

Little Friends Frequently Asked Questions

What is your contract year and what does that mean?

Our 12-month contract year is July 1-June 30. Children start in new classrooms on July 1. Little Friends closes minimally throughout the contract year.

Contracts are offered to current families at the beginning of December and to new families in January.

How do you determine what room a child will be in for the year?

Our classrooms are referred to by animal names (Butterflies, Koalas, Birds, Frogs, Pandas and Owls). We do this in order to be able to maximize the interest of potential families (i.e. we are not looking to fill X number of two-year old spots – if we have 20 two-year olds one year, we can accommodate all of them). We offer contracts in December/January to anyone who is interested and, once the contracts come back, children are placed into age appropriate classrooms, based on their birthdays. Because life can change from December-June, and contracts can be terminated if we are able to find a replacement for that child, we do not share classroom assignments until on or around June 1. We do not move children from class to class mid-year.

How large are your class sizes?

Our class sizes are purposefully small. This is to allow a teacher to have meaningful one-on-one interactions with the children. Each classroom has two full-time teachers. We have a multi-classroom teacher who floats between all the classrooms and is our main substitute in a room when a teacher has to be absent. The Butterflies, Koalas, Birds and Frogs have 6 children in each classroom. The Pandas and Owls have 10 children in each classroom.

What is Quaker education?

Quakerism is a historically Christian religion. Quakers believe “there is that of God in everyone”. Quaker Education is based around the Quaker testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship, called SPICES. In addition to speaking about the SPICES with the children, we, as adults, model the behaviors we expect from them as well, from the moment they enter the program, whether they are 6 weeks old or 3 years old.

How do you use the greater Friends School campus?

Little Friends children go to the big campus for many things. We offer physical education to our oldest friends (usually 2 and up), all friends go to the Lower School library where the librarian sings and reads to us, enjoy music with the Lower School music teacher, and we utilize the wrestling room and gymnasiums on rainy days. We also take advantage of the expansive field space and take every opportunity to get involved in experiences with children from PK through 12th grade.

What is your curriculum?

Curriculum is “what happens” each day. There are three components to our curriculum. The first is the core of our program - Quaker values. We utilize the SPICES (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship) in the Little Friends program. For our youngest friends, this is seen in the way the teachers interact with each other and the children. As children get older, they become a part of the process, practicing a moment of silence during Morning Meeting, and responding to a query as presented by the teachers (i.e. “How could I be a good friend today?”). The second part of our curriculum is that we are theme based. Each month has a different theme. Each classroom has an experience sheet posted on the door so parents know what the children will be doing throughout the month. The final component of the curriculum is emergent learning. This is child-led learning. We have the flexibility to go in whatever direction the children wish for us to go, in terms of what they are “learning”. Children learn through play. Our goal at

Little Friends is that children consider learning to be fun. We want them to WANT to come to school. We focus on self-regulation (identifying and addressing emotions) and self-help (independence). If these two pieces are in place, the “readin’, ‘ritin’ and ‘rithmetic” will then fall into place. You will not find rote memorization, flashcards or worksheets in this program. Letters and numbers are learned organically throughout play. Colors are learned through our monthly color celebration and end of month parties.

Classrooms with children in cribs, base their classroom practices on the teachings of Magda Gerber and Resources for Infant Educators, better known as RIE®. Much of our focus in the infant rooms come from the resource, Caring for Infants with Respect written by Magda Gerber. Everything we do with the infants begins with respect. We tell infants what we are going to do with them before doing it. We do not put them in positions they can’t get into on their own. We give them uninterrupted time to explore on the floor with open ended toys (i.e. a scarf or an empty box). All of this is based on respecting and nurturing the infant and allowing them to develop at their own pace.

What is child screening and do you offer parent conferences?

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) child care licensing branch is requiring that all child care organizations perform regular developmental screening of all children in care. Little Friends has chosen the Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ-3) as our State-approved developmental screening tool. This tool is used to identify where the children are, developmentally, and to give teachers and parents a plan for what to work on with the children. We conduct these screenings twice a year and hold parent/teacher conferences to discuss each child’s development, in September and April. The findings from the screening help us alter what we do in the classroom to appropriately address the needs of the children.

Is there an enrollment fee?

There is no enrollment fee. If you are offered a contract, a \$100 non-refundable deposit is due with the contract and will be deducted from your first month’s fees.

What happens after leaving Little Friends?

We hope our Little Friends move on to become BIG Friends and continue on to Friends School of Baltimore. Little Friends children get priority consideration in the Admission process for the School. Families are invited to apply to the School in the autumn of the year before they will be four (and therefore eligible for Pre-Kindergarten). The Admission department and Little Friends director will guide you through this process.

What can I expect during my tour?

You will have the opportunity to visit our classrooms and watch the children and teachers in action! Feel free to come with a list of questions not covered in this document, for the teachers and/or Director. You are welcome to bring your child, or come alone. Call or email today to set up an appointment!