



Little Pumpkins Inc

• Early Learning Centre •

Parent Handbook
2026

Mission Statement

Little Pumpkins will provide high quality progressive childcare for children aged 18 months to 12 years. We will work together with guardians, teachers and community members to provide high quality childcare in a safe, healthy, enriched environment. The child-centred atmosphere will provide a rich variety of materials and activities to challenge a variety of developmental levels. Children from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, socio-economic backgrounds, with various social, emotional and physical needs, will be welcomed as individuals whose differences are accepted and respected. Little Pumpkins will be a fully inclusive child care facility.

Reggio Emilia Philosophy

Little Pumpkins is excited to be using the World-renowned Reggio Emilia Approach to Learning. It was started by Loris Malaguizzi and the guardians of the villages around Reggio Emilia after World War II and is based on 3 principles: **respect, responsibility, and community**. We feel it is a unique and dynamic approach, which sees the amazing ways that young children can learn and develop to their full potential when provided with rich experiences and relationships.

It made sense then, as it does now, to focus children's learning around the things they are interested in and develop a curriculum that expands upon this, rather than having a predetermined curriculum. Through observation, discussion with the children, and documentation they get to see their interests "come to life" through long and short-term projects which will be displayed throughout the space.

This will all take place in a beautiful, enriching environment full of things to discover and explore. We want to provide an inviting, highly motivating learning environment in which educators investigate, research, and learn alongside the children. Learning areas include art, language, literacy, math, science, technology, drama and music.

The guardians and community play an important part in the centre. guardians are respected as the child's first teacher and we want to involve them in every aspect of the curriculum. We also welcome people from the community to be involved in Little Pumpkins.

**"It takes a village to raise a child".
—Ancient African Proverb**

We want to develop positive self-esteem and inspire delight and curiosity in the classroom. This has been proven to develop intrinsic motivation (coming from within the child), and a long-term love of learning. These are the greatest gifts we can give the children in preparation for their primary school experience. This same philosophy is adopted in many 4H programs around the province.

Hours of Operation

Little Pumpkins is open from 6:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday.

6:30-7:45am is reserved for morning care school age children. You will need to pre-register for 7:30am drop-off, space is limited.

Staff: Child ratio to meet the licensing regulations will be adhered at all times. You will be required to identify regular times of arrival and departure at enrolment. Notice of changes which will affect these times should be directed to the director and/or owner, to ensure the correct ratio is maintained. For information on hours covered please see our fee sheet at the end of this document.

Our educators are individuals with personal lives outside of the centre, we appreciate that you value them as a trusted care professional. To ensure a work-life balance, maintain professionalism and confidentiality for both parties, we have a no child care after-hours policy for our staff.

General Holiday

If any day designated a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the holiday will be observed on the Monday immediately following, fees are still due for all holidays and mandated closure days. The centre will be closed on all holidays as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--|
| ● New Year's Day | ● Canada Day | ● Christmas Day |
| ● Family Day/Heritage Day | ● Civic/Natal Day | ● Boxing Day |
| ● Good Friday | ● Labour Day | ● National day of Truth and Reconciliation |
| ● Easter Monday | ● Thanksgiving | |
| ● Victoria Day | ● Remembrance Day | |

Storm Days

Little Pumpkins strives to remain open during winter storm days, but may be operating on limited staff. If adequate numbers of staff are not available, you or the person dropping off your child will be required to stay with your child until staff: child ratios are met. If you decide to keep your child at home, please mark them absent through your Lillio app as soon as possible in the morning. You will still be responsible for fees due for the day, if you do not attend.

On any school-declared storm day our opening will be delayed by 1 hour to 7:30am. Notification will be sent via a text through out Lillio system, please ensure to keep your contact info up to date with us. We will reassess at 7:00am of the weather condition and see if a later delayed opening time is appropriate and notify all families.

If we are unable to open or we are forced to close due to severe weather you will be called to pick up your child as soon as possible (within 1 hour). Fees for the day will still apply.

If there is a prolonged power outage with an outlook of over an hour for restoration the centre will be forced to close for the day. Once the call has been made that the centre is closing, we will remained closed for the day. We will not be able to re-open until we have regained power during prolonged outages. Fees for the day will still apply.

Opt-in/opt-out for Inservice and snow days (School Age only)

All school aged children enrolled in our school age program are automatically enrolled for inservice and snow days. Full day rates apply, whether your child attends or does not attend. If you wish to

opt-out of these days please let us know at the beginning of the school year. This will then mean that your child is not attending these days and you will not be billed automatically for them, and another family that does not regularly attend can then, fill the space. If opted out and your child does need the care on a given day, you will need to contact Juli or Stephanie to ensure there is space on the morning of before your child can attend.

Family Communication Plan

Our parent/guardian binder is always available for guardians viewing; It is located just inside the main front door. In this binder you will find the following:

- The Nova Scotia Daycare Act and Regulations
- Copy of the parent/guardian Handbook
- Our behaviour guidance policy
- The most current licensing inspection reports
- The most current funding obtained from the Minister
- A copy of the most recent parent/guardian meeting minutes
- Copy of our facility licence
- List of our current parent/guardian committee

The parent/guardian information board is located in the front sun room. This board has all the go-to centre information such as general information that is given through the government and the daily routines of each class. The daily menu can be found under calendars tab on your Lillio app.

guardians and families have access to information about the children's day, experiences and other interactions through a variety of different ways. We post often on our social media platforms; Facebook and Instagram. We send out a newsletter quarterly that have info on what has been and is going to happen in the centre. guardians have access to daily planning and activities their children are involved in through their Lillio app where they will receive an end of day report with all logs such as toileting, naps, daily meals and more.

Progress reports are completed throughout the year (every 6 months from their start date) for each child. A copy will be sent via email to guardians and a copy will be placed in your child's file. These reports may outline your child's play interests, self-help skills, cognitive and language, social and emotional and gross and fine motor skills along with communication skills and more.

New families receive check ins multiple times throughout the day for at least 2 weeks (longer if needed or requested) via their preferred method (text, email etc.) Along with existing families can request updates and can view children's learning through social media posts and displays in the windows.

Our website (littlepumpkins.ca) displays general information and upcoming programs such as march break camps and summer care for school age children.

Parent/guardian engagement

There are 2 parent/guardian meetings held per year; once in the end of June and another in December as a parent/guardian social. Meeting date and time will be sent in newsletter and posters will be displayed no less than 2 weeks prior to the events. guardians are asked before the meeting time if they have anything to add to the agenda of topics to be discussed.

We value parent/guardian feedback and ask that if you have any questions and concerns to let us know.

Our parent/guardian meeting are made of Juli, Stephanie and open to all guardians to join. If you wish to be on our parent/guardian committee, please let us know.

Child attendance

It is the responsibility of the staff to record the times the children arrive and leave the centre.

Please let us know if your child will be absent and for what the reasoning is. We are required to keep track of attendance and illnesses along with symptoms for licencing purposes.

guardians can use their Lillio app to mark their children absent, there is a box to write a note if needed to give more information.

Please visit the following website for subsidy info

<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/earlyyears/families/childcaresubsidy.shtml>

If your family is going on a holiday and your child will be absent please let us know ahead of time.

You are still required to pay for your child's space, however if Little Pumpkins is able to fill your space during your vacation you will be refunded accordingly.

Emergency/extra days may be available at short notice at normal daily rates. Please contact Stephanie or Juli for details.

All children enrolled in the school age program will be automatically be included/invoiced for the following month for scheduled school in-service full days or early dismissals. Children who are part time will also be auto included if the day lands on a day they are enrolled to attend. Fees apply for these days whether your child attends or not unless you have opted out (see opt-in/opt-out section). All fees for unplanned closures will be added to the next month's invoice.

Inclusion Policy

The staff of Little Pumpkins believe that all children have the right to quality child care programs regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Children are enrolled in programs with their peers. We strive to make the transition to and from our centre as smooth as possible by scheduling meetings with the guardians, the staff and the other professionals working with the child and family prior to starting or ending at our centre. At these meetings we will identify the supports that are currently in place for this family and child as well as the supports that will be required for the child to participate fully in our program. We will work as collaborative members of the team to identify the goals for the child and to develop Routine Based Program Plans to incorporate the goals into our program.

Team meetings will be scheduled as required and the Routine Based Program Plans will be evaluated and updated regularly. Professional Development opportunities will be available to the staff members.

The lead up to your Child's First Day

This is a very important time for your child. Children who are introduced to a childcare setting with the help of their guardians tend to cope better with their new situation. The introduction helps to

open lines of communication between guardians and staff, so that special information about the child can be shared. In addition, you and your child become familiar with the environment, the staff, the routine and the activities at the centre.

We understand that the needs of the children will vary so the introduction process will differ from child to child. We suggest the following ideas for your child's introduction to Little Pumpkins, however if you feel there is something that would work better for you and your child please let us know so we can work with you and your child to make the transition as smooth as possible,

- 1) We suggest that you and your child visit the centre together for an hour or so the evening before their first day.
- 2) The first few days should be shorter than normal to allow your child time to adapt to his/her new timetable.
- 3) If your child needs extra support to help the transition run smoothly the staff and director will be only too pleased to assist. Feel free to share your concerns and feelings with us.

We understand that children may experience separation anxiety and we will implement a number of ways of helping your child through this difficult time. Please be assured that separation anxiety is a normal part of child development. We have a number of articles on the subject for you to take away and read containing a number of tips for guardians to help ease their child's anxiety.

Arrivals and Departures

For safety reasons, the door will not be answered or children accepted any earlier than opening time.

6:30am-7:45am spaces are reserved for morning school-age care. All other spaces are available for 7:30am start once a second staff has arrived. Please let us know if you are going to be needing care between 7:30am-7:45pm as space is limited to 6-8 spaces (depending on child:staff ratio) until after the bus has arrived/left and the teacher has returned.

Our doors will close at 5:30pm sharp Monday-Friday. There will be a late fee applied after 5:30pm - please see fee sheet at the end of this document.

If 9 ½ hours is not going to be long enough for your family, please speak to Juli about alternate options.

Generally, children who are dropped off at 6:30am will be picked up earlier than those dropped off at 8-9am.

Arrivals

1. For safety reasons children must always be left in the care of an adult. It is the responsibility of the staff to record the times your child arrives and departs the centre. Please ensure to engage with an educator before leaving your child in the morning.
2. Children must never be left without an Early Childhood Educator present.
3. We expect all children to be present by 9:30am to be able to participate fully in morning routine. If there is a reason your child will be later than this, please let us know
4. If your child will not be attending on a particular day; Please notify the centre before 10:30am. This allows the cook to prepare the correct number of lunches and our staff schedule to be finalised. In addition, field trips may start at different times-you will be notified to arrive early on any of these days.

****You must pay your scheduled fee whether your child is absent or present to hold your place. ****

Departures

1. Children will only be released to people listed on the application form. Failure to notify the centre that someone other than those listed, is picking up your child, will result in the child not being released until confirmation has been obtained. Pick up persons may be asked for a valid ID if they are not recognised. Please note that even if one staff member has met the person, that does not mean another has.
2. We will not release children to anyone aged 12 years or under; your child must be picked up by someone who is 13 or older with valid ID
3. Please be sure to contact a teacher to let them know you are leaving with your child and check their cubby for notices, artwork and/or wet or soiled clothing.
4. Little Pumpkins closes at 5:30pm. If no contact has been made with the guardians or authorised persons by 6:00pm, it is our policy to contact the police and Child Welfare to inform them of the situation.
5. Please note that without a court order, Little Pumpkins staff are not legally allowed to withhold a child from a legal parent/guardian or guardian, however we will do everything we are capable of to ensure all children arrive home safely. All such incidents shall be recorded and kept on file at Little Pumpkins.

Clothing and needs

1. Children should wear inexpensive comfortable play clothes. Many of our daily activities include active, educational, hands on messy experiences and your child's clothes will get dirty.
2. Soiled clothing will be placed in your child's cubby; please send a wet bag for clothing to go home in. If soiled with urine or faeces, the clothing will not be washed as per health and safety regulations, in order to minimise the spread of disease.
3. **Please label all items of clothing with your child's name or initials.**
4. While every effort is made to protect your child's clothing and possessions from loss or damage, Little Pumpkins cannot guarantee that this will not happen. Please check the lost and found box regularly.
5. For the rest period your child will be provided a sheet for their mat and a blanket, when appropriate some children may have a pillow with a pillow case. Children who bring blankets from home we ask to stay here at the centre (they will be washed with the regular scheduled laundry).
6. Please send a minimum of 2 changes of clothing for the day; more if potty training.
7. Please send a pair of slippers or inside shoes to be worn and take out in the event of a fire drill. Outdoor shoes are not allowed in the classrooms.
8. Children are not permitted to wear dangling or hoop earrings for safety reasons. Earrings of any kind are usually not recommended.
9. Please provide enough diapers and wipes for each day. We request that you bring in whole packages of each to be stored in your child's classroom. Requests for these items are sent in advance to give you a few days to get a new stock in. A fee will be charged on your next month's invoice if we have to use centre diapers/wipes in the even that you have not supplied the items requested (if you use more than 2 days worth of centre supplies a warning will be given).
10. Please ensure your child's fingernails are kept short to avoid the possibility of accidentally scratching someone and also avoid the transfer of germs.

11. We request that **personal possessions** such as toys, books and treats be **left at home** unless we request them (example: bring a stuffy for show-and-tell day). No electronics of any kind (tablets, cell phones, cameras, digital watches that take pictures etc.) are permitted to be brought to the centre. Little Pumpkins Inc is not responsible for the loss, stolen or broken items that have been brought against our policy
12. All drawstring and cords from jacket hoods and waistband must be removed as they may get caught on climbing equipment and cause strangulation.
13. Please send your child in the appropriate outdoor clothing for the day. We go outside at least twice a day weather permitting. The following are lists of seasonal outer wear that your child will require: -

	Winter	Fall/Spring
Summer		
Sun hat	Wool hat	Sun hat
Summer jacket	Snowsuit (snow pants and coat)	Wool hat
Waterproof rain boots	Scarf	Jacket
Sneakers	Winter boots	Rain pants
Swimsuit	2 pair of mittens	Rain coat
Sun Screen (provided)	Sweater	Waterproof rain boots
Bug Spray (provided)	Pants	Sneakers
Light sweater	Sneakers (indoor)	Sun Screen(provided)
Shorts		Bug Spray (Provided)
Rain suit		Mittens

Families are asked to provide sunscreen as soon as UV starts to rise, this can be as early as april and as late as the end of september, typically. Our climate is changing. We will send notices regarding when sunscreen will be expected to be needed.

Per regulation of the province, we are required to apply sunscreen when UV hits 3 and above. We apply prior to going out 2-3 times a day, after 90 minutes and after water play.

Please label the sunscreen or provide a zip lock with a label. Tape with sharpie works well, sharpie alone often rubs off, on the bottom is best when possible. It is not possible for siblings to share a bottle as we are in 3 different levels- please send a labeled sunscreen per child.

Bug Spray:

“OFF! family care” by johnson & johnson - provided by us; as needed

Sample of a Daily Routine for Preschool and Toddlers

Times may vary due to weather, activities planned etc.

6:30am-7:30am	Free play and child initiated activities
7:30am-9am	Outside play
9:30-10am	Open AM snack (fruit/veg + secondary food group)
10-10:30am	Child initiated and teacher lead activities

10:30am-11am	Outside Play for Preschools
11am-11:45am	Outdoor Play for Toddlers
11:45am	Family style lunch (4 food groups)
12:10pm-2:15pm	Rest Time & Quiet activities as children wake up
2:30-3pm	Open PM snack (fruit/veg +secondary food group)
*2:20 pmish	School bus arrive; outside play until 3:15pm and go inside for snack
3:15pm-5:30pm evening	Outside play for Preschool; children are picked up for the evening
3:45pm-5:30pm	Outside play for Toddler; children are picked up for the evening

Toilet Training

When the time is right for your child to start potty training, we will continue with whatever you have started. However, we will not initiate the process. Please note that in the early stages of toilet training and when any big changes occur at home or school, such as just starting with us or moving classrooms, new baby in the house etc, it is very common to see a relapse in toileting, along with children will feel more comfortable toileting at home versus with us at the centre. This is very common and very normal. We will try our best to follow your routine as consistency is the most important thing for our little ones and support them positively in the process.

Soiled clothing will be bagged and sent home to be washed. Please supply a wet bag if possible for these transactions, along with lots of changes of clothing and underwear.

Wipes may be requested from the classroom teacher to help ensure easy clean-up for accidents. If pull-ups are needed for when sleeping, please supply these. The teacher will let you know when more is needed. Children who wear a pull up for rest time will change before going to sleep and be asked to change back into underwear once they have woken.

Health Policy

This policy has been written with the best interests of children in mind. Little Pumpkins promotes a shared responsibility with guardians to reduce the spread of infections and promote the healthy well being of all the children enrolled.

Children get infections whether or not they are in a day care setting, however they tend to get more in childcare settings regardless of the cleanliness of the environment. The reasons for this are: -

1. Children's natural immunity is not fully developed.
2. They have exposure to more children from different families and potentially outside siblings, in a group setting, therefore the chances of getting an infection are greater.
3. Sharing toys and touching each other speeds up the spread of germs.
4. Many young children have not yet learned the hygiene techniques needed to help reduce the spread of germs.

Please do not send your child if there is any question of illness as we are not equipped to accommodate/ isolate sick children. Once contacted to pick up your child, you are required to make arrangements and let us know, within 30 minutes. We are not equipped nor staffed to care for children who have become ill. Your child must leave the center within the hour of being contacted. If

this is a challenge for your profession, please ensure you have a back up option in the event your child becomes ill.

1. **Fevers:** are a temperature of 99.5°F or 37.5°C or higher. Children must stay home for a minimum of 24 hours after fever break for known causes such as an ear infection for example, or 48 hours after fever break with no medication (advil, tylenol etc.) if the cause is unknown so long as no other symptoms has arouse within this time period.
If your child develops a fever while in our care we will let you know the initial reading and re-test in 30 minutes time. If the fever remains or has rose, you will be contacted again to pick up as soon as possible.
2. **Vomiting:** If the first episode happens in our care we will contact guardians to let them know, if there is a second episode or your child is unwell in general, guardians will be contacted to pick up as soon as possible. Children must stay home for a minimum or 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting without medication and are feeling well enough to participate in daily activities.
3. **Diarrhea or loose stool:** If happens while in our care guardians will be notified. Children can stay so long as another episode does not occur and your child is still well. If another episode happens within an hour and/or your child is unwell, guardians will be asked to pick up as soon as possible. Children are required to stay home for a minimum of 24 hours after the last occurrence without medication
4. **Rashes:** Open sores need to be closed before returning ie: scabbed, healed, sealed over and must be covered with a bandage to return. This includes cold sores, hand foot & mouth, chicken poxs, other poxes etc.
**Diaper rashes are common-please let us know if there is a cream provided to apply during diaper changing.

If a rash develops while in our care we will access and contact guardians that they are to be picked up as soon as possible or we are monitoring depending on the type of rash. We will reassess after 30 minutes and if the rash remains you may be contacted to pick up and monitor at home and/or be seen by a medical professional before returning. Any rash paired with a symptom such as a fever (for example) will be asked to be picked up as soon as possible and notified of those arrangements within 30 minutes. Your child must leave the center within the hour of being contacted. If this is a challenge for your profession, please ensure you have a back up option in the event your child becomes ill.

5. **Eyes:** Red ,itchy, swollen and unusual discharge all are symptoms of pink eye. guardians will be contacted to pick up as soon as possible. Eyes will need to be clear of the following symptoms to return
6. Any illness that prevents your child from taking part in regular activities.
7. Any illness that requires more care than staff can provide without affecting the health and safety of the other children
8. **Lethargy:** If your child is feeling unwell and unable to participate during the day in the morning, please keep them home. While in our care if they do not want to participate, wants to go to sleep, wont eat etc. without any other symptoms guardians will be notified and we will reassess after rest time. If they are not recovered after rest, guardians will be contacted to pick up.
9. **Pinworms:** Children can return to care after 24 hours after treatment has started

*If head lice is discovered why a child is in our care we will notify the parent/guardians to let them know. If it is discovered at home please let us know so that we can take the appropriate actions of removing items from the classroom that is needed.

Please let us know in the box provided on Lillio when marking your child out sick of any symptoms or diagnosis. We are required to keep track of these per our licencing requirements to help aid in the spread of illnesses

Medications

1. Both prescription and non-prescription medications can be given to your child if needed.
2. All medications must be in original container, with original label.
3. You will be asked to complete an authorisation form for each new medication that includes the name of the medication and time to be given.
4. All written instructions will be valid for 6 months unless the doctor, dentist or parent/guardian designates a shorter time period.
5. When administering non-prescription medications, we must follow the manufacturers or physicians written instructions for recommended use. If the medication states a age recommendation on use, we will require a note from a physician that we are able to administer the medication.
6. All medications must be given directly to a staff member and not left in the child's bag or cubby for safety reasons. Let staff know how the medication is to be stored. If at all possible, ask pharmacy to put prescription in a separate labelled bottle, to limit having to be transported back and forth daily, this will reduce the chancing of it being forgotten at home or the centre daily.
7. Staff who administered the medication will initial the authorisation form with date, time and dose of all medications given.

Allergies

All allergies are to be made known to Juli and Stephanie prior to your child starting with us. We need to know the allergy, severity and what to do in the event of your child coming in contact with the allergen. All allergies and diet requirements are posted in each classroom for staff to view at any time along with in the kitchen for the kitchen staff.

If an Epinephrine injection is required we are to have:

1. A injection stored at the centre at all times (not to be brought back and forth daily)
2. A signed medical form stating that the staff have permission to administer the injection
3. Instructions and training of staff on how to administer the injection and what to do in the event that the injection is to be given.

Emergency Information

Little Pumpkins is inspected annually by the Fire Department and by the Department of Community Services. We have monthly fire drills, and all teaching staff have been trained in First Aid and CPR C.

Please inform the centre of any changes to your address, place of work, telephone numbers and authorisation list, and any injuries your child receives outside the centre.

Accident Reports

Staff are required to complete an accident report form for any accident that happen while present. It will be signed by the staff member who administered treatment, the guardians and by the Director, and placed in the child's file. guardians will be informed of the injury at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury), maintaining confidentiality of any concerned parties. Accident reports will be sent through the notes feature on the Lillio app and given to a guardian at pick-up to be signed. All head injury accident reports will be sent through a message on Lillio for faster transaction.

Emergency Medical Treatments

It is the staff members' responsibility to handle emergency medical treatments for which they are trained. Each staff member will keep updated training in First aid and CPR C. If a child requires medical treatment, the parent/guardian will be called at an appropriate time (depending on the extent of the injury) and required to take the child for professional medical attention. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, an authorised person will be called to fulfil this responsibility, and contact with the parent/guardian will continue to be sought.

If contact with the parent/guardian or authorised person has not been made and your child requires immediate medical attention, a staff member will accompany your child to the Kentville Hospital Emergency Department. Centre staff will continue to attempt to reach a contact person, who will be expected to meet the child at the hospital. Staff must return to the centre as soon as possible. If your child requires emergency medical treatment due to an incident, an ambulance will be called and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital.

You are responsible for all cost involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transport costs if required.

Emergency Closure, Evacuation and Fire Drill

At Little Pumpkins we practise fire drills on a monthly basis. We will take the children out of different doors and routes and teach them which door is the best exit in the right situation. We will all meet at a designated area away from the day care at a safe distance. The teachers will all take attendance to account for all of our children and will be carrying the children's emergency files. Should the fire be real or any other emergency situation occur, children will be taken to a place of safety out of the elements and guardians will be contacted to come and collect the children. The Evacuation Plans will be posted on the bulletin board at all times, as well as in all classrooms.

Should the staff take children out on walks or field trips, emergency contact numbers will always be carried along with emergency treatment for allergies etc. If an emergency occurs while the children are out of the day care, the educator will contact the Director immediately who will assess the situation accordingly.

In the event of needing to close the centre early, you will be contacted to pick your child up within 1 hour. Fees for this day will still apply.

Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness will be highly valued within the centre making use of, where possible, recycled and energy efficient products. Strict recycling policies will be

implemented. Products such as furniture, toys and equipment will be sourced when possible from sustainable resources.

We are a smoke free centre; there is a zero tolerance for smoking on Little Pumpkin's property or in sight of the children. No cigarette butts are to be left in our drive way. Please do not leave any garbage in our driveway or yard.

Please be aware of our environment and do not leave cars running while picking up your children. This is a by-law of Kentville as well.

Nutritional Information

Whenever possible our food will be organic and sourced locally. Our menu plans are designed 4 weeks at a time and aim to include many internationally inspired meals. All our menus will be approved by the Department of Health and Nutrition Services and follow the Canada Food Guide for Children. They will be prepared and served in accordance with the Health Protection Act under the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

The menus are posted in a 4 week rotation and can be found under the calendar tab on the Lillio app.

A full meal including all recommended food groups and 2 nutritional snacks each including at least 2 food groups (1 being a fruit or veggie), will be provided to all children enrolled in a full day program (preschool and toddlers). Children will be given a morning snack at 9:30am, Lunch at 11:45am and an afternoon snack at 2:30pm.

School age children are required to bring a packed morning snack and lunch for inservice and snow days. An afternoon snack is provided with at least 2 food groups (1 being a fruit or veggie) on all days; regular, early dismissal and inservice/snow days.

The staff of Little Pumpkins are responsive to children's cues around hunger and fullness and provide snacks and meals outside of regular schedule as required.

If your child requires supplements or special foods due to medical conditions, please let Juli (Owner) or Stephanie (Director) know and where possible, they will be catered to. In some cases, you may be responsible for providing these items. Children who bring their lunch from home must eat apart from children who are provided with a lunch by the program as per the Day Care Act. Any prepared food brought into Little Pumpkins must be from an establishment permitted by the Department of Agriculture and comply with the food and beverage criteria. Aside from school age children and special requirements for diets, no outside food is permitted to be brought to the centre (including drinks (etc. juice boxes, gatorade, bottled water, milk etc. in a cup, original container and/or bottle). Please let your children finish their snack in the car or ask the staff at drop-off to provide a snack if not close to a scheduled meal time.

Little Pumpkins strives to make mealtimes an enjoyable and healthy experience; Staff will therefore never force children to eat or withhold favourite foods for inappropriate behaviour, but rather encourage children through positive modelling and reinforcement to try new or different foods. Children are often surprised by what they like!

Little Pumpkins will be a breastfeeding friendly and supportive centre and will provide all the necessary facilities you require to successfully continue nursing whilst your child is in day care. We have private and semi-private or public comfortable spaces you are welcome to openly use per your nursing comfort level.

Please keep us informed about any food allergies or intolerances.

Rest Period

According to the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations, children enrolled in a full day program require a rest period.

1. Day care is such a stimulating environment that most children will need a nap/rest. All children are required to lie down and rest for a minimum of 30 minutes, including children who do not sleep. This is to ensure they are rested enough to partake and enjoy the afternoon's activities.
2. After 30 minutes, children who do not sleep are able to engage in quiet activities for the remaining designated quiet time.
3. By guardians request for your child not to sleep, we cannot keep them awake. If your child falls asleep, they need the rest. After a half hour we can gently try to wake them and will do so twice more after 15min intervals; if they do not wake, they will be left to rest.

Outside Play

It is our policy to allow children to play outside daily, weather permitting, as the staff feel this is in the best interest of the child. Cold weather is not considered unhealthy for children as long as they are appropriately dressed. We play outside for a minimum of 90 minutes per day weather permitting.

All children go outside unless:

1. The outside temperature is below –25 Celsius
2. The wind chill is below –25 Celsius.
3. Heat/humidity is too high (judged on daily basis)

Child Abuse Reporting

As per the protocols outlined by the Department of Community Services for the prevention and reporting of child abuse, any childcare provider who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child may be abused or neglected has a legal obligation to report the matter to the local child welfare agency.

Suspected Substance Use

Should any member of staff at Little Pumpkins suspect that a person is under the influence of a substance at the time of pick, the following steps will be taken: -

1. A staff member will offer to phone a taxi to take the parent/guardian and child home.
2. A staff member will offer to call one of the people listed on the emergency contact list.
3. If these offers are refused and the parent/guardian leaves Little Pumpkins Centre, operating a motor vehicle with the child, the staff member is obligated to phone 911 and report the incident.

All such incidents shall be recorded and kept on file at Little Pumpkins.

Termination Policy

If you plan on withdrawing our child from Little Pumpkins for any reason you must give one full Calendar month notice and fees do apply until that agreed on last day date. So long as your invoices have been paid up to date, your security deposit will be returned on your last invoice.

If Little Pumpkins determines that it is necessary to provide notice for the withdrawal of your child from our daycare, we reserve the right to do so at our discretion. Please note that you will remain responsible for all outstanding fees.

Admin Staff:

Juli MacHattie-Owner

Stephanie Fraser-Director

Danielle Brown-Assistant Director

Behaviour guidance policy

Little Pumpkins philosophy is to focus on positive reinforcement, encourage children to express their emotions and help them through day-to-day frustrations. We do this by giving choices, reassuring emotions, allowing space to for themselves, and allow the children to self problem solve; giving help when needed and letting children make choices for themselves.

Section 19 of the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and Regulations lay out specific behaviours which are prohibited. It states “Each licensee, facility director, agency director, family home consultant, care provider, staff member and volunteer of a licensee must behave in a manner that does not harm any child who is attending the day care program, and in particular must not do or permit any of the following....(examples in bullets)

(a) Corporal Punishment, including but not limited to the following:

(i) Striking the child directly or with any physical object

- Example: Jonny was not listening to the teacher about it being clean up time. The teacher used the broom handle in her hands to hit John in the back and told him to go clean up

(ii) Shaking, shoving, spanking or other forms of aggressive physical contact

- Example: The class of toddlers were a challenge all morning, lots of biting, hitting and hard to keep engaged in activities. The teacher over time became very frustrated. The teacher spanked Maria for biting Blake and then shoved her to move away from the area they were in, causing Maria to fall to the ground.
- Forceful movement of a child's body; example picking up by arm and moving them

(b) Requiring or forcing a child to repeat physical movements

- Example: The preschool teacher used both hands to hold Steve down on his mat to try and force him to go to sleep at rest time
- Example: The after school teacher is forcing all afterschoolers to keep running laps from point A to point B because they stated that the class was too energetic and needed to run it off

(c) use Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional or physical movements.

- Example: Telling a child “don’t be a cry baby” when upset
- Example: Laughing at a child who fell instead of making sure they are not hurt
- Example: Blaming a child by telling the class they can not have snack because Katie spilt the milk

(d) confine or isolate a child

- Example: Telling a child that they can not leave one spot in the classroom
- Example: Creating barriers to hold children in a space to separate intentionally from others
- Example: Excluding a child from an activity because they did not finish a task such as cleaning up, eat their snack/lunch etc.

(e) Deprivation of a child’s basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding.

Examples:

- Not allowing a child to fall asleep or forcing to wake when not ready
- Withholding food or not supplying enough food when they are hungry
- Taking them outside with inappropriate clothing on for the weather (ie: just a sweater on in the middle of winter, not supplying mittens, hats etc.
- Not allowing seconds of snack and/or lunch because the child did not finish or like one part of the meal

Section 11.1 of the Manual for Foods and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Setting for Nova Scotia states (examples in bullets)

(i) Staff, volunteers and care providers do not offer food to reinforce positive behaviors

- Example: “Good job Toby! Here is a cookie for not hurting Liam”
- Example: “You can have an extra piece of snack because you cleaned up the art area”

(ii) Staff, volunteers and care providers do not withhold food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviours

- Example: Sending a child to rest time with not eating purposely for the reason of not cleaning, washing hands etc.
- Example: "No lunch for Casey because she is not listening"

(iii) Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g. dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal)

- Example: "Great job for finishing your lunch Harvey, here is a cookie for dessert because you ate it all"
- Example: "You can have dessert if you finish all that if on your plate"
- Example: "Here is a cracker for not hitting today"

Behaviour Guidance Techniques used by the staff, volunteers and child care providers at Little Pumpkins include:

1. Acceptable alternatives for negative behaviors; focus on the behavior and not the child such as explaining to a child
 - Example: "You hurt Max when you hit him, that made him sad"
2. Providing positive reinforcement (recognizing/rewarding appropriate behavior with praise)
 - Example: "Great job making Stacey feel better by giving her a hug"
3. Respecting and accepting children regardless of behavior
4. Positive directions (use positive statements of expected behavior)
 - Example: "Walk please" instead of "Don't run inside"
 - Example: "Can you use a softer voice" or "inside voices please" instead of "be quiet!"
 - Example: "It's okay to cry" instead of "You are okay"
 - Example: "Feet on the ground" instead of "get down!"
5. Giving the children real choices
 - Example: "Do you want to help clean up the lego or the play dough?"
 - Example: "Do you want to wear your blue hat or red hat?"
 - Example: "Would you like to help with...?"
6. Modeling by staff of appropriate behavior
 - Example: "Thank you teacher Kim for passing me the glue sticks"
 - Example: "I am sorry that I accidentally stepped on your toe Payton"
7. Providing age appropriate limits (staff set limits in a positive way, and periodically remind children)
 - Example: "You can have 3 tires stacked on top one another to climb on or be inside"
 - Example: After Schools set their own rules when in roughhousing play, with reminders of the rules and that if someone goes outside of the rules then they need to be re-looked at or if someone gets too rough they will need time away from the activity
 - Example: Encouraging safe risk play by supervising when climbing

Staff at Little Pumpkins recognize that a well-planned program with interesting activities helps prevent many inappropriate behaviors. We structure our program with a variety of developmentally appropriate and interesting activities that encourage children to participate with appropriate behaviors.

Little Pumpkin's Fee Sheet 2025

Full Day fee up to 9.5 hour

Preschool	\$34.00/day - \$18.25 fee reduction=\$15.75/day
➤ Part Day Preschool	\$21/day -\$4.50 fee reduction=\$16.50/day
Toddler	\$38.00/day-\$18.25 fee reduction=\$19.75/day

Extra hours are available at \$5/hour up to the maximum of 11 ½ hours. These hours must be pre-arranged to ensure child to staff ratios are maintained. Part-day program is exempt from extra hours.

Afterschool

Regular day: \$16.50-\$4.50 fee reduction=\$12/day	Early Dismissal day: \$22.70-\$6.00 fee reduction=\$16.70/day	Full Day care: \$31.95-\$10.00 fee reduction=\$21.95/day
Morning care: \$5.00/day-\$3.00 fee reduction=\$2/day	Before & after school: \$21.50 - \$6.00 fee reduction=\$15.50/day	

As per the governments initiative for \$10 a day childcare by 2026, fee reductions will be applied to your account based on your child's age. Guardians with subsidy will also have these reductions and as of right now subsidy fees will still be paid by the government.

Fees are payable one month in advance by the 10th day of each month. Fees must be paid for everyday your child is registered to attend, regardless of whether or not your child has attended. All stat holidays and mandated closures are required to be paid for even though our centre will be closed, staff still gets paid.

Any accounts unpaid by the 10th of the month will be charged a \$25 fine per month. All NSF cheques will be charges \$45. If you are having difficulty meeting the scheduled payments, please contact Juli MacHattie, so that an alternative payment plan can be approved.

The \$100 deposit is held until your final invoice with us when a month notice to withdraw is received, it will be applied back to your final balance. This is the process based on the assumption you have maintained your account up to date.

If fees are not paid regularly and on time, the following policy will be applied

- For those accounts that are 1 month in arrears, a final reminder with 5 days notice of settlement will be issued and in the absence of full settlement childcare services will be suspended until payment is received.
- In the absence of settlement, childcare services will be withdrawn and your child's space will be forfeited. Any further childcare and payment terms will thereafter be at the proprietors discretion
- Unpaid accounts will be referred to a collection agency for recovery within 30 days of the child's withdrawal from Little Pumpkins. If your file is sent to small claims court a fee of \$100 plus any court fees will be added to your bill.

Payments can be made directly through the Lillio app as the preferred method of payment. Alternatives are available upon request. Email transfer or paypal through Paypal invoicing (3% fees applies).

Late Pickup fees

- Little Pumpkins closes at 5:30pm and all Guardians and children must have left the classrooms by this time.
- Our staff have many commitments outside of work and we feel it is important that they are able to leave on time to attend to them.
- Guardians who arrive after 5:30pm or after their scheduled pick up time (without prior arrangements being made with the management) will receive a warning and a late fee of \$15/15 minutes late.
 - First time – Verbal warning from Little Pumpkins Staff and late fee
 - Second time – Written warning and late fee
 - Third – fifth time – charged \$25/ per 15 minutes for every failure to arrive on time.
 - There after – childcare services will be withdrawn and your child's space will be forfeited. Any future childcare and payment terms will thereafter be at the proprietors discretion.
- Children present after 9.5 hours, accounts will be charged \$5 for every 5 minutes they are over.

If no contact has been made with the Guardians or authorized persons by 6:00pm, it is our policy to contact the police and the Child protection Services to inform them of the situation. If this occurs, there will also be an added \$50 fine.

Once a latecomer is put on the third - fifth fee schedule, it will take three consecutive months to clear their file.