



Family Handbook

2026/2027

Little Giant Minds
350 Old Rochester Road | Somersworth, NH
LittleGiantMinds@gmail.com
M-F: 7:30am-4:30pm

Program Overview

Little Giant Minds is a licensed, home-based daycare nestled in Somersworth, NH, where children grow in every sense of the word - rooted in nature, nurtured by animals, and guided by hands-on learning. Inspired by a *farm to future philosophy*, our program uses the rhythms of the natural world to foster empathy, responsibility, and connection. Whether caring for animals, tending a garden, or exploring the outdoors, children at LGM learn what it means to contribute, care, and cultivate kindness.

We provide a safe and nurturing environment that supports each child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development - within a warm, home-like setting. Through mixed-age learning and peer mentorship, children learn to lead with compassion, help others, and work together like a little community farm.

At LGM, we believe today's little farmers are tomorrow's future leaders. That's why we weave social responsibility, environmental care, and community belonging into everything we do - preparing children not just for school, but for a lifetime of thoughtful, grounded engagement with the world around them.

Vision

At Little Giant Minds, we envision a world where children grow with deep roots in nature, strong bonds with their community, and a heartfelt sense of responsibility for the world around them. Our vision is to nurture compassionate, curious, and capable young minds who understand that by caring for the earth, each other, and themselves, they can cultivate a better future - one small act at a time.

Mission

Little Giant Minds is dedicated to nurturing the whole child through a nature-based, home-centered learning environment that fosters empathy, responsibility, and community. Guided by our *farm to future* approach, we empower children to grow through hands-on experiences with animals, gardens, and one another - planting the seeds for lifelong learning, kindness, and active citizenship.

Philosophy

At Little Giant Minds, we believe that every child is a unique individual deserving of respect and care. Rooted in our *farm to future* approach, we use nature, animals, and hands-on experiences to help children understand their place in the world as compassionate caretakers and active community members.

We view families as essential partners in this journey, cultivating strong connections between home and daycare to create a seamless, supportive environment. Through meaningful daily rhythms, cooperative learning, and outdoor exploration, we foster a love for learning, a deep sense of belonging, and an early appreciation for stewardship of the earth and each other. Here's **what sets us apart**:

Farm-to-Future Model: We blend hands-on learning with values of community, stewardship, sustainability, and active citizenship. This model uses rhythms of the farm - planting, harvesting, caring for animals - as a natural framework to teach responsibility, empathy, and civic engagement. Children don't just learn *about* the world, they contribute to it! From collecting eggs to sharing produce with families, even the youngest learners see themselves as capable, connected, and empowered members of their community.

Family Partnership: Strong family involvement in a home-based daycare setting contributes to a supportive and enriching environment where children thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. It strengthens the connection between home and daycare, promotes consistent care and learning experiences, and fosters a sense of community among families and caregivers.

Community Engagement: Community engagement and encouraging children to give back not only benefits the children themselves, but also contributes to building a stronger, more resilient, and compassionate community. It nurtures important values, skills, and attitudes that children carry with them into adulthood, shaping them into responsible and engaged global citizens.

Mixed-Age Learning: Mixed-age learning in a home-based daycare setting offers several benefits that contribute to the overall development and well-being of children. These benefits are particularly pronounced as children often spend extended periods together in a family-like atmosphere, enhancing their social, emotional, and cognitive development in a nurturing environment.

Meet the Staff!

MISS HEATHER

Center Director / Owner

Miss Heather founded Little Giant Minds after more than a decade of hands-on experience in early childhood education, caregiving, and parenting. Drawing from her personal and professional experience, she brings invaluable insights into the needs and behaviors of young children. She recognizes and celebrates the distinct strengths and personalities of each child and believes in nurturing their natural curiosity and creativity. Her approach to early childhood education is holistic, integrating cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development into every aspect of the learning environment. Miss Heather is passionate about creating a space where children feel empowered to explore, learn, and grow at their own pace.



MISS KELSEY

Lead Teacher



With over seven years of experience working with children, Ms. Kelsey has worn many hats — from teaching in large childcare centers to running her own in-home program while raising her family. Now part of the Little Giant Minds team, she loves watching children discover new things and seeing their confidence grow as they master new skills.

Outside the classroom, Ms. Kelsey enjoys hiking, swimming, fireworks, and spending time outdoors with her family.

MISS KARA

Lead Teacher

Ms. Kara brings over a decade of experience working with children and families. She spent seven years in childcare before earning her LNA certification, which she has held for the past five years — now proudly balancing both careers. At home, she's a busy mom to two children, ages 14 and 7, and a bonus child who's 13. Outside of work, she loves spending time outdoors fishing, camping, going to the races, or relaxing at the beach. Known for her patience and outgoing personality, Ms. Kara brings warmth and positivity to everything she does. Her favorite color is sage green, and her favorite animal is the highland cow — a perfect match for her calm yet spirited energy!



Community | Farm | Family

TOT TALKS **Coming early 2027!*

Throughout the year, we'll learn what it means to give back by hearing from all kinds of community helpers through our "Tot Talks" series! Community helpers you can expect to hear from include farmers (of course), nurses, first responders, mail carriers, librarians, and more!

FAMILY FARM FRIDAYS **Coming early 2027!*

We will host monthly open-farm days where families are encouraged to come participate in projects with their little ones. Projects can include gardening, painting signs, planting flowers, and more!

GARDEN-TO-TABLE PROGRAM

Kids help plant, grow, harvest, and prep / bake simple snacks from the garden (e.g., veggie sticks, muffins, infused water, etc).

LITTLE FARM STAND

We run a small produce stand (with help!). Families can pick up baked goods and farm fresh eggs when available. We also welcome parents to sell their handmade goods and creations at our farm stand - we love supporting local businesses!

ADOPT A GRANDPARENT GARDEN PROGRAM **Coming early 2027!*

We are proud to partner with local senior centers where our kids grow flowers, exchange notes, and share artwork with seniors! This is a great opportunity for the elders to share gardening wisdom and for the kiddos to contribute to their community in an impactful way.

ECO HEROS

Each week, kids earn a badge for completing green acts: (composting, litter pickup, turning off lights, et.). We have a wall display of their actions that you can see when you enter the school!

POLLINATOR PATROL

Raising awareness for bees and butterflies - we make seed balls with wildflowers, which we distribute at our farm stand for families to take home. We learn all about pollinators and why they're important for the planet.

FARM HAND

Each day, one child is chosen as our "Farm Hand of the Day" - a special helper who takes on meaningful tasks like feeding the chickens, assisting with lunch and clean-up, leading show-and-tell, and holding the flag during circle time. This rotating role helps children build responsibility, confidence, and a sense of leadership within our daycare community.

2025 Tuition & Fees

Fall 2026 Tuition Schedule

	Infants & Toddlers <i>1mo - 2yrs</i>	Preschool & K-Prep <i>3yrs - 5yrs</i>	Before/After School <i>School Age</i>
5-Day Schedule (M-F)	\$400/wk	\$375/wk	\$75
3-Day Schedule (MWF or MTW)	\$255/wk	\$240/wk	\$60
2-Day Schedule (T/Th or Th/F)	\$180/wk	\$170/wk	\$50

Deposits

A non-refundable deposit equivalent to first weeks' tuition will be collected at the time of enrollment. The deposit will hold the space for your child until they begin. Deposit will be held and used toward their last week of care upon un-enrollment (see policy about notice for change in enrollment).

We will not accept deposits and hold spaces more than 4 weeks in advance. If you want to secure space for longer than 4 weeks in advance, you will have to pay the full tuition starting 4 weeks after the deposit is collected.

Enrollment Fee

We charge a \$75 non-refundable registration fee at the time your space is secured. This fee is put directly towards personal start-up materials for your child, as well as any special guests we invite throughout the year.

Payments

Tuition payments are due FRIDAY BEFORE WEEK OF CARE. We prefer to accept payments in the form of Venmo transfer, and also accept Personal checks, Bank checks, Money orders, & Cash. Please make any payments out to Heather Nash.

*Little Giant Mind appreciates any positive mention and referral! If an enrolled family refers a friend who successfully enrolls in our program, they will receive a \$50 credit towards the next week's tuition! This holds true for unlimited referrals 😊

2026/2027

School Calendar

SEPTEMBER						
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NOVEMBER						
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FEBRUARY						
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JULY						
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AUGUST						
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OBSERVED HOLIDAYS

Sep. 07 Labor Day
 Oct. 12 Columbus Day
 Nov. 11 Veteran's Day
 Nov. 26 Thanksgiving
 Dec. 25 Christmas
 Jan. 01 New Year's Day
 Jan. 18 Civil Rights Day
 Feb. 15 President's Day
 Mar. 29 Easter Monday
 May 31 Memorial Day
 Jun. 18 Juneteenth Observed

PAID SCHOOL VACATIONS

Nov. 25 - 27 Thanksgiving Break
 Dec. 24 - 31 Christmas Break
 Jul. 05 - 09 Summer Break

Special Events

Family Farm Fridays

The last Friday of every month April - November

Tot Talks

Once per month - check ProCare for updates on when they'll be scheduled!

Farm Hand - Helper of the Day

Your child will be the Farm Hand once per month - check the schedule for when it's their turn!

Policies & Procedures

Changes in Enrollment and Schedule

You must submit a notice, in writing, signed and dated, at least 2 weeks in advance in order to make changes to enrollment or schedule. Examples include: Termination of enrollment, decrease in days, decrease in hours, and any other changes to the terms of our tuition agreement.

Late Pick-Up Policy and Associated Fees

Families are expected to pick up their children no later than our closing time. We will begin charging **\$20 for every 10 minutes you are late**, beginning at 4:30 PM (\$20 for pickup between 4:30 and 4:40, \$40 for pickup between 4:40 and 4:50, \$60 between 4:50 and 5:00, and so on). It is important to us to get our teachers and staff out of school on time every day. A pattern of late pick-up may lead to the termination of your enrollment contract.

Child Guidance Policy

Children will be encouraged to communicate with each other and be kind to one another. Providers will model appropriate behavior and guide children through their play and interactions, teaching them with kindness, empathy, and compassion. Providers will continuously practice love and kindness to de-escalate a situation in which the child is in distress or acting out. When children are feeling frustrated or overwhelmed they may be offered space and time from their friends with the company of a childcare provider as an option, but will not be separated in a punitive way or forced to be isolated (time-out). We believe that challenging behaviors are a lack of skill, or an under-met need. Therefore, we focus on teaching skills, meeting needs, and building relationships with the children.

**There may be rare occasions when, for safety reasons, a parent or guardian is called to pick up their child. If this happens, it is our policy that the child not be blamed or made to feel like they are leaving because they did something wrong. We do not encourage shaming, blaming, or judging. It is developmentally appropriate for toddlers to express their emotions physically as their language is still developing, and we will not shame them for that but rather continue to teach them how to use their language and develop those skills.*

Expulsion and suspension Policy

Expulsion and/or suspension will be avoided. Only if there is a safety concern for the other children, and all other efforts, including at least 3 family/provider conversations/meetings and new strategies have been unsuccessful, would we consider terminating someone's enrollment.

Diapering/ Potty Procedures

Children's diapers are checked and changed every 2 hours. Families are responsible for providing diapers, wipes and a preferred diaper cream. We are here to support and collaborate with families when they are ready for their child to potty train.

Meal and Snack Policy

Parents and guardians are required to send every child 12 months and up to the program with a packed lunch, 2 snacks and a clean water bottle every day. Infants under 1 year old need to be sent with breast milk or formula, clean bottles for the day, and appropriate snacks for their age and development. If an infant or child is sent to the program without adequate snacks, meals or formula/milk, the provider will supply the necessary food and water from the household to ensure the child is fed and hydrated. Parents will be asked to send an appropriate amount of food for the next day.

Child Illness Exclusion Policy

Tuition will be charged when children are out sick or absent. Children will need to be sent home if they:

- Have a temperature of 100.4 or higher
- Are not feeling well to the point of being inconsolable, uncomfortable, and/or unable to participate in activities
- Vomit
- Have diarrhea 2 or more times in one day
- Have a persistent cough/ wheeze or difficulty breathing
- Test positive for COVID or Flu

**Children must stay home for at least 24 hours after symptoms disappear without using any fever-reducing medicine, or clearance from a physician with a note stating they can return. Serious illness will be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services as well as New Hampshire CDC if required. Parents will be given a copy of this report and the center will maintain a copy.*

Medication administration

We must have written instructions and signed/dated permission forms in order to dispense any OTC medication. Prescription medication can only be administered with written instructions from both the child's doctor and parent or guardian, this includes times to administer, dosage, expiration, and storage.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency parents will be contacted immediately to pick up their child, or be notified of what is happening with further instruction. If the parent is unreachable our providers

will contact the emergency contacts listed on your registration form. We have specific instructions for staff to follow in event of emergencies that are specific to each type of emergency that may arise. Please let us know if you want more information regarding these procedures.

Our designated off-site emergency relocation site is located at Strafford Farms Restaurant located at 58 New Rochester Rd, Somersworth, NH 03878. This is located less than 2 miles from our school and has a large cow statue in front for landmark reference. In the event that there was an emergency that posed imminent danger to our group, we would transport the children, using our own vehicles to the above location and contact you.

We complete emergency evacuation drills with the children each month in which we practice our evacuation route out of the building. Depending on the emergency we are practicing and location of the emergency (i.e. intruder or fire) we have different exits. Children are instructed to either evacuate out the garage door, the office door to the playground, or the front door to the house in an organized manner using a walking rope. We exit to the driveway and gather at the far parking space near the dumpster for a headcount and then safely make our way to our evacuation location at 58 New Rochester Rd, Somersworth, NH 03878.

Release of Children

Children will not be released to anyone not listed on your registration form. All registered pick-up persons must show ID when picking up. Children will not be released to anyone who cannot provide an ID, even if the child recognizes this person. There are no exceptions. Children will not be released to any person who presents as being intoxicated or smells of alcohol, or any other substance that can impair your ability to drive. Little Giant Minds reserves the right to refuse the release of a child to anyone who shows signs of intoxication, and to contact another person to pick up the child in this case.

Information for developmental screenings

In accordance with standards put forth by the New Hampshire Health and Human Services Department, Little Giant Minds will uphold and respect the rights of all children including:

The right to be free from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. The right to freedom from harmful actions that are detrimental to the child's welfare and practices that are potentially harmful to the child. The right to an environment that meets health and safety standards from the state. The right to care without regard to race, religion, age, national origin, disability, sex, or family composition. The right to be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. The right to the implementation of plans and service developed for the child with community and state agencies. The right to developmentally appropriate practices, materials and equipment. The right to reasonable modifications to provider policies for children with disabilities.

Mandating Reporting

Every family has access to developmental screening for their children. In the event that a family would like to seek an evaluation for their child, they can contact Seacoast Area Child Development at 603-862-0561. If you would like guidance or support during this process, please let us know and we will be happy to assist you.

Serious Injury/Death Reporting Requirements

New Hampshire Law requires child care providers to report serious injuries and death that require treatment by a health care professional or emergency room (for example, a broken bone, losing consciousness) within 24 hours of the incident. Guardians and staff know children are active and no amount of child-proofing and supervision can prevent all injuries. However, reporting serious injuries and death can help prevent them in the future by identifying injury patterns specific to the childcare environment, and/or with a child who may need help with difficulties associated with balance, vision, or foot positioning. Little Giant Minds Will use Serious Injury / Accident Report forms to report accidents. A copy of the completed form will be kept in the child's file and be provided to the parent/ legal guardian. Parent/ legal guardian signature will be secured on the form within 48 hours of the event.

Water Activities Policy

Children will only be allowed to participate in water activities if their parent or guardian has signed a permission form allowing water play while in our care. Ratio for Staff to student is 1 staff member per 6 preschool aged child (36 months and over). Staff members will be intently supervising children in the water and not engaging in any other supervision of infants or children in the program while responsible for the (up to) 6 children in their care for water activities. Any child under 24 months of age will have 1 on 1 supervision from a staff member in water play.

Electronics Policy

At Little Giant Minds we are proud to be screen free! 2-3 times per year, we have a movie and pajama day (usually around a holiday or special occasion) where the provider or staff member will bring a TV into the classroom and put on a PG rated movie for the students to enjoy together! If another instance occurs where it is appropriate to incorporate a tablet or TV for any special occasion or extenuating circumstance, permission will be asked of all the parents of children attending that day.

Inclement Weather Policy

- Families will be notified of closures due to weather by 6:00 am
- If we are not closing, you will not receive any notification
- Notification will be sent by text/email and the Procare communication app.
- Snow days are paid tuition days so that we are able to pay and retain our team
- We understand families need to work in spite of weather, and we will always do our very best to be here for you

Unplanned Closings

In the event of an unplanned closing, we will email and/or text the night before or early in the morning. Please be sure to check your emails regularly, or request that we text you in these cases instead. The possible reasons for last minute closing are:

- Provider illness (and/or provider's children are ill)
- Absence of staff causing insufficient child/provider ratios
- Family emergency
- Power outages
- Illness related situations that pose a safety risk to the children

Parent signature:

Date: