



ACTIVE LITTLE PEOPLE
preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK

Active Little People Preschool retains the authority to modify, delete, or add to any sections of this handbook as it deems necessary. Updates to policies will be prominently displayed in the office for a duration of 30 days.

Revision Date: 03/02/2024

Unauthorized reproduction, in whole or in part, of this handbook is strictly prohibited without prior written approval.

9 Russel Ave, Watertown MA. 02472
Phone: 617-458-9713
www.activelittlepeopleschool.com

Dear Parents,

Greetings! I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to **Active Little People Preschool**, a bilingual program. We are delighted to have you and your child join our community, and we eagerly anticipate the joyous moments that lie ahead.

At Active Little People, our approach to learning is dynamic and engaging. Through activities such as painting, cooking, climbing, and jumping, we foster an environment where your child can thrive. We firmly believe that the interactions, sharing, and play with fellow children contribute to the development of healthy personalities and self-direction.

To facilitate greater understanding between parent(s) and provider, we have created this handbook covering preschool philosophies, business policies, and expectations. Please read this carefully, and feel free to discuss with the Director any questions that you may have.

Rest assured, our commitment includes infusing each day with an abundance of love, warm hugs, and exciting activities to create a nurturing and enjoyable experience for your child.

Thank you for entrusting us with the privilege of caring for your little one. We look forward to embarking on this enriching journey together.

Warm regards,



Director of Active Little People Preschool

Welcome to Active Little People Preschool

At **Active Little People Preschool**, we pride ourselves on offering a distinctive early childhood education experience. Our preschool is dedicated to providing a bilingual immersion environment, where children not only learn the Spanish language but also gain a deeper appreciation for diverse cultures. Rooted in the belief that education goes beyond the classroom, our curriculum is designed to translate experiences into understanding, fostering hands-on learning and a lifelong passion for exploration.

We prioritize the holistic development of every child, addressing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects. Our innovative teaching methods cater to diverse learning styles, ensuring that concepts and skills are presented in engaging and effective ways. We embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, instilling resilience and problem-solving skills, all while tailoring our curriculum to the individual interests of each child. At Active Little People Preschool, we create a nurturing and secure environment where your child can thrive, fostering a love for learning, critical thinking, and a strong foundation for future success. Welcome to a place where education is an exciting journey, and every child's unique potential is celebrated!

Childcare Philosophy

Active Little People's is dedicated to providing a loving, high-quality educational preschool program. Our mission is to nurture a safe, creative environment where children can explore and grow. We focus on fundamental building blocks to prepare them for formal schooling while fostering open communication between parents and caregivers for a collaborative educational experience.

Our Goals

- **To immerse children in the Spanish language:** Foster a bilingual environment where children are actively engaged in learning and using the Spanish language, promoting cultural appreciation and linguistic development.
- **To enhance children's feelings of comfort and security:** Create a nurturing and supportive atmosphere that encourages a sense of well-being, trust, and emotional stability among the children.

- **To provide opportunities to translate experience into understanding:** Facilitate learning by connecting real-life experiences with meaningful understanding, encouraging a deeper grasp of concepts through hands-on activities and exploration.
- **To address all aspects of children's development:** Emphasize holistic development by addressing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded educational experience.
- **To design activities for effective presentation of concepts and skills:** Utilize a diverse range of methods and techniques to design age-appropriate activities that cater to various learning styles, ensuring a thorough comprehension of concepts and the acquisition of essential skills.
- **To enable children to experience both challenge and success:** Foster an environment that balances challenges and achievements, promoting resilience, problem-solving skills, and a positive attitude towards overcoming obstacles.
- **To enable children to learn things important to them:** Recognize and incorporate children's interests and curiosities into the curriculum, fostering a sense of ownership and enthusiasm for learning.
- **To use language to enhance critical thinking:** Encourage the use of language that stimulates critical thinking, inquiry, and problem-solving, fostering cognitive development and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

Organizational Hierarchy

In the organizational hierarchy of our center, Ximena Narvaez serves as the Director and holds authoritative responsibility when present in the building. In her absence, a qualified individual is designated to assume leadership. If you contact the Center seeking the Director and she is unavailable, please inquire about the current person in charge. All staff members are well-informed about the designated authority figure in the Director's absence to ensure seamless communication and efficient operations.

Admission Policy

To enroll your child(ren) at Active Little People, parents must initiate the process by scheduling a tour of our facility and engaging in an interview with our Director. As a small, close-knit community, it is imperative that any new family joining our preschool comprehends

and aligns with our unique philosophy and environment. Effective communication is paramount, not only for the enhancement of your child's care and education but also for fostering a harmonious school environment. Educators and parents function as a unified team, and for optimal development, it is crucial that the dynamics between the two groups work seamlessly. An interview provides both parties the opportunity to determine if our school is the best fit for each family individually.

Waiting List

Active Little People is a distinctive preschool environment, and admission is in high demand. If our class is at capacity, you may place your child on our waiting list. As soon as an opening becomes available, you will be promptly contacted. Priority is given to siblings of current students. To be added to the waiting list, please complete the Letter of Intent found on the last page of this handbook or on our website www.activelittlepeopleschool.com. When enrollment is offered, a decision is required within 48 hours. Failure to accept enrollment will result in removal from the waiting list. If, at a later date, the decision is made to rejoin the waiting list, a new Letter of Intent must be submitted, and the applicant will be placed on the waiting list based on the date recorded on this new form.

Communication

Effective communication forms the cornerstone of our child care program at Active Little People. Upon the integration of a new family into our class, transparent communication becomes paramount. We encourage an open dialogue to address any concerns, queries, or share mutual child care philosophies. Your questions, feedback, or discussions, geared towards a positive outcome for your child(ren), are always welcomed. For more sensitive matters, private discussions will be scheduled outside of regular childcare hours. To streamline communication, a group chat for parents will be initiated, ensuring that important notifications that impact the entire school are promptly shared.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Active Little People is committed to providing services to children and their families without discrimination based on race, sex, religion, cultural heritage, disabilities, political beliefs, marital status, or National Origin.

Department of Early Education and Care

Overseeing early education, care, and after-school services in Massachusetts, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the regulatory body licensing all in-home child education programs. EEC upholds quality standards to ensure high educational value, health, and safety across licensed programs. Active Little People's compliance with EEC regulations demonstrates our commitment to meeting these standards. For inquiries or information from the Department of Early Education and Care, please contact # 617 988 6600, and their address is 51 Sleeper Street, 4th floor, Boston, MA 02210.

Regulatory Compliance and Program Standards

Active Little People is required to maintain a copy of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises. This document is readily available to any person upon request. If you have inquiries about specific regulations, kindly request your Center to provide the necessary information. Additionally, parents are encouraged to reach out to the Early Education and Care (EEC) department for details on the program's regulatory compliance history.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedure

The welfare and best interests of children take precedence over the concerns of parents, guardians, caretakers, or families when instances of child abuse are reported or investigated. Both the police and Child Protection Services prioritize the protection of the child in such cases. As childcare educators, we may encounter situations where a child exhibits signs of abuse or neglect.

By law, the Director and staff members have a duty to report any suspected cases of abuse. No conclusive proof of abuse is required; a report can be made based on a reasonable suspicion arising from observations. If any staff member suspects that a child may have experienced neglect or abuse, the matter should be promptly referred to Child Protection Services within the Department of Social Development. Inform them that a report of abuse has been filed.

When reporting, the following information will be provided to the Child Protection Professional:

- Child's full name, date of birth, and address.
- Names and addresses of parents, guardians, or caretakers.
- Detailed information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect.

- The identity of the person reporting the suspected abuse/neglect, including their address and phone number.
- The name and address of the facility, along with the Director's name.

It is important to note that direct interviews with the child or contacting parents/guardians are not within the scope of our responsibilities. Reporting suspected cases of abuse is a crucial step in ensuring the safety and well-being of the child.

Enrollment Procedure

Completion of necessary forms is mandatory before assuming responsibility for your child. This non-negotiable policy adheres to state regulations and non-compliance may jeopardize our licensing status. Regular updates, at least annually, are vital. The required forms include:

- Signed Contract and Rate Agreement
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Child's Health Record (to be completed by a physician)
- Enrollment Form
- Sunscreen/Field Trip Permission Slip
- Media Use Form
- Pick-Up Authorization Form
- Allergy and Food Preference Form
- Immunization Form

Your prompt notification of any changes in addresses, phone numbers, or relevant details on the forms is crucial for seamless communication and compliance. If you have questions or concerns about form completion, feel free to seek clarification—we are dedicated to assisting you for a smooth enrollment process and your child's well-being.



Trial Period

The initial two weeks (14 calendar days) of your child's enrollment serve as a trial period. During this period, either the parent or provider may terminate the childcare agreement at any time. Following the trial period, a three-week written notice is required for termination, as outlined in the Termination Policy.

Building a Culture of Respect

In our preschool community, we believe that respect is the cornerstone of positive relationships and a thriving learning environment. We ask that all parents, children, and staff members uphold a culture of respect towards one another and towards our institution. This means valuing the contributions and perspectives of teachers, the director, fellow children, and parents alike. By treating each other with kindness, empathy, and consideration, we create a supportive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and can fully engage in the learning process. Together, let's foster a culture of respect that enriches the experiences of all members of our preschool family.

Hours of Operation

Our regular operating hours are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Add-ons or schedule changes may be accommodated if there's an available slot for the day, following a first-come, first-served basis. While we strive to assist our families with these changes, please keep in mind that they may disrupt our normal schedule. Kindly provide as much notice as possible to help us manage meals, sleeping arrangements, and adjustments to activities.

Open Door Policy For Parents

We maintain an open-door policy during preschool hours, encouraging parents to call or drop in to check on their children. We appreciate your consideration of our schedule during visits or calls, as unexpected guests can excite the children. If we are occupied with the children when you call, please leave a message, and we will get back to you promptly.

It's important to note that our open-door policy does not mean leaving the doors unlocked. We prioritize the safety of the children by keeping the doors locked to prevent unauthorized entry or the departure of little ones without supervision. Your understanding of these safety measures is crucial to maintaining a secure environment.

Arrivals and Departures

It's normal for some children to find it challenging to separate from parents or express emotions during drop-offs. To ease this transition, we encourage brief drop-offs, as prolonging farewells can make it more difficult. A smile, a cheerful goodbye kiss, and a reassuring word that you'll return are usually sufficient. In our experience, children quickly engage in play or activities once parents depart.

Our standard procedure is to release the child only to their parents or someone designated by the parents. If someone other than the parent is picking up the child, please inform us in advance. A verbal notice on the day is acceptable if the person is authorized. However, for anyone not on the list, we must have written permission. Please inform emergency contacts or designated pickups that, for safety reasons, we may ask for identification if we are not acquainted with them or if the child is too young to recognize them.

Absences

No refunds or adjustments will be made for days missed due to illness, holidays, or personal days off. Each child's spot is reserved and cannot be filled on a short-term basis, requiring payment for all scheduled days, whether the child is present or not. Makeup days are allowed only if space is available on another day and do not apply to paid holidays due to ratio constraints. We appreciate your understanding as we maintain a consistent and secure environment for all children.

Closed Holidays

Active Little People will be closed on the following paid holidays each year:

- MLK Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July & the day after
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after
- Week of Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Additionally, for snow days, we align our closure with Watertown Public Schools.



Staff Involvement and Outside Services

At Active Little People, our staff members are not permitted to engage in babysitting services for our families. We emphasize that we are not a babysitting service but rather a curriculum-based learning environment. While we understand the relationships and trust that may develop between you and your child's teacher, we do not endorse babysitting to prevent favoritism and maintain a professional work environment for all parties involved.

Clothing/Attire

Dress children for play, considering our fun, interactive setting with outdoor and messy activities. Avoid pristine clothing, and ensure comfort and seasonally appropriate attire. Please provide an extra change of clothing for unexpected accidents, ensuring a smooth transition.

Personal Belongings

We welcome children to bring toys from home, aiding morning transitions, but they must be shareable with the group. Please avoid toys with small parts posing choking hazards. Sleepy toys are allowed only during nap time. Show and tell is on Fridays, where any toy is welcome. We are not responsible for personal item loss or breakage, so ensure all belongings are labeled with the child's name.

Supplies

Parents are responsible for providing diapers, weather-appropriate clothing changes, and other necessary items. You can leave a diaper package here, and we'll notify you when supplies run low. Avoid sending good clothing, as soiled items will be sent home, and clean replacements should be provided the next day. Special occasion clothing should be sent with your child for events right after childcare. Bathing suits are required in the summer, and specific items like boots or snowsuits may be requested seasonally. All items must be labeled with your child's initials, and maintaining these supplies is crucial. Failure to do so may result in termination and remember, a missing item could limit outdoor activities for all children.

Daily Schedule

Young children thrive in a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. While we aim to follow our written schedule (see *Daily Schedule*), we acknowledge the unpredictability that comes with children. Adjustments may be necessary, and we appreciate families considering our schedule during drop-offs and pickups.

To maintain a peaceful environment, avoid arrivals or departures during quiet time. Children arriving during this period will be encouraged to rest or play quietly. Our daily schedule does not include spontaneous trips, and any planned field trips will be communicated well in advance with written consent obtained.



Meals

Parents are responsible for providing their children's food. Please include an ice pack in your child's lunch box and bring enough food for the day. Sample cold lunch options include *almond butter with bananas, raisins, applesauce, egg salad, cottage cheese, tuna salad, cold meats, ham salad, hummus, cucumber, English muffin, and ham and cheese with broccoli.*

Food Allergies

To ensure a supportive environment for companionship and the well-being of all children, if any child has an allergy to a particular food, that item is strictly prohibited within Active Little People.

Cleanliness/Hygiene

We prioritize strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals and toileting, using paper towels for drying. If parents provide a toothbrush and toothpaste, we ensure teeth are brushed. Staff frequently wash their hands and use antibacterial gel. Washable cots are used for nap time, cleaned weekly along with blankets and pillows, and wiped with bleach water.

Toilet Training

We start toilet training around thirty months, focusing on physical ability, understanding, and emotional readiness. Children wear independent-friendly clothing, supported by spare outfits. We'll gradually transition to full-time pull-ups until they can announce bathroom needs and maintain control. Consistency between home and our facility is key for success."

Naps/Quiet Time

Every day, there's a scheduled nap/rest time. All children must nap or engage quietly. This break helps maintain harmony, preventing afternoon conflicts and ensuring happier evenings for all.

Progress Report

Every six months, you'll either meet with our staff to discuss your child's progress or receive a written report detailing their activities and participation at the center. This report may be added to your child's record.

Conferences

You can request individual conferences with staff, arranged by the Director. These meetings are vital for setting goals and understanding your child's development both at home and at school. Please arrange conferences as needed. For programmatic issues, schedule appointments with the Director.

Your Child's Records

Information in your child's record is privileged and confidential. The staff cannot share it with anyone unrelated to implementing the program plan without your written consent. You will be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Birthday Parties

Birthdays are truly special occasions, and we love to celebrate them in style! On your child's big day, we'll host a small party to commemorate their milestone. You're welcome to send treats like cookies or cupcakes. Just give us a heads-up about your plans to avoid duplicate sweets.

Fire Safety

Ensuring the safety of our children is a top priority. We have a comprehensive fire evacuation plan in place, and fire safety lessons are integrated into our curriculum to educate and prepare our students.

Rules for Safety and Respect

To create a safe and respectful environment for all, we have established important rules for our students to follow. This includes no physical aggression such as hitting, pushing, or biting, and refraining from climbing on furniture. Respectful behavior and language are expected at all times. Smoking is strictly prohibited on the premises. We are a smoke-free environment.

Indoor/Outdoor Play

Our indoor area is stocked with toys for imaginative exploration, while outdoor play happens daily, weather permitting, with engaging activities like sidewalk chalk and water play. Dress your child for outdoor fun!"



Engaging Learning: Our Core Knowledge Approach

We prioritize creating a positive and nurturing learning environment for our preschoolers, recognizing that this is often their first experience away from home. We ensure that school feels like a natural extension of home—safe, fun, and nurturing—by incorporating enjoyable activities into our curriculum. By infusing fun into learning experiences, we aim to prevent any negative associations with school and foster a love for education that will carry through their academic journey.

Fostering Positive Behavior: Our Approach to Discipline

We prioritize positive discipline techniques to support children in developing pro-social skills such as problem-solving, turn-taking, and effective communication. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and explore alternative solutions to conflicts. Our teachers model positive behaviors, provide guidance through reinforcement and redirection, and empower children to make choices. As part of our commitment to nurturing a supportive environment, we do not employ punitive measures that may humiliate, shame, or frighten children, nor do we use punishments related to food, rest, toilet, or isolation.

Problem-Solving Techniques

In our environment, we prioritize fostering essential social and emotional skills like problem-solving, turn-taking, and effective communication. Children learn to express their feelings and explore alternative conflict solutions. Our teachers model positive behaviors, provide guidance, and empower children to make choices without punitive measures. When conflicts arise, educators facilitate problem-solving by engaging children, validating feelings, discussing behaviors' impacts, and proposing solutions. This approach promotes empathy, establishes clear rules, and encourages fairness and thoughtful choices, creating a supportive environment for positive conflict resolution and skill development.

Sick Child Policy

Parents must not bring sick children to daycare. If a child shows signs of illness or cannot participate in the regular routine, they should stay home. This prevents illness spread and ensures proper care. Parents will be notified to pick up sick children promptly. A child must re-

main absent for 24 hours after recovery or 24-48 hours after starting antibiotics. Contact us for guidance if unsure. Allergy-related symptoms and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion.

Symptoms requiring removal of child from daycare:

- The child must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning. (*Fever: Defined as a temperature of 101°F orally*).
- Fever and sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.
- Diarrhea. Runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within the last 4 hours.
- Vomiting. Occurring 2 or more times in a 24-hour period.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots resembling childhood diseases, including ringworm and pink eye.

Medications

Parents are responsible for providing any necessary medications for their child, whether over-the-counter or prescription. Prior written authorization is required for the administration of any medication. All medications must be in their original container, labeled with the pharmacist or manufacturer's details, including the child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times for administration.

Medical Emergencies

While minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, we prioritize the safety of our children through close supervision and childproofing measures. Minor injuries are treated promptly with appropriate first aid. In the event of a serious injury or illness, parents will be notified immediately, and if necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. Please ensure we have a reliable contact number if you will not be at your usual location.

Parents are responsible for all costs associated with emergency medical treatment, including transportation if required. The owner of Active Little People, or her family, cannot be held liable for any sickness or injury to parents, guardians, or children while on the premises or during field trips or outings in the company of the provider.

Referral Plan

Referrals may be initiated for various social, mental health, educational, and medical services

as deemed beneficial by staff. All staff members report concerns about a child's development to the program coordinator, who assesses the situation and takes appropriate action.

Referrals are made by the coordinator, with parents informed verbally and in writing. Written consent is obtained before sharing referral information. Services may be provided on-site or off-site, with documentation of concerns, actions taken, and progress filed in the child's social service record.

Emergency Procedures

In any safety-threatening event like fire, flood, or evacuation, our priority is swiftly relocating children to safety. Parents will be promptly informed of the situation and the designated relocation site via telephone at 617-458-9713.

Our primary rendezvous point is Watertown High School, located at 50 Columbia St. Watertown, MA 02472.

In the unlikely event of a lost child, authorities will be contacted immediately, followed by parents. Every effort will be made to ensure the child's safety, with parents promptly informed of any emergency and our location.

Termination Policy

Our center maintains the authority to terminate enrollment for various reasons, including but not limited to:

- Failure to meet financial obligations
- Incomplete submission of required documentation
- Lack of cooperation from parents
- Inability of the child to acclimate to the center within a reasonable timeframe
- Instances of physical or verbal abuse towards individuals or property
- Inability to adequately meet the child's needs
- Non-compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness affecting the child or provider

As part of our commitment to a collaborative approach, we endeavor to:

- Maintain open and consistent communication with families regarding any behaviors that compromise the safety of children in our programs. We may request parental attendance

at planning meetings to address challenging behaviors and develop an effective plan of action for behavior modification.

- Serve as positive role models for children by demonstrating constructive problem-solving techniques, both for parents and staff members.
- Facilitate appropriate referrals to ensure children and families receive necessary support for addressing challenging behaviors. Incidents of aggression are documented, and in cases of recurring issues, a parent conference is scheduled to devise a comprehensive plan. This plan encompasses goals and activities aimed at fostering self-control, addressing underlying issues contributing to disruptive behavior, and delineating responsibilities of parents, children, and staff. Continued chronic aggressive or disruptive behavior may lead to termination from the program.

We require advance notice of termination whenever feasible. Parents must give three weeks' written notice when ending childcare, paying for the full three weeks regardless of the child's attendance. Likewise, the center provides three weeks' notice of termination, with full tuition due regardless of attendance. In exceptional circumstances endangering the provider or other children, immediate termination may be necessary, with payment for the remaining three weeks still required.

Tax Information

For your convenience, we provide an annual summary of all daycare fees paid during the year for tax purposes. This summary will be furnished to you in January of each year or upon termination of services. You may request a statement at any time.

Handbook/Contract Updates

Annually, all families will sign a revised handbook and contract. We may adjust rates and policies as necessary and will provide written notification of any changes. We strive to give at least two weeks' notice of changes whenever possible.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and understand the contents of the **Active Little People** Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook are presented as guidelines for informational purposes and are not to be considered a contractual agreement between **Active Little People** and the recipient of this handbook.

I am aware that **Active Little People** reserves the right to change, alter, modify, amend, or rescind any of its policies and procedures stated in the Parent Handbook at its sole discretion, without prior notice. Admittance to programs is based on space availability and is not influenced by race, religion, creed, color, national origin, or sex.

Having received and read this Acknowledgment of Receipt, I affirm that I comprehend its contents and sign it willingly of my own accord.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date



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