



PARENTS' HANDBOOK

2023-2024 School Year

67-25 188th Street, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365

PHONE: 718-454-6460

EMAIL: imecc@littlemeadows.org

About Little Meadows: Little Meadows is an educational agency serving preschool children with and without disabilities. We offer a variety of services and programs at several locations. Listed below are our program locations:

Main Site: Little Meadows Early Childhood Center
67-25 188th Street
Fresh Meadows, NY 11365
718-454-6460

Off Sites: Common Point Queens Sam Field Center
58-20 Little Neck Parkway
Little Neck, NY 11362
718-225-6750 x253

Christ Lutheran Church
188-12 73rd Ave
Fresh Meadows, NY 11366
718-454-6460

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SERVICES PROVIDED BY LITTLE MEADOWS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

Little Meadows is a preschool that caters to children of all abilities, providing inclusive programs for children aged from birth to five years. We offer a diverse range of programs designed to meet the unique needs of each child:

1. **Early Intervention:** Our Early Intervention Program focuses on children aged birth to three years who are experiencing developmental delays. We provide comprehensive evaluations, home-based therapy, center-based toddler programs, and service coordination.
2. **CPSE Preschool Program:** Specifically designed for children aged three to five years with developmental delays, our CPSE Preschool Program offers evaluations and various services including Special Education Itinerant Services (SEIT), Special Class in an Integrated Setting at Little Meadows and our Community Partners at the Sam Field, Little Neck location, as well as Self-Contained classes. The Self-Contained classes provide a higher staff-to-children ratio and specialized education support, with a ratio of 12:1:2.
3. **General Education:** We also offer NYCDOE 3K and PKA (4-year-old) classes for children who do not require specialized services and can thrive in a general education setting.
4. **Clinical Services:** Our preschool provides speech, occupational, and physical therapy services to support children in their development. Additionally, counseling services are available to address emotional and social well-being.
5. **Creative Arts:** Little Meadows incorporates creative arts into our curriculum, offering music and yoga programs to enhance children's creativity, self-expression, and overall well-being.

We strive to create an inclusive and nurturing environment where all children can learn, grow, and reach their full potential.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Family Communication:** Multiple pathways of communication are available for families to stay in touch with staff. You are encouraged to share information about your child and ask any questions you may have. The program aims to support the linguistic, cultural, and social needs of families.
2. **Parent Conferences:** Regularly scheduled parent conferences take place in the fall and spring. Attending these conferences is strongly encouraged as they provide an opportunity to develop an open line of communication and work together for the benefit of your child. Additionally, parents can request conferences at any time during the school year.
3. **Classroom Involvement:** Parents are welcome to stay in the classroom with their child during the initial adjustment period if necessary. They can also visit their child's classroom at other times. However, due to COVID-19 precautions, there might be some restrictions in place.
4. **Communication Tools:** Communication notebooks and emails are used as effective tools for back-and-forth communication between the school and home. This allows parents to stay informed and actively participate in their child's progress. Weekly parent newsletters are also distributed to provide updates and important information.

Overall, the program emphasizes the importance of maintaining regular communication with parents to ensure that each child receives the maximum benefit from the program.

ATTENDANCE

For students to fully benefit from the educational and therapeutic services offered by Little Meadows Early Childhood Center, regular attendance is essential.

We have confidence that parents will prioritize their child's regular attendance at school.

As part of our obligations, we are required to document reasons for absences and monitor daily attendance. We kindly request that you contact our front office at 718-454-6460, extension 10, and inform us each day your child is absent. Our office will be available to take your calls starting at 8:30 a.m.

We do request that you send a note to indicate the reason for your child's absence. For children who are enrolled under the CPSE, regulations require us to notify the CPSE if your child has been absent without a legal excuse for five consecutive days. Please note that vacations, visits to other countries, and similar reasons are not considered legal absences. It is important to be aware that if your child is absent for one week or accumulates 20 days of absence within any three-month period, other than for illness or hospitalization, there is a risk of your child being "dis-enrolled" from our school by the New York City Department of Education. We kindly request that you plan any necessary vacations during our scheduled school breaks.

Ensuring regular attendance is crucial for your child's educational progress and continuity of services. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter to provide the best possible experience for your child at our school.

REQUIRED MEDICAL RECORDS

To ensure compliance with the Department of Health, it is necessary for our students to meet the following requirements before starting school:

1. Complete series of immunizations: This includes Polio (IPV), Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus (DTaP), Mumps-Measles-Rubella (MMR), HIB, Varicella (Chicken Pox), Hep B (Hepatitis B), and Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV) vaccinations.
2. Blood (H&H) and lead level tests.
3. Recently completed (or within the last 12 months) Department of Health medical form: This form should include the child's diagnosis, date, and physician's signature.
4. *Influenza/Flu Shot requirement: The flu shot is mandatory and should be obtained by December 31. We recommend consulting your child's pediatrician for further guidance.
5. Optional dental certificate: This certificate should be signed by a licensed dentist.
6. Information regarding allergies, conditions, or diseases: Please provide details about any conditions that may impact your child's participation in activities. Additionally, include recommendations for facilitating your child's participation and any plans for their medical needs.

Thank you for your cooperation in meeting these guidelines.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

At some point during the school year, it is possible for your child to experience illness. This is a common occurrence among children, and we would like to provide you with guidance on how to handle illness when your child is enrolled in our program.

Due to COVID-19 precautions, even for mild illnesses, it is important that your child stays at home. We kindly request that you contact our medical office for guidance in such situations. As per the guidelines of the NYC Department of Health, if your child exhibits symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, or any of the following symptoms listed below, it is required that you keep your child at home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours. The symptoms or conditions include:

- Fever
- Severe coughing or trouble breathing
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) or drainage from the eyes
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Infected skin patches
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Headache/stiff neck
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing/strep throat.
- Head lice
- Scabies
- Scarlet fever
- Ringworm

We kindly ask that you keep the school's medical office informed regarding any developments.

If your child develops any of the symptoms, we will contact you to request that you pick up your child from school. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called.

For the well-being of your child and the safety of all our students, it is crucial that you keep your child at home when any of the listed symptoms are present. We cannot emphasize this request strongly enough, as it is vital for the overall health of our student community. Additionally, please promptly notify the nurses if your child is suspected of having any communicable diseases or conditions, such as measles, mumps, chickenpox, rubella (German measles), scarlet fever, impetigo, meningitis (all types), pertussis (whooping cough), polio, salmonella, diarrhea, food poisoning, hepatitis, tuberculosis, diphtheria, influenza, meningococcal disease, conjunctivitis, MRSA, COVID-19, or any other disease that may pose a risk to the health of others. This will enable us to inform other families that their children may have been exposed. It is important to note that AIDS or HIV infection are not considered as part of these communicable diseases or conditions.

When your child is ready to return to school, please provide a note explaining the reason for their absence. If your child has been absent for three or more days, the note should be from a doctor. In the case of

hospitalization, a note from the doctor is required. For children who receive therapy and a new prescription for occupational therapy/physical therapy will be needed.

Our staff members who are trained in Medication Administration Techniques (MAT) can administer medications or prescribed medical procedures to your child with written permission from both you and your doctor. For further details and to receive a written copy of our complete medication policy, please contact our Director. Additionally, we will request parental authorization to administer Tylenol, Motrin, antibiotic ointment, and/or an EpiPen as needed.

Please be assured that all our staff members are trained in proper infectious disease control measures to ensure a safe and healthy environment for everyone involved.

RELEASING A CHILD BEFORE DISMISSAL

To ensure the safety and security of all children at our school, we have implemented a strict procedure for when your child needs to be picked up by an adult other than the parent. We kindly request your cooperation in following this procedure:

1. Parent Notification by Phone: Please call the school and provide the name of the individual who will be picking up your child.

OR

2. Written Authorization: Send a note to school, along with your child, stating the name of the authorized individual who will be picking up your child.

In the event that you, or another authorized adult who is 18 years or older, need to collect your child from school, it is required to sign your child out at the front office.

We emphasize the importance of this procedure as it ensures that only authorized individuals are allowed to pick up your child from school. Safeguarding the well-being of all our students is our utmost priority, and we appreciate your understanding and compliance with this necessary measure.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND RIGHTS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

We take seriously the confidentiality of your child's records and personally identifiable information. Parents who wish to review their child's file or who have questions about this policy should contact the Executive Director of Curriculum Coordinator. Non-custodial parents cannot have access to their children and/or their children's records, unless we have a copy of a court order saying otherwise.

IFSP and IEP

Children who come to Little Meadows who have special needs will have an IFSP (Early Intervention or an IEP for children enrolled under CPSE). These documents set the goals and objectives that our Special Education staff will be working on with your child(ren) during the day at Little Meadows. Currently Little Meadows has a theme-based curriculum with monthly topics which are school – wide events. We have fun Fridays and friendly creative arts which focus on the topic of the month,

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Many of the children who attend Little Meadows are transported to school by minivan school buses. The NYCDOE assigns the bus company to the school. At this time companies assigned to Little Meadows are the following: Penny Transportation and Happy Days Transit. The bus company will advise you of your child's pick-up and drop-off times. Children need to be always in proper car restraints on the bus: a car seat, booster seat. If your child will be absent on a given day, please call your bus company to cancel the bus service for that day. When your child is ready to return to school, it will be necessary for you to contact the bus company in order to resume service.

The telephone number for Penny Transportation: 718-946-6699. The telephone number for Happy day is 718-484-8855. The bus company is supervised by the NYC Office of Pupil Transportation. The OPT Customer Service Center's phone number is 718-482-3800.

For concerns or problems, please call Little Meadows Early Childhood Center and ask for Melanie at 718-454-6460, ext. 10. If you are moving or if you want your child regularly picked up or dropped off at a different address, you must call the school and notify them at least one week before you make these changes. It takes up to 5- 10 school days for the bus company to arrange a new pick-up/drop-off. Changes cannot be accommodated that are temporary or are being requested to begin in less than 5 school days.

Please note that bus pick-up and drop-off times will fluctuate during the first weeks of school or whenever there is a bus route change.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO MEET YOUR CHILD ON TIME EACH DAY. If you are unable to meet the bus due to an emergency, please try to call the school to let us know and we will let the bus company know. Unfortunately, bus times cannot be changed to accommodate parents' work schedules. Your child must be ready at your scheduled pick-up time and an authorized adult (18 years or older) must be the drop-off address to take the child off the bus.

As per the NYC Office of Pupil Transportation, "children who are not met by the parent or otherwise authorized person on their return home from school, are to be taken to the police station after the bus driver or attendant has notified the garage dispatcher."

CLOTHING - SUPPLIES

During the day, your child will be involved in many exciting and interesting activities, such as painting and cooking. Through exploration of the varied materials, children can get a little messy. In addition, some of our children wear diapers and need to be changed during the day. We suggest that you send the following items to school, so that we may attend to your child's needs.

- 1 shoe box or small plastic bin or 1 large shopping bag for extra clothing
- 1 plastic bag for soiled clothing
- 1 complete change of clothes (dress or pants and shirt; underclothes and socks)
- Diapers, if necessary

All clothing worn to school must be labeled with your child's name in bold print including shoes and sneakers, etc.

Clothing returned home for laundering should be replaced the following day.

Clothes should be practical, easy for your child to manage and appropriate for play.

Please do not send your child to school with good jewelry or any item of importance to your child. During the school day, your child is involved in many activities and a necklace or earring can be easily lost. We try very hard to keep track of your child's possessions in school; however, we cannot be responsible for lost items.

SECURITY

The safety and security of your children are of the utmost importance to us. Therefore, all parents must show photo ID, sign in at the front office and get a Visitor Pass. Parents, and any other visitors, must be escorted by a staff member while in our school. Parents need an appointment to meet with the teacher or therapist but can request to simply observe. In addition, parents and children are not permitted to enter the building, past the front lobby, until 8:30 a.m. We have cameras at all our exits.

LUNCH

Little Meadows Early Childhood Center participates in the New York City National School Food Program. Lunch is free for all students. However, parents might be requested to fill out an application every year, whether interested in participating. This food service is a positive, beneficial addition to your child's program. A hot lunch is usually provided, with low-fat milk as the beverage, with water as an option. We try to accommodate dietary, medical, allergy and religious restrictions. Please let the teacher know of any restrictions or allergies, so we can plan for your child.

Lunch is also considered an instructional activity, working on items such as table manners, nutrition, social skills and language skills.

For those parents sending in lunch, it is recommended that you send in a sandwich and a beverage in a paper bag or lunch box printed with the child's name and teacher's name. Children's lunch usually begins at 12:00 noon. However, this time may vary according to the needs of each class. Please send any hot foods in a thermos, as we are unable to heat up children's lunches.

Food menus will be sent home monthly.

BIRTHDAYS

Parents are encouraged to have their child share his/her birthday with the class. On this special day, parents may bring to school their own simple birthday treats. Breakfast treats (e.g., mini-muffins, plain donuts, pretzels, cheese and crackers, fruit) are suggested for morning times and healthy desserts or cake treats for afternoon times. Sweets cannot be served before lunch. Please let the teacher know your plans in advance. Due to choking concerns, balloons are not allowed in school. Please let us know if you do not want your child to eat sweets or desserts that might be provided by the school, or any sweets, desserts, or any food sent in by other families.

PHONE CALLS

You are welcome to call Little Meadows during our business hours, which is 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. We have an automated phone directory, or you can ‘hit’ 0 for the operator and you call will be directed to the appropriate staff member. However, we cannot put through a call to the teachers and or therapist during school/instructional time. We ask that you leave a message, and the staff member will call you back during a break or at the end of the school day.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

You have received a school calendar. Little Meadows Early Childhood Center generally conforms to the NYC Department of Education holiday schedule.

Communication regarding unscheduled closings i.e., poor weather, etc. will be posted on your class DoJo. For our classes for children 3-5 years of age our intention is to pivot to remote learning. Your child’s teacher will post the virtual link for virtual learning. For our Early Intervention classes, we are not able to provide the virtual sessions without the authority of NYC Early Intervention. In situations where there might be a prolonged gap in service, we will reach out to NYC Early Intervention to set up options.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play activities are an important part of our daily program. Children need fresh air, physical exercise and a change of pace. Our program includes 35 minutes of outdoor play daily. We will not take the children outdoors in the rain, in extreme wind, in extreme heat, in extreme cold, when there is lightning or thunder, when ice is on the playground, etc. We ask that your child comes to school wearing appropriate outer clothes and that during the winter your child wears a hat, scarf, and gloves.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency, such as a serious accident, a serious injury or a lost child. Please keep us updated on changes in your business and home addresses and phone numbers so you can be easily located. This is extremely important. For minor accidents or injuries, you will also be contacted but sometimes via a note. We conduct fire drills, lock-down drills, AED drills and evacuation drills so students and staff are familiar with our emergency procedures. Upon request, parents will be provided with a copy of the school’s Health and Safety Plan.

If you need to contact us, please call during school hours. At other times, our administrative office is open all year, except for legal holidays, with daily hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

INSURANCE

Each child is covered by liability insurance during school hours.

NONDISCRIMINATORY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

We admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, family make-up, national origin, ethnicity or religion in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies or any other school-administered programs.

Our toys, stories, artwork, and songs show our commitment to multiculturalism. Parents are welcome to come in to share their culture so we may fully embrace diversity.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Little Meadows Early Childhood Center uses Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) as a foundation to our school-wide behavior policies. PBIS is an approach to supporting students to be successful in school and focuses on positive reinforcements. Emphasis is placed on our three-core school-wide expectations of “Be Kind, Be Safe and Be Responsible”.

We use several positive techniques that help children internalize rules and become self-directed in their behavior. These include giving choices, problem solving, natural and logical consequences, ignoring, redirecting and “cooling off” periods. We work with children to help them find alternatives to responding physically in stressful situations. We provide a consistent and cooperative approach with much positive reinforcement in order to encourage appropriate behaviors. We prohibit room isolation, corporal punishment, denial of food and aversive or noxious stimuli to reduce or eliminate maladaptive behaviors. Of course, we never hit, threaten or humiliate a child. We always comfort a child in distress.

STAFF SUPERVISION

Staff qualifications and child/adult ratios always meet and often exceed New York City and New York State requirements. We maintain constant and competent supervision of the children, including a line-of-sight observation of children at all times. Qualified staff are on duty in required ratios during all school hours.

THERAPIES

Your child might receive speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy or counseling services, as mandated on his/her IFSP or IEP. Children need a prescription written by their doctor to receive OT or PT. We try hard to provide all mandated services. If your child’s therapist is absent for any reason, the therapy session will be made up. However, if your child is absent due to illness, vacation or some other reason, missed therapy sessions might not be made up. As we make a great effort to make up missed therapy sessions, your child may receive a make-up from a therapist who is not your child’s assigned therapist.

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

All our staff have up-to-date medicals and are checked for child abuse and criminal records. We strive to always be in compliance with relevant regulations and take them seriously.

Parents can ask us for any information or can call 311 for our most recent NYC Department of Health’s Inspection Report, to find out requirements for childcare centers or to register any complaint about our center. The Inspection Reports can be accessed on the Health Department’s website.

DIRECTORY

General Office: 718-454-6460

Linda Silver, Executive Director: 718-454-6460 x15

Jennifer Ramalhete, Program Director: 718-454-6460 x20

Kara Bockstein, Evaluation Intake: 718-454-6460 x19

Dori Lau, Pre-K Coordinator: 718-454 -6460 x31

Melanie Bullock, Transportation Coordinator: 718-454-6460 x10

PHILOSOPHY

Little Meadows Early Childhood Center is dedicated to promoting independence, inclusion, and an improved quality of life for children with disabilities. We believe that exceptional programs possess the following qualities:

1. Developmentally Appropriate:
 - Promoting social, emotional, physical, creative/expressive, and cognitive development.
 - Providing student-centered activities that enhance and strengthen growth.
 - Adapting learning opportunities to suit each student's functional level.
 - Encouraging the progression of student independence through developmentally appropriate challenges.
2. Aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS):
 - Promoting literacy through a carefully planned learning environment that fosters oral language development, phonemic awareness, letter recognition, comprehension, and writing experimentation.
 - Incorporating key ideas in content areas.
 - Cultivating process skills to equip students with the tools needed to grasp concepts across various content areas.
 - Recognizing the responsibility of educators to increase exposure to core curriculum content for learners with special needs.
3. Emotionally Safe:
 - Creating respectful, nurturing, and welcoming environments for students, families, staff, and communities.
 - Cultivating a non-judgmental and nurturing atmosphere where it feels safe to take risks.

- Promoting the idea that all children are welcomed and included.
4. Family-Centered:
 - Empowering and supporting families as central team members.
 - Ensuring a culturally sensitive and competent approach that encourages ethnic pride.
 - Providing ongoing support and training to families.
 5. Community-Centered:
 - Utilizing the resources within children's communities to promote healthy development and learning.
 6. Focused on Independence:
 - Collaboratively working as a team to develop a unique path toward independence for each child and student.

At Little Meadows, we strive to embody these principles and values in our programs to create a nurturing, inclusive, and empowering environment for all children with disabilities.

PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS FOR DATA PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives certain rights with respect to your child's education records. These rights are:

- 1) The right to inspect and review your child's records within 45 days after the day that LMECC for Progress receives a request for access. Parents should submit to Jennifer Ramalhete, Director, a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. A school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- 2) The right to request the amendment of your child's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents who wish to ask LMECC to amend a record should write Jennifer Ramalhete, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If LMECC decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent, the school will notify the parent of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent when notified of the right to a hearing.
- 3) The right to provide written consent before LMECC discloses personally identifiable information from your child's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by LMECC as an administrator, supervisor, therapist, teacher, social worker, social work assistant, nurse, physician, psychologist, secretary, billing staff. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility necessary for the provision of appropriate care or success in school of your child. Also, upon request, LMECC discloses education records without consent to

officials of another school district in which your child seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the child's enrollment or transfer.

- 4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by LMECC to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas and disclosures to the parent, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires LMECC to record the disclosure. Parents have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. LMECC may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of your child without obtaining prior written consent of the parents:

- To other school officials within LMECC whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes an administrator, supervisor, therapist, teacher, social worker, social work assistant, nurse, physician, psychologist, secretary, and billing staff, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met.
- To officials of another school or school system where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorize representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State Educational Agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§ 99.31(a) (3) and 99.35)
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36 (§99.31(a)(10))

LMECC will never sell or release your child's personally identifiable information for any purpose, including commercial or marketing, or collect and release this information except for the situations listed above without the parents' consent.

Please note: If you would like to review a complete copy of LMECC's confidentiality policy, please contact Jennifer Ramalhete.

APROPRIATE FOODS for YOUNG CHILDREN

Little Meadows does provide snacks and lunch to our full day students and snacks to children who are at school less than a full day. However, we some parents are more comfortable sending in food with their child. We request that those foods are appropriate and follow the following guidelines which we have adapted from an article in the New York Times.

The following foods are not appropriate for young children, and/or those with chewing or swallowing difficulties, and we ask that you follow these guidelines when sending food to school:

- **Grapes** (remove the skin and quarter the grape for children 4 and under)
- **Raisins** (not for children under 3)
- **Nuts** (not for children under 5)
- **Popcorn** (not for those under 4)
- **Carrots** (cook to soften for those 3 and up)
- **Celery** (never raw for children 4 and under)
- **Hot dogs** (never for children under 3, remove skin and cut into small pieces for older children)
- **Peanut butter** (not for children under 5)
- **Hard candy** (never for children 5 and under)

Please Note: many common objects are choking hazards for curious toddlers, who like to examine things by putting them in their mouths. Among them: dry dog food, coins, marbles, deflated latex balloons and pieces of popped balloons, “button” batteries or any toy with such batteries, pieces of crayon or chalk, game pieces, small toys, and larger toys with small removable parts. In addition, children should be discouraged from laughing, walking, playing, or running when they have food or a small object in their mouths.

We hope that these suggestions prove helpful to you. **Please be aware that this is not a complete list, just guidelines. Judgement and caution must always be used as children can be prone to choking.** Therefore, never leave children unsupervised while eating. Please call your child’s teacher or speech therapist if you have any specific questions.

Also, we have a Peanut Policy in the school so please be sure to speak to your child’s teacher before sending any foods/party snacks/Halloween treats that contain peanuts.

SAFETY PLAN GUIDELINES

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Ensuring the safety of your children and our staff is of paramount importance to us. Given the current security climate, our school has implemented additional security procedures, and our staff has received training on these protocols.

In the event of an emergency, it is crucial that you are prepared to personally pick up your child from school, as bus services may not be reliable during such situations. We strongly advise you to

establish emergency backup arrangements in case you are unable to come in person. For families residing outside of Queens, it is particularly important to identify a local backup contact.

In the event of a building evacuation, we have designated local sites where we can safely relocate our students. To enhance communication during unusual circumstances, Little Meadows has implemented an automated communications system that can send email and/or text alerts to keep you informed.

We kindly request that you keep us updated regarding any changes to your home or work phone numbers, as well as your address.

Should you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 718-454-6460, extension 20.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Ramalhete
Program Director

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Little Meadow uses Positive Behaviors Supports and Intervention to encourage appropriate behavior. With Positive Behavior Support we teach children about behavior just as we would teach children about other subjects. Our focus is on prevention and not punishment. Our program supports social emotional competence to all our children through the following: universal supports 1) nurturing and responsive relationships and high-quality environments; 2) practices target social-emotional strategies to prevent problem behaviors; and 3) practices related to individualized intensive interventions.

Our goals include:

- 1) Building skills that help children learn to listen, focus attention, use self-talk, and develop assertiveness.
- 2) To help children learn to: Identify and understand their own and others' feelings, begin to see things from perspectives other than their own, show care and concern for others.
- 3) To help children recognize how they are feeling and calm down strong feelings by: Learning feeling words; learning how they are feeling and developing strategies to calm down strong feelings.
- 4) To help children to solve problems in safe ways and to build friendship making skills: To calm down strong feelings before trying to solve problems, learning to use problem solving strategies, to make and keep friends.
- 5) To review skills and concepts children have learned and to help children understand that these skills will help them in the future.

Our program is intended to help children succeed in school by developing their: Confidence, Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults, Ability to concentrate and persist when tasks are challenging, Ability to effectively communicate emotions, Ability to listen and be attentive, and Ability to solve problems.

Families will be informed about our Positive Behavior Support program and will be provided with information on children's social emotional development and be encouraged to follow up with home activities. We plan to provide a variety of mechanisms including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting emotional development, and updates on the outcomes of the program. Information may be shared by means of: meetings, home visit discussions, newsletters, open house, websites, family friendly handouts, workshops, and school events.

For individual children needing more intensive interventions, families will be expected to be involved in planning in a meaningful way. Families will be encouraged to team with program staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children including the development of strategies that may be used in the home and community.

BEHAVIOR ISSUES:

When your child first enters school, he/she may not be used to following routines, rules or sharing and playing with other children. The staff of Little Meadows uses several techniques to help children internalize rules and become self-regulated in their behavior. These include giving choices, problem solving, natural and logical consequences, ignoring inappropriate behavior, redirecting and cooling off periods. We work with children to help them find ways of responding appropriately in the classroom.

THE DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT:

Little Meadows promotes appreciation for diversity, teaches respectful attitudes and ensures a welcoming environment for all children, parents and staff. We want every parent to feel confident that their child will be surrounded by supportive adults who will ensure that their child(ren) is treated with dignity and respect.

In preschool we have the important job of influencing how children view themselves within the larger community. Children learn from their teachers and their parents and all the adults around them. At Little Meadows, we strive to create a climate of mutual respect and to teach children to treat others fairly and with kindness.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Code of Conduct the following are basic goals for preschoolers in order to learn to live together, work cooperatively and to be productive citizens:

- Children will see their own self-worth and as a capable member of the group
- Children will learn how to express strong emotions in non-hurting ways
- Children will learn problem solving skills
- Children will learn to understand the feelings of others
- Children will learn to work cooperatively in groups and accept individual differences

Teaching dignity and respect starts with a focus on developing social emotional competency while concurrently guiding the child toward strategies that discourage teasing and bullying.

All staff of Little Meadows will receive annual training and utilize curriculums that reinforce these values. We will be encouraging family involvement by informing parents members about what the child is learning and activities to continue the learning at home.

We strive to create an environment that promotes a strong sense of self, reduces the need for children to use negative behaviors such as bullying and teasing. Teacher and parents must join together to address negative behavior before it takes root and grows.