



# Little Blessings Preschool

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

2023-2024 School Year

# Little Blessings Preschool

## WELCOME

Dear Little Blessings Preschool Families,

Whether you are a new or returning family, welcome to Little Blessings Preschool, school year 2023-2024!

This is the year for our youngest learners to shine brightly in our classrooms. It will be a magical year, filled with wonder and amazing growth for your little star.

Thank you for choosing Little Blessings Preschool and trusting us with your youngest learner! We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment and guiding you and your family through a successful preschool year!

Sincerely,

Shelby Moschini  
Director  
lbpdirector@bethanycovenant.org  
**Little Blessings Preschool**

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## ABOUT US

### *Philosophy*

Bethany Covenant Church has established a preschool to enrich the experiences of the young child. Through the warm understanding and Christian conviction of each teacher and an environment rich in opportunities for learning and growth, each child will develop an awareness of God and grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. It is the mission of Little Blessings Preschool to provide an atmosphere which:

- Develops spiritual awareness of God's love and the many gifts God has given us through thematic units and day to day experiences.
- Promotes healthy, social and emotional attitudes towards self, others, family, school and the world through cooperative play and guidance from loving teachers.
- Encourages development of cognitive skills, readiness skills, basic concepts and creative expression through art, music, story time and group experiences. Children will learn by doing, using concrete and tangible materials.
- Promotes development of gross and fine motor skills, coordination and perceptual skills through work and play.

As children progress through our preschool classes, they will develop appropriate kindergarten readiness skills.

### *Mission*

Bethany Covenant Church believes that each child is a special and unique person created by God. We are committed to providing children with an excellent preschool education within a Christian environment.

Through guided instruction and creative play, children will grow socially, emotionally and spiritually. They will develop physical and cognitive skills and gain self-esteem and self-help skills.

## **Staff**

Director- Shelby Moschini

Office Administrator- Sandy Brown

Head Teachers- Shelby Moschini

Lead Teachers- Dina Vieira, Melissa Gibbins & Mikayla Doucette

Assistant Teachers- Beth Cugno, Kimberly LaPointe, Kristin Waszczuk & Sara Colapietro

## ***Little Blessings Board Members***

Little Blessings Preschool is blessed to have a board of directors dedicated to the well-being of students and staff at Little Blessings Preschool. Board members provide strategic direction and oversight to the organization and lead the nonprofit in achieving its mission. Board members play an active role in fundraising, fiscal oversight and strategic planning. In addition, they establish policies and procedures to ensure smooth operation of the organization, protection of its assets, fidelity to its mission and adherence to legal requirements and filings.

Email: [LBPBoard@bethanycovenant.org](mailto:LBPBoard@bethanycovenant.org)

Diane Stevenson, Associate Pastor – Board President

\_\_\_\_\_ - Vice Chair

Karen Baker- Treasurer

Kat Korineck- Church Member

Alessandra Plomitallo – Preschool Parent Representative

Katie Bitzarakis- Pre-K 4/5 Parent Representative

Marissa Bouvier – Pre-K 3 Parent Representative

Please feel free to reach out to the Board President with any concerns

## ***Certification***

Licensed with the Connecticut Department of Public Health #16306

## ***Definition of Family***

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

## ***Hours of Operation***

Early 3's T/TH 9am-12pm

Pre K 3 T/W/TH 9am-12pm

Pre K 4 M/W/F 9am-12pm

Pre-K 4/5 M-TH 9am-1:55pm & F 9-12

## ***Holidays***

Little Blessings Preschool is in session early September through the Friday before Memorial Day. We follow the schedule of Berlin Public Schools for all holidays and vacations. A school calendar will be distributed prior to the beginning of the school year. It will also be available on our webpage: [www.bethanycovenant.org/preschool](http://www.bethanycovenant.org/preschool)

The school will be closed for:

- Friday of the Berlin Fair
- Indigenous Day /Professional Development
- Election Day (if Berlin schools closed /Professional Development training)
- Thanksgiving Break
- Christmas Vacation
- Martin Luther King Day
- February Vacation
- Presidents Day
- Good Friday
- April Vacation
- Memorial Day

## ***Admission & Enrollment***

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 24 months to 5 years of age.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

## ***Inclusion***

Little Blessings Preschool believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every

reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At Little Blessings Preschool equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Family Activities***

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Education/Certification</b>	<b>Experience</b>
Head Teacher	Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education	2 years
Teacher	College Credits working towards degree	1 year
Assistant/Aide		

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

**We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Little Blessings Preschool.**



## *Child To Staff Ratios*

**Children are supervised at all times.**

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Child to Staff</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
24- 32 months	<u>4 to 1</u>	<u>8</u>
3 year-olds	<u>10 to 1</u>	<u>15</u>
4-5 year-olds	<u>10 to 1</u>	<u>24</u>

## *Communication & Family Partnership*

**Seesaw.** We will use this app to communicate urgent matters, upcoming events, classroom happening and other information pertaining to your child's classroom.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located near our school entrance, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** Quarterly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk for your taking and will be emailed to you.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, or read to our classrooms. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. We ask that you wait until October before visiting your child's classroom.

**Family Night.** Family nights are scheduled on a regular basis. These nights include snacks, drinks and fun filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

## *Open Door Policy*

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. We ask that you give us time in September to have the children adjust to school routines and in December when we are preparing for our holiday program and projects.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### ***Publicity***

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### ***Learning Environment***

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

### ***Curricula & Assessment***

Little Blessings Preschool uses the Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards and Creative Curriculum to design a developmentally appropriate learning environment. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please check the classrooms.

### ***Outdoor play***

Weather permitting; we conduct 20-30 minutes of supervised outdoor play a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times.

### ***Transitions***

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

### ***Transition from home to center***

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time, please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

## ***Electronic Media***

Electronic Media are limited to 5 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content.

## ***Multiculturalism***

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

## ***Celebrations***

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community. We celebrate various holidays by preparing special treats, doing special art projects, and learning appropriate songs, games, etc.

## ***Toilet Training***

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Children may use the bathroom at any time during the class time as needed. Children need to be able to complete this process independently, including unfastening and fastening clothing, using appropriate sanitary expectations and washing their own hands. The teachers do remind children to flush and wash. If a child is having a difficult time with a snap etc, the teacher will assist the child.

## **GUIDANCE**

### ***General Procedure***

Little Blessings Preschool is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

## Discipline Policy

Young children need clearly defined consistent limits. They are in the process of developing self-control, learning to respect the right of others and the care of property. The expectations for behavior will be age appropriate. Our goal is to guide the children in that development in the most positive and helpful ways. Giving them many interesting choices, positive reinforcement and timely intervention helps to prevent problems from occurring. The following guidelines are used in working with the children.

1. Establish clear limits and explain the reason for them:
  - a. Respect ourselves and each other
  - b. Respect other people's property
  - c. Behave in a manner that encourages learning for self and others
  - d. Refrain from using offensive language or name calling
2. Remind children of the rules when needed, especially during first weeks of school
3. Acceptable behavior is encouraged by giving positive verbal rewards
4. If/when inappropriate behavior takes place, ask children to stop and think about his/her behavior.
5. Inappropriate behavior in a group setting will result in the child being seated by a teacher and reminded of appropriate behavior. The teacher may ask the student to come sit next to them, or the teacher may move to sit next to the child.
6. Inappropriate behavior in small group activities will result in the child being moved to another activity if talking about the behavior does not change it.
7. If after the teacher has tried redirection, distraction and/or the above methods and the child persists with the inappropriate behavior, the child can be removed to regain control of themselves. They will sit for a few minutes (age of child) apart from the group until they agree that they can remember to follow the rules.
8. If a child becomes upset and needs to be removed from the room or area, a teacher or staff member will stay with the child until the child is calm enough to discuss the issue or focus on another task.
9. Persistent negative behavior will be discussed with the parents for a mutually agreed upon course of action.

Staff will continually supervise children during disciplinary actions. Staff shall not be abusive, neglectful or use humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances.

## Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at Little Blessings Preschool has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

### ***Physical Restraint***

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

### ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Important Notice***

All payment and fee processing will be completed by our office administrator. He/she will oversee collection of tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact [littleblessingpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:littleblessingpreschool@gmail.com)

### ***Payment***

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*. There is a black lock box located outside the Pre-K 4/5 classroom where you can drop an envelope of cash or check with your students name on it.

### ***Methods of Payment***

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, or paypal. To set up automatic, reoccurring payments, please contact our office administrator.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

The first tuition payment is due May 31<sup>st</sup>. For those choosing the monthly payment option their remaining Tuition payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, September through April. If payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, a late fee of \$20 will be added.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

The family will be charged the bank fee for any checks returned for insufficient funds. Two or more returned checks may result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees will be assessed.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### ***Absence***

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9 AM, please call us at (860) 828-9520. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

### ***Withdrawal***

Should you withdraw from the program, we will refund on a pro rata basis your tuition paid minus the \$100 registration fee following the enrollment of a student to replace your child. This also applies if you do not make your first Tuition payment. Once a child is accepted into the program and space is held for him/her, the family is financially obligated for the total annual tuition unless another child fills the vacancy.

Waiver of the Tuition agreement is granted in the following circumstances:

1. The unplanned relocation of the family more than 35 miles from Berlin,
2. A child is five by December 31 st and the family decides to send him/her to public school,
3. Another child fills the vacancy
4. All other circumstances will be addressed at the discretion of the LBP Board of Directors.

### ***Closing Due to Extreme Weather***

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on television channels: 3 CBS, 4 NBC, 6 FOX and 8 ABC.

Little Blessings Preschool will close in inclement weather when Berlin Schools close.

When Berlin Schools have a delay due to weather, LBP will have a delay opening at 10am if our property has been cleared for us to open school.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## ***Snow Make-Up Days***

In the event the school needs to close due to a weather event, Little Blessings Preschool will try to make-up days after the number of days exceeds the number of days a week the child attends school. Any make-up day will not go past May 31<sup>st</sup>

An example would be if your child was in:

Early 3s: after 2 missed school day because of snow

Pre K 3 & 4: After 3 missed school days because of snow

Pre K 4/5: after 4 missed school days because of snow

The make-up days will be determined after the threat of snow is over.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### ***General Procedure***

We open at 9 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

### ***Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up***

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after dismissal time and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

### *What to Bring*

- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

### *Mailboxes*

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "mailbox." Mailboxes are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's mailbox on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

### *Lost & Found*

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the Pre-K 3 sign in table. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### *Toys from Home*

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.



## NUTRITION

### *Foods Brought from Home*

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration and were made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough food for all children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

<b>Snack Suggestions</b>	
<b>All snacks must contain two food groups. Refrigeration is available</b>	
½ turkey sandwich Celery sticks Fruit salad Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Water	Yogurt crackers Carrots 100% juice

### *Food Allergies*

If your child has a food allergy, **you must notify us in writing** so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy must have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

**WE ARE A NUT FREE FACILITY!**

### *Children 24 Months and Older*

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

## HEALTH

### *Immunizations*

**Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).** Every August, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

### *Physicals*

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

### *Illness*

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.

- Has a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 48 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.
- Nit free.

### **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

### **Medications (LIFE SAVING MEDICATION ONLY)**

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

We are not able to put sunscreen or bug spray on your child. Please remember to apply before school.

### **Communicable Diseases**

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19

- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

### ***Covid Policy:***

Positive Case:

A positive individual may return when:

- At least five (5) days have passed since the positive Covid test, and the child can mask effectively for another 5 days. If a child cannot reliably mask, a child who has been positive may not return until at least ten (10) days have passed
- Fever free at least 24 hours (without fever reducers)
- Symptoms are improving

## **SAFETY**

### ***Clothing***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 99 °F or less than 32 °F degrees.

### ***Communal Water-Play***

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

## ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. We commonly call these “BooBoo notes. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital (Hospital of Central Connecticut) immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

## ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter’s family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

## ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

## ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children’s developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center’s premises.

## ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center’s premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

## ***Dangerous Weapons***

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Lost or Missing Child***

In the unlikely even that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### ***Fire Safety***

Our center is fully equipped with fire safety equipment including alarms and sprinkler systems. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies not included in this handbook are reviewed yearly and updated as needed. They are available for review upon request to the center director.

# Emergency Dismissal Plans

Weather forecasts often provide us with ample warning of approaching storms, blizzards, hurricanes, and flooding. The best defense for severe weather is preparation. We will post our closing status on the local news stations listed in your parent handbook. Some types of emergencies may prevent us from contacting you by phone immediately. In the event that we need to “SHELTER IN PLACE” (use any room or interior space for the purpose of providing temporary shelter from a hazard), we will gather all the children in a safe place in the building. We will not be able to release anyone or allow anyone to enter until emergency personnel determine the area is “all clear”. We will notify parents/guardians to pick up children once the incident is over.

Emergencies may require us to evacuate (remove) children from the facility as quickly as possible. In the event the facility must be evacuated because of a confined emergency (gas leak, building fire, earthquake, etc.), the staff and children will leave the building and gather in the immediate area at Hubbard School at 138 Grove Street, East Berlin. In the event the facility must be evacuated because of an emergency in the immediate area (wildfire, chemical spill, flash flooding, etc.) the children will be transported by staff or NB Transportation bus, depending upon the response time, to a safe assembly area where we will arrange for you to be reunited with your child. We will make every effort to post signs, notify you by email, phone and the media that we have evacuated our facility and where you can safely pick up your child. We will only be able to release your child to those on your emergency pick up list.

We feel it is very important that you have an additional phone number other than the schools for emergencies:

Little Blessings Preschool  
Name of program

785 Mill Street Berlin, CT 06037  
Program Address

Shelby Moschini, Director  
Emergency contact at the school

860-335-2825  
Director Cellphone

860-828-9520  
Program phone number

860-836-6401  
Little Blessings Board President, Associate Pastor Diane Stevenson

# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the Little Blessings Preschool Family Handbook, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the Little Blessings Preschool staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the Little Blessings Preschool Family Handbook that I do not understand.

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Parent Signature

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Date

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Director Signature

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Date



## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

### **Advisors:**

- Board Members – We actively seek parent representatives each year

**Family Events:** We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements!

- Open House
- Back to School Night
- Family Night
- Valentines Day Dance
- Trunk or Treat
- Little Blessings (Not So Scary) Boo Bash
- End of Year Celebrations

**Classroom Activities:** Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Read to children at pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class projects
- Playdough Club