



Family Handbook

2023-2024

This handbook is a guide for parents and caregivers of children enrolled in Lincoln Parks and Recreation Preschool Programs. The information contained herein explains the requirements, policies, and procedures of the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department and the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. A copy of licensing regulations is available for review at program offices.

If you have any questions about preschool policies, procedures, schedules, or anything else, do not hesitate to contact us! You can reach the Preschool Director, Candace Kastrup at 402-441-8669.

About Us

Lincoln Parks and Recreation Preschool Programs provide Lincoln children an opportunity to socialize with other children, learn important skills in preparation of formal school, and instill a lifelong love of learning. Program staff plan fun, developmentally appropriate experiences for children with a focus on nature exploration. Our Preschool Programs operate from September – May, Monday through Friday, serving children 3 – 5 years of age who are fully potty trained. We provide structure and routine for children using the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines, following children’s interests to plan curriculum, and supporting the following learning domains:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Health and Physical Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- Mathematics
- Science
- Creative Arts



Little Sprouts at Calvert Recreation Center
4500 Stockwell Lincoln, NE 68506
402-441-8480

Little Sprouts offers children the opportunity to learn about nature in an urban setting, utilizing Henry Park for daily walks and exploration. Using observations of the children during play and outdoor experiences teachers plan the curriculum and activities in which children learn literacy, math and science through play experiences and further exploration. Children also engage in music and movement activities, creative arts, and building experiences to support creativity and social/emotional skills in a mixed age setting.

Little Sprouts meets 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. and is offered for children 3 – 5 years old Monday – Friday with the following enrollment options:

Tuesdays & Thursdays,
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, or
Monday – Friday



Nature Preschool at Pioneers Park
3201 S. Coddington Lincoln, NE 68522
402-441-7895

Nature Preschool offers children the opportunity to explore nature in a wildlife sanctuary, encountering diverse landscapes and animals during daily hikes and outdoor play. Teachers plan the curriculum based on their observations of children during outdoor experiences, through class discussions, and during play. This emergent curriculum supports children’s natural curiosity to deepen their understanding of the world around them and link it to math, literacy, creative arts, and social/emotional skills. Nature Preschool operates Monday – Friday with the following enrollment options:

Preschool for children 3 – 4 years old:
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9 – 11:30

Prekindergarten for children 4 – 5 years old:
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays
9 – 11:30 **OR** 12:45 – 3:15

Important Information

Contact Information

Families must always keep contact information up to date, informing us of any changes when they arise. A phone number where staff can immediately contact someone to arrange pick-up of ill children within 30 minutes of notification must be provided daily.

Registration Forms

It is important for families to complete all forms in full upon enrollment including:

- Participant and family information
- Permission Form
- Waiver and Release of Claims
- Media, Talent, and Production Consent and Release
- Handbook Receipt
- Description of Center Services and Policies
- Immunization Record
- Receipt of DHHS Parent Information Brochure

Arrival/Dismissal Times

Families are expected to be on time for arrival and dismissal times so teachers can begin sessions in a timely manner and cleanup at the end of the day. A late fee will be charged for children picked up after dismissal times.

Communication

It is important in a child's early years that parents/guardians and teachers maintain open, two-way communication to ensure we are best meeting the needs of each child. We will use email to communicate important information, upcoming dates or changes, and classroom newsletters. We expect families to check email frequently, so you are aware of important information. Teachers will be available for brief conversations at drop off and pick up times, however lengthy conversations should be reserved for phone calls with the teaching staff/preschool director, or we can schedule a conference.

Family Engagement Opportunities

Throughout the school year we will provide opportunities for families to be involved in the preschool program. These may be home art projects, visiting the classroom, or special preschool family events. We will try to accommodate families' busy schedules and give ample notice for scheduling. It is our goal for all families to feel welcome and included.

Conferences

Teachers will be available for conferences during the school year to discuss student development and establish goals. These conferences may be via Zoom, phone call, or in person. If you would like additional conferences outside of scheduled times, please reach out to the preschool director for availability and scheduling.

Preschool Program Expectations

Clothing

Children should come dressed for active play in weather appropriate attire and closed-toe shoes. We will play outdoors daily, except for severe weather such as lightning, extreme windchills, or heat advisory. The following labeled weather gear can be sent to school in a reusable grocery bag daily as needed:

- Winter coat/Rain Jacket
- Mittens/Gloves (preferably waterproof)
- Snow/Rain boots
- Snow pants/bibs or a snow suit
- Hat

What to Bring to Preschool

- A small backpack or bag, labeled with your child's name.
- A gallon size Ziplock bag labeled with your child's name containing extra clothes.
- Weather appropriate outdoor gear.

What to Leave at Home

- Toys
- Valuable or sentimental items
- Food and drinks

Toilet Training

We require children to be fully potty trained upon enrollment. We understand accidents may happen and ask that you provide a change of clothes for these occasions, however we do require children to be out of diapers and pull ups.

Snacks

Our Preschool Programs provide a snack daily for children while in attendance. Snacks meet or exceed USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. If you have NOT alerted the staff of food allergies, please do so immediately to arrange alternative snack plans.

Birthdays and Holidays

Teachers will celebrate birthdays throughout the year with children. We ask that you refrain from sending sweets or treat bags on your child's birthday. Instead, families may provide birthday napkins or plates to serve snack on for the day. Please do not put party invitation or treat bags for birthdays or holidays in children's cubbies. This helps avoid hurt feelings among children.

Field Trips

Parks and Recreation Preschool Programs utilize City of Lincoln parks property for daily walks/hikes and outdoor exploration. If we plan to go off park property this is considered a field trip, we will give families at least 24-hour notice of any planned field trips.

Supports and Interventions at Preschool

Lincoln Parks and Recreation expectations are for children to be safe, respectful, and responsible. Preschool is a time to develop social skills, self-regulation, and problem solving. When situations arise teachers will work with children, assisting them in building and using these skills. At times children may be asked to spend some time away from peers with other activities, then teachers will assist children as they re-enter play. If children are having difficulty at home or at school, it is important to communicate with staff. It is our goal to work together as a team to best meet the needs of every child.

It takes time for children to adjust and settle into a routine. It is important for teachers and parents to remember that some children's behavior might be challenging, but most children respond when consistency and routine are in place.

If your child is receiving special education services from Lincoln Public Schools or another provider, we want to make sure that we are implementing and following the strategies and goals of the IEP or IFSP. Please notify the preschool director BEFORE your child's first day.

Photographs

Please respect others' privacy and refrain from taking photos of the children while in the classroom or joining us outdoors. Some families have specifically requested not to have their child's photo taken.

Lost and Found

Please check with the front desk staff if your child has misplaced a personal item. Any items left unclaimed at the end of the semester will be donated to a local charity. Lincoln Parks and Recreation is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Teacher Gifts

Occasionally students wish to offer gifts to teachers to celebrate holidays or special occasions. Please know that our Preschool Programs adhere to the City of Lincoln Gift Policy that restricts the acceptance of gifts by city employees. If your family is so inclined, please consider a donation to the classroom instead: books, art supplies, toys, games, facial tissue, etc.

Parent Code of Conduct

We reserve the right to discontinue your preschool/prekindergarten enrollment at any time if we find parental/guardian behavior to be detrimental or disruptive to the program or staff during indoor and outdoor activities while class is in session. If you do not agree with or no longer prefer the services of our program and how we facilitate them, you have the right to discontinue the preschool/prekindergarten service at any time.

School Calendar

Lincoln Parks and Recreation Preschool Programs begin the day after Labor Day, September 5, 2023, and follow Lincoln Public Schools Elementary Calendar for days off. The last day of school will be May 17, 2024. School closures for the 2023-2024 school year are:

October 13 - 17	November 22 – 27	December 25 – Jan 5	January 15
February 16 - 19	March 11 – 15	March 29	April 26

Health & Safety

Lincoln Parks and Recreation is committed to keeping the spread of illness to a minimum, and we take the following steps to do so:

- Staff will conduct a daily check upon arrival by asking each child how they are feeling and observe each child for symptoms.
- Children and staff will wash hands upon arrival and throughout the day.
- Materials are disinfected on a regular basis.
- Strict and consistent enforcement of our criteria for excluding participants due to illness.
- Staff track and monitor illness and exclusion.
- Families and health authorities are notified of any communicable disease outbreak.
- We follow the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department regarding Covid-19 guidelines and requirements. Per local DHMs or the recommendation of the LLCHD we may require face masks indoors at times.

Illness Exclusion Policy

Participants with the following symptoms must be excluded:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Covid - 19* | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever higher than 100.4 F• Cough• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing• Loss of taste or smell• Close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19• Two or more of the following: chills, congestion and/or runny nose, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting. <p><i>*Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department Directed Health Measure 2021-18. (2.12.2021)</i></p> |
| Diarrhea | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When a watery stool causes an “accident” or• If the frequency of watery stools exceeds two stools in the past 24 hours. |
| Vomiting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 or more times in the past 24 hours |
| Fever | Temperature above 100.4° F and behavior change or other illness symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) |
| Rash | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With fever or behavior change: until a physician has determined the illness is not contagious.• Chickenpox: until all lesions have dried or crusted.• Impetigo (symptoms include blisters/sores on the face, neck, and/or hands): until 24 hours after treatment has been started.• Mouth sores with drooling.• Head lice or ringworm until after the first treatment. |
| Not Feeling Well | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any child who requires more care than can be given by staff in a group setting or a child who is unable to participate in regular daily activities. |

Please do not send your child to the program if they cannot participate in regular daily activities or if signs of a possibly contagious illness are present. Children who exhibit the signs of a possibly contagious illness will be excluded. A parent/guardian will be called to pick up the child. Due to the additional care required when a child is ill, we request children be picked up within 30 minutes.

Doctor Notes

There may be times when it is necessary to present a doctor's note to indicate an illness is not infectious. Staff may request that you consult with your child's physician. The final decision on whether to exclude a child is made by the Preschool Director/Site Coordinator.

Medication

We ask that you do your best to schedule medications during hours your child is not at preschool. If your child needs to take medication at preschool (prescription or over-the-counter), you must request and complete a Medication Consent Form. All medication is kept secured in a designated location and must be checked in with the Preschool Director. IMPORTANT: Medications that are used on an "as needed" basis (or "PRN") require a note from a medical professional describing the symptom(s) and dosage.

Allergies

If your child has an allergy that requires any action, please make sure we have an action plan on file. We will store allergy medication/epi-pens within the classroom. Please contact the Preschool Director prior to your child's first day to ensure we have an action plan in place and understood.

Photo Identification

Children will only be released to the parent(s)/guardian(s) listed on the program registration form. Written and signed permission from a parent/ guardian will be required for the child to be released to any other adult. IDs will be checked when staff does not recognize the person picking up a child.

First Aid/CPR

Our staff is trained in First Aid and CPR by the American Red Cross (or equivalent). This training includes preventing, recognizing, and properly responding to emergencies.

Sunscreen/Bug Spray

Children should come to preschool prepared for outdoor play, this includes having sunscreen and bug spray applied before arrival. We do not have classroom space to store sunscreen/bug spray on site.

Fire Drills/Tornado Drills

Fire and tornado drills are practiced regularly according to licensing and fire code throughout the school year. We incorporate drills into our curriculum as an addition learning opportunity.

Inclement Weather/School Closing

Out of consideration for the safety of our students and their families, preschool recognizes Lincoln Public School (LPS) decisions regarding "snow days" and other weather-related closures.

Preschool Program Payments

Preschool tuition is calculated according to the number of days the program is schedule to be in session throughout the year and divided into nine equal monthly installments.

Payment Schedule

Due upon registration.....Enrollment fee

Due the 1st of every month.....Monthly tuition

Late pick-up fees.....A late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes the child remains at the program after dismissal will be due at pick up.

Payment Policy

- Families must pay in advance according to the schedule above unless a special payment plan is approved. You will not receive a bill.
- The enrollment fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Fees are charged based on full-time attendance. The fee is the same if a child is ill, out-of-town, suspended, or out for any other reason.
- We accept cash, checks, credit/debit cards, and money orders.
- Receipts are provided upon request.
- Families will be notified if a payment becomes past due.
- Five days written notice is required to cancel enrollment prior to the start of the next month. The written notice will be dated and filed by staff. Failure to provide 5 days written notice will result in full charges for the following month.
- If enrollment is cancelled and a family later wishes to re-enroll, the child will be placed on a waiting list until an opening becomes available. The family will not be required to pay an additional enrollment fee.

Please pay at the guest services desk; credit/debit card payments are preferred at this time.

- **Online Payments:** Go to parks.lincoln.ne.gov, click the green “ePay” button. Sign up for a MyInterline account and create a Parks and Rec client profile for your child. If you have ever paid your water bill, pet license, or a parking ticket online, you already have an account. Call us if you need help.
- **Late Payments:** There will be a \$15.00 fee applied if your child’s tuition is not paid by the 15th of each month.
- Families with past due fees on the last day of the program will be turned over to the City Attorney’s Office. You will not be able to enroll in any Parks and Recreation program until payment is received.
- If we receive a returned check, future payments must be paid by cash, credit card, or money order.



Little Sprouts Preschool and Nature Preschool are owned and operated
by the City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department:

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