

2023

# Parent Handbook

*Inspiring Discovery through Hands-On / Minds-On Exploration*



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## Table of Contents

General Information .....	4
Kennedy.....	4
Encanto.....	4
Scottsdale.....	4
Uptown.....	4
State of Arizona - Department of Health Services .....	5
Current Liability Coverage.....	5
Equal Opportunity .....	5
Description of Services in Accordance with §R9-5-204.....	5
Safety Credentials.....	5
Who We Are.....	6
Mission .....	6
Vision .....	6
Our Values.....	6
Teaching Methodology and Pedagogy .....	6
Piezas del Mundo <sup>©</sup> ~ Putting the Pieces Together .....	7
In the Classroom.....	8
Daily Schedule .....	8
Academic Day Schedule .....	8
All Day Schedule.....	8
Academic Centers.....	9
Knowledge Partners .....	10
Confidentiality.....	10
Observations and Portfolio.....	10
Processes and Procedures .....	12
Parent Procedures .....	12
Check In and Out Procedure.....	12
Easing Separation Anxiety .....	13
Clothing.....	14
Nutrition .....	14
Lunch and General Food Guidelines.....	14
Academic Day Shared Snack .....	14
Breakfast and Aftercare Snack.....	15

Classroom Management & Discipline Policy .....	15
Conscious Discipline® .....	15
Behavior Management Plan .....	16
Toilet Training .....	17
Personal Belongings .....	18
Naptime .....	18
Birthdays .....	18
Enrichment Activities / Field Trip Policy .....	19
Parent Visits .....	19
Health and Safety .....	19
Child Protective Services (CPS) Policy .....	19
Emergency Card .....	19
Infectious Disease Control .....	19
Sick Child Policy .....	20
Medication Policy .....	20
Head Lice Policy .....	20
Safety Procedures .....	21
Pesticide Application .....	21
Sun Safety .....	21
Parent Involvement .....	22
Parent Volunteerism and Classroom Participation .....	22
Communication Building Parent – Teacher Relationships .....	22
Parent/Teacher Conferences .....	23
Parent Teacher Organization .....	23
Supporting Your Child’s Learning at Home .....	23
Admissions Process and General Information .....	23
Enrollment .....	23
Disenrollment .....	24
Special Needs .....	24
Holidays, Breaks and Summer School .....	24
Force Majeure .....	24
Payment Procedures .....	24
Financial Policies .....	24
Why Spanish Immersion? .....	25
Second Language Acquisition .....	26

## General Information

### Preschool Contact Information

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#### Monterey

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#### Scottsdale

Address 6315 E. Thunderbird Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85254  
Telephone 602-900-0403  
Director Alejandra Ramirez  
Email Address [director.scottsdale@lbmpreschool.com](mailto:director.scottsdale@lbmpreschool.com)

#### Uptown

Address 1973 E. Maryland Ave., Phoenix, 85016  
Telephone 602-900-0404  
Director Maria Hitt  
Email Address [director.uptown@lbmpreschool.com](mailto:director.uptown@lbmpreschool.com)

#### **Days/Hours of Operation**

**Monday - Friday: 7:00am to 5:30pm**

#### **Website**

[www.littlebigmindspreschool.com](http://www.littlebigmindspreschool.com)

#### **General Email**

[Nieves.bermudez@cadence-education.com](mailto:Nieves.bermudez@cadence-education.com)

## **Child Care License**

### **State of Arizona - Department of Health Services**

DHS Location: 150 North 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85007      Tel: 602-364-2539

Little Big Minds Spanish Immersion Preschool® operates under a license issued by the Department of Health Services of the State of Arizona.

This facility is regulated by Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Child Care Licensure. Inspections by Child Care Licensing for these classrooms are available for your review upon request. All records related to licensing are available for review in Preschool Office.

## **Current Liability Coverage**

Little Big Minds Spanish Immersion Preschool® carries General Liability Insurance that complies with State of Arizona requirements. A copy of insurance coverage is on file in the Preschool Office.

## **Equal Opportunity**

Little Big Minds Spanish Immersion Preschool places great value on providing a global and multicultural environment for its students. We admit students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or other school administered programs.

## **Description of Services in Accordance with §R9-5-204**

Children must be 24-months (2 years old) to participate in our program. Two-year-olds do not have to be toilet trained but diapers must be provided by parents. Children who are three years old by August 1<sup>st</sup> must be toilet trained to enter a 3+ classroom.

## **Safety Credentials**

Be assured that our staff has met all of the following requirements:

- a. Fingerprint clearance
- b. Background checks
- c. First Aid/CPR Certification
- d. TB test and proof of current immunizations on file

## Who We Are

### Mission

Little Big Minds Preschool strives to grow bigger minds by leveraging the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. Founded in 2010, our mission is to engage children in hands-on / minds-on activities that teach children how to think not what to think. We give children the confidence to find their voice in any language and to solve problems through creativity and innovation.



### Philosophy

At Little Big Minds, we provide opportunities for meaningful hands-on/minds-on learning experiences and engage students through intentional inquiry explorations. Authentic learning environments allow children to grow their understanding of the world around them through natural investigations.

### Vision

We inspire children to embrace the world around them, to participate with confidence, and to seek joy in discovery on their journey toward becoming life-long learners.

### Our Values

We strive to GROW BIGGER MINDS!

- We recognize immersion learning before the age of 5 allows children to unlock cognitive potential.
- We create playful spaces that inspire exploration and a joy in discovery.
- We challenge children to ask questions and seek understanding.
- We teach children that their voice (in any language) has incredible value.
- We believe children have an endless capacity to learn and we challenge them to challenge themselves. Critical thinking skills grow through practice.
- We embrace progress not outcomes.
- We nurture child-focused classrooms designed to encourage independence and curiosity.
- We commit ourselves to ongoing professional development and teaching excellence.

## Teaching Methodology and Pedagogy

### *Minds On...Hands On!*

We place emphasis on developing children's inquiry and critical thinking skills by encouraging minds-on/hands-on, collaborative learning experiences. Our goal as guide and facilitator, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of inquiry-based learning experiences, is to make children's thinking visible.

**The basis for all great education is not answers...it's QUESTIONS!**

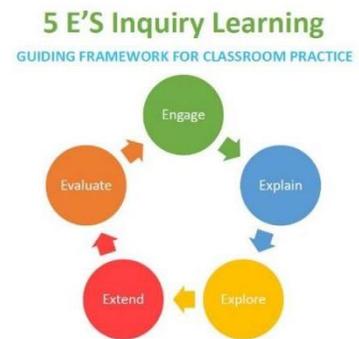
## Inquiry Based Learning

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) is a form of active learning (based on constructivism) that starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios—rather than simply presenting established facts.

- The focus is on the process rather than the outcome.
- Students are involved in piecing together knowledge by asking questions, listening to their peers, engaging in hands-on experiments and discovering answers by themselves.
- The more tangible, authentic, practical or real the problem, the more interested students are in the process of learning. It's all about engaging, hands-on activities
- When students are engaged, the process of learning becomes almost effortless.

## Our Inquiry-Based Teachers

- Guide students through the 5 E's of Inquiry: Engage, Explain, Explore, Extend and Evaluate.
- Provide children with the tools to develop critical thinking skills through concept and mental mapping.
- Provide authentic learning opportunities.
- Guide children through exploration activities and knowledge-building by asking questions and seeking answers.
- Encourage children to formulate hypotheses and test their theories through investigations.



## **Piezas del Mundo® ~ Putting the Pieces Together**

We wholly believe that these are the formative years. In all we do, we strive to ensure that the *Piezas del Mundo*® Curriculum and our classroom environments:

- Meet or exceed Arizona Department of Education Early Learning Standards.
- Validate a child's effort and exploration.
- Encourage and support a child's natural curiosity and desire to learn about the world around them.
- Help the child build confidence, independence and respect for others.
- Offer age- and developmentally-appropriate lessons based on the Little Big Minds academic progression and predetermined social/emotional standards.
- Promote curiosity and facilitate opportunities to love learning.
- Use established assessment and observation methods to meet individual child needs.
- Promote discovery, critical thinking, problem-solving and Kindergarten-readiness.
- Promote collaboration between parents and school to facilitate an individualized standard of care.
- Provide ready opportunities to engage all senses and encourage experimentation.
- Recognize and embrace individual learning styles, talents and skill-sets.

## In the Classroom

### Daily Schedule

Our program is designed to provide varied and intentional learning activities that engage mind and body. We provide a balance of whole group and small-group differentiated instruction, indoor and outdoor play, child-centered and teacher directed activities. A sample daily schedule follows:

#### Academic Day Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 - 9:30	Nest	Nest	Nest	Nest	Nest
9:30 - 10:30	Literacy	Math	Math	Literacy	Value
10:30 - 11:00	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack
11:00 - 11:30	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor
11:30 - 12:20	Fine Art	PE/Yoga	Music and Movement	Fine Art	Culture
12:20 - 12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:45 - 1:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

#### All Day Schedule

All Day Schedule	
7:00 – 9:00am	Early drop-off. After a warm welcome, your child will have a choice of activities including playing and exploring different learning centers or doing teacher-directed crafts and activities.
9:00 – 1:00pm	Academic Day Schedule (See Above)
1:00 – 3:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LBM Aftercare</li> <li>• Naptime for children under 3 years old.</li> <li>• Please bring a sheet or blanket and small pillow.</li> <li>• Enrichment programs - Outsourced programs (ie...soccer, dance, music)</li> </ul>
3:00 pm	Snack, wrap-up and dismissal of Extended Day students.
3:00 – 5:30pm	Self-selected learning, planned activities, and outdoor play.

## Academic Centers

Young children learn through active exploration of materials and hands-on play. At Little Big Minds, we use learning centers to guide discovery:

### Literacy

The *Piezas del Mundo*® Curriculum utilizes researched best practices in early reading. Our Connected Literacy program allows teachers to systematically introduce letters and phonemes and establish sound pre-reading and early reading skills.



### Mathematics

We utilize a variety of tools to build on basic math skills and to provide consistent and varied opportunities to explore concepts of counting and cardinality, geometry, patterns and spatial reasoning.



### Science

Science is experiential and exploratory and the *Piezas del Mundo*® Curriculum is designed to weave basic science concepts throughout our lesson plans. We teach our students to ask, "Why?" and we invite them to develop hypotheses then circle back to our theories. Arizona Department of Education standards provide the framework for our curriculum.

### Fine Arts

The arts nurture the imagination and creative spirit of all children. Sensory awareness (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste) is the foundation for all imaginative activity and creative expression. At Little Big Minds, we place great emphasis on the importance of the arts and the process of creating rather than the end result.



### Cultural Studies

A core value at Little Big Minds is teaching children to embrace the world around them. Our curriculum includes Composer of the Month, Artist of the Month and Region of the Month. In each of these modules students learn about masterpieces rich in history and heritage. Through the *Piezas del Mundo*® Curriculum, students will discuss, listen to and mimic the rhythm and beats of composers like Bach, Handel, Vivaldi and Purcell and they will attempt to replicate artwork by Picasso, Matisse and Cézanne. They will watch and emulate African or Japanese dances, sample ethnic foods, build adobe houses, weave rugs or uncover ruins.



### Social Emotional Skills

We believe that children who learn to empathize with others, accept and celebrate individual differences, communicate their feelings, and resolve conflicts in constructive ways, learn to love becoming contributing members of the community. We work with children to leverage their

strengths and we love and encourage them through their weaknesses and challenges. There is no better time to learn independence and self-confidence than during the preschool years.

### Values Education

We believe that a quality early childhood education program should include a discussion of basic values – friendship, giving, compassion, respect for nature, kindness and more. These values provide the foundation for expectations in our community and they give students common language with which to articulate feelings of empathy and understanding of others. We provide weekly values discussions in all classes.



### Kinesthetic Development – Gross and Fine Motor Development

All the spaces in our classrooms are intentional, safe and productive and play/academic areas are designed to provide students with opportunities to hone gross motor skills. We weave fine motor learning throughout all of our activities. With intention, we provide children with ample practice to develop grip and grasp.

## **Knowledge Partners**

We recognize the importance of authentic learning experiences in all early learning environments but, particularly in a 2<sup>nd</sup> language program. In an effort to enhance opportunities for developmentally appropriate language production and to make learning even more FUN, we invite special visitors and knowledge partners to be a part of every learning unit. Each of these programs provides an opportunity to engage students in the world around them, increase hands-on exposure to specific developmental skills and enhance our academic focus. Some of these programs/visitors include:

- Knowledge Partners = Content Specialists (ie.. beekeepers, musician, meteorologists, doctors and other knowledge experts)
- Periodic Arizona Science Center and other Knowledge Partner Agency visits
- Cultural visitors

## **Confidentiality**

All child and family records are kept in locked file cabinets to ensure confidentiality. Records are only sent to other educational agencies at the written request/permission of the parent.

## **Observations and Portfolio**

Teachers carefully monitor every student's progress throughout the year. Parent/Teacher conferences are optional and held twice a year. The student portfolio must be used during Parent Teacher conferences to show student academic and socio-emotional progress.

“Evidence of Learning” of the all (cognitive, social, second language) content areas must be prepared for each of the students and share with parents at the conference. The evidences of learning stays in the child's Portfolio. We believe that the parent is the child's first teacher. Your observations and knowledge about your child are of utmost importance to us. As your partners in

the education process, we believe that together we will better meet your child's needs. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns or questions at any time.

## Processes and Procedures

### Parent Procedures

To provide a safe and happy learning environment for your child, we ask that you follow the guidelines listed below:

1. **Sign In/Out:** A parent or authorized person (16 years or older) must sign the child in and out of school using our electronic signature platform (ID card swiper or PIN number) every day. (See instructions below.)
2. **Authorized Adults:** All authorized individuals must be identified on the child's Blue Form/Emergency Authorization form. We do not accept telephone authorizations for pick up. We will not release your child to anyone who is not on the Blue Form/Emergency Authorization Card.
3. **Change in Contact Info:** Please notify the director or office staff if you need to make changes in telephone numbers, addresses, and/or emergency contacts. For the safety of your child, it is your responsibility to ensure that our files are always up-to-date.
4. **Notification of Absence:** If your child must be absent from school, please call the Preschool office between 7:00am and 9:00am. Please let the office staff know the reason for the absence. If your child is sick with a contagious illness, we will notify other classroom families so that we can prevent additional contagion. All absences will be recorded in accordance with licensing standards.
5. **Early Pick Up:** In the event you need to pick up your child early, please let the teacher know at drop-off. Please go to the office and a staff member will retrieve your child from their classroom to prevent undue interruption.
6. **Late Pick Up:** Please call the office if you are going to be late for pick up for any reason. We must always abide by state licensing ratios and we cannot always accommodate additional children in the classroom. Pre-approval is necessary and additional charges will apply.
7. **Change in Home or Health:** Please let the teachers know of any changes in the family such as death, illness, divorce, separation, company in the home or if the child is on any medication. This helps the teachers understand any sudden changes in the child's behavior at school.

### Check In and Out Procedure

In accordance with the Arizona Department of Health Services, Little Big Minds Preschool must have a valid "signature" from an authorized adult at drop-off and pick-up. Each signature must have an accurate time stamp and the preschool is obligated to provide accurate records for all students on campus at all times. In an effort to meet this standard and ensure the safety of all students on campus, Little Big Minds Preschool utilizes a state-of-the-art, computerized Student Attendance Program to track student sign-in/sign-out.

ALL families MUST use the check-in/check-out system every day. Parents who do not sign-in/sign-out properly after three reminders from the Director may be subject to a \$25 fine. Thank

you for strictly adhering to these sign-in/sign-out procedures. Please know that these systems are an Arizona State Requirement and are in place to insure the health and safety of students in our care at all times.

### **Easing Separation Anxiety**

Little Big Minds Preschool works hard to provide a safe, loving and nurturing environment but the first few days of school can be scary for our new students. We find that sticking to a consistent drop-off/pick-up routine eases children's anxiety. Our teachers will help you through this process but here are a few simple guidelines.

- The “Hug and Go” Approach. The simplest of the steps, is also the hardest to do! Give your child a hug and a kiss, tell her you'll be back soon and then walk out the door. Don't delay or linger. Linger around creates a sense of uncertainty. The child senses that the parent is worried and they become increasingly anxious with each passing minute. Rather than soothing the child and easing the transition, the “linger” approach causes greater anxiety. Instead, adopt the “Hug and Go” Approach. With a quick, confident hug and kiss, your child will sense that you have confidence in them and this new situation and they will embrace their new surroundings much more readily. Have confidence that the teachers will immediately engage your child in an activity or circle time. It usually only takes a child a few minutes to settle in to their new routine.
- Establish a Routine. Preschoolers crave routine. By giving your child something he can count on, he's likely to go to school that much more willingly. Before school begins, talk to your child about what to expect. You may even want to role-play the drop-off procedure. Some parents have found it helpful to come up with a couple of things that they do each time they say goodbye. Maybe it's a secret handshake, special high-five, a kiss on her chin or a tweak of her nose. Something special between the two of you eases anxiety and lets the child know that it is time to say "Goodbye."
- From the door. While you are always welcome in your child's classroom, we believe that saying goodbye at the door and picking your child up from the door helps your child build confidence and independence. At morning drop-off your child's teacher will greet him at the door and quickly get him started on a fun activity. At pickup time, the students will sing "Adios, Ninos" from their circle as each child's parents arrive. The teacher will then help him collect his lunch and bring it to you for "Besos y Abrazos" (kisses and hugs).
- Trust your child's teacher. Our teachers have a wealth of knowledge and years of experience. From redirecting children to a new activity to simply giving your child a hug and offering comfort, our teachers are masters at knowing what works and what doesn't when it comes to getting kids engaged. If you have any requests or instructions, you can communicate those to the teachers at morning drop-off or via email. They will make every effort to accommodate special needs.

While a few tears are to be expected, they seldom last long. As they get to know their teachers, their friends and their surroundings, their anxiety quickly dissipates.

## Clothing

- Please do not send your child to school in his or her best clothes. At preschool, we play with glue, paint, sand and water. Messy, fun activities are a part of every day.
- We encourage rubber-soled, close-toed shoes that are safe for running and climbing. (Please, no “flip-flops”.)
- Children are required to have a change of clothes in their cubbies at all times in case of emergencies. Please bring them with you the first day of class in a clearly labeled Ziploc bag. Remember to change your child’s extra clothes with the change in weather. If your child has a bathroom accident and has no extra clothing, the parent will be called to come pick up the child, or to bring a change of clothes. Please label all personal items.

## Nutrition

“Family-style” meals encourage and support social, emotional, gross and fine motor skill development. At Little Big Minds sitting and eating with children is a chance to get children to interact with each other. Conversations at the table add to a fun mealtime environment and provide opportunities for informal modeling of good eating behaviors, communication about eating and teaching about nutrition. Family-style meals also encourage children to serve themselves, which develops their hand-eye coordination.

Family-style meals allow caregivers to set the stage for meal and snack times that are more productive and pleasant. Meals are a special time to bond as a school family around food and conversation.

### Lunch and General Food Guidelines

- Little Big Minds is a NUT-FREE school. Please do not pack anything with nuts for your child’s lunch or for the classroom snack. Sunflower butter and Soy butter are approved alternatives.
- Food allergies are a serious concern. If your child has allergies, please clearly communicate restrictions to teachers and Director and make sure their allergies are clearly posted on classroom allergy board. If your child has food restrictions, please provide an alternative treat that is safe for them to eat in the event of a classroom party or celebration.
- Milk or Water will be served at snack time. When asked please bring half a gallon.
- Water will always be served at lunch time.
- We request that children do not bring candy, gum, or sugary treats for snack or for lunch.



### Academic Day Shared Snack

We work hard to nurture your child and we believe that giving them healthy snacks is essential to growth and development. We ask all families to participate in shared classroom snacks. You will be asked to bring snack for their child’s whole class about once a month.

- Your teacher will provide a calendar with a schedule of parent snack-days each month.
- Specific balanced nutritional items will be included on your monthly calendar for you to bring on your assigned date.
- Please bring the snack exactly as denoted on the calendar.
- DHS requires all items to be store-bought.

- Please be mindful to bring enough for the whole class. Teachers will share student count.
- All snacks should be “READY TO SERVE.” For example, if you are bringing fruit, make sure it is pre-washed and pre-cut. The teachers are busy and our little ones get very hungry. Whatever you can do to help make snack-time run more smoothly will be appreciated.
- We understand that parents are busy, but this is the food that is fueling our children's brains. As you know, many children don't eat a very hearty breakfast and, consequently, they are hungry by 10am. Therefore, it is VERY IMPORTANT that the snack is brought on your assigned date.
- If you cannot bring snack on your specified day, please notify your child’s classroom teacher so we can make alternative arrangements. Consider swapping days with another parent.
- If you accidentally miss bringing snack on your scheduled day, please bring a non-perishable replacement (example: crackers or cereal bars).
- If your child needs special meal accommodations, you may bring your own snack. Please notify the teachers that you need to “opt out” of shared classroom snack and send your child to school with their own snack daily.

### Breakfast and Aftercare Snack

School is open for All Day students from 7:00am to 5:30pm. Before and Aftercare snacks are parent-provided.

- Morning Care: Children who arrive before 8am may eat their breakfast in the Before-Care classroom. Breakfast is parent-provided and eating at school is optional.
- Aftercare Snack: If your child will be staying at school after 3:00pm please provide a clearly marked afternoon snack.

## **Classroom Management & Discipline Policy**

### Conscious Discipline®

Little Big Minds Preschool uses Conscious Discipline® techniques as the basis for classroom management and discipline. Created by Dr. Becky Bailey, an internationally renowned expert in child developmental psychology, Conscious Discipline® is built on the premise of developing discipline within children rather than applying discipline to them. We have found that this program provides simple and practical tools to help foster an atmosphere of mutual respect while giving children the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Conscious Discipline® is the only program that integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning, uses everyday events as part of a school's curriculum, and addresses the adult as well as the child. This is not a punishment-based approach. Rather, this approach teaches children to think about their decisions and learn from natural consequences.

Conscious Discipline helps:

- Students own and solve their own problems
- Build strong connections between home and school
- Manage disruptive students
- Make teaching and learning more fun and productive
- Get and keep students' attention
- Set and achieve goals together... despite obstacles
- Manage emotions instead of acting out

- Set personal boundaries to encourage mutual respect
- Resolve conflict in a way that creates closer relationships

It works because it:

- Provides adults with the seven discipline skills needed to effectively transform any problem into a life lesson.
- Creates a positive school climate by eliminating reward and punishment in favor of the safety, connection and problem-solving of a School Family.
- Allows perceptual shift that empowers us to see discipline encounters as an opportunity to teach new skills.
- Addresses a child's internal state first, using a neuro-developmental brain model, so adults and children may learn to self-regulate effectively.
- Promotes self-control.

We believe Conscious Discipline® can be a powerful approach both in and out of the classroom. As a community, it is our goal to provide a consistent and positive approach to raising responsible children. If you would like to learn more about Conscious Discipline® and how you can implement these techniques at home please visit: <http://www.consciousdiscipline.com/>

#### Behavior Management Plan

We make every effort to insure the safety of all students in our care at all times. As Early Childhood Educators, we know that young children sometimes participate in disruptive or risky behaviors as a normal part of their development. In fact, a big part of preschool is learning social skills. Studies show that cooperation, self-control, confidence, independence, curiosity, empathy, and communication are among the most important skills to learn. In our classrooms, we practice sharing, waiting, keeping our hands to ourselves, listening and sitting in a circle and each of these moments provide opportunities for students to build the skills to navigate difficult social situations.

***There is no better time to learn about how to make positive choices than in preschool!!***

It is our policy to encourage children to “use their words” if they become angry or frustrated. With guidance and practice, most children learn to channel and communicate their feelings in a positive manner. Sometimes, however, children make choices that put other children at risk or they repeatedly disrupt the classroom learning environment. If an incident occurs, the Little Big Minds *Disruptive Behavior Policy* outlined below addresses the actions the staff will take to insure the safety of all children on our campus.

- **Level One:** If a child exhibits disruptive behavior, the teacher will redirect the child to another activity. If another child is injured, attention will be given to the injured child first. Both parents will be notified with a written “How was my Day” Behavior report.
- **Level Two:** If a child exhibits disruptive behavior outside the bounds of classroom rules or typical behavior, three times in one week, the same discipline method will be followed each time. The teacher will contact the parents and request a meeting to discuss the child’s behavior.
- **Level Three:** If a child exhibits Level Two behavior a second time, the parent will be required to pick the child up from school. The child may return to school the next day.

- **Level Four:** If a child reaches Level Three again in the same week, the above methods will be followed. In addition, the child may not be able to return to school the next day. Any child exhibiting Level Three behavior for three weeks may be dis-enrolled.

Note: **Confidentiality of all children involved is maintained at all times.**

## Toilet Training

When should I start toilet training my child? No need to rush. Your child will let you know when s/he is ready.

Signs that your child is ready include the following:

- Your child signals that his or her diaper is wet or soiled.
- Your child seems interested in the potty chair or toilet.
- Your child recognizes the need to use the potty and is able to tell you that he needs to use the potty.
- Your child understands and follows basic instructions.
- Your child can pull his or her pants down and then up again.
- Your child is able to wipe him/herself (this may not occur until a little later for some children)
- Your child is able to show signs of discomfort when diaper is soiled.

You may start noticing these signs when your child is 18 to 24 months of age. However, it is not uncommon for a child to still be in diapers at 2 ½ to 3 years of age. By respecting children's readiness and leaving it up to them, the occurrence of bedwetting, withholding stools and urine and regression in the later stages of potty training drops dramatically (American Academy of Pediatrics).

Remember that toilet learning is ultimately your child's responsibility. The natural consequences are neither good nor bad. Avoid disapproving tones and facial expressions. It should not be a scary or frustrating experience for them.

If your child is developmentally ready to begin the potty-training process, toilet learning should only take a couple of days but he or she may have accidents periodically for a few weeks. If your child is struggling with the process, stop and try again in a couple of weeks.

### Toilet Training Philosophy

Little Big Minds teachers are here to support your child through this process if your child shows signs of readiness in the preschool setting. Please let the teachers know if you are working on toilet training at home. By communicating the process with them, they can provide consistent reinforcement throughout the school day. We will be happy to make special accommodations to help you and your child through this process!

### At School

Students are taken to the restroom at regular intervals. Children will have the opportunity to use the restroom as a class and on an as-needed basis.

## **Accidents Happen**

We understand accidents may happen from time-to-time. For hygiene reasons, if accidents are recurring, the teachers will ask that you send your child to school in a diaper until s/he has been accident-free for two full weeks. Thank you for your understanding. Teachers will continue to work with your child on toilet training as above and together we can help your child through the process.

## **Accidents Happen (Children in 3+ year-old classrooms)**

Important Note: We are bound by licensing requirements set forth by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Our 2-year old classrooms are licensed as “diaper-changing” classrooms; our 3+ classrooms are not. Our licensing prohibits diaper-changing in classrooms that are not specifically licensed for diaper changing. For the health of all children in our care and in an effort to abide by state licensing standards, if a child in a “non-diaper changing” classroom has repeated accidents, the following policy will apply.

We know that children 3+ have accidents from time-to-time. However, if a child has repeated accidents, the director will request a meeting with the child’s parents. For the health of all children in the classroom, an adjustment in classroom placement may be necessary. If there is no room in a “diaper changing” classroom and accidents continue to happen, the child may be temporarily disenrolled until s/he is toilet trained. The child’s spot in their classroom will be saved for up to 3 weeks and tuition will be prorated. However, if a child is not yet ready to be toilet trained and no alternative classrooms are available, the child may be disenrolled.

## **Personal Belongings**

Please do not send children to school with candy, gum, snacks, or personal items from home. Valuable or breakable toys or other items may be lost or damaged and these items often cause distraction or conflict.

Every Wednesday throughout the year is “Show and Tell” day. Your child is invited to bring one item to share with the class on this day only. The item must be left in the “show and tell” box until circle time and returned to the box until pick-up. Toys brought to class on other days, will be held in the Preschool Office for safe-keeping and parents can retrieve them there.

## **Naptime**

All children staying after 1pm are required to bring a nap bag to school if they are going to nap. All children under 3 years old are required to go to the nap room. The nap bag should contain a blanket, sheet, pillow and stuffed animal (optional). All nap bags will be sent home at the end of the week to be washed and returned to school the following Monday.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. Please contact your child’s teacher to schedule a time that will work for you. Keep it simple and limit to no more than 30 minutes during snack or lunchtime. Birthday snacks must still adhere to food guidelines (ie...no nuts) and a healthy snack is always preferable (fruit smoothie or fresh fruit cup) to a sugary treat.

### **Enrichment Activities / Field Trip Policy**

Field trips are a wonderful opportunity for children to experience the community in which they live and to extend their classroom experiences. At Little Big Minds, we prefer to bring these experiences to our children. Off-campus field trips are not a part of our curriculum, and no transportation is provided. During special occasions, siblings are welcome to attend with a parent, (i.e...petting zoo, transportation day, classroom parties, etc.) with the understanding that the parent will supervise their visiting child. In house field trips will follow DHS requirements.

### **Parent Visits**

Parents are invited and welcome to visit their child's classroom anytime. Please check-in at the office prior to your visit. For the safety and privacy of our students, please know that visits are restricted to the classroom/program that your child is enrolled in.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Child Protective Services (CPS) Policy**

Little Big Minds Preschool staff and volunteers are required by Arizona Law (HB2293) to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Child Protective Services Agency. As a part of each daily health check and throughout the day, children will be routinely observed. Be assured that normal bruises or scrapes and/or mood swings will not alarm our trained staff. However, they may ask for clarification on how an injury occurred or why a child's behavior has changed. Please do not feel threatened by this procedure. It is the Preschool's way of assuring you that caring and supportive adults are meeting your child's needs. All inquiries give parents and staff an opportunity to work as a team in supporting a safe and healthy environment for each child.

### **Emergency Card**

A child will not be admitted unless the Blue Form/Emergency Authorization Card is on file. Parents are asked to come to the preschool office to make any changes to the blue card as necessary. Make sure you note any and all allergies on your child's emergency card and make sure that phone numbers and emergency contacts are up-to-date.

### **Infectious Disease Control**

Teachers are trained in health and safety procedures including signs and symptoms of illness. For the health and safety of your child and/or the other children in the class, your child will be sent home if she/he shows any signs of illness such as:

- Fever over 100°
- Red/infected eyes
- Green runny nose
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea
- Upset Tummy / Stomachache

According to Arizona Child Care Regulations, any child with a contagious illness may not stay in the preschool. If your child becomes ill during class time, you will be contacted to pick your child up immediately. To prevent contagion, the child will be held in the office until you are able to pick him/her up.

## Sick Child Policy

We believe that most people prefer to be home in a comfortable environment when they are ill; this is especially true for children. We also believe that it is irresponsible, and sometimes dangerous, to knowingly expose others to an illness. For these reasons, we ask that no sick children attend Little Big Minds Preschool. For the safety of all of our children, symptoms that would exclude a child from care include:

- Fever of more than 100°.
- Unexplained rash or sores. (children may return to school with a written notice from the Doctor)
- Discharge from eyes, ears or nose. (children may return to school with a written notice from the Doctor)
- Vomiting or Diarrhea.
- Productive cough or dry cough lasting more than one week without doctor attention.
- Any illness or injury that keeps a child from participating in regular activity.

From time-to-time our children are unavoidably exposed to contagious illness. If that happens, we alert parents through a Health Notice. These notices provide school policy and individual prevention measures with regard to specific illnesses. Please read these notices carefully.

Important: Children may not return to school until they have been FEVER-FREE for at least 24 hours.

## Medication Policy

Medication will be administered upon the written direction and consent of the parent. Medication prescribed by a doctor must be labeled with the original prescription and specific instructions. If your child takes two or three doses of medication daily, please give the medication to your child at home before and after school. Only when absolutely necessary will the staff administer medication. The Director or his/her designated staff member are the only people authorized to administer medication to the students. The parent must fill out a medical consent form before medication is administered. All medicines will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Preschool Office. The medical consent form can be found online or in the Preschool Office.

## Head Lice Policy

Symptoms:

- Child scratching head
- Child reports itchy scalp

Little Big Minds has adopted the No Nit policy as the best safeguard for all the children. The No Nit Policy consists of the following procedures:

- Surveillance: Teachers will check for symptoms periodically and may do head checks if an infestation is suspected.
- Temporary Dismissal: Children with suspected or clear evidence of lice infestation (nits and or head lice) will be removed from the classroom and sent home upon notifying the parents. In addition, we will require the child to be nit and lice free before returning to

school. We ask that the child not return to school for a minimum of 72 hours while steps are taken to get rid of the nits or lice. If a parent believes that the child is rid of nits or lice prior to that, we ask for doctor certification that the child is nit and lice-free.

- Parents will be provided with louse control instruction/information.
- Infested children will not be readmitted until verification by the director that the child is free of any lice or nits.
- We will notify school parents for prevention with postings on the school boards while maintaining the confidentiality of each child.

### Safety Procedures

- All accidents or injuries are documented. Teachers will assess the injury and apply first aid. The staff will contact you if urgent attention is needed. If the injury is minor (a scratch or bruise), you will be informed when you pick up your child through an “Ouch Report.”
- If an injury or serious illness occurs which requires immediate medical treatment, we will attempt to contact the parent at the number listed on the emergency card after we contact emergency personnel or the child’s physician.
- If a parent cannot be reached for consultation, the child will be taken to the medical facility identified on their Emergency Authorization Form.
- Parents are responsible for the supervision of their non-Preschool children at all times while at the Preschool.



### Pesticide Application

Little Big Minds Preschool will post notices on our premises that will contain the date/time of application and the concentration of each specific pesticide to be used at least 48 hours prior to a pesticide application on our campus. The name and number of the pesticide business licensee and the name of the specific applicator will be noted. The business licensee can make available the pesticide label and the material safety data sheet. Parents may also be notified via classroom newsletters or in a specific notice sent home through the student folder. These notices will remain posted for at least 48- hours after the application.

### Sun Safety

Little Big Minds Preschool will schedule limited outdoor time when necessary due to extreme weather conditions. Little Big Minds Preschool will provide parents, upon request, a sun safety checklist for clothing, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and more detailed information on sun safety. We recommend for parents to apply sun block at home. Upon request sunscreen can be reapplied thought the day, parents must sign a blanket permission slip authorizing the teachers to apply the sunscreen to the children according to their institutions.

## Parent Involvement

### Parent Volunteerism and Classroom Participation

We have many fun activities planned for this coming school year! There will be endless opportunities for you and other parents to lend a helping hand. Your early involvement in your child's education will promote future success in growth and development. We truly pride ourselves on the fact that parent involvement (at any level) is an integral part of our culture. It is a meaningful part of who we are, and not only do the children take notice, but it strengthens our community in a meaningful way.

There are many ways for you to be involved at the preschool and your input is always appreciated and encouraged. Following is a list of just some of the classroom and campus volunteer opportunities that help shape the culture of our preschool community.

- **Classroom Coordinators:** Parent coordinators help teachers organize volunteers for classroom parties (Valentines, Thanksgiving, Winter Celebration, etc.) and events and they serve as liaisons between parents and teachers. We will provide you with a list of upcoming events and classroom needs and our hope is that you will serve as an "Ambassador," communicating needs, organizing events, and recruiting parents to make these events a success.
- **Playdough Volunteer:** Make playdough for the classroom once a month. We'll provide the recipe.
- **Library Volunteer:** Help us enrich our library based on our weekly themes. Books are needed by Mondays and they will be return to you by Friday.
- **Classroom Boards Volunteer:** Coordinate a group of parents interested in making our classroom boards engaging and fun.
- **Gardening Volunteers:** Help us plant and tend our preschool garden. Our living garden is the cornerstone of many of our learning objectives.

For the health and safety of all children, volunteers must follow Preschool guidelines. All Parent volunteers must sign-in in the Little Big Minds office prior to entering a classroom.

### Communication Building Parent – Teacher Relationships

Effective communication is essential for building school-family partnerships. It constitutes the foundation for all other forms of family involvement in education.

**Monthly Newsletter:** Little Big Minds will send a monthly newsletter through Constant Contact. If you do not receive the newsletter on or before the first day of each month, please stop by the office to verify your email address.

**Folders and Boards:** Please take time to check your child's classroom folder every day. Our little ones have worked hard on their projects and it means a lot to them that you recognize their effort.

**Classroom Email:** Every classroom has its own email account. Lead teachers will provide classroom account. Parents and teachers are encourage to use this medium of communication to address questions, suggestions and others individually.

### **Website for the school.**

**Workshops for parents:** Schedule once a year. Parenting workshops equip parents/guardians with knowledge and skills to better serve our little Big minds.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Teachers carefully monitor every student's progress throughout the year. Parent/Teacher conferences are optional and held twice a year. We believe that the parent is the child's first teacher. Your observations and knowledge about your child are of utmost importance to us. As your partners in the education process, we believe that together we will better meet your child's needs. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns or questions at any time.

### **Parent Teacher Organization**

Each campus has an independent, not-for-profit, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). These organizations are self-sustaining and completely independent of the Little Big Minds corporate entities. The sole purpose of the PTO is to support the learning and enrichment of students on Little Big Minds Campuses.

We are incredibly thankful for the support of our parent community through PTOs and as individuals. If you would like to get involved in the PTO to help build community or support for student learning or special events, we encourage you to do so. Following is a list of just some of the important ways these campus organizations serve our students and our communities.

- Fundraising (Gala, Fun Run, Scholastics Book Fair and more...)
- Community Building Events
- Enrichment Activities

### **Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home**

You are your child's first and most important teacher and model for appreciation of other languages and cultures. You can support your child's success in school and second language acquisition by:

- Bringing your child to school and picking them up **on time** each day.
- Ensuring a good night's sleep, proper nutrition and comfortable clothes to learn and play.
- Reading to your child daily (in both Spanish and English).
- Listening intently to their thoughts and ideas. Children grow confidence by sharing their voice.
- 

### **Admissions Process and General Information**

#### **Enrollment**

To complete an application to Little Big Minds Spanish Immersion Preschool® you must submit the following materials: Registration form, registration fee, Emergency Authorization, Birth Certificate (copy), Photo and Directory Release, Signed Financial Policy, Confidential Form and Credit Card Authorization Form.

Please note: Incomplete registration packets will not be accepted. We cannot add your child's name to the enrollment list or "hold" spots with partially completed packets. You must turn in ALL of the above information to be added to the registration list.

Completing the above paperwork does NOT guarantee acceptance. Little Big Minds Preschool will accept students based on space available and parents will be notified by phone or email of acceptance. Students will be placed on a first-come, first-served basis with priority placement given to returning students and siblings of returning students.

### **Disenrollment**

Should unforeseen circumstances arise (ie...illness or relocation) parents must provide the Director with 30-days prior written notice of withdrawal and shall be liable for tuition for a period of 30 days from the date notice is given to the school.

### **Special Needs**

The Preschool can accommodate children with special needs. The child's parent, in agreement with the Director, will determine if our facilities and programs are compatible with the particular special needs and if the child's needs can be met by the Preschool.

### **Holidays, Breaks and Summer School**

Little Big Minds generally follows the partner-district Academic Calendar. There may be exceptions from time-to time. Please refer to the Little Big Minds campus calendar for a complete listing of dates and events.

### **Force Majeure**

Force majeure is defined as any event beyond the school's control (natural disaster, pandemic, fire, etc...) that prevents the school from normal operations. In the event of force majeure, tuition for the current month will not be refunded. Future charges will be halted until operations return to normal.

### **Payment Procedures**

- Automatic Credit Card payments are accepted and encouraged. Please complete the credit card authorization form available in the office to avoid late fees and missed payments.
- Cash and check payments are to be dropped off at the Little Big Minds Preschool office or sent to Little Big Minds Preschool.
- If you have any questions about billing, please call the preschool campus office.

### **Financial Policies**

Little Big Minds Preschool is an independent, private preschool. Our operations are not subsidized by a sponsoring organization and our income derives solely from tuition fees and fundraising efforts. Our budget constraints mean that every family has a responsibility to pay their tuition in-full and on-time. An explanation of the school's financial policies follows:

**Registration Fee:** Annual Registration fee is paid once each year to cover the cost of initial administration, supplies, special projects, and enrichment opportunities. The registration fee for all classes is \$200 and it is nonrefundable and nontransferable.

**Tuition Payment:** Tuition is payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month of the school year. August tuition is due August 1st. Monthly Tuition costs are paid for 10-months (from August through May), including December. The **campus is closed to all students for Fall, Spring and Winter breaks** according to the School Calendar. Tuition is not prorated based on school holidays, illness or vacation.

**Late Charges:** Tuition payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month are deemed late and subject to a late charge of \$25.00. Any payment received will first be applied to any outstanding late fees, then to the outstanding tuition balance. A charge of \$25.00 will also be assessed on checks or credit card payments returned for insufficient funds.

**Non-Payment:** If family experiences a change in circumstances or is otherwise unable to meet their payment obligations, it is the responsibility of family to contact the Director to work out an acceptable arrangement. If an account is more than 30 days past due and a satisfactory arrangement cannot be reached, the Director may require that the child(ren) be withdrawn from the school and a payment schedule will be made until the balance due is paid in full.

**Withdrawal:** Should unforeseen circumstances arise, parents must provide the Director with 30-days prior written notice of withdrawal for any reason and shall be liable for tuition for a period of 30-days from the date notice is given to the school.

**Program Change:** Parents may change program selection mid-year if space is available. Parents must provide 30 days written notice prior to the effective date and they are responsible for all tuition charges for the original program during that 30-day period.

**Temporary Absences:** No refunds will be made for temporary absences due to family vacations, illness, accidents, health notices, force majeure, etc. In the event of special circumstances, a parent may apply in writing to the Executive Committee of the Preschool Board of Directors for special consideration.

**Multi-Child Discount:** In the event a family has two or more children enrolled in the school during the same school year, the family will receive a 10% discount on the tuition for one additional child. (The discount applies to the child in the family with the lowest tuition.)

**Teacher/Staff Discount:** Any teacher or staff member under contract with the partner school district will receive a discount of 10% on the tuition for any child(ren) enrolled for that school year. The 10% discount will be applied after the multi-child discount, if both are applicable.

**Care Beyond your Program:** Care beyond your program will incur a charge of \$10.00/hour. Hourly costs are not prorated. A full hour will be charged after 15 minutes. Care beyond your program fees are payable on the first of each month with monthly tuition.

**Late pickup:** A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for every minute after 5:30pm. Teachers will report late pickups to the Director and families will be invoiced with monthly tuition.

## Why Spanish Immersion?

**Build Brain Power!** - Learning a second language at an early age stimulates brain development and expands cognitive abilities. Greater neural activity promotes denser tissue in the areas of the brain related to memory, attention, and language resulting in greater flexibility in thinking, enhanced mental development, improved listening and problem-solving skills, and sensitivity to other cultures. (Bialystok 2001, Mechelli et al., 2004; Kovelman, Baker, & Petitto, 2006). Compete in a Global Economy – Surprisingly, only 5% of the world population is a native English-speaker. Foreign language skills provide our future leaders the ability to communicate in a global economy.

**Develop an Authentic Accent** - Research shows that kids who learn a second language before the age of 7, develop more native-like pronunciation, speech patterns and intonation.

**Build the Foundation for Reading Excellence** - Children who acquire a second-language learn to continuously scaffold, connect and compare what they know with what they are learning. Skills learned in one language are easily transferred to the other language. Children are able to recognize symbolic relationships between letters and characters to become excelling readers in both languages.

**Achieve Higher Test Scores** - Standardized test results show that students who have focused on foreign language studies at an early age routinely achieve among the highest scores in all subjects tested (CAL, NABE, 2003).

**Encourage Cultural Sensitivity** – Not only does a second language provide young people the ability to communicate in another language but, at Little Big Minds Preschool, we focus on educating our students about world cultures. We believe that this holistic approach provides students with a unique understanding of other cultures and the confidence to engage in discussion about cultural differences. By trying different ethnic foods, playing games, dancing, listening to music and reading stories about other countries we encourage a sensitivity to other cultures.

**Embrace Natural Learning** – Unlike adult learners, children are able to absorb a language naturally. They learn through song, dance, interactive and experiential play. They mimic pronunciation fearlessly and build vocabulary effortlessly. It beats hours in the high school Spanish lab!

**Why Spanish?** Learning Mandarin is becoming increasingly popular so, why Spanish? The United States has the 2nd largest Spanish speaking population in the world. There will be 52 million Spanish speakers in the United States by 2020. Spanish provides a more practical opportunity for daily application than any other language. Once a child has learned another language they are able to transfer those skills to learning other languages but Spanish is a functional academic add-on while providing all the cognitive advantages.

## Second Language Acquisition

Each child learns in his/her own unique way and at his/her own individual pace. You can help your child embrace the process of second language acquisition in the following ways.

- **Model Appreciation for Other Cultures:** Little Big Minds encourages your child’s interest in language and in other cultures. Involvement shows the child that you value the ability to speak a second language. Becoming bilingual is a special gift parents can offer their children. If your child sees you making an effort to play in Spanish s/he will develop a willingness to learn.
- **Learning Should Be Fun:** The more fun it is to learn a language, the more engaged a child will be. Learning while playing creates emotional attachments, and emotion is the door to learning.
- **Practice at Home:** It is important to listen and reinforce the Spanish language at home. Consider supplemental Spanish videos, books, or apps. Music can be a great language production tool. **Tic-Talk Spanish** is age and developmentally appropriate and supports or preschool vocabulary. CDs are available for purchase in Little Big Minds offices or through Amazon.com.
- **Play in Spanish:** When learning a language, interaction with others is the most critical component to acquiring effective communication skills. Remember that you don’t need to speak the language fluently yourself, however, you should make an effort to incorporate key vocabulary words into your daily routine. Do not hesitate to ask us if you need help with vocabulary or pronunciation.

Cognitive benefits, cultural tolerance, greater academic achievement and the practical advantages of being bilingual are just some of the gifts afforded immersion students. We are so happy you have chosen to embark on this journey with your us. We consider it a great privilege to learn and grow with your little BIG minds.

Let the adventures begin!

