

Bright Beginnings Child Care Parent Handbook

I. History

Bright Beginnings Child Care is a ministry of Seminary United Methodist Church. This ministry has evolved out of a need for full-time child care in the Roanoke and surrounding area. This ministry reflects a Christian focus which is to be a community about caring and caring about community. The child care is guided and directed by a Board of Directors whose members have been elected with equal representations from Seminary Church.

II. Philosophy

The philosophy of the Bright Beginnings Child care ministry is based on a set of strongly held beliefs:

- A. We believe that Seminary United Methodist Church, as part of their ministry, have a responsibility to promote the welfare of families in our community. We see child care as an opportunity to serve those families that view child care as extension of their family life.
- B. We believe that each child is a unique individual. We are sensitive to their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. We provide developmentally appropriate programs that focus on the process of learning and help the child to enjoy successful experiences. We encourage not just learning, but the love of learning.
- C. We believe in providing a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and designed for children. Classes are arranged to offer challenging play and learning choice at a range of developmental levels. Children are offered the opportunity to explore, to experience and certainly most importantly, to succeed.
- D. We believe the strength of our program lies in the dedication of our Director and Teaching Staff and the support of our sponsoring church. We support our teachers with resources and the freedom to create a caring and nurturing atmosphere while building the child's self-confidence and self-esteem.
- E. We believe in positive discipline, we establish consistent, age appropriate limits to help children function in their world. Our program is designed to foster in children a sense of independence and responsibility. It is our desire to strengthen each child's own cultural identity, while also instilling a respect for others who may be different.
- F. We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create a mutual respect between parents and teachers; a partnership for the benefit of the child. We encourage daily communication between parents and staff. Our doors are open to parents at all times.

III. The Educational Process

Early childhood education in our child care is based on the concept that children construct their own knowledge. Learning occurs at all times and is enhanced by a rich, diverse environment that encourages a child to interact with materials, peers, and adults. The goal of the program is to support social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual

development by meeting each child where she/he is and providing a responsive environment that allows the child to choose activities and actions, build on previous experience, go at his/her own pace and pursue individual interests. We recognize play is a child's work and is the most powerful learning method available.

IV. Enrollment and Orientation

Our school year runs from January through December. Parents of child care children are informed of the school's policies through and individual orientation with the child care director.

At the time of enrollment, a registration fee will be collected. An enrollment form, "to help us know your child" as well as other required forms and fees, must be completed for your child to be officially enrolled.

Also included are Kids Klub & VBS forms. These programs are run by SUMC & your children are encouraged to attend. These forms must be completed for your child to be officially enrolled.

V. Child Care Schedule

Child care is available from 7:00am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday. Other than before and after school care, we accept children on a full-time basis only. Depending upon availability it may be possible for children to be enrolled on a part-time basis 1 to 5 days per week. Before and after school care is offered to children for grades K through 8th grade. A set rate is charged for all children enrolled. Please see tuition schedule in this handbook for these rates. Full time child care is available to school-age children during the summer months and Spring & Fall breaks.

On days that Huntington County Community School Corporation is not in session, arrangements can be made for before and after school children to attend the Bright Beginnings for the entire day. An additional fee will be charged as set under the tuition guidelines on page 4.

VI. Financial Arrangements

A registration/enrollment fee of \$40.00 will be charged to secure a place in our childcare program. This is not part of any tuition fee; it is non-refundable and is due annually each fall.

A. Tuition

The total cost of a child's participation in our program is calculated on a yearly basis. This amount is divided into equal payments, due weekly. The operation of our program is depending upon prompt payments of tuition. Therefore, accounts not kept current are subject to late fees. Inconsistent or incomplete payments will jeopardize a child's enrollment.

Tuition is due the first day of each week. A \$10.00 late will be added to weekly tuition received after Wednesday at 10:00am. If the bill is more than two weeks late, the child may not return to the child care unless other arrangements are made through the Director.

Because the number of children we have enrolled establishes our expenses, it is not possible for us to reduce tuition for any days a child misses due to illness or other days off. Parents of full-time children only, are entitled up to 5 vacation days after 6 months of consecutive enrollment; then one week for each calendar year thereafter. The family vacation must be used during the calendar year (January through December). This may be taken as a full week or one day at a time. Parents using vacation days must specify with the director the days that are to be used for vacation. Otherwise, parents are charged their weekly tuition. Parents are responsible to pre-pay tuition should the child be away for a family vacation when not eligible for vacation due to not being enrolled for six consecutive months or enrolled part-time. Please pre-pay if you will be away.

Part time enrollment or before and after school enrollment are not eligible for vacation and must pay a weekly tuition when the child is not in attendance.

Unless other arrangements are made with the director, the tuition fee is due weekly. At the time of registration/ enrollment, a financial agreement contract must be signed by the parent(s). This provides an understanding on the weekly contracted tuition due, and the expected schedule of payment. Extra charges for the late tuition payments are also explained in the contract.

The annual fees are:

\$40 for all year

\$30 for 9 months

\$20 for 6 months

\$10 for 3 months

\$0 for under 3 months

Our tuition schedule is as follows per child showing addition fees for no school days.

Weekly full time –2 to 3 years old	\$135.00
Weekly full time—over age 3	\$115.00
Weekly full time—over age 3 and potty trained	\$95.00
Weekly full time—1 to 2 year olds (must be walking)	\$150.00
Weekly before and after school	\$60.00/\$7.00 no school day
Weekly before or after school	\$30.00/\$11.00 no school day
Weekly summer rate grades K-5	\$115.00
Spring Break rate grades K-5	\$115.00
Fall Break rate grades K-5	\$115.00

B. Vacation and Holiday Credit

Tuition is due 50 weeks of the year. There are no deductions for holidays. Even though the child care is closed, parents are expected to pay for the following holidays:

Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

The child care will be closed for the Huntington County Community School's winter break. Parents are not responsible to pay for the days we are closed for the Winter Break but are responsible to pay for the three holidays of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and New Year's Day. This applies to both part time and full-time enrollment.

C. Termination and Withdrawal

Parents may cancel or withdraw from the child care ministry upon a two-week notice or a two-week advance payment. This gives the childcare two weeks to fill the spot created when a child is withdrawn from the program.

D. Overtime Charges (late pick-up)

We understand that occasionally you are delayed beyond your control. However, with so many families, if a different family would come late each day and each family is late only 5 or 6 times during the year, our staff would be required to stay late nearly every day. Parents must arrive early enough at pick up time to allow time to gather their child's belongings and be out of the facility by 5:30. A late fee of \$20.00 will be assessed for every 0 to 15 minutes beginning at 5:31pm with an additional \$20.00 for every 15 minutes thereafter unless other arrangements have been made through the director.

VII. Parent Involvement

The staff of the child care center welcomes parent involvement in our program. We encourage parent visits, suggestions and participation. Parents are welcome to join their children for snack or lunch any day. If a parent plans to be present for lunch, the office should be notified by 10:00am to be included in the lunch count. A parent is charge \$2.75 for lunch.

VIII. Our Policies

The childcare center opens promptly at 7:00am. Teachers will not be prepared for children arriving before this time. The child care closes promptly at 5:30pm. Parents arriving past this time will be charged a late pick-up fee unless other arrangements have been made through the director or the teacher or staff. Please accurately record the exact time of pick up when you are late.

Children will be released only to their parents or other adults authorized by parents on the enrollment form. Please notify the office if a substitute will be picking up a child. The substitute and authorized persons unknown to the staff will be asked to show identification.

If a child will be arriving at the child care center past 9:00am but will be coming for lunch; please notify the office so the child will be included in the lunch count.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE CHILD CARE BY 9:00AM IF YOUR CHILD WILL BE ABSENT FOR THE DAY.

Daily sign-in and sign-out system

A daily sign-in and sign-out system is used in our child care. This system requires that each child be signed in and out on an attendance chart by a parent or authorized adult. The attendance charts are located where you enter the child care center. The procedures are:

Upon Arrival:

Write arrival time on attendance chart on the correct day. Get/offer verbal and visual contact with one of the teachers that your child has arrived. Sign the attendance chart

Upon Departure:

Write departure time on attendance chart on the correct day. Again, make sure you get/offer verbal and visual contact with the teachers that your child has left. Sign the attendance chart.

1. Points to Remember
 - a. All child care children must be signed in and out by a parent or authorized adult
 - b. The correct time must be written on the attendance chart when your child is arriving or leaving
 - c. Any person younger than eighteen (18) picking up a child needs a note from the child's parent and must bring it to the office prior to picking up the child.
2. Use of the Attendance Charts Serves the Following Purposes
 - a. Safety and security of children: The mechanics of a parent (or other adult) signing the attendance chart and having visual and verbal contact with a teacher ensures that the teacher knows that child has arrived or departed.
 - b. Parent and teacher communication: Twice daily, parents and teacher will have the opportunity for contact at arrival and departure time.
 - c. Mobile record of attendance: When the children leave the central area of the child care center for activities the attendance chart will go as well.
 - d. School-age students' arrival and departure procedures; All elementary age children (kindergarten and older) will report to the child care director and/ or teacher.

IX. Health and Safety of your Child

Your child's health is of major importance to us. Upon enrollment, you must file with us a health form. We also require that your child have certain standard immunizations and a tuberculin clearance. Parents who choose not to immunize their children must have a written statement of explanation or waiver on file.

Your child will be sent home if he/she appears to have symptoms of illness during the school day. In such cases, he/she is immediately isolated from the other children and a parent is contacted.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period. If the child is sent home with a fever, they may not return the following day. Child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the child care.
- Has vomited during the past 24 hours. If a child is sent home due to vomiting, the child may not return the following day. Child must be vomit-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the child care.
- Is contagious
- Has a heavy nasal discharge
- Has a persistent cough
- Has symptoms of a possible communicable disease

We may ask you to take your child with you upon arrival if your child is brought to our facility with any of the above symptoms.

Please notify the child care at once if your child does come down with a communicable disease. If your child contracts lice, we must be notified immediately. If your child is taking any medication, we must have a doctor's name and the parent's written permission for the child to take the medication. In addition, the medication must have the child's name on it and be in the original container with the pharmacy name on it.

In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call for the EMS and paramedics; the director, in cooperation with the emergency technicians will be in charge and make all decision about the care of your child. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any expense not covered by our insurance. The child care will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to the provision. It is your child's benefit that you keep the child care up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

Staff injury-Parents will be notified should changes in staffing occur because of serious illness, injury, or death of a provider.

Employee Substance Abuse- We prohibit the use of tobacco; illegal substances use or possession of alcohol in the facility. Employees are required to have a drug screening before employment. Any employee under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave the facility immediately.

X. Discipline and Guidance Policy

Discipline is the slow, bit by bit, time-consuming task of helping children to see the sense in action in a certain way ----- Dr. James Hymes

Our goal, as a Christian Child Care Ministry, is to help children see the sense in "acting in a certain way." This is aided by the creation of a fair and consistent environment in the child care center.

As adults working with children, we attempt to create an affirming, cooperative, accepting environment. As conflicts are an inevitable fact of the daily life, in and out of the child care setting, we have tremendous opportunities to enable children to deal creatively with "people" problems. We try to put the responsibility for conflict resolution where it belongs - with the people involved. We try to help the children acquire the language of conflict resolution. In this way, children at an early age begin to "see the sense" in finding mutual, peaceful resolutions to problems, rather than settling for a "win" or "lose" situation or becoming the "victim" or the "villain."

In accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana, and our own belief that people are not for hurting, no child will ever be hit, shaken, or spanked. Any cruel, harsh, humiliation, or frightening punishment will not be used.

Bright Beginnings Child Care and its teachers take a positive, proactive approach to guiding children's behavior which includes the following steps:

- a. Preparation of the environment to meet the children's needs and of oneself to be an appropriate model.
- b. Entering relation with others-learning to know and enjoy each child.
- c. Close and continuous observation of the child's activities and their needs.
- d. Anticipation of when and in what ways the child needs guidance.
- e. Choosing intervention to support the children's efforts in problem solving.
- f. Communication to clarify feelings, needs and solution options. This may include helping the child recognize the natural or pre-established consequences of particular choices.
- g. Redirection of participants so they can remain in the activity with successful resolution.
- h. Comfort of child and distraction into alternate work if stress level is too high.
- i. Separation from the group for a quiet time of relaxation and coping (The child may be removed from the group and parents called).
- j. Reassessing the appropriateness and clearly communicating the expectation for behavior choices.

As children who consistently exhibit behavior problems are often signaling a need for help, parents will be asked to meet with the staff in seeking a solution. Realizing that we may not be able to meet the needs of every child, we may, when deemed necessary by the staff and/or consultants, ask that a child be removed from our child care program. In extreme cases of violence displayed from a child, the child care may ask that the parent remove the child immediately from the program for the safety of the other children enrolled. Behavior such as hitting, kicking, biting, or spitting on a teacher will not be tolerated and the parent may be called to remove their child for the day. Children in elementary schools who display this kind of behavior towards a teacher are suspended from school, we also hold this same policy.

XI. Nutrition

We serve a simple breakfast if your child arrives at the child care before 8:00am. Lunch will be served by 12:00pm. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks will also be served. All foods are carefully planned and meet the nutritional requirements for young children.

Lunch menus will be posted above the sign-out table. There is no additional charge for breakfast, lunch, and snacks for full time enrollment. It is included in the fee schedule.

Children are invited to bring snacks for birthdays and other special occasions to share with all the children. However, in order to comply with the State Board of Health requirements, any food items brought in must be prepackaged from a store or prepared in a commercial bakery, not homemade.

Children with food allergies will need a list of foods to which they are allergic for their file, as well as written instructions from their physician regarding the allergies and food substitutes.

Parents or guardians who do not want their children served particular foods, for religious or other reason must write and sign a statement to this effect for each child. We are required by the State, to provide the entire serving of lunch or snack to all children, unless they have documentation in their file which exempts them from certain foods.

XII. What to Wear to Child Care

Comfort: Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Think of the messy art materials and other messy activities and provide clothing that is washable. Think of our outside activities and provide clothing that is sturdy. Think of the changeable, seasonal weather and dress your child appropriately. Provide sweaters or jackets even on the first sunny fall days. It is much easier to remove an unneeded item than to put on something they don't have. Think of how you would feel playing outdoors in the cold, damp and windy weather. For your child's comfort, provide him/her with suitable head covering when needed, snowsuits and boots may be brought to use at the child care during winter months for playing in the snow.

Please note: children from age 2-6 must wear shoes that are non-flip-flop type. Sandals worn to the child care must have a back strap on them. Children from age 7-11 are permitted to wear shoes that are flip-flop type. If a child is unable to keep their flip flops on while in our care, they may be asked to wear shoes with a strap.

XIII. Weather and Safe Conditions Policy

Weather conditions permitting, children will be taking outside on most days, for at least a brief period. Please keep gloves, hats, coats, sweaters, or boots at the child care for outdoor play in the cold. Outdoor play is an important part of a child's physical development. Basic rules that all children and staff are aware of will be enforced to ensure outdoor safety. Playground equipment when available is kept maintained and the play area is fenced in to aid in staff supervision. Playground is checked for standing water, debris, glass, beehives/wasp nests, tripping hazards or damage to equipment. Children have access

to drinking water while playing outdoors to prevent dehydration. Shaded areas are accessible as well.

A safe environment reduces the risk of injury to children and staff. During indoor activities our staff assist children with the clean-up up all activities before moving on to another to prevent injury. New toys are approved to ensure they are developmentally appropriate and safe. Small children do not have access to objects that completely fit into a child's mouth. Equipment and materials are sturdy and non-toxic. Electrical outlets are covered with safety covers. All toys that are mouthed during play are thoroughly washed and disinfected before returning to the play area. Toys are kept on a disinfecting rotation and broken, or damaged toys are removed to prevent injury. Your child's safety is important to us.

Bright Beginnings is a ministry of Seminary United Methodist Church. It is open to all young children and is nonsectarian. No child enrolled in our program will be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or special need.

Welcome to Bright Beginnings Child Care!!!

I have read and understand the policies in this parent handbook

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date