



Parent Handbook

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1.1 Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare Mission Statement: To provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for preschool age children. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience, which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be life-long learners.

1.2 Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare Core Values: Little Sprouts has adopted the Core Values and Code of Ethical Conduct of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (naeyc). Some of the main points of the code are listed below. For more information on the naeyc or for a complete copy of their code of ethics please visit their website at www.naeyc.org

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,¹ community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

1.3 Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare Code of Ethics:

- *Responsibility to Children* – **Above all we shall not harm children.** It is our responsibility to provide care and education in a setting that is safe, healthy, nurturing and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children's self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency and physical well-being.
- *Responsibility to Families* – Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because family and Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare have a common interest in the child's well being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.
- *Responsibility to Community:* Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare acknowledges the responsibility to provide the best possible care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity.

1.4 Our Partnership: It is expected that we will work together to ensure your child has the opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential.

Regular communication is key to your child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth. Parent teacher conferences are held twice per year to discuss your child's progress and set goals.

Please inform Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare of any change in the child's schedule, routine, or home environment. We will do the same for any changes in the business that may affect your child.

2.1 Hours of Care: Monday thru Thursday 7:30 am to 5:00 pm August 1st – June 30th.

2.2 Holidays and Vacations: You will be given a holiday/vacation calendar on August 1st of each year. For the most part Little Sprouts follows the Montrose County School district calendar however our school year runs from August 1st – June 30th. We are closed the month of July for Summer Break.

The following 7 holidays are paid holidays; Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, President's Day, and Memorial Day. Monthly tuition has been calculated so that you are not charged for any other days that Little Sprouts is closed.

2.3 Parent Vacations: As a courtesy, please notify the school at least 2 weeks in advance when you plan to take vacations. Please note full payment is expected for all days and hours your child is normally scheduled.

2.4 Extended Leave: In cases of extended leave (longer than one month and up to three months) due to maternity leave, summer break, or extended leave from your job, you will be required to pay the minimum monthly tuition (2 days/week) for the entire time of your absence to hold your child's position.

2.5 Back up Child Care Arrangements: You are responsible for finding backup care for your child when I am closed. If you need names of some caregivers who may be able to provide backup care, please talk to me.

2.6 Substitute Caregiver: I may hire a substitute caregiver in the event of an emergency or if I have an appointment that must be made during business hours. The substitute is usually my mother; Charleen McCracken. Charleen meets all state childcare regulations and the children are familiar with her. If possible I will notify you in advance that I will be using a substitute caregiver. In an emergency the substitute or I will contact you as soon as possible to let you know that there is a substitute.

3.1 Ages of Care: 3 years – 5 years

3.2 Licensing: Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare is a fully licensed childcare home under the laws of Colorado. All laws and regulations pertaining to providing licensed childcare will be followed.

Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare is licensed for 6 preschoolers at one time. Therefore our adult to child ratio is 6:1

3.3 Anti-Discrimination: No child shall be discriminated against due to race, religion or handicap

Reasonable accommodations will be made for children with disabilities, as long as the accommodations do not fundamentally alter my childcare program or home.

3.4 Use of Interpreters: English is the primary language spoken at Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare. However in cases where your family's primary language is something other than English, I will make every effort to hire an interpreter in order to communicate in your family's home language.

3.5 Admission Procedures: An interview with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) AND the child is required before any child will be accepted into Little Spouts Preschool & Childcare. This gives me an opportunity to meet you and your child, discuss my policies and answer any questions. It also gives your child an opportunity to explore my preschool environment and become familiar with me. A contract must be completed and your deposit + activity fee must be paid to secure your child's spot at Little Sprouts. Your first tuition payment is due on your child's first day of care.

3.5 Children's Records: State Law requires that I keep up to date information on all children in my care. The registration packet must be completed and returned prior to your child's first day of care. The health evaluation must be completed by your doctor and returned no later than two weeks after enrollment.

Little Sprouts encourages all families to obtain medical insurance for their child. A copy of your child's medical insurance card is required in your child's registration paperwork. If you need assistance obtaining medical insurance for your child please see the list of resources in the back of this handbook.

It is your responsibility to inform me of any changes in your child's paperwork. This includes phone number (work, home, cell) and/or addresses (work or home). Also any medical insurance changes must be given to me.

These records are kept confidential and are updated annually on September 1st.

3.6 Immunization Records: The State also requires all immunization records be kept on file and current. As your child sees his/her doctor the immunization record needs to be updated. I must have a copy of your child's immunization record prior to their first day of care.

If there is a medical, religious, or personal reason for not obtaining vaccinations or for using an alternative vaccination schedule, Little Sprouts is required to have an exemption form on file. In the event of an outbreak any exempted child will not be allowed to attend school until the outbreak is over.

All immunization records as well as exemption forms must be updated annually.

3.7 Sign in/out Book: This is a mandatory source of record keeping and must be signed every day your child in attendance. Only persons listed on your registration paperwork will be permitted to pick up your child should you be unable to do so. You **MUST** let me know in advance if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child and that person must bring their photo I.D. If I have not been notified in advance of someone else picking up your child, I will not allow your child to leave with the person until I make contact with you and get your permission. If someone attempts to pick up your child without your permission, the door will be locked immediately and I will call 911.

3.8 Abandoned Children: In the event that a child remains in care for more than 15 minutes beyond pick up time without prior approval, social services will be contacted and your child will be considered abandoned.

3.9 Verification of Legal Custody: In cases of court appointed custody, Little Sprouts must have a copy of the court order recognizing the parent who has legal custody of the child as well as any visitation schedules. Without a court order Little Sprouts has no choice except to release the child to his/her parent.

3.10 Parental Termination of Contract: One month's written notice, on or before the first of the month shall be required by the parent to Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare to terminate the childcare contract. Payment is due for the notice period regardless of whether or not your child is brought to me for care during that time.

3.11 Little Sprouts Preschool & Child Care Termination of Contract: Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare will provide the parent(s) with two weeks written notice if Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare is no longer able to care for your child. Termination under this provision is at the sole discretion of Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare. Payment is required regardless of whether the child attends or not. Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare retains the right to terminate childcare arrangements for the following reasons without notice:

- Nonpayment as required in this agreement.
- Failure to comply with the policies of Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare
- Failure to comply with this contract
- Failure to complete or update required paperwork
- Destructive or hurtful behavior of the child that persists
- Failure to show up for 5 days in a row without any communication
- Inability to meet the child's needs

4.1 Contacting Little Sprouts: Please feel free to call the Little Sprouts anytime throughout the day to see how your child is doing – the phone number is (970)240-6102. I have an answering machine, which I use and will phone you back ASAP if I do not answer at that time.

4.2 Security: The main goal of security in the Child Care setting is to protect the children and the provider. In most cases, I am the only adult with the children. In society today, there are those who prey on others and for this reason, Child Care Providers can keep their doors locked to keep predators out and the children in, for their own safety. When the children go outside to play, I will be outside with them.

4.3 Alcohol and Drugs: According to Colorado State Law, alcohol is not allowed to be used in a Child Care Home during the hours of operation. Parents are not allowed to pick up children if behavior or smell indicates alcohol or drug use. In the event you choose to participate in these activities, please plan to have a designated driver or a drug/alcohol free person come in with you to pick up your children. Failure to do so will result in the children remaining in my care until a drug and alcohol free person can pick them up and late charges will be assessed until such time. Those late fees will be due upon pick up of your child.

4.4 Second Hand Smoke: It is imperative to me that your child not be exposed to second hand smoke while in childcare. Colorado Law governing Licensed Child Care Homes forbids SMOKING. DO NOT SMOKE ON THESE PREMISES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE!

4.5 Emergency Procedures: In the event of an evacuation of any kind: fire, gas leak, electrical problems, etc. the children are trained on how to evacuate the home, where to go, and where to wait after the evacuation (safety area). In an emergency situation that does not allow us to return to the home, children will be taken to an alternate safe location here in Montrose and parents will be contacted.

4.6 Fire: In the event of a fire the children are instructed (fire drill) on a regular basis and will be taught to meet at a “safety area. “ The children will then be accounted for and parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible.

4.7 Flood: In the event of a flood, the children and staff will seek higher ground and parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

4.8 Tornado; In the event of a tornado alert, the children will be seated on the floor next to an interior wall away from all windows (hall way) and all lights will be turned off.

4.9 Earthquake: In the event of an earthquake the children will be instructed to get under the table in a fetal position covering their neck and head with their arms.

4.10 Gas Leak: In the case of a gas leak, we will exit the home as quickly as possible without using the phone and without turning off lights to avoid causing sparks. We will then go to the “safety area” and call for help. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

4.11 Blizzards/Power Outages: In the event of a blizzard or power outage, my home is equipped with lots of blankets, first aid equipment, non-perishable food, flashlights, and bottled water. Your children would be kept very safe and warm until you are able to pick them up.

4.12 Lockdown: In the event of an unsafe situation such as the need for a lockdown, my phone is able to receive reverse 911 calls and we would immediately lock all the doors and windows. We will remain inside until the threat is cleared.

4.13 Reverse Evacuation: In the event we are outside when an unsafe situation arises, we will implement a reverse evacuation by finding the nearest secure location inside a structure and remain there until the threat is over.

4.14 Inclement Weather: In the event that Montrose County School District RE-1J Schools are closed due to weather, I will also be closed. Please check with local media announcements to verify the closure of these schools. These are paid days, since they are beyond my control.

5.1 Medical Emergencies: Parents must complete the CONSENT FOR MEDICAL CARE FORM that allows the provider or a substitute to obtain medical treatment for your child, should the need arise. This form must be updated annually on September 1st.

The parents must allow provider to call 911, the child’s doctor, dentist, or hospital if emergency medical treatment if necessary.

It is understood that every attempt will be made to contact the parents or emergency contacts on the Enrollment Record before any action is taken and if time allows.

The parents must allow care provider to call an ambulance at provider's discretion.

Parents agree to assume any and all financial responsibility for the ambulance, response team, and medical treatment for their children.

5.2 Illnesses: For the protection of your child and others, I am not willing to provide care for your child if he or she is ill. I will not send a child home with a common cold unless it is accompanied by a fever or other symptoms. If your child becomes ill during the day, I will isolate your child from the other children and call you to pick up your child. I expect you to pick up your child within one hour of my call. I will notify you of any exposure to contagious illness, disease or infection in my program within 24 hours of when I become aware of it. I expect you to notify me if your child will not come to care due to illness, contagious disease or for any other reason. If a child has the symptoms listed below, he or she will not be permitted to attend care until 24 hours after their last symptoms or until 24 hours after medical treatment has begun as prescribed by a physician. I reserve the right to request a doctor's note if I feel your child may be contagious and/or should not be in Day Care.

- a fever of 100.5 degrees or higher,
- diarrhea
- vomiting,
- a skin rash – other than diaper rash or prickly heat. The child will not be allowed to return to care without a written statement from a doctor that the rash is not a communicable condition
- any parasitic infestation (lice, scabies, etc.)
- pink eye
- discharge from the eyes or ears
- a runny nose with colored discharge
- chicken pox – the child may not return until all the blisters have dried up and formed scabs, usually about 6 days after the onset of the rash
- an other communicable or contagious disease (such as tuberculosis)

5.3 Notification: Parents should notify me if the child has been ill during the past 24 hours, even if illness occurred on the weekend. Also, inform me of any communicable diseases when they occur in the family. I need to know if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease such as: Chicken Pox, Pink Eye, and Strep Throat. In the event these diseases manifest themselves while your child is in my care, I will call you, isolate your child to minimize the spread of the disease, and expect you to pick up your child within one hour or less. The child may not return to care until all signs of disease are gone or a written notification from the child's doctor is received indicating that the child is no longer a health risk to the other children or the provider.

If your child is exposed to any communicable disease, I will notify you as soon as I am notified.

5.4 Medication Administration: Under the State Licensing Rules and Regulations, I can only administer medications (even non-prescription) when accompanied by the permission to administer medication form. Prescriptions (even samples) must have a current prescription label, be in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label that shows the prescription

number, patient's name, name of medication, date filled by pharmacy, expiration date, physician's name, and directions for dosage.

When bringing medication to childcare facility, parents must give medication to provider, who will enter medication in the Medication Log, parent is to verify that information is correct and sign entry. If your child refuses to take their medication, parents will be notified and you can either come and try to administer it yourself or the dose will be skipped and so noted in the Medication Log.

Non-prescription medications must be accompanied by the permission to administer medication form, filled out by the person with prescriptive authority. All non-prescription medication must be in the original container, bearing the original label, expiration date, and directions for dosages. State Licensing Rules and Regulations mandate this.

If your child uses an inhaler or nebulizer for asthma or an EpiPen, I will need an individualized health care plan in their file. This needs to be filled out by your Health Care Provider and will need to be updated according to the Academy of Pediatrics as well.

6.1 Clothes: Please send your child to preschool/childcare in play clothes and appropriate shoes. I will take precautions to protect clothing by using smocks during messy activities however spills and splatters still happen. I am not responsible if you send your child to daycare in expensive clothing and it gets ruined. Additionally you should provide at least one spare set of clothing to be kept in your child's backpack should they need a change of clothes. In the winter, bring clothes for outdoor play, including a jacket, hat, mittens or gloves a snowsuit or snow pants, and boots. During the summer, bring a swimsuit, towel and sunscreen.

6.2 Outside Play: We will be playing outside daily for a minimum of 30 minutes per day as long weather permits. When the weather is excessively hot or cold or raining, we will stay indoors and do other physically active games.

6.3 Sunscreen: Sunscreen is highly recommended and should be applied by parent/guardian prior to coming to childcare/preschool. Should you wish to have additional sunscreen applied during the day you must provide your own sunscreen in its original container and labeled with the child's name to which it is to be applied. In addition you must give written permission for the sunscreen to be applied on the "Sunscreen Permission Form."

6.4 Naps/Quite Time: All the children will take a nap or observe a quiet time in the afternoon. All children lie down during this time. I play soft lullaby/instrumental music and each child has his or her own separate, clean bedding. You may also bring a special blanket or other security item for your child. Our rest time is usually from 1:00 – 2:30 or 3:00 pm. Please do not arrange for pick up during this time.

Little Sprouts only accepts children ages 3 -5 however should we ever accept an infant all "safe sleep" policies as outlined in the Colorado Childcare Rules and Regulations would be followed.

6.5 Meals: Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare provides breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack according to the nutrition guidelines outlined by the Wildwood food program. Breakfast is served between 8:00 and 8:30 each morning. If your child attends later than 8:30 AM you will

need to feed them breakfast at home. Lunch is served between 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM and afternoon snack is provided between 3:00 PM and 4:00PM.

If your child requires a special diet you are responsible for providing a packed lunch and afternoon snack each day. Please make sure I am aware of ANY food allergies.

6.6 Transitions for Cups and Bottles: Little Sprouts does not accept children who are still taking a bottle. Preschoolers are taught to pour their own drinks from child sized pitchers into cups without lids. When children spill they help clean up their mess as this is a great opportunity for learning.

6.7 Diapering and Toilet Training: Children must be potty trained to attend Little Sprouts Preschool & Childcare.

Occasionally when a preschooler starts a new school they will experience some potty accidents. This is to be expected, however if it continues after the initial adjustment period it may indicate the child is not ready to be in a preschool environment. For hygiene purposes and the safety of the other children alternative arrangements may need to be made for a child who continues to have accidents.

For children who are prone to accidents at naptime parents responsible for providing pull-ups for them to wear during naptime.

6.8 Cleanliness/Hygiene: Highest efforts are made to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals as well as when coming in from outside and after toileting.

Children's bedding are washed weekly unless soiled, then they are washed as often as necessary.

Toys and equipment are sanitized weekly or more often as needed.

7.1 Activities/Curriculum: Experts have developed standards defining what children should know and be able to do by certain grade levels. The state of Colorado has adapted these standards into the "Colorado Early Learning & Development Guidelines." The content children learn at Little Sprouts is guided by these standards.

Our curriculum offers a wide variety of activities including: language & literacy development; mathematics; puzzles; games; science; sensory exploration; block play; social studies; dance; music; health, safety & nutrition; outdoor play; large & fine motor activities; dramatic play and more.

I also believe children learn best through meaningful play. This type of play encourages curiosity, discovery and problem solving which allows for individual growth and development of a positive self-image.

All children's activities will be developmentally appropriate to the age of your child which means they will be within the abilities of your child.

An activities fee of \$50.00 is due August 1st and January 1st each year.

7.2 Field Trips: We will be going on occasional field trips throughout the year; I may also have to transport children to and from school. A permission slip will be kept on file for each child. You will be notified in advance of any planned field trips, however other trips such as emergencies, school pickups, trips to the park, or something of that nature you may not be notified in advance.

Should we be away from the childcare facility a sign will be posted indicating where we've gone and when we're expected to return.

7.3 Transportation: I do occasionally transport children in my vehicle. I drive a 2010 Chrysler Mini Van which seats 5 child passengers in rear seats plus myself and another adult in the front seat. Children under 13 years of age are not transported in the front seat. Parents will need to supply a child safety seat suitable to your child's height, weight and age.

7.4 Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations: I celebrate the birthdays of the children in my care on or near the date of their birthday. I ask that you do not bring presents for these celebrations however you may bring cupcakes or a special treat that day.

We will also have a holiday party to celebrate Christmas each year. You will be asked to bring a children's book for our Christmas gift exchange. If you have questions, please talk to me.

7.5 Media Policies: All television, videos, music, computer and video games used in the childcare home will be age appropriate and in an educational category. Children will have no more than 2 hours of screen time (combined computer, video games and television watching) per day but this is a very rare occasion. A normal day will consist of very little media usage with the exception of music.

We use music throughout our preschool curriculum and during music and movement time. I also play classical lullaby music during naptime.

7.6 Personal Belongings: Each child has their own cubby to store any personal belongings. It is their responsibility to keep track of their things.

LITTLE SPROUTS PRESCHOOL & CHILDCARE WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ITEMS THAT ARE LOST, DAMAGED OR STOLEN!

7.7 Toys: We have an abundance of age appropriate, clean, safe and educational toys/materials at Little Sprouts. I prefer that your child NOT bring toys from home, except for a comfort item such as a stuffed animal to be used at naptime. If your child brings a toy to school they will not be allowed to play with it and it will be placed in your child's cubby until it is time to go home.

PLEASE NOTE: There may be "Share and Learns" periodically. At this time, appropriate toys/items may be brought from home. You will be notified of such days as needed.

7.8 Damages to Property: Reasonable steps have been taken to child proof my home, however if your child damages home furnishings or personal property you will be asked to replace it.

7.9 Recalled Items: Every effort is made to immediately remove any toys, furniture, or other equipment that has been recalled either by the manufacturer or the Consumer Product Safety Commission. I regularly check the consumer product safety commission website and receive emails regarding recalled items. To check this list yourself, you can log on to their website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/index.html>

7.10 Referrals to Community Services: Any concerns about a child's development will be discussed with the parent/guardian and if necessary referred to a local community service agency such as Child Find. A log will be kept on file of any such referrals. All referrals made to community services are confidential.

A list of early childhood resources is included in the back of this handbook.

7.11 Discipline: I believe in positive redirection as a first step to resolving problem behavior. Your child will always be given more appropriate choices, however if a problem behavior persists your child will be given a verbal warning and placed in "time out" if necessary. Time outs will be one minute per year of your child's age. **Corporal punishment of any kind will not be used.**

It is my job to ensure that all children in my care are safe. Violence of any kind will not be permitted. If your child repeatedly engages in any behavior that puts themselves or any one else at risk I reserve the right to terminate our contract. However termination will only happen in the event that all other avenues have been exhausted.

7.12 Transitioning from Preschool to Kindergarten: When your child is 5 and preparing to leave Little Sprouts to start kindergarten we will meet with you to discuss ways to facilitate the transition.

When your child "graduates" preschool they will get to take home their portfolio with all their progress in it. This is a great tool to share with your child's kindergarten teacher during kindergarten orientation.

The Montrose County School District holds kindergarten registration every year in April, I will give you the dates for registration once I receive them from our school district. After registration your child's school will inform you of orientation dates.

8.1 Child Abuse/Neglect: As a professional childcare provider I am required by law to report any signs of neglect or abuse of the children in my care. Failure to report such signs could cause me to be fined and/or jailed. That is never a risk I am willing to take. Children's Protective Services and the Police Department will be notified when it appears that a child is being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, neglected or exploited.

Most licensed facilities make every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Unfortunately, on rare occasion, an incident for physical or sexual abuse may occur. If you

believe that your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county department of social services. The telephone number to report child abuse in your county is listed below:

Montrose County Social Services
1845 South Townsend
Montrose, CO 81401
970-252-5000

8.2 Filing a complaint: For additional information regarding licensing, or if you have concerns about a child care facility please consult:

The Colorado Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman St.
Denver, CO 80203
303-866-3755
800-799-5876

The Rules and Regulations for Family Child Care Homes can be viewed on the Colorado Department of Human Services website: www.cdhs.state.co.us/childcare or www.sos.state.co.us

You may also review provider's files at the Division of Child Care Website.

9.1 Policy Revisions: When any changes are made to these policies, you will be given a two-week written notice and asked to sign the new policy handbook.

PLEASE NOTE: New regulations mandated by the state may require changes to take place immediately in which case two weeks' notice may not be possible.

10.1 Parenting Resources: The following is a list of helpful resources for parents:

- Child Find (Free developmental screenings for children ages birth to five – including vision, hearing and speech)
249-2405 www.childfindidea.org
- Child Health Insurance
CHP+ / Carol Schutter
970-596-4764 www.CHPplus.org
- Early Childhood Mental Health
The Center for Mental Health
970-964-2121
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- Early Childhood Resources and Referrals
Bright Futures for Early Childhood and Families
970-728-5613 www.brightfuturesforchildren.org
- Montrose Community Dental Clinic
970-252-8896
- Montrose County School District RE-1J
970-249-7726 www.mcsd.org
- Montrose County Sheriff
970-252-4023
- Montrose County Social Services
970-252-5000 www.co.montrose.co.us
- Montrose Fire Department
970-249-9181
- Montrose Memorial Hospital
970-249-2211
- Montrose Police
970-252-5200
- Montrose Regional Library
970-249-9656 www.montroselibrary.org
320 S. 2nd St. Montrose
- Northside Clinic
970-240-6438
- Parenting Press – Parenting Articles, Advice, etc.
www.parentingpress.com
- Parenting SOS – Parenting Articles, Advice, etc.
www.parentingsos.com
- Pediatric Associates
970-249-2421
- Poison Control
800-222-1222