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Welcome to Little Bears Preschool

Little Bears Preschool was established in 1957 by Bess Scott and was held in the back room of her home. Douglas County had no kindergarten at the time and she filled a need for the community. In 1965, Mildred Stewart began helping Bess and, in 1967, bought Little Bears and relocated it to Christ's Church.

At Mildred's retirement in 1985, Janice June took over, until Natalie Young bought it in 1987. After Natalie's retirement in 2012, Shelley Kirk purchased Little Bears Preschool.

Little Bears accepts children who are 3, 4 and 5 years of age.

Although we are not affiliated with the Episcopal Church, we are thankful for the working relationship we have with them.

Center's Purpose and Philosophy

The Little Bears Preschool program is based on the philosophy of giving each child the opportunity to engage in developmental learning through discovery, an approach based on respect for each child as an individual, as well as on a sensitivity to each child's way of learning. Children learn, grow and acquire skills as they play. Through play they increase their creativity, understanding and problem solve. We strive to help each child reach their full potential within a safe, nurturing environment.

We believe that children grow and develop at different paces. Therefore, attitudes of acceptance and care towards one another are modeled and encouraged.

Our program offers an integration of developmentally appropriate education, whole language learning and school readiness to help children feel good about themselves, master new skills, and develop a healthy desire to learn. The Center's curriculum, teacher led and child led activities is designed to incorporate learning in all areas of development - spiritual, intellectual, social, physical and emotional - through active involvement in play.

Little Bears is a child-centered, holistic approach that uniquely fosters learning opportunities which builds confidence, encourages exploration, teaches personal responsibility, self discipline, respect, conflict resolution, problem solving and decision making.

We view parents as the child's first teachers and essential to the child's success and development and therefore encourage a partnership with parent participation throughout different activities during the school year.

About our Little Bears Director

Shelley Kirk received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Governors State University in Illinois. She has been married since 1993 to her husband and they have 3 children. For the past fifteen years, Shelley has enjoyed teaching children ages 3-10 years old as a Sunday School teacher. She has been blessed to be a stay at home Mom until all her children started school, but is excited to have a career that will allow her to use her gifts and talents in an atmosphere that she is passionate about - teaching children and helping them learn and grow.

Registration

Registration for Little Bears Preschool opens in January for the following school year. However, children may be enrolled at any time during the school year when there is an opening. Applications for the wait list are accepted throughout the school year in the event that an opening becomes available. An annual non-refundable \$75.00 registration fee is due at time of registration. Last month tuition is also due at the time of enrollment.

Eligibility

Children must turn three/four years old by October 1, of the school year for which they want to enroll. All children must also be toilet trained by the time school starts.

Please inform Little Bears of any special needs your child may have so that we can determine if and how we can help in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Special needs children may be enrolled on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Director. Little Bears is not wheelchair accessible.

Tuition

Tuition is based on a 10 month year and is broken down into 10 equal payments.

- No tuition adjustments will be given for snow days, or absences due to vacation or illness.
- Tuition for the last month of the school year is due at time of registration. This payment is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Current tuition rates are as follows:
 - 2 day program... \$190.00 per month
 - 3 day program... \$240.00 per month

Payments

Full monthly tuition payments are due on or before the 1st of each month.

A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed if tuition is not received within 7 days of the due date. A \$25.00 fee will be assessed per returned check. Please make checks payable to: Little Bears Preschool and place in the mail box at the sign-in table.

Please Note: August tuition will be due on the first day of school.

Classes

Monday/Wednesday/Friday (Pre-kindergarten)

Morning - 9:00am-12:00pm

Afternoon - 12:30pm-3:30pm

Tuesday/Thursday (3's)

Morning - 9:00am-12:00pm

Afternoon - 12:30pm-3:30pm

A minimum of 6 students is required to open a class. Based on enrollment, Little Bears reserves the right to cancel a class or adjust a child's classroom placement.

Arrival and Dismissal Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

All students need to be signed in and out every day, with a full signature including first and last name. Written and verbal notice must be given to the teacher if someone other than the parent/guardian or authorized person will be picking up your child. If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, the child will not be allowed to leave. If an authorized person who is unknown to the staff attempts to pick up the child, identification will be required. If staff is suspicious of any person picking up a child, or if they are clearly under the influence of drugs or alcohol or if any aggression is used, the staff will immediately call the police and the child will not be released to them. The emergency contact will then be notified to pick up the child. Little Bears staff cannot legally deny the release of a child to a parent unless we have received a written court order regarding this. To ensure that all children have been picked up, staff will check the classroom and the sign-in/out sheets before leaving.

Late Pick Up

If you are more than 5 minutes late picking up your child, you will sign a late pick up form. After 3 incidents of late pick up you will be charged \$1 per minute starting 5 minutes after the dismissal time for future late pick ups. This is to be paid directly to the teacher at the time of pick up. If your child is not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal the following actions will take place:

- The listed parent/guardian on the sign in sheet will be called.
- If unable to reach the parent/guardian the emergency contact will then be called.
- If none of the above are successful, Social Services will be called 30 minutes after dismissal.

If you have an emergency and are running late, let us know.

Volunteers and Visitors

Parents are welcome to visit at any time. There are also many different opportunities available to parents for volunteering in the class. A sign-up sheet will be available at the beginning of each month for parents to sign up for these events. When visiting or volunteering, please sign in at the welcome table. Any children who are not registered at the school must be accompanied by their parent or guardian and both must be signed into the visitor's log.

Daily Required Items

Please ensure that your child is dressed in clothing that they can put on and take off by themselves. This makes it easier for them to be independent when using the bathroom facilities. Because of the physical activities your child will participate in on a daily basis, please dress them in comfortable clothing that allows for movement. Also ensure that they are appropriately dressed for outdoor activities, even in the colder months. While closed shoes are best, sandals with back straps will be allowed in warmer weather. Feel free to keep a pair of closed shoes and socks in your child's backpack so they can change shoes before outside playtime. Please ensure that all removable clothing is labeled.

- Each child is to bring a backpack to school every day. Please have a labeled zip-lock bag with a full change of clothes inside the backpack (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) Accidents happen, and sometimes a change of clothes is needed.
- Labeled water bottles (with child's first and last name) are to be brought to school each day.
- Please do not allow your child to bring any personal items to school except on their designated show and tell day. (A comfort toy or blanket is allowed when needed.)

School Year

Little Bears Preschool runs on the Douglas County modified schedule, starting in August and running through May. A detailed calendar with important dates and closures is provided to all enrolled families. Little Bears will be closed for the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- One week fall break and two week winter and spring break

Little bears will not be closed on the teacher work days or other Douglas County staff development days unless noted on the calendar.

Absents/Vacations

If your child is going to be absent, please call or email to inform the preschool. Also, if your child is absent due to being sick, please add the symptoms that he/she is having.

For vacations or extended health absences:

If your child will be out of school for an excessive amount of time, please write a letter to the Little Bears staff indicating dates and any other information you feel necessary. This will help the staff in classroom preparation.

Parking

Little Bears Preschool parking is on 4th Street and/or Lewis Street. Please do NOT park in the church parking lot.

School Closing

If Douglas County/Castle Rock schools are closed due to severe weather, Little Bears will also be closed. If Douglas County/Castle Rock schools are on a delayed schedule, Little Bears morning session will be cancelled. No reimbursements will be given due to school closures. Parents/guardians will be notified of any closures via e-mail by 7am, but for the most accurate and up-to-date school closure or delayed schedule information, please call the Douglas County School District's Weather Hotline. 303-387-SNOW (7669) or check the district's Web site at www.dcsdk12.org.

Weather Related Issues

In cases of excessively hot or inclement weather, children will not go outside. We will have indoor large gross motor activities in doors in the classroom.

Emergencies

Fire Drills: August through May, monthly fire drills will be conducted so that all staff and children will be familiar with the procedure. The drills will be done after teaching the children the importance of knowing what to do in case of a fire. The children will be taught what to do and then practice exiting the building. Some drills will be preplanned and some will be unannounced. Fire drill records can be reviewed and are on hand. Other drills will also be conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with the drill procedures in case of a real emergency. These include: Tornado, Lockdown, Shelter in place and Active shooter (we will refer to this as our "hide & seek drill" with the kids - we hide and wait for the police to find us)

For any other natural disasters or emergencies, detailed information can be found in our disaster preparedness plan which can be reviewed.

Accidents

When children play; accidents can happen.

- Minor bumps and scratches will be treated with loving care and a band aid. An accident report will be made and must be signed by the parent upon pickup.
- In the event that a child is hurt, the parent will immediately be notified. If a serious accident or injury occurs, 911 will be called and staff will give medical attention until medics arrive. Once medics arrive they will evaluate whether transportation or more treatment is required. All payments and costs for emergency transportation or services are the responsibility of the parents.
- Any serious accident must be reported by Little Bears to the Tri-County Health department and the Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services.

Lost Children

A staff member or adult volunteer will be with the children at all times, using a head count to verify the number of children present. The classroom teacher will ensure that each parent/guardian signs their child in upon arrival and signs the child out upon leaving the center daily. Emergency information will be taken with the classroom teacher whenever children are away from the center. In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost the following steps will take place:

- A thorough search of the premises will occur.
- The police and lost child's parents will be notified.

Sending Money to School

Please do not allow your child to bring money to school, other than for specific projects, book orders and fund raisers. When sending money to school please place it in a sealed envelope with your child's name, purpose for the money and amount enclosed on it. You may place the envelope in the mail box at the sign in desk.

General Health Issues

All children enrolled at Little Bears are required to have a yearly physical from their Doctor stating that they are free from all communicable diseases. Both the immunization record and the general health appraisal form must be handed in before the first day of school. The general health form is only valid for one year from the date it was signed by the doctor. The parent/guardian must provide a new form signed and dated by the doctor within two weeks of the expiration of the old one. The child will NOT be allowed to attend school until the updated copies are received.

All medications given to the center to administer to children will need to have annual parental permission and Doctors orders for each medication prescribed. All medication will be administered by trained delegated staff and in accordance with the prescribed directions and will be documented on our medication log. These items must be supplied by the parent, be in there original container, have a prescription and written instruction from a physician. A written health plan approved by the nurse consultant will also be required. All medications will be stored in areas inaccessible to children at all times. Emergency medications will stored in an area that is easily accessible to the staff , but still not accessible to children. Any unused medication must be removed at the end of the school year. If at the end of the school year medication is left at the school, the school will dispose of it in accordance with state rules and regulations. If a medication is expired, it will be given back to the parent and the child will be unable to attend school until new unexpired medication is provided to the school. All teachers are qualified in CPR, first aid, standard precautions and medication administration.

Children who are visibly ill will not be allowed to come to school in order to maintain the good health of the other children. Please keep your child home if they have had any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- Fever of 99.5 or higher
- Upset stomach or diarrhea (2 or more episodes)
- Vomiting
- Pink eye
- Bad cold, sore throat, coughing

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent will be notified and must come pick the child up as soon as possible. Until the child is picked up, they will be supervised by a staff member, away from the other children. In the case of an infectious disease other than a cold, a physician's release note will be required in order for the child to return to school. If a child attending Little Bears contracts a communicable illness, the Director will notify the local health department and all the parents.

Sun Protection

Due to licensing rules and regulations, you will be required to note the time you applied sunscreen to your child on the sign in sheet. Please apply sunscreen at home to all exposed areas of skin no more than 30 min before attending school. Sunscreen will be available upon request for the parent or guardian to apply on their child. You can also supply a hat for extra protection.

Toileting

All children entering the program are expected to be fully potty trained. Please ensure that your child is dressed in clothing that is easy to get on and off so that they can be fully independent while using the bathroom facilities. Occasionally accidents happen, so please have a zip-lock bag with a change of clothes in your child's back pack.

Transportation

Little Bears does not provide any transportation to or from school. Parents are asked to provide their own transportation to and from any field trips. On walking trips, a request for extra parent chaperones will be made.

Field Trips

Parents will need to provide transportation for certain field trips. For walking field trips, parents are encouraged to join their child. Children will be under staff supervision for the entire field trip. If a student arrives late to school the day of a walking field trip and the class is gone, the child must remain in the care of the parent or guardian. The student cannot be left at the school as there will be no-one there to care for them. Please note that while on any field trip, smoking is prohibited by all participants.

Video Viewing

Occasionally, a video will be viewed in conjunction with the curriculum. It will be developmentally appropriate and rated "G".

Parties, Birthdays and Other Special Events

Halloween, Thanksgiving and Valentine parties are held each year. Parties are planned, prepared and given by teachers, with the help of parent volunteers. A sign-up sheet will be available ahead of time.

We invite you to come celebrate your child's birthday in the class. You may bring a special treat in to share, and join us for the birthday celebrations. If your child has a summer birthday, we celebrate their half birthday during the school year.

Little Bears has two family events each year, our Christmas Celebration and our End of Year Celebration. These events are planned by the teachers. Families will be asked to contribute minor items for these events.

Snacks

A nutritious snack will be served each day, and will be provided by the parents on a rotating basis. Due to health department regulations and for allergy safety all snacks **MUST BE IN THEIR ORIGINAL PACKAGING AND UNOPENED**. Birthday treats and other special occasion treats for the class holiday parties must also follow these regulations. Little Bears requires written information and instruction regarding any food allergies your child might have. If your child has severe food allergies parents are welcome to supply their own child's snack. A copy of suggested nutritious snacks will be available upon request.

Discipline and Guidance

At Little Bears, the teachers implement Conscious Discipline as the discipline/guidance policy. We believe in treating children with respect and teaching them to do likewise to others. We share control and set limits by giving choices. We allow for mistakes in order for the child to learn and become an independent thinker. When a child makes a wrong choice, the following will occur:

- Empathy with consequences
- Positive reinforcement for improved behavior

Our goal is for children to be safe and have an enjoyable environment. Conscious Discipline says, "It's our job to keep your child safe and it's their job to help keep it that way." The social/emotional aspect of children is the main focus. This program uses daily conflicts to teach conflict resolution, social skills, character development and self control. There are 7 powers of self-control: perception, attention, intervention, unity, acceptance, love and free will. From that emerges the 7 Life Skills: composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, positive intent, empathy and consequences. Life skills are essential to implement in the child's daily routines as it will help guide the child through situations they encounter, which in turns help develop the whole child and helps them to become successful.

Parent/Teacher conferences will take place on an as needed basis to discuss any behavioral situations that arise throughout the school year. When a situation occurs that make a child's needs difficult for staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) to adequately address the family will be given information on how to access on Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist to help support them.

We reserve the right to release your child from the program if their behavior is not acceptable.

Withdrawal and Termination

If a child is to be withdrawn from Little Bears, written notice to the Director is required within 2 weeks of the withdrawal date. No refund of payments will be made. There are also times when a child is not adjusting well to our program. In the event that our care is not a good fit for your child and your family, we may request that you withdraw your child from our program. If this request is made you will also be given a 2 week notice in writing.

Suspension and Expulsion

Our staff are well trained and work hard to identifying the social, emotional and developmental needs of each child. However, there are times when children may need additional care that our staff are not able to provide. If we feel that your child's behavior endangers the safety of the other children, we will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) and begin with a parent/guardian-teacher conference. To better accommodate your child, we would like to work with the family to develop a plan of action. During that time, if the child is a danger to themselves or other children, we may choose to suspend your child for a discussed upon period of time. Once the child returns to our program, if the child is still a danger then we will discuss if we are the best persons to be caring for your child. Please refer to our detailed discipline policy for more information regarding the steps that are taken by our staff to work with children who are displaying challenging behavior. It is only as a very last resort that we would ask you to remove your child from our care.

Conferences

Conferences will be held once a year for the 4/5 class only, however a conference can be requested at any time by the teacher or parent if there is a concern that needs to be addressed. Brief, informal updates will be given to parents by the teacher at pick up and drop off times.

Complaints

If you have a complaint, please put it in writing so that it can be discussed with the Director. If you feel the issue is very serious you may contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, by writing to them at
1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203-1714, or by calling (303) 866-5958.

Child Abuse

State Law requires all Little Bears staff to report any suspected child abuse to the Douglas County Department of Health and Human Services at:

101 Third Street

Castle Rock, CO 80104

Phone # (303) 688-4825

and to the Castle Rock Police Department # (303) 660-1000

If you need to report suspected child abuse, you may call The Child Abuse Hotline at (720) 944-3000.

State Rules and Regulations

You may find a copy of the official rules regulating child care centers at the following websites:

www.colorado.gov/CDHS/childcare

www.sos.state.co.us

Supplies

Most items needed for the school year are supplied by Little Bears however, throughout the year parents may be asked to contribute craft items such as baby food containers, egg cartons, paper towel roll holders etc. Little Bears periodically has a wish list of items and supplies on the web site that you can donate if you so choose.

Changes

Little Bears will notify you of any significant changes to services, policies, procedures, fees or staff in writing.

Privacy of Information

All parents and staff who work or volunteer in the class will be required to sign a privacy statement. No information related to a child's health, safety and development, including but not limited to special diets, accident reports, specific fears, allergies and information received from the nurse consultant is to be shared. The only time information will be shared is if/when it is crucial for the safety of the child.