



Little Giants Handbook

2025-2026

YOUR CHILD AND OUR SCHOOL

At Little Giants Child Care Center at HPHS, we are dedicated to children and the fulfillment of their needs. By treating each child with love, respect and understanding, the teachers will promote these very qualities within the children. We offer an enriched environment that encourages the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of our children. We strive to stimulate each child's development of a positive self-image, a curiosity for learning, social skills, problem solving techniques, and a sense of fun and adventure, while recognizing and encouraging diversity in ability and interests.

Each child will be encouraged to enjoy learning with others through play. We believe that play is vital to a child's learning; it is the way each child organizes and makes sense of their world. Through play experiences children learn to build and maintain relationships; they learn to trust others, which enhances their emotional maturity. We plan appropriate activities through themes and explorations based on the interests of the children. Our program provides a mixed age group of children aged 2 to 5-years, targeted to individual skills. Each day your child will learn and grow in our engaging and enriching program!

DCFS LICENSING

Little Giants Child Care Center is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). We are also required to meet regulations of the Lake County Health Department, the State Fire Marshal, and local fire departments.

FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL

It can be difficult for a child to separate from their parent(s), whether it is a new school experience or not. Parent(s) set an important example by showing their children that they approve of our center, our teachers, and the positive experience that we provide. When saying goodbye to your child, be kind but straightforward. Let your child know you are leaving and go! Set a limit and make it non-negotiable. Returning to the room or staying five more minutes repeatedly at the request of your child will make this transition more difficult. Please feel free to call or email to check on your child... this week and always!

DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Children must be signed in and out each day by their parent or guardian; also, the child's arrival and departure at the center must be acknowledged by a staff member. When you arrive at Little Giants, the staff will be greeting you at the playground door for drop-off. Pick-up procedures will occur either at the playground door or on the playground. Please have your child wear a mask or face covering when walking through the hallways. We will then take your child into the bathroom to wash their hands. We always hold hands in the hallway. You must send an authorization note on days when your child is to be picked by someone other than a parent/guardian or send an email in advance. Only individuals authorized in writing will be able to pick up your child. This individual must present a valid ID. No individual (related or unrelated) under the age of eighteen will be permitted to pick up your child.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the Director.

SCHEDULE

7:00 - 9:00	Drop off / free play
9:00 - 9:30	Breakfast
9:30 - 9:45	Gathering Time
9:45 -11:00	Lessons and Themed Activities
11:00 -11:45	Outdoor/ large motor activities
11:45 -12:30	Lunch
12:45 - 3:00	Nap and quiet activities
3:00 - 5:00	Snack, Playground and Pickup

CLOTHING

Please bring your child to the center in play clothes. School is fun and having fun often means getting dirty! Weather permitting (twenty degrees or above), we will play outside. It is important to dress your child appropriately for this experience. On your child's first day, please bring a change of clothing for warm and cold weather. Children should be prepared with several changes of clothes, including socks and shoes if possible. ***Please label all clothing, including outer garments.***

SUPPLIES FROM HOME

Required: Parent(s) must provide a blanket, travel-sized pillow if needed, pillowcase, wipes and at least a one-week supply of diapers for their child if appropriate. Blankets, sheets and pillowcases will be sent home weekly for washing.

Please label all of these items before bringing them to school.

Please note that guns, war toys, or toys of destruction will not be allowed.

ILLNESS

The following guidelines have been developed by DCFS and/or the Health Department to help prevent children from contracting or spreading infections. These guidelines include symptoms for Covid-19. Children with any of these symptoms cannot attend the center:

- Temperature exceeding 100 degrees, if taken under the arm; one degree will be added to the reading.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Any suspicious continuous rash.
- Profuse nasal discharge.
- Croupy cough.
- Pink eye, including but not limited to discharge or glassy eyes.
- Developing illness, as demonstrated by a lack of interest in or inability to participate in typical activities.
- Any distress requiring one-on-one care, including unusual behavior.

If there is a case of Covid-19 at school, will be following protocols set by DCFS and the CDC, realizing that they are subject to change

If you keep your child home or he/she is sent home for one of the above symptoms, they may not return the following day. Please do not send your child to school after they have taken a dose of Tylenol/Motrin/fever reducer, as this may mask a fever or other symptoms of illness. If your child will be absent due to illness, please notify the center. To help us track illnesses, please be prepared to report all symptoms (time and degree of fever, time of last dose of medication, etc.) Parent(s) will receive

notification when their child comes in contact with a reportable, communicable disease as designated by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

MEDICATION

We will administer prescription medication to a child upon a parent's completion of a Medication Consent form. Prescription medication must be in the original container with a child-proof cap, dated with physician's name, name of medication, dosage, storage instructions. Medications will be stored out of reach of children in the classroom or in the kitchen refrigerator (if needed).

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

In case of serious illness or injury requiring immediate care, the appropriate medical service will be contacted, including, but not limited to first aid care by a caregiver, the Highland Park High School on-site nurse, private physician, clinic, paramedic or hospital.

VOLUNTEERS

Under typical circumstances, Little Giants welcomes volunteers!

BIRTHDAYS/ SPECIAL SNACKS

We encourage you to share your child's birthday with us at the center. Children with summer birthdays may wish to have a "half-year" celebration. On other important occasions, such as the birth of a new sibling, a child may wish to celebrate at school. DCFS requires all food brought in to be **store bought and in its original unopened package**. PLEASE NOTE: Packages cannot be opened to remove items (such as cupcakes from a large box) unless each item is individually sealed (such as granola bars or yogurt). If your child's birthday snack arrives at school with packaging opened, we will unfortunately not be able to serve it. Please take note of any classroom allergies by speaking with a teacher first before bringing the snack.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

No formal religious instruction or observance will be included in the curriculum. Crafts and activities may include traditional holiday topics not of a religious nature. All community holidays will be recognized.

FOOD

Little Giants provides nutritionally balanced lunches catered by the Quest Food Service, two snacks, and an optional breakfast. The food is prepared under the supervision of a food server who is licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Our menus meet or surpass the nutritional requirements set by DCFS and the Health Department.

TUITION

Tuition is paid monthly and is due on the 20th of each month. Payments to Township High School District 113 can be made in person or mailed to: Little Giants, 433 Vine Ave., Highland Park, IL 60035. A late payment fee of \$40.00 will be charged for tuition received after the due date. August tuition is due by July 20th and September tuition is due by August 20th, etc. Repeated late payment and/or failure to pay tuition or fees may result in dismissal from the program.

When your child is enrolled at Little Giants, 11 equal tuition payments are required whether or not your child is in attendance. Tuition payments will not be adjusted for vacation, sickness, holiday, inclement weather closures or COVID quarantine. Payment in full is due for all periods of absence.

LATE PICK UP FEES

The following late fees will be charged after 5 pm, according to the classroom clock:

First offense:	\$10 any time in the first 5 minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter
Second offense:	\$20 any time in the first 5 minutes and \$2 per minute thereafter
Third offense:	\$30 any time in the first 5 minutes and \$3 per minute thereafter
Fourth offense:	\$40 any time in the first 5 minutes and \$4 per minute thereafter

Repeated late pick up may result in dismissal from the program. Late fees will be enforced beginning one hour after parent(s) are notified that their child must be picked up due to illness.

EMERGENCY PLAN

In the event of an emergency, the staff will implement the necessary safety procedures. The director will consult with the building safety team (principal, assistant principals, and building manager) in the event of a weather, security, or other emergency.

The safety of all Little Giants children is our priority during a crisis; your child will remain safe with a staff member until you arrive. When all children are safe and secure, parents will be contacted when appropriate. All parents will be enrolled in the Infinite Campus Emergency Notification System which will distribute emergency information as needed. Parent board members working in the building may assist with phone calls home. **Please help us to promptly notify you by updating your Emergency Contact form when any information changes.** Emergency school closings are dictated by District 113's decision whether or not to close. If Highland Park High School closes due to weather or other emergency, Little Giants will also be closed. We do not offer refunds or make up days when we have an emergency closing. The following additional safety procedures are required by DCFS:

- Fire evacuation drills are performed monthly.
- Tornado drills are performed twice a year.
- Lock down drills are performed on the High School schedule.
- Our door is always locked.

COMMUNICATION

Little Giants communicates with parents in the following ways:

1. Phone call to home, work and cell phone
2. Email to work and personal email addresses
3. Text to personal cell phone
4. Face to face meetings at beginning and end of day
5. Notes left on cubbies
6. Conferences and Portfolios
7. Lillio Daycare App

EMAIL Tuition notices and other parent reminders will be issued electronically. You may email the center director at lbenson@dist113.org.

RELEASE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Little Giants will never release personal information regarding any child without the written permission of the parent or guardian. This includes other parents or a third party if special services are required.

DISCIPLINE

Our primary purpose is to ensure the safety of our children. The goal is to create an environment which allows each child to develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own behavior. We:

- anticipate and minimize situations which may result in discipline problems.
- communicate behavioral expectations in age-appropriate language.
- acknowledge positive behavior on an ongoing basis.
- redirect negative behavior and give children alternatives and choices.
- set appropriate limits in a calm and respectful manner so that children are never humiliated.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CONCERNS FROM PARENTS

We value daily communication between parents and Little Giants staff. Should a concern arise, please observe the following procedures. If the problem is not resolved at the initial step, parents should proceed to the next step.

STEP 1 The parent addresses their concern directly with the teacher.

STEP 2 The parent, teacher, and center director meet to discuss the issue.

STEP 3 The parent, center director and Assistant Principal who oversee Little Giants meet to discuss the issue and to determine the next course of action.

DISMISSAL

There may be occasions when the school program is not able to meet the special needs of a child or parent. Circumstances that would necessitate dismissal include:

- Behavior which endangers the health and safety of other children or themselves.
- Repeated late payment and/or failure to pay tuition or fees.
- Parent(s) refusal to adhere to school policy.
- A child who is not ready to enter a group situation at the present time.
- Any other situation in which your child's attendance in our program is not in their best interest.

Dismissal with two weeks notice will be at the discretion of the Director.

Little Giants Behavior/Transition Policy In order to comply with the DCFS Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers, all Day Care Centers are responsible for having a written policy to explain the actions that will take place should Little Giants Child Care Center need to transition a child out of his/her care due to challenging behavior, safety concerns or if our environment is not the right fit for the child.

Our policy is: 1. When a behavior or safety concern is noticed, Little Giants will document the behavior or safety concern and share with the parent/guardian. 2. If the behavior/safety concern continues, a meeting will be arranged between parent/guardian and the Little Giants Director to discuss a solution. A plan will be developed and shared. 3. Behaviors and interventions will be documented and shared with the parent/ guardian as they happen. If an outside behavioralist/ intervention is needed, and both Little Giants and the parent/guardian agree, we will help to find outside resources that will help establish interventions to help with the challenging behavior. If the parent/guardian does not agree to intervention from an outside source, this will be documented.

PESTICIDE POLICY

Highland Park High School has a long tradition of maintaining a safe and clean environment for its students and staff. Our facility is regulated and visited frequently by the State of Illinois Regional Office of Education and the Lake County Board of Health. At certain times during the year pesticides are applied as part of the maintenance of our physical education and athletic fields. On occasion, spot applications of pesticides are performed inside the building, such as in the case of a bee's nest or a minor ant problem. Regular spraying is not part of the procedure. Applicators are state certified, and all applications are made during unoccupied times, either late evening or early morning. Anyone wishing to receive written notification of any pesticide application should contact Building Manager Nick Demeas at (224) 632-3031 or ndemeas@dist113.org.

Little Giants Child Care Center 2025-26 SCHOOL CALENDAR

HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Giants is open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. We open on Thursday, August 7, 2025 and close on Thursday, June 5, 2026.

The center will be closed on the following days:

September 1	Labor Day
September 23	Rosh Hashahah
October 2	Yom Kippur
November 11	Veteran's Day/Staff In-Service
November 26-28	Thanksgiving Break
December 22 - January 5	Winter Break- resume on 1/5/25
January 19	Martin Luther King's Birthday
February 16	Presidents' Day
March 23-27	Spring Break
April 3	Good Friday
May 25	Memorial Day
June 5	Last Day of school

By signing below, you agree to abide by our Little Giants Child Care Center policies and procedures as outlined in this parent handbook. We believe that parent involvement is a critical component of any successful childcare program. Thank you for your ongoing cooperation, service, and ideas.

I HAVE READ THE ATTACHED LITTLE GIANTS CHILD CARE CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK AND ACCEPT THIS AGREEMENT WITH ALL OF THE FOLLOWING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS DEFINED:

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| Your Child and our School | Birthdays/ Special Snacks |
| DCFS Licensing | Religious Observances |
| First Week of School | Food |
| Daily Arrival and Departure Procedures | Tuition |
| Daily Schedule | Half-Day Lunch Options |
| Clothing | Late Fees |
| Supplies from Home | Waiting List |
| Illness | Emergency Plan |
| Medication | Email |
| Emergency Medical Care | Discipline |
| Parent Visits/Participation | Procedures for Handling Concerns from Parents |
| Volunteers | Dismissal |
| | Pesticide Policy |

Review of calendar dates

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE