



Little Me

521 4th Ave, Fernie BC, V0B 1M0

250-423-1095

littlemefernie@gmail.com

PARENT HANDBOOK

2026–27 School Year



Welcome

Welcome to Little Me Pre-Kindergarten! We are a licensed private facility offering high-quality enhanced program for preschool-aged children.

Goals and Objectives

As Early Childhood Educators we are dedicated to promoting the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of young children. The skills developed in early childhood lay the foundation for lifelong success. Our goal is to give young children the tools to build these developmental skills and to help prepare them for kindergarten.

Why Choose Little Me?

- We offer an all-day educational experience
- Have a fun, friendly, play-based atmosphere
- A variety of curriculum options and longer class times
- Outdoor play each day
- Downtown location which allows for community experiences
- Solid knowledge about what it really means for your child to be “ready for kindergarten”

- Parent-teacher interviews and progress updates
- Newsletter to keep you informed about class activities
- End of year assessments (Report Cards)

How do I deal with my child's separation for the first day of Pre-K?

Separation anxiety in children is very natural. Children do grow out of this condition, generally by four years of age. If your child has tantrums, yells, is clingy or cries a lot, be reassured that these are normal reactions and show they have a loving bond with you. Most children tend to stop crying about three or four minutes after their parent leaves. Separation anxiety can come and go. However, children soon build trusting relationships with their teachers which helps relieve any anxiety.

Tips that ease separation anxiety

- Be sure to attend orientation day with your child
- Quick goodbyes are the best
- Smile and be happy, children seek facial cues of their parents in new situations
- Let them know who will be picking them up
- Read books about going to school
- Let them help pack their lunch and pick a special snack
- Lay out their clothes the night before
- Do not sneak out without saying goodbye as this can make your child distrustful
- Do not bribe your child
- Talk about school in a positive way and mention activities they enjoy
- Trust our teachers and allow time for us to build a relationship and bond with your child
- Show up on time so your child is arriving with their peers
- Stick to the schedule and follow through – turning around or leaving once you get to

school can teach your child it is not a safe place



How does play help my child learn?

Although adults separate work and play, play is the work of young children.

As your child plays, they connect their play object to what they are observing and thinking to the world around them. Through play children learn math, spatial concepts, language skills, gross and fine motor, social skills and how to express themselves.

Play is how children naturally learn about their environment and themselves. That is why high- quality early education programs make play-based learning the core of their programs.

Will my child learn to read and write?

We do not “teach” reading and writing per se. That is not the purpose of early education. Your child may be able to read and write before kindergarten but that depends on many factors. The purpose of pre-k is to assist your child to develop the independent skills and be physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually ready for kindergarten.

The “My Child Can” sheet was developed by Kindergarten Teachers within the Elk Valley and details the skills and developmental areas they hope to see in their new students for them to be truly ready for school. Little Me uses this in our assessments for each student and will include it with a mid-point assessment halfway through the year.



Program Information

Hours of Operation

Little Me is open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Fun Fridays are offered from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on scheduled Fridays for eligible/enrolled children. Fun Fridays follow the School District 5 (SD5) school calendar and are not offered on Fridays when SD5 schools are closed.

Dates of Operation

Little Me operates September through June. Our Monday–Thursday program follows the annual Little Me calendar, and Fun Fridays follow the School District 5 (SD5) school calendar. Little Me is closed during scheduled Christmas and Spring Break closures and during July and August.

Christmas Break and Spring Break Closures

Dates vary each year and follow the public school calendar.

Ages and Number of Children

The ages of children enrolled in our program are 3-4 and 4-5 years old. Requirements allow a maximum of 16 children per classroom. Staff to child ratio is 1:8 as per licensing requirements.

3 & 4 Year-Old Mixed Class

Our mixed-age class provides a welcoming environment for 3- and 4-year-olds to learn and grow together. Through play, exploration, songs, stories, and hands-on learning, children develop confidence, independence, friendships, and important social-emotional skills.

Activities and expectations are adapted to each child's age and stage of development, allowing younger children to learn alongside older peers while giving older children opportunities to build confidence, leadership, and independence.

4-Year-Old Pre-K Program

Our 4-year-old Pre-K program focuses on kindergarten readiness through a balance of play-based learning and structured classroom experiences. Children develop independence, social skills, classroom routines, and the confidence needed for a successful transition to kindergarten.

This program is intended for children in the year before they enter kindergarten. Exceptions may be considered for previously enrolled children when the family and Little Me agree that an additional Pre-K year is in the child's best interest.

Registration

Enrollment is offered on a first-come, first-served basis while maintaining appropriate classroom balance and program needs. Once your child is enrolled, their scheduled days are reserved for the school year.

A secure placement fee equal to one month of tuition is required to confirm your child's space. The fee is applied to your child's final month of enrollment when the required withdrawal notice has been provided.

Please note: If you have a child in our program and are looking to register another child (sibling), you must follow the first-come, first-served procedure.

Program Schedule

4-Year-Old Pre-K Program

- Monday–Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- Fun Fridays: Optional and available to all students enrolled in the 4-Year-Old Pre-K Program.

3 & 4 Year-Old Mixed Class

- Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
- Fun Fridays: Optional for eligible students who are able to participate independently in the Friday program. Readiness for Fun Fridays will be determined in consultation with Little Me staff.

Fun Fridays

- Friday, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., on scheduled SD5 school days.
- Fun Fridays offer a more relaxed day of play, socialization, and activities and follow the School District 5 calendar.

Pre-K Fees

Full Time: \$831 per month Two days: \$350 per month

Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)

Families may be eligible for additional assistance with preschool fees through the B.C. Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB). Eligibility and benefit amounts are determined by the Province of British Columbia. Families are responsible for applying directly through My Family Services. Little Me will provide or confirm child care arrangement information when required as part of the application process.

Child Care Reduction Fee Initiative

Little Me is enrolled in the Childcare Reduction Fee Initiative offered by the Government of BC. This initiative is given to ALL families who attend our program. No action is needed by you to partake in this fee reduction, it is all completed by the Government and Little Me Management. The amount of the Childcare Initiative is applied from the Little Me fees mentioned above and will reduce parent fees as follows:

Full Time funding reduction: \$545 per month (parent fee: \$286) Two-day funding reduction: \$218 per month (parent fee: \$132)

Fees / Payment

Monthly tuition is due on or before the first of each month. If payment is overdue, management will contact the family. Continued non-payment may result in enrollment being paused until the account is brought up to date or alternate arrangements have been approved.



Payment may be made by monthly e-transfer or by another payment arrangement approved by management. We do not accept cash. Insufficient funds may be subject to a \$40 NSF fee.

Secure Placement Fee

A secure placement fee equal to one month of tuition is required to hold your child's space. The fee is applied to your child's final month of enrollment when the required withdrawal notice has been provided. Please see the Withdrawal policy for details.

Refunds

Fees are not refunded for absences, illness, vacations, statutory holidays, scheduled closures, or unexpected closures outside Little Me's control. Secure placement fees are handled according to the Withdrawal policy.

Closures

Little Me may close when conditions make it unsafe or impractical to operate, including power outages, severe weather, building concerns, or other emergencies. Families will be notified as soon as possible when an unexpected closure occurs.

Little Me also closes for scheduled statutory holidays, Christmas Break, Spring Break, and other dates identified on the annual program calendar. Refunds are not provided for scheduled closures, statutory holidays, or unexpected closures outside Little Me's control.

Withdrawal from Little Me

If you need to withdraw your child, one month's written notice is required. When the required notice is provided, the secure placement fee will be applied to your child's final month of enrollment. If the required notice is not provided, one month's fee may apply.

We welcome respectful feedback regarding your reason for leaving and will treat information shared with management confidentially.

What to Bring to Pre-K

Please label all belongings with your child's name. Each day, please send:

- A school-sized backpack
- A labeled, spill-proof water bottle
- Lunch, morning snack, and a separate afternoon pocket snack
- Indoor shoes
- Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing
- A complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear

Please avoid sending toys, money, or other valuables unless requested for a classroom activity. Little Me is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.

Active Play & Screen Use Policy

Little Me values active, hands-on play as an important part of children's physical, social, and emotional development. Children are provided with opportunities for active play each day, including outdoor play whenever weather and conditions allow.

Screen time is limited and is not used as a regular substitute for active play or classroom learning. iPads or other screens may occasionally be used for short, purposeful educational activities such as learning songs, movement activities, or age-appropriate educational programs that support our classroom curriculum.

Children are expected to participate in outdoor and active play as part of the regular program. If your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor play, they should remain home until they are able to comfortably take part in the full school day.

Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen to your child before school when needed. Staff may reapply sunscreen during the day; a labeled bottle may be kept in your child's bag. Sunscreen is not shared between children.

Attendance

Little Me is a Pre-Kindergarten program and follows a daily schedule full of learning, play, and important classroom routines. Consistent attendance and on-time arrival help children feel secure, understand what to expect, and participate fully in the day.

Please make every effort to have your child arrive on time. Arriving with their classmates allows children to settle in together, take part in the opening routine, and transition into the classroom without feeling that they have missed something. Starting the day calmly and on time can have a positive impact on a child's confidence, behaviour, participation, and overall success throughout the day.

Late arrivals can also interrupt activities already underway and can make it more difficult for the arriving child and the rest of the class to remain engaged in the routine. We understand that occasional delays happen; however, repeated late arrivals may require a conversation with the family to support a more consistent arrival routine.

If your child will be late or absent, please text the classroom at 250-423-1095. Please do not use Facebook or email for same-day attendance information, as these may not be checked during class time.



Arrival

Little Me staff will be ready to receive your child at 9:00 a.m. each morning. Staff are in the classroom before 9:00 a.m. preparing for the day and are not available to receive children early. If you require care before 9:00 a.m., please arrange alternate care outside of Little Me.

At arrival, the parent/guardian must greet a staff member so we can confirm that the child has been safely transferred into our care and complete the daily sign-in record. Children should not be sent into the building unattended.

Children arriving after 9:10 a.m. are considered late. When arriving late, a parent or guardian must accompany their child into the building, supervise and help them get ready, and deliver them directly to their teacher. We understand that occasional delays happen; however, frequent late arrivals can affect a child's transition and classroom routines. If lateness becomes an ongoing concern, Little Me may invite the family to a supportive conversation so we can work together on a more consistent arrival plan.

Dismissal/Safe Release of Children

Little Me has two regular dismissal times: 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Please write your required pickup time in your child's agenda each day so staff know which dismissal time your child will be leaving.

If you select the 2:45 p.m. dismissal, please be prompt and ready to pick up your child at 2:45. This allows staff to complete the first dismissal smoothly and return their attention to the children remaining until 3:00 p.m.

Children will only be released to a parent/guardian or an authorized pickup person listed with Little Me. Please notify staff of any changes to your child's regular pickup arrangements.

Late Pickup

Little Me closes at 3:00 p.m. and children must be picked up by that time. We understand that unexpected circumstances can occasionally cause a delay. If you believe you will be late, please contact staff immediately so that we know you are safe and can reassure your child.

If a late pickup occurs, the family will receive a written warning. If late pickups continue after a warning, Little Me may implement a required 2:45 p.m. pickup time for that child. If a 2:45 p.m. pickup time is implemented, the family will be notified in writing.

Continued difficulty meeting the required pickup time may result in a meeting with management to determine whether Little Me can continue to meet the family's scheduling needs.

Emergency Contacts & Authorized Pickup

Families must provide current emergency contact information and authorized alternate pickup people. Please notify Little Me promptly of any changes.

Children will only be released to a parent/guardian or an authorized pickup person. Staff may request photo identification when the person picking up is not known to them.

Meals and Snacks

Food and Drink

Please send a nutritious lunch, morning snack, and afternoon snack each day. Children are active at school and often eat more than they do at home, so we recommend packing a variety of healthy options.

- Send water only in a labeled, spill-proof water bottle.
- Pack food in child-friendly containers your child can learn to open and close independently, along with any required utensils.
- Hot food must be sent in a thermos; microwave access is not available.
- Please send an afternoon “pocket snack” in a separate labeled bag for easy access when we are outside or on the go.
- Little Me is a nut-free facility. Families must carefully follow any additional allergy restrictions communicated for the class.

Children are encouraged to eat healthy choices first, but they are not required to finish all of their food. Staff will support independence, good table manners, handwashing, and safe eating practices.

Food Safety

- Children are seated and supervised while eating.
- Round foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, and hot dogs must be cut lengthwise into safe pieces.
- Please do not send hard candies or throat lozenges.

Families will be notified in advance of shared snacks, cooking activities, or celebrations so that allergies and dietary restrictions can be accommodated.

Celebrations and Holidays

Little Me may recognize seasonal celebrations and special occasions through age-appropriate classroom activities. Families will be notified when shared food is planned so allergies and dietary needs can be considered.

Children are welcome to bring a shared birthday snack with advance notice to staff. Please do not send party invitations for children to distribute during class; staff can discreetly send invitations home on your behalf.

Care and Respect

Care and Respect

Little Me educators are committed to maintaining the dignity, safety, and well-being of every child. We use clear, consistent, age-appropriate expectations and positive guidance to help children develop independence, emotional regulation, social skills, and respect for others.

If your child has a difficult day or ongoing concerns arise, staff will communicate with you and may request a parent/teacher meeting so that home and school can work together on supportive strategies.

When a Child May Need to Be Picked Up

Families must be available, or have an authorized alternate available, when a child cannot safely or comfortably participate in the program. This may include illness, significant emotional distress, unsafe or aggressive behaviour, repeated toileting accidents as outlined in the Toilet Training Policy, an injury requiring medical attention, or an emergency/closure.

Parents are asked to arrange pickup promptly when contacted and to remain in communication with staff until the child is collected.

Teacher Qualifications

Children will always have access to a staff member trained in First Aid and CPR. Staff meet applicable certification, criminal record check, reference, and licensing requirements. A qualified Early Childhood Educator (ECE) is available to the program as required.

Behavioral Guidance

Little Me uses positive guidance, redirection, active listening, modelling, natural and logical consequences, and age-appropriate choices. Educators focus on the behaviour rather than labeling the child and help children identify feelings, solve problems, and learn appropriate ways to manage conflict.

- Clear, consistent, and simple limits
- Positive language and age-appropriate expectations
- Acknowledging feelings and encouraging problem solving
- Redirecting unsafe or unwanted behaviour
- Modelling respectful communication and social skills

Child Development

Sometimes a child shows signs that they may benefit from extra support. If this happens our teachers will notify you and request to reach out to the following (but not limited to) services: Speech Therapy (SLP), Occupational Therapy (OT), Behaviour Intervention (BI) and/or Supported Child Development (SCD).

Supported Child Development

Little Me welcomes children with diverse strengths and needs and works to create an inclusive environment where children can participate meaningfully in the program.

When a child requires additional support, Little Me may work with the family, Supported Child Development (SCD), and other professionals. Enrollment or continued attendance may depend on whether the supports needed for the child's safety, participation, and well-being are available within the program.

Families are encouraged to share relevant information and recommendations from professionals so that appropriate strategies can be considered. Individual information is handled respectfully and confidentially.

Difficult Behaviour

Little Me will document and record any incidents that may occur. We maintain zero tolerance for violence and/or physical aggression. Our staff will do our best to work with families and children to provide proper care and support. However, in the case where staff or children's safety is at risk and/or it becomes impossible to carry out class activities. The service may need to be terminated or suspended until the child can receive full support, ensuring the safety of all involved.

Addressing Concerns/Issues

Addressing Concerns & Communication

We value respectful, direct communication with families. If a concern arises, please contact management to arrange a time to discuss it. Sensitive or complex concerns are best addressed in person rather than through lengthy or emotionally charged text or email messages.

Staff personal phone numbers and personal email accounts should not be used for Little Me matters. When appropriate, two staff members may be present for meetings to support clear communication and accurate follow-up.

Parent Expectations

Families are expected to read and follow the policies in this handbook and to communicate respectfully with staff and other Little Me families. Shouting, threats, intimidation, discriminatory or abusive language, physical aggression, or inappropriate public/social-media conduct involving Little Me staff, students, or families will not be tolerated.

Termination or Pause of Services

Little Me will make reasonable efforts to work with families when concerns arise. Services may be paused or discontinued when necessary to protect the safety and well-being of children or staff, when required supports are unavailable, when fees remain unpaid, when a family repeatedly does not follow program policies, or when respectful and workable communication between the family and program cannot be maintained.

This includes the specific attendance, late pickup, toilet-training, illness, behavioural, and support requirements described elsewhere in this handbook. Whenever reasonably possible, management will communicate concerns with the family before services are paused or discontinued.



Confidentiality

Little Me respects the privacy of children, families, and staff. Personal information is shared only as required for the child's care, program operation, licensing, or as otherwise required by law.

Family Involvement

We value a positive partnership between home and school. Families are encouraged to communicate with staff, ask questions, share information that may affect their child, and participate in meetings or classroom opportunities when appropriate.

Health

Illness & Precautions

At Little Me, the health and safety of our students, staff, and families is deeply important. Children who are ill must remain at home so they can recover and to reduce the spread of illness within our classroom community.

48-Hour Return Policy

Children may return to Little Me once they have been symptom-free for a full 48 hours without the use of medication to mask symptoms. The 48-hour period begins after the last symptom has occurred, not when the illness first began.

When antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious bacterial illness, children must have received antibiotics for at least 48 hours and must also meet Little Me's symptom-free requirements before returning, unless management has provided different return conditions based on the specific circumstances.

Illness / Send-Home Form

When a child becomes ill at Little Me or is sent home because of illness symptoms, staff will provide the family with an Illness / Send-Home Form. The form will document the symptoms or illness concern observed at school and clearly outline the conditions that must be met before the child may return.

Families are expected to follow the return conditions stated on the form. Depending on the illness or circumstances, an "Other" section may be used to document additional return requirements when needed.

Symptoms to Keep Your Child Home

- Fever (38°C / 100.4°F)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained or contagious rash
- Persistent or significant cough
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Unusual irritability, lethargy, or inability to participate normally
- Significant nasal discharge accompanied by other illness symptoms
- Sore throat
- Headache or stiff neck
- Earache
- Any contagious illness or symptoms that prevent participation in the regular program, including outdoor play

Communicable Disease

Please notify Little Me if your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness. Management will advise the family of the return conditions that apply, using the Illness / Send-Home Form when appropriate.

Allergies/Asthma & Medical Conditions

Families must inform Little Me of diagnosed allergies, asthma, or other medical conditions that may require accommodation or emergency treatment. Where medication or specific treatment may be required, an appropriate medical/action plan must be provided and kept current in the child's file.

Toilet Training Policy

Children attending Little Me who are over three years of age are required to be fully toilet trained.

For the purpose of our program, fully toilet trained means that a child can recognize when they need to use the toilet, communicate that need to an educator, manage their clothing with age-appropriate independence, use the toilet, and complete basic toileting hygiene with minimal assistance.

We understand that occasional accidents can happen, particularly when children are busy, excited, or adjusting to a new environment. An isolated accident does not mean that a child is not toilet trained.

Toileting Accidents

If a wet accident occurs, staff will provide age-appropriate assistance and the child's soiled clothing will be sent home. Families must ensure that a complete change of clothing is available at school each day.

For bowel-movement accidents, families will be contacted to assist their child with cleaning and changing. Parents/guardians must have authorized alternate pickup persons available in the event they cannot attend.

If a child experiences repeated toileting accidents or demonstrates that they are not yet fully toilet trained, Little Me may require the child's enrollment to be temporarily paused until they are consistently toilet trained and able to meet the requirements of the program.

Individual Support Needs

If a child requires toileting assistance beyond Little Me's standard practices due to an identified additional need, an individual continence care plan may be required in consultation with the family and appropriate professionals. Families should speak with management before enrollment or as soon as the need becomes known.

Policy Acknowledgement

Parents/guardians and the child's authorized alternate pickup persons may be required to sign the Toilet Training Policy acknowledgement confirming that they understand the toileting requirements and accident procedure.

Safety

Emergency Plan

Emergency Plan

Little Me maintains emergency procedures for situations such as fire, evacuation, utility disruption, and other safety concerns. Staff are trained in emergency procedures and emergency contact information is kept readily available.

If an unidentified person or situation presents a potential safety risk, children will be kept secure and staff will contact emergency services when necessary.

First Aid

Children will always have access to an employee certified in First Aid and CPR. A first aid kit will be up to date and readily available within the facility and on outings.

Fire Drill/Evacuation Process

Fire Drill/Evacuation Process

Fire drills are practiced regularly so children and staff are familiar with evacuation procedures. In an emergency, staff will take attendance and emergency information, move children to the designated safe meeting area, and contact families when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Evacuation Locations

Our primary evacuation area is the City Hall area at 501 3rd Ave, Fernie. If the area must be evacuated further, staff may relocate children to the Fernie Memorial Arena at 1092 BC-3, Fernie. Families will be notified of the pickup location as soon as possible.

Emergency supplies, including water, food, first aid supplies, attendance records, and emergency contact information, are maintained and checked regularly.

Emergency Recovery

We acknowledge that an emergency can be very detrimental. In the rare case that an emergency should occur staff will seek out appropriate support groups or counseling for themselves, children, and their families. A meeting will be arranged as soon as possible to debrief with staff, guardians, families, and community members to begin a recovery plan to rebuild the childcare facility both emotionally and physically (if needed) and address any areas that may need improvement in set emergency procedures. The debriefing will also discuss if the center is capable of reopening and if any repairs or equipment replacement is necessary.

Visitors

For safety, all visitors must identify themselves to staff and remain appropriately supervised while in the program.

Have more Questions?

Email us at Littlemefernie@gmail.com Call us at 250-423-1095