



FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Our Vision

Parents and Teachers working together to raise up tomorrow's leaders.
(NAEYC 7.A.06-07, &.12-14, 10.A.1)

Our Internal Mission

Every member of our team will adhere to best practices for young children as forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (NAEYC 10.A.1)

Our Specialty

We are family owned and family focused
We have a Christian environment by creating a Biblical Climate
We have low teacher to child ratios created by our organic multi-age environments
Our curriculum is individualized for every child
We offer occasional care for families that do not need care on a regular basis
We have a Sick Bay to care for ill children
We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Table of Contents

WELCOME	3
OUR PHILOSOPHY ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING	3
OUR BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE	4
TOOLS WE USE TO FULFILL OUR MISSION AND VISION.....	6
OUR INFANT/TODDLER CURRICULUM	7
OUR PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM	20
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	36
OPERATIONAL POLICIES.....	38
HEALTH & NUTRITION POLICIES.....	44
ADMISSION POLICIES.....	54
FINANCIAL POLICIES.....	57

Welcome

Thank you for choosing our program. We are excited about your decision to partner with us in creating a long lasting legacy. Transitioning to a new program cannot be easy. The unknown can be quite scary for everyone. The Family orientation is designed to give you a brief overview of our program and its components as well as familiarize your family. We also want your first day to be as stress free as possible. (Would you like a copy of this handbook translated into your first language? It is our policy to communicate with our families in the way that is the best fit for them. Please let us know if this would help you and we will happily oblige! (NAEYC 7.B.02)

Our Philosophy on Children's Learning

We believe in providing experiences for children that meet their developmental needs and will work to compliment a child's experiences at home. Families are the most important influence in the lives of their children. It is our goal to involve and work closely with families as we assist them in the care of their children. Families have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and development. (NAEYC 2.A.01, 2.D.01, 7.A.09, 10.A.01, 10.B.08)

Each child is valued as an individual with individual needs and interests. We know that development takes place in orderly sequences and is multifaceted including social, emotional, physical, language and intellectual development. We are especially attuned to the social and emotional development of the children in our care. All of our interactions and activities are geared toward the achievement of a positive self-concept and self-esteem in each child. We believe a child must feel emotionally safe before the child can learn and grow effectively.

Children learn by doing. Through active involvement with their environment, children attempt to make sense of the world around them. They learn by exploring their environment through hands-on experience and play. Teaching young children is a creative process. An early childhood curriculum provides the framework for what actually happens in a planned environment where children interact with materials, their peers, and adults. The primary teaching goal is to help young children use the environment productively and see themselves as capable learners. They will acquire the skills and abilities needed for kindergarten and beyond through carefully planned, developmentally appropriate activities arranged by the caregivers.

When a learning environment encourages exploration and discovery, children develop a sense of trust and belonging. They feel important and valued when others listen to them, seek out their ideas, and allow them to express themselves.

Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers:

- Follow a consistent schedule;
- Carry through on announced plans and/or promises;
- Make contact with each child during the day; and,
- Make positive comments about children's play activities.

Children develop a sense of competence when caregivers:

- Reinforce and value their play activities;

- Give them developmentally appropriate materials to play with;
- Provide them with materials that support and challenge their abilities;
- Praise their efforts;
- Help channel their frustrations; and,
- Encourage them to see tasks through to completion.

Children develop a sense of initiative when caregivers:

- Provide them with ample opportunities for creative expression;
- Allow them to explore the environment freely;
- Permit them to get messy during sand, water, or art activities;
- Encourage make-believe play;
- Allow them to work independently; and,
- Promote problem solving and risk taking.

Our Biblical Perspective

Focus on God's Love

Small Blessings focuses on God's Love by [Creating a Biblical Climate](#) (by Mary Gibson Speer) for young children. What does this mean to you and your family? As today's world becomes more secular and less person-schooled, we recognize the need to preserve and pass on our biblical heritage. At the same time we are aware that simply telling our children Bible stories will not accomplish that goal. "Experience is the best teacher." This is an old saying, but it is still a valid statement. Our task, as teachers of young children, is to provide settings where children can experience the Bible.

The Experience of Covenant

In the Old Testament, covenant is the promise between God and the Hebrews that they belong to one another. In the New Testament, covenant is the fellowship of love and concern for one another and the world which is brought about by the Holy Spirit.

The security and the acceptance found in this fellowship of concern are essential to the well-being of a young child. When the church (or the home) is truly a covenant fellowship, children know they are loved and accepted long before they can understand Bible stories about "covenant." The covenant relationship, basic in both the Old and New Testaments, is the foundation of the teaching needed with young children.

Some ways a child can experience covenant relationship

- We call the child by name.
- We as teachers show genuine interest and take time to listen.
- We acknowledge personal occasions such as birthdays and sickness.
- We encourage a child to recognize feelings.
- We put the needs of the child first.

The Experience of Creation

The biblical teaching about creation is divided into three parts: God creates and what he creates is good; God created persons in his image and is in fellowship with them; persons are intended to serve as stewards over God's good world and to participate in creative activity.

Building on the trust created in the covenant relationship, young children can turn from self to awareness of the expanding world and its people.

Good teaching allows younger children the freedom and opportunity to engage in creative play. From this experience of creative activity a child can develop qualities needed for a healthy personality. Some of these are: a sense of responsibility and self-direction, the ability to reflect and understand, the desire to investigate and evaluate and make decisions.

Children should be allowed and encouraged to think and feel. They should be permitted to talk about their experiences through creative stories and conversation. They need many opportunities to create with art materials, blocks, dramatic play, and manipulative toys.

Just as in the biblical story of creation God allowed persons to help create order out of chaos, so must the young child be given freedom to bring order and meaning into his/her existence.

Some ways a child can experience creation

He/she has:

- Media with which to create without others restrictions or preconceived ideas of the end product in the use of painting, drawing, clay and clay materials.
- Equipment with which to explore and try out ideas instead of having only one way. For example, there may be several ways to use a slide and a climber, many safe ways to construct with blocks.
- Time to work at his/her own pace.
- Individual ideas that are encouraged and supported in conversation.
- Experiences with music that allow a child an opportunity to move as the music makes him/her feel she/he wants to move.

The Experience of Law and Ethical Sensitivity

Our biblical heritage includes law (The Ten Commandments) interpreted in the New Testament from the perspective of God's graciousness. In a covenant community this is experienced not as a negative legalism, but as a call to concern for the welfare of others.

For good mental health children need to be taught in an atmosphere that sets limits on their behavior. In order to feel true freedom they must know where the bounds of correct behavior lie. These bounds must be accompanied by a developing sensitiveness to the needs and rights of others. Where possible, children should help make the rules and have explanations of why we need the rules.

Some ways a child can experience law and order

- Teachers are trustworthy and keep promises: "When John is finished painting it will be your turn, Joy. I will call you."
- Teachers give choices only when there is a choice; saying such things as: "It is time to go home now" when families come for a child rather than "Are you ready to go now?"

- Teachers are firm but loving. "We keep the puzzles in this area of the room so pieces will not get lost."
- Teachers protect each child's rights and well-being. "You may pound the clay or hit the teddy bear, but I cannot let you hurt John."

Not all of our teachers will be Christians, but we believe the tools, training and expectations of Small Blessings Inc. creates a biblical culture.

Tools we use to fulfill our Mission and Vision

The National Association of the Education of Young Children

Standards and criteria are driven by their association with positive outcomes for children, grounded in values and supported by a variety of evidence. Standards and criteria address: Relationships (1.A.-F.), Curriculum (2.A.-L.), Teaching (3.A.-G.), Assessment of Child Progress (4.A.-E.), Health (5.A.-C.), Teachers (6.A.-B.), Families (7.A.-C.), Community Relationships (8.A.-C.), Physical Environment (9.A.-D.), Leadership and Management (10.A.-F.). We also adhere to the Professional Code of Ethics (6.A.01). www.naeyc.org

Family Involvement

Small Blessing's is only as strong as it's families. We believe that when schools and family work together everyone benefits:

- Families become empowered.
- Teacher morale improves.
- Schools get better.
- Communities grow stronger.

Family Volunteers - A family's participation in the classrooms is a special treat for the children and the teachers. You are invited to "help out" whenever your schedule permits. You may wish to bring a special activity for the children or simply participate in the activities underway. Families can come in and volunteer their time reading and playing games with the children and/or they may donate a few household items. Please coordinate these activities in advance with your child's caregiver.

Household items - Teachers may ask for items that can be found around the house to elicit family and child participation. Many families have asked for ideas and ways they can play an important role in their child's school day. Children too play an important role in collecting these household items. This builds a child's ownership in their classroom. And, nothing says more to a child than when the children and families work together to plan for school.

Family Advisory Board - To help ensure that the school's program meet the needs of families and children. Check the community calendar on our website for a listing of meeting dates. The school Directors will post the dates and times of the meetings to give all families the opportunity to share their suggestions with their Family Committee prior to the scheduled meetings. (NAEYC 7.A.06-.09, 7.A.12-14, 7.C.01, 2.L.02-2.L.09, 3.F.06)

Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum and Gold Developmental Assessment:

- Research and theory based; www.teachingstrategies.com (2.A.1, 2.A.2)

- Promotes family partnerships through *Teaching Strategies Gold*
- Focus on the learning environment as an additional teacher (3.A.4)
- Multi-disciplined instructional methods
- Knowledge of HOW children develop and learn (3.A.5)
- Knowledge of WHAT children need to learn in four developmental areas: Cognitive, Language, Physical and Social/Emotional (2.A.6, 2.A.10)

Project Learning and Multiage Classrooms (a.k.a. Studies):

- Children engage in a much wider range of capabilities (3.B.2)
- Learning environments are responsive to the individual differences which influence learning (2.A.7, 3.B.2, 3.B.5, 3.B.7, 3.B.10)
- Children learn best through varied hands-on manipulative experience. (3.G.2)
- Children achieve at a higher level if they are interested in what they are doing and interests can vary considerably within these classrooms (3.A.4, 3.A.6)
- www.projectapproach.org
- www.multiage-education.com/multiagelinks/index.html (NAEYC 3.D.4)

Our Infant/Toddler Curriculum

Introduction

Many parents find that placing their infant or toddler in child care stirs up deep feelings. You may be asking yourself some important questions. *Will my child...*

- Be safe and free from harm?
- Feel comfortable and happy in child care?
- Be with adults who are warm and responsive?
- Still love me the best?
- Have interesting things to see and to do?
- Learn to get along with other children?
- Hear lots of language including the language we speak at home?
- Be with adults who know and respect our family's culture?

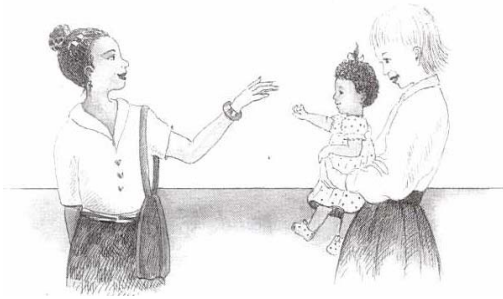
You want the best for your child and so do we. We appreciate how very important these early years are in your child's development. Current research shows that when we give very young children warm and responsive care – at home and in child care – we help shape their future development and ability to learn.

To make sure that we have a quality program that promotes your child's development, we use a curriculum specifically designed for programs serving children from birth to age three. The purpose of this section in the handbook is to give you an overview of our Infant and Toddler program. (NAEYC 1.B.01-1.B.15, 2.A.09)

Child Care – A partnership

Quality child care is a partnership whose primary goal is to benefit your child. Sharing our knowledge – at drop-off and pick-up times, in dailies, observations, phone conversations, and

during conferences – gives us a more complete picture of your child than either of us could have alone.



You are the specialist about your child. You know, for example, that your child cries for her bottle the minute she wakes up from her nap, or that he has been afraid of dogs lately. Having worked with many children of the same age, we know about how children develop. We know, for example, that we help babies develop trust by meeting their needs promptly. We know that fears are common in toddlers, and with support, they usually pass.

When we share information, we build a bridge between home and child care for your child. Your child will feel more secure when we sing the same song you do to help him fall asleep at naptime or when you talk on your way about the pancakes she helped make for snack.

As we work together, we each play an important though very different role in your child's life. Your child knows who is who. And so do we. You are the most important person in your child's life. Your relationship is forever. Child care can never replace the care you give your child every day, but it can play a very important role.

Your Child's Safety – Our First Priority

Safety is our number one concern. No matter what services we provide, if we do not keep your child safe, we are not doing our job. And you won't have the peace of mind to do yours. At each stage of your child's development, we take special steps to keep your child safe.

We know that...

Young infants put everything in their mouths

Mobile infants crawl everywhere and use furniture to pull them selves up

Toddlers are learning self-help skills such as using the toilet, dressing, washing hands, and brushing teeth

We therefore...

Make sure that their toys have no small or breakable parts that could be swallowed

Provide protected spaces and make sure furniture is securely anchored

Keep soap and towels where children can reach them, provide sturdy stools at the sink, and make sure water temperature isn't too hot

Preventing Accidents

Prevention is always the best approach to safety. Every day, we use a detailed checklist to make sure that our program has no "accidents waiting to happen." We regularly:

- Check smoke detectors to be sure they are in working order
- Make sure outdoor play equipment is secure and cushioned
- Keep poisonous items and sharp tools in locked cabinets
- Use safety straps on changing tables, strollers, swings and car seats
- Closely supervise children at all times

Planning for Emergencies

While prevention goes a long way, we also know that emergencies can happen. We prepare for these situations by getting trained in pediatric first aid, maintaining a fully stocked first aid kit,

and having up-to-date emergency plans on hand. Please take a few minutes to review our procedures so you know what to expect.

In non-life threatening instances, the School staff will provide on-site first aid. If a child requires medical attention, the child's family will be contacted, informed of the injury and asked to pick up the child. Accidents occurring while a child is participating in field trip activities may be responded to by using the nearest medical facility.

Families will be notified of accidents as soon as possible. The staff member who has observed the incident will fill out an accident report and a copy will be retained at the School and one given to the families.

Helping Children Become Aware of Safety

Although adults are responsible for the safety of young children in their care, even infants and toddlers can begin to learn how to keep themselves safe. Because young children are great imitators, we model safe practices. We talk about what we are doing and why, and explain rules so children become increasingly aware of safety.

Keeping Your Child Healthy

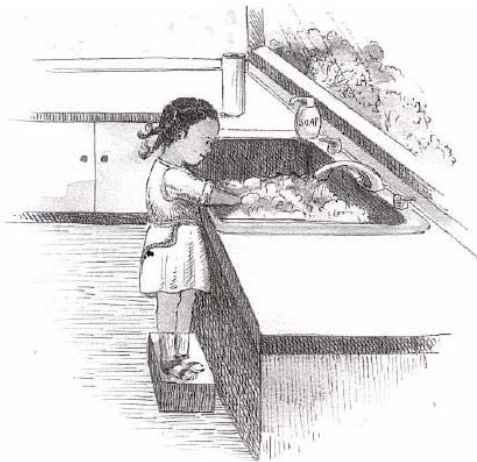
A healthy child has the energy to grow and learn. You may rightly be concerned that in a group setting your child will be exposed to germs and all kinds of illnesses. As with safety, we therefore focus on preventing problems before they can occur. Prevention involves two main strategies: screening children for potential health problems and checking daily to make sure that health measures are in place.

Screening for Health Problems

Arranging for your child to receive regular check-ups and schedules immunizations is one of the most important things you can do to keep your child healthy. We will be happy to work with you to make sure that your child receives the medical attention he or she needs. We will also keep a watchful on your child and let you know if we have any concerns. We hope that you will share any observations or concerns that you have with us.

Checking for Good Health Practices

On a daily basis, we check to be sure that good health practices are in place in our program. For example, we



- Make sure toys and equipment are germ-free
- Sanitize the diapering and toileting areas
- Follow personal hygiene practices, especially washing hands
- Make sure the sleeping and rest areas are clean and comfortable
- Carefully monitor the eating areas for cleanliness
- Plan healthy meals and snacks
- Do our best to prevent the spread of disease by washing hands and disposing of tissues in covered trash cans

Handling Illnesses When They Occur

Despite all our best efforts, you can expect that your child will get sick several times a year. Our policies follow the state “sick child” guidelines. As a general rule, your child should not be at the program if any of the following conditions are present: fever, uncontrolled diarrhea or coughing, vomiting two times or more within 24 hours, difficulty breathing, mouth sores, rash with fever, and pinkeye. In these situations, you will want your child to be seen by a health-care professional as soon as possible.

Teaching Good Health Practices

Finally, to keep your child healthy in child care, we model and teach good health practices. These include washing hands regularly, eating a balanced diet, brushing teeth after eating, sneezing and coughing away from other people, and using tissues to blow noses and then disposing of them in a trash can. We welcome your additional suggestions at any time. Many studies have shown unwashed or improperly washed hands are main reason for the spread of infections. Proper hand washing has shown to reduce the number of colds and diarrhea in children in child care. Hand Washing Policy Small Blessing’s families transition their children into the classroom and make it part of their daily routine to wash their children’s hands prior to releasing them into the classroom. (NAEYC 5.A.09) Family members should wash their hands if joining the classroom.

What Your Child Is Learning

More learning and growth take place during the first three years of a child’s life than at any other period. Every interaction and experience at home and in child care is “wiring” your child’s brain for learning and loving. For this reason, we need to work together as partners to help your child gain answers to questions such as these.

- Am I loved?
- Can I depend on other people when I need them?
- Am I important to others?
- Am I competent?
- How should I behave?
- Do people enjoy being with me?
- Is it safe for me to show how I feel?
- What things interest me?

In less than 36 months, you will see your child change from being totally dependent on others to being able to choose which shirt to wear; from listening to stories to repeating ones you have read together. Your child will grow in all areas of development: emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively. Here are some of the important learnings that you and we can expect.

Learning about Self

Very young children are building a picture of who they are, what they can do, and what they think and feel. How each of us respond to your child will shape this picture.

To help your infant learn to trust us and to feel valued and important, we respond promptly, consistently, and lovingly – just as you do – to meet every need. We understand that toddlers are struggling with wanting to be “big” and independent, and at the same time, wanting to stay little, have their needs met, and be cuddled. We appreciate the power of being able to say “No” and recognize how this helps toddlers to develop a sense of self.



Learning about Feelings

Young children need adults who understand and share their feelings – at home and in child care. We call this “attunement” – kind of like singing the same tune. When your baby smiles or makes a sound and we do the same, this back and forth action reinforces the pathways for emotions in the brain. When your child notices something and gets excited, we respond with the same excitement.

When your child is sad, we talk about these feelings and reassure your child. These experiences help your child learn about feelings and begin to empathize with others – an essential skill in the development of “emotional intelligence.”

Learning about Other People

Your child’s social development began at birth. Remember the first time your child looked you in the eye and smiled directly at you? And the first time your baby kicked or cooed to show delight at seeing you? Every interaction you and other family members have with your child teaches important lessons about other people.

Babies learn how to treat others from the way they are treated. In child care, we continue to build on the positive experiences your child has at home. We help your child learn to trust other adults. As your child grows, other children will become more and more important. Knowing that the ability to make friends and care for others is essential to children’s happiness in life, we use every opportunity to help your child learn how to play and get along with other children.

Learning about Communicating

At one time people thought, “Why talk to babies? They don’t understand anything.” We now know that language development begins at birth. In fact, the part of the brain that is used for language is most receptive in the first few years of life. The more you listen and talk, sing, repeat rhymes and chants, and read books, the more language your child will understand.

In our program, we help your child learn about communicating just as you do at home. If English is not your home language, we recognize that it is important for your child to continue to hear the language you speak at home, as well as to learn English.

Should the situation arise and we enroll a family whose needs are not met by communicating in the English language, Small Blessings will seek in the community for a staff or volunteer whose primary duty would be in regularly communicating to the children and families in the language in which they are proficient. (NAEYC 7.B.01, 7.C.04)

Learning to Move and Do

In these first three years, your child will go from being held and carried to running and jumping; from holding a rattle to turning the pages of a book. With increasing motor skills comes the ability to actively explore the world.

Everyday we provide opportunities for your child to try out and refine new motor skills. To develop large muscles, we provide an environment where your child can reach out, crawl, climb in, pull up, and jump. To develop small muscles, we encourage your child to pick up finger food, fill containers and dump them out, stack blocks, and thread beads. To promote eye-hand coordination, we provide opportunities for your child to grab a rattle, place blocks in a bucket, and put a simple puzzle together. We also help your child learn self-help skills such as holding a bottle, pouring juice, and putting on a jacket.

Learning about Thinking

Babies are constructing an understanding of the world as they watch, listen, taste, touch, and smell everything around them. We give them every opportunity to explore and learn using all their senses.

You have probably noticed that your child loves games like “peek-a-boo.” This all-time favorite teaches the important lesson that things exist even when they are out of sight. Dropping objects on the floor so you will pick them up, over and over again, provides an example of cause and effect. Over time, your child will learn to use language and to keep images in his mind. Every day, by exploring and playing, your child collects new information to add to what she already knows. Bit by bit, your child comes to understand the world a little better.



How We Guide Behavior

Children need adults to guide them – to help them learn what acceptable behavior is and what is not. You have done this by responding to your baby’s needs consistently and lovingly. A baby whose basic needs are met feels comfortable and calm. This is the beginning of the development of self-control.

Continuing a Positive Approach

In child care we also take a positive approach to guiding behavior so that we can continue to help your child develop inner controls. A child with self-discipline is more likely to be successful in school and in life. A positive approach to guiding behavior means:

- Taking steps to prevent dangerous behavior (by, for example, covering electrical outlets)
- Planning a schedule that includes plenty of outdoor time for children to be active
- Redirecting a child climbing on a table to a safer place to climb
- Having simple, positively stated rules and explaining them many times
- Using “No” sparingly by making the environment safe for children to explore freely
- Providing duplicates of favorite toys because we know it’s difficult for young children to share

Guiding children’s behavior also includes helping them learn how to relate to others in positive ways. We do this by modeling caring behaviors, encouraging children to help each other, reading stories about helping and caring for others, and helping children to resolve problems as they occur. (NAEYC 1.B.09, 1.B.10, 1.E.01-1.E.04, 1.F.01-1.F.02, 6.A.02, 10.B.08)



Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. This program integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning, utilizes everyday events as the curriculum and addresses the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children.

Conscious Discipline is evidence-based, and was named as a national model for character education by the Florida State Legislature.

www.consciousdiscipline.com

Responding to Challenging Behaviors

We are also realistic, and we know to expect outbreaks of crying, hitting, kicking, temper tantrums, and even biting from time to time. Young children have very strong feelings, and they don't yet have the words to express what they feel. We respond to these challenging behaviors in a positive way. For example, we:



- Maintain a calm atmosphere to reduce stress and tension
- Ask ourselves what the child might be feeling so we can figure out what is causing the behavior
- Minimize frustrations by having realistic expectations and planning activities that match what children can do at each stage of development
- Give children choices and many opportunities to feel competent about their growing independence
- Respond quickly when an incident occurs

If a situation comes up that involves your child, we will let you know immediately so that we can work together to better understand what happened. We can then design an approach to address your child's needs.

Learning Through Daily Routines

Daily routines are a big part of your child's day – at home and at child care. Through the daily routines of hellos and good-byes, diapering and toileting, eating and mealtimes, sleeping and napping, and getting dressed, we meet your child's basic needs. These routines also provide opportunities to enjoy being with your child and to promote learning and development. Working together, we can make the most of daily routines.

Hellos and Goodbyes

Learning to separate from and reunite with people we love is a lifelong process that can bring out deep feelings in everyone involved. Some of these feelings can be uncomfortable, and it is natural to want to avoid them. But we believe that because they arouse such strong feelings, hellos and good-byes provide valuable learning for infants and toddlers. As an infant, your child can learn about trust when you say good-bye and return as promised. Your toddler can learn what it means to be a separate person with deep attachments to others.

Say Goodbye the First Day, at some point, families must leave. Not saying goodbye is sneaky. It doesn't promote emotional growth in the long run, even if it seems easier at the moment. Goodbyes build trust. Repeated goodbyes strengthen children's beliefs that families will come back. If children know where families are going it is easier on them. Create a good-bye routine for you and your child.

How We Can Work Together:

- Try to stay a few minutes to help ease your child into the day. Always say "good-bye" even when it is tempting to sneak away. We will be here to help.
- Bring in reminders of home, such as family photos and a tape of you reading your child's favorite story. These sights and sounds from home will help your child feel safe and secure in child care.
- Remember that transitions can be hard for all of us. If your child breaks into tears or ignores you for a few minutes at the end of the day, we will be there to explain how these behaviors show your child's deep love and trust.

Diapering and Toileting

Diapering is a time to talk together, sing a song, or play "Where are your toes?" In addition, we can help your child learn the names of body parts and clothes, concepts such as wet and dry, and that body functions are a natural part of life. Families are asked to provide disposable diapers and wipes in unopened packages. Families will also need to provide appropriate ointments, etc. (NAEYC 5.A.08).

Sometime around the age of 2½, children begin using the toilet. By waiting until your child is ready to do so and avoiding power struggles, we can make toilet learning a positive learning experience and give your child the sense of achievement that comes with wearing “big kid” underpants and gaining self control. Toilet learning efforts of families are assisted and supported by the School staff. Toilet learning will not be started until both the child’s families and caregivers feel the child is ready. Please discuss the techniques with your child’s caregiver so that your child can experience continuity in adult expectations in this important area.



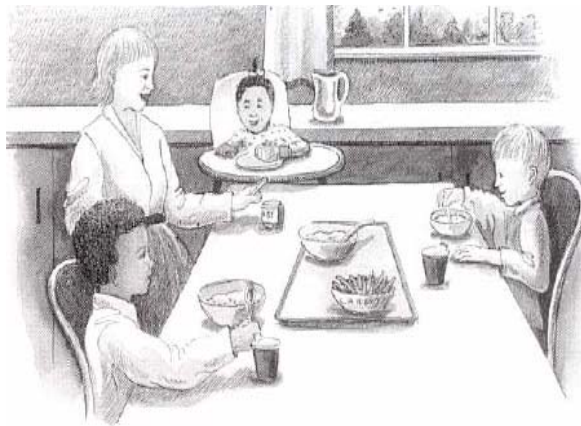
How We Can Work Together:

- Work with us to plan a consistent approach for helping your child learn to use the toilet at home and in child care.
- Keep in touch with us about how things are going at home. We’ll let you know what is happening at child care.
- Let’s keep reminding each other that learning to use the toilet is a complex skill that takes time to develop. By taking a matter-of-fact approach to accidents, we can promote your child’s sense of competence and reduce stress for all of us.
- Let’s also take a few minutes to celebrate together the accomplishment of this important milestone.

Eating and Mealtimes

Nutritious meals and snacks are an important part of your child’s day. All children are served breakfast at 7:30, ending at 8:00am, a mid-morning snack at 9:30am, lunch at 11:30am, and a mid-afternoon snack at 3:30pm. Menus are posted on Fridays outside the classroom and are available on our website at www.smallblessingsinc.com. The foods served meet the standards of the US Department of Agriculture, local and state health departments and licensing guidelines. Children on special diets for medical reasons must have a physician’s statement on file. Children with dietary restrictions (i.e., due to religious reasons, medical, etc.) must have a written statement from families indicating the food products that must be restricted and provide substitutes. (NAEYC 5.B.01-.16)

Food from outside of the school should not be provided as an addition or replacement to the school-provided meals and snacks. This includes holiday or birthday celebrations. The exception to this is children with food allergies or personal beliefs, outlined above. (NAEYC 5.B.02)



Mealtimes and related activities – such as gathering their tableware, washing hands before sitting down to eat, carrying on a conversations with others, and brushing teeth – give older infants and toddlers opportunities to develop self-help, communication, and social skills. Mealtimes are also times to practice fine motor skills and lay the groundwork for good nutrition and health habits. We are aware the foods you eat at

home often reflect not only your personal taste, but your culture. We’ll try to be sure that the meals we serve here do the same. If your child is an infant, let’s talk together about issues such as nursing, weaning, and introducing solid foods.

How We Can Work Together:

- Join us for a snack or meal whenever you can so you can see how we do things. We welcome your questions and suggestions.
- If you are nursing, we'll find a comfortable place where you can feed your baby without interruption.
- Please share with us what mealtimes are like in your home so we can provide your child with a sense of continuity.
- Give us any information we need to keep your child healthy. Let us know, for example, if your child has any allergies or tends to choke.

Sleeping and Naptime

Sleeping and naptime give your child needed rest during the active day in child care. Even if your child doesn't sleep, naptime can serve as a break from group life and a chance to develop trust in the child care environment. You may have questions about how long we allow children to nap. If so, let's talk and create a plan that meets your child's needs as well as your own. Nap Time Procedures (NAEYC 2.K.01, 3.A.03, 3.C.04, 10.D.01) Licensing guidelines require a minimum rest time of ½ hour for all children.

After brushing teeth and going to the restroom and before laying down children should retrieve quiet activities to play with until 1 o'clock

- At 1 children should place activities under cots and lay down on their cots
- Nap music should be present (can be soothing music or a calm story)
- Children should be on the cots at all times to encourage sleeping
- After 30 minutes activity bags that are already stored under cots can be retrieved if child is not sleeping. This reduces children being awakened due to movement in the classroom.
- No timers
- No public announcements
- Children who have not been resting need to continue to rest (children who are off of their cots or playing with toys are not resting)

Even though teachers are working on things they maintain supervision and control over the room. In-between dailies or email responses they walk around the room so that they are sure that children out of the direct line of sight are alright. Please see Section 53 of our State's Regulations for additional information.

How We Can Work Together:

- We can keep each other informed. Knowing how long your child has slept and whether there have been changes in sleep patterns, will help each of us plan better.
- Please share with us ways that you help you child fall asleep. We can do similar things, and help your child experience some of the safe and secure feelings of being with you and falling asleep.
- We encourage you to bring in your child's special blanket, stuffed animal, or other object for naptime and launder it weekly. Due to limited space these items do need to be small. Your child will fall asleep more easily if he or she can snuggle up with a "connection" from home.

Getting Dressed

Dressing offers pleasant – and sometimes challenging – moments to enjoy being with your child. As we dress your infant or encourage your toddler to push a foot into a shoe, we promote cooperation, introduce names of body parts, provide practice in self-help skills, and help your child learn to make

decisions. Just as you do at home, we sometimes find ourselves dealing with a protesting child. We respond by being firm, respectful, and finishing as quickly as possible. And we try to keep our sense of humor – even when we turn around to find a child pulling off the overalls we just struggles to get on.

How We Can Work Together:

- Please provide a complete change of clothing appropriate for the season. This includes winter activities in as low as 25 degree weather. Mark your child’s name clearly on all articles of clothing to minimize confusion and loss. (NAEYC 5.A.07a) The School staff will make every effort to keep track of your child’s clothing. However, the School is not responsible for lost articles of clothing. A Lost and Found box is provided at the front desk.
- Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for a variety of active, and often messy play so she can participate in everything we do without worrying about getting dirty.
- Choose clothes that are easy for your child to manage. Your child will feel competent when he can close the Velcro fasteners on shoes and manage pants with elastic waists.
- Compare notes with us about dressing. By sharing ideas we can make dressing a positive learning experience for all of us.
- For infants we ask that you have them dressed as you wish them to be for the day. Please do not bring in a change of clothes that you wish for us to change your child into once they wake up. Infants Addressing Clothing (NAEYC 5.A.07a)

Learning through Daily Activities

From birth, your child has been exploring the world – taking in sights and sounds and textures, sorting them out, and making discoveries about how things work. Very young children are very capable learners. Just as you do at home, we build on this natural curiosity about the world. We carefully set up the environment so that your child will find interesting things to explore and will learn from everyday activities.

Here are some of the experiences you can expect your child to have in our program.

Playing with Toys

Toys are natural teachers. Children learn new skills while they have fun.

When your child . . .

Bats a mobile

Rolls a ball back and forth

Fits shapes into a frame

Builds a block tower

This teaches . . .

Cause and effect

Cooperation

Matching hand-eye coordination

Coordination and creativity



In our program you will see a selection of toys appropriate for the ages and interests of the children. We invite you to come play with your child whenever you wish.



Dabbling in Art

Using art materials to express ideas and emotions gives children another language for communicating for very young children, art activities are sensory experiences. When you visit our program, you may see your child:

- Exploring textures such as bumpy corduroy and silky satin
- Observing colors from the sunlight streaming through a prism
- Squeezing and rolling playdough
- Making crayon marks on a paper
- Painting with water on the sidewalk

You won't see many art products coming home, even when your child is a toddler. But the experience we provide lay the foundation for a lifetime of creative expression.

Imitating and Pretending

Pretend play builds imagination, promotes social skills, and is one of the ways your child gains a better understanding of daily experiences. Imitation is the beginning of pretend play. You may have seen your child:

- Crawl on all fours and pretend to be an animal
- Pick up a toy telephone and carry on a conversation
- Hold and feed a doll
- Push a block along the floor and make a train sound
- Roll playdough into a ball and say "Apple"

In our program, we encourage the children to imitate and pretend. Sometimes we participate in their play, taking on a pretend role ourselves. We also provide props that inspire pretending: stuffed animals, dolls, baby carriages, play telephones, pots and pans, dishes, some hats, and dress up clothes.



Enjoying Stories and Books

The warm feeling your child experiences when you cuddle together and read a book or tell a story can lead to a lifelong love for reading.

Research shows that children who have been read to often and from an early age enter school with more advanced language and better listening skills than those who have not had these experiences. The time you spend sharing books and telling stories at home with your child is time well spent.

Every day in our program we read books together. We provide sturdy washable books for infants so we don't have to worry if they mouth and bend them. We

know that young children enjoy stories about familiar objects and experiences, with lots of repetition, rhyming verses, and simple plots. And toddlers especially like predictable stories so they can anticipate what will happen next! We have found that children love homemade books – ones filled with photos of people they love. If you would like to make one for your child, we will add it to our inventory.

Tasting and Preparing Food

Food nourishes the body and the mind. At home, when you allow your child time to mash, smear, and squash food around, you encourage rich sensory experiences. Inviting your toddler to help prepare meals with you is a wonderful way to promote thinking, social, and fine motor skills all at the same time. And your child will experience a sense of pride in being able to help you with grown-up tasks.

Here in our program, your child will have tasting and food preparation experiences such as these:

- Stirring cinnamon in apple sauce
- Dipping banana chunks into yogurt
- Spreading jelly on crackers
- Shaking grated cheese into macaroni
- Squeezing lemons to make lemonade
- Punching dough to make bread



If you have recipes to share or would like to come “cook” with the children one day, please let us know.

Cooking projects are a part of your child’s activities. On occasion your teacher may ask for project ingredients and if this is the case the ingredients must be brought in unopened containers.

Exploring Sand and Water

Water play is a natural part of everyday life. It becomes a special activity when we provide props such as rubber animals, balls, boats, funnels, bottles, and cups and place a small amount of water in a tub.

Sand play leads to discoveries (such as what happens when water is added to sand), develops fine motor skills (pouring sand into a pail), and promotes pretending (creating a sand castle).

Having Fun with Music and Movement

Music and movement experiences take place every day in child care. We listen to different kinds of music, move our bodies to music, sing songs together, and create music with simple instruments. These experiences are enjoyable and teach important skills. Here are some examples.

When your child does this . . .

Holds hands and dances with another child

Beats a drum

Stomps around the room to a march

Claps slowly, then quickly

Repeats a favorite finger play

Your child is learning . . .

About relationships

How to make music and keep a beat

To respond to musical patterns

Concepts of fast and slow

Fine motor control and language

Research suggests that listening to and creating music help wire parts of the brain in ways that can help children understand math and science concepts.

Going Outdoors

Time outdoors is important for everyone's health and well-being. Some of the experiences your child will have outdoors include:

- Crawling, rolling, swinging
- Climbing, jumping, sliding, throwing, and running
- Collecting pinecones, leaves, sticks, and acorns
- Feeling the grass
- Watching ants move along the sidewalk and squirrels scurry up the trees
- Scooting along on wheel toys
- Going on neighborhood walks

Our outdoor play area invites your child to stretch and strength large muscles, breath fresh air, and take in the sunshine and natural world. We try to spend part of every day outdoors.

Conclusion

We hope that this section of the handbook has answered some of you questions about placing your child in child care. We want to reassure you that in our program, your child will:

- Be safe and free from harm
- Feel comfortable and happy
- Be with adults who are warm and responsive
- Still love you the best
- Have interesting things to see and to do
- Learn to get along with other children
- Hear lots of language, including the language you speak at home
- Be with adults who know and respect your family's culture

The best child care is a partnership. We look forward to talking with you each day and working with you to provide the best possible care for your child.

Our Preschool Curriculum

Introduction

Do you want your child to . . .

get along with others?

do well in school?

become a good reader?

solve math problems?

speak and write well?

be creative?

make decisions?

develop physical skills?

have good study habits?

be self-confident and respectful?

enjoy learning?

Our preschool program can help prepare your child for success in school – and life. New research on the brain and on learning shows how important the early years are in a child's learning and development. What happens in preschool matter a lot. What you do at home is even more important.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain our curriculum and how we can work together – at home and at school – to help your child acquire the skills, attitudes, and habits to do well in school and throughout life.

Parents ask, “What is my child actually learning in preschool? And what can I do at home to help?” A *Parent's Guide to Preschool* answers these questions. Working together, we can give your child the best start for school.

How Your Preschool Child Learns

Your child is at a special stage. Children ages 3 to 5 are learning all the time – and they learn best by being active. Like other preschool children, your child probably asks lots of questions: How does this work? What makes plants grow? How do worms move if they don't have legs? What's inside this old clock? Preschoolers are very curious about their world.

We could answer these questions, and sometimes we do. But because we want children to see themselves as inventors, problem solvers, discoverers, and capable learners, we help them develop their natural curiosity. We encourage them to observe, explore, take things apart, build, create, draw, and see what they can find out. The more active children are in their work, the more they learn and remember.

While preschool children are alike in many ways, no other child is exactly like your child. And no one knows your child better than you do. You know how your child learns and reacts to new situations, so you can help your child's teacher. If you share with us what is happening to your child at home – the arrival of a new baby, the death of a pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation, or divorce – we can understand your child better. We can support positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, soothing art activities, imaginative dramatic play, and extra love and attention.



If your child has a health problem such as an allergy, diabetes, or asthma, please let us know what we can do to keep your child safe. We also want to know if your child has a diagnosed disability or any other type of special need. While a child may have a disability in one or more areas of development, in other areas a child may be developing at a completely normal rate. We will do everything we can to help your child participate as fully as possible in all aspects of our program.

The Goals of Our Curriculum

The most important goals of our preschool curriculum are for children to get along will with others and become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, curious learners who can work well with others. We're teaching them **how** to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We do this by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas.

Our curriculum identifies goals in four areas of development.

Social/emotional: to help children develop independence, self-confidence, and self-control; follow rules and routines; make friends; and learn what it means to be part of a group.

Physical: to increase children's large muscle skills – balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching – and to use the small muscles in their hands to do tasks like buttoning, stringing beads, cutting, drawing, and writing.

Cognitive: to acquire thinking skills such as the abilities to solve problems, to ask questions, and to think logically – sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, and making patterns – and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.

Language: to use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose.

Through the activities we plan and the way we organize the classroom, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, we seek to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

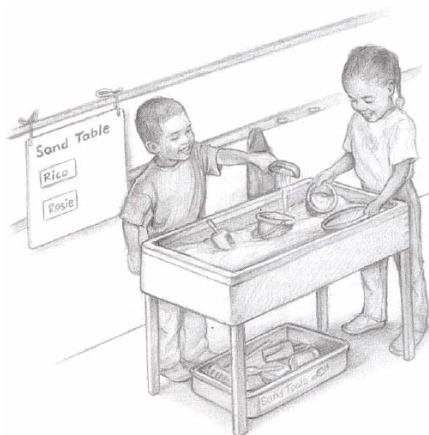
Why Social and Emotional Skills Are So Important

Who does best in school?

- Children who know how to make friends
- Children who can cooperate with others
- Children who can control their emotions

Children with strong social and emotional skills are more likely to be successful in school and in life than children who do not have these skills. That's why we want to help your child develop self-confidence, self-control, and the ability to make friends.

Developing self-confidence: Confident children have a “can-do attitude” about life. They are not afraid to try new things. They don't give up when something is difficult – they keep trying until they get it. To build self-confidence, we plan activities and provide materials that are challenging for children – but not too challenging – so they experience success. We see what interests children. We encourage them to experiment and find answers to their own questions as they play.



Learning self-control: Children with self-control are able to manage their emotions and not simply act out if they are angry or frustrated. They talk about the problem rather than calling another child names and using threats to get their way. We teach children how to calm down and help them use words to get their needs met: “I don't like it when you hit me. Stop it!” or “I was still playing with the shovel. You can have it when I'm finished.”

Making friends: Every child needs a friend. Children who do not have friends are often unhappy. They worry about why others don't like them. They feel alone. As they get older, children without

friends often have trouble learning and my resist going to school. We watch for any problems, and we teach children how to make and keep a friend.

Children learn social and emotional skills from the ways people treat them. When you visit our classroom, you will see and hear what we do to help children develop social and emotional skills. The chart gives some examples.

What We Do	What We Say	Why
Bend down to talk to a child who is upset	"I want to hear what is bothering you so I can help. Tell me what happened."	To let the child know we are interested and we care
Point out children's special skills and interests	"Ask Sarah to help you start the computer and find the program you want. She knows just where it is."	To help children appreciate each other's strengths and interests in order to build respect and friendships
Describe the behavior we want to see in positive terms	"Walk in the classroom. If you run, you might get hurt. Save your running for outdoor time."	To help children learn the rules and why they should be followed
Encourage children to help each other out	"Leo has a big job today wiping off the tables after finger painting. Who can give him some help."	To encourage children to be helpful and to share responsibility for the classroom
Show children how to identify feelings by noticing facial expressions and body language	"Look at Hannah's face. Can you see that she is angry? Let's find out what's wrong. Maybe we can help."	To guide children in learning to recognize how others feel and develop empathy
Help children calm down and use words to describe and solve a problem	"You are both upset. Let's stop and take some deep breaths. I want to hear what both of you have to say. Then we'll see what ideas you have for solving the problem."	To teach children how to resolve problems on their own

What Children Learn in Preschool

You probably have academic goals for your child: to be a good reader and writer, to solve problems in math and science, to be a good citizen in the world, to appreciate the arts, and to use technology. We share the same goals, but learning in preschool looks different from learning in elementary school. Here's how we help your child learn.

Literacy

The ability to communicate with others—through speaking and listening, reading and writing—is essential for success in school and in life. In our program, we plan experiences every day to help your child develop these important skills.

Listening and speaking: Children who know lots of vocabulary words usually have an easier time learning to read. They learn new words when adults talk with them, describe what they see, name things, and

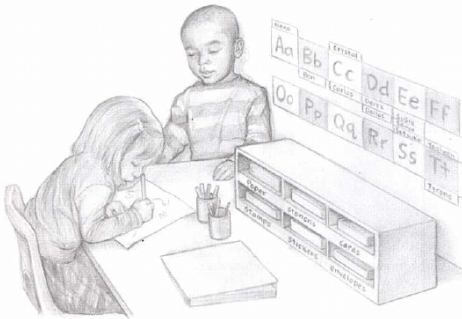
explain what new words mean. During these conversations children learn to listen to and understand what others say and to express their ideas in words and sentences.

When you visit our program, you will hear a lot of talking. We talk with children as they play to describe what they are doing (“You made a tall tower,” or “You used three colors in your picture: red, yellow, and blue”). We ask questions to encourage children to express their ideas in words (“What do you see the caterpillar doing?” or “What do you like best about this picture?”). We take time to listen carefully to what children have to say. And we encourage children to talk with each other as they play.

Early reading: Reading is about getting meaning from print. Readers know that written words convey messages. They understand how books work: you turn pages from right to left; pictures show what the words say; stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Readers know that words are made up of letters and letters stand for sounds.

In preschool, children begin to learn the names of the letters and their order. Of course, the most important letters in the alphabet are those in each child’s name. So we start with those letters first. We post children’s names on their cubbies, on our job chart, on their work, and we encourage them to start writing their names.

Your child will also learn to explore the sounds in language: words that rhyme (*hop/pop, cat/mat*), and words that start with same sound (*Peter, pet, pot*). This is called “phonological awareness.” To teach this skill we sing songs, recite poems, and read books that play with words.



Most importantly, we want to read. The best way to encourage children to become good readers is to read to them every day. We have lots of wonderful books in our classroom, not just in the library but in every interest area.

Early writing: Reading and writing go together. When children scribble on paper and tell us what it means, we know they are beginning to understand what writing is all about. We encourage this beginning writing. We show children how we use writing to convey messages—writing down their words, their names, making lists and signs for the room. In our classroom you will see paper and writing tools in our library and in other places in the room. For example, we keep writing supplies in the Block Area so children can make signs for their buildings and in the Dramatic Play Area so children can take phone messages and write prescriptions.

Math

Bigger. Longer. Smaller. More. Less. The same. How many? Math is more than just knowing numbers and counting. It’s about organizing information, comparing amounts, seeing relationships. Math involves logical thinking.

Just as the alphabet song helps children learn the names of 26 letters and their order, counting songs and rhymes teach children to recite numbers in the correct order. But they need lots of experiences with objects to really understand what each number actually represents, and to be able to think logically—like a mathematician.

Here are some of the experiences your child will have in preschool and what math skills your child will learn.

What Your Child May Do	What We Might Say	What Math Skills You Child Learns
String beads in a pattern: red, yellow, blue; red, yellow, blue	“You just put a yellow bead on your string. How do you decide what comes next?”	Making and repeating patterns
Sort and organize objects like colored shapes, leaves, bottle caps	“Which group has more? Let’s count them to see.”	Organizing and comparing information Counting
Follow the steps in a recipe using picture cards, measuring spoons, and cups	“How many cups of flour do we need?” “What does the recipe card say to do in step 3”	Following the steps in order Using math in everyday experiences Measuring
Make a fence out of blocks for the plastic animals	“I see you made a fence to keep your animals safe. You made a rectangle.”	Recognizing and learning the names of shapes
Organize a collection of keys into two piles: large and small	“You noticed the keys are different sizes. Can you put them in a line from largest to smallest?”	Placing objects in a logical order

As you can see, children develop math skills every day as they play with different materials and have conversations about what they are doing.

Science

Young children are natural scientists. They notice and wonder about things, ask question, and come up with possible answers. Then they test their ideas, observe what happens, and share their discoveries.

Some children love insects and pets and want to find out what they eat, how they move and feel, and how they reproduce. Other children are more interested in how things work. They want to take apart a flashlight, use a balance scale to weigh objects, or test how fast a toy car can go down a ramp.



In our preschool, children can be scientists every day as they play. We have living things and materials for them to care for, observe, and explore. We give children tools to us in their science explorations—magnifying glasses, eyedroppers, measuring cups, magnets, gears, and scales. We encourage children to wonder and explain by asking:

- What do you see? Hear? Smell?
- What would happen if you tried it this way?
- What did you find out?

We listen carefully to what children say to understand what they are thinking.

Social Studies

Children are naturally curious about the world they live in—where people live, what jobs they do, how they use and take care of the environment. This is social studies. Perhaps your child asks questions like:

- What do you do all day when I am in school?
- Who takes care of the animals at the zoo?
- Did those workers build this street?
- What happens to the bus when the driver eats lunch?

In our program, children learn about social studies by being in a group. They help to make the rules for our classroom, make choices, learn to accept different points of view, and treat others as they want to be treated. We study different topics, sometimes for weeks or even months, so children get to be “experts” in investigating why things are the way they are. We might study they grocery store—who works there, how they do their jobs, how they display the food and keep it fresh, where food comes from. We hope you will join us on one of our site visits and share what you know about the topics we are studying.



The Arts

Young children love to draw, paint, cut and paste, and mold clay and dough. They also enjoy moving to and making music, and pretending. They love these activities because they are fun and satisfying. But the arts are important for another reason. They give children different ways to express what they know and feel. This is why it is so important for children to create their own works of art. If we gave children coloring books, asked them to follow patterns, or told them that everything had to be done the same way, they would just be copying another person’s ideas.

In our programs, we provide lots of creative art materials—paints, markers, crayons, paper, clay, dough, collage materials, scissors, and glue—and encourage children to create their own pictures structures. We take an interest in what they do and we say: “Tell me about your picture.” Because children’s artwork shows their learning, our walls are covered with children’s work. You won’t see art projects that all look the same.



We involve children in all the arts. We encourage them to pretend about situations or experiences that they have had so they gain understanding. We sing songs every day, and we invite children to move to music, all different kinds. Children play instruments to make up their own songs or to keep time with a march or a song we are singing.

Technology

Most of us think of computers when we hear the word *technology*. We show children how to use computers to find information, write stories, solve problems, and play games.

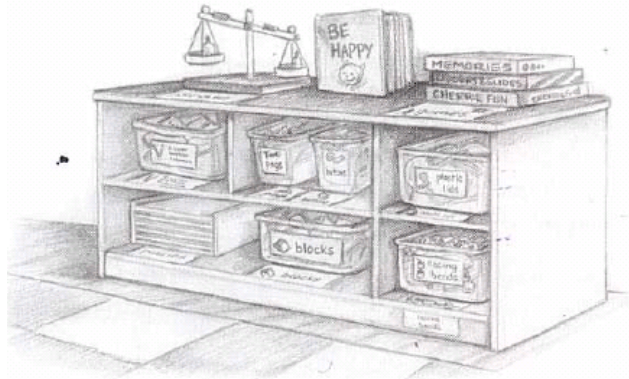
But technology is more than computers. It's about using tools to get a job done. Children use tools at our workbench—hammers, saws, drills. They use a tape recorder to listen to stories and songs or to record their own. They show their understanding of how to use tools when they pretend to scan items in the grocery store, open and close a cash register, use a mouse and keyboard to navigate through a computer program, or use binoculars to observe a mother bird feeding her babies in a tree.

How Children Learn in Preschool

Children are learning every minute of the day. They learn from the way we organize the classroom, from the daily schedule, from activities, and from their outdoor play.

The Classroom

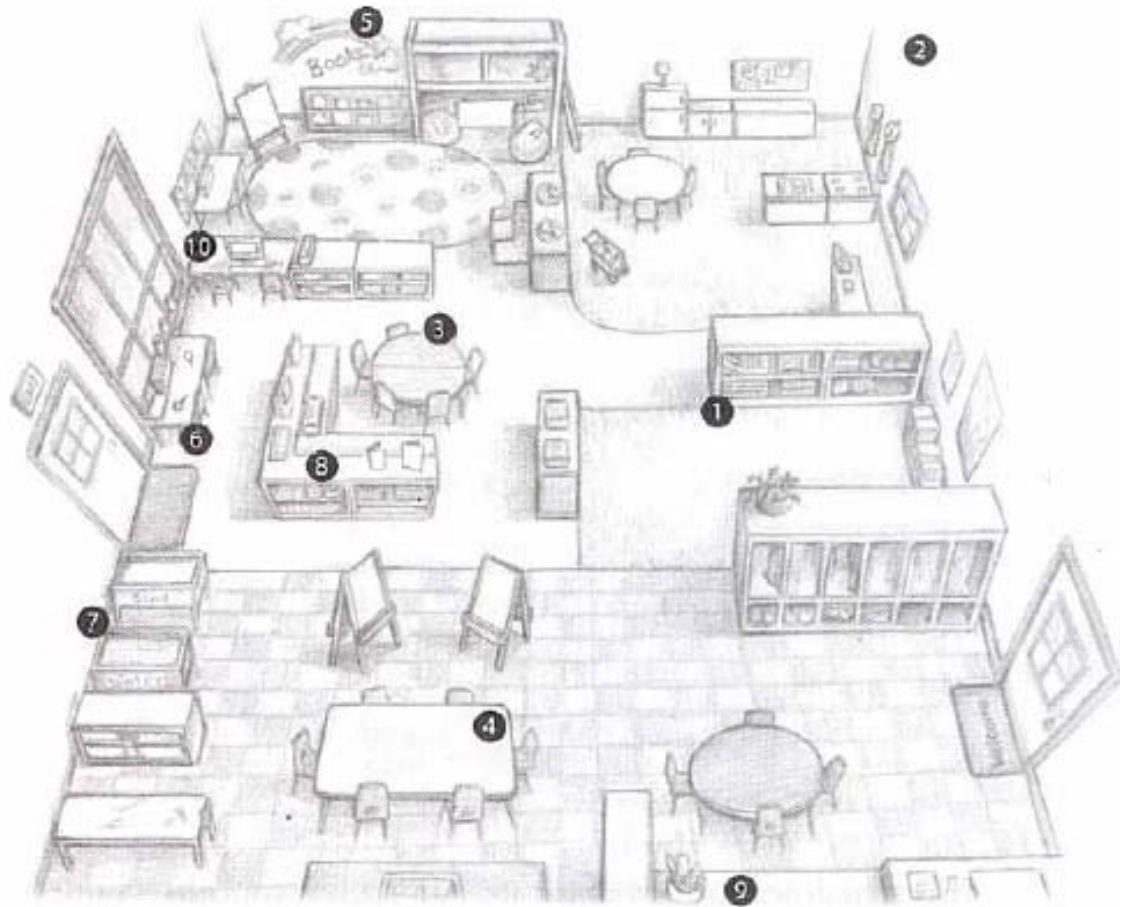
Our classroom is set up for learning. Children have many opportunities to make choices, come up with ideas, experiment, and take responsibility for their work. Here's what you'll see when you visit



- Materials are on low shelves, in containers, and on hooks, so children can get them independently and put them away.
- Shelves are neat and uncluttered, so materials are easy to see, remove, and replace.
- Picture and word labels are on containers and shelves, so children know where materials belong and learn to use print.
- There are distinct interest areas—blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, discovery, library, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, computers, and different play spaces outdoors—so children know what choices are available and make decisions.
- A variety of learning materials are in each area, so, no matter where children choose to play, they learn.
- Similar materials are grouped together to teach children to sort and classify—skills that are important to understanding and solving math problems.

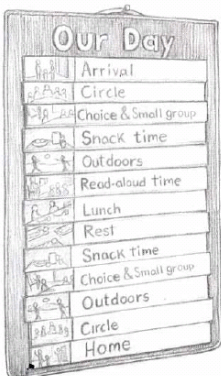
Sample Classroom Layout

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Blocks | 6. Discovery |
| 2. Dramatic Play | 7. Sand and Water |
| 3. Toys and Games | 8. Music and Movement |
| 4. Art | 9. Cooking |
| 5. Library | 10. Computers |



The Daily Schedule






We want your child to feel secure and independent, to move from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible. And we want to provide a variety of learning experiences for a well rounded education. So we plan a daily schedule with these goals in mind. We follow this same schedule day after day. A picture schedule like the one below helps children feel secure because they know what comes next.







This schedule works well for us. After a few months, children are amazingly independent. They tell us what they are supposed to do next!

Classroom Activities

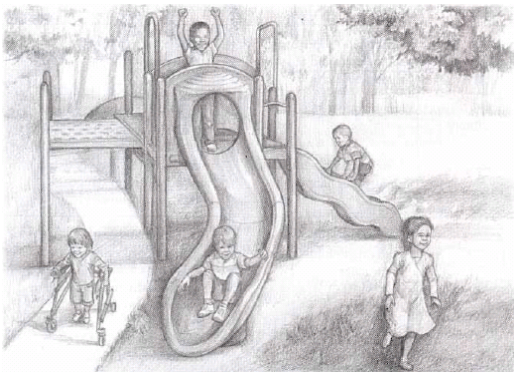
When you visit your child’s classroom, you see a room full of children playing. You may wonder what we are doing to help children learn. As children play, we watch how they use materials. We listen. We talk with them to find out what they are thinking and trying to do. We help children become aware of their actions, offer suggestions, and think about what materials to offer next. Then we challenge them to think further. This is how we encourage the development of skills children will need in elementary school. Here are some examples:

	When children do this	They are learning to
 Blocks	Use block and wooden people to create rooms in their Make bridges for cars	Make maps of their world (social studies, math) Use shapes to build (math) Plan ahead (study skills) Recreate structures they've seen (geography, problem solving)
 Dramatic Play	Use a stethoscope to examine a doll and write a prescription Pretend to be a firefighter	Pretend with objects (abstract thinking) Write for a purpose (literacy) Recall what they know about workers in their community (social studies) Act out roles (the arts)
 Toys & Games	Finish an alphabet puzzle Group pictures that are the same	Complete a task (study habits, self-confidence) Learn about the alphabet (literacy) Match and classify (math)
 Art	Gather paper, scissors, and glue for a project Draw a picture of their family	Plan and carry out a task (study habits, independence) Use symbols to represent their ideas (literacy) Gain an understanding of what "family" means (social studies)
 Discovery	Plant seeds and measure each plant's growth Use eyedroppers to add colors to containers of water	Measurement (math) Plant life cycle (science) Mix colors (science) Small muscle development (writing)

	When children do this	They are learning to
 Computers	Try out a computer program together with another child Type the letters of their names	Share and play cooperatively with others (social skills) Recognize and use alphabet letters (literacy)
 Library	Scribble on paper using some letters and tell what the scribble says Listen to a story and talk about what happened	Use writing as a way to communicate (literacy) Make a connection between letters and the sounds they make (literacy) Love books, remember details, and express ideas (language development, literacy)
 Music & Movement	Sing or do a finger play with other children and the teacher Create different sounds by putting more (or fewer) beans in a can and shaking them	Participate cooperatively in a group (social skills) Recognize rhymes (phonological awareness, listening) Explore cause and effect (science, logical thinking)
 Cooking	Follow directions in a recipe that calls for add ingredients by teaspoons, cups, etc. Watch bread dough rise or butter melt	Understand measurement (math) Read a recipe (literacy) Understand that foods can change their physical states (science)

Outdoors

The time children spend outdoors everyday is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in the classroom. Your child’s experiences on the playground at the School are an important part of the program and his/her development. The playground is an extension of the classroom. It combines



opportunities for exploration, creativity and play. Unless the weather is severe, we take children outdoors every day, often more than once. On inclement days, we will make use of a spacious indoor playground with natural light and a variety of gross-motor toys for climbing and riding.

Large muscle activities are essential for children’s health and well-being. Too many children today are overweight. One reason is they don’t get the large muscle activity essential for healthy development. Children need time each day to run, leap, hop, jump, slide, climb, and throw and catch a ball. These activities build strong muscles and a sense of pride. They are

important for another reason as well. Brain research shows that physical activity actually wakes up the brain for learning.

The outdoors greatly increases our learning environment. It is a natural setting for scientific investigations. Children find and study bugs and butterflies, plant seeds and watch them grow, and compare the feel of the bark on different trees. In some climates they notice the leaves change color and fall to the ground and learn about ice and snow. In other climates they learn how plants survive on almost no water. We talk with children about their discoveries and encourage them to continue investigating what they find outdoors. Outdoor Play (NAEYC 2.C.04, 5.A.06)

Our private playground features separate play space for younger toddlers and older preschoolers. A wide range of riding toys, bike paths and sand play are among the playground’s amenities.

Children will go outside each day as weather permits. Because we offer group care we are unable to accommodate individual preferences during outside play for ratio purposes. Families can assure their comfort by providing appropriate outdoor clothing such as gloves and mittens daily during winter months, but be careful not to overdress your child. They will be running around and generating a lot of warmth. Due to staffing demands, children are not allowed to stay inside while their group is on the playground unless a documented medical reason is provided. Children will go outside when the temperature and wind chill are above 25 degrees.

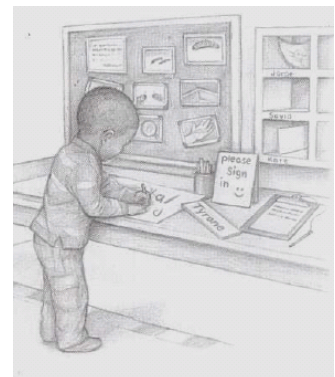
On inclement days, we will make use of a spacious indoor playground with natural light and a variety of gross-motor toys for climbing and riding.

When children do this	They are learning to
Follow each other up climbers, down slides, through tunnels	Develop an awareness of shapes and space(math and social studies) Make friends (social skills)
Work together to build a tunnel in the sandbox	Share space (social skills) Communicate ideas (literacy) Explore the properties of a natural material (science)
Pretend to be police stopping tricycle “cars”	Understand community roles and rules (social studies)
Notice color patterns on caterpillars	Recognize patterns in nature (math) Sharpen observational skills (science)
Catch and throw balls	Coordinate eye and hand movements (physical development)

How We Know Children Are Learning

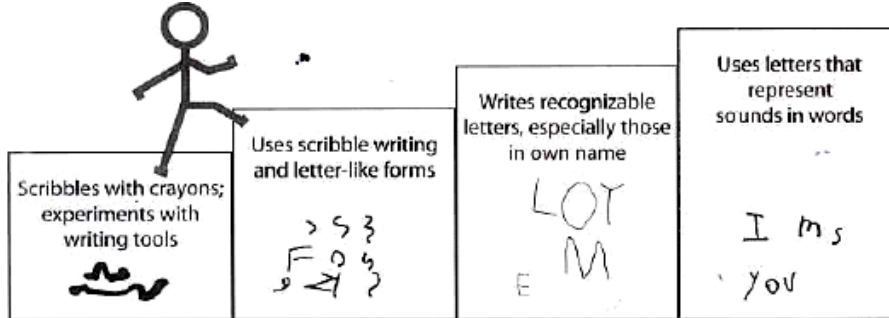
We want to be sure you child is making progress in our program. We don’t leave learning to chance. That’s why we keep track of what each child knows and can do. This information helps us to plan for further teaching and learning.

We can tell if your child is making progress because we know the steps preschool children typically go through in learning a skill. Just as toddlers go through stages in learning to walk (they sit up, crawl, stand, and then walk), preschoolers follow a typical path when they learn a new skill. We observe children’s paths as they learn new skills and support them along the way.



To show you what we mean, let's look at one objective of our curriculum: "Writes letters and words." Preschool children often begin using scribble writing and shapes that look like letters. Then they may write some letters, especially the letters in their names. Later, they start to write letters that stand for words. They might write "dg" to stand for the word "dog". They write the sounds they hear. These are the steps we typically see.

Writes Letters and Words



By carefully observing each day, we find out what children know about letters and words. We may discover that many children are scribble writing. That tells us what experiences we can provide to build on what they know and help them move to the next step. For example, we would

- put out more alphabet puzzles and games
- display the alphabet and talk to children about which letters are in their names
- place writing materials in many interest areas so children can use them in their play, make signs for the block structures, and enjoy writing for a purpose

We don't need tests to find out what preschool children know. Tests are not reliable for this age group. Instead, we observe what children do and take notes. We collect samples of each child's work—drawings, writing, photos of artwork or block buildings—and keep them in a portfolio. Several times during the year we summarize this information and share it with you. We ask what you have seen your child do. Together, we gain a more complete picture of your child's progress. Then we can plan together how to support your child's learning.

What Children Learn at Home

Many parents ask us what they can do to help their children succeed in school. You don't need to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to turn your child into a successful student. The thing you can do is to take time to play with your child, read wonderful books together, and talk as you go about your normal, everyday household chores. Sometimes, after a long day at work, this may seem difficult. But you'll find that this kind of attention has a powerful effect on children and makes your job as a parent more fun and interesting—and sometimes easier.



You are your child's first and most important teacher. The way you talk with your child makes a big difference in how your child thinks and feels and the kind of person your child will become. If we can work together and do some of the same things at school and at home, your child will benefit in many ways.

Literacy

How can you prepare your child to read and write? The most important way is to take time to listen to and talk

with your child. Hold your child on your lap and read books together every day. Talk about the stories. And make sure your child sees you reading and writing. When grown-ups read and write, children know that reading and writing are important.

When you and your child . . .	You might say . . .	This helps your child . . .
Read books together	“Who is this story about? What do you think will happen next? Have you ever felt this way? Now it’s your turn to tell the story to me.”	Learn new vocabulary Understand what is read Express ideas and feelings
Talk about what happened during the day and together make up a story	“I wonder if anything happened today at school that made you laugh. Tell me about it. “	Recall events Use language to express ideas and describe events Learn that parents feel school is important
Recite nursery rhymes, chants, and songs and then have fun changing the words that rhyme	“Let’s sing ‘Twinkle, twinkle, little star’...We’ll make up a silly rhyme. How about ‘Twinkle, twinkle little car, how I wonder what you are?’”	Hear the sounds in words (phonological awareness) Have fun playing with words
Notice street and store signs and talk about what they say and mean	“See that red sign? It says stop. All cars, buses, and trucks stop at this sign. Let’s see if we can find another stop sign.”	Learn about print and what it means. Learn that reading is important in the real world
Find letters from your child’s name on food containers	“Holly, do you see a letter you know on this box of Honey-Nut Cheerios?”	Recognize and name some letters

Math

You don’t have to be a whiz at math to be a wonderful math teacher for your child. Lots of things you do at home every day involve math. The main idea is to include your child in these experiences and make them fun.

When you and your child . . .	You might say. . .	This helps your child. . .
Set the table for dinner	“Put one napkin (or plate, cup, fork) wherever you see a chair.”	Match one-to-one when counting
Put away groceries	“Can you find all the food that needs to go into the refrigerator? Now hand me all the cans. Can you tell what is inside?”	Sort objects into categories Describe different foods
Sort and fold clothes	“Let’s find all the socks first. Then we’ll see which ones go together.”	Sort and match
Play with a collection of	“Can you put all the ones that	Compare and organize

pennies, nickels, and dimes	look the same together? Which pile has the most? Let's count and find out."	Estimate Count
Prepare lunch together	"Would you like your sandwich cut in two triangles or four little squares?"	Make choices Learn the names of shapes

Science and Social Studies

Your child is naturally curious about the world. You can show that you are curious too by saying, "I wonder why. . ." when you see something interesting. Encourage your child to ask questions, observe things carefully, predict what will happen next, experiment, think about what happened, and share that information. There are many things that you do together in your everyday life that can help your child to learn about the natural world (science) and what people do (social studies).

When you and your child . . .	You might say. . .	This helps your child. . .
Prepare simple foods such as toast, pancakes, or scrambles eggs together	"Look how runny the egg is now. What do you think will happen when we heat it in the pan?"	Observe carefully Notice cause and effect Describe how things change Make predictions
Look at family photos together	"Let's look at some old photos of you. See that? That's you when you were a baby. What were you able to do? What can you do now that you couldn't do then?"	Learn how people change over time Learn about family history
Go for a walk and collect seeds and leaves	"I wonder why some leaves are green and some are yellow. What do you notice about this leaf? How is it different from the other leaves we found?"	Observe and describe Understand plant life
Pretend to be the people you met when you went to the doctor and act out what you saw them do	"Let's pretend we're back at the doctor's office and it's time for a check-up. Who do you want to be? What should the office look like?"	Learn about jobs people have in our community

The Arts and Technology

Your home is a place for you child to explore the arts and technology. It doesn't matter whether you can sing, dance, or act. Remember, for young children, the act of creating is what's important, not what the child produces. You don't need to be artistic yourself to raise a creative child. Keep in mind also that technology is about using tools to get a job done, whether it's an egg beater, a tape recorder, a screwdriver, or a computer.

When you and your child. . .	You might say. . .	This helps your child. . .
Turn on a tape recorder and listen to music together	“This music makes me want to clap. Let’s do it together.”	Operate a machine Become aware of rhythms and patterns Follow a beat
Go on the Internet together to find out what kind of caterpillar you found in your garden	“Let’s see if we can find a picture that matches this caterpillar on the computer so we can learn more about it.”	Learn how to find answers to questions Appreciate the value of computers
Dress up and pretend together	“I’m going to be a kitty, and I’m going to pretend to lick my paw just like this and walk ever so quietly just like this. Who are you going to be? Show me, and I’ll try to guess who you are.”	Observe people and animals more closely Make decisions Create a role
Talk about your child’s artwork	“Tell me about your picture. How did you get the idea to draw it? What do you like best about it?”	Develop a sense of accomplishment Evaluate his/her own work

Conclusion

We hope that this section has helped you to understand our approach to preschool education and appreciate the important role you play in supporting your child’s learning. The key to successful learning experiences is to figure out what interests your child. Then use those interests to engage your child in actively exploring and learning about the world. It doesn’t matter where you live—city, farm, town, suburb, bayou, mountain, desert, tundra, or coast—or what kind of home you have. Every place is a learning environment for a child.

Together, at home and at school, we can help your child to. . .

- get along with others
- do well in school
- become a good reader
- solve math problems
- speak and write well
- be creative
- make decisions
- develop physical skills
- have good study habits
- be self-confident and respectful
- enjoy learning

Communication Strategies

It is our commitment to communicate with you regarding your child's experiences at the School. Daily communication, Weekly Classroom Newsletters, Quarterly Administration Newsletters and Family/Teacher Conferences will keep you updated on your child's experiences in school activities. Remember, teachers are interested in working with you to meet your child's individual needs. You should feel free to talk with them about any questions and concerns. (NAEYC 1.A.01-1.A.04, 7.A.02, 7.A.09)

Teaching Strategies Gold Family Site

A unique online tool to help early teachers in our school follow children's, plan the curriculum, and communicate and collaborate with you.

Through this tool, family members will be able to:

- Receive messages and images from your child's teacher and respond through your online journal.
- Get personalized activity recommendations for your child.
- Learn more through the extensive resource list.
- See an event calendar that includes classroom and program events. (7.A.04, 7.A.14, 8.B.02, 8.B.03)
- Read program and classroom newsletters. (1.A.01, 7.B.01, 7.B.02, 7.B.06)
- See your child's classroom Weekly Planning Form.
- After parent-teacher conferences, review your child's Progress and Planning Form.

To get started, your teacher will send you an invitation. **It is necessary for you to respond, set up your username and password upon receiving this invitation before you will receive any of the above features. This is an important step for each family to take upon enrollment into our program.**

Communication will not be at its peak without it. View the Family Guide to CreativeCurriculum.net at www.creativecurriculum.net/parents/index.cfm for a step-by-step guide to using this important online resource.

Daily Communication

Communication with families is an essential part of a quality program; therefore, each classroom has a Family Information Board located outside each room. Each information board will display the classroom's daily schedule, current lesson plans and weekly menus. The dry erase side of the board can be used to write reminders or "daily news". Your child's caregiver will communicate daily with you concerning your child's experiences at the School. (NAEYC 1.A.01, 1.A.03, 6.A.02, 7.A.09, 7.A.10, 9.A.09)

Family/Teacher communication is critical in the development of every child. Our Daily Communication goes beyond conveying basic information of the child; it bridges the communication gaps between teachers and families. It is our policy to collect information from the parents in order to provide individualized care for the child and also to report authentic details of the child's day in order to communicate to families and document children's progress.

Documented daily communication is as follows:

1. Each child's daily is to be stored on a clipboard located in each child's cubby. The adult dropping the child off at school will list any pertinent information on the daily concerning the child's morning, medication needed, and how teachers can individualize for the family on that

specific day (Families will also need to continue to sign the medication log located on the medicine cabinets).

2. Preschool and School Age Child will get nametag from cubby.
3. Parents will bring the child's sticker and clipboard from the cubby to the teacher so that teachers will record information as it happens throughout the day.
4. The adult picking the child up will tear the white copy off of the daily sheet and take it home. The closing teacher will re-load dailies onto the clipboards for the entire suite and place the clipboards back into each child's cubbies.
5. Preschool and School Age child will return nametag to cubby.

We are hopeful that adherence to this procedure by teachers and families will eliminate lost information that helps teachers provide optimal care and education for their students as well as information that helps families continue education at home.

Family/Caregiver Conferences

Families/caregiver conferences are generally held every six months and/or time of transition. The purpose of these conferences is to provide families with an overview of their child's developmental progress and to answer any questions or concerns families may have regarding their child's stay at the School. In addition, any family may request a family/caregiver conference any time. A conference will need to be scheduled so that a teacher will be covered in her classroom. (NAEYC 4.E.01-4.E.07, 7.A.06, 7.A.08)

Curriculum/Assessment Policy/Procedure

We conduct assessments as an integral part of our program. Assessments are used to support children's learning. We take daily observations on the children that we enter into TeachingStrategies.com. (7.B.03) We utilize these observations to assess children in their social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development using the Creative Curriculum's Developmental Continuum. (NAEYC 4.A.1-4.A.03, 4.B.01-4.B.06, 4.C.01-4.C.03, 4.D.01-4.D.08, 4.E.01-4.E.07, 7.A.09)

We utilize the results of these assessments to plan activities, adapting teaching practices, and classroom environment changes for the children on a group and individual basis, as well as monitor the developmental progress of each child. The results of these assessments are also used to request developmental screenings if needed. (7.B.03)

Children are assessed four times each school year – Summer, Autumn, Winter, and Spring. The information from these assessments is to be kept confidential and only to be shared with that child's family and teachers. This information is securely stored on TeachingStrategies.com which is only accessible by the teachers and each individual child's family through a password. (4.E.07, 7.B.01, 7.B.03) We utilize these assessments to plan for each individual child in the classroom setting. After each assessment, we conduct Family Teacher Conferences at which time we go over the Family Conference Form with the family. (4.E.01, 7.B.03)

Resolving Family Concerns

Just as caregivers are encouraged to discuss concerns with families, families are encouraged to ask their child's caregivers any questions they may have about their child's care at the School or about general School issues. It is important for families and staff to clear up any questions or misunderstandings quickly. Nearly all concerns are best addressed at the classroom level, but if families and caregivers are not able to reach a mutually satisfactory resolution, families are encouraged to discuss their concerns with one of the School Directors. Small Blessings, Inc. is committed to the satisfactory resolution of

families' concerns. Good communication between staff and families is vital to the smooth running of the School. (NAEYC 1.E.01-1.E.04, 7.C.02, 7.C.04)

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Hours of Operation

The School is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask, whenever possible, that you adhere to your contracted arrival and departure time for billing purposes and so that daily classroom activities can be structured accordingly. Your child and his/her caregiver need to know what to expect on a daily basis. **The Sick Bay hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Emergency Closing

In case of an emergency closing, families will be informed by message on the school's voice mail, posted to the website, and via email to your invoicing email address.

Arrival and Departure – Security

Coming to and leaving the School are exciting times for the children. Upon arrival, they will be anxious to see friends and share experiences of the previous evening. And, of course, nothing can compare with seeing mom or dad at the end of the day. These transitions times deserve special attention.

Arrival

For your child's safety and to provide an opportunity for your child's caregiver to talk with you, adults escorting children to the School are required to accompany them to their rooms.

Please follow these procedures for easier transition from home to school.

1. Collect your child's clipboard and name tag.
2. Place your child's share item in the share basket.
3. Hand your child's sticker and clipboard to your teacher.
4. Help your child wash their hands. Don't forget to let them show you their bubbles.
5. Say "Good-bye!"

Thank you for helping your child have a smooth transition into the room.

Caregivers plan the day's activities based on the days and hours children are expected. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the children if arrivals are completed by 9:00 a.m. so that caregivers can welcome and help children get involved within the classroom.

We do understand that situations occur which requires your child to arrive after 9:00 a.m. Therefore, if you absolutely must arrive late in the morning, please discuss the late arrival with your child's caregiver in advance so 1) he/she can prepare the group for this and, 2) more importantly, you and the caregiver can discuss how to manage the departure from the routine for your child to ensure an easy transition upon arrival.

Departure

For your child's protection, only the people authorized by the family are permitted to take a child from the School. Families must list the names of anyone who might escort the child from the School on the Enrollment Application, Release Authorization Form. Escort permission is granted only to individuals whose names are on the list. You can add to or delete names, but you must make changes in person. Changes will not be accepted by telephone.

If you know that a person on the Release Authorization Form will be picking up your child, please let your child's caregiver know in the morning when you arrive. In addition, we ask that you fill out a "Change of Status" form and turn it in at the front desk. A "Change of Status" form may be found near the check-in/out printer located in the lobby. If during the day you decide a person from your child's Release Authorization Form will pick up your child please notify the school in writing by fax. The fax number is 713-1903.

If the adult picking up the child is unfamiliar to staff, the adult is required to show his/her driver's license for identification. Whenever an adult takes a child from the School, he/she must check out using their security card, fingerprint, or security card number, pick up their check out label off of the printer located near the lobby of the School, and hand the label to your child's caregiver.

In the event that an authorized person picking up your child does not have a security card, the Front Desk person will buzz them in, and ID will be checked. If a card is lost or stolen please notify the Office Manager as soon as possible.

A special word on picking up your child later than expected: It can be difficult for young children to stay at the School longer than they are used to. Please notify the School if, due to some emergency, you are unable to arrive on time. The caregiver then can tell your child why mom or dad will be a little late tonight.

If a custodial family is inebriated by law we must call 911. If a non custodial family attempts to pick up the children 911 will be called.

Open Door Policy

You are welcome to visit the school at anytime and are encouraged to do so. However, we understand that your availability to visit the School during working hours is a matter to be determined by you and your employer as you strive to balance your work and family responsibilities. (NAEYC 7.A.11)

The First Day

As mentioned, transitioning in to a new program can be stressful at best. Please know it is our goal to make this transition as smooth as possible. Pay close attention to our **Opening/Closing & Expanding/Collapsing Classroom Policy** to understand how our classrooms teams work early in the morning and late in the day. Because children are different and temperaments vary, we will work with families to meet the individual transition needs of each child. (NAEYC 1.A.03, 1.A.04)

Infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers transition better if the families are the first to interact with them in the School environment. Families should be the first to put them on the diaper changing table, put them down in their crib, and to help communicate that the School is a safe place to be.

Should Families Stay? It Depends...

Most child care professionals believe that a caring policy allows families to stay as long as necessary, especially if the children appear to need family support. No optimal policy exists. Some children adapt to change well, while others approach new experiences with hesitation and adapt better if the family remains. Families offer valuable support by staying, but if they make themselves too available, children may be reluctant to relate to other children or caregivers.

Circumstances vary as well as children's temperaments. Children who have had few babysitters and whose families rarely left them may need a more gradual separation than children with a large extended family or a history of multiple caregivers.

Child Custody

Legal decisions regarding issues of child custody will be respected. In fairness to families and children, documentation of the rights of each family is required in order to restrict visitations where necessary.

Cooperating with Regulatory Agencies

The Indiana Division of Family and Children's Services licenses the School. The School meets or exceeds state standards. The licenses are clearly displayed in the School entrance. A summary of the State's day care licensing standards is provided to all families during orientation. School staff is mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Indiana Division of Family and Children's Services.

Hiring Teachers

It is important as child care providers and educators to maintain a secure and stable environment for all children. In order to accomplish this, we provide significant in-service training and offer our staff the opportunity for excellent employment opportunities with Small Blessings. This allows us to provide the best qualified and trained staff for you and your children. To maintain a stable staff, it is critical that our students' families not hire, nor solicit to hire, staff. By enrolling your child you agree not to solicit for hire, or hire, any current employee or person who was employed by Small Blessings while your child was receiving child care services from Small Blessings. I acknowledge the value of the services provided by Small Blessings and agree that any breach of this provision will result in the immediate suspension of all services, forfeiture of all paid fees and deposits and an obligation to pay as liquidated damages a "teacher replacement and training" fee of \$8,500. (NAEYC 6.A.01-6.A.12, 6.B.01-6.B.02)

No Idling Policy

As a member of the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program, we have a commitment to reduce vehicle idling at our facility. Please help us meet our commitments to this program. We ask that families, staff, visitors and vendors turn off vehicles when in our parking lot. This will help reduce exposure of our children to exhaust fumes that can enter our building and could prevent accidents as well. (NAEYC 10.D.02)

Parking

Please enter from the west entrance and exit through the east side of the parking lot to avoid traffic problems. Also, please do not park next to the curb, thereby blocking someone in, or in the two designated handicapped spots at the very front of the building, someone may need them. There is additional parking on the west side of the building and across the street.

Risk Management

Every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment for children. The entrance is monitored from the administrative office and unauthorized persons will not be admitted. The School has a central intercom system as well as central fire alarm. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the School; emergency exits are located throughout the School.

Staff is trained in first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and emergency procedures. The School Directors are responsible for risk management including periodic inspections and training of staff. Families are encouraged to identify and discuss with the School Directors any perceived risks to a child's health or safety.

Security and Emergency Procedures

- Security Plans:
 - Entrances will be protected from unauthorized access by keeping all doors into the facility locked (to the outside).
 - In the events of an admission of an individual who subsequently demonstrates threatening behavior the emergency alarm will be used to notify another adult to call the police and all caregivers to avoid the area where the threatening individual is located.
- Evacuation Procedure:
 - Child: staff ratios will be maintained, and the children will be evacuated to: The dumpster of the building next door; 6900 W. 96th street, Gray Building.
- Staff will count the children in each group being evacuated and count the children again when they reach the evacuation destination.
- Each Teacher will carry attendance and emergency contact information from the facility to the location where evacuees will gather and compare attendance to the attendance sheet to be sure no children or staff have been left behind.
- To assure complete evacuation has occurred, the last person to leave each part of the facility will conduct a final, thorough 'sweep' of all areas accessible to children (whether or not children are allowed in those areas).
- The facility will post a list of all areas to be checked as part of the 'sweep' in each part of the facility. The last person to leave will use the list of accessible areas to be sure each area is checked, and then take the list to the front parking lot.
- If reentry into the building is not possible, children will be evacuated to:
 - 6100 W. 96th Street
 - Gray Building
- Families will be notified by telephone.
- Evacuation procedures will be posted in the facility at the front office and in each classroom.
- Evacuation drills will be held monthly. The timing of the drills will be varied to include early morning, mealtimes, and nap times. Children will be appropriately prepared for and reassured during drills. (NAEYC 10.D.08)

Birthday Celebration Policy

There will be LOTS to celebrate at Small Blessings! We'll celebrate each child's birthday, including those summertime ones! Due in part to the large number of food allergies, there will be no edible treats, such as cupcakes, etc., allowed for birthdays. As an alternative, we invite each family to donate a small gift to the classroom, such as a book, puzzle, craft item, game, etc. Some families choose instead to give each individual student a little treat, such as a pencil, sticker sheet or eraser. We'll read a birthday story on your child's day, and he/she can open the gift and present it to the class. As an alternative we encourage you to look at the list below which includes alternative ways to celebrate your child's special day. (NAEYC 1.D.05)

Alternative Ideas for Birthday Celebrations

We will:

- Provide a birthday hat for them to wear
- Have them decorate a Birthday chair to sit in during the day
- Sing Happy Birthday at lunch

Families could:

- Bring in a special game to play like a board game, large motor, age appropriate computer CD-ROM game, ring toss, bowling, car races, etc.
- Bring in treat bags for children to take home that are filled with stickers, erasers, small toys, etc.
- Provide a t-shirt that friends could sign as a literacy activity (we will provide fabric markers)
- Donate something to the classroom. This would allow your child to open a present and have ownership in the classroom
- Have a party character visit the class (clown, Power Ranger, Dora, etc)
- Have someone from a pet store visit and bring animals
- Arrange a private Oogles 'n Googles visit
- Bring in a special art project
- Bring in a disposable camera for your child to take pictures and we will make it into a scrapbook as a group project.

Child Transition Policy

It is the policy of Small Blessings to transition children on or around their birth date until they reach preschool age. It is the responsibility of every caregiver to individualize care in their classrooms for the youngest to the oldest child in their environment thereby providing the best possible care for each child. (NAEYC 1.A.03, 10.B.14)

Transition Procedure

Preparation for the transition occurs long before the actual move. It is the responsibility of every caregiver to individualize care in their classrooms for the youngest to the oldest child in their environment thereby providing the best possible care for each child.

Families will be contacted for a Family/Teacher Conference. At this conference families will meet their new caregiver, discuss Individual Care Plan (Creative Curriculum) and receive a welcome packet. Parents will also be asked to assess their child's development prior to moving to the new environment so that the new caregiver will be prepared to initialize for their child. Caregivers will begin to talk to children about their new room, their new caregivers and the activities in their new room several weeks in advance. The hope is to instill in transitioning children a sense of eager anticipation regarding the move. It is the policy of Small Blessings to transition children on or around their birth date until they reach preschool age.

One Week Transitioning Schedule

The following schedule will be followed for part time and full time students:

Monday: 9am to 11am Tuesday: 9am to 11am Wednesday: 9am to Lunch
Thursday: 9am to Nap Friday: 9am to Pick Up

Every child is different, if anyone feels that one week is not enough time to transition, please contact us.

Around transition time children's behavior may change slightly. They may experience separation difficulties such as crying or clinging to families, or they may talk about returning to their old rooms. Such reactions are not unusual and rarely last long. Children need time to feel comfortable with new caregivers, classmates and surrounding. Families, too, may take some time to adjust to the child's new room and caregivers. Good family-caregiver communications helps both families and child feel at ease at transition time. Families of transitioning children are welcome and encouraged to visit their child's new room at anytime.

Holidays and Other Special Days

Celebrations, rituals, and social activities are an important part of childhood. They help children understand how they belong historically and culturally. Our program has a critical responsibility to provide developmentally appropriate activities that support each child's unique cultural and family heritage while allowing children to experience the power, magic, joy, and importance of celebrations. (NAEYC 1.A.02, 7.A.04) At Small Blessings, Inc., we want to:

- Encourage and support celebrations where children have the ability to be actively involved.
- Celebrate that which primarily benefits children, not adults.
- Encourage that all decorations are child-created, unique, non-commercial, and developmentally appropriate.

Children will have the availability of choice in games and activities (and food if it is in the form of a cooking project) in a climate that is low-key and supportive of everyone's needs. All children and their families who choose to participate will be engaged in the celebration. We will strive to actively support the unique needs of each child and family and ensure that all feel welcome as members of our program while supporting early childhood education values of health and safety, good nutrition, sound mental health, multicultural inclusiveness, and individual differences.

Each classroom will choose celebrations based on the experience of the children in the room.

Opening/Closing & Expanding/Collapsing Classroom Policy

It is the policy of Small Blessings to strategically open and close classrooms based on the number of children served, while maintaining a financial responsible staffing ratio at all times. In doing, so we will always maintain the ratio of the youngest child being served in any given classroom at any given time.

Personal Belongings

On designated days throughout the year, children bring personal items or toys to share during a special part of the day's activities. Caregivers will inform you about "Show and Share" days. Please do not allow your child to bring personal items to the School except at these special times, or a soft toy for naptime. Please talk with your child's caregiver for more information. To avoid loss and confusion, please label all personal items. Please do not allow your children to bring breakable objects, money, candy, food, gum or toy guns or other toy weapons to the School. (NAEYC 1.D.05)

Pet Policy

Pets in our program will be carefully chosen in regards to care, temperament, health risks and appropriateness for young children. (NAEYC 5.C.05)

Pet Policy Procedure:

- Animals will be properly cared for (clean water, food, clean cages, and immunized). Staff will be assigned duties to maintain the pets.
- Animals, their cages and any other equipment will not be allowed in the food prep area.
- Children will be closely supervised when handling pets.
- Children with allergy response to animals will be accommodated.
- Children and adults will wash hands after handling or feeding animals.
- Children will not clean cages or have access to animal waste. Staff will wash hands after cleaning animal cages/equipment.

- Birds of the parrot family that carry psittacosis, a respiratory illness, as well as reptiles and amphibians that typically carry salmonella, a bacteria that can cause serious disease in humans, will NOT be permitted.
- Families will be notified in writing when pets will be on premises, including the type of pet.
- As a member of the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program, we have made a commitment to have no pets with fur or feathers on our property. Pets with fur and feathers are at rigger for allergic reactions and asthma attacks.

Staffing

Small Blessings, Inc.'s staff are trained and dedicated early childhood professionals. Even our youngest assistants are enrolled in formal training. It is our goal to grow and retain our staff by creating a long-term team-oriented environment. The high quality of the staff is a benefit to you – the result is the positive development of your child and the increase in your ability to focus on your job. We encourage you to treat your child's caregiver and the rest of the School staff with dignity and respect. They are early childhood professionals with whom you have entrusted the care of your child the majority of the day. (NAEYC 10.B.09)

Study Trips

The program of activities for children 3 to 12 years old may include visits to special places within the community (car seats must be supplied). Special precautions are taken to assure the safety of children on field trips. You will be notified in advance of planned field trips and if there is any cost. Familial permission is required. You may request that your child not participate. Alternate care can be arranged while the field trip is occurring. Families are welcome and sometimes needed to participate in field trips as their work schedules permit and at their own cost. (NAEYC 7.A.07, 7.A.12, 8.A.02, 8.B.01, 8.B.02)

In addition to trips taken out of the School we will be also bring special people and events into the school. Visits from the fire truck, police, zoo, etc. are encouraged and supported. (8.B.04) If you have any ideas for a special trip or visit please talk with your child's caregiver.

Videos from Home

Small Blessings Inc.'s philosophy limits video watching in classrooms unless educational. Please do not send a video from home.

HEALTH & NUTRITION POLICIES

Small Blessings, Inc. will be operated in a manner to ensure a healthy and safe environment for the children and staff at the School.

Biting Policy

We are always upset when we experience biting in our toddler rooms. Even though we know that it is expected when toddlers are together in groups, we don't want any of your children to be bitten and we want any child who bites to learn more appropriate behavior. (NAEYC 1.B.09, 1.B.10, 1.E.01-1.E.04, 1.F.01-1.F.02, 6.A.02, 10.B.08) When it comes to biting, here is what families can expect from us:

- We will put children's safety first and provide appropriate first aid as well as comfort and advice to any child who is bitten.
- We will provide appropriate programming for toddlers to help prevent biting.
- We will help the children in our program who are biting.

- We will have current information and resources on biting for teachers and families.
- We will have teachers with adequate knowledge and training to deal appropriately and effectively with biting.
- We will take families concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect.
- We will tell families what specific steps are being taken to address biting and explain the reasoning behind those steps.
- We will respond to families' questions, concerns and suggestions, even when the response to a suggestion is not possible.
- We will work to schedule conferences about biting with the child's teachers at a time when families can attend.
- We will keep all children's identity confidential if he or she bites. This helps avoid labeling or confrontations that will slow the process of learning not to bite.

We encourage families to come to any of us with questions or concerns.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs are welcome to attend our School. The administrative staff and the care giving staff will work closely with your family and your child's intervention specialist, transition coordinator or early childhood special education teacher to provide individually appropriate instruction as outlined by your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP). (NAEYC 3.A.01)

Chronic Medical Conditions

Children with pre-existing medical conditions will be evaluated for admission on an individual basis. After admission, documentation of regular medical follow up is required.

Food Allergy Policy

Food allergies are becoming more common among infants and young children. Allergic reactions can range from mild skin rashes to severe, life-threatening reactions with breathing difficulties. It is important to reduce the likelihood that these reactions will take place while the child is at child care. (NAEYC 5.A.01h, 5.B.05)

Food Allergy Procedure

When children with food allergies attend the child care setting we ask that families submit a food allergy action plan which is filled out by the families health care provider. (NAEYC 5.A.01h, 5.B.05)

- Based on the child's Individualized Care Plan for Food Allergies, Food Intolerances or Family Preferences, caregivers will receive training and put into practice:
- Preventing exposure to specific food(s) that trigger allergy,
- Recognize symptoms of allergic reaction
- Treating allergic reaction

Families and staff shall arrange for setting to have appropriate medication (if necessary) on site, proper storage of medication, equipment and training to use while in child care.

Teachers will promptly and take proper steps outlined in Action Plan if a reaction occurs in child care. Teachers will also notify emergency medical personal if epinephrine has been given.

Individualized Care Plan for Food Allergies, Food Intolerances or Family Preferences

Ensuring Children's Nutritional well being For each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs, the child's health provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. The program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent for posting information about that child's food allergy and, if consent is given, then posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day. (NAEYC 5.B.5)

Procedure: Food Allergies, Food Intolerances, or Family Preferences

Families and their doctor review weekly menus to determine menu items not suitable for their child.

Family provides

- Signed Food Transportation Form ensuring food is transported in a safe manner that program can serve.
- all Substitute menu items several days in advance of meal
 1. Labeled with child's name and classroom
 2. Labeled with the date, and which menu item substitute is for
- All substitutes are taken directly to the kitchen. Substitutes **are not** to be dropped off or stored in the classrooms for any reason.
- Food Services will serve all substitutes on the carts – labeled as families directed; special milks will be taken down by the carton.

This system is designed to provide accurate services regardless of the teachers present because it is the family and food services working closely.

When milk substitutes get low, Food Services will email the families directly, copying Family and Community Relations Director, Director, and Classrooms. Classroom Teacher will then make a note on the daily until the substitutes are brought in. When substitutes are brought in, Food Services will send a thank you email and copy Family and Community Relations Director, Director, and Classrooms.

III Child Policy

The Small Blessings child care staff entrusted to care for your child/ren are concerned with your child's health. In spite of everyone's efforts, children do get sick. Young children, in particular, get sick more often because:

- their immune systems do not fight illness as well as an adult's and
- they have not been exposed to many of the germs (viruses, bacterial, fungi, or parasites) that cause infections.

Contagious diseases spread from one person to another. Often, people who spread disease do not look or feel sick. The germs spread by direct contact (touching), by coughing or sneezing, or by germs from the stool (bowel movement), or by blood getting on surfaces. (NAEYC 5.A.04)

Maintaining health and preventing the spread of contagious diseases are responsibilities shared by families, teachers, and administration. Our staff uses illness-prevention practices that limit spread of infections such as the use of gloves during diaper changing, frequent hand washing, and the employment of the proper cleansing agents.

Families must have their children immunized against major diseases, including but not limited to: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae type b disease (HIB), polio-myelitis, measles, mumps, reubella, and chicken pox according to the latest recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the State of Indiana (unless exempted for religious or medical reasons). If you have any questions, you should call the Indiana chapter of the American Academy of pediatrics at (800) 257-4762 and they will contact your family physician to review the requirements.

Small Blessings, Inc employs procedures for reporting exposures, identifying an ill child, and informing the family of a child's illness. Families are responsible for providing up-to-date emergency phone numbers, promptly picking up their ill child when asked, and consulting with their child's doctor about diagnosis and care.

Families must inform the school when their child is ill with a contagious disease and should request their pediatrician's cooperation in consulting with the school if the illness has implications for the entire child care program.

Notifications Procedure and Practices including responsible person(s):

- The child's primary care giver will conduct a daily health check on all children upon arrival; when primary care giver is not present, a teacher will document anything of note on the daily form.
- The reporting Lead teacher will decide whether a child who is ill will be permitted to remain for the day in the classroom, or referred to Sick Bay, based on ill policy for children. The Lead Teacher will notify Sick Bay when a child is being watched for symptoms (1st diarrhea, noticing of a rash, etc.) so that the Sick Bay can be prepared.
- The child's primary care giver will complete a symptom record on the child's daily to document time, date, and symptoms of illness; when primary care giver is not present, a teacher will document anything of note on the daily form.
- Sick Bay will decide whether the child can remain in Sick Bay or excluded from the school, based on ill policy for children. Based on this information, Sick Bay will notify family, and document everything on the Sick Bay referral sheet.

Temporary exclusion in Sick Bay is recommended when:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortable in activities as determined by staff.
- The child is irritable, continuously crying, requiring more attention than staff can provide without endangering the health and safety of the other children.
- Appears to be severely ill.
- Fever AND behavior change or one or more of the following symptoms:
- Axillary temperature of 100°Fahrenheit or higher if under 4 months of age. If a temperature goes over 102°F axillary you will be notified to pick up your child. Digital thermometers are used at Small Blessings.
- Diarrhea: defined by more 3 or more watery stools. If your child has excessive stools that cannot be contained in a diaper you may be asked to pick them up due to contamination.
- Vomiting: there are many reasons children vomit from eating something that does not agree with them, excessive hard play, or any number of illnesses. A child will be excluded from class if they have vomited two or more times.
- Abdominal pain (persistent): that pain continues for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms.

- Severe Cough

Following an illness, children will be readmitted to the classroom when they no longer have the above symptoms, have begun appropriate treatment, and/or no longer have significant discomfort and feel well enough to participate in the group.

Children with the above signs and symptoms will be separated from the group and cared for in the Sick Bay. Family/guardian will be notified by the Health Specialist. The child's primary care giver will complete a symptom record located on the sick bay referral form and the child's daily. When the family/guardian picks up their child they will sign the sick bay referral form and receive a copy for their records. When the child spends the day in the Sick Bay, the Health Specialist will fill out the symptom record on the child's daily and give a copy to the family/guardian for their records.

Exclusion from school is recommended when:

- The child displays any of the following conditions, or conditions shown on the health department chart, unless a health professional determines the child's condition does not require exclusion:
- Diarrhea: excessive stools that cannot be contained in a diaper due to contamination or lasting longer than 48 hours without being seen by a doctor. Excessive diarrhea is defined as watery stools occurring one after the other.
- Blood in stool: not explained by dietary changes, medication, or hard stools.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): A child will be excluded for bacterial conjunctivitis (red eyes, green or yellow discharge). They may return a full 24 hours after treatment has started and they are able to participate in activities. Other forms do not need to be excluded if determined by a physician (such as caused by allergies).
- Fever
 - Axillary temperature of 102°Fahrenheit or higher. If under 4 months of age, fever over 100°Fahrenheit or higher. Digital thermometers are used at Small Blessings.
- Impetigo: Exclude until a full 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Mouth Sores: Exclude if mouth sores is coupled with drooling.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough): Children should be excluded until five days of appropriate antibiotic has been completed or until physician states patient is non-infectious.
- Pinworms: Children should be excluded for a full 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Rash: with fever and/or behavior change. Rashes without a fever and/or behavior change will be observed for an hour and if they spread, the child will be excluded. Behavior change with rash is defined as any behavior not normal to the child, scratching, or rubbing of affected area. Any rash that breaks and seeps will require exclusion until sores are clear of infection or treated appropriately.
- Scabies: Children should be excluded until 24 hours after treatment is begun.
- Sore Throat with Swollen Glands.
- Streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep Throat): Excluded until 24 hours after treatment is begun.
- Yellow, green, or clear thick runny nose: Persisting for more than the typical 7-10 as recorded on the child's daily health record.

Any child determined by the local health department to be contributing to the transmission of illness during an outbreak.

Children with the above signs and symptoms will be separated from the group and cared for in the Sick Bay. Family/guardian will be notified by the Health Specialist that their child will need to be picked up within one hour. If the family cannot be reached at any of the contact numbers listed on file, emergency contacts will be called. If the child is not picked up within one hour of the initial phone call, late fees will apply.

The child's primary care giver will complete a symptom record located on the sick bay referral form and the child's daily. When the family/guardian picks up their child they will sign the sick bay referral form and receive a copy for their records. When the child spends the day in the Sick Bay, the Health Specialist will fill out the symptom record on the child's daily and give a copy to the family/guardian for their records.

Following an illness, children will be readmitted to the classroom when they no longer have the above symptoms, have begun appropriate treatment, have a doctor's note, and/or no longer have significant discomfort and feel well enough to participate.

Families/Guardians will be notified by written notice on the main door of the building signifying the classroom of exposure to a communicable disease. Families/Guardians will not be given verbal notice. (5.A.05)

Conditions that do not require exclusiton

Reason this policy is important: When a child becomes ill but does not require immediate medical help, a determination must be made whether the child requires exclusion. Most illnesses do not require exclusion.

- Common Colds, Runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge), and coughs. Signs and Symptoms of colds will be observed by the teacher and/or families and should be written on dailies each day.
- Fever without any signs or symptoms of illness in children who are older than 4 months. For this purpose, fever is defined as an axillary (armpit) temperature of 100°F or greater measured by a digital thermometer. *Fever is an indication of the body's response to something, but is neither a disease nor a serious problem by itself.
- Watery eye discharge without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness.
- Children with chronic infectious conditions that can be accommodated in the program according to the legal requirements of federal law in the American with Disabilities Act (e.g. HIV infection). The act requires that child care programs and schools make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, considering each child individually.

Immunizations

Children must be immunized in accordance with standard pediatric practice in order to be admitted to the School. Infants and toddlers must follow the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended immunizations schedule and provide a written record to the School verifying each immunization so that the School's records are kept current. Pertussis vaccine is included in this requirement due to the large group of susceptible (one year and younger) children at the School. These files are kept confidential.

All children must be immunized against Hemophilus Influenza type B (HIB) and MMR. Children will receive 3 HIB vaccines with a booster at 12 and 15 months. The first HIB vaccine should be administered at 2 months. Varicella, Chicken Pox vaccination is also required. (NAEYC 5.A.01) The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following schedule:

Immunizations	Age(s) Given
DPT (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)	2 months 4 months 6 months 15/18 months 4/6 years
Polio (oral)	2 months 4 months 6/18 months 4/6 years
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (usually given together at MMR)	12/15 months 4/6 years
HbCV (Hemophilus Influenza B conjugate vaccine – formerly Hib)	2 months 4 months 6 months 12/18 months
Varicella	12/18 months
Hepatitis B	Birth 1/4 months 6/18 months
Pneumococcal (PCV)	2 months 4 months 6 months 12/15 months

Children whose immunizations are not kept current are subject to disenrollment.

Medication Administration Policy

Inevitably, some children will require medication while in the childcare setting. The process for handling and administering medications must be well structured and carefully followed in order to ensure that the interests of the children and the providers are best served. When possible, a child's families and physician should try to minimize the need for medications while in childcare. Medicines ordered twice a day should normally be given before and after, rather than during, childcare hours. Medications ordered to be given three times daily also may be planned so that they are given in the morning before the child leaves for childcare, in the afternoon after the child returns home, and again during the evening. However, in some cases, administration of medications during childcare hours is unavoidable. (NAEYC 5.A.11)

Medication Administration Procedures

Teachers will administer medication only if the family or legal guardian has provided **written consent on the Medication Permission Form** located in each room on the outside of the first aid cabinet. **Over the counter medication must have a current Standing Order Form** on file, signed by the family doctor.

Prescription Medication

- Families or legal guardians will provide the prescription medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with:
- the child's name, the name and strength of the medication;

- the date the prescription was filled;
- the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription;
- the medication's expiration date;
- and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

Nonprescription Medication

- families or legal guardians will provide the medication in the original container.
- the medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names;
- specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer;
- and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.
- Instructions for the dose, time, and method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the child care staff in writing on the Medication Administration form located on the outside of the first aid cabinet in the classroom. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications

Standing Order Forms, signed by the family and doctor, should also be used for certain medications for recurring problems, emergency situations, or chronic conditions or prevention. Example: sun screen, diaper ointment, and/or Epi-pen.

The instructions should include

- the name of the medication
- the dose of the medication
- how often the medication may be given
- the conditions for use
- any precautions to follow; and
- potential side effects

A child may only receive medication with the permission of the child's family or legal guardian.

Medications for chronic conditions such as: Asthma or allergies

For chronic conditions (such as asthma), the family/legal guardian written consent must be renewed monthly. An individual care plan must be provided that lists symptoms or conditions under which the medication will be given.

Emergency supply of medication for chronic illness:

For medications taken at home, we ask for a three-day supply to be kept with our disaster kit in case there is a situation in which children are not able to return home for an extended time.

Staff Documentation:

Staff administering medications to children will be trained in medication procedure by Health Specialist and record of training will be kept in staff's file. Staff giving medications to will document the time, date and dosage and route of the medication given on the child's Medication Permission Form and will sign each time a medication is given. Notation of failure to provide medication, at the prescribed time as requested by a physician or family will also be noted.

Staff will report and document any observed side effects on the child's individual medication form.

Staff will provide a written explanation why a medication was not given. Outdated Standing Order Forms and documentation will be kept in the child's file.

Staff will only administer medication when all conditions listed above are met.

Medication Storage:

Medication will be stored as follows: (NAEYC 5.A.11e)

- Inaccessible to children
- Separate from staff or household medication
- Protected from sources of contamination
- Away from heat, light and sources of moisture (not in the kitchen or bathroom)
- At temperature specified on the label (refrigerated if required)
- So that internal (oral) and external (topical) medications are separated
- Separate from food
- In a sanitary and orderly manner
- Medications no longer being used will promptly be returned to families/guardians or discarded, never placed in the child's cubby.
- Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the health care provider. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be reviewed by the health care provider at least annually.

Self-Administration by Child

A school-aged child will be allowed to administer his or her own inhaler or Epi-pen when the above requirements are met AND:

A written statement from the child's Health Care Provider and family/legal guardian is obtained, indicating the child is capable of self-medication without assistance

The child's medications and supplies are inaccessible to other children.

Staff must observe and record documentation of self-administered medications.

Nutrition for Infants

For infants not yet on table food, we ask that you have fed them at least once for the day upon bringing them into the center. If the infant is on table food, please note that breakfast will not be served after 8 am. Therefore if they are dropped off after this time they will need to have been fed at least once as well. This ensures they are receiving the best possible nutrition in a timely matter. (NAEYC 5.B.9-10)

Infant Feeding

Children in the infant program are fed on demand. For children six weeks to 12 months, families are asked to provide food, formula, or frozen breast milk. Mothers who wish to continue nursing should coordinate the baby's nursing schedule with the caregiver to facilitate the baby's and mother's needs.

Infant Safe Formula Procedures

This process will provide for the safe preparation and transportation of your infant's formula by following the procedures below:

1. The bottles shall be sterilized. (See bottle sterilizing procedures)

2. The nipples must be covered.
3. The bottle shall be labeled with the child's name and date prepared.
4. The bottles must be brought to the child care school in a clean, insulated container that keeps that formula at forty-one (41) degrees Fahrenheit or below.
5. Staff shall return all unused bottles daily.
6. The family shall provide one (1) unopened can of ready to feed or powdered formula and one (1) extra bottle to leave at the site.

(Division of Family and Children; 470 IAC 3-4.7 – 135)

Breast Milk Procedures

Breast milk is a very special product. Please provide a safe and excellent source of nutrition to your breastfed infants by following the procedures below:

1. The mother must supply sterilized bottles or disposable nurser bags.
2. The mother will store her milk in a bottle or bag and refrigerate or freeze the milk. The bottle or bag should contain no more than the amount of milk the child would drink at one feeding. The milk must be labeled with the child's name, amount and the date and time collected.
3. The bottles or disposable bags must be brought to the school in a clean insulated container which keeps the milk at 41 degrees or below.
4. Fresh, refrigerated breast milk must be used within 48 hours of the time expressed. Frozen milk may be stored in a refrigerator freezer for 2 months or stored in a deep freezer at 0 degrees for 6 months.
5. Frozen breast milk may be thawed as follows:
 - a. Frozen breast milk may be thawed under warm water, gently mixed, used within one hour or refrigerate immediately and used within three hours. Label the bottle with time and date thawed and method used for thawing ("warm water" or "heat thaw")
 - b. Frozen breast milk may be thawed in the refrigerator at 45 degrees or below. Label the bottle with the time and date moved to refrigerator and "cold thaw" method and use within twenty four hours. This method never warms the breast milk until ready to feed child.

NEVER HEAT BREAST MILK IN A MICROWAVE

Note: Once a bottle is fed to infant, the remainder must be discarded and cannot be returned to refrigerator.

Bottle sterilizing procedures

1. Pre-wash all items in hot detergent water or dishwasher.
2. Scrub bottles and nipples inside and out with bottle and nipple brush.
3. Squeeze water through the nipple hole during washing.
4. Rinse items well with clean, hot water.
5. Boil in clear water as follows:
 - a. Bottles for five (5) minutes.
 - b. Nipples, caps, collars, expanders, and tongs for three (3) minutes.

(Division of Family and Children; 470 IAC 3-4.7 -138)

Physical Examinations

All children enrolled in the school must present a physician's certificate of good health prior to the time of admittance. Furthermore, Infants, toddlers and twos must have an updated physical record form after each check up. (NAEYC 5.A.0)

Sickbay Procedures

If your child becomes ill at the school they will be taken to the sick bay. You will immediately be called and given an update. Late charges begin if you are asked to pick up your child within one hour and your child is not picked up within one hour of our call. Late charges also begin at 5:31 p.m. The following conditions also need to occur: (NAEYC 10.D.0)

- **All ill children entering/exiting the building must do so through the sickbay door**
- Clocked in/out at the front desk
- Notification may be required in writing, from your doctor, that a child may return to class, or sick bay.

We are not to diagnose a disease but do our best to recognize illness or disease symptoms in order to protect the health of the whole school. Please know that we do our best at protecting our young ones.

Special Health Procedures

During outbreaks of contagious illness (i.e., epidemic diarrhea – to rule out shigella, bacterial meningitis or Hemophilus Influenza type B), families may be required to have their children cultured or tested prior to entry into the classroom. Children who do not receive the required testing may be excluded from the School in order to protect the health of the group. (NAEYC 5.A.05)

Families of children with physical, emotional, visual or dental problems will receive referral notices from the School. Families will be responsible for contacting the appropriate agency for screening. A child whose families fail to comply with the School's medical policies may be disenrolled.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

To protect against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne diseases, the program ensures that:

- Children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.
- Children have the opportunity to play in the shade. When in the sun, they wear sun protective clothing, applied skin protection, or both. Applied skin protection will be either sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher that is applied to exposed skin (only with written parental permission and Physicians Standing Order Form for non-prescription medications to do so.) (NAEYC 5.A.07B)

When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET are used, and these are applied only on children older than two months. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written parental permission and Physicians Standing Order Form for non-prescription medications.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Eligibility for Admission

At Small Blessings, Inc. children between the ages of six weeks and twelve years are eligible for admission. A full-time enrollee is defined as a child attending the School on a regularly scheduled basis between 34 and 50 hours per week, 52 weeks a year. A part-time enrollee is defined as a child attending the School on a weekly scheduled basis between 11 and 34 hours per week. Part-time enrollments must maintain a consistent schedule. An occasional enrollee is defined as a child attending less than 10 hours per week. (NAEYC 10.B.08)

Registration Fee

The first step in the enrollment process is placing a non-refundable processing fee of \$125 covers the administrative cost associated with processing your child's enrollment information. The initial \$125 fee is payable at the time a Registration Form and Family Agreement is submitted. The registration fee for a family is \$175. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Waiting List Policies

Traditional Waiting List

- To secure a spot on the waitlist you will need to submit a non-refundable registration fee of \$125.00 and a completed registration form. This fee does not confirm your enrollment in the center, however, it will be used to join the waitlist and begin the enrollment process when a position becomes available.
- As there is a heavy demand for places in the Center parents are asked to notify the Center of any changes to the information recorded on our waiting list, including whether a child still requires care, etc.
- It is the responsibility of the parents to notify us of a change in phone numbers or email addresses. If we cannot reach you due to invalid contact information, your child will be removed from our waiting list.
- When a position becomes available we will first try and contact you via phone at work, home or any other phone number listed and leave a message if you are not available. Then we will send an email and you will have 24 hours to respond. Failure to respond will result in the space being offered to the next person on the list. If you decline the position, we will also offer it to the next family on the list.
- To secure a position you are asked to pay a security deposit (equal to your first week of tuition) and the first week tuition within 24 hours of accepting the position. These fees are non-refundable if you decide at a later date you no longer require our services.
- Upon completion of the registration form to be placed on the wait list you are asked for a desired start date. This date is not guaranteed. We will do our best to be able to meet your need depending on the children in the room and their birth dates. When a position is offered this is your start date and cannot be changed unless another position becomes available and you are able to trade or you choose to pay for the weeks prior to the changed date.
- With so many factors involved in enrollment at the center, we cannot accurately predict when spaces will become available until we receive notice from a parent, and the space actually becomes available. We cannot give you a "number" of where you are on the waiting list due to the many factors involved.

Limited Secured Positions

- Based on birthdates of currently enrolled children we can predict a limited number of available positions; these positions are available on a first-come-first-served basis. To secure one of these positions the first month's tuition along with the registration fee and security deposit is required.
- These spots are first-come-first-served, therefore, we ask existing clients to secure their positions as soon as possible so that we can accommodate their families.
- These fees are non-refundable if you choose at a later time to not attend the center.
- For infant families we ask that you secure a position on the best date you can, and then you let us know a more definite start date as soon as your child is born. We can work with you as much as possible with the start date, but it will need to be in the range that you secure. For example, if you put down a start date of December 7, we cannot hold the position until January 7 unless

you continue to pay for the spot as it causes financial difficulties on the center. If you need December 1, we will do our best to accommodate your family.

It is our goal to be able to meet all the needs your family when you join our wait list with your help by keeping your information updated and keeping us abreast of your situation and any changes in your needs.

Adoption

Families who are adopting may apply for a position on the wait list at the time they are approved as adoptive families and may request a date for needed care as much as 24 months in advance.

Changing Start Dates (Excludes those who have secured a spot)

All families on the wait list have the opportunity to change the date that care is needed for their children, one time, as long as their original request date has not passed. The date requested may be no longer than 24 months from the original date indicated that care was needed.

Family Orientation Meeting

Relationships are at the heart of what we do. It is because of this that we meet with every family prior to a child's start date. These orientations are scheduled at 9:30 a.m. so that your teacher may attend and we have proper room coverage. Childcare will be provided. (NAEYC 7.A.02, 7.A.06, 7.A.08, 7.A.09)

Orientation Meeting - This is a time to:

1. Allow your child to have a play date in the classroom
2. Meet your child's primary caregiver and see your child's classroom,
3. Review our Family Handbook and review communication strategies,
4. Discuss your program, and our strategies for a successful collaboration,
5. Spend time reviewing our curriculum and emphasize the importance of Family Involvement,

Collect:

1. completed enrollment forms (physical, immunizations, and a copy of the birth certificate), family pictures and checklist items,
2. classroom supplies (as are listed on the enrollment form)
3. outstanding fees
4. Take digital pictures of the child and family,

This meeting will take approximately one hour, depending your enthusiasm and questions. It is designed to answer your questions, allow us to get to know one another, and make your transition smoother.

During this visit we will also:

- Issue security cards
- Food Service Director to discuss dietary needs for families who have special dietary needs

Enrollment Packet includes:

- Intake Agreement
- Enrollment Form
- Allergy Alert Form
- Discipline Policy

- Child Care School Health Record, this is a report of physical examinations, dated no more than two months prior to enrollment, which includes the following:
 - Physician's signature
 - Record of immunizations – no exceptions (Physician must document reasons for deviation from the recommended ages for immunization)
 - Diet orders for infants or special nutrition needs (including a script for powder formula, but script must state a medical reason such as: ease in digestion)
- **Physician Standing Orders for Non-Prescription Medications - for ANY over the counter medication you may ever wish us to administer with your permission, including sunscreen and diaper ointment.**
- Signed Medication Procedure
- Signed Security Procedure
- Copy of birth certificate
- Additional items for Infants: Infant Feeding Plan Food and Transportation Sheet if applicable.
- EFT paperwork

FINANCIAL POLICIES

At Small Blessings, Inc., we provide quality programming in an excellent facility at a reasonable and competitive price to families. Tuition fees paid by families are utilized to cover the School's direct operating expenses including staff salaries, program and food expenses.

Tuition payments are due on Thursday mornings for the following week. If you are on a part-time or occasional child schedule, tuition is paid based on your specific, contracted, window of time. Tuition not paid by 6:00 p.m. Thursday evening will be assessed a \$40.00 late charge and will continue to accrue for each week your account is behind.

Small Blessings, Inc. is open to serve you 52 weeks of the year.

Tuition

Small Blessings, Inc. establishes the School's tuition rates and adjusts them annually to cover increases in the cost of operation. Each year we will review the tuition rates of child care schools in the Indianapolis area and determine rate increases for our school. In determining a rate increase, comparative rates, quality, and staff salaries and benefits are considered. Families will receive a month's notice, in writing, of fee adjustments.

Tuition rates reflect the ratio of the classroom grouping. They will move up to the next classroom until preschool when they near their birthday depending on enrollment.

- Billed on Monday
- Invoices distributed via email on Monday
- Due on Thursday morning, EFT is processed noon on Tuesday
- Late on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuition is due on the last business day should school be closed for any reason (ie: on Wednesday when closed Thursday and Friday)

Full Time

Full time is classified as a child attending 34 or more hours a week. Tuition is calculated on a weekly rate and is paid a week ahead. Even though your hours are included from opening to closing we do require you to secure a timeframe for staffing and ratio purposes.

Part-time

Part time is classified a consistent schedule of 1-33 hours per week, on alternating days, based on availability (examples: Monday and Wednesday, Wednesday and Friday, Tuesday and Thursday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). It is charged as an hourly rate and is paid a week ahead. There is a 7 hour minimum per day and you are charged for the time frame of hours you would like to arrive and leave. Any additional hours used are charged as an **actual usage** and appear on your invoice the week after you use them.

Actual Usage Adjustment

If you attend part time you are asked to secure a time frame for the hours you would like to arrive and leave at. This timeframe is what your billing is based upon and not the number of hours you have requested. If you arrive before your secured time or pick up after your secured time the extra minutes will be calculated at an hourly rate and will show up as an **actual usage adjustment**, the following week. For example, if you secure the timeframe of 7am to 4pm and you drop off at 6.45am and pick up at 3.30pm. You will then accrue a 15 minute actual usage charge.

Occasional Care Usage

If your attend on an Occasional Care basis, time is calculated at an hourly rate and will show up as an **actual usage adjustment**, the following week. If you secure a spot with us and do not attend that day, hours will be billed for the time you secured at the hourly rate.

School Age Tuition

All weekly fees are based upon before and after school needs. Any additional hours for waiver days, snow days, etc. are charged at the hourly rate and appear as an **actual usage** the week after they are used.

School Age Year Program Scheduling (Arborists Enrollment)

Our school age children have different schedules and are often going in many different directions. For this purpose we have a flexible way to meet your needs. Children who are enrolled full time, with either before or after or both are driven to and from their school (or ride the local ZCS bus). If your child will not need to be picked up from their school, or getting off their bus at the end of the day, please notify the front desk by noon so we are not looking for them. We do apply a \$25.00 no pick-up fee if we have not been notified and need to contact you. You can leave a message on our absence line, but we do advise that you speak with someone directly.

Emergency Delays or Emergency Early Closings

If there is an emergency closing and our center is open, your child can spend the day with us if they are enrolled full time. If there is an emergency delay or early closing we will provide transportation for your child if they are enrolled to be here at that time. If your child does not attend in the mornings or afternoons and need transportation at a time they are currently not scheduled to be here, we do ask that you call the front desk to be sure we have room on our bus/van for transportation. Hourly rates apply for all time used outside of school-age contracted hours (6:30-9:00am; 3:30-6:00pm). **Families who are enrolled as Occasional Care must call** if care is needed to be sure we have room on our bus/van for transportation or in the room to spend the day; hourly rates apply for actual usage.

School Breaks

If your child will be in attendance over school breaks please fill out a change of status form two weeks or more in advance so that we can plan accordingly. We want to plan study trips and experiences and also need to plan meals for those days. Often our school-age children will not all have the same days for breaks. When attendance allows, we plan for the school age children to be in the Arborists room with their teacher. When attendance does not allow, or when our teachers have bus/van runs, your child may spend planned time in one of our preschool/kindergarten classrooms and then return to their classroom later in the day.

Summer Camp

Summer Camp can be used for the entire summer, weekly, or Occasional Care. We can take enrollment for summer camp at any time. To secure a spot for your child's summer experience you will pay their first week's tuition and fill out our Summer Camp Registration or a Change of Status Form. As we do not offer vacation credits, you must designate the weeks your child will be in attendance for proper billing **at the time of enrollment** for summer camp or you will be billed for weeks missed. This will give us an opportunity to enroll Occasional Care children for the weeks your child will not be in attendance.

Children's Schedules

It is important for families to stay within the hours they have scheduled as closely as possible because staffing is based on children's schedules. Early drop off or late pick up, without proper notice, can jeopardize the School's caregiver/child ratios.

Occasionally families temporarily need to change the hours their children are scheduled at the School. When this happens, families are asked to first check with the office to make sure the change can be accommodated and then fill out a "Change of Status" form and turn it in at the front desk. If the families need to change their child's schedule permanently, they should note that this is a permanent change on the "Change of Status" form. If the changes result in a schedule or financial decrease change, two weeks notice must be given.

Absence Policy In the event of an absence or late arrival, parents must notify the Front Desk on or before the day of the absence by either calling 328-2223 ext. 6 or filling out a Change of Status Form. This helps us to plan our day in terms of staffing and meals to keep tuition costs down. Families must pay for all absences regardless of the cause. No credits will be issued.

Discounts

Sibling - A 10% discount off of the lowest tuition is given when one or more siblings attend.

Extended Hours and Late Charges

It can be difficult for young children when they stay at the School longer than they are used to and it can mean that caregivers have to work unscheduled overtime. After 6PM a late fee of \$25.00 for the first fifteen minutes will be assessed and \$5.00 for each minute after that, per child. Please note the Sick Bay closes at 5:30PM therefore late charges begin at 5:31. When a family is called and asked to pick up their child due to illness they have one hour to do so. After an hour, late pick up charges apply. Holidays (Paid days off)

The School will be closed on the following paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve and New Years Day
- April, Friday-NAEYC Conf.-Staff Development

- August, Friday-Curriculum Training.-Staff Development

Back-up care may be offered on some holidays if a sufficient number of families need care. These holiday observances are subject to date changes, depending on the day of the week that they fall. Exact dates can be found on the Family Calendar which can either be downloaded from the website <http://www.SmallBlessingsInc.com/> or picked up at the front desk.

Payments

Tuition payments are made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) transactions through your checking account. There is a credit card option; to use this option there is a 5% convenience fee added to each transaction. An EFT application is included with your enrollment packet. Is it the family's responsibility to notify us immediately of any change in your EFT information and provide us with an up-to-date account by filling out a new EFT form. Any returned funds through EFT will be assessed a \$35 processing fee.

Referral Program

Our most treasured assets are our customers. The best referral comes from our happy customers and devoted employees and we want you to know it! We provide referral cards at the front desk. Just write your name on the back and hand them out, for every family you send our way that enrolls in our program--make sure they bring us that card--Small Blessings, Inc. will credit your account \$500! We appreciate your kind references!

If you refer a teacher to our school, you will receive a \$200 referral credit after their 90 day review.

Security Deposit

Enrollment fees include a Security Deposit, Supply Fee and first week's tuition. A Security Deposit is the equivalent of one-week of tuition or \$150 whichever is greater. For the "occasional child" this fee will be \$150.00. Security Deposits will be applied to the final use of the program, provided that two weeks' notice has been given. Every effort will be made to make arrangements for this deposit.

Supply Fee

An annual supply fee of \$150 is assessed the first week of September. For families starting mid-year, the amount will be prorated at \$12.50 per month. This fee goes toward: an annual supply of Daily Sheets, equipment repairs and replacements in each classroom, construction paper, paint, glue, glitter, cotton balls, butcher paper, yarn, contact paper, laminating, poster board, plaster of Paris, sequins, craft sticks, foam balls, pipe cleaners, feathers, fabric paint, tissue paper, crepe paper, wiggle eyes, pom-poms, paper plates, food items for cooking projects, items for science experiments, liquid starch, clothes, writing paper and the list goes on and on.

Even infants and toddlers go through tons of diaper changing paper and gloves as well as worn out toys from being washed daily, not to mention all the small toys that find their way into the trash cans or pockets.

We want our teachers to be creative with their lesson plans because this is the best for the children. We know that you'll support our program of enriching your children with hands on projects and experiences.

Withdraw and Disenrollment

A family's right to withdraw a child from the School is respected. You are required to provide a two-week written notice of intent to withdraw to have your Security Deposit applied to your last week of care.

If, in the judgment of the School Director, the individual needs of a child cannot be met in group care, the Director reserves the right to disenroll the child. When a situation is identified that could lead to disenrollment, the Director and caregiver will work with families to overcome the problem. Should disenrollment become necessary, a two-week written notice is generally provided. All belongings should be taken home on the last day. We will give one courtesy call if any items remain. After 30 days all items will be donated.

Fees

Late pick up fees - A fee of \$25.00 for the first 15 minutes and a \$5.00 per minute after is charged to each child who is not picked up by the time the center closes at 6pm. Late fees apply in Sick Bay starting at 5: 31 pm.

No Call Transportation Fee

A fee of \$25 will be applied if we arrive at your child's school and you have not called to let us know that they will not require transportation for the day.

Late Payment Fee

Tuition is due Thursday morning. Any payment not received by **Thursday at 6:00 pm** receives a \$40.00 late fee payment.

Returned Check Fee

A \$35.00 processing fee will be applied to your account for each returned check or EZ-EFT draft.

Other Fees - In addition to the fees already mentioned special situations such as families eating lunch in their child's class and/or field trips may require a fee.

Additional Charges

- **Jump into Motion** - Jump into Motion offers classes on Wednesday and Friday afternoons for children 2 and up. Fees for this class are paid directly to Jump into Motion Dance Academy.
- **Spanish Class** - On Monday and/or Thursday, children ages 2+ will learn vocabulary through a play based program of music, art, games, and fun activities. Fees for this class are paid directly to the teacher.
- **Kids Night Out** - These are held every other month on Saturday nights. If you sign up at the front desk, you will be billed \$25 per child. No refunds are given after the Tuesday prior to the event. Dates can be found on our calendar.
- **Study Trips** - For safety reasons no cash is accepted for field tips and all children attending will be billed the week of the event.

Scholarships

We accept Child Care Development Fund Vouchers.

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Voucher Clients

- Voucher clients will give voucher application to the Office Manager completed with all personal information, including days/hours child(ren) will need care.
- Office Manager will fill out Small Blessings information for Client, sign, and give back to Client to turn into their case worker.
- Client will present voucher certificate at orientation with start date listed. Client cannot start until the official voucher is received and all deposits/ fees have been paid.
- Client is responsible to pay registration fee, the full first week's tuition, and security deposit upon enrollment.

- The security deposit will be credited to your account when a two-week notice is given to end care. Failure to give a two week notice will result in losing your security deposit.
- Client agrees to pay difference of tuition. Example, tuition is \$216 weekly, CCDF voucher states Subsidy Amount as \$200, Client agrees to pay Over Amount of \$16 weekly.
- When applicable Client agrees to pay Co-pay.
- Client agrees to pay any tuition not paid by CCDF. Example, CCDF agrees to pay \$200 tuition weekly, CCDF sends Small Blessings \$150, Client will be responsible for additional \$50 of tuition EACH WEEK. Services will discontinue after two weeks of nonpayment of family portion.
- Over Amount or Co-pay for CCDF is due Thursday morning, anything not received by noon on Friday will be assessed a \$40 late fee. Failure to pay your portion of the client account will result in termination of care.

We encourage you to discuss any of these policies with our Director, Lee Ann Balta. A true partnership of family and provider make Small Blessings, Inc. a special place for your children.