

**the little school**  
**at**  
**Kids**   
**Cottage**

**Drop-In Play & Learning Center**

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2018-2019**

**Preschool/Pre Kindergarten**

**Shannon Mercer      Lisa Ratliff**

**105 Mont Blanc Blvd., Dover DE 19904**

**302-734-3040    [www.thelittleschool.us](http://www.thelittleschool.us)**

# **The Preschool Experience**

A preschool child is a very special person who is ready and anxious to learn in a school situation. However, he/she feels deeply about leaving, even for a few hours, the security of his/her home and family. The classroom situation presents many new friends, ideas and ways to learn from both teacher and peers. The gentle blend of home and school lets your preschooler experience a happy and successful year. This in turn prepares the child to encounter, with security and easy communication with others, the school years ahead.

Our purpose at the little school at Kids Cottage is to share love and understanding with young children while helping them advance in their socio-emotional, intellectual, and physical development. We can achieve our goals only if you, as parents and friends, and we as teachers and friends, give our attention and emotion to each child. We look forward to sharing your child and a good friendship with each family.

## **Developmental and Educational Goals**

The curriculum at the little school is designed to reflect the age and interest of the children in the program with special attention given to community events and involvement, multicultural customs and celebrations, and developmentally appropriate skills and topics. The curriculum emphasizes the whole child and includes activities in the following developmental areas: Language, Motor (gross motor and fine motor), Social, Emotional, and Cognitive. The lead teacher in each class will be responsible for implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum given the age of the children in his/her class.

## **Community Relations**

**the little school at Kids Cottage** will develop and maintain active relations with local schools and community-based agencies. These relationships will include but not be limited to: communication with local public and private feeder schools, communication with Child Development Watch (birth-3), Early Intervention Services for children ages 3-5, local mental health/behavioral resources, etc.

## **Student/Family Transitions**

The staff at LSKC will support transitions for families into the program, within the program and out of the program. Each transition will be individualized to meet the needs of the child and family. The directors will assist with transition plans and the implementation of activities to promote healthy, positive transitions.

## **Continuity of Care**

LSKC utilizes a system of continuity of care that includes primary care throughout the day to establish an environment in which program staff work together to minimize the number of staff a child interacts with during a day and over time. Primary caregiving ensures consistency of relationships, environment and communication between the staff and the families in order to strengthen relationships and the child's early learning experiences. It also optimizes teachers' knowledge of children's routines, strengths and needs thus helping to create individualized and responsive learning experiences. Whenever possible, long-term staffing assignments will be implemented to ensure consistency across all five days of the week. In addition, LSKC will minimize transition for children throughout the program year.

# Registration and Tuition Fees 2018-2019

**Registration:** There is a fee of \$125.00 to register and enroll your child with the little school at Kids Cottage. This is payable at the time of registration. This fee is nonrefundable and not applicable to tuition.

**Withdrawal:** A 30 day written notice is required when withdrawing.

**Refunds:** After the 30 day withdrawal period, any advanced payments will be refunded.

## Tuition Rates:

Pre-Wee Mon., Wed., & Thurs. (3 day) 9:15am—11:30am	\$125 registration fee (nonrefundable) \$3,550/yr or 10 installments of \$355 /month Payments are due the first of each month August through May
Wee Little and Play Little (4 day) Mon.-Thurs. 9:15am –12:00	\$125 registration fee (nonrefundable) \$4025/yr or 10 installments of \$402.50/month Payments are due the first of each month August through May
Pre-School (4 day) Mon. - Thurs. 9:30am – 12:15pm	\$125 registration fee (nonrefundable) \$4025/yr or 10 installments of \$402.50/month Payments are due the first of each month August through May
Pre-K Mon.-Fri. 9:00am—12:00 pm	\$125 registration fee (nonrefundable) \$4,505/yr or 10 installments of \$450.50/month Payments are due the first of each month August through May
Pre-K Enrichment Mon.—Fri. 12:00 pm—3:00pm	\$3,145/yr or 10 installments of \$314.50/month Payments are due the first of each month August through May

**Tuition payments are due according to the plan selected on the concurrence form. A late fee of 3% of the total due will be charged to the account if payment is not paid on the due date per the concurrence form. There will be a charge of \$40.00 for any returned checks. Any account sent to collections will incur a 40% interest charge which will be added to your account at the little school at Kids Cottage. As of August 1, 2018, the first month's tuition for all preschool classes will be nonrefundable. A little school at Kids Cottage withdraw form must be submitted 30 days prior to a students last day if your child will not complete the 2018-2019 school year.**

**SPECIAL EVENTS/FIELD TRIP/VISITOR FEE:** All children attending a 4 or 5 day Preschool/Pre-K program will be billed \$125.00 in September and \$125 in February. These fees help to cover the costs of field trips, outside experiences, guest presenters, etc. The Older Play Little class will incur a fee of \$75.00 due in September and \$75 due in February. These fees cover costs incurred. There is no field trip fee for the Wee Little, Pre-Wee and Younger Play Little classes.

If your child qualifies for the state **Purchase of Care (POC) program**, please inquire at the front desk about our Purchase of Care (POC) plus rates.

## Admissions

**Admission** is on a first come basis with an overall goal of the best possible mix of race, religion, sex, abilities and economic status. LSKC provides the opportunity for diverse learners and their families to fully participate in the learning experience. Families are encouraged to share information about their child such as an IFSP or IEP or a behavioral or health plan. For families who are dual language learners, we will communicate with families using their preferred method to receive information about their children whenever possible. When necessary, adaptations, accommodations and/or individualized plans will be written to ensure the success of all children in the classroom. These adaptations, accommodations, individualized plans may include but are not limited to: changes in the environment, daily schedule, curriculum or teacher-adult interaction.

Please note, LSKC is not a special education facility. Our staff is trained to work with typically developing children. We might help a child who needs a friendly, flexible environment because she/he is above average or needs more time to master skills, but children with significant delays sometimes learn best in special education programs. If we discover during the school year that our program is not the best fit for a particular child, we will ask the parents to explore alternatives with us.

## Communication

**the little school at Kids Cottage** believes that communication between our staff and parents is essential to the ongoing success of the facility, and benefits our children. Parent involvement and suggestions are welcomed. To assure good communication between our staff and parents the following will be used to accomplish this goal:

- ◆ Parent Orientation Night (September)
- ◆ Daily, individualized communication and monthly calendars will be provided to parents of children between 0-36 months of age.
- ◆ Weekly class newsletters and monthly calendars will be provided to parents of children 37 months and older.
- ◆ Monthly **school** newsletters and calendars will be sent via constant contact.
- ◆ Two parent/teacher conferences will be held per year (one in the fall and one in the spring) to discuss children's progress, strengths and needs. In addition, parents and teachers may request conferences at any time to discuss progress, strengths and needs.
- ◆ Brief daily verbal communication between parents and their child's teacher during drop off and pick up times.
- ◆ Website ([www.thelittleschool.us](http://www.thelittleschool.us)).
- ◆ Parent handbook (online or printed upon request).
- ◆ Family Centered Events: LSKC will organize a variety of family events each year (i.e., Holiday program, Annual Art Show, Dover Days, Pet Day, Halloween Parade, etc.) some of which will be educational in nature such as parenting education classes and/or information sessions related to curriculum and assessment.
- ◆ LSKC will systematically gather information from families and use data to inform program planning annually. This information will be gathered via a parent survey each spring. Feedback will be provided to both staff and parents.

Please be sure to give us your email address for weather cancellations, school updates, newsletters and other important information. In addition we will send emails and text messages to inform of any weather related delays and cancellations. Snow Days will be made up during the school year with the exception of "state of emergency" days.

## **Family Involvement**

We value the importance of a strong relationship between school and home, with that we offer a multitude of family centered events to help build these strong relationships. Through out the year the families will be invited to but are not limited to parents night, holiday programs, the art show, and Dover Days parade and festivities. We also encourage any family with special talents abilities or cultural beliefs to come and share with the school.

## **Food Service**

Children enrolled in the preschool program will be provided a morning snack. Children staying for the lunchtime period are required to provide their own lunch. Lunches should not contain peanut products or any candy items. Please consider all the healthy food groups when packing your child's lunch. Children staying after 3:00pm will be provided another snack in the afternoon.

## **Transportation Admission/Release Policy**

**The little school at Kids Cottage** strives to provide a safe environment for all children. To ensure the safety of your child our school requires that:

- Parents provide the name of the person(s) able to pick up and transport his/her child. All names must be listed on the child's Emergency Card.
- Proper photo identification will be asked for upon the release of a child.
- No child may leave school with anyone other than his/her immediate family unless written parental permission is presented to the teacher/office. This is a very important protective measure.
- Eye contact must be made with the teacher when dropping off or picking up your child.

At all times, an adult must escort the child into the facility when dropping off and out of the facility when picking them up. Please do not drop them off at the front door.

If your child is to be released due to health concerns or emergency reasons, and you cannot be reached, other authorized persons on the emergency card will be contacted for immediate pick up. Please make arrangements to have your child picked up from LSKC within 30 minutes of being contacted.

**Car pooling:** Those parents in car pools need to establish good safety habits with the children involved. Considering younger siblings, **we suggest that there be no more than four (4) school children to a carpool.** This insures proper attention to each child. Be sure that the teacher and the office have the list of persons involved in the carpool. All children are to be brought to their classroom and to be picked up from their classroom at dismissal.

**Please use appropriate car seat and seat belts. Never leave children unattended in your car while dropping off or picking up! Please turn off your car before entering the building.**

**YELLOW CURB:** This designated area in the front of the school is to remain open for special conditions. Please do not park in this area.

## The Field Trip Experience



Field trips and visitors are a large part of the little school experience. Different classrooms will experience different trips depending on the age of the children. There are some trips that the children will experience every year; however, the age of the child, teacher, and classmates will change that experience so that it is a new one each time. The other benefit of doing the same trip again is that the children who are experiencing it for the second time gain self-confidence and pride when they can answer correctly the questions being asked by the presenter/teacher.

Our field trip experience goes something like this:

1st year-1st experience: Taking in the new environment, new faces, new ideas, exploring something new for the 1st time, etc.

2nd year—2nd experience: Less nervous about the new experience, environment, familiar faces, similar ideas at an older age level (greater comprehension), joy and excitement in knowing what comes next, predicting and anticipating the answers to question the presenter/teacher may ask, etc.

### **Chaperones**

For each field trip your class teacher will ask for a certain number of chaperones. A sign up will appear outside your classroom door or on the class parent board. We ask that any adult going on the field trip leave your cell phone in the car. We also ask that younger siblings do not attend field trips. Parents who are chaperoning a trip are required to drive separately as there is not always enough room on the school bus for extras. In addition, we require all children ride the school bus with their class to and from all trips.

Just riding the school bus can be a new and exciting adventure. The thrill of traveling with a large group in one vehicle is part of the experience.

## Outdoor Climate and Space

Weather permitting we will play outside unless the wind chill factor is 32 degrees or the heat index is 89 degrees or lower and the weather and environmental conditions do not pose a significant health or safety risk. Outdoor playing during these periods outside this temperature range shall be at the discretion of the administration, unless the National Weather Service has issued an advisory regarding health or safety risks for the local area.

In the event of inclement weather the children will utilize the indoor playground.

## **FOOD ALLERGY POLICY**

The little school at Kids Cottage (LSKC) strives to create and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students.

There are a number of LSKC students who are severely allergic to nuts and other food items. For some students this is a life threatening situation.

For that reason we will be a “nut/allergy aware school”.

If your child suffers from an allergy:

- A written allergy plan should be submitted to the office and your child’s lead teacher prior to the first day of school and must be reviewed with the lead teacher. This should be signed by your child’s physician.
- Children’s allergy plans will be easily accessible in the classroom for all those who come in contact with the child.
- A copy of the written allergy plan will also be kept in the main office.
- Parents of children with severe allergies should provide all necessary medications in case of a reaction (Benadryl, epipens, etc.). These medications **must** be left in the main office and a medication log **must** be completed.
- Additionally, we ask if your child has an identified severe allergy that you provide the snacks and treats for your child.
- We ask **all** parents to prepare lunches and snacks from foods that do not contain nuts.
- LSKC promotes the policy of “nut free” foods and materials used in the classroom.
- LSKC cannot guarantee that others outside of our control (i.e. parents, grandparents, babysitters, caregivers, etc.) will abide to our food allergy policy when preparing foods for the children.

A healthy snack will be provided in the morning and afternoon. A sample snack menu can be found in each classroom.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Each staff member at the little school at Kids Cottage will be given written information governing the reporting provision of the Delaware child abuse and neglect law(s) and regulations, center policies and procedures for reporting and documenting suspected abuse and neglect, and maintain on file written documentation of their receipt of this information.

The little school at Kids Cottage directors will not discourage, inhibit, penalize or otherwise impede any staff member from reporting any suspected or alleged incident of child abuse or neglect.

In the case of child abuse or neglect that occurs at the little school at Kids Cottage, staff will follow the policies and procedures out lined below:

Suspected abuse or neglect will immediately be reported to the directors who will report the incident as required by Law.

Any staff member alleged to have perpetrated an incident of child abuse or neglect shall not have direct contact with any child and will be reassigned to other duties that do not involve contact with children until the investigation of the incident has been completed.

## **Health/Sanitation**

**Health Habits:** Staff and children will practice healthy habits by washing their hands with soap and running water a various times throughout the day. These times will include but not limited too before and after eating and after toileting or diapering.

**Regular rest, good nutrition, healthy eating habits and a good morning start has a dramatic effect on your child's interest level and performance.**

## **Sick Policy**

**After an elevated temperature of 100+ or above, a child may not return to school until a normal temperature has been held for twenty-four (24) hours without the aid of medication.**

**Communicable Diseases:** Please notify the school if your child is absent because of a contagious disease. We can inform you concerning the required isolation periods and thus protect the other children.

**Please do not send your child if she/he shows any of the following symptoms:**

1. Sign of abnormal temperature
2. Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
3. Any other signs of illness, e.g. swollen glands, skin rashes etc.

## **Medication**

Medication can only be given by staff members authorized in accordance with State Law and cannot be administered to a child without written permission from the child's parent. **All medication shall be in its original container, properly labeled, and authorized by the child's health care provider. All medications will be stored where they are inaccessible to children.**

## **Accident/Emergency**

In the event of an accident, an Injury Report will be completed and signed by a staff member and filed. In case of an emergency, the center will call 911 and contact the parent/guardian. Information from the child's records will be used to obtain necessary emergency information. The little school at Kids Cottage will document all information pertinent to the emergency and a copy will be sent home and kept on file in the main office.

## **Positive Behavior Management**

One of **our** goals is to develop a positive self-esteem in each child. The staff will use positive developmentally appropriate methods of behavior management to redirect a child when necessary. As a policy, we will intervene, redirect the behavior, and praise the new positive behavior. If it is a recurring behavior, we will counsel with the parent(s) and set up a behavior plan.

**If at anytime you are not satisfied with your experience at the little school please bring it to the attention of the administrators.**

**A copy of the DELACARE handbook can be found in the off ice at all times for families to review.**

# Curriculum

## Creative Curriculum

Now, in its latest edition, *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* is everything that teachers love: a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning. The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on five fundamental principles:

- ◆ Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- ◆ Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- ◆ Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- ◆ The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- ◆ Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

Resource: *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool: The Foundation*, Page 3 (Dodge, Heroman, Colker, Bickart)

## Handwriting Without Tears

The Handwriting Without Tears curriculum prepares young learners for school using three programs: Readiness and Writing, Language and Literacy, and Numbers and Math. These programs complement and expand our existing Preschool and Pre-K programs.

## STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Math)

**STEM** is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. Rather than teach the four disciplines as separate and discrete subjects, STEM integrates them into a cohesive learning paradigm based on real-world .

## Phonics

We use the Phono-visual\* method. It is primarily designed to help children distinguish initial consonant sounds. “This is not a method of teaching reading by itself. It is not presented as a substitute, nor does it presuppose the discarding of all sight reading. It is to be used as a supplemental tool, as parallel teaching in a developmental reading program.” At this level it is a readiness tool .

\*Phono-visual Products, Inc.

In addition to the phonics program, the little school at Kids Cottage classrooms are reading oriented. The children engage in a program that prepares them for reading as their teachers read to them from a book. They will see words on the chalkboard, they will browse at the library books, they will dictate their experiences to the teacher who prints them on large chart paper and later reads them to the children. This language and/or learning experience approach (LEA) is often implemented in the classroom, along with inventive spelling (creative writing). Such a program develops an eagerness to learn to read on the part of the children when they reach developmental readiness.

## Second Language

The little school at Kids Cottage introduces a second language to the Preschool children by teaching them the equivalent of some of the things they learn in their other classes. The goal is to foster an awareness of the fact that different people have different customs, ways of life and methods of expressing themselves. This will be accomplished primarily through games, songs, conversations and books.

## Music

The music program at the little school at Kids Cottage provides a “fun time” for the children to use their imagination while singing, dancing and playing musical games. The children gain an understanding and appreciation of music by learning high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow, etc. Rhythms are strongly emphasized throughout the school year. Preschoolers experiment with percussion and woodwind instruments. Music programs are prepared and enjoyed at the holiday time and in May at Dover Days.

## Communication

Teaching students to speak easily, freely and clearly is one of the most important phases in the language development of the children. This can be done by encouraging them to share their experiences (i.e. trips, pets, toys, etc.), by relating stories to the class, by conversations with the teachers and peers during classroom and play periods, and by acting out stories, which have been read to them. All of these activities will help children develop a background of useful knowledge.

# ASSESSMENT

## **Developmental Screening Tool: Ages and Stages**

LSKC will implement a child developmental screening (Ages and Stages) for all students on an annual basis. Children exhibiting developmental delays in any area will be discussed with the co-directors and if warranted, appropriate referrals will be discussed with parents. The co-directors will help guide/support children and their families through the referral process if needed.

## **Assessment Tool: Teaching Strategies Gold**

In recent years, research has offered new insight into the importance of early learning and its relationship to school and success in later life. Much of this evidence links children's early cognitive, language and social-emotional development to later developmental and school outcomes (Hair, Halle, Terry-Humen, Lavelle & Calkins, 2006). In response to this research, the little school began using the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment System (TSG) in the fall of 2015. This observation-based assessment system for children from birth through third grade is a resource that supports effective teaching and the natural development of children. TSG is an authentic ongoing assessment tool designed for use as part of your child's everyday learning experiences.

### **Highlights of the TSG program include:**

- Exciting, Innovative, Comprehensive
- Developmentally appropriate, ongoing, observation-based
- Available online and in print
- Helps teachers focus on what matters most for school readiness
- Aligns with the expected outcomes identified in the state's early learning standards
- Focuses on nine key areas of development and learning: Social-Emotional, Language, Physical, Cognitive, Literacy, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Arts, Mathematics
- Supports the needs of English-language learners



## **Afternoon Little (Extended Care/EC)**

Afternoon little is a service offered both before and after school hours to children who are enrolled in a little school at Kids Cottage Preschool or Pre-K class. The Afternoon Little program is a planned program that enhances the curriculum from the school day in a less structured environment. It includes a time for lunch, rest, stories, afternoon snack, crafts, cooking, outdoor play and indoor free play. This service is also available to school aged siblings before and after their school day. Ask about our After School Club for school age children.

### **Hours**

7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.      Monday-Friday

Saturday

(one Saturday a month for movie night  
from 5:30pm - 10:00 p.m.)

See our website for dates

### **Full Time Rates**

Registration fee: \$45 (per family)

\$90.00/week Enrichment

\$150.00/week 5-day class

\$165.00/week 4-day preschool

\$180.00/week 3 day class

\$8.00 per hour for children enrolled in the  
afternoon little program

\$5.00 per hour for each additional child in the  
same family.

\$10.00 per hour for children not enrolled in the  
afternoon little program.

## **Camp Little/School-Age Camp**

During the summer months we have a day camp at the little school at Kids Cottage. This program offers outdoor experiences, visitors, water play, crafts, music, games, etc. All of our camps run in weekly sessions from mid-June through mid-August. Children may attend half day (9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) or full day for one or more sessions depending on the child's interests and the needs of the family. Further information will be available in March.

## **OTHER HAPPENINGS**

### **After School Club**

The little school at Kids Cottage offers an After School Club for children ages 5-12. The program provides snack, homework help and indoor and outdoor free play. Transportation will be provided by Capital School District for children attending Booker T. Washington, North Dover, Fairview, William Henry Middle School and Central Middle School. Upon request, the area private and charter schools will also drop off and pick up at the little school. These schools include St. Anne's, Holy Cross, Academy of Dover, Campus Community and Providence Creek. A non-refundable \$50 registration fee is required per child to enroll in this program. Weekly and hourly rates are available. For more information please contact the little school at 734-3040.

### **Drop-In Childcare**

The little school at Kids Cottage offers a drop-in childcare program for children ages 2-12. Children may be dropped off at the parent's convenience for an hourly fee. Qualified staff are available to monitor and play with the children. The center offers a multipurpose room filled with indoor play equipment. Children will enjoy dressing up in our children's theater or making a craft in one of our classrooms. There is also an outdoor playground equipped with swings, sand, shaded areas and much more. The hourly rate is \$10/hour for the first child and \$5/hour for each additional child in the same family. Ask the front desk for available hours.

### **PK Play**

The little school at Kids Cottage provides an atmosphere for parents and their children to spend a few hours together. Children and their parents are welcome to play on our indoor and outdoor playgrounds, dress up in our costumes and more. Parents are responsible for their children during PK play and must supervise their children at all times. Ask at the front desk for PK play rates and available times.

### **Birthday Parties**

The little school at Kids Cottage is the place for birthday parties! In our upstairs multi-purpose room we provide a private area for your child's party. At the heart of the facility is a large indoor playground, tree fort and dress up area. In addition, there is an outdoor playground equipped with swings, sand, play equipment and more. All birthday party dates and time are scheduled for Saturdays throughout the year.

### **LSKC Monthly Classes**

The little school at Kids Cottage offers monthly classes full of fun and excitement. The monthly schedule may include but is not limited to dance, art, golf, music, cross fit for kids, yoga, karate, science and more. Ask at the front desk about our upcoming classes. Most classes meet once a week for six (6) to eight (8) weeks during the afternoons.

### **Movie Night**

The little school at Kids Cottage offers "Movie Night" for children ages 3-12 years of age on the second Saturday Night of every month from 5:30pm-10:00pm. The movie will be listed in the monthly calendars so parents can plan ahead! Movie nights include a movie, snack, crafts and time to play on the playground (indoor and/or outdoor depending on the weather). Children can bring a bag dinner to eat before the movie. Check at the front desk for RSVP sign up.

**General information about the little school at Kids Cottage can be found on our website at [www.thelittleschool.us](http://www.thelittleschool.us)**

