

Little Oaks Learning Center

Family Handbook 2025–2026

742 Maplewood Drive, Austin, TX 78745

Phone: (512) 555-0192 | Email: info@littleoakslearning.com

Website: www.littleoakslearning.com

Licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission

License #: TX-248817

Welcome to Little Oaks

Dear Families,

Welcome to Little Oaks Learning Center! We are thrilled to partner with you in your child's early education journey. Our center has served the Austin community since 2016, and we take pride in providing a warm, safe, and enriching environment where children ages 6 weeks through 5 years can grow, explore, and thrive.

This handbook contains everything you need to know about our center's programs, policies, and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the year. If you have any questions, our front desk team and your child's lead teacher are always happy to help.

We look forward to a wonderful year together!

Warmly,

Maria Gutierrez, Center Director

director@littleoakslearning.com | (512) 555-0192 ext. 1

1. General Information

1.1 Hours of Operation

Little Oaks is open Monday through Friday, 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM, year-round.

- Early drop-off begins at 6:30 AM.
- Standard hours are 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM.
- Extended care (6:00 PM – 6:30 PM) is included at no extra charge.
- Late pickup after 6:30 PM incurs a fee of \$1.00 per minute per child, billed directly to your account.

1.2 Holiday Closures (2025–2026)

Little Oaks is closed on the following days. Tuition is not adjusted for holiday closures.

Holiday	Date(s) Closed
New Year's Day	Wednesday, January 1, 2025
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 20, 2025
Presidents' Day	Monday, February 17, 2025
Memorial Day	Monday, May 26, 2025
Juneteenth	Thursday, June 19, 2025
Independence Day	Friday, July 4, 2025
Labor Day	Monday, September 1, 2025
Veterans Day	Tuesday, November 11, 2025
Thanksgiving Break	Thursday–Friday, Nov 27–28, 2025
Winter Break	Wednesday–Friday, Dec 24–26, 2025
New Year's Day	Thursday, January 1, 2026

The center may also close for up to 2 inclement weather days per year. Families will be notified via the Brightwheel app by 5:30 AM on any weather closure day.

1.3 Staff Directory

Name	Role	Contact
Maria Gutierrez	Center Director	ext. 1
James Park	Assistant Director	ext. 2
Denise Okafor	Infant Room Lead	ext. 3
Carla Mendez	Toddler Room Lead	ext. 4
Aisha Johnson	Pre-K Room Lead	ext. 5
Ryan Patel	Curriculum Coordinator	ext. 6

Front Desk

General Inquiries

ext. 0

2. Enrollment & Tuition

2.1 Programs & Age Groups

Program	Ages	Ratio	Max Class Size
Infant	6 weeks – 12 months	1:4	8
Young Toddler	12 – 18 months	1:5	10
Toddler	18 – 24 months	1:6	12
Twos	2 – 3 years	1:9	18
Preschool	3 – 4 years	1:11	22
Pre-K	4 – 5 years	1:13	26

Children transition to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, and space availability. Transitions typically happen at the start of a month, and families receive at least two weeks' notice.

2.2 Tuition Rates (Effective August 1, 2025)

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month via autopay through Brightwheel. A \$25 late fee is applied if payment is not received by the 5th.

Program	Monthly (5 days/wk)	Monthly (3 days/wk)
Infant	\$1,850	\$1,295
Young Toddler	\$1,750	\$1,225
Toddler	\$1,650	\$1,155
Twos	\$1,500	\$1,050
Preschool	\$1,350	\$945
Pre-K	\$1,250	\$875

- Registration fee: \$150 per child (non-refundable, due at enrollment).
- Annual supply fee: \$200 per child, due each August.
- Sibling discount: 10% off the lower tuition for the second child enrolled simultaneously.
- Tuition is charged regardless of absences, holidays, or center closures. No credits or refunds for missed days.
- We accept Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) childcare subsidies.

2.3 Waitlist

If your preferred program is full, you may join our waitlist for a \$50 non-refundable fee. Waitlist priority is first-come, first-served, with siblings of current families given preference. Average wait time is 2–4 months for infants and 1–2 months for older classrooms.

2.4 Withdrawal Policy

Families must provide 30 calendar days' written notice to withdraw. Tuition is due through the full notice period. Notice should be submitted in writing to the center director via email.

3. Daily Schedule & Curriculum

3.1 Sample Daily Schedule (Preschool / Pre-K)

Time	Activity
6:30 – 7:30 AM	Arrival, free play, and breakfast
7:30 – 8:00 AM	Morning circle (calendar, weather, songs)
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Learning centers (literacy, math, science, art)
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Morning snack
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Outdoor play / gross motor
10:15 – 11:00 AM	Small group instruction / projects
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Lunch
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	Story time and wind-down
12:00 – 2:00 PM	Rest / nap time
2:00 – 2:30 PM	Wake up, afternoon snack
2:30 – 3:30 PM	Enrichment (music, STEM, Spanish)
3:30 – 4:30 PM	Outdoor play
4:30 – 6:30 PM	Free play, quiet activities, and pickup

Infant and toddler schedules follow individual feeding and nap routines while incorporating age-appropriate sensory, music, and movement activities throughout the day.

3.2 Curriculum

Little Oaks follows a play-based, emergent curriculum inspired by the Creative Curriculum® framework. Our approach emphasizes hands-on exploration, social-emotional development, and school readiness. Weekly lesson plans are posted in each classroom and shared with families via Brightwheel every Monday.

Enrichment programs included in tuition:

- Spanish language exposure (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
- Music and movement (Wednesdays)
- STEM exploration (Fridays)
- Yoga and mindfulness (Mondays, Preschool and Pre-K only)

3.3 Outdoor Play

Children go outside at least twice daily, weather permitting. We follow Texas licensing guidelines: outdoor play is canceled when the temperature (including wind chill or heat index) falls below 32°F or exceeds 108°F, or during active thunderstorms, lightning, or air quality alerts above AQI 150. On days when outdoor time is limited, indoor gross motor activities are provided.

4. Meals & Nutrition

4.1 Meals Provided

Little Oaks participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The following meals are provided at no additional cost:

- Breakfast: 7:00 – 7:30 AM
- Morning snack: 9:00 – 9:15 AM
- Lunch: 11:00 – 11:30 AM
- Afternoon snack: 2:00 – 2:30 PM

Weekly menus are posted in each classroom, on the parent board near the front entrance, and shared via Brightwheel on Fridays for the following week.

4.2 Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

We take food allergies seriously. All allergies and dietary restrictions must be documented on the enrollment health form and communicated to your child's lead teacher. We accommodate the following:

- Common allergens (peanut/tree nut, dairy, egg, gluten, soy, shellfish)
- Religious dietary requirements (halal, kosher, vegetarian)
- Medical dietary needs with a physician's note

Little Oaks is a peanut-aware facility. While we cannot guarantee a completely peanut-free environment, peanut and tree nut products are never served, and classrooms with enrolled children who have nut allergies are designated nut-free zones. Parents must not send peanut or tree nut products in lunchboxes.

4.3 Sending Food From Home

If your child has dietary restrictions we cannot accommodate through our menu, you may send meals from home. All food sent from home must be:

- Clearly labeled with the child's full name and date
- In sealed, ready-to-serve containers (we can refrigerate and microwave)
- Free of peanuts and tree nuts

If a child arrives without a packed lunch and we are not able to reach a parent, we will provide a center meal and note it in Brightwheel. There is no additional charge for substitute meals.

4.4 Infant Feeding

For infants, we follow each family's feeding plan. Parents must provide:

- Breast milk or formula in pre-measured, labeled bottles
- Baby food or age-appropriate solids as the child progresses

We do not introduce new foods without written parent consent. All bottles and containers must be labeled with the child's name and date.

5. Health & Safety Policies

5.1 Illness Policy

To protect all children and staff, a child must stay home or will be sent home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea (2 or more episodes in 24 hours)
- Undiagnosed rash or skin condition
- Persistent cough, especially if accompanied by fever or colored nasal discharge
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) with discharge
- Head lice (active, untreated infestation)
- Any contagious illness diagnosed by a physician (strep, flu, RSV, hand-foot-mouth, COVID-19, etc.)

Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) before returning to the center. For contagious illnesses, a doctor's return-to-care note may be required at the director's discretion.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you immediately. Children must be picked up within one hour of notification.

5.2 Medication Administration

Staff can administer prescription and over-the-counter medication only with:

- A completed Medication Authorization Form (available at the front desk or in Brightwheel)
- Medication in its original container with the child's name and dosage instructions
- Written doctor's note for any prescription medication

Medications are stored in a locked cabinet. Sunscreen and insect repellent may be applied with a signed blanket authorization on file.

5.3 Immunizations

All children must be current on Texas-required immunizations. Updated immunization records must be provided at enrollment and whenever new vaccines are administered. Children who are not up to date may be excluded from care per state licensing requirements. Medical and religious exemptions are accepted with proper documentation filed with the Texas Department of State Health Services.

5.4 Accidents & Injuries

Minor injuries (scrapes, bumps) are treated with basic first aid and documented in an incident report shared via Brightwheel the same day. For any head injury, bite that breaks skin, or injury requiring more than basic first aid, parents are called immediately. In a medical emergency, staff will call 911 first, then the parents. All lead teachers are CPR and First Aid certified.

5.5 Emergency Procedures

Little Oaks conducts monthly fire drills and quarterly severe weather (tornado) drills. Our emergency plans are posted in every classroom and at the front desk. In case of an emergency evacuation, our designated off-site location is Maplewood Community Church, 800 Maplewood Drive (0.2 miles from the center). Families will be notified via Brightwheel and phone.

6. Drop-Off & Pick-Up

6.1 Drop-Off Procedures

- Drop-off is between 6:30 AM and 9:00 AM. Children arriving after 9:00 AM must be signed in at the front desk.
- All children must be signed in through the Brightwheel kiosk at the front entrance using the parent's 4-digit PIN or QR code.
- Walk your child to their classroom and ensure a teacher acknowledges the handoff.
- Breakfast is served until 7:30 AM. Children arriving after 7:30 AM should have already eaten breakfast.

6.2 Pick-Up Procedures

- Pick-up is between 3:00 PM and 6:30 PM (or your contracted hours).
- Sign your child out through Brightwheel at the front entrance.
- Only authorized individuals listed on the enrollment form may pick up your child.
- Anyone not known to staff will be asked for a government-issued photo ID, which will be checked against the authorized list.
- Custodial agreements or court orders restricting pick-up must be provided in writing to the director.

6.3 Late Pick-Up

The center closes at 6:30 PM sharp. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child applies after 6:30 PM, beginning at 6:31 PM. Late fees are billed through Brightwheel and added to your next invoice. After three late pick-ups in a 60-day period, a meeting with the director will be required to discuss a plan. Chronic late pick-ups may result in termination of enrollment.

6.4 Absences

If your child will be absent, please notify the center by 8:30 AM through Brightwheel or by calling the front desk. This helps us plan staffing and meals. Tuition is not adjusted for absences. If a child is absent for 5 consecutive days without communication, we may contact the family and, if unresolved, the spot may be released after 10 consecutive unreported absence days.

7. Communication

7.1 Brightwheel App

Brightwheel is our primary communication platform. Through the app, you can:

- View daily activity reports (meals, naps, diaper changes, activities)
- Receive photos and videos from the classroom
- Message your child's teacher or the director
- Review and sign documents
- Make tuition payments
- Check in and check out your child

All families are required to download and activate their Brightwheel account during enrollment. Teachers respond to messages within 2 hours during operating hours; after-hours messages are addressed the next business day.

7.2 Other Communication Channels

- Monthly newsletter: Emailed on the first Monday of each month with center updates, upcoming events, and parenting resources.
- Classroom boards: Posted in each room with the weekly lesson plan, specials schedule, and daily menu.
- Parent-teacher conferences: Held twice a year (October and March). Progress reports are shared at each conference.
- Open-door policy: Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time. We simply ask that you check in at the front desk first.

7.3 Concerns & Feedback

We welcome feedback. For day-to-day classroom concerns, please speak with your child's lead teacher first. For broader issues or unresolved concerns, please contact the center director. You may also submit anonymous feedback through the suggestion box in the front lobby or via the feedback form on our website.

If you have concerns about licensing compliance, you may contact the Texas Health and Human Services Commission at 1-800-862-5252 or visit hhs.texas.gov.

8. What to Bring

8.1 Daily Items (All Ages)

- A complete change of weather-appropriate clothing (labeled with child's name)
- Closed-toe shoes suitable for outdoor play
- A water bottle (labeled)
- Sunscreen (if not already on blanket authorization)

8.2 Infants (Additional Items)

- Pre-measured, labeled bottles of breast milk or formula
- Diapers and wipes (at least a one-week supply)
- A blanket or sleep sack for nap time
- Pacifiers (if used; labeled)
- Baby food, cereal, or age-appropriate snacks as needed

8.3 Toddlers & Preschoolers (Additional Items)

- A fitted cot sheet and small blanket for rest time (sent home Fridays for laundering)
- Pull-ups or diapers if not yet potty trained, and extra underwear/pants if potty training

8.4 Items to Leave at Home

- Toys from home (except for designated show-and-tell days, announced in advance)
- Candy, gum, or outside food not pre-approved for dietary needs
- Jewelry, hair accessories with small parts, or items that pose a choking hazard
- Electronics (tablets, phones, smartwatches)

Little Oaks is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items. Please label everything.

9. Behavior & Discipline

9.1 Positive Guidance Philosophy

Little Oaks uses a positive guidance approach grounded in respect, redirection, and relationship-building. We believe all behavior is communication, and our goal is to teach children the social-emotional skills they need to navigate their world. We never use physical punishment, shaming, withholding food, or isolation as discipline.

9.2 Strategies

- Setting clear, age-appropriate expectations and consistent routines
- Acknowledging positive behaviors and effort
- Redirecting children to appropriate activities
- Using calm-down corners and breathing exercises to support emotional regulation
- Modeling problem-solving and conflict resolution

9.3 Persistent Behavioral Concerns

If a child's behavior presents a safety risk to themselves or others, the following steps are taken:

- Step 1: Observation and documentation by classroom teachers, shared with parents.
- Step 2: Parent-teacher conference to develop a collaborative behavior plan.
- Step 3: Involvement of the curriculum coordinator and/or outside specialists if needed.
- Step 4: If the behavior plan is unsuccessful and the child's or others' safety remains at risk, enrollment may be suspended or terminated. This is always a last resort.

We ask families to communicate any changes at home (new sibling, move, family stress) that may affect behavior so we can provide additional support.

10. Potty Training

We support potty training as a partnership between home and school. Teachers will begin classroom-based potty training when a child shows readiness signs (typically between 18 months and 3 years), such as:

- Staying dry for 2-hour stretches
- Showing interest in the toilet or awareness of wet/soiled diapers
- Ability to follow simple directions

During potty training, please send at least 5 extra sets of underwear and pants daily. Pull-ups are used during nap time only. We celebrate successes and handle accidents with patience—no child is ever shamed. Progress updates are shared daily via Brightwheel.

11. Tours & New Enrollment

11.1 Scheduling a Tour

We offer in-person tours Monday through Friday between 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM, and again from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Tours last approximately 30 minutes and are led by the center director or assistant director.

To schedule a tour:

- Visit www.littleoakslearning.com/tours and fill out the request form
- Call (512) 555-0192 and press 0 for the front desk
- Email tours@littleoakslearning.com

We recommend scheduling at least 3 business days in advance. Walk-ins are accommodated when possible but are not guaranteed.

11.2 Enrollment Steps

Once you've toured and decided Little Oaks is right for your family:

- Step 1: Complete the enrollment application online or at the front desk.
- Step 2: Submit the \$150 registration fee to reserve your spot.
- Step 3: Provide required documents: immunization records, completed health statement, emergency contacts, authorized pick-up list, and any custody agreements.
- Step 4: Schedule a meet-the-teacher visit during the week before your child's start date.
- Step 5: Download and activate your Brightwheel account.

For families receiving TWC subsidies, please bring your authorization letter at enrollment. Our billing coordinator can help with subsidy paperwork.

12. Special Events & Enrichment

12.1 Annual Events

- Back-to-School Night (August): Meet your child's teachers and see the classroom setup.
- Fall Festival (October): Costume parade, games, and family fun. No scary costumes please.
- Grandparents' & Special Friends Day (November): An open morning for children to host their special guests.
- Winter Celebration (December): Holiday sing-along and classroom parties.
- Spring Art Show (April): Display of children's artwork from throughout the year.
- End-of-Year Picnic (June): Family potluck at Maplewood Park to celebrate the year.
- Pre-K Graduation (Late May): Ceremony for children moving on to kindergarten.

12.2 Birthdays

We love celebrating birthdays! Families may bring a simple treat to share with the class (store-bought, with an ingredient label, and nut-free). Please coordinate with your child's teacher at least 2 days in advance. Non-food celebrations (a favorite book, stickers, or a special activity) are also welcome and encouraged.

12.3 Summer Program

Our summer program runs from June through August and features weekly themes focused on outdoor exploration, water play, arts and crafts, and field trips (Pre-K only). Summer enrollment is open to currently enrolled families first, with registration opening in March. Summer tuition rates are the same as the regular school year.

13. Quick-Reference Policy Summary

Topic	Key Details
Hours	Mon–Fri, 6:30 AM – 6:30 PM
Late pick-up fee	\$1/minute/child after 6:30 PM
Tuition due	1st of each month via Brightwheel autopay
Late payment fee	\$25 if not paid by the 5th
Withdrawal notice	30 calendar days written notice
Fever threshold	100.4°F — must be fever-free 24 hrs
Sick pick-up	Within 1 hour of notification
Drop-off window	6:30–9:00 AM (after 9 AM, sign in at desk)
Meals included	Breakfast, lunch, AM & PM snacks (CACFP)
Nut policy	Peanut/tree nut-aware; no nut products served
Tour availability	Mon–Fri, 9:30–11 AM & 3–4 PM
Tour scheduling	Web, phone, or email (3 days advance preferred)
Registration fee	\$150 (non-refundable)
Annual supply fee	\$200 per child, due August
Sibling discount	10% off lower tuition
Waitlist fee	\$50 (non-refundable)
Subsidy accepted	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
Communication	Brightwheel (primary), email, phone
Conferences	Twice yearly (October and March)

This handbook was last updated on July 15, 2025. Policies are subject to change with 30 days' written notice to families.

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