

Frequently Asked Questions

What is your contract year and what does that mean?

Our 12-month contract year is July - June. Children start in new classrooms in the beginning of July. Little Friends closes anywhere from 17-21 days a year, depending on when the Holidays fall. Contracts are offered to current families at the beginning of January and to new families between February and March.

How does your waitlist works ?

In January we offer any current family to keep their spot for the following year including siblings. After that, we offer any family on our priority list a spot. Priority children include Employees of the school, Friends School of Baltimore Alumni, Siblings of currently enrolled Friends School of Baltimore students, and Current Stoney Run meeting house members who have applied. Then we reach out to general waitlist applicants.

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

Our classroom are referred to by animal names (Butterflies, Koalas, Birds, Frogs, Pandas, Giraffes, Owls and Bears). 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 January/March 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 January-June, we do not share classroom assignments until on or around the beginning of June 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 set of two classrooms has one support teacher that moves between the two rooms. The Butterflies, Koalas, Birds and Frogs have 6 children in each classroom. The Pandas and Giraffes have 9 children in each classroom. The Owls and Bears have 12 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 and utilize the wrestling room on rainy days. We also take advantage of the expansive field space and take every opportunity to get involved in experiences with the children from PK through 12th grade.

What is your curriculum?

Our program embraces the RIE (Resources for Infant Educaring) philosophy, and Emergent Curriculum which allows our teachers to be creative and infuse our SPICES into experiences. The 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). For our youngest friends, this is modeled by the adult members of our community. As children get older, they become a part of the process, practicing a moment of silence during Morning meetings, 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 theme-based. Each month the teachers use a selected theme to create experiences and an environment that stimulates group and individual exploration and learning. Each classroom has an experienced 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. We believe that children learn through play. We allow them to direct their play, art activities, and sensory experiences. Teachers and Parents can support their learning by presenting some ideas and creating an environment to expand their interests, and enhance their learning, allowing their imaginations to take the lead. Inspirations for Classroom Experiences come from experiential learning, Quaker values, reflect the interest of the children or the developmental needs identified through observations and assessments.

Our goal at Little Friends is that children consider learning to be fun. We focus on self regulation (identifying and addressing emotions) and self-help (independence). We do this by providing our children with an environment they can trust, feel welcomed, and encouraged.

Is there an enrollment fee?

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

What 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. We use the most current Ages and Stages Developmental Screen Assessments to assess your child's early development twice in the school year. Your child's teacher will complete a developmental screening, and families will receive and fill out the Parent section. You may request a conference with your child's teacher to discuss the outcomes of these screenings. We will provide at-home activities for you to use to help your child grow and learn. If concerns are evident based on the results of these screenings, we may request or require a child to have further evaluation. We will reach out to you directly if this is the case, and support you in finding the proper assistance.

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 & Assistant Director will guide you through this process.