



Little Nest Child Care Learning Center Parent Handbook

Little Nest Childcare is founded on three principals-

- ❖ Children learn best when allowed to explore, experience, and communicate about what they are learning.
- ❖ Curriculum will help children develop intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and creatively.
- ❖ Parents, care providers, and children form a community to prepare the children for a lifetime of learning.

“Education is not the filling of a pail- but the lighting of a fire.”

-William Butler Yeats

Our goals:

For our students:

That they will feel secure, loved, and accepted. That they will have fun and enjoy learning and playing here. That they will know that they and their families are important and respected. That Little Nest Child Care will be able to go above and beyond for them all.

For our student’s parents:

That they will know that they are not alone. That Little Nest Child Care will be supportive a partner in parenting their child and will always try to act in their child’s best interest.

For our staff:

That they will feel safe and loved here. That they will have financial and emotional security within these walls.

Our handbook begins with a line of open communication. Please know that we are always available to discuss your child with you.

Day to Day Inquiries:

Little Nest Child Care and Learning Center

317 East St Patrick Street

Rapid City, SD 57701

605.430.4268 Ext 4

info.littlenestchildcare@gmail.com

Business Office:

605.430.4268 Ext 3

Info.littlenestpreschool@gmail.com

PLEASE DON’T TEXT 605.430.4268. Text messaging is managed through the Remind App

Admission

The following items are required for admission: completed online enrollment and enrollment forms, current immunizations, completed contract, and **deposit equal to one week’s care to be applied to the last week of the two week notice.**

Ages

Target age of students is between 6 weeks and 12 years.

Allergies

We are very sensitive to the needs of children with allergies. **We are a “nut free” (this includes tree nuts and peanuts) facility,** and have many safety precautions in place to avoid exposing any students to their allergen. Please complete the allergy section in our Emergency Contact form in your enrollment packet. If your child has an allergy you will also be asked to complete a care plan which details their allergy list, symptoms, steps to avoid triggers, and a treatment plan in the case of a reaction. Please note that we ask families do not keep ANY food or non-water drink items at preschool in back packs or cubbies. If extra lunches, snacks, or drinks are brought in they must be handed to a staff member for proper storage.

Attendance

Please call the facility directly (605.430.4268 Ext 4) to report absences or if your student will be late. **YOU MUST CALL IN BY 10 AM** if you are arriving late to be sure enough food is prepared for lunch.

Behavior

Children are reaching many behavioral and developmental milestones. Please note that your child will be provided guidance and help as they continue to hone their skills, but that we must provide a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff. There are centers in town with behavioral specialists onsite, and some children with extreme behaviors will be referred to centers with those beneficial resources.

Birthdays

At Little Nest birthdays are a big deal! We want to be able to celebrate your child and we will have a party for them that day. You are welcome to bring in treats, or let us know and we'll make sure to plan treats for snack that day. If possible, we'd love to have your child bring photos, a favorite toy, and their favorite book from home that day.

Child Care Assistance

To apply for child care assistance please visit <http://dss.sd.gov/childcare/childcareassistance/> If you are approved, the state may assign you a copay amount. The state also only allots a small amount of time for sick/vacation leave. If your child is frequently absent your copay may increase. All students must pay a one week deposit, regardless of applying for Child Care Assistance. Once you are approved, you will receive a confirmation letter from the Department of Social Services, and a letter from our business office. Our provider number for your application is 016598091

Child Care Safety - Child Abuse

Our love of children prompts us to help provide the best possible life experiences for them. We have been trained to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, and are required by law to report to Social Services any suspected abuse or neglect of any child we care for. Substitute and/or additional caregivers have also been trained to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, and are also required to report suspected abuse or neglect to Social Services. Training in child abuse and neglect is renewed annually. Any staff member awaiting investigation outcome and evaluation will be removed from the center until the investigation is complete.

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

All staff receive training from the Department of Social Services regarding these two topic areas. They are trained to recognize the symptoms that a child is suffering from Shaken Baby Syndrome or Abusive Head Trauma. These apply to all children under the age of five. Staff have been trained to recognize the risk factors, reduce these factors for families and in the center, and how to provide support to prevent incidents.

Communication

Little Nest Preschool has an open-door policy. Please feel free to call or stop in at any time to check on your child. Monthly newsletters are emailed that detail curriculum, menus, and important announcements and are also posted in the buildings. Also, for those interested we are more than willing to email, and send photos and videos over cell phone to help you remain more connected with students during the day. Note that we have a separate extension lines for our facilities and business office. Any questions regarding your account, enrollment, or direct concerns can be communicated to the Director/Owner Ms. Jessica at **430-4268 Ext 3**. Please use our FACILITY EXTENSION LINES listed below to check on how your child is doing daily, whether they ate/slept/had any accidents, how they are feeling, whether or not you will be arriving early or late or will be absent, etc. This will give you a direct line of communication at all times with teachers and your child. Texts must be sent through the Remind App and teachers are required to keep an open line of communication with the director about daily activities of the students. Please try not to call these extensions and ask for the director, as it is the teacher's direct line of communication.

LITTLE NEST CHILD CARE LEARNING CENTER 605.430.4268 Ext 4

Community

We have a dedication to forming a sense of community for our students. Please fill out the parent/child questionnaire. It will give us insight as to who you are as a family, important information about your child, and how you might want to become involved in your child's time here. We believe that keeping families, students, and teachers involved will instill a sense of pride for the children in the center, in their families, and in each other.

Community Activities

Little Nest Preschool offers activities outside of normal care to give you the opportunity to get to know the other students and their families. A variety of activities will be offered throughout the year. A few of these are listed below; please let us know if you have any other suggestions!

Preschool Summer Ice Cream Social

Preschool Trunk or Treat

Preschool Saturday Winter Holiday Party

Preschool Easter Egg Hunt

Cost

Cost for full time students age 6 weeks through 23 months is \$170 per week. This helps us keep low student to teacher ratios.

Cost for full time students age 2 years and up is \$150.00 per week.

Cost for part time students is \$90 per week (7:00am-12:30 pm)

Cost for school age students before and after school is \$75 per week

Cost for school age students after school only is \$65per week

Cost for drop in care is \$40 per day

All snacks, meals, and educational materials are included in this price. **As it is with all other care providers in the state, you pay for care whether your child is present or not.** A one week deposit is required to hold your place, and is retained for the last week of your two-week notice should you wish to remove your child from care. This deposit is nonrefundable. All tuition is due Mondays prior to care unless you have a different written agreement with our office, however payments are always due in advance. Changes to your payment plan **MUST** be submitted in writing with 10 business day to accommodate your request. Note that Little Nest Child Care does not accept payments onsite. Please see Fees section for additional Field Trip and Supply Fees.

CPR

All fulltime/substitute/part time staff members are CPR certified. All certifications are kept current and on file.

Discipline

Discipline will offer clear-cut limits and direction to help a child develop self-control and respect for the rights of others. We follow a philosophy referred to as conscious discipline, which redirects children into communicating about what is going on, and why certain actions have natural consequences. This method goes beyond automatic overuse of time out to help children understand the natural consequence to their behavior. For more information please visit with one of our site managers or visit <http://consciousdiscipline.com> Other methods of discipline that will be utilized are redirection, talking with the child, loss of certain privilege activities (not meals or outside play time), time out (not to exceed in minutes the child's age in years), and as a last resort, phone call to the parents. Certain methods of discipline **WILL NOT** be used, even with permission from the parent including humiliating or frightening the child, any physical punishment, verbal abuse or negative remarks about the child or their family, restriction of movement, punishment for potty accidents, withholding or forcing naps or meals, and use of substances such as soap. You will always be notified of any incidents during the day. Please, if you have any questions or concerns discuss them with site managers.

Discrimination

No child, parent, or staff member will be discriminated against due to race, sex, sexual orientation, or financial status. However, Little Nest Child Care does receive the right to forbid anyone from the business who proves to be a danger to themselves or others.

Drop In Care

The rate for drop in care is \$40 per day and is paid online in advance to care. Please note that we still have the same paperwork and immunization record requirements.

Emergency Preparedness

Federal laws mandate emergency preparedness plans for all licensed child care centers. In addition to our tornado and fire drills, we are now required to have lockdown and evacuation drills

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In the incident that Little Nest Preschool needs to be evacuated you need to know the following:

317 East St Patrick Street Near evacuation site: Calvary Chapel Community Church, 320 East St Patrick Street

Far evacuation site: Little Nest Preschool (Rapid Valley), 3459 Jet Drive

In the event of an evacuation, if possible children will be evacuated to Calvary Chapel Community Church. If Calvary Chapel Community Church is in disrepair, children will be evacuated to our far evacuation site, Little Nest Preschool.

Families will be notified via social media, the Remind app, and calling tree. Students must be picked up within one hour of parent notification.

Evaluations

Your child will be assessed based on the Early Learning Guidelines for the state of South Dakota. These guidelines provide benchmarks for intellectual, physical, and social emotional development. Evaluations are held each trimester, and you will receive the results as well as learning goals. Learning goals are based on experiences which encourage self-esteem and positive self-image, social interaction, self-help skills, communication skills, creative expression, large/small muscle development, as well as intellectual growth.

Expulsion

Little Nest Child Care reserves the right to cancel care to protect the safety of our staff and students.

Reasons your child might be considered that their needs are not being met:

1. If they are repeatedly physically, emotionally, or otherwise harming other children.
2. If they are developmentally not ready for my preschool environment.
3. If the parents are unable to comply with policies as stated in the handbook.
4. If they repeatedly pose a serious risk to themselves or others through dangerous actions.

Children may also be expelled if they or their families exhibit extreme violent behavior at any time during enrollment. Our number one priority is health and safety of all students and staff.

Extra Clothes

As we will be doing a lot of science experiments, outdoor play, and art activities, please do not send your child in their finest clothes. Also, please send an extra set of clothing with your child, just in case they need it.

Fees

An annual Field Trip Fee of \$35 is Due 3/1 of each year to cover all field trips from March 1st- November 1st. An Annual Supply Fee of \$30 is due 9/1 of each year to cover all art supplies for the year. These fees are nonrefundable.

Field Trips/Outings

We will be taking frequent field trips and outings. A signed permission slip will be required for children to participate. Please review field trip safety with your child.

Holidays

Little Nest Child Care will be open regular business hours all holidays except those listed below.

Other holidays that Rapid City Schools are closed for will be "special days" at Little Nest.

Generally, those days will be pajama/movie days.

The following days Little Nest Preschool will be CLOSED (normal tuition will still be due)

Spring Break (The Thursday before Easter and Good Friday)

Memorial Day

July 4th and 5th (Oftentimes preschoolers up late due to the holiday, this does not make for a very positive learning environment)

Thanksgiving Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve*

Christmas Day*

New Year's Eve*

New Year's Day*

***If any of these falls over a weekend Little Nest will observe the same closed business days as US banks**

Hours of Operation

Little Nest Child Care's hours of operation are from 6:30 am-6:30 pm daily. If you need special arrangements, please contact the director. **A late/early fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed.**

Illness

It is South Dakota state law that if your child has had a temperature of 100° or more that they must wait 24 hours before returning to child care without the use of Tylenol. If your child becomes ill during the day they will be separated from the other children and a parent will be notified and required to pick up their child **within the hour**, this helps to prevent the spread of illness to other students and staff. Please see the [“Exclusion from Child Care.”](#) This is also posted in our buildings. Little Nest Preschool is also required to report contagious diseases to the Department of Health, so please let us know if your child has received a diagnosis.

Immunization Records

A list of your child’s current immunizations signed by their physician is due **before** your child’s first day of class.

Infant Care

Parents will supply bottles of breast milk or premixed formula. Empty and used bottles will be rinsed, and sent home upon request (otherwise they are washed and sanitized daily at the center). Parents may bring unopened labeled store-bought baby food for children eating solids. Parents may also provide freshly prepared homemade foods in labeled containers daily. All children’s items, including bottles, foods, and clothing must be labeled with child’s name. Per State licensing requirements, infants through eleven months may not nap with blankets in cribs. Parents may choose to send a sleep sack. Alternate sleeping requests must be made by using a specific form authorized from the child’s physician. Infants will be placed on a schedule of regular feeding, play, and rest times. Infants will be fed either formula or breast milk, both of which are to be supplied by the parent. The parent is responsible for providing baby food for as long as that is necessary. Formula must be provided in pre-mixed ready to use bottles labeled with the child/ren’s name and bottles with breast milk must be stored in a separate container (small lunch box) and all bottles will be stored in a refrigerator. Infants will be fed on a feeding schedule provided by the parent/guardian and all formula or food will be documented. Rest periods for infants vary per child. Diapers are checked on a regular basis and changed whenever reasonably necessary. After the diaper is changed, the diaper-changing area will be sterilized and the provider's hands washed. Parents should provide any special instructions regarding the use of diaper-changing products, such as powder or ointment.

Insect Repellant/Sunscreen

We can apply insect repellant and sunscreen if you complete our waiver.

Labelling of Personal Items

All items brought from home must be labeled (hats, mittens, gloves, blankets, back packs, toys etc). Please keep in mind that we have limited space, and only send necessities to school with your child. Every attempt will be made to keep personal items in cubbies, and this is a great opportunity to teach our students about tidying up and taking care of their belongings.

Materials Needed for Class

Extra clothing
One large oversized t-shirt for painting
2 Blankets and pillow for naptime
Appropriate outdoor clothing in winter

Meals

All meals and snacks served will follow federal guidelines for nutrition of preschool children including mandated serving sizes of protein, grain, fruit/vegetable, and dairy. Food can be brought from home,

but it is expected that it will either meet nutritional guidelines, or it will be supplemented with missing components from the centers menu. **ALL FOOD BROUGHT FROM HOME MUST BE GIVEN TO A STAFF MEMBER FOR PROPER STORAGE IN THE KITCHEN. FOOD IS NOT TO BE LEFT IN CUBBIES OR BACK PACKS.** Menus will be posted a month in advance. All meals are included in your tuition price. Occasional substitutions will be made due to availability, but will always fall into the same food group category. Breakfast is served at 8:30, AM Snack for infants and toddlers is served at 10:00, Lunch is served at 12:00, and Snack is served at 2:45. **Please list any allergies on your enrollment form. This form includes an action plan for allergic reactions. We are happy to prepare foods for special dietary needs. PLEASE NOTE OUR FACILITY IS A TREENUT/PEANUT FREE ZONE.** These items are prohibited in the facility.

Medication

Medications may only be administered with the written consent of the parent or guardian and only if the consent lists the name of the medication and the date or dates the medication is to be administered. Medications must be kept in their original container with the original label. The label must contain legible directions for use, the expiration date, the child's name, and the physician's name. A drug container without a label or with an illegible label is not permitted. **MEDICATIONS MUST BE STORED IN A PLACE WHICH IS INACCESSIBLE TO CHILDREN AND ARE NOT TO BE LEFT IN CUBBIES OR BACK PACKS.** Medication requiring refrigeration must be placed in another container which is not absorbent and labeled "medication."

Nap/rest time

Naptime will take place each day from 12:30-2:30. Please let us know what calms your child at home. Children are not required to sleep. After fifteen minutes of quiet time, wakeful children will be allowed to engage in quiet play until naptime is over. Please send two blankets and pillow for your child to use. We will wash them each Friday. Please try to arrange your schedule so you are not picking up or dropping off your child during nap. Occasional pick up/ drop off during this time is allowed, but if it is the schedule every day it can be very disruptive and it's important that students get the rest they need.

Outside Play

Weather permitting; we will attempt to take children outside at least twice a day. Please remember in winter months to send them with mittens, coats, hats, boots, and some days even snow pants.

Parent Resources

Little Nest Preschool has several parent handouts on topics of interest. If you would like to receive any of these, please take a copy from our resource book, request one by email, or visit our website at www.littlenestpreschool.biz/.

- Preschool Childhood Development
- Positive Reinforcement
- Stress Management
- Helping Your Child Develop a Positive Sense of Self
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen, and Listen So Kids Will Talk
- Encouraging a Shy Child
- The Strong-Willed Child
- Common Challenging Behaviors

Payment

Payments are due on the date listed on your individual payment plan or on Mondays prior to care. A \$30.00 late fee will be assessed the first day a payment is not received, and \$10 per day each day afterward. A payment received that is returned by the bank will result in an automatic \$30.00 charge in

addition to any other late charges/fees that were incurred. Payments are due in advance whether or not your child is present. If you have consistently returned checks you may be placed on a money order only payment plan.

Pick Up

Please note that only those listed on your registration will be allowed to pick up your child unless we have prior notice from you, and if it is our first time meeting them, they will be required to show photo ID. Also, if anyone appearing to be under the influence of any substance attempts to pick up a child, the staff of Little Nest Preschool reserve the right to say no.

Potty Training

Children do not have to be potty trained prior to enrollment. We will assist the parents in this process using a plan of action agreed upon by both parties.

Program Activities

Are planned according to the developmental level of each group of children. Little Nest Child Care provides each child with experiences to develop creatively, socially and emotionally, cognitively, and physically. All curriculum is based on the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines, https://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/early_learning_guidelines.pdf

Program Schedule

6:30 am-8:30 am Opening and arrival, centers
 8:30 am- 9:00 am Breakfast
 9:00-11:30 Recess, Preschool Planned Projects
 10:00 Infant/toddler AM Snack
 11:30-12:00 Educational TV
 12:00-12:30 Lunch
 12:30-12:45 Potty break, set up naptime
 12:45-2:45 Naptime/Quiet playtime
 2:45-3:00 Potty break, handwashing
 3:00-3:15 Snack time
 3:15-6:30 Recess, secondary project time, centers

Reporting Child Abuse

Child care providers are mandated by law to report signs of abuse and neglect. Our policy is that staff will report initial suspicions to the director first. If we feel that the threat is real and that a child is at risk, then suspicions will be reported directly to the Department of Social Services at 605-394-2525. In the incident of reports of suspected in house child abuse or neglect Little Nest Preschool will remove the teacher from the classroom until the Department of Social Services has conducted their investigation and filed their official report.

Reporting Changes or Circumstances

As a licensed facility, we are required to report changes in circumstances to the Dept of Social Services. These changes include change of location, new director, the felony conviction of any staff member or involvement with Child Protective Services or law enforcement concerning investigations of child abuse or neglect.

Rules

Please refer to the list of rules included in your packet and go over them with your child. Please sign at the bottom and return with registration.

Safe Handling and Storage of Hazardous Material and Disposal of Bio Contaminants

All staff undergo orientation from the Department of Social Services addressing safe handling and storage of hazardous materials and disposal of bio contaminants. Staff are trained on what is a hazardous material, chemicals are kept in locked cabinets away from children, they remain in their original containers and labeled (except for bleach solutions, which are in labelled spray bottles). The number for poison control is kept onsite and there are first aid kits located in each room and on field trips. All staff understand hazardous items are to be stored after use. Staff are also trained on Standard Precautions which include handwashing after diapering, providing toileting help, personal contact with any bodily fluids, before and after administering first aid, or cleaning up a spill or object that has come in contact with bodily fluids. Staff are also trained on proper glove use, which includes proper removal, disposal, washing hands after they are used, and training on how to disinfect areas after they have come in contact with bodily fluids.

Sanitizing and Cleaning Schedules

We follow strict daily sanitizing and cleaning schedules. We are inspected annually by the Department of Health, the Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Social Services.

School Age Program

Steps to success for the school age program

1. Review with your child the pickup procedure for afterschool care (what our vehicle looks like, where to meet us, and that they are to come straight to the pickup vehicle etc)
2. Make sure their teachers and school office know that we are providing pick up and the location of our vehicle.
3. If we won't be picking up your student, you must call in and notify us by 2:00 pm. It's important that we know who we'll be picking up each day to ensure the safety of all students. Please notify us if your out of town, your child is ill etc. **If we're waiting at the elementary school for your child and they are absent there will be a \$15 fee added to your tuition.** When we're waiting at schools for children who aren't there, it makes us late to pick up at the next school, and is stressful for the instructor and students who are waiting.
4. School age students and families should follow all other guidelines outlined in the handbook and contract.
5. Please note school age tuition increases to the regular tuition rate of \$150 per week in the Summer months. It does not increase during "no school days" during the school year, but you will be asked to pack a lunch those days.

Show and Share Days

Show and Share will be held each Friday during the school year. This can be any special item your child wants to share with the class, however if you wish to bring in a special pet please arrange to have it taken home after circle time.

Sign In/Out

All students must be signed in/out daily on our computer system. **This is an important requirement from the Department of Social Services.**

Smoking

Smoking on the premises of Little Nest Preschool is strictly prohibited.

Staff Requirements

Primary staff must be at least 18 years of age. Secondary staff may be 14 as long as they are supervised by an adult. All programming is planned and overseen by the director and site managers who are all

CDA certified. All staff undergo background checks and are CPR and first aid certified. Staff completes over 60 hours of training annually. We have a highly developed staff professionalism training program. All staff are placed on leadership career pathways that involve continuing education through SDSU and opportunities for advancement. We partner with the Rapid City Area School District to make sure all of our students are on track for kindergarten.

Termination of Care Requirements

A two-week written notice is required when a family decides to terminate care. The deposit at enrollment will be applied toward the last week. Little Nest Childcare reserves the right to cancel care to protect the health and safety of students and staff and to protect our financial stability.

1. If a student is repeatedly physically, emotionally, or otherwise harming other children.
2. If a student is developmentally not ready for our preschool environment.
3. If the parents are unable to comply with policies as stated in the handbook.
4. If a student repeatedly poses a serious risk to themselves or others through dangerous actions.
5. If a parent behaves inappropriately on preschool property (threatening anyone on the premises, yelling, physical violence)
6. Nonpayment of tuition.

If these behaviors arise at any time during enrollment we will communicate expectations with families. Every effort will be made to continue enrollment, but if behavioral issues persist either by a student or a parent that present a threat to safety of students and staff, or if there are issues of non-payment, students may be unenrolled via written notice. This ensures safety for all in our building, and also helps us operate our finances judiciously.

Toys

Please only send one toy to preschool per day, and they must be small enough to fit in their cubby or backpack. Remember to label all toys brought to preschool. Please do not send items such as guns, belts, “grabbing” toys, nail polish, and let your child know that if they bring an item such as a ball, they will only be allowed to use it outside!

Transportation

When required, children will be transported in our 15-passenger preschool van. While we do have enough booster and harnessed car seat to accommodate our students, we can always utilize a family’s personal car seat if they prefer, provided it is in good working order.

Two Home Families

Please let us know if your child has two households. This allows us to make sure copies of event schedules, parent letters, and special family crafts go home in duplicate.

Winter Weather

Normal tuition will still be due even if there are snow days, late starts, or early dismissal. If Rapid City schools are closed due to weather, Little Nest Preschool will also be closed. If Rapid City School are closed due to hot temperatures, we will remain open.