



Welcome to Little Acorns

We are thrilled to welcome you and your child to the Journey School Kindergarten Aftercare community, Little Acorns. Our program is designed to ensure a seamless transition from the regular school day into aftercare, providing a safe and nurturing environment that meets the developmental needs of each child.

General Information & Schedule

- **Dismissal and Lunch:** Kindergarten children will be picked up from their classrooms at dismissal and walked together to the lunch tables in the kindy yard. We highly encourage a healthy lunch to be brought from home, which should include a water bottle, a cloth napkin, and utensils, if needed. Alternatively, hot school lunches are available at no cost through the school's lunch program. Please inform your child's teacher at the beginning of the week or provide a 24 hour advance notice if they will need a hot lunch. If you would like your child's packed lunch to be stored in the Kindergarten classroom, please inform your child's teacher in the morning before school.
- **Pick-Up Times:** Pick-up is in the Kindergarten Yard (unless otherwise specified) before either 3:30 PM or 5:00 PM, depending on your schedule. Please make eye contact with a staff member, verbally confirm pick-up, and sign-out using our Brightwheel App or the Brightwheel device that will be located in the Kindy Yard. If an older sibling (3rd grade and above) is picking up, they must sign your child out as well. Inform your older child's teacher/staff member if they will be responsible for pick-up.
- **Early Pick-up:** If you are picking your child up earlier than the regular school day ends (3:05 PM on TWThF or 1:05 PM on W), please come to the front office and we will have a staff member escort your child to you.

Lunch Guidelines

Promoting independence is a core value of the Waldorf Kindergarten and lunch is an extension of this. Little Acorns fosters the practice of self-sufficiency by encouraging the children to feed and serve themselves to their best ability. You can support this by following these guidelines:

- **Lunch Content:** Each child should bring a wholesome, healthy lunch to school in the morning that aligns with Journey School's food policies. Items that conflict with the school's philosophies, such as cookies, chocolate, candy, fruit gummies, jello, pudding, chocolate milk, or juices are **not permitted**. Please focus on whole foods that are minimally processed and preservative-free.

- **Portions and Preparation:** Ensure that your child's lunch is nutritious and filling, as they will be hungry after their busy morning. Consider the following tips:
 - Slice hard fruits or pre-peel oranges to make them easier for your child to eat.
 - Practice opening containers at home to ensure your child can manage independently.
 - Provide water only in a reusable bottle. If possible, please also send a water bottle holder with a strap, to make holding the bottle easier for your child.
- **Waste Reduction:** Journey School promotes a no-waste/low-packaging lunch policy. We strive to return plastic baggies and containers home in the lunch bag for reuse and so you can see what your child has eaten.
- **No Backpack/No Toy Policy:** Due to storage space in the kindy yard and classrooms, backpacks are not permitted for kindergarten students. Please send your child's lunch in a lunchbox that can be easily stored. This will also help eliminate toys and stuffies that may make their way to school via a child's backpack. Toys and other personal items are not allowed and must be kept at home during the kindergarten and aftercare day.

Lunch Ideas & Suggestions

At Journey School, we value wholesome, nutritious meals that support the growth and development of our children. Here are some guidelines and lunch ideas to help you prepare balanced meals for your child.

General Guidelines:

1. **Balanced Meals:** Aim for lunches that include:
 - **Fruits and Vegetables:** At least one or two servings.
 - **Protein:** A source such as meat, tofu, beans, or cheese.
 - **Carbohydrates:** Whole grains, bread, rice, or a similar item.
 - **Treats:** Consider natural options such as fruit, applesauce, or fruit leather.
2. **Focus on Whole Foods:** Whole, real foods are more filling and nutritious than processed foods. Choose items that are as close to their natural state as possible, free from artificial flavors, colors, and preservatives.
3. **Portion Adjustments:** Lunch portions may need adjustment as children grow and their appetites change throughout the year.
4. **Meal Prep Tips:**
 - **Prepping in Advance:** Cut up fruits, veggies, and portion out snacks like pretzels or crackers at the beginning of the week.
 - **Night Before Prep:** Pack lunches the night before, perhaps during or after dinner preparation, to save time in the morning.
 - **Simple Rotations:** Create a two-week rotating lunch plan to keep things simple yet varied.
5. **Healthy Choices Over Convenience:** When buying prepared foods, choose healthy options over easy, processed ones. Remember, children are less likely to get bored with simple, consistent meals than adults might be.

6. **Fun Presentation:** Children enjoy food that is visually appealing. Consider cutting fruit or sandwiches into shapes. Toothpicks are a fun way to eat the smaller items.

Sample Lunch Ideas:

1. **Pasta & Sliced Peach:**

- Pasta with chunks of chicken or tofu
- Sliced peach
- Sliced veggies with hummus or ranch
- Yogurt in container (with spoon)

2. **Tuna Salad & Berries:**

- Tuna salad (with diced carrots and celery), bean salad, or guacamole
- Mixed berries and melon
- Crackers
- Cheese stick or cottage cheese
- Dried fruit leather

3. **Soup & Muffin:**

- Thermos of soup (pack a spoon)
- Crackers
- Veggies or fruit
- Healthy muffin

4. **Chop-Chop Salad:**

- Chopped mixed veggies, chickpeas, and egg or tofu
- Optional grain like quinoa, rice, bulgur, or lentils
- Applesauce

Understanding Food Choices:

- **Processed Foods:** These are often highly manufactured, containing artificial ingredients, flavors, and colors. While convenient, they offer little nutritional value and should be minimized in your child's diet.
- **Whole Foods:** Grown naturally, these foods are unprocessed, full of flavor, vibrant in color, and rich in essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They are the ideal choice for your child's lunch.

By following these guidelines and ideas, you can help ensure that your child's lunch is nutritious, filling, and enjoyable.

Little Acorns Daily Rhythm

For most days, aftercare will start with lunch time, followed by a brief out-breath in the yard before transitioning to an in-breath experience that will take place in another location. This is when the elected Rest/Nap Time will occur inside of a Kindergarten classroom that will include a story, simple game, and quiet time. For those not participating in Rest/Nap Time, students may be brought to a different part of the school, including the front or back fields of the school, the Wildflower Outdoor Classroom, or Foxborough Park, which is off-campus and adjacent to the

school entrance. During this time outside of the Kindy Yard, students will experience an in-breath to help lower the child's heart rate and allow them to enjoy a circle time that may include a story and a simple game. After this time of in-breath, children will transition back to the Kindy Yard for outdoor play or arts & crafts. Snacks will be provided for Extended Day students, which may include fresh fruit, vegetables, allergy-friendly granola bars, rice crackers, hummus, string cheese, popcorn, or another healthy snack. Please note that on minimum days (Wednesdays and conference days), the Little Acorns rhythm will start with outdoor play, games and/or crafts prior to lunch at 12:45 PM.

Sample Rhythm

1:00 PM - Kindergarten Classrooms - Welcome & Gather
1:10 PM - Kindy Lunch Tables
1:30 PM - Kindy Yard - Outdoor Play
2:00-2:30 PM - In-Breath (Indoor classroom for Rest Time or another location for those not participating in Indoor Rest Time.
3:15-3:30 PM - First Dismissal - Kindy Yard & the Pick-up line
3:10 PM - Extended Care - Outdoor Play/Games/Craft/Art Time
3:45 PM - Snack
4:00 PM - Outdoor Play/Games/Craft/Art Time
4:45 PM - 5:00 PM Clean-up/Goodbyes/Pick-up from Kindy Yard or specified location

Inside Rest/Nap Time

Little Acorns recognizes that the “in-breath” is an important part of the rhythm of a young child's day. Rest time helps regulate children's bodies, improves immune systems, develops better memory and cognitive functions, and assists in emotional regulation. To this end, Little Acorns will offer an “**opt-in**” 25-minute indoor time that will include storytime, rest time, and quiet games for the students. Although we understand that most of the children will not fall asleep during this quiet time, those who rest quietly for even a few minutes will also benefit.

IMPORTANT: If you elect to have your child participate for indoor **Rest Time**, we request that you purchase bedding that can be found on Amazon here: [nap mat with pillow](#). Due to storage space, the nap mat may not be larger than this example. We also ask for the bedding to have a basic, non-distracting design, adhering to the school media policy. The nap mat will be kept at Little Acorns during the week and sent home when needed for cleaning.

Behavior Policy

Little Acorns staff are Journey School employees who are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for every child who is enrolled in the Little Acorns program.

In adherence to several of the policies that are introduced in Journey School's Student Behavior Policy, our intention is to discourage misbehavior, guide children towards positive choice-making, and develop positive contributors within our school community. The Journey School approach emphasizes *compassion, consistency, and responsibility*.

To that end, Little Acorns students are expected to adhere the following behavior guidelines:

Behavior Expectations

- 1. Students will support a good learning environment.** Children are expected to do their best and cooperate with teachers and classmates. This includes, but is not limited to, quietly focusing their attention on the teacher when asked to do so, interacting with other children in age-appropriate ways, and following directions when asked to do so, such as lining up promptly and quietly when requested to do so. Student defiance and disruption to the aftercare environment will not be permitted, and such behavior shall be subject to removal from the program.
- 2. Students will treat all adults and children with respect.** Respectful, courteous language is expected towards teachers, children and parents. Inappropriate behavior such as rudeness, teasing, mimicking, unkind or inappropriate words, swearing and lying are not permitted. Students are expected to comply whenever an adult or peer asks for the inappropriate behavior to stop.
- 3. Students will treat all personal and school property with respect.** Lost, stolen, defaced or destroyed property will be repaired or replaced by the parents of those responsible in accordance with applicable law.
- 4. Students will follow all indoor and outdoor playground rules.** Little Acorns teachers will help the kindergarten students understand and integrate the schoolwide behavior policy into their activities.
- 5. Students will contribute to supporting a safe, positive, productive and nurturing educational environment.** Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or against any student, staff, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse. *A full copy of the Journey School Bullying and Harassment Policy can be found on the school website and on page 25 of the School Handbook.*
- 6. An expectation for “Gentle Hands” is in place.** Rough housing, fighting, shoving, spitting, pushing, hitting, kicking, or biting is cause for immediate intervention.
- 7. An expectation that “All Are Welcome” is in place.** Conversations, activities and games that exclude peers from participating are not permitted.

Consequences for Misbehavior

Classroom management techniques, positive behavior intervention strategies (PBIS) and disciplinary interventions will be employed by Little Acorns staff as a primary measure to correct behavior. Disciplinary interventions may include but are not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, mandating a short break, etc. Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students.

In the event that primary efforts are not sufficient in our attempts to correct disruptive/disrespectful behavior OR a pattern of misbehavior emerges OR the severity of an incident/infraction is significant, one or more of the following actions will be taken as determined appropriate by the Little Acorns team and Journey School administrators.

- 1. Incident Report:** A document describing the specifics of an incident or infraction will be written by the Little Acorns lead teacher or by the staff person who was directly involved. This report will be kept on file with Little Acorns *and* a copy will be sent home to the student's parents for review. A Little Acorns administrator will notify the student's parents of the incident or infraction and share next steps and/or consequences for the incident, if any.
- 2. Parent Conference:** Little Acorns administrator may convene a meeting with the parents to detail behavior and discuss best strategies to help improve student misconduct. A temporary leave from Little Acorns may be assigned to a student in response to an isolated incident/infraction or a pattern of misconduct.
- 3. Removal from Little Acorns Enrollment:** A significant incident or pattern of misbehavior may result in an administrative decision to remove the student from Little Acorns enrollment.

Fees and Payment Options

Journey School encourages parents to pay for Little Acorns through Brightwheel's secure billing website. All payments are due in advance of your child attending. Little Acorns will also accept a check or cash, paid in advance, to be dropped off in the Enrollment Office.

Little Acorns Registration

Registration for Little Acorns will be available on the Brightwheel Child Care App that can be downloaded to your computer and phone. To begin your child's enrollment in Little Acorns, please complete the Brightwheel [interest form](#) and look for the registration packet information in the coming days.

RATES: Daily rates (drop-in) are available for families who wish to enroll their student just one day a week or who will need aftercare on a limited basis. In order for Little Acorns to have ample staff on hand, we require that parents indicate, in advance, which days of the week their child will be attending,

Regular Day 1:00 pm - 3:15 PM** (Due to heavy after school traffic, we allow a grace period, however, a late fee will be applied after 3:30 PM)

- **5 Day:** \$400/month (All 5 days)
- **4 Day:** \$340/month (Any 4 days - Scheduled in advance)
- **2-3 Day:** \$280/month (Any 2 or 3 days - Scheduled in advance)
- **Daily Rate:** Until 3:15 PM: \$35 per day (Paid in advance with 24 hour notice)

Extended Day 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM** (A late fee will be applied after 5:00 PM)

- **5 Day:** \$600/month
- **4 Day:** \$540/month (Any 4 days - Scheduled in advance)
- **2-3 Day:** \$480/month (Any 2 or 3 days - Scheduled in advance)
- **Daily Rate:** Until 5:00 pm: \$50 per day (Paid in advance with 24 hour notice)

Sibling Discount

- Kindergartners who have kindergarten siblings also attending Little Acorns will be offered a 50% discount for the additional sibling(s).

Late Fees

- Parents are required to pick their child up at the scheduled time. Although we understand that sometimes circumstances arise that may cause a parent to be late, habitual tardiness may lead to removal from the program. Families who are late in picking up their child are subject to an extra fee of \$1 per minute late.

Early Pick-up

- If you plan to pick up your child earlier than their scheduled pick up time, please notify Little Acorns *in advance* using the Brightwheel App. When you arrive to pick up your child, please come to the school office and a Little Acorns staff member will escort your child to the office to meet you. If the office is closed, please go directly to the Kindy Yard.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **School Holidays:** Little Acorns does not operate on school holidays or "student free" days. Please refer to the Journey School Calendar on ParentSquare for specific dates.
- **ELO-P Funding:** Expanded Learning Opportunities Program funding is available for students who qualify. If you would like to apply for the aftercare funding, please submit the [ELO-P application form](#).

All of us at Little Acorns look forward to providing your child with a loving and enriching after school experience. For questions or additional information, please email us at littleacorns@journeyschool.net