



Family Handbook

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A ministry of University United Methodist Church
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	Page 3
Philosophy Statement	Page 3
Curriculum Statement	Page 3
Eligibility	Page 3
Enrollment Procedures	Page 3
Admission of Students	Page 4
Staff/Child Ratios	Page 4
Fee Policy	Page 4
Expulsion/Disenrollment Policy	Page 5
School Calendar	Page 6
School Cancellation	Page 6
Arrival / Departure	Page 6
Before School and Lunch Bunch Care	Page 6
Attendance Policy	Page 6
Daily Schedule	Page 7
Snacks	Page 7
Chapel Time	Page 7
Birthdays / Celebrations	Page 7
Field Trips	Page 7
Guidance Policy	Page 7
Parent Involvement – Open Door Policy	Page 8
Home and Preschool Communication	Page 8
Complaints	Page 9
Health & Safety	Page 10
Medications	Page 11
Backpacks / Clothing	Page 11
Personal Items from Home	Page 11
Visitors	Page 11
Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness Plan	Page 11
Lock Down Procedures	Page 11
Confidentiality Statement	Page 12
Child Abuse / Neglect	Page 12
Board Contact	Page 12

Mission Statement:

The mission of Bright Beginnings Learning Center (BBLC) is to provide every student with a quality early childhood experience. We strive to create a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment that cultivates individual needs and respects differences by supporting and strengthening the parent-child relationship to the benefit of the child, family and the community. We recognize each party as our partners and decision makers in building positive, respectful and collaborative partnerships.

Philosophy Statement:

The philosophy of BBLC is to promote the positive development of spiritual and physical growth; emotional and social growth; language and intellectual growth; creative expression; positive self-concept; a respect for cultural diversity; and a lifelong love of learning. The staff of BBLC will work towards insuring that each child's individuality is recognized by providing academic excellence in a Christian environment.

We offer small class sizes and ideal student to teacher ratios. This enables the teachers to have a powerful impact on each child's development by giving them the individual attention that is essential during their early years.

The teachers are experienced and knowledgeable about early childhood education through college course work and other professional development classes. They work collaboratively with one another to support each other in providing an atmosphere that is safe and engaging for all children. They are selected because they represent the values and beliefs of BBLC. Each teacher believes in on-going and open communication with families. This is provided through: 1) A yearly calendar and monthly newsletter 2) Assessment and conferences two to three times per year and phone calls on an as needed basis 3) Daily highlights of the days' events 4) Moments of conversation at drop-off and pick-up times.

The teachers provide a consistent schedule with a balance between teacher-directed and child-centered activities. By providing a setting which fosters self-esteem, builds confidence and is based on respect, it is our goal that the children will be empowered to take educational risks in their learning and reflect on them.

Curriculum Statement of BBLC:

Bright Beginnings Learning Center curriculum will be based on developmentally appropriate thematic units and practices that will emphasize center-based, hands on learning experiences, Christian values, and will provide opportunities for children to make choices in a safe and nurturing environment. Teachers will use a variety of approaches and provide daily opportunities for children to improve language and literacy skills, mathematical, science, social studies skills and development of fine and gross motor skills.

Eligibility:

Preschool is for those who are 3 years old by Sept. 1st and not yet 6 years old. They also have to be completely potty trained.

Toddler Classes are for those children 18 months old up to 3 years old. To be considered as a student in the 2 to 3-year-old class the child must be 2 years old by Sept. 1st of the current year.

Enrollment Procedures:

Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. Completion of the following is required:

- Registration Form, Contract for Services and non-refundable fee
- Immunization Records

Admission of Students:

BBLC Full-Time is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Families are REQUIRED to provide a blanket and pillow for rest time. BBLC provides a rest mat, but families may be asked to supply one if needed.

BBLC Morning Session is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

BBLC Afternoon Session is open Monday through Friday, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Additional care is available 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and Lunch Bunch is available 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. If not enrolled in Full-Time, additional fees apply to before care and Lunch Bunch. (Please see: Before School and Lunch Bunch Care)

Students will attend on a school year basis and tuition will be assessed accordingly. BBLC does not discriminate due to race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or religion.

Staff/Child Ratios:

State of New Mexico requires a minimum ratio of:

18 months old – 23 months old = 1 adult for every 6 children

2 years old = 1 adult for every 10 children

3 years old = 1 adult for every 12 children

4 years old = 1 adult for every 12 children

5 years old = 1 adult for every 15 children

In order to allow for more individualized learning and attention; we strive to keep our staff/child ratios lower.

Traditionally BBLC's minimum ratios are:

Zebra Classroom = 1 adult to every 2.5 children

Lion Classroom = 1 adult to every 6 children

Tiger Classroom = 1 adult to every 6 children

Giraffe Classroom = 1 adult to every 8.5 children

Monkey Classroom = 1 adult to every 7.5 children

Fee Policy:

1. Tuition is based on the school year and divided into monthly rates.

Full-Time (Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

2 days/week \$474.00 per month

3 days/week \$605.00 per month

4 days/week \$665.00 per month

5 days/week \$717.00 per month

Part-Time (Mon – Fri 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. – 4:00p.m.)

2 days/week \$199.00 per month

3 days/week \$286.00 per month

4 days/week \$364.00 per month

5 days/week \$433.00 per month

*Before school and Lunch Bunch care rate is \$4.25 per hour. Students are to bring their own lunches for lunch bunch.

2. There is a \$12.00 Snack Fee per month per child. (No discounts are given for snack fee)
3. If there is available space a student may attend additional days, if **prior** arrangements are made. The cost for this is \$30.00 per session.
4. A \$75.00 per child **non-refundable** Registration fee is due with the registration.
5. A \$75.00 per child **non-refundable** Materials Fee is due in January
6. There will be no refund of tuition for any reason, including inclement weather, illness, vacation, or change of residence.

7. **Tuition checks are payable to Bright Beginnings Learning Center (BBLC) and will be collected by the Director/Assistant Director of the preschool or put in the BBLC drop box outside the preschool office. We also have an electronic withdraw payment (EFT) option available and/or an online payment portal, please see the Director for more information and for additional fees.**
8. All tuition payments are due the 1st school day of each month. After the 10th of each month, unpaid tuition will be considered late and a \$20.00 fee will be assessed with additional charges of \$5.00 per day after the 11th of the month, if no arrangements have been made with the Director or Assistant Director.
9. Tuition refunds will not be given for any student withdrawn without **2-weeks written notice**.
10. Families can enroll students during the semester if there is available space.

Expulsion/ Disenrollment Policy

The policy of BBLC is to provide quality care and instruction to the students entrusted to our care. We strive to create a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment for all our students. While this philosophy cultivates individual needs and respects diversities, unfortunately on rare occasions there are some reasons we have to expel a child from our program, either on a short term or permanent basis.

We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

Child's Actions:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or themselves
- Uncontrollable violent tantrums/angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting
- The needs of the student cannot be adequately or reasonably met
- For any other reason in the best interest of the preschool.

Family's Actions:

- Failure to complete required forms (i.e. child's immunization records)
- Parent/guardian threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members
- Failure to make payments or making arrangements to do so
- Failing to make provisions for the student's personal needs
-

Corrective Plan:

BBLC personnel will attempt to work with the family and child to take constructive steps to finding a solution that resolves the problem, before an expulsion/disenrollment occurs. Staff will attempt a number of approaches before making the final decision to expel or dis-enroll a child from the program.

When a child's teacher or an administrator has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, he or she will document such concerns using an Incident Report. The family will be called and a copy of the Incident Report will be sent home indicating what the problem is, and what next efforts will be made to support the child. Staff will inform and involve the child's family by notes, phone calls, or meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative environment. Together BBLC and the family will develop strategies to address a child's particular needs, during this time a variety of options will be considered depending on the child's individual or developmental needs. Options can include, but are not limited to, changes in:

- the physical environment
- the daily structure of activities
- transition times

- redirection

If, after one to two weeks, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the family will be asked to remove the student. The family will be given a minimum of two weeks' notice to find another center to provide care for this child.

Withdrawal Policy:

Families who wish to withdraw their child from BBLC should notify the school in writing at least 2 weeks before the student's final day of school.

School Calendar:

In general, BBLC follows the Las Cruces Public Schools calendar. School begins in August. A yearly calendar will be provided to the families each semester.

School Cancellation:

In the event that a weather emergency occurs and the Las Cruces Public Schools cancels classes or delays the start of school, BBLC will follow their decision and families will be notified via email and Remind. This decision will prompt the following predetermined actions:

- Morning classes will be cancelled
- Afternoon classes will continue only if LCPS has a delayed start and it is determined safe to continue preschool by the Director or Assistant Director

Arrival/Departure Information:

An **ADULT** (18 years or older) must bring students into their assigned classroom and sign them in and out. The door north of the playground is the **only door** to be used for drop-off and pick-up of students.

Preschool will begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 a.m. and staff will not open doors prior to this time. Please have your student here no later than 9:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. so they do not miss valuable class time.

Preschool dismisses at 12:00 p.m., or 1:00 p.m. if attending lunch bunch and not staying for the afternoon session, and 4:00 p.m. Please pick up your child promptly. A late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes will be assessed if a student is picked up late beginning at 12:15 p.m., 1:15 p.m. or 4:15 p.m. If there is an emergency and you are unable to pick up your student by dismissal time, 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m., please call the Director or Assistant Director at 636-7490 or 522-8220.

Before School and Lunch Bunch Care:

Before school care is available from 7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. for an additional \$4.25 per hour.

Lunch Bunch is available from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. for an additional \$4.25 per hour. Students are to bring their own lunches for this hour. Please send food that is cut into smaller pieces such as carrots, grapes, and hot dogs. If your child's food needs to stay cold, please pack it with an ice pack; we do not have refrigerator space for lunches. If the lunch needs to stay warm, please pack it in a thermos. The Staff will **NOT** heat food.

Attendance Policy:

It is important that your child attend class every day so that they may take full advantage of what the program has to offer. There is no tuition reduction for missed days or make-up days unless prior arrangements have been made with the director. Please call the director at 636-7490 or 522-8220, or email director@brightbeginnings-lc.org if your child will be absent.

Daily Schedule (subject to adjustment and individual classrooms):

Please see schedule posted in your child's classroom.

Each class will have at least 30 minutes of outside time (Weather Permitting)

Each class will have at least 30 minutes of Free Play time

Each Class will have circle time that is appropriate for the ages of the students in the class

Each class will have snack each day

Each class will attend chapel daily from 11:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Snacks:

There will be one snack served during the morning and afternoon sessions in accordance with state regulations. If your child has any food allergies, an alternate choice will be provided. Please alert staff to any food allergies or dietary concerns. Families will pay a \$12.00 per month, per child snack fee for snacks provided by BBLC.

Chapel Time:

Chapel Time is held daily 11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Families are always welcome to share this time with their children. You may pick up your child **in their classroom** after chapel dismissal.

Birthdays / Celebrations:

BBLC will celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom. Families are welcome to send modest treats for snack time to celebrate your child's birthday. Please discuss your plans with your child's teacher in advance and feel free to ask for suggestions. These treats **must** be store bought according to state regulations.

Field Trips:

No off-site field trips will be taken unless families are providing transportation for their child. Guest speakers will be invited from time to time to come to BBLC. Previous guest speakers have included a doctor, dental assistant, horse trainer, border patrol, fire department and police department representatives.

Guidance Policy:

BBLC rules concerning discipline promote the health, safety, and well-being of each child. We focus on making good choices, being respectful to others and ourselves. The purpose of discipline is to allow the student to emerge from a negative experience with a better self-concept and identity, and with an understanding of respect for the rights of other people and property, personal responsibility, and the safety of students and staff at BBLC. In an environment of Christian attitude, rules and procedures are shared with each student at the beginning of the year and as needed.

Positive reinforcement and praise will be given so the student receives immediate feedback when desirable behavior is demonstrated. When a student displays unacceptable behavior, they will be removed from the offending activity and given re-direction or a time-out that is appropriate for the age (approximately 1 minute per age, i.e. 3 mins for a 3-year-old).

Only a BBLC Staff person may discipline a student. Punishment that is humiliating or frightening to a child is prohibited. This includes:

- Spanking, hitting, pinching or other forms of corporal punishment
- Verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about self or family
- Restricting movement or enclosing in a confined space
- Withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps

Parent Involvement – Open Door Policy:

BBLC has an Open-Door Policy and families are encouraged to visit and/or volunteer. There will be opportunities to share your gifts and talents (career, hobbies, music, etc.) with the children and staff. Regular volunteers will be required to complete a background check through the United University Methodist Church office and through CYFD.

Three Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled throughout the year. This is an opportunity to share classroom activities with you and keep you updated on your child's progress.

You can help your child by:

- Letting them know you love them and that they are an important part of your life
- Listening to them, so that they in turn, become good listeners
- Answering their questions
- Accepting them as they are, and helping them accept themselves
- Arranging a time and a place that belongs only to them
- Helping your child believe in you by keeping your promises
- Providing opportunities for your child to accept simple responsibilities
- Showing by word and deed your belief that school is an important place where many new and interesting experiences await them.

Home and Preschool Communication:

Preschool is a delightful time. As a staff, we want to help your child become an accomplished individual with the awareness that God loves them all the time! Here is what we plan to help your child with this year:

Physical Development:

- Coordination in large muscle activities such as jumping, hopping, running, climbing, bending, dancing, marching, playing with balls, balloons, and bubbles
- Coordination in small muscle activities such as cutting, gluing, painting and drawing

Social Development:

- Working and playing well with others
- Understanding the need for making and following rules
- Accepting responsibility for one's own actions
- Listening without interrupting

Emotional Development:

- Showing self-confidence and self-discipline
- Working within a group
- Adapting to new situations

Work Habits:

- Following directions
- Working independently
- Completing tasks on time
- Taking responsibility for work area

Visual Skills:

- Recognizing basic colors
- Recognizing likeness and differences in objects, shapes and pictures
- Recognizing own name
- Recognizing some alphabet letters and numbers

Language Arts:

- Enjoying books, stories and poems
- Increasing vocabulary
- Speaking in sentences and participating in discussions
- Awareness of sounds

Math:

- Recognizing shapes
- Recognizing numbers
- Recognizing patterns
- Recognizing size

Science:

- Awareness of things in our environment (plants, animals, etc.)
- Awareness of ourselves (5 senses, body, etc.)

Social Studies:

- Awareness of ourselves (emotions, celebrations, etc.)
- Awareness of our community and country (community workers, transportation, etc.)

Spiritual*:

- Help them see themselves as persons of worth
- Provide opportunities to make choices
- Help them become better stewards of God's creation
- Help them practice the rule of love in all attitudes and relationships
- Provide opportunities for them to be involved with the natural world
- Provide opportunities for them to create instead of copy
- Provide opportunities for them to be involved with many other people
- Use the language of faith in interpreting experiences
- Admit there are things we do not know but are willing to trust God for
- Share the richness of everyday living, the hurts, the joy, the needs and the fulfillments offering hope in honest and open ways

* Guidelines for Weekday Preschool Ministry Programs in United Methodist Churches

There are many ways for the home and preschool to communicate; become acquainted with the staff, attend special events and meetings, newsletters in your child's cubby, and remember you are always welcome to visit your child's class or visit with the Director.

Conferences:

Parent – Teacher conferences will be scheduled three times per school year. If you have a concern and wish to schedule a meeting with your child's teacher, please do not hesitate to ask.

Complaints:

In the case of complaints by a family or other person, the teacher will address the situation with the director following guidelines and procedures laid out in this handbook. A written record of the nature of the complaint and the final resolution will be made whenever it is in the school's best interest.

Health & Safety Policy:

If a student exhibits any of the following, they must remain at home or will be sent home if already at school:

- Runny nose with green or yellow discharge
- Severe coughing and/or sneezing – if the student makes a high-pitched whooping sound after coughing, or if the child turns red or blue in the face
- Fever – if a student has or has had in the last 24 hours a fever of 100.5-degree F orally, or 99 degrees F under the arm, or is on fever reducing medication such as Tylenol. A student must be fever free for 24 hours before they may return to school
- Vomiting – if the student has vomited twice in 24 hours or has vomited once and displaying other symptoms. The student needs to stay home for 24 hours after symptoms have passed
- Diarrhea – if a student has 2 abnormally loose stools, or if they have 1 loose stool with other symptoms. The student needs to stay home for 24 hours once the symptoms disappear
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Pinkeye – if a student has tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling and/or discharge. The student must stay home until the discharge has stopped completely or if they have been on medication for 24 hours and have a physician's written permission to return to school
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Sore throat and/or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin patch(es) – crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of skin.
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Headache and stiff neck
- Unusual spots or rashes, undiagnosed skin outbreak
- Severe itching of the body or scalp – evidence of head lice, mites, scabies, or severe itching/scratching of the body or scalp
- Other signs or symptoms – those symptoms that are compatible with that of a communicable disease, especially if the student has been exposed to a communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox).

Families of students who become exposed to certain contagious diseases will be notified through a flyer sent home and/or email to all students' families. **If your child should become infected with a contagious disease, please notify BBLC immediately** so the director can notify families of other children who may have been exposed.

If your child has an allergy or any other chronic health problem, please make this known to the director and teachers, assistance will be provided.

If a child becomes ill during school hours a parent/guardian or your designated emergency contact person will be called. It is very important that your Emergency Contact information is kept current with correct phone numbers. Please let us know if any Emergency Contact information changes.

School and playground rules are established to keep students and staff safe. The possession or use of toy guns, lighters, knives or other potentially dangerous articles is prohibited and may result in suspension from BBLC.

At least one staff member trained in CPR and certified in First Aid will be present at all times in case of an emergency or accident.

In case of serious accident or illness, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be called. They will advise whether or not the child should be taken to the nearest hospital or doctor's office by ambulance. A BBLC staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance. Once EMS is contacted, the staff will call parent/guardians and inform them of the situation. An accident/injury report will be filled out, a copy for the

file and a copy for the family. In any case that an injury needs medical attention outside of basic first aid a copy of the accident/injury report will be sent to CYFD with any additional treatment measures from the attending medical personnel.

Medications:

Medications will not be given to a student unless it is related to a preexisting condition, severe allergies requiring emergency treatment or other medical condition that may require emergency treatment. In all cases medications, will ONLY be given with **written permission and instructions**.

With **written permission** from the legal guardian of a child, the center may apply sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper cream to the child if relevant and applicable. When applied, the guardian must sign and date the classroom medication form.

Backpacks / Clothing:

Please send a change of clothing **each day** with your student in a backpack and/or leave a change of clothes in a labeled zip lock bag in your child's cubby. Please label backpack and other personal belongings.

Personal items from home:

1. Do not have your child bring toys from home unless requested to enhance the current lesson themes/activities.
2. Show and Tell will be held on a regular basis for students to share special items such as toys, pictures, etc. from home when the teachers deem appropriate. Please do not send any toy weapons or electronic devices such as iPods.

* When personal items are brought to school, BBLC will not be responsible or liable if items become lost, stolen, traded, damaged or broken.

Visitors:

All visitors will be required to sign in at the information table and wear a visitor badge. Visitors are asked to please check in with the Director upon arrival. Therapists from local agencies will have a sign-in notebook at the information table also.

Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness Plan:

In the event of a disaster or emergency evacuation from University United Methodist Church, the following actions will be taken:

1. The health, safety and well-being of our students is our primary concern
2. Students will be evacuated from the building per the Emergency "map" in their classroom
3. Administrators are responsible for "sweeping" the building to make sure every child is evacuated and being first contact with relocation spots. This responsibility will be delegated to the Director, Assistant Director or other appointed staff.
4. Students will be taken to either First Church of the Nazarene at 1900 S. Locust or University Hills Elementary School, 2005 S. Locust. In the case that further relocation is required, BBLC will follow the instruction of LCPD or other law enforcement. Families will then be notified of new relocation area.
5. We will attempt to contact families as soon as students are safely evacuated
6. Families are urged to follow the instructions of the local authorities under such circumstances regarding when it is safe to pick their child up.

Emergency Lock-Down Procedures:

In the event of an emergency that would require BBLC to **lockdown**, the following actions will be taken:

1. The building will be locked and so will classrooms.

2. Students will be supervised at all times.
3. Students maintain a spare set of clothing in their backpacks to be used in such circumstances
4. We will attempt to contact families, guardians or emergency contacts by phone as soon as it is safely possible.
5. Families are urged to follow the instructions of the local authorities under such circumstances regarding when it is safe to pick their child up.

Confidentiality Statement:

Families can view their child's educational file by contacting the Director or Assistant Director to make arrangements. Student files are made available outside of BBLC with a release signed by a parent/guardian. Only authorized certified personnel, authorized government official or appropriate authorities in a health or safety emergency may access a student's educational records without the approval or notification of the families.

BBLC's public records may be viewed by contacting the Director or Assistant Director to make arrangements to view as soon as practical.

Child Abuse / Neglect:

BBLC staff members are mandated to report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused and/or neglected to the proper authorities. The staff will be trained annually regarding how to determine child abuse/neglect and how to report. To report such a claim, the phone number to Children, Youth and Families Department is: 1-800-797-3260.

BBLC Board Contact:

The BBLC Board is always happy to speak with you about your concerns, questions and successes of the preschool. At the beginning of the school year you will be given contact information for each board member after all new/returning members have gathered and leadership has been selected.