



Parent Handbook: Pine Valley

Established: 2022

Revised: 2024

Dear Family,

We are delighted you have chosen Little Love Bugs to fulfill your childcare needs. As a mother, I truly understand the worry when seeking a childcare program and the desire to ensure that my child is attending a safe, high-quality program filled with loving teachers and caregivers. As parents, we want to ensure that our child is safe and nurtured. This is absolutely the peace of mind you will receive when your son or daughter is enrolled in our program. At Little Love Bugs, your child will be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment of learning that enables children to grow through fun, intentional, and developmentally appropriate activities. I understand you, the parents, count on our center to have teachers who are loyal, educated, and caring, and I assure you that's just what we have. I am proud of the remarkable and dedicated teachers that work for our company.

Enrolling in a new center is a big change for your child — and for you. We recognize that adjustment periods will vary depending on the age of your child and prior experiences in a classroom setting. Our teachers are very experienced in welcoming new families and will work with you to make the process as seamless as possible. The following are some suggestions for easing the transition for you and your child:

- Visit the center with your child before his or her first day. Let your child explore his or her new classroom while you step out for an hour. This time will allow your child to associate your departure with a return.
- Bring a family photograph for your child to look at during the day.
- Say goodbye to your child rather than slipping out. Your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will be back.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our goal is to supplement your parenting and support you in your role as a working parent. We encourage you to become an active participant in our school activities and programs we offer. If you have any questions, concerns or problems, feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the center's director. We want the best for you and your child.

As we build our partnership together, please feel free to share new ideas and suggestions. We value the need for close communication between families and teachers. We look forward to getting to know you and to offering you and your child a safe, caring, and joyful educational environment.

Sincerely,

Heather Mohawk

Owner/President

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Mission Statement of Little Love Bugs

Our mission is to help children prepare for a lifelong love of learning by providing a safe and nurturing environment for children to explore and discover new possibilities while acquiring knowledge. It is our goal to help children thrive socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

Vision Statement of Little Love Bugs

Our vision is a community where all children feel loved, respected and encouraged to develop to their fullest potential. We will strive to provide our children and families with many opportunities to succeed each day. Many successes promotes both self-confidence and a higher self-esteem which are vital to the learning process. Little Love Bugs hopes to become the first and only choice for discerning, nurturing parents and teachers looking for an early childhood development and preschool home for themselves and their families.

Program Objectives

- To provide a warm, nurturing environment that encourages the development of the whole child
- To provide an environment that is based on successful experiences, which encourage all children to develop a healthy self-concept and positive self-esteem
- To offer an environment that encourages children to develop their capabilities and interests at their own pace and according to their individual needs
- To offer a program that recognizes the uniqueness of each and every child and provides positive encouragement for the child's continued growth
- To create an environment that provides the child with the opportunity to learn by doing
- To provide opportunities for a lifetime of creative living and learning

History

Little Love Bugs was established in November 2013. It started as a small in-home family daycare with just the Owner, Heather Mohawk, and 6 children. After a very short time it became apparent that the daycare needed to expand to a group family daycare which allowed Ms. Mohawk to care for 12 children with an assistant. The need for childcare in the village of Gowanda continued to grow which resulted in a very long list of children needing to be enrolled into a childcare setting. As a result, after a long couple of years of hard work, our location on Allen Street was opened in 2019. We have since then expanded to a second location inside the Pine Valley School District.

General Center Information

Administration. Owner: Heather Mohawk Hmohawk@littlelovebugs.net (716)241-7344
Director: Monica Kenney monicakenney@pval.org (716)988-3267 ext. 3416

Hours of Operation. Little Love Bugs is open Monday through Friday from 7am to 4:30pm. The center will follow the Pine Valley school district's schedule, with the exception of being open during summer breaks. A calendar will be provided when the district distributes them. The following holidays will be considered paid holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas

Any additional holidays will be designated by the center at the start of each calendar year.

If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will select either the following Monday or the preceding Friday as a substitute holiday.

Programs. There are 2 childcare programs offered at Little Love Bugs. They are:

- Continuity of Care for ages 6 weeks to 36 months
- Pre-K for ages 3 and 4 years

Typically, there are three times throughout the year that we transition the children from one age group to the next: the beginning of September, January and May. However, there may be times that it is necessary to transition a child on a different schedule to meet the needs of the child and the center.

Enrollment

Enrollment. At Little Love Bugs, enrollment is open to children from six weeks to three years old. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in Little Love Bugs by completing the Child Care Registration form and paying the \$25.00 Registration Fee. The Registration Fee is non-refundable. Once the fee and completed form are received a \$55 Enrollment Fee will be charged to proceed with the enrollment process. This Enrollment Fee will go towards your first week of tuition and is non-refundable.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, including the signed fee agreement and signed Parent Handbook receipt, registration fee and the last week's tuition payment. Immunization records and health assessment must also be received before the child's start date in order to continue care.

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. Little Love Bugs reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at Little Love Bugs is contingent upon the parents and the child's adherence to the policies and procedures of Little Love Bugs as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify Little Love Bugs immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any deposit.

Schedule Changes. In order to provide sufficient supervision and to appropriately schedule staff, families must carefully adhere to the schedule they choose for their child. We ask that schedule changes be made in writing to center management at least one month in advance. If you have an emergency and need to alter your child's schedule, please do not hesitate to contact the center.

Withdraw. Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Little Love Bugs, must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are approved based on the needs of the center. The Center Director will notify the parents in

writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available or may choose to withdraw their child from the program. The date the request for the Center Director receives the schedule change will be used to toll the two weeks' notice required for withdraw.

Dismissal. Little Love Bugs reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred to the agency's legal counsel for collection.

The Center Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave agency property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. Little Love Bugs will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to agency property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by Little Love Bugs.

Confidentiality

Within Little Love Bugs, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Little Love Bugs who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Little Love Bugs strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health related information of anyone associated with Little Love Bugs.

Outside of Little Love Bugs, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Little Love Bugs, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of Little Love Bugs are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Parent Code of Conduct

Little Love Bugs requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Little Love Bugs is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Little Love Bugs, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding disenrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

Swearing/Cursing. No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Threatening of Employees, Children Other Parents or Adults Associated with Little Love Bugs. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, Little Love Bugs cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children at Little Love Bugs. While Little Love Bugs does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights

and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

Smoking. For the health of all Little Love Bugs employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on agency property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Little Love Bugs. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

Violations of the Safety Policy. Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of Little Love Bugs. Please be particularly mindful of Little Love Bugs entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, Other Parents or Associates of Little Love Bugs. While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Little Love Bugs or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Violations of the Confidentiality Policy. Little Love Bugs takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with Little Love Bugs. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Little Love Bugs, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Little Love Bugs must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with Little Love Bugs, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Little Love Bugs cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Little Love Bugs suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Little Love Bugs' staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Little Love Bugs will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon agency property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, Little Love Bugs cannot have a child at the agency when the child's parent is prohibited access. Little Love Bugs will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Little Love Bugs are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of Little Love Bugs are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Little Love Bugs take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of Little Love Bugs cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Tuition

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in Little Love Bugs. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

All payments must be made electronically through Brightwheel.

As of June 1st 2022 tuition rates are as follows:

Infant – \$64/Day or \$295/Week

Toddler - \$59/Day or \$275/Week

Pre-K - \$55/Day or \$253/Week

Before and After UPK - \$24/Day

Payment Schedule. All payments are due the Wednesday before the following week of care. A charge of \$5.00 per day will be added to your account if not received by closing on Wednesday (6:00pm).

There is no credit given for scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations or inclement weather.

If the daycare needs to close down for any period of time due to COVID-19, tuition will be reduced to 50% of the normal weekly tuition.

Late Payments. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. If tuition payments are behind more than a week, your child will not be permitted to attend daycare until all payments have been settled. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Little Love Bugs; however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

Subsidized Care. Little Love Bugs DOES accept childcare subsidies. Parents must pay their co pay by Wednesday, the week prior to care, or we will have to report non-payments to our county office. Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Little Love Bugs. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies. If at any time a subsidized check is not received on time, the parent is responsible for making the full tuition payment until payments have been received. A letter of acceptance must be presented at the time of enrollment, or the parents will be responsible for payment until one is provided.

Multiple Child Discount. Families with two or more children enrolled three or more days at Little Love Bugs are eligible for a 10% discount to be applied to the oldest child's weekly tuition

fee. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late as per the late tuition policy stated above.

Vacation Days. Each family will be given one week of vacation, tuition free, to use throughout the year based off the number of days the child is enrolled each week. So, for example, if your child is enrolled five days a week your child will have five vacation days to use throughout the year; if your child is enrolled for three days a week, your child will have three vacation days to use throughout the year and so on. The vacation days do not need to be used consecutively. In order to use a vacation day, a two-week notice is required. Vacation days will not be able to be used towards days that your child is absent due to being sick. Vacation days may be used for days that the center is closed for a holiday that is during the week, but a two-week notice is required. If you choose to take a vacation that is longer than the number of days that you are allowed tuition free, the payment for the following week must be paid in advance to cover the time that you will be gone. Vacation days will be replenished each year on September 1st.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Drop off and pick up between the hours of 7:30am and 4:00pm will be done at the front entrance of the Administrative Office building. Someone from the office will be there to assist you. You will need to sign in and have your driver's license readily available. Drop off and pick up between 7:00am-7:25am and 4:00pm-4:30pm will be done directly outside the classroom doors at the back entrance of the Administrative Office building.

Arrival. Upon arrival at Little Love Bugs, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the Brightwheel app. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom/teacher. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the childcare facility. Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

Little Love Bugs discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. Little Love Bugs believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of Little Love Bugs are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or Center Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Center Director. Parents may also use the Brightwheel app to discuss these instructions if they are not able to physically meet with the teacher and/or director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the childcare providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Notification of Absence. Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information

will be shared. Little Love Bugs will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are required to notify the center by 9:00 am to maintain the appropriate staff to child ratios upon your child's arrival at school.

Agency's Right to Refuse Admission. Little Love Bugs reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. Little Love Bugs strives to maintain an ample list of substitutes in anticipation of staff absences, however, there are times when substitutes are not available, and classrooms need to be closed to maintain compliance with licensing regulations. Refusal will be based on a "first come first served" basis when seeking to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios and/or when closing classrooms.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to: 1. Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations. 2. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations. 3. Staff deems the child too ill to attend. 4. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at Little Love Bugs if the child were to be present at the center. 5. Parents' failure to maintain accurate, up to date records. 6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents WILL NOT be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

Departure. Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care on the Brightwheel app. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground.

Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents or persons designated to act in the place of a parent are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adults at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Late Pick Up. Children *must* be picked up at their scheduled time. *Late pick-ups should be considered an unusual occurrence.* We do, however, understand that special circumstances arise. If, in the case of an *emergency*, you cannot pick up your child on time or send one of your emergency contacts, please notify the center immediately. In the absence of contact from a parent/guardian, we will call all the numbers listed on the Child Release form; please make sure these numbers are up to date. Children left in our care after hours will be supervised for as long as possible. The local police station will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after two hours. A late fee will be charged if a child is picked up after their scheduled pick-up time. All measurements of time are to be according to the Little Love Bugs clock located in the pick-up classroom. Late fees are a \$1.00 a minute after your child's scheduled pick-up time.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up. The staff of Little Love Bugs will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of Little Love Bugs to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, Little Love Bugs staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff of Little Love Bugs to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of Little Love Bugs will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up Forms. At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Little Love Bugs. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form have the rights to act in place of the parents. This status affords the pick-up person the right to discuss confidential information about the child's day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports, and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the Emergency/Alternate Pick Up Form are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child's day with them. The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide Government issued photo ID prior to the agency releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

Little Love Bugs reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Emergency/Alternate Contact Form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Emergency/Alternate Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

Court Ordered Agreements. In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex... Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Little Love Bugs must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed,

In the absence of a court order on file with Little Love Bugs administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Little Love Bugs cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Little Love Bugs suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Little Love Bugs is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of Little Love Bugs cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. Little Love Bugs will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Emergency Closings

Emergency. Little Love Bugs will always make every attempt to be open for business. In the event of an emergency the Owner will make the final determination in closing the center. Emergency closings may be deemed necessary for lack of heat, water, electricity or severe weather. In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified by phone via the Brightwheel app.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call, the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the childcare center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Inclement Weather. In the event that hazardous weather conditions exist, please check the local news stations for school closings. The center will be closed when the Pine Valley School District is closed. The Director will also make every effort possible to contact the parents ahead of time.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than 10 school days. If the closure extends beyond 10 school days, parents will have their tuition reduced.

Curriculum Information

Daily Schedule of Activities. The Lead Teacher in your child's classroom will provide you with a daily activity schedule. These schedules are meant to give you an idea of your child's day. Actual times and activities may vary depending on time of the year, weather, age and temperament of the children. Age-appropriate activities are scheduled with the flexibility allowed to respond to the needs of each individual child and their various ages.

Nap/Rest Time. We provide at least one hour of rest time for our children each day. We provide a quiet, soothing atmosphere that is conducive to resting through the use of calming activities, quiet music and by sitting with the children to rub their backs or help settle them down. Per licensing regulations, children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes of rest are given the opportunity to do quiet activities on their mats. After 60 minutes, children may engage in quiet activities at a table.

Meals. At Little Love Bugs your child will be served Breakfast, Lunch and an afternoon snack. If your child arrives later than the scheduled **start time** for meals, please make sure that your child has been fed prior to drop-off.

If your child has a known food allergy, you must make note of that on the enrollment form. You must also inform your child's teacher of that as well to make sure that he/she can make special arrangements at mealtime or for special celebrations.

Infant classrooms:

- **Infants.** Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a weekly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily log on Brightwheel for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much.
- Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher.
- Our center follows the CACFP guidelines which states that it is best practice to wait until 6 months to provide infants with solid food.
- We will not introduce new food to infants. New foods and cereal must be given at home before they can be given to your child at daycare.

Educational/Personal Care Supplies Needed.

- At least one complete extra change of clothing
- Appropriate outerwear for outdoor play (snow gear for winter; hats, gloves, snow pants and boots) and water wear for summer.
- Please supply your child with sneakers for outdoor play if they choose to wear sandals in the summer.
- A sheet and blanket for nap time. We recommend a small fitted sheet to cover the cot and a **small** blanket (and pillow) to cover your child.

Please label all items with your child's name.

Toys from home can be very difficult to share and can lead to conflicts between children. We request that children only bring a comfort toy they may use for nap.

The center provides a number of age appropriate and stimulating toys and activities for your child.

Parents are responsible for providing diapers, wipes and diaper cream (if needed). In addition, parents of infants are responsible for bringing:

- Formula / Breast Milk
- Bottles for feeding

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations. Children celebrating birthdays are invited to share a treat with their class. If sending in treats, please check with the classroom teacher for a list of allergies or diet restrictions. Other parties are held during the year to celebrate various occasions (Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, etc.) Parents and students may be asked to help organize these events.

Little Love Bugs is concerned with the development of positive self-image for all students. Therefore, if one of our students is having a non-school party where all of the students (or all the students of the same gender) are not invited, invitations should not be sent to school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences/Communication. Periodic parent/teacher conferences are scheduled to discuss your child's development and progress and include child observations. A conference may be requested at any time by the parent(s) if there are questions concerning a child's progress or a specific problem.

Dress Code

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be ***messy***, and/or athletic in nature. So, please do not send your child in any clothing that you do not want to get dirty. Additionally, ***children are engaged in outdoor play daily***, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing.

Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. Please make sure that your child has an extra pair of dry shoes at school to change into when arriving at daycare.

Children are discouraged from wearing open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children are required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. If your child is potty training your child is required to have multiple seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes, shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change. All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Little Love Bugs is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Jewelry. Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, Little Love Bugs will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents' responsibility to enforce this policy with their children.

Little Love Bugs is not responsible for damage to or loss of any articles of clothing.

Behavior Policy

At Little Love Bugs, we believe that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Transition activities help the children move smoothly from one activity to another. Our teachers use only positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, clear, understandable limits fosters the child's ability to become self-disciplined, which is our ultimate goal. We encourage staff to try to ignore negative behavior as much as possible (since much of it is an effort for attention) and reinforce appropriate behavior. Hopefully this will draw the child into the group and thus avoid the need for frequent discipline. When these methods do not work, your child will be spoken to and removed from the situation as a first step. Children are born with enormous creativity! We feel that too much discipline (correcting a child for every little thing) destroys their spirit. By teaching the child that each choice they make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. A negative choice will result in a negative consequence. Little Love Bugs prohibits corporal punishment of any kind, cruel, or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse. No child will be denied food as a form of punishment nor punished for soiling or wetting their clothing. If a behavior problem presents itself, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation. However, dismissal of a child for behavior problems will be at the sole discretion of Little Love Bugs staff.

The following acceptable child guidance techniques will be used:

Redirection. In a conflict, the teachers will give an alternate toy or activity to one of the children competing for the toy.

“Do” Rather Than “Don’t”. Teachers will use “Do” statements rather than “Don’t” statements. For example, “We walk inside” instead of “Stop running inside”.

Offer Choices. The children will be given acceptable options to choose from so that they feel more in control of themselves. For example, “You can either sit on the rug or at the table for story time”.

Use Your Words. The children will be encouraged to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, the teachers will suggest using the phrase “I was playing with that toy” rather than taking the toy out of the other child's hands.

Praise Positive Behavior. When a child is doing something positive the teacher will comment on it so that the child knows that they are making positive choices. For example, “Thank you for using your words”.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items or do maintenance work.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

Any volunteer that enters the building must first sign in on the sign in sheet at the main office before entering the daycare. The volunteer must include their name, reason for visit and the date and times in which they visited the center.

Babysitting by Center Staff

In an effort to maintain the professional status of Little Love Bugs staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by center staff is strongly discouraged by Little Love Bugs. However, if a center staff member elects to babysit for a family, all such activities must occur outside center premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services is solely between the staff member and the child's family and that Little Love Bugs is in no way responsible for the child's care in connection with these activities. The arrangements are not sanctioned by the center. Babysitting should not interfere with the staff member's center schedule. If a babysitting arrangement should be made between a staff member and a family, the family is required to complete a Babysitting Release form, which can be supplied by center management.

Health and Safety

Pre-Enrollment Requirements. Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at Little Love Bugs. This is per our licensing regulations.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend Little Love Bugs. The Physical Examination Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend Little Love Bugs, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the Center Director BEFORE the first day of enrollment.

Severe Allergies. For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy. This form can be obtained by request from the center director.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases Little Love Bugs from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, provided Little Love Bugs exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

Communicable Diseases. Little Love Bugs requires that any children with a fever of 100.4° or greater; colored discharge from their nose, eyes, or mouth; chest congestion that impedes the natural flow of air; and/or drowsiness/fatigue that interrupts the ability to perform skills, remain at home until they are symptom free or on antibiotics for **24 hours**. In addition, vomiting and diarrhea warrant removal from school until symptoms have ceased for **24 hours** and a meal is retained without inducing symptoms. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. An email reminder will be sent home specifying what is needed for the child to return to school.

Children must be kept home if he/she has a communicable disease, has had a fever, or has vomited within the previous 24 hours. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is ill (i.e., fever, lethargy or a cough which is making the child uncomfortable).

Please be considerate of the health of other students, families, and staff, and understand that we cannot accept sick children.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Little Love Bugs will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school. Some examples of common communicable diseases in childcare are: Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, Influenza, Lice, Strep Throat, and Pertussis (Whooping Cough).

Children with a communicable disease must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Little Love Bugs reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

COVID-19. Before entering a childcare program, employees, volunteers, parents, children and essential visitors must complete a health screening questionnaire daily. Employees, volunteers, parents, children and essential visitors must answer all question and take their temperature daily to confirm a body temperature lower than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit. If anyone answers "Yes" to any of the question below, they cannot enter the childcare program. A parent or guardian is responsible for completing daily screening on behalf of their child(ren).

Below are the self-screening questions that employees, volunteers, parents, children and essential visitors are required to answer daily. If any of the answers to the below questions are "Yes", individuals cannot enter the program. If the answers are "No" to all the following questions, individuals may enter the program. If employees, volunteers, parents, children and essential visitors cannot take their temperature at home, but answer "No" to all other questions, they may report to the program to have their temperature taken on site.

1. Is your temperature higher than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit?
2. Have you had any known contact with a person confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
3. Are you currently experiencing ANY of the following symptoms?
 - a. Cough (new or worsening)
 - b. Shortness of breath (new or worsening)
 - c. Trouble breathing (new or worsening)
 - d. Fever
 - e. Chills
 - f. Muscle pain (new or worsening)
 - g. Headache (new or worsening)
 - h. Sore throat (new or worsening)
 - i. New loss of taste
 - j. New loss of smell
4. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test in the past 14 days?

If you answered “NO” to all questions, you have passed and may enter the program
If you have answered “YES” to any question, you will not be allowed to enter the program.

If your child has a fever of 100.0 degrees or higher, he/she may not return to the center until he/she has been fever free for 72 hours without a fever reducer.

Biting. Little Love Bugs recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Little Love Bugs cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

Medication. Little Love Bugs will not dispense any form of medication. If your child is prescribed antibiotics or any other medication that must be taken throughout the course of the day it is recommended that the medication be given to the child before arriving at the center or

after the child has been picked up. If he/she must be given medication while at the center, a parent or approved adult must bring the medication to the child's classroom, administer the medication and sign off on the Medication Form. This form will include the date, time, name of medication, how much was given and who administered the medication. Medication Forms can be obtained from your center director. Medication Forms and doctor's notes are to be turned into the center director.

Staff will contact a parent or person listed on the emergency contact form, if a parent cannot be reached, to inform them of their need to administer the medication. Staff will also inform the parent or emergency contact person if it is necessary for the child to be picked up due to illness. Refer to the policy listed above regarding picking up ill children.

Fire/Emergency Drills. Little Love Bugs conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the center is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

Alternate/Safe Location. Should the administration of Little Love Bugs or any emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the childcare agency to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to the high school. A sign will be posted on the door stating that we have relocated to our alternate emergency location. Once the children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact

persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Incident/Accident Reports. Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident report on the Brightwheel App.

The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Firearms and Weapons. At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Field Trip Policy

Little Love Bugs frequently supplements the in-class curriculum with off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your child's teacher at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the class. An additional tuition fee, as well as the cost of the trip and signed permission slip will be due prior to the date of the trip.

In order for Little Love Bugs to plan field trips, parent/volunteer participation is vital. We do not have our own transportation for the children, so we rely on parents and/or family members and volunteers to help transport the children to and from the designated locations. Each vehicle must be up to date on its registration and insurance and each driver must have a valid driver's license and a clean background check.

Brightwheel

Little Love Bugs will be utilizing the Brightwheel app in each of its classrooms. This is a tool for classroom management, communication, photos, videos, online bill pay, and much more! This app has proven to save time for staff, allowing for measurably more time to focus on the children. Soon after your child is enrolled, you will receive a welcome email from Brightwheel explaining the instructions on how to sign up. Once you have created your account and confirmed your child's profile you will then have access to all that Brightwheel has to offer! You will be able to log in any time of the day and see, in real time, what your child has been doing while at daycare. You will be able to see when and what he/she ate, how long he/she napped for, the last time he/she was changed and more. This will also be the central location for communication between parents and staff.

Our primary focus is providing the best care possible for your child while here at Little Love Bugs. With that in mind, there may be times that the Brightwheel app is not updated with each activity (i.e. diaper changes, meals etc.). This is due to the demands of the children's needs and will be updated as soon as the teacher has a free minute to do so.

Resources

Child Abuse Prevention: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cwcs/aces.php>

Social Services: Cattaraugus County [Social Services | Cattaraugus County Website \(cattco.org\)](#)

Erie County [Home | Social Services \(erie.gov\)](#)

Chautauqua County [Human/Social Services | Chautauqua County, NY \(chqgov.com\)](#)

Love Inc. [What We Do — Gowanda \(gowandaloveinc.org\)](#)

Tri County Pregnancy Crisis Center: **Address:** 17 South Water Street P.O.Box 367, Gowanda, NY

Phone: (716) 532-9738

Gowanda Food Pantry: **Address:** 64 E Main St, Gowanda, NY 14070

Phone: (716) 532-6130

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I, the parent/guardian of _____, have read and reviewed Little Love Bugs Parent Handbook. Since the information contained in the handbook is subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions may occur throughout the school year. All such revisions will be communicated through parent group emails and memos sent home with my child. I concede that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies and programs. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with Little Love Bugs policies contained in the Parent Handbook.

Parent, Legal Guardian (print)

Parent, Legal Guardian (sign) Date