

Prescription Medication

Doctor prescribed medication will be given to your child on the following conditions:

- A medication consent form is filled out by the parents.
- The medication is brought in its original container with a pharmacist's label containing the following information: Child's name, Physician's name, Directions for dosage, filled date, name of medication, expiration date.
- Prescription medication will be sent home at the end of each day.

****Note for Epi-Pens, asthma inhalers, nebulizers - Parent must train staff at the school in the use of this medication equipment and there must be a special care plan for use form completed by a physician. *****

ALLERGIES

If your child has a known allergy, we will ask you to complete a special form. An allergy list will be posted in all classrooms.

If your child requires an Epi-pen or any special medications for this allergy, a medication authorization form must be completed by the child's physician indicating the plan for use, and the medication must be in the original packaging labeled with the child's name.

We will inform any parents of children with an allergy of any parties or special events where there may be food items.

SNACK

For students that do not provide a snack from home, they will be offered a variety of dry snacks and a serving of fruit daily. Fruit varies from season but typically consists of applesauce, fruit cups and/or clementines. Dry snacks may include:

- Goldfish
- Cheez-Its
- Pretzels
- Ritz Crackers
- Animal Crackers
- Graham Crackers
- Teddy Grahams

******Please Note if your child cannot eat these snacks or has allergies you will be required to send in a snack for him/her******

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We would love to celebrate your child's special day here at school! Here are some suggestions for what type of snack your child may bring in to share with the class is as follows:

- Although we do not have a "nut free" policy, we do ask that any food items brought in for birthdays not contain nut products.
- It is always a good idea for young children to share bite sized snack items such as: munchkin donuts, mini cupcakes, or mini muffins if possible.
- Please let your child's teacher know the date and snack item you would like to share at least a week in advance and include an ingredient list.
- You can either drop off the snack when you bring your child to school in the morning. If you would like to come in and share your child's day, please let us know.
- If you are hosting a birthday party outside of the school day and would like to invite students from the school, you can only use the school mailboxes if you are inviting all the children from the class. Please note we cannot give out the children's addresses.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events at Little Earth Shepherds

At Little Earth Shepherds, we love bringing our school community together! Throughout the 2025-2026 school year, we will host a variety of special events that are all listed on our School Year Calendar.

If a celebration or event requires food or party items, a sign-up sheet will be available in your child's classroom. While we are not a "nut-free" school, we kindly ask that all items brought in for special events be nut-free to help keep every child safe.

New this year, we are excited to introduce our Family Fun Night—a chance for families to come together, enjoy activities, and celebrate our wonderful community!

Gifts for Employees

At L.E.S., we value the thoughtful ways families show appreciation to our teachers and staff. The most meaningful gifts are often simple gestures—such as a handwritten note, a child's drawing, or a small token that reflects care and gratitude.

To support families who wish to give, the Director maintains a binder of teacher questionnaires that include each staff member's favorite items, such as scents, candies, classroom supplies, and other personal preferences. This resource is available to help guide you in selecting thoughtful, non-monetary gifts that are both personal and appropriate.

We encourage families to celebrate our staff through these meaningful gestures, which foster joy and strengthen the L.E.S. community.

Parent Participation & Volunteering

At L.E.S., we love welcoming families into the classroom experience! Throughout the school year, there will be many opportunities for parents, grandparents, and caregivers to volunteer and take part in special events.

We'll have sign-ups for activities like reading to the class, helping with celebrations, or sharing your talents and ideas. If you have a special way you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear it!

Our goal is to make your child's journey from home to school feel seamless and connected. By partnering together, we can create meaningful memories and a rewarding experience for your child, your family, and our school community.

SAFETY/SECURITY

At L.E.S., the safety and well-being of our children, families, and staff is our top priority. To ensure a secure environment, we follow these safety practices:

Brightwheel Sign-In/Out: All drop-offs and pick-ups are logged through the Brightwheel app. Families may add up to 3 approved contacts for pick-up. Please notify us through Brightwheel if someone different will be picking up your child.

Emergency Preparedness: In accordance with state protocols, we conduct regular safety drills, including fire, evacuation, and lockdown drills. Fire drills are practiced monthly at random times.

Parent Notification: In the event of an actual emergency, families will be contacted immediately with instructions for safe pick-up.

For additional details, please review our Door Policy.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

At LES, we believe in building strong connections between home and school so that every child can thrive. To support this, we hold parent/teacher conferences semi-annually and also by parent request. A sign-up list with available times will be posted in your child's classroom, and conferences may be held in person, over Zoom, or by phone. Please be sure to let your child's teacher know which option works best for you.

To keep families updated and ensure your child's growth is supported every step of the way, we will also be conducting three formal assessments throughout the school year:

September - to connect with families and establish goals together.

January - to review progress and identify areas that may need extra support.

June - to celebrate growth and highlight how much your child has advanced!

These assessments will travel with your child as they move forward, giving each teacher a clear picture of their needs, strengths, and the areas to reinforce.

LES will continue to hold two conference periods per year, with mandatory conferences in the fall. Spring conferences are optional, but always encouraged if you'd like to meet with your child's teacher. Families are also welcome to request a special conference at any time by reaching out to the Director or contacting your child's teacher directly.

Together, these conferences and assessments help us stay connected and ensure your child receives the best support possible throughout their learning journey. 28

SIGNATURE FOR REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

By providing your initials and signature, you are confirming that you have read and understood the terms and conditions from the included documents provided in your Parent Handbook, such as:

(Initial) _____ State Required Information to Parents Document

(Initial) _____ Little Earth Shepherds Discipline Policy

(Initial) _____ Little Earth Shepherds Policy on the Release of Children

(Initial) _____ Policy on Illness/Communicable Disease

(Initial) _____ Little Earth Shepherds Expulsion Policy

(Initial) _____ Tuition & Fees Policy

(Initial) _____ Computer & TV Policy

(Initial) _____ Social Media Policy

By providing your signature, you understand the terms and conditions of enrollment at LES Preschool and that there are no make-up days, switching of days or refunds. This includes but is not limited to, state ordered closures, pandemics, or other events beyond our control.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

Image Consent Statement

By providing your signature, you grant permission for your child to be photographed or recorded at school. I understand that these images may appear in, but not limited to, church or parent newsletters, media releases, presentations, social media sites, and the pre-school website.

Child's name (Please print): _____

Parent/Guardian signature(s): _____ Date: _____