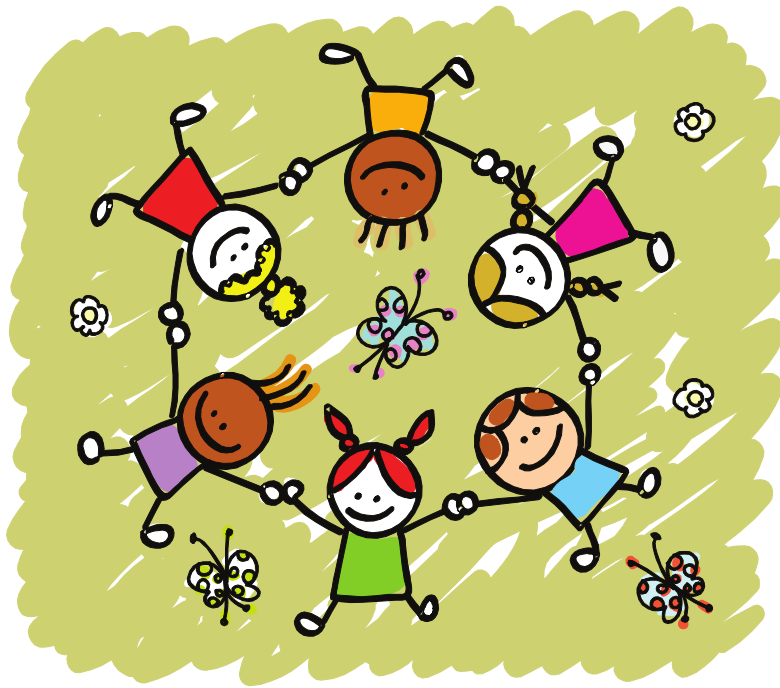


# Parent Handbook



## Little Forest Playschool

3880 Villa Street  
Los Alamos, NM 87544  
505.662.5895  
[littleforestplayschool.org](http://littleforestplayschool.org)

# Welcome to Little Forest Playschool!

We're glad you're here!

In selecting Little Forest Playschool you've done more than just choose a preschool for your child. You have joined a community dedicated to creating an interactive and holistic environment for our children.

Little Forest Playschool has been providing high quality, preschool classes to the Los Alamos community since 1951. We are a private, non-profit, parent cooperative offering a program of both full-time and part-time classes, for children ages 2–5. At Little Forest, we take great pride in our commitment to creating life long learners.

Little Forest was intentionally established as a Parent Cooperative to encourage parents to observe and participate in the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of their children. Your participation not only creates a richer classroom environment, it also sends a powerful message of value and respect to our children. We strongly encourage all parents to share their interest and talents with the school.

We are delighted to welcome you to our community!



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## Our Mission

The primary purpose of Playschool is to provide the opportunity for preschool children and their parents to participate in a school situation that can both supplement and complement learning at home.

Our goals for children are:

- that they grow to be independent learners,
- that they be creative and divergent thinkers,
- and that they be willing to ask questions, take risks and practice self-control.

**Research has shown that young children learn best through direct sensory encounters and not through a formal academic process. Learning should be the outcome of hands-on experience, especially play!**

– National Association for the Education of Young Children

At Little Forest Playschool we believe **PLAY** is primary. Open-ended and self-directed play encourages children to interact with others, to think symbolically, to explore possibilities, and to generate original solutions. When children are encouraged to explore and interact with their environment, they develop a passionate, life-long sense of curiosity, as well as a confidence that enables them to pursue the answers to their questions. Through play, children explore and come to terms with the realities of life.

Our classes offer widespread opportunities for children to develop and enhance the social, physical and intellectual skills in an environment that cultivates both individual awareness and respect for the rights of others.

**Playschool is a non-profit organization which welcomes children of any race, religion, ethnic background or ability to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school.**

## Educational Philosophy/Curriculum

Playschool is a developmentally oriented preschool. All of our teachers are certified in Early Childhood Development and we follow guidelines established by The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our goal is to provide activities and experiences that meet the needs of individual children across a wide variety of ages, abilities, and behaviors.

**Years of research have shown that self-directed and spontaneous play is necessary for children to build their social and cognitive skills. The deprivation of play has led to a crisis among children with respect to their fitness, their health, their strength, their coordination, and their cognitive abilities.**

– Dr. Joe Frost, Early Childhood Specialist, University of Texas  
Author, *Play and Child Development*

Playschool's classrooms are carefully structured to encourage the development of independence, self-esteem, curiosity, creativity, and competency through meaningful and enjoyable hands-on activities, and through positive interactions with peers and adults. We emphasize learning by doing and we believe that the process is more important than the product.

Teachers plan theme-oriented curriculum and extend these themes into activities, projects, play centers, and literature. Teachers plan curriculum and organize the learning environment based on children's interests as well as their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

## Little Forest is a Parent Co-Op

Little Forest has been established as a Parent Cooperative in order for parents to observe and participate in the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of their children. Parental participation creates a richer classroom environment and sends a powerful message of value and respect to our children.

### **Playschool is cooperative in these respects:**

- Families contribute by assisting with equipment repair, playground up-keep, creating classroom materials, providing transportation, and other essential tasks.
- Parents contribute by serving as members of the Playschool Corporation, the Nominations and Elections Committee, the Playschool Operations Committee and the Board of Directors.
- Parents assist the teachers during class sessions in some classes.
- Parents volunteer at fund-raising events and school clean-ups.

**Life is not a race for knowledge, but a journey of discovery.**

– Bev Boss

# Playschool Programs

## Classes and Eligibility

Pre-school classes and childcare are offered for children ages 2 thru 6 years old FROM 7:30 – 5:30, Monday through Friday (except noted holidays and breaks.) To be eligible for Playschool a child must be 2 years old before their first day of attendance. A child enrolled in Playschool participates in a flexible program that provides a peer group experience, a stimulating environment, challenging educational and play materials appropriate for his/her age level. A child is placed in a particular class based on his/her age and consultation with the parents, the teacher, and the director.

## Class Routines

Individual teachers vary classroom programs according to the age level and emphasis of the class.

Playschool activities routinely include:

- group activities
- cooking
- outdoor play
- free play
- language
- science
- art
- music
- snack time
- story time
- math

Classroom areas offer opportunities to make choices, explore, experiment, and discover a variety of choices such as dramatic play, block building, art, science, writing, books and literature, and manipulatives. Staff rotates the materials regularly to provide variety and to supplement curriculum throughout the year. Teachers plan a balance between child/teacher initiated activities. The curriculum provides children with opportunities to explore, make choices, follow their interests, and make discoveries.

Time lines and activities vary from class to class, but all classes share the same general schedule. Most mornings begin with a period of open choice, where students can explore the classroom and move freely among all activities. Teachers put out an art activity or project around mid-morning and students are encouraged (though never required) to participate. Each classroom has a morning snack, provided by the school and a group/circle time in which they read stories, do finger-plays and talk about the events of the day. After some time out on the playground, students come inside for lunch. Every class has a rest period where children may nap or do quiet activities on their mat. The afternoon is a similar, though less formal schedule. Classes have snack together (again, provided by the school), then have a group time and go outside. Although students bring their own lunch, all 'meals' are served 'family style' with

students and teachers sitting together. All classes go outside every day, in the morning and again in the afternoon, so please dress your child appropriately.

Parents are welcome to observe classes at any time. Parents who have a special skill or interest they wish to share with the children are encouraged to do so after consulting with the teacher. Please refer to the Parent Bulletin Board in your child's classroom for daily schedules, snack menus, curriculum, and other important information.

## **Room 2 – Class Time Only**

Classes in Room 2 are designed specifically for parents wishing for their child to experience the environment and social interaction of a preschool setting, but not looking for full time child care. Classes are 2 ½ - 3 hours long and run 2 or 3 days a week. Room 2 classes are condensed and more structured than the other classes at Little Forest and require more parent participation. Parents of Room 2 students are asked to be the classroom 'Parent Helper' once every 6-8 weeks, depending on the student's schedule. This allows parents the opportunity to observe his/her child in the classroom situation and enables the teacher to devote more attention to the complex activities of the room.

The classroom schedule typically begins with a welcome followed by a brief group circle before moving into the daily project. Students are given time for free choice before participating in a more extended circle time. Then, the class has snack together and goes outside for 20-30 minutes before parents arrive for Pick-Up.

While Room 2 follows the same philosophy as the rest of Playschool, there is a stronger focus on Kindergarten-readiness skills such as: managing transition times, taking turns, following directions and learning group cooperation. Parent Helper days will be assigned by the teacher at the beginning of each semester. Families having children in more than one class are required to participate as Parent Helper **in each class**. If a parent has two children in **the same class**, they may opt out of parent-helping for one child only. The parent will be charged an additional \$20/month (T/Th) or \$30/month (M/W/F) for opting out. The position of Parent Helper is not limited to parents only; we encourage other adult members of the family, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles to participate.

**Parent Helpers MUST find their own substitute from the class list provided.**

**A \$50.00 fee will be charged to your account if you are unable to trade times with another parent and cannot fulfill your obligation. Parents should notify the teacher of any changes and update the Parent Helper chart in the classroom**

**\*NON-ENROLLED CHILDREN (SIBLINGS) MUST NOT ACCOMPANY THE PARENT HELPER DUE TO STATE REGULATIONS.**

Parent Helper duties vary with each class and teacher, but there are certain responsibilities which are the same in all classes:

1. **Snack** – A nutritious snack, including milk or 100% juice, is provided by the school. Parent helpers will be responsible for preparing and serving the snack according to the posted snack calendar.
2. **Teacher assistance** - Assisting children as the need arises, especially at painting, craft, and snack time.
3. **Room maintenance** - It is the cooperative responsibility of the staff, Parent Helper, and the children to prepare the classroom for the next class session. A checklist for daily maintenance is posted in the room.
4. Parent helpers may arrange with the teacher to read a story or share a talent or interest with the children.

**To facilitate the fulfillment of these responsibilities, Parent Helpers arrive 10 minutes early and should be prepared to remain at least 15 minutes after the close of the class session. The Parent Helper requirement does NOT replace the required school and classroom Work Credits.**

## Classroom Expectations

### Dress

Please dress children in suitable clothing that they can easily handle themselves. Messy activities will be taking place, so do not dress them in special clothes. Pants and jeans are preferred and non-slip, closed toe shoes are advised. Plan on outdoor play whatever the weather may be. Boots, mittens, snow pants, jackets and a hood or hat are required during winter months.

Please label all clothing and check the classroom Lost & Found for missing items. We request that you always have a seasonally appropriate change of clothing for your child in his/her cubby, including socks, underwear, and an extra pair of shoes. In the event we have to supply your child with LFP clothing, please launder and return the clothing as soon as possible so it is available to others when needed.

### Lunch

Parents of children attending Playschool during the 9:00 to 4:00 time block are expected to provide a lunch for their child. Parents are encouraged to send simple, nutritious lunches that do not contain excessive sweets.

There are microwave ovens in all of the classrooms for heating lunches as necessary. We also provide hot water for children who bring dried noodles or soup in an appropriate container. Please be aware that during nice weather classes frequently eat outside. From late spring through early fall, please check with your child's teacher before sending food that must be heated. **Please do not send sodas or candy in your child's lunch.**

Any day a parent forgets to provide a lunch, Playschool will provide the child with appropriate lunch food and the parents will be charged \$7.00. This is only for emergencies and not intended as a regular service.

### Snacks

A morning and an afternoon snack are included in tuition fees and will be provided by Playschool. A monthly snack schedules is posted on the bulletin board in each classroom.

Please notify the teacher in the classroom no later than the first day of attendance if your child has food allergies or other special dietary needs. **If your child has severe allergies please talk with the Director and carefully review the Food Allergy Policy.**

All classroom snacks will follow the State mandated guidelines below:

- Each snack will include at least 2 different food groups
- Snack items will not be repeated within a one week period
- 2% Milk or 100% undiluted juice will be served with each snack

If you wish to bring in a snack to share with your child's class (birthday cupcakes, for example) you **must make arrangements with the classroom teacher** at least one week before hand so there is time to notify other parents and make changes to the Snack Schedule.

## Food Allergy Policy

### Little Forest Playschool Guidelines

- Little Forest Playschool will keep a copy of health records for all students with severe food allergies
- Every classroom will post a school-wide list of children with food allergies/intolerances which includes the prohibited foods and parents' phone numbers for each child.
- Every classroom will post a Food Allergy Action Plan for each child assigned one.
- This list will be discussed at staff meetings twice yearly and every time a new child is added to the list.
- Staff will discuss the Policy for Managing Students with Food Allergies and train regularly in the administration of emergency medication (epi pen).
- Food brought in by or for the staff at LFPS and placed in the office or elsewhere should be inaccessible to children.
- Children should not be allowed to eat food other than their own classroom designated snacks or lunches from home.
- Field trips will be discussed with the family of the food-allergic child to decide appropriate strategies for managing the food allergy.

### Family's Guidelines

- Notify the school of child's allergy(s) in writing.
- Review and sign the LFPS Policy for Managing Students with Food Allergies.
- Provide a Food Allergy Action Plan completed by the food-allergic child's physician.
- Provide properly labeled medications (as directed by a physician) and replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Provide individual lunch and class-time snack

For a complete copy of the school's Food Allergy Policy please see the Director.

## **Holidays, Birthdays and Office Food**

Little Forest Playschool encourages the exchange of only NON-FOOD/NON CANDY items during holidays such as Halloween, Christmas and Valentine's Day. Food and candy items will not be allowed to be exchanged in the classrooms.

## **Sign In & Out Procedures**

Due to state regulations, you are required to sign your child in and out; putting the exact time you bring them in or pick them up as well as your initials. Please record the time you take charge of your child, not the time that you leave Playschool.

State regulations require that Little Forest Playschool be able to account for every child every minute they are in our care. We must be able to track when students arrive, when they leave and who they leave with. Because this is such a liability issue, you will be charged a \$5 fee any time you do not sign your child in or out.

## **Pick-Up & Drop-Off**

A parent or an adult must accompany their child to the classroom or playground when bringing them to school or picking them up; this is for safety reasons. Any person picking up a child must be 18 or older. This includes siblings who are sent in to pick up a child.

Enrollment packets include a Child Release form where parents may list other adults (18 or over) who have permission to pick up their child. If you wish to have your child picked up by someone not on the permanent form, you must fill out an individual Child Release Form (available in the office) and leave it with your child's teacher. To ensure the safety of your child, persons picking up your child may be asked for identification.

**Playschool will not release a child to anyone NOT authorized to pick up that child under any circumstances.**

For the safety of the children, **cars may not, for any reason**, be left running in the parking lot while you are dropping off or picking up your child. All cars must be turned off and the keys brought with the driver into Playschool. Parents are strongly discouraged from leaving infants or young children unattended in cars in our parking lot.

## **Early/Late Fees**

Prior to class time, staff members prepare the classroom and activities for the day; they need this time to get ready for your children. If you arrive early, please do not bring your child into the classroom until their contracted time.

Being picked up late is distressing for a young child and hard on our staff. Preschool age children do not have a well-developed sense of time, nor do they have an understanding of getting caught in traffic, a long line at the market, etc. They do, however, recognize when they are supposed to be picked up because of parents arriving and the other children leaving. In addition, our teachers often have commitments after the end of their teaching time.

For these reasons, we require parents to be at Playschool at the scheduled time, otherwise you will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minute interval, or fraction thereof, if you arrive earlier or later than the child's scheduled time. If you sign in or out with the incorrect time, the staff in the classroom will mark the correct time and you will be charged accordingly.

## **Drop-In Childcare**

Drop-in care is for the convenience of Playschool parents who need childcare on an irregular or occasional basis. Drop-in childcare is available ONLY to those students currently enrolled at Little Forest Playschool.

We do not take walk-ins. Drop-in care is by reservation only on a space-available basis, Monday through Friday from 7:30-5:30. Please call the office at 662-5895 to make your reservations and cancellations. The full amount for the reserved time will be charged whether or not the time is used. Drop-in fees will be charged the next billing cycle.

Drop-in care is not available in room 2. Children in room 2 may be scheduled for Drop-in time in another room on a space-available basis.

## Health Policies

### Medication

Dispensing of medication is controlled by State regulations. Medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, must be handed to the teacher by the parent on arrival in the classroom.

**Under no circumstances should medication be left in a child's lunch box, backpack, or anywhere else accessible to children.**

Parents are required to sign and give the requested information on our "Medication Sheet". All medicine must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name, the dosage to be given, and the time dosage is to be administered. Medication Sheets are available in each classroom. **No medication will be administered without written parent permission.**

Please be aware that under State Regulations chapstick, lotion, and cough drops are considered medication so they must be given to the teacher, NOT kept in the child's cubby.

### Illness

It is the parents' responsibility to keep at home any child who shows symptoms of a communicable disease;

- fever
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- a persistent cough
- excessive dark yellow or green nasal discharge

**After an illness a child may not return to Playschool until s/he has been free of fever for 24 hours.** The parent should report to the teacher or the office any communicable disease in the home so that any known outbreaks will be posted for everyone's information. Please call the school to inform us if your child will miss school due to illness.

If your child becomes ill at Playschool, s/he will be isolated and you will be expected to pick him/her up as soon as possible. **If a child is not well enough to play outside s/he will be considered too ill to attend Playschool and will be sent home.**

## Field Trips

The frequency of class field trips varies from room to room. Teachers will always provide advanced written notice of all field trips. A parent or guardian must sign the consent forms for field trips, which is on the back of the emergency information cards.

Children are welcome to attend field trips scheduled on days they do not attend but must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. This is required to keep our teacher/student ratios within State Regulations.

Anyone providing transportation for any Playschool field trip must use one separate SEAT BELT on each person in the vehicle. All children 4 years of age and younger, regardless of weight, or children who weigh forty pounds or less, regardless of age, must be properly secured in a child passenger restraint device that meets federal standards. No child may ride in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers must have at least 7 years driving experience. Any vehicle used for trips must have adequate liability and medical insurance (at least in compliance with New Mexico State Law). A copy of the license of each driver and the insurance certificate for any car being used on a field trip must be on file in the office. All cars must have an emergency bag supplied by Playschool containing a blanket, water, and fire extinguisher.

## Birthdays/Holidays

After consulting with the teacher, parents may send a simple refreshment to class to celebrate a child's birthday. Holiday celebrations will be handled at the teacher's discretion based on the child's developmental abilities, age and the cultural make up of the families in the class.

## Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held at least once a year. In addition, parents or teachers may request a conference at any time. Every parent is encouraged to connect with his/her child's teacher on a daily basis in order to establish a greater understanding of the child's experience. Parent/Teacher conferences provide the opportunity to confer with the teacher on a much deeper level regarding the child's progress, as well as to address any particular concerns that may have arisen. If a serious problem manifests at Playschool, the teacher will contact the parent(s) to discuss options and solutions.

## Parent Programs

The Playschool Operations Committee (POC) plans and coordinates at least two programs of educational interest for the parents and teachers during the year. Parents are encouraged to attend these programs as part of their participation in their child's education.

## Work Credits

Work credits are for the purpose of encouraging parental involvement and maintaining Playschool's equipment and operation. When parents are actively involved with their schooling at all levels, children have a higher chance of success. Each family is required to fulfill two work credits per child enrolled in Playschool. There is a school-wide work credit which is equivalent to 5 hours or more and 3 classroom work credits per school year which is determined by the classroom teacher. During the summer session, each family is required to fulfill one classroom Work Credit per child enrolled in Playschool. Families who enroll after January 1 for the remainder of the school year are encouraged to complete all 8 hours of the Work Credits, but are only required to complete 4 hours.

It is the responsibility of the parents to be sure they are signed up for and complete both work credits. Work credits must be completed by the last day of the school year or summer session; there is no grace period. There will be a \$125 fee for the school wide work credit and a \$75 fee for the classroom work credits if not completed.

Both work credits may be completed by serving on the Board of Directors or Playschool Operations Committee (POC). The school work credit may be completed by helping during the entire day of Fall Fiesta (including set-up and/or clean-up), participating in all of Playground Workday or other jobs as defined by the office.

The teachers in each room will define the classroom work credits. It is the responsibility of each family to talk to your child's teacher to find out what work credit jobs are available for both credits.

### Playground Workday

In an attempt to upgrade and maintain the outdoor play area, we will have one or two work parties on Saturdays to improve the yard or install new equipment. We shall ask for volunteer time, labor, and equipment. Working at Playground Work Day may serve as a school-wide work credit.

## Fall Fiesta

In the Fall Playschool holds a “Fiesta” which is open to the public and offers special children’s activities, food, entertainment, and much more. **Parents may fulfill their school-wide work credit by volunteering to work the day of Fiesta.**

## Playschool Resale

In October, and again in March, Little Forest Playschool hosts a community-wide resale. The spring and Fall Resale events are Little Forest’s biggest fundraisers, and comprise a sizable portion of Playschool’s yearly budget. Little Forest organizes, advertises, and provides a space where members of the community may sell gently used children’s toys, clothing, baby equipment, books, etc.

The seller earns 70% of the selling price and Playschool retains 30%. Details for sellers and sign-up sheets for volunteers are available at <http://littleforestplayschool.org> around the time of each event. Volunteer workers receive early shopping privileges. **Volunteering to work at Resale DOES NOT fulfill a Work Credit.**

## Registration Information and Fee Schedule for 2010-11

Children must be 2 years old before June 5th to enroll for the summer.

The birth date cutoff for fall is September 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Children who are 2 years old before September 1st will be enrolled in Room 3,
- Children who are 3 years old before September 1st will be enrolled in Room 1,
- Children who are 4 years old before September 1st will be enrolled in Room 4

In some cases, the parents and teachers may agree that the child should remain in his/her current room for another year.

**Childcare** is defined as any schedule of two or more days per week containing the 9:00-4:00 time block (except after-kindergarten care in Room 4).

**Classtime only** is defined as 7:30-11:30, 7:30-1:00, 9:00-11:30, or 9:00-1:00, in Rooms 1, 3, & 4 as well as ALL Room 2 Classes. There are limited 'Classtime' spaces available in Rooms 1, 3, & 4.

### Early Registration

Registration for 2011-12 will be held over a two week period in the spring of 2011. Registration days will be announced in a parent newsletter. During the first week of registration, priority is given to families of children currently enrolled at Playschool and to Playschool alumni. If a student is registering for the same schedule in the age-appropriate class then registration is guaranteed. Playschool families making schedule changes may do so during open registration and will be given space on a first come, first serve basis according to classroom availability. If you miss your designated sign up time, you can sign up any time during open enrollment. Please note; we do not assume that your children will return (although we sincerely hope they will) and we DO NOT hold their spots.

A child may **not** be registered in two different classes with the intention of dropping one class. If a parent enrolls a child in two classes and wishes to drop one class, the child will be dropped from both classes and will be put on the waiting list for the desired class.

### Open Registration

The second week registration opens to the general public. **Registration for the general public is on a first come, first served basis.**

A non-refundable registration fee **must** accompany all early registration forms:

- \$30/child for summer only
- \$70/child for fall only
- \$85/child for summer and fall

## **Schedule Changes**

Fees will be charged for any schedule changes made after initial registration:

- \$10 for 1st change
- \$20 for 2nd change
- \$30 for 3rd change
- \$50 for all subsequent changes

During the formal registration period a change of schedule fee will not be charged to add time to the existing schedule in the same room.

## **Scheduled Closure Dates**

Contracts exclude care during the entire Winter Break and Spring Break of the Los Alamos Public Schools, as well as all public holidays, and any day the Board of Directors deems necessary or beneficial for the school.

Drop-in care may be provided during spring and Winter breaks dependent on number of children requesting care at a rate of \$75 per day or the regular drop-in rates for partial days. Sign up for these times will be posted well in advance and parents are encouraged to register early, so Playschool has ample time to staff those days.

## **Immunization Records**

Children who enter Playschool for the first time are required by the State to have up-to-date immunization records (including all required immunizations) on file at the school. Current immunization records are required for every child attending school 24 hours before the first day of school. This requirement shall be strictly enforced for your child's protection. Please remember to bring in records of additional immunizations as they occur. Children who do not meet this requirement will not be allowed to attend. If a child is not immunized due to religious or medical reasons, you may obtain and file a state-approved waiver.

## **Fees**

Fees are determined prior to Registration for each school year. A non-refundable registration fee and a deposit of half of one month's tuition are due at the time of registration to reserve a space for your child. The one-half of one month's tuition will be applied against May tuition, or with 14 days written notice, towards your student's final month's tuition.

## **Sibling Discount**

Siblings who are enrolled at Little Forest Playschool receive a 10% discount. The first child will be billed at the regular rate and the second child will receive a 10% discount on their portion of their regularly contracted hours. If you have a child enrolled in room 3, they will be the first child billed and then the sibling will receive the 10% discount. The sibling discount does not apply to drop-in rates.

## **Billing and Due Dates**

Bills will be placed in your child's cubby around the first of the month, and payment is due by the 15th of each month. Fees that are not paid on time are considered delinquent and a \$25 late fee will be added to your next bill. The child may be removed from Playschool if payments are delinquent by more than two months and the parents refuse to pay. For current Playschool rates, fees, and schedules, see our website.

## **Withdrawal and Change Fees**

Playschool requires fourteen days written notice if you plan to withdraw your child. You will be billed for an additional ½ month tuition and/or forfeit your enrollment deposit if Playschool does not receive this required notification. A withdrawal fee of \$85 will be charged if you withdraw your child before the end of the contract period.

If you wish to make any changes to your child's schedule you will be asked to sign a change of schedule form. You must notify the office and will be asked to pay the difference in the ½ month enrollment deposit. A change of schedule fee will be charged for any change made after initial registration:

- \$10 for 1st change
- \$20 for 2nd change
- \$30 for 3rd change
- \$50 for all subsequent changes

## Financial Aid Policy

Little Forest designates at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) every year for financial aid. This fund is to help pay tuition for families who are experiencing financial hardship. Funds will be dispensed at the discretion of the Director, with no more than 20% of the funds going to any one family without Board approval. No more than 50% of any child's tuition may be covered by LFP scholarship. If additional funds for financial aid become available through grants or donations, a plan for distribution will be developed and approved by the Director or Board of Directors.

1. Requests for scholarships may be submitted at any time during the school year or summer session. Applications can be downloaded from the Little Forest Playschool web site at [littleforestplayschool.org](http://littleforestplayschool.org) and a hard copy is available in the office. Additional information or a letter of request may be attached to the application.
2. Pay stubs covering a one month period or other supporting financial documents must accompany the application.
3. Scholarship applicants are expected to meet all of the standard contract agreements, including payment in full of the registration fee and the tuition deposit as well as completion of the work credit requirements. All families are encouraged to volunteer beyond the minimum requirements.
4. A list of jobs will be available to those families that need ongoing tuition assistance. Reimbursement at the minimum wage rate will be credited to the family's account for completion of these jobs. Based on the total amount of the tuition reduction over a calendar year, Little Forest Playschool may issue a Form 1099-B to participants. This method of assistance is available upon request to all Playschool families who have satisfied their work credit requirements. Jobs include: snow removal, playground maintenance, general handyman repairs, library maintenance, office sitting and shopping, etc.
5. The Executive Director will review application information and determine scholarship awards. The director may consult the Board of Directors but will keep information confidential, including names.

## Discipline

The staff is responsible for informing parents about any behavior which requiring disciplinary measures on the day such behavior occurs. At the same time, parents shall be informed of the disciplinary action taken.

Our discipline will be:

1. Clear and understandable to the child
2. Consistent
3. Explained to the child before and at the time of the action.
4. A positive growing experience.

Disciplinary methods will **NOT** include:

1. Physical punishment (including shaking)
2. Techniques humiliating, shaming, frightening or otherwise harmful to the child.
3. Punishment associated with food, rest or toilet.

We stress respect for the rights of others, and we work toward the children's internalization of control, toward their ability to govern themselves and to construct for themselves the conviction that it is best for people to deal honestly and responsibly with each other. To promote this autonomy, we encourage decision-making and problem-solving and help the children to understand the logical and natural consequences of their actions. We feel that all discipline should always be carried out with respect for the dignity and self-esteem of all those involved.

### **Aggressive Behavior Policy**

We will use the following phased approach when dealing with aggressive behavior.

1. The first through third aggressive behavior incidents, the child will be redirected and a behavior report made by the teacher in conjunction with the staff that witnessed the event. All reports (behavior, accident or incident) shall be signed by the parent. After being signed, the original will be filed in the office and a copy will go into the child's file and one to the parents.
2. Fourth aggressive behavior incident will require a parent/teacher conference to discuss issues and set goals for a Behavior Management Plan for parents and teachers to follow. (Behavior Management Plan should include a timeline for expected improvement).
3. The Director will be informed of any and all incidents and invited to attend the parent conference if the teacher or parent feels her presence is needed.
4. Subsequent incidents will be recorded and communicated to parent/s on a Behavior Report. Severe or continued incidents will result in child's dismissal from school for the day.

5. A child will be withdrawn from school if the aggressive behaviors do not show improvement during the time projected in the Behavior Management Plan and/or parent(s) will not cooperate with staff regarding the Behavior Management Plan.

A copy of the detailed description of our discipline policy and practices is available on request in the office. A copy of our playground rules is also available in the office.

## Dismissal

Little Forest Playschool reserves the right to withdraw a child from enrollment for the following reasons:

1. A parent fails to submit a current immunization record which includes all required immunizations (or a medical or religious exemption) by the first day the child attends Playschool;
2. A parent becomes delinquent in payment of fees and refuses to pay the amount requested;
3. The parents do not participate in the Parent Helper program (Room 2) and refuse to pay the non-Parent Helper fee; or
4. A child has behavioral difficulties which hinder his/her or other children's participation in the program at Playschool that the parent(s) cannot or will not address in cooperation with Little Forest staff, or that the staff feels are not improving over time.

## Playschool Parents' Grievance Procedure

Parents who encounter a problem concerning the teaching or administrative staff of Playschool may take the following steps:

1. Parents shall attempt to discuss and resolve a problem with the staff member or members.
2. If the problem is not thereby resolved (or they feel they cannot discuss the problem with the staff member or members) they shall discuss the problem with the Playschool Director.
3. If discussion with the Director does not resolve the problem, they shall discuss the problem with one of the members of the Board of Directors.
4. If the problem still cannot be resolved, parents shall be advised of their rights to call the New Mexico State Children, Youth, and Families Dept., Childcare Licensing Bureau, at 827-4185 (Santa Fe) to register a complaint.

## General Information for Parents

Little Forest Playschool will not allow any person to be active in the child care facility who we know would be disqualified as a direct provider of care under the most current version of the criminal records check (as outlined in the New Mexico Child Care Licensing Regulations).

This includes but is not limited to volunteering in the classroom, attending field-trips, attending/participating in classroom events, volunteering during Fall Fiesta and Fall/Spring Resale and any other event that may come up in which children are present. Participation may also be restricted by the discretion of the Board of Directors. A copy of the child care licensing regulations is available in the office.

The Little Forest Playschool Board of Directors urges all Little Forest parents and guardians to check the Little Forest Playschool's website at [littleforestplayschool.org](http://littleforestplayschool.org) for important links so they may take appropriate precautions for the safety and welfare of their children. Any specific questions regarding this policy may be taken to the Director or any member on the Board of Directors.

### Extended Absence

Teachers and the office should be notified prior to vacation or extended absences from Playschool. If a child is to be absent for four consecutive weeks or more during the school year we will make a tuition adjustment of half tuition with prior notice of vacation or immediate notice of illness. Credit is not given for shorter absences.

### Emergency Procedures

Procedures to be used for a child who is seriously ill or injured at Playschool are posted in the office and in each room. Staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR. If immediate or emergency medical attention is deemed necessary by the staff, 911 will be called. Every attempt will be made to reach the parents as soon as possible. No staff member will transport an injured or ill child to a doctor or to the emergency room. Please refer to the LFP Crisis Action Plan posted on the Parent Board in the school office.

### Fire Drills

Each month, Playschool holds a fire drill to prepare our students in the event of a fire emergency. Parents who are on the premises at the time of the fire drill are required to follow the proper evacuation procedures as posted in the classrooms. No one may reenter the building until the "All Clear" bell has sounded.

## **Child Abuse**

Any staff member who suspects a child enrolled in Playschool is being abused will report such suspicions and/or information to the head teacher and the Director. Any case of suspected child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities in accordance with state law.

In the event a properly identified police officer or social services worker comes to interview a child at Playschool, the Director, Assistant Director or child's teacher will notify the parents as soon as is practicable. It will be suggested to the interviewer that a Little Forest staff member familiar to the child be present during the interview.

## **Confidentiality**

All staff members are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of our interactions with children, parents, and each other. When you discuss concerns with teachers, be sure you do so where you cannot be overheard by other adults or children.

## Holidays & Events 2010-2011

<b>August 12, 13</b>	Playschool CLOSED for Fall Session Set-Up
<b>August 16</b>	Fall Session Begins
<b>August 19</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>September 6</b>	Labor Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>September 16</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>September 18</b>	Fall Fiesta, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
<b>October 11</b>	Columbus Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>October 14</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>October 16</b>	Fall Resale
<b>November 11</b>	Veteran's Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>November 18</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>November 25, 26</b>	Thanksgiving - Playschool CLOSED
<b>December 16</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>December 17</b>	Fall Session Ends
<b>December 20- 31</b>	Winter Break - Playschool CLOSED
<b>January 17</b>	Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>January 20</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>February 14</b>	President's Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>February 17</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>March 13</b>	Spring Resale
<b>March 17</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>March 28 - April 1</b>	Spring Break – Playschool CLOSED
<b>April 14</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>May 21</b>	6:30 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting
<b>May 27</b>	Last day of 2008-2009 School Year
<b>May 30</b>	Memorial Day - Playschool CLOSED
<b>May 31</b>	Playschool CLOSED for Summer Session Set-Up
<b>June 1</b>	Summer session begins

## Snow Closures and Delays

The following guidelines will be followed:

- **Little Forest Playschool will follow Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for snow delays and closures.**
- Playschool will be CLOSED if LANL is CLOSED.
- Playschool classes will be on a delayed start if LANL is on a delayed start. Playschool will open at 8:30 instead of 7:30 if there is a one hour delay and 9:30 if there is a two hour delay and so on.
- Room 2 morning classes are canceled if LANL is delayed two hours or more.
- Days missed because of snow will not be made up, nor will tuition be refunded.
- The LANL hotline is 667-6622.

## Playschool Governance and Structure

Playschool is a non-profit corporation. Copies of the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures are available in the office. The Corporation comprises all parents who have a child currently enrolled in Playschool and who have a paid-up account, the Board of Directors, and the Teaching Staff. A Corporation meeting is held at least once annually in the spring. Elections for the Board of Directors and Playschool Operations Committee are held each spring and announced in the parent newsletter. Please see the Bylaws for qualifications and duties of elected members.

### **Powers and Duties of the Corporation**

The Corporation sets the policies of Playschool according to the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures. The Corporation also:

- approves the annual budget;
- receives annual reports from the President of the Corporation, the Director, the Business Manager or Finance Chair, and the Playschool Operations Committee Representative to the Board;
- acts on any recommendations from the Board of Directors or the Playschool Operations Committee;
- elects Board of Directors Members-at-Large;
- elects two non-Board parent members of the Nominations and Elections Committee; amends the Bylaws and the Policies and Procedures; and
- transacts any additional business that comes before it.

### **Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors**

The Board has the power to administer the affairs of Playschool and to carry out the programs and policies of the Corporation according to the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures. Additional duties of the Board may be found in the Bylaws.

### **Duties of the Nominations and Elections Committee**

This committee annually (by March 15) draws up a slate of candidates to fill the parent member positions both on the Board and on the Parent Operations Committee. Annually (by April 1), the committee shall draw up a slate of candidates to fill the member-at-large positions on the Board of Directors and the Parent Representatives on the Nominations & Elections Committee.

## **Duties of the Playschool Operations Committee (POC)**

POC makes recommendations to the Board concerning the operation of Playschool, raises funds and makes recommendations to the Board on the use of these funds. In addition, each position on POC carries a different, individual responsibility. Other responsibilities may be found in the Bylaws.

## **Duties of the Personnel Committee**

This committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding teacher candidates to be hired and regarding dismissal of a teacher. They may be requested to meet with a member of the teaching staff to hear a grievance.

## **Administrative Staff**

Jeni Morrison	Director
Allison Collins	Office Staff
Martha Katko	Bookkeeper

Each member of the administrative staff can be reached in the office during their office hours at 662-5895 or by leaving a message on the LFP voicemail. Martha can be reached most easily by email at [LFPBooks@gmail.com](mailto:LFPBooks@gmail.com).

## History of Little Forest Playschool

When the Los Alamos Branch of the American Association of University Women was organized in June 1950, one of the first study groups formed focused on learning about the development of the young child. As a result, in February of 1951, a playgroup was formed with children from one to five years of age. This class of fifteen children met in a public school kindergarten room on Saturday mornings with all mothers participating. The charge was ten cents per session for juice and supplies.

By 1959 all classes had teachers, assisted by mother helpers. In 1962 AAUW Playschool rented a two-classroom building from the public schools and in 1964 formed a separate board of directors, with one member providing liaison with the AAUW Board. Enrollment was then 145 children attending once or twice a week with fees of \$1.45 per class. In 1968 Playschool moved into its present building, the vacant Little Forest Elementary School, renting it annually from the public schools.

Playschool initiated its first extended care classroom in 1978 in response to the need of a growing number of families with both parents working outside the home, while retaining a variety of parent-helper, preschool classes. Over the years, the extended care program has grown with the needs of the community, adding a full summer program in 1981 and an after-kindergarten class that same fall.

Throughout these years Playschool was sponsored and directed by AAUW. In late summer of 1987 the Playschool Corporation met and voted to separate from AAUW and change Playschool's name to Little Forest Playschool. Little Forest Playschool became a separate and independent corporation, retaining its status as a non-profit, parent cooperative preschool and childcare center.

**Playschool will celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011!**

## Sample Forms

### Accident Report Form

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of accident \_\_\_\_\_ Reported by \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of accident \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/emergency contact notified \_\_\_\_\_

by phone \_\_\_\_\_ in person \_\_\_\_\_ not necessary \_\_\_\_\_

Time notified \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Copy to office \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of teacher/director

Copy to parent \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent

# Incident Report Form

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of incident \_\_\_\_\_ Reported by \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of incident \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/emergency contact notified \_\_\_\_\_

by phone \_\_\_\_\_ in person \_\_\_\_\_ not necessary \_\_\_\_\_

Time notified \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of teacher/director

Copy to office \_\_\_\_\_

Copy to parent \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent

**Behavior Report Form**

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of issue \_\_\_\_\_ Reported by \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of behavior \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action taken \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/emergency contact notified \_\_\_\_\_

by phone \_\_\_\_\_ in person \_\_\_\_\_ not necessary \_\_\_\_\_

Time notified \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Copy to office \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of teacher/director

Copy to parent \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent

## Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Little Forest Playschool Parent Handbook and the Discipline Policy within this Handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Parent Name – please PRINT

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Child's Name – please PRINT

## Directory Permission

Each class at Little Forest Playschool has a phone/address directory which is given to the parents of the children in their classroom. Please check the box that you prefer.

- Permission is granted to give out my child's name only  
**OR**  
 Permission is granted to give out my child's name, parent's name, address and phone number.

## Publication Permission

Little Forest Playschool uses pictures of our students on our website, in our advertising, and occasionally in local media. All student information is kept confidential, and names are never released. Please check one:

- Yes, I give LFPS permission to use photographs of my child.  
**OR**  
 No, I do not give permission for pictures of my child at LFPS to be used by LFPS.

**Please return this form to the office within  
5 days of your child's first day of enrollment**