



# Parent Handbook



updated June 2021



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5678 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Holland, MI 49423  
Preschool Phone: 616-393-0949

## Welcome!

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is a nature-based preschool program for three and four-year-old children. We emphasize learning and exploration through interactions with the natural world each and every day – and in all seasons! This program began six years ago as a collaboration between the Outdoor Discovery Center and Hamilton Community Schools, *Little Hawks Discovery Preschool* is now a part of the Outdoor Discovery Center. We are excited to have you join our Little Hawks family and look forward to an exciting year together!

## Mission

The mission of the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is to provide a quality early childhood experience that prepares young children to be active, independent learners who will have a lifelong connection to the natural world.

## Philosophy

We believe that children are natural learners, eager to explore and create. The teaching staff promotes early learning by:

- Providing a natural environment that enables and encourages discovery, experimentation, and the opportunity to see the results of one's actions.
- Structuring a program that includes many opportunities for children to be outdoors, learning and exploring, reflecting the research that supports the advantages of these experiences.
- Offering opportunities for children to connect with nature while developing the skills of the whole child, as well as children's individual abilities and interests.
- Encouraging problem solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing information in response to children's ideas, observations, and questions.
- Assisting children in their interactions with each other and supporting opportunities for learning to work in a group.
- Appreciating and celebrating the unique individuality of children and families.

## Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Staff

Rachel Hucul, Preschool Director and VP Early Childhood, [rachel@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:rachel@outdoordiscovery.org)  
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Stephanie Williams, Teacher, [stephanie@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:stephanie@outdoordiscovery.org)

Staff members are trained in First Aid, CPR, blood-borne pathogens, and health and safety procedures. Staff shall act in a manner that is conducive to the welfare of children. A comprehensive background check is required of all staff members. Volunteers who are approved to volunteer through the [WISH](#) program may also help in the class. All volunteers will be supervised by staff members.

### **Program & Facility Overview**

The three classrooms are designed to provide space for active, age-appropriate play and include open-ended equipment and supplies to encourage creative and cooperative learning. A team of 3 teachers lead activities and supervise a maximum of 20 students per class; GSRP sessions have a maximum of 18 students. A fenced, outdoor play area is located just outside each classroom. Additionally, the preschool classes have access to the ODC Nature Preserve's 150 acres with diverse habitats, environmental programming, award winning naturalist staff, and resident reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds. The setting within the ODC Nature Preserve makes this a truly unique preschool experience.

### **Benefit of Being Part of Little Hawks Discovery Preschool - ODC Membership**

Enrollment in the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool includes an annual family membership to the ODC. Membership entitles families to participate in ODC programs throughout the year at no cost or at a reduced cost. If a family is already a member of the ODC, the membership renewal fee will not be required.

### **Age Eligibility, School Year and Schedule**

Eligibility for Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is determined by the child's age on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Children must be 3 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of enrollment to register for 3 year old sessions, or 4 on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of enrollment to register for 4 year old sessions. The school year will run from September through May. We require a commitment for the entire school year. A calendar of the year is attached.

We offer a variety of class configurations for 3 and 4 year old children. The chart below lists the sessions that will be offered for the 2021/22 school year.

Class Name	Age	Students	Days	Times	Cost
Painted Turtles	4's	20	M-TH	8:50-11:50AM	\$3350 GSRP eligible
Green Frogs	4's	18	M-TH	12:50-3:50PM	\$3350 GSRP eligible
Bluegills	3/4's	20	F	9:00-11:00AM	\$685
Gray Squirrels	4's	20	MWF	8:30-11:30AM	\$2195
Coyotes	3's	20	T/TH	8:30-11:30AM	\$1660
Kestrels	4's	18	M-TH	12:50-3:50PM	\$3350 GSRP eligible
Red Foxes	3/4's	20	MWF	8:30-11:30AM	\$2195
Fireflies	3's	20	T/TH	8:30-11:30AM	\$1660
Chickadees	4's	20	MTW	12:30-3:30PM	\$2195

## Curriculum

The Little Hawks Discovery Preschool utilizes research-based, comprehensive early childhood curricula that focus on the whole child, recognizing the characteristics of the young child, and promoting growth in physical, social, emotional and intellectual areas. *Creative Curriculum® for Preschool* provides the basic curriculum structure. *Creative Curriculum®* is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum for early childhood programs that is recognized by Michigan as a quality program, promoting school readiness.

Within this curricular framework, the emphasis at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is on nature-based learning and outdoor exploration. Each day, children spend a significant amount of time outdoors involved in active learning, both structured and self-directed. Recent research studies have affirmed the value of active outdoor exploration in building children's problem-solving, self-regulation, organizational, and language skills, in addition to the health benefits.

As an example of how nature-based learning is integrated within the preschool curriculum: In a typical lesson, children may explore animal tracks on a hike outdoors, then hear a story about animal tracks, explore books on the topic, use tracks to create patterns, to count, to recognize similarities and differences, or to measure lengths. Our program is designed to prepare children to be ready for school – socially, emotionally, physically, and academically.

Weekly newsletters emailed to parents connect curriculum with classroom activities which support each child's development.

## Developmental Screening

All parents are encouraged to complete The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), a developmental screener, in September and March. The ASQ is discussed during home visits for students in the GSRP



session and during Parent Teacher Conferences for all students. Parental agreement will be obtained for any additional individualized support recommended based on the ASQ results. The ASQ is available for all parents through the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District. The online version can be found at:

<https://www.asqonline.com/family/185-screening-family-access-open-asq-3-english/start>

## Assessment Information

Student Assessment: *Teaching Strategies Gold®* is the assessment tool used by Little Hawks. Daily developmental observations are recorded on each student. These developmental observations are evidence of each child's academic progress. Your child's teacher will use these observations to complete progress reports that will be shared with you during parent/teacher conferences. Parent Teacher Conferences will occur in November and February. Additionally, we use the PELI (Preschool Early Literacy Indicators) assessment to measure developing literacy skills and to plan our assessment to meet our students' needs. This assessment is given three times each year and the results are shared with parents during conferences.

Social/Emotional Development	Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Language Development
<p><b>Sense of Self</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Shows ability to adjust to new situations</li> <li>*Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults</li> <li>*Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately</li> <li>*Stands up for rights</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsibility for Self and Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Demonstrates self-direction and independence</li> <li>*Takes responsibility for own well-being</li> <li>*Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials</li> <li>*Follows classroom routines</li> <li>*Follows classroom rules</li> </ul> <p><b>Prosocial Behavior</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Plays well with other children</li> <li>*Recognizes the feelings of others and responds</li> <li>*Shares and respects the rights of others</li> <li>*Uses thinking skills to resolve conflicts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gross Motor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, galloping)</li> <li>*Shows balance while moving</li> <li>*Climbs up and down</li> <li>*Pedals and steers a tricycle (or other wheeled vehicle)</li> <li>*Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Fine Motor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Controls small muscles in hands</li> <li>*Coordinates eye-hand movement</li> <li>*Uses tools for writing and drawing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning and Problem Solving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Observes objects and events with curiosity</li> <li>*Approaches problems flexibly</li> <li>*Shows persistence in approaching tasks</li> <li>*Explores cause and effect</li> <li>*Applies knowledge or experience to a new context</li> </ul> <p><b>Logical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Classifies objects</li> <li>*Compares/measures</li> <li>*Arranges objects in a series</li> <li>*Recognizes patterns and can repeat them</li> <li>*Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence</li> <li>*Shows awareness of position in space</li> <li>*Uses one-to-one correspondence</li> <li>*Uses numbers and counting</li> </ul> <p><b>Representation and Symbolic Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Takes on pretend roles and situations</li> <li>*Makes believe with objects</li> <li>*Makes and interprets representations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening and Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hears and discriminates the sounds of language</li> <li>*Expresses self: using words and expanded sentences</li> <li>*Understands and follows oral directions</li> <li>*Answers questions</li> <li>*Asks questions</li> <li>*Actively participates in conversations</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading and Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Enjoys and values reading</li> <li>*Demonstrates understanding of print concepts</li> <li>*Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet</li> <li>*Uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print</li> <li>*Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts</li> <li>*Understands the purpose of writing</li> <li>*Writes letters and words</li> </ul>

Program Assessment: The *Program Quality Assessment (PQA)* is used three times per year by an Early Childhood Specialist from the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District and/or our Program Director to

observe and assess our classroom environment and staff. Using the results of this assessment, we are able to set goals to improve our program. Our goal is to deliver the highest quality classroom program and learning experiences for your child. This chart shows our program goals related to various components of child development according to *Creative Curriculum®*

### **Cultural Competency Policy**

Preschool age children begin to notice similarities and differences at a young age. By age three, children begin to show signs of being influenced by societal norms and biases and may exhibit "prejudice" toward others on the basis of gender or race or being differently abled (Derman-Sparks, etl). LHDP will create meaningful experiences that celebrate and acknowledge our families similarities and differences. We will represent a more diverse society and inclusive environment. We strongly believe:

- Nature-based education should be accessible to all children and families
- Diversity in our education programs makes them better
- High demand for our programming, systemic inequities, and registration logistics create barriers for families to enroll in our program
- These barriers disproportionately affect children of color and economically disadvantaged families
- Program decisions should be based on more than just input from existing Little Hawks families and must include the interests of those who aren't represented

### **Inclusion Policy**

LHDP values student diversity and individual learning differences. We will work to grow students in all developmental areas with scaffolded support, starting and celebrating their current development and accomplishments. We strongly believe that nature-based education is for all children and LHDP will make accommodations as needed for a child's need. If/when LHDP staff need additional assistance to support a child's learning needs, we will work with the child's parent/caregiver for a referral for more specialized support.

### **Referral Policy**

If a parent or staff member suspects that there is a need for additional assistance from an outside agency or professional (for example, if there are concerns about a child's speech or language, if there are suspected physical or mental health needs, if there is a need for food or clothing support, etc.) a member or members of the staff will schedule a meeting with the parents to gather input and discuss concerns. Together, a plan of action will be determined to address the concern. The Program Director will monitor progress on the plan. If it is determined that a child could qualify the student for special education services, the student's resident elementary school will be contacted. A referral for evaluation would be made through the resident district.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

Students' personal information is protected under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act. This includes any learning or disciplinary needs of students or any data gathered as part of the referral process; this information is confidential and may not be shared or discussed outside of the classroom. Assessment data (e.g., developmental screening results) will only be shared as "group results" and only with parental consent. If you, as a parent or classroom volunteer, are ever asked

about a student, simply say that you cannot discuss or share information about students. If you have a question about confidentiality, please talk with the Program Director.

## **Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, who has reached the age of 18 or is attending any school beyond the high school level. Students and former students to whom the rights have transferred are called eligible students.

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

- School employees who have a need to know;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
- Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; and state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Student Directory information (e.g., student names, parents names, email addresses) will be made available to parents during the fall semester, after parents have been notified and have had an opportunity to "opt out" of the directory.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

## **Child Protection Policy/ Mandated Reporting**



All staff and volunteers are mandated by law to report any suspected case of child abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to the Department of Human Services. Any reasonable suspicion will be reported including a child telling a staff member about abuse, witnessing the abuse, a parent's statement of abuse, or any physical or behavioral signs of abuse. A copy of this law may be obtained from the program director.

### **Non-discrimination**

The ODC Network does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, handicap, disability, or limited English proficiency in any of its programs or activities. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Travis Williams, Chief Executive Officer  
ODC Network, 4214 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Holland, MI 49423

### **A Typical Day at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool**

A predictable structure or schedule is important for young children, helping them to know “what is next”. We also value those “teachable moments” and spontaneous opportunities for learning. The basic structure of the day will form the backbone of our work, providing predictability while enabling flexibility. The following is a typical daily schedule:

**Arrival:** Class begins with play, usually outdoors. The adults dropping off the students will walk with them to the preschool building, put away backpacks, extra clothes, etc., child and parent will sign in, and then walk with their child to join the teachers and other students.

**Outdoor Activities and Play:** Children will play in the outdoor play area and then take a hike on the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) grounds. Play area activities could include sand play, digging, fort building, water activities, gardening and dramatic play. Activities on the ODC grounds include hiking and exploring woodland, meadow, and wetland habitats. Children may visit the Birds of Prey, elk and deer, and Michigan animal exhibits. *NOTE: Parents are responsible for any applying sunscreen or bug spray before the children are dropped off at the preschool.*

**Group Meeting:** Children take part in whole group conversations, engage in music and movement activities, listen to stories, sing songs and participate in learning activities, building language and math skills.

**Snack Time:** Teachers and children eat “family style”, eating, talking, and enjoying each others’ company. Children clean up as they finish and transition to choice time. A healthy snack will be provided; dietary restrictions and allergies will be accommodated.

**Choice Time:** Children have at least 60 minutes of supervised, uninterrupted time to choose an activity among the different areas of the classroom or outdoor area. This allows children to lengthen attention spans and to develop competency with an activity. Children may choose activities that occur in any of the interest areas within the classroom including: Blocks, Art, Sand & Water, Library, Toys & Games, Dramatic Play (“kitchen”), and Discovery.

**Small Group:** Learning activities also occur in small groups. These activities provide an opportunity for targeted instruction focusing on academic skills and allow the teacher who is leading the group to evaluate each child’s needs and progress.

**End Group Meeting:** Teachers and children gather together to recall/review activities from the day

and to say good-bye before parents arrive to pick up the children.

By the end of the school year, the children will become confident, curious learners who can be part of a group, follow directions, and take turns.

**Our Daily Routine** is as follows (times reflect the beginning of the year routine; as the year progresses, the transitions are quicker and group times increase):

Typical Session Schedule - all sessions will include these components; times are approximate

<b>Arrival and Sign-in</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
Children and Parents will hang up backpack, work together to complete sign-in, read arrival note, then parent walks child to the outdoor classroom.	
<b>Outdoor Play</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>
Children and teachers interact for choice time in the outdoor classroom.	
<b>Group Meeting/Hike (Large Group)</b>	<b>25-35 minutes</b>
Children and teachers gather for a group meeting and then go on a hike. (Locations vary at the ODC). Group meeting has a student centered focus.	
<b>Snack</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
Children and teachers eat together family style.	
<b>Small Group</b>	<b>15-20 minutes</b>
Teacher lead an activity that allows for children to have choices and is skill-based at each child's developmental abilities.	
<b>Planning</b>	<b>At the end of Small Group</b>
Children will use various strategies to make a plan for free choice.	
<b>Choice Time</b>	<b>40-55 minutes</b>
Children will participate in up to one hour of free choice. Staff will interact with children during free choice. Children will eat snack family style during choice time.	
<b>Clean-up/Recall</b>	<b>5-10 minutes</b>
Children will proceed to clean-up the classroom. Then will participate in various recall strategies.	
<b>Transition</b>	<b>3-5 minutes</b>
Teachers will utilize various transition techniques to empower children to transition to Good-bye group.	
<b>Group Meeting</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
Teachers and children lead the group meeting together. The group meeting will end with our Good-bye Rhyme.	

## Learning through Play

Play is a vital part of a child's social, emotional, language, physical, and cognitive growth during the preschool years. Children learn best through play-it's their work! When you visit Little Hawks Discovery Preschool you will see the children engaged in many different kinds of play:

- A child working hard to put a puzzle together may be learning how to problem solve and enhance his/her fine motor skills.
- Children playing a game together are learning to take turns and cooperate. They are developing language skills in communicating the rules to one another.
- A child climbing and using natural materials to build is building his/her large motor skills and using creativity.

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is a great opportunity for your child to experience various forms of play. Whether alone or in a group, your child's learning is fostered when there is a connection to something that interests him/her. We invite you to visit our classroom and witness children learning through play each and every day!

### **General Rules of Behavior**

- Keep hands and feet to self
- Use kind words
- Children only leave the room or group with a staff member
- Use toys and equipment safely
- Home toys stay at home

### **Discipline**

Positive discipline enables children to be problem solvers with guidance and modeling from adults. Little Hawks Discovery Preschool follows the Conscious Discipline approach. The techniques used are brain researched and help children develop discipline from within. Teachers will help students label their emotions, provide language support, and implement structures to create a school family. We view all behaviors as communication and believe conflict is an opportunity to teach.

Children will learn how to label their emotions, build upon words to communicate wants/needs, and learn how to solve conflicts with their peers. Teachers will work closely with parents to ensure a positive experience that is the best for each child and family.

You can find more information on Conscious Discipline at [consciousdiscipline.com](https://consciousdiscipline.com)

We will utilize redirection, modeling, and Conscious Discipline problem solving techniques. The staff will work closely with parents to ensure a positive preschool experience that is the best for each child and family. In extreme situations where behavior is detrimental to the learning atmosphere on a continuing basis, teachers will work with the parents on a plan to help the child function more appropriately in the classroom.

Our Teachers will use Conscious Discipline's DNA process with children during emotionally charged

conflict situations.

**D**escribe

Your face looks like this. Your hand went like this.



Take a Big Breath

**N**otice

You seem \_\_\_\_\_

**A**cknowledge

You wanted \_\_\_\_\_  
You were hoping \_\_\_\_\_

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
2. Quickly identify a child's brain state. The identify if you start with describing (brain stem) or move to noticing (Limbic)
3. Name children's feelings: "You seem \_\_\_\_\_ (sad, mad, frustrated, etc.)"
4. Gather information: "Something must have happened." If you do not know what occurred or Acknowledge with "You wanted/hoping for \_\_\_\_\_"
5. Restate the problem
6. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
7. Be prepared to give follow-up support

### **PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool utilizes the PBIS structure to create and maintain the focus of positive behavior. The PBIS structure creates the common language and expectations at LHDP. Staff are expected to implement the common language and expectations.

## LHDP School Expectations

Location	Be Safe	Be Helpful	Be An Explorer

Meadow	See a teacher Boots or shoes on	Pick up garbage Voice off when teacher speaks Ask for help Include others Follow hike instructions	Ask before picking Observe	
Mudroom	Walking feet Take gear off and place in backpack	Help others with changing Ask for help Match teacher's voice	Take care of natural materials collected	
Playscape	See a teacher Boots or shoes on Change cold wet clothes	Ask for help Include others Put materials away	Try new ideas Keep living things alive	
Pond	See a teacher Bottom or belly on dock Walk in middle of dock Boots and shoes on	Pick up garbage Voice off when teacher speaks Follow hike instructions Ask for help	Keep living things alive Try new ideas Ask before picking Observe	
Small Group	Stay with your small group Give others space	Put materials away Share ideas with peers Voice off when teacher speaks Ask for help	Share wonders Follow instructions	
Visitor's Center	Walking feet See a teacher	Ask for help Match teacher's voice	Ask questions Observe	

		<b>Conscious Discipline Skills</b>		
<b>Step 1: I Am</b>  I have a big feeling. I can go to the Safe Place, get the We Care Bag or find a trusted adult.	<b>Step 2: I Calm</b>  I breathe by choosing calming strategies.	<b>Step 3: I Feel</b>  I name my feeling by choosing the feeling image.	<b>Step 4: I Choose</b>  I choose a calming tool.	<b>Step 5: I Solve</b>  I choose a solution to solve my problem.

## Incident Reports

A State of MI, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Incident Report will be completed anytime an accident or illness occurs at the preschool causing a child to seek medical attention. The staff member who attended to the sick or hurt child will be responsible for completing the report. Staff members are required by law to report suspected incidents of child abuse/neglect.

## Ouch Reports

Teachers will complete Ouch Reports that document an injury (skinned knee, bumps, etc.). These forms are reviewed by parents and school leadership.

## Behavior Plans

If a pattern of aggressive behavior develops where a child injures self or others and/or a child's behavior impacts his or her education or the classmates then Little Hawks staff will meet with the child's family to create a behavior plan to support the needs of the child.

## Corporal Punishment

In accordance with state law, the use of corporal punishment shall not be permitted. No employee, volunteer or contractor employed or engaged by the ODC shall threaten to inflict physical pain upon a student as a penalty or punishment for a student's offense. Staff members may, within the scope of their employment, use and apply reasonable force and restraint in self-defense, to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to others, to obtain possession of weapons, or for the protection of persons or property. If any employee inflicts unreasonable, inappropriate or unlawful force upon a student, he or she may be subject to discipline.

## Holidays and Birthdays

We do not celebrate holidays in the traditional sense at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool. Our program will focus on changes in seasons and events in the natural world. For example, we may have a pajama party for the winter solstice, the day of the year with the shortest amount of daylight. If your family celebrates birthdays, you may bring in a birthday treat – non-edible treats are



encouraged (e.g, pencils) for your child’s class. (If you choose to bring in a food item, it must be store bought & ingredients must be listed on the package.)

**Snack and Food Service Policy**

Snacks will be served family style. Milk or water and a healthy snack will be provided. The monthly snack calendar will be posted and shared with parents. Please communicate any food allergies your child may have to your child’s teachers, the Preschool Director, and Chief Administrator.

Snacks are served family-style and will include healthy choices such as fresh whole fruits and vegetables, veggie straws, cheerios, etc. No items are cooked at the preschool. Raw fruits and vegetables will be thoroughly washed before being served. Items stored in the refrigerator will be labeled with the date the item is placed in the refrigerator. Staff and volunteers will wear food grade gloves when serving or preparing snacks. All tableware, utensils, food contact surfaces and equipment will be thoroughly washed, rinsed and sanitized after each use. Tables will be thoroughly washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after they are used for snacks. Multi-use tableware and utensils will be washed, rinsed and sanitized in a dishwasher after each use.

**Clothing: Dress for Success!!**

Nature based learning can be a messy job! For this reason, it is important that your child come dressed for messy, outdoor play. Clothing that can be covered in mud, paint, clay, and other natural materials are a must everyday! Tight clothing, fancy dresses, costumes, or shoes will only get in the way of your child’s play. Your child will need comfortable, closed toed, protective shoes that enable him/her to run, jump, and climb. *NOTE: Parents are responsible for any applying sunscreen or bug spray before the children are dropped off at the preschool.*

Layers of clothing for the changing weather and moving from outdoors to the indoors are needed for your child to enjoy a variety of activities. Please expect your child to go outside every day. Each preschooler will need a backpack with spare clothes and inside shoes.

Clothing needs for each season include:

Fall	Winter	Spring
Rubber Boots	Snow Pants	Rubber Boots
Coat	Winter Coat	Coat
Rain Suit or Jacket and Pants	Waterproof Mittens	Rain Suit or Jacket and Pants
Sunglasses	Sunglasses	Sunglasses
	Scarf	
	Wool Socks	
	Hat	
	Boots	

**How do I get a rain suit for my child?**

**Buy one online from oakweari:** [www.oaki.com](http://www.oaki.com) (ask us for a coupon code, we usually have one!)

**Check one out from us:** Rainsuits can be checked out from our inventory for free for use during the school year, available sizes may be limited. There is no fee to check out for the year, however if families fail to return the rainsuit, a \$25 lost rainsuit fee is due.

**Stores:** Many large stores or sporting goods stores will sell rain suits. Frogg Toggs is another quality brand of rain suits.

*If you need assistance obtaining these items, please contact the preschool director.*

## Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is very important to the development of young children and provides strong support for the preschool program. The partnership between parents and teaching staff is important for child development and achievement of goals. Formal opportunities for parent involvement include home visits (GSRP scholarship families) and parent-teacher conferences. Topics typically discussed during conferences and home visits include student progress, assessment results, recommendations for additional support, and adjustment to preschool. Additionally, a Parent Engagement Group will meet throughout the year to plan activities for parents and children as well as review and provide opportunities for input on policies. An introduction to the Parent Engagement Group is provided and minutes of the meetings are shared. Most meetings take place during a preschool session in the Hawks' Landing space; parents with younger children are able to bring their children, although child care is not provided. Parents may also participate in our regional advisory group, the Great Start Collaborative Parent Coalition. All parents are encouraged to actively participate.. Contact Ruth Cronk ([ruth@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:ruth@outdoordiscovery.org)) for more information about how to participate.

Additionally, parenting sessions are offered throughout the year as a support for parents of our preschoolers. The sessions, free to Little Hawks parents, are led by two social workers who have done extensive work with parents.

Parents are expected to:

- Attend the Open House & Family Orientation at the beginning of September. This is a meeting for parents only, to provide an opportunity to meet the staff and learn what to expect during the school year. The Parent Handbook with details about the day-to-day preschool operations and procedures will be distributed at that time.
- Participate in home visits twice a year (GSRP tuition free preschool program families). Home visits are generally scheduled near the beginning and end of the school year and last 1 hour.
- Volunteer during the school year, if possible. All parents who volunteer must complete a Hamilton Community Schools' online profile ([www.hamiltonschools.us/WISH](http://www.hamiltonschools.us/WISH)). A background check will be conducted before parents or other volunteers work at the preschool.
- Attend parent and family activities.
- Attend parent/teacher conferences held in the fall and late winter.
- Read newsletters and flyers sent home with your child.
- Encourage your child's independence, especially at drop off time when the preschool begins.

## Volunteers

Parents and other family members are welcome to become Little Hawks volunteers to help in the classroom or with support activities (e.g., materials preparation, book order organization, etc.) Before being scheduled ALL persons wishing to volunteer (including parents) must complete an [online WISH volunteer profile](#) form through the Hamilton Community Schools, which assists us with the required screening of volunteers. All volunteers will be scheduled by one of our preschool volunteer coordinators. Requests for volunteers are sent by email. Volunteers will sign in and out on the

volunteer computer in the Little Hawks office. Volunteers will be supervised by preschool staff at all times and will not be alone with individual children, unless it is the volunteer's own child.

Any volunteer who works with or has access to students shall be screened through the Public Sex Offenders Registry (PSOR), the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) prior to being allowed to participate in any activity or program. Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having contact with any child in care.

Volunteers are mandated reporters in Michigan. This means that all volunteers, as well as staff members, have a responsibility to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. More information and a guide for volunteers is included later in this handbook.

## **Drug, Smoke and Weapon Free Zone**

The entire preschool campus is a drug free, smoke free, vaping free and weapon free zone. Please extinguish cigarettes and properly discard smoking products prior to entering the parking lot and building. This includes chewing tobacco. Help us stay a drug free and smoke free zone by informing anyone that will be escorting your child to and from school of our policy. According to state law it is illegal for any person to carry weapons, concealed or otherwise, in a preschool/daycare facility.

## **Cell Phone Use**

We encourage all parents and visitors to restrict the use of cell phones when at preschool. If you find it necessary to use your cell phone while at the preschool, please step outside the classroom or away from areas where children are working or playing.

## **Weather Conditions**

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is closed when Hamilton Community Schools is canceled for snow days. If there is a two (2) hour delay due to severe weather for Hamilton Community Schools, the morning session is canceled and the afternoon session will run as scheduled.

### ***Severe Weather Policy***

The following procedures will be used in a severe weather situation:

#### **Severe Thunderstorm Watch**

A possibility of severe thunderstorms with high wind and hail in a defined area.

1. Schools remain in session.
2. Parents may pick up their children if they wish.

#### **Severe Thunderstorm Warning**

Severe thunderstorms in process in the area.

1. School remains in session.
2. Parents may pick up their children if they wish.

#### **Tornado Watch**

A possibility of tornadoes in the area.

1. School will remain in session until normal time of dismissal.
2. Parents may pick up their children if they wish.

#### **Tornado Warning**

Tornadoes reported in a defined area by local weather spotters.

1. Schools will remain in session and students will be sent to prearranged protected areas.
2. Teachers will remain with their students until released by the program director.

### School Closing or Delay

When it becomes necessary to close or delay school due to weather conditions, area radio and television stations will be notified. These stations will also be contacted if the students must be dismissed early.

### **Weather Conditions**

Parents should see that their children are dressed appropriately for changing "Michigan weather." Children will play outside each day, unless there are high winds or thunderstorms. The staff will determine time spent outside according to the National Weather Service's Wind Chill Chart, as well as gauging the children in care, and adjust the daily routine accordingly on chilly days. The staff will determine the location of play, based on the current conditions.

### **Emergency Policies and Safety Drills**

The Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is committed to providing a safe learning and work environment. Unfortunately, natural and manmade disasters do occur. Such emergencies are best met by preparedness and planning.

A system of emergency preparedness has been developed that addresses the following goals and/or objectives:

- a. The health and safety of students and staff are safeguarded.
- b. The time necessary for instructional purposes is not unduly diverted.
- c. Minimum disruption to the educational program occurs.
- d. Students are helped to learn self-reliance and trained to respond sensibly to emergency situations.

All threats to the safety of ODC facilities shall be identified by appropriate personnel and responded to promptly in accordance with the plan for emergency preparedness. We shall conduct at least three (3) evacuation/fire drills (fall, winter and spring), and two (2) tornado drills between the months of March through November. The staff will practice lockdown drill procedures three (3) times per year at a time when children are not present.

Emergency procedures for fire, tornado, serious accident or injury and crisis (such as natural disasters, intruders or bomb threats) are posted on the parent bulletin boards. If evacuation is required due to a natural or man-made disaster, parents will be notified of the event by phone and/or text message. The location and method for reuniting families will be included in the message. The relocation site in case of evacuation will be Founders' Hall near the main entrance of the Outdoor Discovery Center. Students with special needs (such as mobility issues) will be assisted or accommodated according to individual plans determined by the staff and parents.

### **Field Trips**

The Outdoor Discovery Center grounds are considered part of our extended campus. Daily hikes on the grounds are considered walking field trips by the licensing agency. Therefore, written permission will be obtained from parents for these walking field trips at the beginning of each school year. We will take various trips around the property. We will also take a two-way radio or cell phones with us on these excursions to allow contact with the office in case of an emergency. If you need to pick up your child early, go to the office directly to coordinate an early pick up.

### **Pest Management Plan**

Pesticide application may occur during the school year, if there are pest issues in the classroom. You will receive an advanced notice of these applications through two means (letter home or notice posted in the classroom sign in area). The notice will inform you of the target pest, information about the pesticide, location of pesticide, date of application. Pesticide would only be applied to concerned area during non program hours.

## **Attendance and Illness**

Regular attendance is crucial to your child's academic and social success in school. When a child has frequent absences, a child may feel uncomfortable in school because he/she may not know the songs, activities, routine, or may have difficulty maintaining friendships. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to communicate with the staff of Little Hawks if their child will be absent. If your child will be absent, please either email us at [littlehawks@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:littlehawks@outdoordiscovery.org) OR call the preschool and leave a message (616-393-0949). If a child is frequently absent, the teacher or program director will contact the parents to determine the causes and to create a plan for a return to regular attendance. Children will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

### *Accident, Injury, Incident and Illness Notification Policy*

Should your child become ill, sustain an injury, or if an incident occurs impacting your child - you, the parent, will be contacted first and as soon as possible following the illness or injury. This contact will be made by phone (please be sure that your contact information is always current). If necessary, we will request that you come to the preschool to pick up your child. If we are unable to contact you, we will contact the person you have listed as your emergency contact on the Child Information Record. If we are unable to reach you or the emergency contact by phone, we will keep your child at school and care for them until we can reach you or the emergency contact. However, if your child requires immediate medical assistance and we are unable to contact you or the emergency contact, we will call for emergency assistance (e.g., 911) and continue to try to reach you.

While waiting to be picked up, the sick or injured child will be moved away from the rest of the group, supervised by a staff member, and made comfortable until the parent arrives.

If a sick child or adult has handled toys or other items in the classroom, the items will be washed, rinsed and sanitized before being used by other children or adults.

Consistent attendance is encouraged for your child to get the best preschool experience. However, there are times when it is best for a child NOT to be at school. *Please make sure your child is fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.*

If your child has one or more of the following symptoms, *please do not send him/her to school*. Staff and volunteers are also included and should not attend if these symptoms are present.

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| -A temperature of 100 degrees or higher | -Constant runny nose |
| -A low grade fever and acting ill       | -Coughing non-stop   |
| -An infectious disease                  | -Pain                |
| -Vomiting or upset stomach              | -Diarrhea            |

For minor injuries that do not require a child to be excluded from participation, parents will be notified by a staff member via telephone or email before the end of the day.

You will be notified if a child, staff member or volunteer has contracted a contagious disease. Notification will include the name and symptoms of the communicable disease. It is also requested that you inform the preschool staff if your child has been exposed to or contracts a contagious disease. Please take into consideration your child's classmates and teachers. Please call (616-393-0949) or email Little Hawks Discovery Preschool ([littlehawks@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:littlehawks@outdoordiscovery.org)) when your child will not be in school.

## **Immunizations**

We encourage families to vaccinate their children. Vaccines are effective in controlling the spread of disease. Your vaccination decision affects not only the health of your child, but also your family, your child's friends, their families, families your child attends school with and your community.

Students must be up to date on vaccinations at the time of enrollment. An immunization record is a required form for enrollment. If you have chosen to waive vaccinations for your child, you must obtain a vaccine waiver from your county's health department.

If you have chosen to waive vaccinations for your child and there is an outbreak or report of a vaccine preventable disease in our school or community, your child may be required to stay out of school. This could be for 21 days or longer. Time out of school depends on multiple factors, including the disease, incubation period, means of spread, and the nature of the outbreak. Your child's lack of vaccination puts all other children at risk and could contribute to the spread of the vaccine preventable disease. You are still responsible to fulfill your tuition agreement and make any payments due during this time.

## **Removing Children from School**

No child is permitted to leave or be taken from school during the time school is in session by anyone other than an authorized adult (i.e., listed as approved on the Child Information Record). If you must have someone else pick up your child, please send a note to school. We will require photo identification from that adult when they arrive to pick up your child.

## **Late Pick Up Fee**

Our teachers are very busy before and after class preparing and cleaning up. They also have very limited time to enjoy a quick lunch break between classes. Thus, we have a \$1.00 per minute late fee when students are picked up late. We recognize that everyone has busy schedules and at times things happen which is why we wait five minutes of a grace period from the scheduled end time before charging the late fee. Families who are enrolled in the GSRP program are exempt from this fee.

## **Medication and Health Services**

No medication shall be given at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool except on written order by child's doctor. Parents must also complete the "Medication Permission and Instructions" Form (updated annually if medication is given on an ongoing basis). The medication will be stored according to the label instructions and in the original container. The container MUST have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication. All medication is to be stored out of the reach of children and returned to the child's parent or destroyed when parent determines it is no longer needed or it has expired. All medication is to be given according to the label directions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American



Academy of Pediatrics have both recommended that cold and cough medications NOT be used with children under 6. It is for this reason that we require a written order from the child's physician prior to administering cold and cough medications.

All other health services (i.e. medical, dental, etc.) will be provided by the parents. Referrals to community services and agencies will be made by the Lead Teacher, when appropriate.

### **Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Health Care Plan**

Licensing regulations require us to provide you with a copy of our Health Care Plan.

Many communicable diseases can be prevented through appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices. Contamination of hands, toys, and other equipment in the room appeared to play a role in the transmission of disease in child care settings. Illnesses can be spread by:

- Human waste, such as urine and feces
- Body fluids, such as saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge, open skin sores, and blood
- Direct skin to skin contact
- Touching a contaminated object
- The air, in droplets that are a result of a sneeze or cough

Since many infected people carry communicable diseases without symptoms, and many are contagious before symptoms, caregivers protect themselves and the children by carrying out, on a routine basis, universal precautions and sanitation procedures. The following policies are implemented at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool:

#### Handwashing

Staff must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school if the day begins with indoor activities
- Before preparing or serving food or drink
- After handling animals or insects
- After sneezing or blowing nose
- When hands are dirty
- Before administering medication
- Before and after giving first aid
- After using the restroom

After washing hands, it is important not to touch anything (such as a child, chair, doorknob, etc.) before handling food. If you are using gloves to prepare food, you still wash your hands before putting on the gloves. After any contact with a child's bodily fluids: including blood, vomit, sputum and mucus (from wiping noses) your hands must be washed.

Children must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school if the day begins with indoor activities
- Before eating
- After toileting
- After sneezing or blowing the nose
- After outdoor activities
- After handling animals or insects



- When hands appear dirty

How hands should be washed:

1. Wet both hands.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
3. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds to work up a good lather.
4. Be sure to wash between fingers, under nails, and all hand surfaces from the tips of the nails to beyond the wrists.
5. Rinse hands well under a stream of warm running water.
6. Leave water running while you dry your hands. You do not want to turn off the “dirty” faucet with your now clean hands.
7. Dry your hands well.
8. Use the towel to turn off the faucet.
9. Dispose of the towel in the trash.

Teaching the children: Time should be taken to teach children the correct hand washing technique as described above.

- When to wash hands.
- How to wash hands (demonstrate correct hand washing).
- Observe the child hand washing.
- Correct his/her technique as necessary.

### Handling Bodily Fluids

Staff will use universal precautions (i.e., protective gloves) when handling potential exposure to blood, including blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharge. Treat all situations involving potential contact with blood, body fluids, or medical waste with caution.

- Wash hands after contact with any bodily fluid substance or articles contaminated with a bodily substance. Use liquid soap from a dispenser; not bar soap.
- Wear protective gloves on both hands for anticipated direct hand contact with blood, body fluids, medical waste or contaminated objects or surfaces. Wash hands immediately after removing protective gloves.
- When anticipated exposure occurs, remove contaminated substances by washing hands and other skin surfaces immediately and thoroughly. If splashed in eyes, nose or mouth; flush with water immediately. Notify supervisor immediately. It is recommended that medical help be sought within 2 hours of exposure. Employees are not to risk their personal health by waiting to see treatment if they feel that immediate treatment is needed. Any approval that the employee feels that they need from their supervisor is to be “assumed” in exposure situations.
- Treat all linen soiled with blood and/or body secretions as infectious. Soiled linens and materials should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation. All linen should be bagged in a red-labeled biohazard bag at the location where it is used.
- Trash must be placed in covered containers bagged in impervious bags; secure tops when filled, double bag only if breakthrough is anticipated.
- Areas, surfaces, or articles that are grossly soiled with blood or other body fluids must be cleaned with detergent/disinfectant

### Cleaning and Sanitizing of Equipment

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool staff shall complete regular cleaning and sanitizing of equipment, toys, and surfaces. Cleaning procedures should be conducted according to the timeline below and anytime a child contracts a communicable disease. We use a three-step process for cleaning: Wash, Rinse, Sanitize.

Area	How Often	With What?
Countertops and tabletops	Daily/when soiled Before/After food is served	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Student Coat Hooks	Weekly	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Bare Floors	Swept daily, mopped weekly	Commercial floor cleaner
Small rugs	Vacuum daily, launder weekly or when visibly soiled	Laundry detergent
Carpets and Large Area Rugs	Vacuum daily, shampoo every 3 months or when visibly soiled. Must be dry when children return.	Commercial Cleaner
Door and cabinet handles	Daily or when visibly soiled	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Telephone Receivers	Weekly	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Toys (not contaminated with bodily fluid)	Bi-Weekly	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Dress-Up Clothes, stuffed toys	Bi-Weekly and when head lice or skin infection is identified	Laundry Detergent
Area	How Often	With What?
Water Table	Weekly	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Trash cans	Bi-weekly or when visibly soiled, empty daily	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Food Preparation and food service area	Before and after food activity; between preparing raw and cooked foods	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Eating Utensils	After each use; do not reuse single use service items	Residential dishwasher with sanitizing capability
Hand washing sinks, faucets, counter tops, soap dispensers, cabinet handles, and floors	Daily and visibly soiled	Spray/bucket bleach solution
Toilet seat, flush handles, and door knobs	Daily and visibly soiled	Spray/bucket bleach solution

Any surface contaminated with bodily fluids	Immediately	Spray/bucket bleach solution
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## Health Related Resources

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is involved with a wide variety of agencies in and around Ottawa/Allegan County. Information is shared and referrals are made to agencies such as:

- Help Me Grow – c/o Ottawa Area ISD Early Childhood Dept.
- Ottawa/Allegan County Health Department
- Community Mental Health
- Child Protective Services
- Early On
- Early Head Start
- Love, INC
- Whole Family Connection
- 211: Allegan County 211: Free and confidential hotline that provides information and referrals open 24 hours.

Additional Information can be found at Ottawa County Resource Guide

## Animals at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool

Animals play a large part in our curriculum and we will have animals visiting throughout the school year. Please notify your child's teacher of any animal/other allergies your child may have, or other concerns you have regarding animals. Please do not bring pets at drop off or pick up time.

## Procedures Related to Concerns

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool and the ODC Network strive to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times concerns may arise. If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of your child's teacher. If you are unable to resolve your concerns with your child's teacher, the Program Director or Chief Administrator may be contacted. If you feel Little Hawks Discovery Preschool is in violation of a licensing regulation, reports may be made to DHS: Office of Children and Adult Licensing. A copy of the regulations is available on the Parent Information Bulletin Board.

## Licensing Notebook

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool maintains a licensing notebook which contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years. This notebook includes all reports and CAPs developed on and after March 18, 2013, per licensing requirements. This notebook is available for parents to review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

## Planning for Transition to Kindergarten

In an effort to make the transition from preschool to kindergarten a smooth and efficient one, activities and procedures will be implemented at the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool to help children and parents be ready for the kindergarten year. For example, the newsletters will include

information about how early readiness skills are being developed. Procedures to help the children be independent and self-sufficient as kindergartners will be taught and practiced, including procedures like dressing and undressing themselves, opening snack packages, carrying items on a lunch tray. Information about kindergarten registration and enrollment requirements will be shared with parents. Our end of the year will not be a “graduation”, but will celebrate all your child has learned during this first step in their education!

## **How Do I Enroll My Child?**

### Enrollment Policy

To enroll your child for the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool, you will need to complete an [online registration](#) form and pay a \$25 registration fee (form & fee processed through our online system). This registration fee is non-refundable and non-transferable. If you withdraw your child after registration is complete, the registration fee is not refunded.

Enrollment in tuition-based sessions will be based on the date and time that registrations were completed. Applications for the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) must be completed at the time of registration. However, placement in GSRP will not be determined until the official allocation is received from the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District. This generally happens in July and is based on need. Applications for GSRP must be completed online through [Help Me Grow - Ottawa](#).

Registration occurs online. Parents will register for specific class sessions. If a class session is full, parents can add their name to a waitlist for sessions they are interested in. If you are on the waitlist, there is no registration fee. If enrollment changes occur and you move off the waitlist, the registration fee is due.

You will receive an email confirmation of registration through the online system.

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool guarantees a placement in the 4 year old program for children who attend in the 3 year old program each year; currently enrolled families have an early registration period to secure their 4 year old class for the following year. 4 year old classes that are full of returning students will be noted next to the registration link on the website.

The early registration period for currently enrolled families is meant for families whose currently enrolled child will be returning to Little Hawks for a second year. Families who have a child returning for a second year and also a child who is age-eligible to enter the program are able to register the younger sibling during the early registration period.

If the currently enrolled child is moving on to another school (Kindergarten, Young 5's, other preschool, etc.), there is NO early registration period available to register younger siblings. Families can register children during the public registration period.

There is NO early registration period available for siblings of children who have attended in the past.

Families are encouraged to [register online](#) promptly when registration opens.

### Tuition for 2021/22 School Year

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Tuition for 2021/22	
<i>Tuition may be paid in 1 payment (yearly, due in September), 2 payments (semester, due in September &amp; January) or 8 payments (monthly, due September - April). Tuition rates are listed below.</i>	
One session a week program	- \$685
Two sessions a week program	- \$1660
Three sessions a week program	- \$2195
Four sessions a week program	- \$3350

### Scholarships and Tuition Assistance

Families may be eligible for tuition assistance based on family size and income. One universal application form is used for all scholarship applications. Families may apply for scholarships after registering; it is also found on our [website](#). Applications should be completed in the spring or summer before preschool begins.

The Great Start Readiness Program is Michigan's state funded program that provides tuition-free preschool for qualifying 4-year-olds attending a 4-session a week program. Our Monday-Thursday afternoon sessions qualify for GSRP. Little Hawks receives a limited number of GSRP grants, and they are awarded based on need. Once all income eligible families are enrolled, families that fall outside the income guidelines may be considered for enrollment. These families will pay a sliding scale tuition as described by the OAISD guidelines. Information regarding tuition costs will be provided to families meeting the criteria. Families applying for the GSRP funded tuition are not required to pay the registration deposit. If it has been paid and the family is enrolled in GSRP, the deposit will be refunded.

Three-year-olds enrolled in a two- or three-session a week class may qualify for a partial tuition scholarship through [Ready for School](#). The income guidelines for this scholarship are similar to those of the GSRP program.

The Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Tuition Assistance fund was established within the ODC Network to provide an opportunity for all children to attend preschool. This scholarship is also based on economic need and special circumstances and is open to families who are not able to apply for GSRP or Ready for School scholarships.

### Payment Schedule and Options

Tuition may be paid in one payment for the whole year, in two payments at the beginning of each semester or in eight monthly payments September - April at the beginning of each month. Payments may be made by check, credit card, or ACH (automatic payment option) and are due on the first of the month. ACH transactions will be processed and withdrawn from accounts on the first. Checks



should be made payable to Little Hawks Discovery Preschool. Credit card payments can be made in the Little Hawks office or by phone at 616.393.0949.

If you are unable to make your monthly tuition payment and fall behind, please come to the Little Hawks office to speak with the Chief Administrator about updating your payment plan or the potential of applying for a scholarship. We want to work with families to fulfill their tuition agreements. In the case that a family falls behind and fails to speak with the Chief Administrator regarding an update to the payment plan, the following steps will be taken.

Step 1: If payment is not made in full for the month, speak with the Chief Administrator about a payment plan for the month. A full or partial payment must be made during the month.

Step 2: If a full or partial payment and payment plan is not created or fulfilled by the end of the month, the tuition account will be placed on probationary status, meaning that if no full or partial payment is made by the end of the second month the child will be withdrawn from the program.

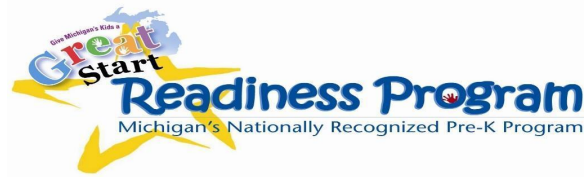
Families with outstanding tuition balances will be unable to enroll children for future years of the program until the balance is paid in full.

### **Withdrawal Policy**

It is required for families to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the manual. As problems arise, communication with the Little Hawks Preschool staff is desired and encouraged. When staff members are informed of the situation, most problems can be overcome as staff and families work together. If a child is withdrawn from the preschool during the program year, tuition for that semester will be due.

# GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM (GSRP)

The Great Start Readiness Program is Michigan's state funded preschool program for four-year-olds with factors which may place them at risk for low educational attainment, and is free for those who qualify. Little Hawks Discovery Preschool GSRP is a cooperative effort of the Ottawa Area Intermediate Service District, local school districts, and other local child care/preschool providers. The programs receive funds from the Michigan Department of Education and every classroom is licensed by the Michigan Department of Human Services.



## *Great Start Readiness Program Philosophy:*

Our goal is to provide every preschooler with the best educational opportunities through our child-centered, hands-on curriculum set in a rich learning environment which is created through our families, community and professional staff.

We believe that young children learn to the best of their ability when given:

- A safe, healthy, nurturing environment
- Development of strong teacher-child relationships in combination with strong family-teacher relationships in which all are valued
- Many opportunities for play and learning through play experiences
- Families are involved and we work together to help your child
- The activities are geared toward your child's current skills and interests
- Our decisions are made from a child-centered focus which includes looking at the Early Childhood Standards of Quality– Prekindergarten, the curriculum, assessment information, feedback from parents and the diverse social, economic, cultural and family needs that exist within the classroom.

## **Staff**

The staff of the GSRP is committed to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families. Classroom teachers hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development with a specialization in preschool teaching or a valid Michigan teaching certificate and an Early Childhood Education (ZA) or Early Childhood-General and Special Education (ZS) endorsement. Most classrooms will have one teacher and at least one associate teacher to ensure a staff ratio of one adult to eight children. The classroom associate teacher holds a Child Development Credential (CDA) or an associate's degree in Child Development. In classrooms that have three adults, the third adult meets the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing, Department of Human Services licensing requirements as a "caregiver."

## **GSRP Support Staff**

The GSRP has the advantage of working with expert staffing from Ottawa Area Intermediate School District as well as local district personnel. The GSRP Early Childhood Specialist provides classroom support as well as professional development for GSRP staff. The Early Childhood Specialist visits the classroom throughout the school year.

## **Referrals**

We believe that home and school together form a positive support system for the growing child. Parents are always kept informed of their child's progress. If a referral is needed for additional support, the family will be involved in contacting their local school district and creating a plan and setting specific goals for the child. Families will be informed at any point that the child is receiving one-on-one support services, and classroom teachers will partner with support staff to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

## **Inclusion**

Little Hawks Discovery Preschool welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach his/her full potential.

## **Grievances**

Our program strives to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times a concern may arise. If you have any questions or concerns you cannot resolve with the teacher directly, please bring the concerns to the attention of the Program Director who will work through concerns with you.

## **Program Measurement**

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District and its Little Hawks Discovery Preschool GSRP are required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effects of the state-wide preschool program Great Start Readiness Program. Information is sometimes collected about staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Contact: [mde-gsrp@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-gsrp@michigan.gov) or 517-373-8483 or MDE, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services, 608 W. Allegan, PO Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.

## **Qualifying for FREE PRESCHOOL** **GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program)**

Children must be 4 years of age on or before September 1st of the year of enrollment and may not yet be 5 years old. An application must be completed. Eligibility is based on annual income. A child may be eligible for reduced tuition if the family income is above the guidelines and other eligibility factors are documented. All applications are confidential. See chart below for family size and income guidelines.

## Enrollment Policy

Enrollment of students will be based on: Availability of an opening in the appropriate class. Students will be enrolled in the Great Start Readiness Program with priority to students of greatest need first. A wait list of eligible students will be maintained and openings filled based on income and family size. Once all income eligible families are enrolled, families that fall outside the income guidelines may be considered for enrollment. These families will pay a sliding scale tuition as described by the OAISD guidelines. Information regarding tuition costs will be provided to families meeting the criteria.

The OAISD maintains a Joint Recruitment and Enrollment plan. Parents may complete an online application through the [Help Me Grow website](#).

GSRP Income Eligibility (2018 Income)	
Number in Household	Annual Income Limit
1	\$31,225
2	\$42,275
3	\$53,325
4	\$64,375
5	\$75,425
6	\$86,475
7	\$97,525
8	\$108,575

Parents/Guardians are asked to:

1) Meet the enrollment guidelines

2) Return ALL completed forms which includes the following:

- All families are asked to complete an enrollment packet prior to the first day of attendance in GSRP. The packet includes an application, health requirements and emergency contact.
- Families will need to provide proof of the child's age (e.g., birth certificate, hospital certificate or similar documentation) and immunization card along with other important enrollment requirements.
- GSRP requires proof of family income for eligibility.

To maintain enrollment in the program, families are asked to:

- Agree to keep the Child Emergency Information up to date, i.e. Telephone numbers, workplace, address, emergency contact, etc.
- Support staff in maintaining a safe and enjoyable environment through a positive, preventive discipline approach.
- Attend and participate in scheduled parent/guardian/teacher home visits and conferences.

- See that students are in school unless absence is absolutely necessary. Families are responsible for informing the teachers when a child is ill or absent for some important reason.
- Respond to teacher recommendations concerning physical conditions, i.e. Scheduling appointments with appropriate professionals. Families are requested to provide teachers with results.
- Respond to requests for information or assistance needed to promote student success.



*This material was developed under a grant from the Michigan Department of Education.*

### ***Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Contact Information***

#### **Little Hawks Discovery Preschool Staff**

Rachel Hucul, Preschool Director and VP Early Childhood, [rachel@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:rachel@outdoordiscovery.org)

Jayne Schutter, Chief Administrator, [jayne@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:jayne@outdoordiscovery.org)

Darcy Logan, Teacher, [darcy@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:darcy@outdoordiscovery.org)

Kelsey Zuiderveen, Teacher, [kelsey@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:kelsey@outdoordiscovery.org)

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Nicole Dykstra, Teacher, [nicoled@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:nicoled@outdoordiscovery.org)

Vicki Sturtevant, Teacher, [vicki@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:vicki@outdoordiscovery.org)

Jenna Zamzow, Teacher, [jenna@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:jenna@outdoordiscovery.org)

Kristi Rosema, Teacher, [kristi@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:kristi@outdoordiscovery.org)

Taylor VanNaarden, Teacher, [taylor@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:taylor@outdoordiscovery.org)

Ruth Cronk, Parent Engagement Coordinator, [ruth@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:ruth@outdoordiscovery.org)

Phone number: [616-393-0949](tel:616-393-0949)

Hours of operation: Monday - Thursday: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm, Friday: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Mailing Address: ODC Network, 4214 56<sup>th</sup> Street, Holland, MI 49423

Building Address: 5678 143<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Holland, MI 49423

# 2021-2022

## School Year Calendar



### July '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### August '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### September '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

### October '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

### November '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

### December '21

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

### January '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

### February '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

### March '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### April '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

### May '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### June '22

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Aug 16-19 Parent/Caregiver Evening Meetings  
 Sep 7-8 GSRP Home Visits  
 Sep 9 Open House  
 Sep 13 First Day of School  
 Oct 23 Treats & Trails Event  
 Nov 22-23 Conferences - No School  
 Nov 24-26 Thanksgiving Break - No School  
 Dec 20-31 Holiday Break - No School  
 Feb 21 Mid-Winter Break - No School  
 Mar 9-11 Conferences - No School  
 Apr 1-8 Spring Break - No School  
 May 27 Last Day of School



## Preschool Volunteer Guidelines

Step One: [Complete a profile](#) (new or returning volunteers)

- You must be approved as a volunteer prior to participating in a volunteer activity at Little Hawks Discovery Preschool. This means that a background check is completed. All volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care. Any individual registered on the public sex offender registry (PSOR) is prohibited from having contact with any child in care.
- Visit the [district website](#). If you are a new volunteer select “*complete an online profile*”. If you have volunteered for the Hamilton Community Schools in the past, select “*update your volunteer profile*”. (Allow up to 2 weeks for processing).
- You will NOT receive an e-mail stating that your profile has been accepted but should be able to sign up online when you receive requests by e-mail.
- You will receive a call or a letter if your profile has been denied.
- If you have questions or do not have Internet, please contact Tara Weber at [tweber@hamiltonschools.us](mailto:tweber@hamiltonschools.us) or 269-751-6203. There are no paper profiles or paper forms.

Once you have been approved to volunteer:

- The volunteer coordinators for the preschool will send an email asking for help with a variety of activities. You can choose the activities that you wish to volunteer for and sign up through the online system. A link will be included in the email you receive.
- If you have to cancel your volunteer commitment for an activity, please contact the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible so that a substitute can be contacted.
- Please arrive on time for the activity you have volunteered for. You must always, always sign in (and out) using the check in computer provided in the Little Hawks office. Wear your volunteer ID tag; be sure that it can be seen easily by staff and preschoolers.
- Check in with the preschool teaching staff when you arrive. They will give you specific instructions, if required.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- All volunteers work under the direction of the preschool's teaching staff.
- Be dependable and arrive on time.
- If you need to cancel, please contact the preschool volunteer coordinator. DO NOT send a spouse or friend who is not an approved volunteer!

## Confidentiality

- Students' personal information is protected under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act. This includes any learning or disciplinary needs of students; this information is confidential and may not be shared or discussed outside of the classroom.
- If you are ever asked about a student, simply say that as a volunteer you cannot discuss or share information about students.

## Discipline and Safety

- Volunteers may only accompany their own child to the bathroom. Teaching staff must accompany all other children if the need arises (for example, if the class is outside and a child needs to go into the classroom to use the bathroom.)
- Preschool teaching staff will handle any student discipline if the need arises. Generally, problem situations and conflicts are handled by the teaching staff using a step-by-step problem solving method with the goal of helping children solve problems for themselves.
- Always stay within sight of the teaching staff. If you are working with an individual child, be sure that you are in an open area where you can be seen by the teaching staff.
- Body fluids (blood, vomit, urine etc.) must be handled according to recommended guidelines. The preschool staff has been trained and will take care of any situations that arise and require clean up of bodily fluids.
- By law, only trained school staff members may dispense medication to students.

## Understand and follow school procedures:

- Treat all students fairly, equally and positively.
- Reinforce and demonstrate the school's rules and guidelines.
- Report any concerns regarding a student, staff, or parent to the preschool director.
- Appropriate, modest dress is required at all times.
- Use appropriate language and maintain emotional control in difficult or frustrating situations.
- All ODC buildings, including the preschool, are drug, weapon, tobacco, smoke and vaping free.
- Unless approved by the lead teacher or program director, distribution of literature is prohibited.
- Always follow staff instructions carefully, asking for clarification if necessary.
- Unless otherwise instructed, please arrange childcare for younger children so that volunteer time is dedicated to the students at school.

## Appropriate student contact

- When encouraging children, give a high five or a pat on the back instead of intimate touching or gestures (e.g., a hug).
- An adult being approached by a student with a hug can turn to the side and give a pat on the shoulder.
- A student wanting to sit on a volunteer's lap should be offered a spot nearby.

- Volunteer/student relationships should not go beyond the school day.

#### Mandated reporting

- In Michigan, all volunteers, as well as staff, in preschools have a responsibility to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Preschool volunteers will be required to read the preschool policy about child abuse/neglect and sign a statement, acknowledging that they have read this information and recognize their responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- If a child discloses information that would make a volunteer suspect child abuse or neglect, the volunteer is required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services (CPS).
- The lead preschool teacher or preschool director will assist any volunteer in the reporting process if the need arises.

#### AS A PRESCHOOL VOLUNTEER I AGREE THAT:

- I accept the responsibility to serve under the supervision of the preschool teaching staff in support of the educational program.
- I will be reliable and unobtrusive; channel suggestions constructively, keep information confidential, and comply with the state laws and preschool policies.
- Because the Hamilton Community Schools (HCS) and the ODC Network (ODC) diligently protect the safety of all students and community assets, my background will be checked regularly for any criminal history. All volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care.
- Volunteering at preschool is a privilege. The HCS and ODC reserve the right to decline or revoke an individual's request to volunteer based on criminal history or refusal to abide by the above rules and guidelines.
- I am authorizing picture and video use of my volunteering time to be used in publications or videos.
- I am releasing the Hamilton Community Schools and ODC of any obligation should I become ill or receive an injury as a result of my volunteer services.
- I certify that all information provided on my volunteer profile is correct and true to the best of my knowledge and realize that I will be notified by phone or mail if my profile is not accepted.

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures**

To assure the health and safety of all children, staff members and volunteers of the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool will comply with the Child Protection Law and follow the procedures below for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. The program director will review these procedures annually with all staff members.

Child care providers are mandated reporters and must contact the Children's Protective Services (CPS) immediately when they suspect child abuse and/or neglect. The immediate verbal report will be made to Centralized Intake by calling (855) 444-3911. The verbal report will be followed by a written

report. The written report, using form DHS-3200 (Report of Suspected or Actual Child Abuse or Neglect) will be submitted within 72 hours. The written report can be faxed to CPS at (616) 977-1154 or (616) 977-1158 or emailed to [DHS-CPS-CIGroup@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-CPS-CIGroup@michigan.gov)

The staff member or volunteer suspecting the abuse or neglect has a mandated responsibility to report to CPS. This responsibility is not relieved by reporting the situation to an administrator or other staff member.

When child abuse or neglect is suspected, the staff member or volunteer need only obtain enough information to make a report. If a child starts disclosing information regarding abuse and/or neglect, the staff member or volunteer must ask only open-ended questions, if necessary, to determine whether a report needs to be made to CPS. The child must not be led during the conversation. The staff member or volunteer must not attempt to conduct his/her own investigation either before reporting to CPS or during a CPS investigation. If the staff member or volunteer is in doubt about whether or not a report should be made, the staff member or volunteer can call the Allegan County Department of Human Services for consultation.

Below are some commonly accepted warning signs associated with various forms of child abuse/neglect. The warning signs, in themselves, are not the only indicators of abuse/neglect and, if present, do not always mean that a child is being abused or neglected.

- Physical abuse: sores, burns, bruises, injuries on body and reluctance or vagueness about where the injuries originated. Injuries that do not match the explanation.
- Neglect: Consistent signs of hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, unattended medical needs.
- Sexual abuse: unusual sexual awareness or behavior, inappropriate sexual behavior; pain, itching, bleeding or bruises in the genital area; persistent sexual play with other children, themselves, toys or pets; withdrawal or depression.
- Other signs: extremely aggressive and/or passive behavior; delays in development; fear of parents or adults; unusually shy, avoidance of other children and adults; avoidance of physical contact; reports of being hurt or abused.

At the time of hiring, all staff members will have on file, a signed and dated statement indicating the three items listed below. Before volunteering for the first time, all volunteers will sign and date a statement indicating the three items listed below.

- Awareness that abuse and neglect of children is against the law.
- Knowledge/information about the Little Hawks Discovery Preschool's policies on child abuse and neglect.
- Knowledge that caregivers, including all staff members are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services.