



LITTLE BLESSINGS

PARENTS' DAY OUT

A Ministry of First United Methodist Church of Castle Rock

Parent/ Guardian Handbook

Policies & Procedures

2023-2024

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Welcome to Little Blessings and to the 2023-2024 school year!

We are all very excited to be a part of Little Blessings and all it has to offer. Our full dedication and love is given to all children in our care with a guarantee of trust and satisfaction of the parents/guardians. We also hope to bring peace of mind and support to guardians and families by providing a safe, warm and loving environment. This is truly the place you want your child to be!

We personally want to say “Thank You” for choosing Little Blessings PDO. There are many preschool options in Castle Rock, and we are so glad you chose us! We take that seriously and consider it a privilege.

Our door is always open, and we encourage you to visit anytime if you have any questions or concerns about your child’s school year.

Sincerely,

Little Blessing PDO Staff

Little Blessings Parents' Day Out

Parent Handbook of Policies & Procedures

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Little Blessings Parents' Day Out is licensed by the State of Colorado, License #1598390, for a toddler/preschool program.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a positive and loving environment for children. At Little Blessings, children will develop the academic, social, and motor skills necessary to be successful in elementary school and beyond.

Vision Statement

The philosophy of Little Blessings is to recognize each child as an individual and teach to each individual's needs in all areas of development. The environment is one that fosters the excitement, joy, and challenge of learning. The program also strives to create a partnership with families, maintaining open communication. Little Blessings fosters respect, thoughtfulness, and empathy for others.

Admission & Placement Policies

Eligibility

Children between the ages of 12-months (and walking) through 7 years old are eligible to attend Little Blessings Parents' Day Out.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Little Blessings Parents' Day Out does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender or national origin in the administration of educational policies or of admission policies. Admission of children with special needs is in compliance with the ADA. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate each child's needs and to integrate each child with other children. Conferences will be offered with the PDO office staff, teacher, and parents as needed.

Session Days & Times

The Little Blessings PDO school year runs from August to May following most of the Douglas County School District schedule for holidays, snow days, and safety closures (see attached calendar). Full day classes are from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm, half-day classes are from 9:00-12:30 Monday through Friday. We offer two through five day, flexible day programs for your child to best serve the needs of your family.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is our online portal where parents/ guardians are able to communicate with staff, pay tuition, check in/out, sign paperwork, and update their child's information. Please ensure that any individual that regularly picks-up or drops-off your child has their own account on Brightwheel and downloads the application to ensure an efficient check-in/out procedure.

Before and After Care

Little Blessings is happy to accommodate families looking to extend their day or days of attendance. Students must be enrolled in Little Blessings in order to participate in the before and after care program. Before Care is offered Monday thru Friday from 8:30am -9:00am and after care Monday-Friday 2:30pm - 3:30pm. We do offer discounted rates for ongoing participation with registration and payment with your monthly tuition. Invoicing for drop in before and/or after care will be added to the upcoming months tuition and will be due on the tenth of the month.

Monthly sign-up forms are available online. Enrollment for before

and after care will be based on a first come, first served basis each month. The online pre-enrollement forms for each month can be completed at anytime but are due on the 25th of the month prior. A 30-day notice must be given to cancel a pre-enrollement request to avoid any fees. In the event of a school delay, there will be no before care, and refunds will not be provided.

Drop-In Days

Children enrolled at Little Blessings PDO are able to “drop-in” to their classrooms on days that they do not normally attend, depending on availability. However, we do not substitute days if absent. There is an additional drop-in fee that will be added to your monthly invoice but may also be paid the day of drop in attendance. Please notify the PDO Office through phone, email, or Brightwheel to request a drop-in. **You must receive confirmation from the PDO office that there is space for your child to drop-in prior to doing so. 24-hour notice is required for all drop-in requests and no drop in dates are ever guaranteed.**

Student/Teacher Ratio

Little Blessings PDO adheres to classroom ratios mandated by the Colorado Department of Human Services as listed below:

Classroom	Ages	Child to Teacher Ratio	Classroom Capacity
Tiny Tots	12-36 months	5: 1	5
Toddler 1	12-36 months	5: 1	7
Toddler 2	18-36 months	Ranges from 5:1 to 7:1	9
Early Preschool	2.5-3 years	8: 1	14
Early Preschool 2	2.5-3 years	8:1	10
Preschool 1	3-4 years	10: 1	15
Preschool 2	3-4 years	10: 1	16

Prekindergarten 1	4+	12:1	15
Prekindergarten 2	4+	12:1	16

Dis-Enrolled Child Policy:

The program reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a family for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment fees over 2 months
- Not observing the policies and procedures of Little Blessings as outlined in the handbook
- Child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staff
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by guardian
- Non age appropriate child biting or continually hurting another child
- A child is aggressive toward other children or the staff and causes harm to others or self

Behavioral Policy:

Our staff is well trained and works hard to identify the social, emotional and developmental needs of each child. However, there are times when children may need additional care that our staff is not able to provide. If we feel that your child's behavior endangers the safety of the other children, we will notify the parent and begin with a parent/teacher conference.

To better accommodate your child, we would like to work with the family to develop a plan of action under the guidance of an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist. During that time, if the child is a danger to themselves or other children, we may choose to suspend your child for a discussed and agreed upon period of time in order to design a plan to support the child. Once the child returns to our program, if the child is still a danger then we will discuss if we are the best persons to be caring for your child. Please refer to our detailed discipline policy for more information regarding the steps that are taken by our staff to work with children who are displaying challenging behavior. It is only as a very last resort that we would ask you to remove your child from care. In that case, a notice of up to two weeks may be given before termination of services in

order to allow parents to find alternate childcare.

At Little Blessings, we continuously strive to strengthen relationships with our children and their family. Through continuous specialized training, teachers are able to identify the individual needs of your child(ren). While working with families, we are able to provide each child with the specialized care that he/she may need within the classroom. When a situation occurs that makes a child's needs difficult for staff and parents to adequately address the family will be given information on how to access an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist to support their child in all environments.

Financial Obligations & Policies

Registration/Enrollment Fee:

Registration in the Little Blessings PDO program begins in March for the following school year and is open to everyone with consideration given in the following order for the first 2 full weeks of enrollment:

1. Returning Little Blessings Families
2. Members of the First United Methodist Church of Castle Rock
3. Waitlisted Children
4. Children of the Community

After the 2 week window, enrollment will be based on a first come first serve basis.

Applications are accepted for the waitlist throughout the school year in the event of any classroom or student changes.

A **non-refundable** registration fee is due at the time of registration:

- \$95 – Families new to Little Blessings
- Registration fee waived for families returning to Little Blessings
- Registration fee is waived for approved families supported by CCAP

Tuition:

- Tuition for the Little Blessings PDO program is based on an annual

fee divided into ten equal monthly payments for your convenience.

- Tuition for the last month of the school year is due at time of enrollment (last month's tuition). These payments are ***not reimbursed and is non-transferable*** in the event the child leaves the program before the end of the school year. **When given a 30-day notice**, last month's tuition will be put towards your child's last month enrolled with Little Blessings.
- If your child increases the number of days they attend during the year, the increased "last month's" tuition is due at that time of the increase.
- Full monthly payments (cash, check, or credit cards) are invoiced on the **first business day of the month and due on the 10th of the month**. Checks should be made out to "Little Blessings Parents' Day Out."
- Payments are accepted in the office in person or you may place your payment in the tuition box located outside the PDO Office.
- You may also set up recurring credit card payments through your Parent Portal on Brightwheel.

Tuition Fees 2022-23

1 day/week = \$150/month or \$1500/ year

2 days/week = \$330/month or \$3300 year

3 days/week = \$492/month or \$4920/ year

4 days/week = \$642/month or \$6420/ year

5 days/week = \$803/month or \$8030/ year

1 *half* day/week = \$118/month or \$1180/year (multiply by number of half days/week)

Drop-In Fees

• Half-Day (until 12:30pm) - \$43

• Full Day - \$57

Extended Care Fees:

Before Care Only- Monthly Pre- Enrollment (10% discount)

- 1 day/week= \$20/month
- 2 day/week=\$40/month
- 3 day/week= \$59/month
- 4 day/week= \$79/month
- 5 day/week= \$99/month

After Care Only- Monthly Pre-Enrollment (10% discount)

- 1 day/week= \$40/month
- 2 day/week=\$79/month
- 3 day/week= \$119/month
- 4 day/week= \$158/month
- 5 day/week= \$198/month

Before & After Care- Monthly Pre-Enrollment (10% discount)

- 1 day/week= \$59/month
- 2 day/week=\$119/month
- 3 day/week= \$178/month
- 4 day/week= \$238/month
- 5 day/week= \$297/month

Drop In (based on availability)- Approval from office needed prior to dropping in

- Before Care- \$5.50/day
- After Care- \$11/day
- Before & After Care- \$16.50/day

Child Care Assistance Program and Scholarships

As a ministry of the First United Methodist Church, it is our mission to be of service to our community and ensure that every child in the community has access to a high quality early childhood experience. To support us in that mission we accept CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program) from Douglas County, Arapahoe County and Jefferson County.

For information on CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program) please visit

<https://cdhs.colorado.gov/benefits-assistance/child-care-a>

ssistance

Should you not qualify for CCAP however you do need financial assistance we welcome you to apply for a scholarship. Scholarships are approved on a case by case basis and are not guaranteed.

For more information on scholarships please contact the main office at 303-660-2170 or by email at littleblessingspdo@gmail.com

Late Payment Charges:

A \$40 late fee will be added if the tuition payment is not received by the 10th of each month. If payment arrangements have not been made after ten days, the student will not be allowed to attend the Little Blessings PDO program until payment is received. For the month of May, students will not be able to attend after the 10th if not paid in full.

Withdrawal from Little Blessings:

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child before the end of the school year, written notice to the PDO office staff is required of at **least 30 days**. Reimbursement is not given for the pre-paid May tuition nor for days not attended, however will be applied for the final month of attendance.

Absences & Holidays:

Tuition is based on annual tuition fees. **No credit is given for illness, holidays, vacations, snow days, delayed start or safety closures.**

Parent Communication

Brightwheel:

Brightwheel is our online portal where parents/guardians are able to communicate with teachers and administration. Additionally, teachers and administration are able to send messages, alerts, and reminders with the app. Please make sure to have this application downloaded on your phone.

Information Boards:

Inside each classroom, or directly outside of the classroom's main entrance, teachers will have sign-in/sign-out binders, weekly/monthly lesson plans, a sign-up sheet for various activities and events, and other important information and updates.

Parent and Community Event Resource Center:

Located in the south hallway, this contains books, magazines, and other resources for parents of toddlers and preschoolers. Please feel free to take any of the materials there, borrow books, or leave books to be used by others.

Parent Observations & Conferences:

Two parent/teacher conferences will be offered during the school year. The conferences will be offered for each classroom according to the calendar (attached). Sign-up for conferences will be posted on the information boards by teachers 1 week prior to the start of conferences.

Change of Student/Family Information:

Please keep your important family contact information up-to-date with the PDO Office. Please contact the PDO office to make any changes of address, phone number, e-mail address, or emergency contacts.

Special Events:

Special gatherings such as the pancake breakfast, goodies with grown-ups, and Christmas Program and more are held for the parents and/or family members. These gatherings are important and we ask that you make every effort to have at least one member of your family attend. Special events are an opportunity for families to get to know one another and work together for the benefit of the children in the program. Please refer to the school calendar for specific dates of these special events.

Parent Classes:

Depending on parental interest, special classes and fellowship times will be offered during school time or evening, on subjects ranging from child-rearing skills to nutrition.

Translators:

Little Blessings PDO will request the assistance of translators when a child

or child's family member is in need of an interpreter due to a language barrier between our facility and the family.

Operational Policies & Procedures

Arrival & Departure Policy:

Program doors open at 8:57 am. Upon arrival, take your child directly to his/her classroom's designated sink (located either in their classroom or by the bathrooms by the West exits), wash their hands, take them to their classroom and check the student in via Brightwheel. If you are early, please wait with your child outside until the doors are open or if available, check your child in to the before care program between 8:30 and 8:57am using the double doors on the South West corner of the building.

To check-in/out your child, please download the Brightwheel application. There are QR codes outside each classroom to be scanned for check-in/out. Please ensure you know your individual code (which can be found and changed on your main Brightwheel profile).

If an approved pick-up does not have the application on their phone, please notify the front office for alternative check-in/out procedures.

The State of Colorado requires that all children be signed in and signed out of school each day. **Please sign your name, (not initials or relation to the child)**, and wait until the teacher receives your child into the classroom before you leave.

Little Blessings families may enter the building through the main entrance of First United Methodist Church or through the Little Blessings Main entrance on the back of the building. Please note that the main entrance of the church is closed on Fridays and may also be unavailable to Little Blessings families if the church sanctuary is being used (e.g., funeral, wedding, etc.)

End of day pick up

School ends promptly at 2:30 pm. Please be on time!! Children can become anxious and unsettled if you are not there on time. If you are detained and cannot pick up your child on time, please make arrangements for one of your *authorized people* to pick him/her up for you or they will be taken to Aftercare at 2:35pm in which case you will be charged \$15 for aftercare services (refer to aftercare late pick-up for further information).

You must keep the student file in the PDO office up-to-date with any/all

emergency contacts and/or pick-up authorizations. For each child enrolled, Little Blessings requires written authorization from a parent or legal guardian regarding persons who each child can be released to. Persons picking up children will be verified through identification of a valid state driver's license or identification card to ensure they are an authorized pick up person.

Little Blessings will not release children without verifying that the person picking up the child is authorized to do so. If you send someone who is not on your pick-up list, written authorization via email is sufficient for that day only and the office will notify your child's teacher. It is our policy that no one under the age of 18 is allowed to pick up a child from Little Blessings without written consent from the parent/guardian.

The Little Blessings school day ends at 2:30pm daily and all staff begin their daily clean up routine including checking every classroom and classroom attendance verification log to ensure all children have been picked up for the day. Staff also double check each classroom, as well as outdoor play areas to ensure that there are no children unaccounted for.

If you are not able to be here by 2:30pm or arrange for an alternative person to pick up child(ren) will be taken to the After Care Program and a fee of \$15 will be added to your monthly invoice. If a child has not been picked up by our closing time at 3:30pm, that child will continue to be cared for by one of our qualified staff and the parents will be called to ensure pick up and a late fee will be issued.

Late Pick Up:

A late pick-up fee may be assessed if your child has not been picked up at the close of the After Care Program (3:30pm). The charge is \$1.00 for every minute after 3:30pm, that will be due with next month's tuition.

If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the child's enrollment forms will be called. If a child remains in our care for more than a half hour after Little Blessings has closed and we have been unable to reach a parent, legal guardian or emergency contact person, the Little Blessings office staff will contact local child protective services and/or law enforcement.

Transitions:

Transitions in and out of the classroom happen throughout the day at Little Blessings. Our face-to-name log ensures that each child is always accounted for before & after a transition is made. We organize transitions around the needs of each individual child. We understand that staff have a

duty to ensure continuity for children during periods of transition. We believe that smooth transition encourages learning and supports the personal, social and emotional development, as well as the future success of every child. With this in mind we want children to feel secure and safe with staff. We also want parents to have confidence that they are active partners in the well-being and education of their child. To aid in this process we encourage continuity of care so children remain in their classroom for the duration of our ten-month program moving to a new classroom in the fall. Transitions are supported through teacher training and family education. For additional information and articles on transitions, please visit www.naeyc.org.

Health, Safety and Nutrition Policies

Diapering/Diaper Cream Policy:

Diapers will be changed every two hours and as needed. Diaper ointment/cream can only be applied with written permission from the parent. The parent/guardian must provide the ointment/cream in the original over the counter container labeled with the child's first and last name. Ointment/cream will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported promptly to the parent/guardian. Gloves and all sanitary standards required by the Department of Human Services and Health Department are followed when diapering children.

Parents are responsible for providing diapers and wipes for your child's use. You may pack them in your child's backpack to be taken back and forth or you may bring a month's worth to be stored in the classroom. Should your child run out of diapers we will provide up to 4 diapers a month before the parent will be charged \$5 per day without diapers being provided by the parent.

Toilet Training Policy:

Teachers are happy to work with your child during toilet training. However, no attempt will be made to toilet train children until they are 24 months and able to verbalize or indicate a need. Please speak with your child's teacher directly. Remember that the child will have to be able to tell the teacher when he/she needs to go to the bathroom.

Handwashing Policy:

Teachers will ensure that children wash their hands regularly throughout the day; including, but not limited to--arrival time, before and after

meals, after bathroom breaks, and after they have been on the playground.

Sunscreen Policy:

The State of Colorado requires that sunscreen be applied to children prior to going outdoors year round. Little Blessings has sunscreen available or you may also provide your own sunscreen to be applied each day. If you prefer that your child does NOT have sunscreen applied each day, it is required that you have a brimmed hat, long-sleeve shirt, and long pants available for your child every day. Enrollment forms state these three options as part of your child's registration documents so you may decide what is best for your child.

Moisturizing Lotion, Cream, Balm:

Staff are able to assist with applying skin lotion/cream/balm/chapstick to a child if written authorization is given. As the parent/guardian, you must provide the lotion/cream/balm/chapstick in the original over the counter container labeled with your child's first and last name.

Please give these items to your child's teacher as they will be kept out of reach. It is your responsibility to check the ingredients of this product to ensure your child is not allergic to it. Be sure that you have signed the Topical Application waiver provided by your student's teacher or the front office.

Skin lotion/cream/balm/chapstick will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported promptly to the parent/guardian. Little Blessings does not allow hand sanitizer. **Please do not keep any of these products in the child's back pack but instead hand them directly to the classroom teacher for safe keeping.**

Clothing Policy:

Please have your child wear play clothes! Keep in mind that your child will be climbing, painting, digging, sitting in sand, playing with water, and helping himself/herself with toilet needs. We emphasize having a good experience rather than keeping special clothes spotless. Clothing with many buttons, buckles, belts, and straps are hard for little hands to maneuver. You help your child toward independence in dressing by selecting clothing he/she can manage easily on his/her own. **In case of a clothing accident, please keep an extra change of clothing, in a zip-lock bag with your child's name on it, in the bottom of your child's school bag. Please also label tags with your child's name or**

initials. If it becomes necessary for your child to change clothing, privacy will be provided. For the children's safety, cowboy boots, sandals, "flip-flops," dress up shoes and "CROCS" are not recommended. Tennis shoes or rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes are suggested. **Be sure to mark all removable clothing with your child's name.**

In the event that a child needs to change clothes and does not have a spare set, they will be able to use extras provided by Little Blessings PDO. These clothes do need to be washed at home and brought back within 10 days of receiving them or there will be a \$10 charge invoiced to your account to replace the items.

Snacks & Nutrition Guidelines:

Your child's nutrition is important to his/her overall health. Proper nutrition can prevent many future medical problems. It will also ensure that your child physically grows to his/her full potential.

Parents are responsible for providing your child's daily snack and lunch. Please send healthy, nutritious selections with them daily (Little Blessings will offer healthy options when USDA guidelines are not met and families will be invoiced for the cost). Both snack and lunch should consist of finger foods that the child can eat independently. The state does not allow us to serve sugary drinks and 100% juice may be served no more than twice per week.

Allergy Aware School:Meals

Little Blessings is committed to being allergy aware. We do our best to ensure that nuts are not brought into the program; however, we cannot guarantee that packaged foods are not manufactured in a nut-free facility.

No items containing or made with tree-nuts (almonds, pecans, cashews, pistachios, walnuts) or peanuts are allowed at Little Blessings PDO.

Shared Items & Toys:

Little Blessings ensures that all classrooms are equipped with a variety of equipment and toys for each child to play with individually and with friends. Because our storage space is limited, we encourage children to keep valuable personal items at home. At first, some children may feel the need to bring something from home. This is acceptable, as it may give needed security. Because of this, we do allow for children to bring a toy, blanket or stuffed animal that will remain in the child's backpack or cubby and is **individually labeled** when not in use.

Nurse Consultant

Little Blessings PDO does not have a nurse on staff. Our nurse consultant, Brooke Flexter (license #0162398) will visit our facility once a month and on an *as-needed* basis. If you have special needs or concerns that you would like to discuss with the nurse, please contact the Little Blessings office staff to set an appointment.

Immunization Requirements

Little Blessings PDO requires all students to be up-to-date and current with their immunizations. In the case your child is receiving immunizations on a plan from their physician, a note must be on file with the current immunization schedule in writing signed by the physician on company letterhead.

Little Blessings does not accept personal or religious exemptions. Those claiming exemption for medical reasons, must complete an exemption form with their pediatrician's signature or provide a medical release in writing from your physician.

Health Appraisal

We are required by the Office of Early Childhood and the Douglas County Health Department to have an updated general health appraisal form from each student's most recent well-child check as outlined by the recommendations of the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP recommends Well- Child visits at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, and 30 months, and annually after 3 years of age. Please ensure the health appraisal form is completely filled out and signed by a physician at each Well-Child visit.

COVID-19

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we will follow all state issued requirements and Douglas County Health Department guidelines.

Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance:

If you do not currently have insurance and are in need of a referral, please visit www.connectforhealthco.com to help.

Allergies:

Please make sure the PDO Office is notified of any type of allergies that

your child is susceptible to, **especially any type of food allergy!** We do our best to monitor food allergies and make a conscientious effort to make sure that your child is not exposed to anything that would cause an allergic reaction.

Medications:

All medications, both prescription and over the counter, given to Little Blessings to administer to children, will need to have a current parental permission, doctor's orders and medical plan for each medication. All medication must be signed in and out by a parent/guardian. Please bring the medication to the front office for approval prior to giving it to a teacher. All medication will be administered by a trained staff member delegated by our nurse consultant and in accordance with the prescribed directions and will be documented in our medication log book. All medications will be stored in areas inaccessible to children at all times. If a medication is expired or is left over it will be given back to the parents. If we are not able to reach the parents, the leftover medication will be properly disposed of under the guidance of our nurse. Emergency medications will be stored in an area that is easily accessed by staff, but inaccessible to children.

Illnesses

Little Blessings will immediately notify parent/guardian if a child becomes ill while at school and will be asked to pick up the child within one hour. This could include a child acting lethargic, vomiting, or registering a fever of over 100.4 degrees.

We also ask that you call the Little Blessings office if your child is too sick to attend on any given day. In order to maintain the health of everyone at Little Blessings, we will not accept children if:

- Just began taking antibiotics for any illness in the past 24 hours
- Has a temperature of over 100.4 in the past 24 hours
- Has had more than one episode of vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Has acute diarrhea in the past 24 hours

Before returning to Little Blessings the child needs to have been free of symptoms and/or fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of any form of treatment or medication. Some illnesses and/or lingering symptoms may require a release note from your physician.

Communicable Diseases

Keeping our children healthy is very important to us! Please do not send your child to school if he/she is ill or has any abnormal symptoms. If your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, it is very important to **notify the PDO Office** ASAP. If there is any possibility that a child was exposed while at Little Blessings, we will send a confidential notification to parents with the date of the possible exposure and the condition, along with a list of general symptoms to look for in your child.

Accidents & Injury Procedures

In case of a minor injury, an "Incident Report" will be sent home with your child noting the injury and treatment or care given. All non-emergency or minor accidents and injuries will be treated with first aid and TLC by a trained staff member, then the accident or injury is documented and parents are notified upon picking up their child at the end of the day. Should an injury take place above the collarbone the parents will be contacted within the hour of injury.

In case of a more serious accident, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent, in addition to contacting 911, if necessary. If we cannot reach the parent, we will then call the emergency contact. If we are unable to reach either the parent or emergency contact, we will then call the child's physician.

It is extremely important that you keep the PDO office informed of all phone numbers where you can be reached (home, work, cell, etc.) and any changes that occur throughout the year.

Emergency Preparedness:

The Emergency Response Protocol for Little Blessings follows the Douglas County School District. Our evacuation shelter is South Ridge Elementary School right next door to the church. The following responses are the standard responses that we will use in any given situation. On a monthly basis, we conduct fire drills, seasonally we conduct tornado drills and several times a year, we conduct LOCKOUT, SECURE, and EVACUATE drills to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with the drill procedures in case of a real emergency.

LOCKOUT – "Secure the Perimeter"

If there is a threat outside the building, bring everyone in and lock the outside doors. Lockout is called by the office staff. Lockout can be called when a staff member or child notice something strange or unusual. A

lockout could be the response to a violent person or incident in the community near the church. Teachers, aides, or office staff will get children back into the building. Teachers will take roll and notify the office of any missing or extra children. Lockout means an increased situational awareness, but class will be conducted as usual.

- **Informing the Families** – All families via email, Brightwheel message and/or phone call dependent upon the unique situation and our ability to communicate. A follow up message will be sent after the situation has been resolved.
- **Reuniting Families** – Regular pick up policy will be followed. If lockout is in effect during pick up hours, parents will be allowed to pick up once the lockout alert has been lifted.

SECURE – “Lock, Lights, Out of Sight”

Secure is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep children quiet and in place. Teachers will lock classroom doors and turn lights out. In addition, teachers and children will move away from the hallway line of sight and maintain silence. The teacher will take roll and account for all children. Occupants of rooms will not unlock their rooms for anything or anyone. When the incident is over, a responsible person capable of unlocking the room from out in the hall (office staff, law enforcement, etc) will unlock the door and brief the occupants.

- **Informing the Families** – All families via email, Brightwheel message and/or phone call dependent upon the unique situation and our ability to communicate. A follow up message will be sent after the situation has been resolved.
- **Reuniting Families** – Once the threat has been eliminated, we will release children to their families after confirmation has been received from law enforcement informing us it is safe to do so. Regular pick up policy will procedures will then be followed.

EVACUATE – “Follow the Directions”

Evacuate means moving children in an orderly fashion from point A to point B. A fire drill is really: “Evacuate Out of the Building.” The order to evacuate is always followed by a location. Teachers, aides, and office staff all need to work together quickly, quietly, and safely evacuate children to the evacuation point. Children and staff will leave personal belongings behind. Instructions detailing specific actions during the evacuation may take place such as holding hands, covering heads, and/or crawling. Teachers will ensure they bring a roll sheet. Immediately upon reaching

the evacuation point, teachers should take roll.

- **Informing the Families** – All families via email, Brightwheel message and/or phone call dependent upon the unique situation and our ability to communicate. A follow up message will be sent after the situation has been resolved.
- **Reuniting Families** – Regular pick up policy will be followed at our evacuation location of South Ridge Elementary School.

1100 South Street, Castle Rock, CO 80104

Phone: (303) 387-5075

FIRE

All classrooms will meet at their designated evacuation location in the event of a fire. Individual evacuation maps are located in each of the classrooms.

TORNADO

All classes will report to their designated “Tornado Safe Place” (located in each classroom) in a calm, quick, orderly manner. After getting to the room, everyone should crouch low, head face down, protecting the back of the head with their arms. Stay as close to the middle of the room as possible and remain there until you are alerted that it is safe to come out. No person will leave the building, even if the school day is over, until it has been deemed safe to do so.

Student Safety

Little Blessings staff will take special care to keep children safe. Each classroom will have qualified staff members that will verify attendance within their classroom to identify where children are at all times. Children will have a name to face head count taken after each transition. The classroom teachers will ensure that each parent or legal guardian signs in their child upon arrival and signs out their child upon leaving the classroom daily.

Should a child become missing while at the program, the following protocol will be followed:

1. A count of the children in the classroom will be conducted to determine who is missing.
2. The teacher will contact any available PDO office staff via radio

to inform them of a potential situation.

3. A thorough search of the facility will be conducted including all classrooms, the playground, and the parking lot.
4. If the child is not found, the police will be called.
5. The parents/guardians will then be called.
6. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called.
7. The security system-recording device will be reviewed.

Security System

Little Blessings is a secure facility. Doors remain locked during school hours, except during a short period of time to allow for drop off and pick up (in which doors will be monitored by staff). There are security cameras around the perimeter of the building and at the main entrances. The security cameras record all motion detected 24 hours/day.

Birthdays

We encourage you to celebrate your child's birthday with us at school. Your teacher will arrange a date with you to celebrate your child's special day in the classroom. If you would like to bring in store-bought, peanut-free birthday treats, please notify your teacher for approval prior to doing so. Please also ask for assistance from the teacher when planning to hand out birthday party invitations to other children in the class as we want to keep in mind the feelings of others.

Field Trip Policy

Generally, we bring field trips to Little Blessings! In the event that a trip is taken to another area off the grounds, a permission form will be provided and will need to be signed annually.

Occasionally, your child's class may take a nature walk around the facility. In the event that children will leave the facility, parents/guardians will be notified and a parent permission form will be signed for every trip taken. Field trips will always be within walking distance as we do not transport children at Little Blessings. Parent volunteers may be asked to accompany the class on these trips. All children will participate in special events and activities unless written notification is given to the PDO office.

If a special event or activity occurs on a day that your child does not attend, you are always welcome to bring your child and stay with them during the event. In the event your child arrives late and their class is away from the building, your child will be placed in the care of a qualified adult staff member until his/her class returns.

Television Viewing

Little Blessings will occasionally show G-Rated videos to children over 2 years of age within your child's class that will require permission from the parent or legal guardian agreed upon in the child's enrollment forms. TV is limited to 30 minutes/week

Lost and Found

"Lost & Found" items are kept in a bin located at the Parent Resource Center in the south hallway. The staff will collect any found and/or unclaimed items and place them in the "Lost & Found." The Friday before any week long or more breaks, if no one has claimed these items, they will be donated to the program or a charitable organization such as the Douglas County Help and Hope Center or Gateway Battered Women's Shelter.

Visitors to Little Blessings

All visitors must stop by the Little Blessings office to sign in on the visitor log book. We have an "Open Door Policy" for parents of children who are currently enrolled to come and visit Little Blessings and your child's class anytime during the school year. We want you to be well informed of your child's progress throughout the school year.

School Closures

Little Blessings PDO will follow the Douglas County School District schedule in the event of inclement weather (snow, extreme cold, extreme heat, etc.) as well as safety closures. Refunds/make-ups are not given under these circumstances.

- If Douglas County School District is closed for inclement weather, then Little Blessings PDO will also be closed.
- If Douglas County School District has a late start, Little Blessings PDO will open at 10:30 am. If there is a late start, we do not offer before care. •

- If Douglas County School District has an early release, Little Blessings parents are expected to pick up children immediately after the closure has been announced.
- Little Blessings PDO reserves the right to close early due to inclement weather or safety issues. Parents will be notified via email/phone/Brightwheel.
- To determine if Douglas County School District is closed, you may:
 - Call the school weather hotline: 303-387-7669
 - Log on to www.dcsdk12.org

Inclement Weather

We will have time outdoors daily for all children, however we do ensure the safety of the children at all times. During times of inclement weather including excessively hot or cold weather (as noted in the Child Care Weather Watch put out by the National Weather Service), we will not have outdoor playtime but will have scheduled time indoors for large gross motor activities.

Curriculum and Programming

Curriculum Philosophy:

Little Blessings philosophy focuses on the developmental aspect of growth. Lesson plans are individually designed by the teacher. Little Blessings teachers create learning experiences for children based on Colorado Early Learning Developmental Guidelines. For more information on the Colorado Early Learning Developmental Guidelines visit <https://earlylearningco.org/about-us/>

Teachers adapt materials and activities to respond to the changing and expanding needs of the developmental age ranges within her class. Teachers regularly assess the development of children and scaffold their learning activities to meet each child where they are individually.

Developmental Goals for Children at Little Blessings

Social: Relating to Others

Teachers and assistant teachers will encourage the development of interpersonal skills by modeling:

- Cooperation with others
- Using basic manners
- Learning with and from others
- Interfacing with teachers and peers
- Learning to help others and work as part of a group
- Learning to care and cooperate with others, i.e. *taking turns* • Problem solving with others, i.e. *“How can we move all these blocks?”* • Developing social knowledge, i.e. *dramatic play*

Emotional: Child’s Sense of Self and Security

Develop the child’s confidence by understanding self, family, and culture. We will:

- Promote self-help skills, i.e. *pouring a drink, clothing self such as zipping and buttoning, setting a snack table, and performing a daily class job.*
- Promote health skills, i.e. *hand washing, toilet skills, and proper disposal of tissues.*
- Provide opportunities in which the child can experience success and competence without the fear of failure, i.e. *cooking, sharing a story.*
- Share family photos, vacations, career, or holiday observations.
- Provide classrooms with toys and dolls that demonstrate diversity.
- Encourage learning the names of body parts, their location and function, i.e. *ears for hearing, tongue for tasting, touch your elbow, etc.*
- Bring in family members for sharing or special events.

Cognitive: Child’s Intellectual Development

Children develop within a predictable range of age-related human characteristics. The activities, materials, and experiences should fall

within a broad range including Creative Arts Expression, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Logic and Reasoning. Each individual has his/her own strengths and needs.

Physical: Gross and Fine Motor

Develop gross motor skills (the maturing of large muscles, i.e. legs, arms) by

- Providing opportunities daily for students to exercise large muscles.
- Providing an outdoor playground with equipment that promotes large muscle
- growth, such as jungle gym and balance beam.

Development of fine motor skills (the maturing of small muscles, i.e. fingers) by:

- Providing play-dough, puzzles, manipulatives, painting, scissors, and a low writing table with paper, crayons, markers, and stamps.

Children actively involved in these physical activities strengthen neurological pathways in the brain. These pathways must be established before the child can proceed to the higher levels of formal education.

Faith Formation

Little Blessings PDO offers a child friendly ecumenical approach to faith formation. Our faith based curriculum is designed in house to ensure that it is meaningful for the children and embraces the core values our community desires to reflect. Our programming includes stories, drama, crafts, skits, dance, music and service. We use Bible based stories to teach our students that they were created from Love, to Love, by God- who is Loving, and that no matter what- they are Loved by God and by us.

Daily Schedule

Inside and outside schedules are rotated among classes to allow more room for playing on the playground. Variations to the schedule will be made by teachers according to the needs and ages of each class. In addition, inside and outside times may change due to weather and/or special events.

- **Inside Time:** Free play, music, creative arts/crafts, blocks, books/quiet time, dramatic play, science/nature, stories, cognitive learning through games, etc. •
- **Outside Time:** Free play, nature walks, water play, crafts, sidewalk chalk and painting, bike riding, etc.
- **Snack/Lunch:** Families provide nutritious snacks and lunch each day.
- **Circle Time:** Calendar, weather, daily themes, story time, class jobs, music, etc.
- **Nap/Rest Time:** Younger classes nap, whereas preschool and Pre-K classes rest & relax. If your child is here for the full day please provide a crib sheet & blanket.
- **Specials:** Bible Story, song, craft or activity.
- **Before and After Care:** Extended care for those with pre-reservations.

Staff

A loving & dedicated teaching staff has been trained to promote the best development for your child. We are very fortunate to have such well-qualified staff, many of whom have Bachelors or Masters level degrees in Early Childhood or in a related field. All of our staff have specialized training in Early Childhood Education, as well as are CPR/First Aid certified.

The Staff of Little Blessings PDO will

- Relate to children in a loving and caring manner, stimulate and encourage play, and provide “child-chosen” activities.
- Extend thinking by posing problems, making suggestions, adding complex tasks, and asking questions.
- Offer discipline in a firm and loving manner, using redirection, and modeling to give the child an opportunity to think about the choice made and the consequence of that choice.
- Prepare an environment that encourages children to learn by providing areas of interest within the classroom, provide a variety of centers for large and small group activity, provide a quiet area for the solitary child, provide a range of interesting materials, have organized and proper storage space, and maintain a classroom that is safe and clean.

- Have a strong code of ethics, maintain a high standard of professional conduct, show respect for students, parents and colleagues, be open to new ideas, and be willing to learn from others.

Mandatory Reporting

Little Blessings employees are mandatory reporters. A report is required when a mandatory reporter has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect.

Discipline

Discipline is handled as each unique situation requires and will be provided in a loving and gentle manner. It is our desire to promote and secure the development of a positive, healthy self-esteem. All teachers participate in an 8.5 hour training on classroom management and discipline using the Conscious Discipline techniques. The teachers demonstrate kind, loving, positive reinforcement techniques, as we strive to reinforce and stimulate positive attitudes and behavior. For more information on Conscious Discipline please visit <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

Unacceptable behavior is handled in low-key discussions between the teacher and child. The child may then be redirected to another activity. If an unacceptable behavior continues to be repeated, and especially if the well-being of the child or his/her classmates is at risk, then the child will be removed from the activity in progress.

Summer/ Winter Camp:

Little Blessings offers camps while the regular program is closed (please refer to the calendar for camp dates). All policies and procedures listed in this handbook apply to camp programs.

Camps have limited availability, require a separate enrollment process, and have different tuition rates. Your child is not guaranteed a spot on the camp roster if he/she is enrolled at Little Blessings during the regular school year.

Quality Improvement Plan:

Little Blessings has a quality improvement plan in place. If you are interested in viewing this plan, please request this in the Little Blessings office.

Resources

Little Blessings would like to connect our families to community resources. We partner with parents to find resources to accommodate their child's specific needs. An observation-based assessment in the first 30 days of attendance will be conducted to screen for any developmental delays and ongoing assessments will be conducted throughout the year following the Colorado Early Learning Developmental Guidelines. Results will be discussed during parent teacher conferences which will be conducted in the fall and again in the spring. If staff believes further assessment is needed, the parents will receive information for a referral agency. Parents may choose (and are encouraged) to contact outside agencies/organizations for programs or services. Parents can receive resources from the Little Blessings office. Little Blessings staff is willing to work with parents and their community providers to design learning activities that aid in meeting outcomes, goals of individual family services, Individual Education Plans, School Readiness Plans, Individual Learning Plans, and/or other individual plans. Little Blessings welcomes your child's treatment team to work with us at any time to ensure the best care for your child.

Reports and Complaints

Please report any concerns or questions you have to the office staff of Little Blessings PDO.

To file an official complaint about the facility, contact:

The Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
1575 Sherman Street, Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

To report suspected child abuse,
contact:

Douglas County Health & Human
Services 101 Third Street, Castle
Rock, Colorado 80104
303-688-4825

2023- 2024 Calendar:

*Dates subject to change

Little Blessings PDO
2023-2024
Academic Year Calendar

July 23

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Events

July 3-7	Closed- 4th of July
Jul 28	Last day of Summer Camp
Aug 7	First Day of School
Sept 4th	Closed- Labor Day
Oct 16-20	Closed- Fall Break
Oct 27	Trunk or Treat
Nov 7-9	Parent Teacher Conferences
Nov 17	Pancake Breakfast
Nov 20-24	Closed- Thanksgiving
Dec 14	Christmas Program
Dec 18-21	Winter Camp
Dec 22- Jan 5	Closed- Winter Break
Jan 8	First Day of School
Jan 15	Closed- MLK Day
Feb 19	Closed- Presidents Day
Feb 28	Art Show
March 18-22	Closed- Spring Break
Apr 16-18	Parent Teacher Conferences
Apr 24	Fun Run
May 17	Pre- K Graduation
May 24	Last Day of School
Jun 3	First Day of Summer Camp

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