



LITTLE GEMS
NURSERY



This childcare program is not currently licensed by the Government of Ontario.

Little Gems Nursery is in the process of obtaining a license with the Ministry of Education to become a government-regulated and inspected facility. We will not be opting into the CWELCC program at this time. Any changes will be made in writing.

This handbook is an important part of your child's application and/or enrollment with Little Gems Nursery. Any violations of the policies outlined may result in suspension, and in the case of repeated or severe violations, could lead to the withdrawal of your child from the program. While these actions are rare, they are taken in the best interest of all our children, parents/guardians, and staff. Little Gems Nursery reserves the sole discretion to make such decisions when necessary.

Please take the time to thoroughly review the Parent Handbook. Once you have done so, complete the consent form found on the last page and send it to our email. By signing this form, you confirm your understanding of and agreement to all expectations, policies, and procedures within our program. The handbook may be updated periodically, and the most current version will always be available to you.

Welcome to Little Gems Nursery!



Philosophy and Program Statement

Little Gems Nursery is built on the foundation of fostering a love for learning, promoting holistic development, and creating a sense of community. We believe in the following principles:

- **Individuality:** Every child is unique, and our program supports their individual growth and learning journey
- **Play-Based Learning:** Children learn best through exploration, play, and discovery
- **Inclusivity:** We are committed to providing a diverse and inclusive environment where all children and families feel welcome
- **Collaboration:** Strong partnerships between educators, families, and the community enrich the childcare experience

By fostering curiosity, confidence, and kindness, we aim to prepare children for lifelong learning and meaningful connections with others.

Our inclusive philosophy follows the fundamental statement that inclusion is the grounds of our shared humanity. We understand the importance of going beyond mere compliance with laws and that inclusion is a commitment to recognizing diversity as a strength within early education programs.

Expanding on this statement, our guiding principles include the three key features of inclusion being access, participation, and a sense of belonging. We firmly believe that every child should have equitable access to the same opportunities within the classroom. Active participation in all aspects of life should be supported, fostering a sense of belonging where each child's contributions are valued. In alignment with the six principles of inclusion, our philosophy promotes respect for differences, the removal of barriers to participation, and the nurturing of positive experiences for all children. We acknowledge that inclusion is a dynamic and evolving process and reinforces the importance of empathy and compassion within our childcare centre.

Incorporating our understanding of child development, we recognize that every child is unique and will develop at their own pace. Our centre displays the importance of creating an inclusive environment that fosters diversity and caters to all developmental needs. We acknowledge that milestones will vary among children and emphasize the need for flexible teaching. By staying



informed and educated on child development, we will guide your child to success and help ensure they reach their full potential.

In terms of working with families, our philosophy emphasizes the significance of building strong relationships between educators, parents and children. We recognize that families are essential collaborators in their child's development and our guiding principles encourage open communication, engagement, and a mutual respect between us and families. This involves creating a welcoming environment that encourages families to share parts of their values, cultures, and aspirations for their children. Our philosophy emphasizes the importance of involving families and viewing them as allies in the journey towards creating inclusive and enriching experiences for every child.

Program Statement

Our childcare centre is dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where children are supported in their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Through hands-on exploration, creative play, and meaningful interactions, we inspire curiosity and a lifelong love of learning. We value strong partnerships with families and the community, working together to ensure each child feels valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Our program is grounded in Ontario's *How Does Learning Happen* pedagogy, focusing on the four foundations: belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression.

Belonging

We create a welcoming environment where children and families feel valued and connected. Strong relationships with peers and educators foster a sense of security and community.

Well-Being

We prioritize the physical and emotional health of children by encouraging active play, balanced nutrition, and opportunities for self-regulation. Our spaces are designed to support comfort and safety.

Engagement



Children are encouraged to explore their interests through hands-on activities and open-ended materials. Educators observe and respond to children's cues to foster meaningful learning experiences.

Expression

Children are supported in expressing themselves through language, art, music, movement, and play. Communication is encouraged in various forms, allowing children to share their thoughts, feelings, and creativity.

Our educators will participate in ongoing professional development to ensure the highest quality care and education. Daily schedules balance active and quiet activities, group and individual time, and play.

Enrolment

Enrollment is secured upon receipt of all required documents and fees. Fees are due on the 1st of each month and can be paid via e - transfer or cheque.

Unlicensed Child Care

This childcare program operates as an unlicensed childcare centre in accordance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA). As an unlicensed provider, I am permitted to care for a maximum of five children under the age of 13 at any given time.

Little Gems Nursery is in the process of obtaining a license with the Ministry of Education to become a government-regulated and inspected facility.

While I am not licensed by the Ministry of Education, I am committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and high-quality childcare environment. I adhere to the rules and regulations set out by the CCEYA to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children in my care.

If you have any questions about unlicensed child care in Ontario, I encourage you to visit the Ministry of Education's website for additional information.



Nursery School Program

Our nursery school program offers a warm and engaging environment where children can explore, learn, and grow through play-based and structured activities. Designed to support early development, the program encourages social interaction, creativity, and foundational skills in a safe and nurturing setting. With a focus on fostering independence and building confidence, our program prepares children for future learning experiences while promoting a love of discovery.

Afternoon Nursery School	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	12:30pm - 3:30pm	\$600 per month
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Play Groups

Our play group program provides a fun and welcoming space for children to socialize, explore, and engage in activities with their peers. Through open-ended play and guided interactions, children develop important social, emotional, and motor skills in a supportive environment. This program also offers caregivers the opportunity to meet and connect with other caregivers, fostering a sense of community and shared support while their children play and learn together.

Friday January 10th - February 28th	9:00-10:30 am	\$150 for 8 week session
Friday January 10th - February 28th	10:30am-12:00pm	\$150 for 8 week session
Saturday January 25th - March 15th	1:00-2:30pm	\$150 for 8 week session

Attendance Expectations

Regular attendance supports your child's routine and development. Please notify us of any planned absences.

Fee Amendments

Families will receive at least 90 days' written notice of any fee changes.

**Late Fees**

Fees are due on or before the 1st of each month. If they are received after the first day of the month, a \$20/day late fee applies. If payment has not been made by the first day of the month, care may be suspended until payment is made or withdrawal of the child may be deemed necessary.

Hours of Operation

As of January 15th, we will be operating Wednesday - Friday 12:30-3:30pm and Saturdays from 1:00-3:00pm until we obtain more staff and become licensed.

Program Closures

- June 30th - July 4th 2025
- August 25th - 29th 2025
- December 22nd - January 2nd 2025

Holidays Observed

Little Gems Nursery observes the following holidays:

- Family Day (February 17th 2025)
- Good Friday (April 18th 2025)
- Easter Monday (April 21st 2025)
- Victoria Day (May 19th 2025)
- Civic Holiday (August 4th 2025)
- Labour Day (September 1st 2025)
- Thanksgiving (October 13th 2025)

Additional closures may occur for professional development days or emergencies. Families will be notified in advance wherever possible. There will be no reduction, interruption, or refund of fees for public holidays, planned or unexpected centre closures.

Emergency Closures

In the event of severe weather, power outages, or other emergencies, Little Gems Nursery may close temporarily to ensure the safety of children and staff. Parents will be notified via phone,



email, and social media. Please ensure your contact information is up to date to receive timely updates.

Confidentiality

We respect your family's privacy and handle all personal information with the utmost care.

What Information Do We Collect?

We collect necessary information, including:

- Your child's health and immunization records upon enrollment
- Emergency contact details.
- Consent forms for photos, and medical care.

How Do We Use This Information?

Information is used strictly for the purpose of providing safe and effective care. Only authorized staff members have access to sensitive information, which is securely stored.

Third-Party Disclosure

Information will not be shared with external parties unless required by law (e.g., in cases of suspected child abuse or legal investigations).

Waitlist Policy and Procedure

How to Join the Waitlist

Families can apply to our waitlist through our website. No fees are required to join. The waitlist operates on a first-come, first-served basis

Transparency

Parents may inquire about their child's position on the waitlist by contacting the director. While we strive to accommodate all families, placement depends on availability in the appropriate program and age group.



Acceptance of Offers

When a spot becomes available, families will be contacted by phone and email. If we do not receive a response within 48 hours, the spot will be offered to the next family on the list.

Admission and Withdrawal Policy

Admission Process

To secure a spot at Little Gems Nursery, the following must be completed:

- Registration Form
- Health and Medical Form
- Consent Form
- Parent Handbook and Fee Agreement
- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record

Withdrawal

A minimum of one month's written notice is required for withdrawal. If the nursery must terminate services due to unforeseen circumstances, families will receive as much notice as possible.

Parents/Guardians are required to give the Centre paid notice of no less than 1 month in writing prior to withdrawal of their child(ren). All families are required to pay their child care fees for the whole month, therefore, notice would need to be given by the 1st of any given month. (Example- If notice of withdrawal is given on March 15th, April's payment would need to be paid in full. If notice was given on March 1st, March's payment would need to be paid in full.)

1. The supervisor may request withdrawal of a child due to behavioural concerns when:

- the safety of the child, the safety of the other children or staff is endangered and incidences have been documented, or



- The Centre determines that the child's needs cannot be met

The supervisor will discuss the situation with involved staff and then will inform the parents/guardians about the next step(s) (i.e. instant withdrawal, withdrawal with notice, reduced hours of care).

2. In the case where the Centre meets the child's needs, but does not meet the parents/guardians needs, the centre may also withdraw the child. Parents will be notified and a meeting between parent(s), staff and supervisor will be held if deemed beneficial. If the problem is not resolved, the parent(s) will be served the notice of withdrawal.

Upon request, the Centre will take every step possible to accommodate the families who may be affected by the withdrawal by providing:

- List of Licensed Child Care Centres in the neighbourhood

3. Should the supervisor/director of the program determine that your behaviour as a parent/guardian or your child's behaviour interferes with or is disruptive to the daily operations of the centre, or is harassing, intimidating or of an abusive nature to the staff, other parents/guardians or children of the centre, the supervisor/director of the program may terminate care and withdraw your child from the program without notice.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

To ensure children's safety during drop-off and pick-up, we adhere to the following procedures:

Arrival Procedures

- Parents/guardians must sign their child in upon arrival
- Children must be escorted to their classroom and greeted by an educator before the parent/guardian leaves
- Please notify the center if you will be arriving later than usual

Dismissal Procedures



- Children will only be released to authorized individuals listed on the registration form.
- If someone not listed will be picking up your child, you must notify the center in advance and provide written authorization. The individual must present a valid photo ID.

Late Pick-Up

Families who arrive after our scheduled pick-up time of 3:30pm will incur a late fee of \$1 per minute after 5 minutes. Repeated late pick-ups may result in further action.

Nutrition: Snacks and Allergies

At Little Gems Nursery, we prioritize healthy eating habits and provide balanced snacks and meals to support your child's development.

Meals and Snacks

- A nutritious afternoon snack is provided each day of care.
- Our menu is planned in accordance with Canada's Food Guide and is designed to cater to a variety of tastes and dietary needs.
- Weekly menus are posted on the parent information board and sent via email.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

- Parents must inform us of any allergies or dietary restrictions upon enrollment.
- Little Gems Nursery is a nut-free facility.
- If your child requires a specialized diet, please provide detailed instructions and any required substitutes.

It is very important for us to know your child's allergies and food restrictions in order to accommodate your child's needs. Parents/guardians with anaphylactic children must:

- Provide the Centre with an EpiPen.
- Provide an emergency Anaphylactic Treatment Procedure for their child signed by them and their child's doctor.
- Provide clear guidance for their child's emergency procedure for all staff prior to their child's enrollment

Special Occasions

Parents wishing to celebrate a child's birthday or other event at the center must consult with staff to ensure compliance with our allergy policies.



Behaviour Guidance Policy

Our approach to behaviour guidance emphasizes positive reinforcement, problem-solving, and teaching self-regulation.

Guiding Principles

- Behaviour is guided in a way that respects each child's developmental level and individuality.
- Educators use redirection, natural consequences, and clear communication to help children understand expectations.
- Corporal punishment, harsh language, and any form of humiliation are strictly prohibited.

Supporting Self-Regulation

Children are supported in recognizing and managing their emotions through strategies such as:

- Deep-breathing exercises.
- Visual aids (e.g., emotion charts).
- Calm-down corners with sensory tools

Challenging Behaviour

For recurring behaviour concerns, educators will collaborate with families to create an individualized plan, ensuring consistency between home and daycare settings.

Biting Policy

At Little Gems Nursery, we understand that biting is a common behavior among young children, especially those who are still developing language and self-regulation skills. While biting is a



normal part of development for some children, it is our priority to ensure the safety and well-being of every child and staff member.

When Biting Occurs

If a biting incident occurs:

1. Immediate Action:

- The biting will be stopped immediately with a firm but calm verbal response
- The child who is bitten will be comforted, and the wound will be assessed and cleaned if necessary.

2. Parental Notification:

- Parents of both children (the biter and the child bitten) will be informed of the incident the same day.
- For confidentiality, we will not disclose the identity of the other child involved.

3. Documentation:

- The incident will be documented in an Incident Report, which parents must review and sign.

Health and Hygiene

If the skin is broken, we will follow our health and safety protocols, including cleaning the area and recommending that the parents consult a healthcare provider.

Chronic Biting

If the behavior continues despite consistent intervention:

1. Additional Meetings:

- We will hold follow-up meetings with parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and adjust the plan as needed.
- Referral to a child development specialist may be recommended for further support.

2. Temporary Withdrawal:

- In rare cases, if chronic biting poses a significant safety risk to other children and staff, the daycare may recommend a temporary withdrawal to allow the family to seek additional support or therapy.

3. Reintegration Plan:



- When the child is ready to return, we will work closely with the family to create a reintegration plan with clear strategies to ensure success and safety.

Safety for All Children

- We will maintain open communication with the parents of other children in the classroom, ensuring confidentiality while reassuring them of the measures in place to address the behavior and protect all children.

Individualized Plans (IPs) for Medical and Non-Medical Needs

Little Gems Nursery is committed to meeting the needs of all children, including those requiring individualized support.

Medical Needs

For children with medical conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, severe allergies), an Individualized Medical Plan will be developed in collaboration with parents and healthcare providers. This plan will include:

- Emergency procedures.
- Administration of medication.
- Staff training requirements.

Non-Medical Needs

For children requiring additional support due to developmental delays or behavioural challenges, an Individualized Support Plan will be created. This plan will outline:

- Specific strategies to support the child's development.
- Accommodations within the classroom.
- Collaboration with external specialists, if applicable.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

We believe that parent involvement is essential to a successful childcare experience.

**Opportunities for Involvement**

- Attending parent-teacher conferences and workshops.
- Participating in special events such as open houses, and holiday celebrations

Communication

Families will receive regular updates on their child's progress through:

- Daily reports
- Monthly newsletters

We encourage parents to share feedback and collaborate with us to enhance their child's experience.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy

We value open communication and are committed to addressing any issues or concerns promptly and professionally.

Steps to Address Concerns

- 1 Direct Communication: Parents are encouraged to first speak directly with their child's educator regarding classroom-related concerns.
- 2 Escalation to Management: If the issue remains unresolved, parents may schedule a meeting with the center director.
- 3 Written Documentation: For complex issues, parents may be asked to provide written details to ensure clear understanding and documentation.
- 4 Resolution Timeline: We strive to resolve all concerns within five business days.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be handled with discretion and sensitivity. Only relevant parties will be involved in resolving the matter.

Serious Issues



For serious issues, such as allegations of misconduct or safety concerns, the center will take immediate action, including notifying appropriate authorities if required by law.

Illness Policy

To maintain a healthy environment for all children, Little Gems Nursery has the following illness policy:

When to Keep Your Child Home

1. **Fever**
 - A fever of 100.0°F (37.8°C) or higher
 - Child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication before returning
2. **Cold and Respiratory Symptoms**
 - Green or yellow nasal discharge
 - Persistent cough or sneezing
 - Shortness of breath or wheezing
 - Sore throat
3. **Gastrointestinal Issues**
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning
4. **Rashes and Skin Conditions**
 - Unexplained rashes, especially those with blisters or oozing.
 - Any contagious skin conditions (e.g., impetigo, ringworm) that have not been treated or are still contagious.
5. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**
 - Any signs of red, itchy, or watery eyes with discharge.
 - Child must have been on prescribed medication for at least 24 hours before returning.
6. **Lice or Scabies**
 - Child must be treated and lice-free or scabies-free before returning to nursery
7. **Flu-like Symptoms**
 - Body aches, chills, fatigue
8. **Contagious Illnesses**



- Any contagious illness, such as chickenpox, hand-foot-mouth disease, or COVID-19, requires a doctor's note confirming it is safe for the child to return

When to Return to Daycare

A child can return to daycare when they:

- Are fever-free for 24 hours without medication
- Have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours for gastrointestinal issues or a cold
- Have been treated for any contagious illness and have a doctor's note if applicable

Parental Responsibility

- Parents must inform the daycare as soon as possible if their child is diagnosed with a contagious illness
- Please ensure that your child is fully recovered and symptom-free before returning to nursery
- If your child shows signs of illness during the day, you may be contacted and asked to pick them up within one hour

Medication Administration Policy

Authorization Requirements

- All medication must be in its original container with the child's name, dosage, and administration instructions clearly labeled
- Parents must complete a Medication Administration Form before any medication is given

**Administration Process**

- Only trained staff will administer medication.
- A log will be maintained, documenting the date, time, and dosage given

Emergency Medications

For emergency medications (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers), parents must provide an Individualized Medical Plan outlining specific instructions

Serious Occurrence and Accident Reporting**Definition of a Serious Occurrence**

A serious occurrence includes:

- Any incident that poses a serious risk to the health or safety of a child.
- Allegations of abuse.
- Emergency situations requiring evacuation.

Reporting Process

- All serious occurrences will be reported to the Ministry of Education within 24 hours, as required by Ontario regulations.
- Parents will be notified of any incidents involving their child and the actions taken to address the situation if the circumstances permit

Accidents

For minor accidents, staff will administer first aid and complete an Accident Report Form, which parents must review and sign.



Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Little Gems Nursery has a legal and ethical obligation to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Recognizing Signs of Abuse

Staff are trained to identify potential signs of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect.

Reporting Process

- Suspected abuse will be reported immediately to the Children's Aid Society.
- Parents will not be informed of the report to avoid compromising the investigation.

Support

We work with local agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and provide support to families as appropriate.

Important Telephone Numbers

Below are key contact numbers for your reference:

- Little Gems Nursery: 905-999-5560
- Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance): 911
- Durham Region Children's Aid: 905-433-1551
- Durham Region Public Health Unit: 905-576-9991
- Ontario Poison Control Center: 1-844-764-7669

Emergency Management Policies and Procedures

Little Gems Nursery has a comprehensive emergency management plan to address various scenarios, including fire, severe weather, lockdowns, and evacuations.

Emergency Procedures

- Regular fire drills are conducted to familiarize children and staff with evacuation protocols.
- In the event of an emergency, children will be relocated to a designated safe location, and parents will be notified immediately.

Parent Notification



Parents will be informed of emergencies via phone, email, or text message. Updates will also be posted on the center's website and social media pages.

Smoking Policy

Little Gems Nursery maintains a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited:

- On center premises, including outdoor play areas.
- Within sight of children during off-site activities.

Violations of this policy by parents, staff, or visitors may result in removal from the premises.

Prohibited Practices

The

following is a list of practices prohibited by our centre:

- The corporal punishment of a child
- Physical restraint of the child for the purposes of discipline unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent
- Locking the exits of the child care center for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Parents' Responsibilities

We view childcare as a partnership between families and educators. To ensure the best experience for your child, we ask parents to:



- Communicate openly with staff about your child's needs and experiences
- Notify the center promptly of absences or changes in contact information
- Provide appropriate clothing, supplies, and documentation as required
- Follow all center policies and procedures
- Treat staff, children, and other families with respect and consideration

Service Offerings and Staff Ratios

Age Groups and Ratios

- Toddlers (18 months - 2.5 years): 1:5 ratio.
- Preschoolers (2.5 - 4 years): 1:8 ratio.

Supervision Policy

Children are supervised at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Educators perform frequent headcounts and maintain a vigilant presence to ensure safety.

Student and Volunteer Supervision Policy

Role of Students and Volunteers

- Students and volunteers support educators by assisting with activities and routines
- They are not permitted to supervise children independently

Screening and Training

All students and volunteers undergo background checks and orientation training before participating in our program.

Preparing to Begin Childcare

Supplies to Bring

- Extra clothing (seasonally appropriate)
- Indoor shoes
- A comfort item (e.g., blanket or stuffed animal) if needed



- Labeled water bottle
- Diapers and Wipes

I _____ have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above policies and guidelines set out by Little Gems Nursery. I understand that failure to comply may lead to termination of enrolment and withdrawal from the centre.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____