Preschool Handbook



Revised March 2026

849-9384

Little Academy Preschool



Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to Little Academy Preschool! We are so happy that you have chosen our program to support your child's early learning and development. We look forward to a fun-filled and enriching school year with all of our preschool friends.

This handbook is designed to provide you with an overview of what to expect throughout the school year. Our primary goal in preschool is to build a strong foundation for your child's educational journey while ensuring their first school experience is positive, engaging, and meaningful.

Welcome, welcome, Little Preschooler, I'm so glad you're here.

We're going to have such a wonderful year.

We'll draw, we'll write.

We'll sing, we'll play and we'll learn new things

Each and every day!

There's a lot to learn

And fun things to do.

It should be awesome with a special kid like you!

Little Academy Preschool

Preschool Sessions

M/T 8:00-1:00 Blue Team (Act 166 Funds)

Th/F 8:00-1:00 Green Team (Act 166 Funds)

Little Academy Preschool operates in collaboration with the Franklin West Supervisory Union (FWSU) and Vermont's Act 166 Universal Prekindergarten program. Preschool tuition is paid through your local school district upon registration. For the 2026–2027 school year, the per-student tuition rate is $4,106..00. Tuition funds are billed directly to the school district in the town where your child resides.

Little Academy Preschool follows the FWSU school year calendar. A copy of the calendar will be provided, along with advance notice of school closures for holidays, recesses, and in-service days. In the event of inclement weather, such as snow days, closures will be announced through Vermont Public Broadcasting systems.

UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN: FUNDING

Prekindergarten education is publicly funded by resident school districts. The cost of prekindergarten is part of a school district's budget as approved by district voters.

- If a parent chooses to enroll their Pre Kindergarten child in the prequalified program operated by the school district where they live, the cost of the program is paid from the voter-approved district budget.
- If a parent chooses to enroll their Pre Kindergarten child in a prequalified public or private program other than a program operated by the school district where they live, the law sets a specific amount that district will pay for the first 10 hours of prekindergarten education. This tuition is paid from the voter-approved district budget.

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The tuition rate is adjusted each year by the New England Economic Project cumulative price index. Districts paying tuition for prekindergarten education to a prequalified prekindergarten education program (private or public) shall pay at the statewide rate for 10 hours per week for 35 weeks annually.

- The statewide 2024-2025 school year Prekindergarten Tuition Rate is $3,884.00

Preschool Philosophy and Mission

Little Academy Preschool's philosophy is grounded in the belief that children learn best in an early childhood program that provides developmentally appropriate educational experiences within an integrated setting. Our program is designed to create a learning environment that supports each child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

During teacher-directed learning experiences, activities are introduced through a play-based approach. Students are encouraged to actively engage in hands-on learning with support and guidance from teachers.

Our goal is to build a strong community of learners by offering age-appropriate experiences that foster self-confidence, independence, and the development of essential cognitive and social skills.

Little Academy Preschool also recognizes the importance of the home-school connection. We encourage ongoing collaboration with families in a climate of mutual respect and shared responsibility, all within a nurturing, play-based environment.

Preschool Program

Little Academy Preschool offers a strong academic program for children ages 3–5. Our classroom provides a healthy, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environment that supports all children across a range of developmental abilities.

Structure and routine give each student opportunities to grow and to take on meaningful roles within the classroom. As children work alongside their peers, they begin to recognize both similarities and differences, learning when to take on the role of a leader as well as a follower.

Our flexible yet consistent daily routine is designed to support the development of language, listening skills, fine and gross motor abilities, and imaginative play. These skills are fostered through a balance of teacher-directed and child-led activities, allowing children to explore, engage, and learn in ways that are both guided and self-directed.

The Curriculum

At Little Academy Preschool, we believe that children learn best through play, active exploration of their environment, real-life experiences, and meaningful communication with peers and adults. Our curriculum is designed to support children as active participants in their own learning.

The program is guided by the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), which provide a framework for curriculum planning and

implementation. These standards, combined with our understanding of child development, ensure that learning experiences are both developmentally appropriate and purposeful.

Our curriculum balances active play with opportunities for quiet play and reflection, allowing children time to process and make meaning of their experiences. Activities are designed to expand on children's individual interests while also introducing new concepts and skills.

Children are given opportunities to work independently as well as in small groups, where teacher guidance helps support social interaction and engagement with the learning environment. Ongoing teacher observations are conducted to better understand each child's needs, strengths, and interests, allowing us to individualize learning experiences.

We value strong partnerships with families and encourage open, ongoing communication. Working together, we can develop effective strategies to support each child's growth and address any individual needs.

Communication

Please feel free to contact the school at any time. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to speak with your child's teacher, you are encouraged to reach out by phone or email.

Phone: (802) 849-9384
Email: jodie@littleacademypreschool.com

Needs list to start school

Each child should come to school with the following items:

- A regular-sized backpack
- A lunch box
- A water bottle
- A complete set of spare clothes in a labeled bag
- A pair of school shoes (if applicable)

Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings. It is important that your child's backpack is large enough to comfortably fit all of their items.

Fire Drills

Each class will participate in periodic fire drills throughout the school year. These drills help students learn and practice safe procedures in the event of an emergency.

Children will become familiar with the sound of smoke detectors and learn their purpose, helping them understand how to respond calmly and safely.

Medicine administration

If a child requires medication to be administered during the school day, a medication authorization form must be completed by the parent or guardian, providing clear instructions for administration.

All medications, including prescriptions, must be brought to school in their original packaging with the child's name clearly labeled.

Whenever possible, we encourage families to administer medications at home.

Classroom sanitation

The classroom is cleaned daily, and all toys and surfaces are regularly disinfected to maintain a safe and healthy environment. Our procedures follow state and health regulations to ensure the well-being of all students.

Students are required to wash their hands upon arrival to the classroom and as needed throughout the day to support good hygiene practices.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate each child's special day at school! Students are welcome to bring a small, special snack to share with their classmates on their birthday.

Each birthday child will also receive a special birthday crown to make their day memorable.

Emergency contact forms

All required forms must be completed and kept in each student's file.

In the event of a school evacuation, an emergency plan is in place. Students and staff will gather at **J&L** as the designated safe location.

This procedure is in compliance with state regulations to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

Circle time

Circle Time is a daily class meeting that helps reinforce a sense of classroom community while promoting respect for others, listening skills, language development, turn-taking, and self-esteem. During this time, children learn to participate in a group, communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and respect the perspectives of their peers.

Communication is one of the most important life skills a child can develop. It takes time, patience, and experience to strengthen these abilities, and Circle Time provides a structured opportunity to practice them.

During Circle Time, the weekly theme is introduced, and students engage with materials such as *Scholastic Let's Find Out*, investigative activities, and the LFO Challenge. Daily activities also include the calendar, weather, seasons, days of the week, and participation in the classroom job chart.

Learning stations / Activity time

New learning centers are introduced periodically and are usually connected to the current curriculum theme or a specific skill that children are developing. Each theme is designed to integrate multiple areas of the curriculum, including language arts, math, art, science, and social studies.

During center time, children have the opportunity to work independently at their own pace, as well as cooperatively with peers.

This structure also allows teachers to move freely throughout the classroom to observe, guide, and support children individually or in small groups.

Each learning center is carefully designed to accommodate the diverse developmental levels of students. While all children progress along the same developmental continuum, they do so at different rates. These differences are thoughtfully considered in planning and implementing each center to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged and supported.

Smoking

The Fairfax Commons Plaza is a federal building and is designated as a school zone. For the safety and well-being of all students, **smoking is strictly prohibited** on the premises.

Choice Time

Choice Time is a period in the classroom when children explore and learn through a variety of hands-on activities. Play during this time supports the development of concentration, imagination, cooperation, creativity, and social-emotional skills. It also allows children to practice "grown-up" behaviors and develop a sense of control over their environment.

Activities during Choice Time may include, but are not limited to: the block area, dramatic play, math manipulatives, writing center, reading area, listening center, puzzles, puppets, sand and water tables, science exploration, painting, drawing, computer activities, and Legos. Each area provides opportunities for children to practice a variety of skills and concepts. For example, the block area encourages the development

of math skills such as measuring, estimating, classifying, predicting, and counting.

Choice Time activities often tie into the themes being explored in the classroom, reinforcing learning in an engaging, hands-on way. This period also allows teachers to move freely throughout the room to observe, facilitate, and support children's learning. Teachers use this time to assess and gain insights into each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

Snack Time

Snack Time provides children with a chance to sit, relax, and enjoy a healthy snack. This time also supports the development of language skills as children practice communicating their thoughts and feelings. Social skills are reinforced, and good table manners are encouraged.

Snacks should be brought in a lunchbox with an ice pack. Each child should also bring a drink or water bottle.

Food allergies are accommodated. If your child has any food allergies, please provide an action plan from your pediatrician to your child's teacher. At this time, there are no general food restrictions in the classroom.

Recess

Outdoor play is a central part of a child's development and learning experience. Physical activities such as running, climbing, skipping, and bouncing help enhance large motor skills, build coordination, and support self-confidence.

Outdoor time also encourages social development, cooperative play, and a sense of joy in exploring nature. Recess typically occurs at the end of each session, providing children with time for free play. Students who are enrolled in the dual-enrollment program will have two recess periods each day.

Music and movement

Children have daily opportunities to move within the classroom through activities that encourage creativity, focus, balance, and the development of large motor skills. Specific movement activities are designed to stimulate areas of the brain associated with attention and memory.

Music is incorporated daily to support language development, coordination, memory, sequencing, and enjoyment. Our experience shows that most children learn best and have the most fun through music and movement activities. New songs and fingerplays introduced in class are often sent home so families can continue the learning experience together.

Visitors

Little Academy Preschool maintains an open-door policy; however, for the safety of all students, **all visitors must check in upon arrival**.

New visitors are required to show a valid ID before entering the classroom. This policy is in place to ensure a safe and secure environment for every child.

Illness guidelines and health policy

Preschoolers do not yet have the same self-care skills as older children when it comes to managing colds or infections. Additionally, young children often have close contact with one another during play, which can increase the spread of illness.

These guidelines are provided to help families make informed decisions about when to send a child to school if they are not feeling well. As a licensed preschool program, Little Academy follows all state regulations established by the Vermont Department of Health to ensure the health and safety of every student.

Lead testing in water

The State of Vermont recommends or requires testing drinking water for coliform bacteria and *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) to ensure it is safe for consumption. Testing for total coliform and E. coli is commonly used to check whether harmful bacteria might be present in a water supply. If coliform bacteria are detected, a follow-up test is usually recommended to confirm results and determine the next steps.

Our most recent water sample testing for coliform and E. coli was completed on **April 3, 2026**.

Behavior management

Our goal in discipline is to assist and guide children in developing self-control and positive behavior. Teachers implement discipline consistently, taking into account each child's developmental level.

Clear and simple rules are established so that expectations and boundaries are easily understood. Discipline is constructive and natural,

using strategies such as redirection, temporary separation from a situation, and positive reinforcement to encourage appropriate behavior and effort.

Programs such as 123 Magic are introduced during the first week of school to provide consistent behavior guidance. Additionally, children learn about being "bucket fillers", and this concept is incorporated into our daily routines to promote kindness, empathy, and positive social interactions.

CDDIS

As a regulated licensed program, if you have any questions about the Child Care Licensing Regulations, contact the Licensor on Duty (LOD) at 800-649-2642 option 3 or visit online at AHS.DCFCDDChildCareLicensing@vermont.gov.

FWSU expulsion policy

UPK suspension and expulsion of students under Act166 will not be allowed for students enrolled in public schools (including public prekindergarten), approved independent schools, and private UPK programs except in cases of imminent harm or danger to self or others.

Backpack

Your child must have a backpack to transport books, notices, art projects and their school bag that is provided by little Academy. The backpack should be user-friendly and an appropriate size for a preschooler. The backpack should be appropriate for the child to learn to manage things independently. Please check your child's backpack daily since we will be communicating with you through written notices.

Clothing

Children should come to school comfortably dressed and with clothing that is appropriate to the weather. Please mark all clothing and other belongings with your child's name. Please leave a spare outfit in your child's backpack in a storage Ziploc bag with your child's name on it.

Permission notes

If your child is picked up by any person that has not already authorized to do so you must send in a note, text, or call. The note should be dated and include the name of the person picking up your child. Please inform the person that is picking up your child identification is needed. If your child is going to visit a classmate directly from school you must send a note also signed stating the details.

School closings

Little Academy Preschool follows the FWSU public school academic calendar. Copies of the current calendar are provided to all parents at the beginning of each school year. School may be canceled or delayed if the weather is exceptionally bad or for some other emergency. Information will be sent to the Vermont **broadcast System** and displayed over local cable TV. School breaks are posted on the calendar. Please make note of all school closings. A reminder notice will be sent home each month of the dates closed.

Absences

When your child is going to be absent, please be sure to call 849-9384 / 999-7145, you can call the school and leave a message



(There is an answering machine available.) If your child has 10 consecutive absences, the FWSU will flag your child to be up for a review and possible expulsion of your child's enrollment.

Also feel free to text 999-7145. If your child is going to be late or has to leave early, please send a note or talk to the teacher alerting them of the time of pick up and who will be picking him or her up.

Confidentiality

We respect the rights of the student, parents and families. If you need to discuss something, please know that we can offer a private place to do so. It is our obligation to you to keep your students records and developmental growth in a professional and confidential manner.

Conferences

Parent conferences and progress reports are offered twice a year. Conferences may be initiated by the parents or the teacher at any time during the school year. Progress reports will go home in February. It is best to talk openly when children are not present. Please limit to parents only for conferences his meetings.

Home / School Mission

Our school to family relationship is important to us! Please know that we have an open door policy for you to ask questions, seek resources, and talk with your child's teacher about their growth. Our belief about families and parental involvement is critical in the early years. We encourage parental input and participation. We believe that open communication between a teacher and a parent enhances the development of the child. Formal and informal communication is held

between parents and teachers through email, newsletters, weekly sheets and meeting directly with a parent. I encourage a conformance anytime throughout the school year. We recognize and encourage and appreciate cultural differences, we provide opportunities for sharing cultural values, experiences and customs. We are happy to encourage this through classroom activities and family events.

Handbook Acknowledgement

School year 2026-2027

I _____ have read and understand the Preschool policies. I acknowledge what is expected of me as a parent and what is expected of the Preschool teachers at Little Academy.

_____ _____

Parent signature Date

Please sign and return this last page!

Thank you!

Little Academy Preschool