

Barrels Of FUN

EXPLORATION CENTER, LLC

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to Barrels of FUN Exploration Center

Welcome to the Barrels of FUN family!

We are honored that you have chosen Barrels of FUN Exploration Center to be part of your child's early learning journey. We understand that selecting a childcare program is one of the most important decisions a family can make, and we appreciate the trust you place in us each day.

This Family Handbook has been created to familiarize parents and guardians with the policies, procedures, practices, and standards of Barrels of FUN Exploration Center ("Barrels of FUN"). It is designed to provide important information about our program, daily operations, and the partnership we strive to build with every family.

Our goal is to create a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children are encouraged to explore, discover, create, and develop a lifelong love of learning. We believe that strong partnerships between families and educators are essential to every child's success, and we value open communication, mutual respect, and collaboration throughout your time with us.

As our program continues to grow, Barrels of FUN reserves the right to revise or update the policies, procedures, and standards outlined in this handbook as needed or as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Families will be notified of significant changes as they occur.

Thank you for trusting us with your greatest treasure. We look forward to learning, growing, and celebrating alongside your family.

Mission Statement

At Barrels of FUN, we believe in the value and uniqueness of every child we serve. Our childcare experience is designed to promote each child's individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development through meaningful, child-led learning experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori approaches.

As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate learning environment—both indoors and outdoors—that encourages children to explore, discover, create, and become lifelong learners. We strive to inspire confidence, independence, curiosity, kindness, and a genuine love of learning while building strong partnerships with families and our community.

Our Philosophy

At Barrels of FUN, we believe children are born ready to learn. Every child is naturally curious, capable, and eager to explore the world around them. Our role as educators is to provide a safe, stimulating, and encouraging environment where children can learn through play, discovery, meaningful relationships, and hands-on experiences.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies, we view children as active participants in their own learning. Our teachers serve as guides, carefully observing children's interests, encouraging curiosity, and creating opportunities for exploration, creativity, problem-solving, and independence.

We believe childhood should never be rushed. Children learn best when they have the freedom to ask

questions, investigate, imagine, create, and experience the world around them. Whether learning inside our classrooms, exploring our outdoor classroom, or connecting with the Ebensburg community, every experience is an opportunity to grow.

Our philosophy is rooted in the work of Loris Malaguzzi and his belief that every child possesses "a hundred languages"—countless ways to think, express themselves, create, and learn. This belief serves as the foundation of our program and guides the experiences we provide each day.

What Makes Barrels of FUN Different?

Barrels of FUN is more than a childcare center—it's a community where children are encouraged to learn, grow, and thrive through meaningful experiences every day.

Child-Led Learning: Our curriculum is inspired by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies, allowing children's interests and natural curiosity to guide their learning while teachers provide encouragement, support, and intentional learning opportunities.

Learning Beyond Four Walls: Our classrooms extend well beyond the building. Children regularly explore our outdoor classroom and the Ghost Town Trail, helping them develop a meaningful connection to the world around them.

Play with Purpose: We believe play is the foundation of learning. Through hands-on experiences, children develop language, early literacy, mathematics, science, creativity, problem-solving, and social skills in ways that are engaging and developmentally appropriate.

Relationships Matter: Strong relationships are at the heart of everything we do. We strive to build trusting partnerships with families while creating nurturing, supportive relationships between children and teachers.

Individualized Growth: Every child develops at their own pace. Our teachers observe, document, and support each child's unique strengths and interests while providing individualized opportunities for growth and success.

Preparing for Kindergarten—and Life: Our goal is not simply kindergarten readiness. We strive to help children become confident, independent, kind, curious, and resilient learners who are prepared for success in school and beyond.

About Our Program

Hours of Operation

Barrels of FUN Exploration Center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM. To allow our staff time with their families, the center is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Black Friday
- Christmas Day

Barrels of FUN may also close for up to five (5) additional days each school year for professional

development, staff training, or other operational needs. Families will receive advance notice of all scheduled closures.

Licensing

Barrels of FUN Exploration Center is licensed and regulated by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) – www.DHS.pa.gov. Our program meets all applicable state licensing requirements and is inspected regularly to ensure a safe, healthy, and high-quality environment for every child.

Our current Certificate of Compliance and Pennsylvania childcare regulations are posted within the center and are available for review at any time upon request.

Barrels of FUN provides care for children from infancy through entering kindergarten. Additional information regarding Pennsylvania childcare regulations can be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services website: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Child-Care/Pages/Child-Care-Regulations.aspx>

Keystone STARS

Barrels of FUN proudly participates in Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Keystone STARS is a statewide initiative that recognizes early learning programs committed to providing high-quality education and care. Participation in Keystone STARS demonstrates our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement through staff development, family engagement, curriculum, assessment, health and safety practices, and effective business operations.

Our goal is to provide every child with meaningful learning experiences that prepare them not only for kindergarten but for a lifetime of learning.

Classroom Progression

Inspired by our theme song, "What a Wonderful World," your child will journey through our classrooms as they grow and become developmentally ready for each new adventure:

Grow → Rainbow → Sky → Red Roses → Bloom

Each classroom builds upon the last, creating a nurturing environment where children learn through play, exploration, meaningful relationships, and hands-on experiences.

Grow Room: Our youngest learners receive individualized care in a safe, loving environment as they begin discovering the world around them. Through songs, stories, sensory exploration, outdoor experiences, and meaningful interactions, your baby will build confidence and curiosity every day. Most importantly, they will be surrounded by caring teachers who help them feel safe, loved, and right at home.

Rainbow Room: As toddlers become more independent, their world becomes even more colorful. In the Rainbow Room, children began exploring colors, shapes, language, and early problem-solving through play. They continue developing gross and fine motor skills, enjoy outdoor walks and adventures, build friendships, and discover the joy of learning in a fun, engaging environment.

Sky Room: In the Sky Room, every day is a new adventure. Children explore our outdoor classroom and the beautiful Ghost Town Trail while developing independence, confidence, and important social skills such as sharing, taking turns, kindness, and cooperation. Through stories, music, creative play, movement, early literacy, math, science, and nature exploration, learning becomes an exciting part of each day.

Red Roses Room: As children prepare for preschool, they continue discovering the wonders of the world around them. Whether exploring the Ghost Town Trail, searching for "trees of green and red roses too," or engaging in meaningful classroom experiences, every opportunity supports their growing independence. Through play-based learning, children strengthen early literacy, math, problem-solving, communication, and social-emotional skills while building a strong foundation for preschool success.

Bloom Room: Our Bloom Room is where curiosity truly blossoms. As children prepare for preschool and kindergarten, we proudly embrace a child-led, play-based approach rather than a traditional classroom setting. We believe children have plenty of time to sit at desks later in life. Right now, they learn best by exploring, creating, and discovering.

Children in the Bloom Room are encouraged to:

- Create, draw, build, and imagine.
- Dig, pour, wash, and experiment.
- Share ideas, solve problems, organize, and communicate.
- Run, climb, explore, and discover.
- Develop literacy, math, science, and critical thinking skills through meaningful, hands-on experiences.

Every experience is designed to nurture confident, capable learners who are prepared for kindergarten—and for a lifetime of learning.

Curriculum

Barrels of FUN offers a unique early learning experience inspired by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies while aligning with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards.

Our Barrels of Learning Through FUN curriculum encourages children to learn through play, exploration, creativity, and meaningful experiences. Teachers thoughtfully observe children's interests and provide engaging opportunities that promote growth in all developmental areas, including:

- Social and emotional development
- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Science and STEAM
- Creative arts
- Physical development
- Problem-solving and critical thinking

In addition, our Food-Based Learning program incorporates age-appropriate food experiences into the curriculum to encourage exploration, foster healthy eating habits, and support development across all learning domains. Through hands-on activities such as tasting, gardening, and sensory exploration, children build fine motor skills, strengthen language development, explore math and science concepts, and develop an appreciation for a variety of healthy foods. All food-based activities are carefully planned with consideration for allergies, dietary restrictions, and food safety practices.

To further support each child's growth, we conduct developmental screenings, ongoing assessments, and parent-teacher conferences throughout the year. These tools help us monitor progress, celebrate each child's unique strengths and accomplishments, and provide individualized support to help every child reach their fullest potential.

Developmental screenings, ongoing assessments, and parent-teacher conferences help ensure each child receives individualized support while celebrating their unique strengths and accomplishments.

Our Outdoor Classroom

At Barrels of FUN, learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. Our outdoor classroom serves as an extension of our indoor learning environment, providing children with daily opportunities to explore nature, engage in hands-on discovery, and build meaningful connections with the world around them.

Whenever weather permits, children enjoy outdoor experiences that may include:

- Nature walks
- Gardening
- Water and sensory play
- Science investigations
- Gross motor activities
- Outdoor art experiences
- Seasonal exploration

With parent permission, children may also participate in supervised learning adventures throughout the Ebensburg community, including visits to the Ghost Town Trail and other educational destinations.

We believe children learn best when they can move, explore, ask questions, solve problems, and experience the world firsthand. Our outdoor classroom encourages curiosity, independence, confidence, and a lifelong appreciation for nature and learning.

Enrollment, Tuition & Attendance

Financial Agreements

Each family is required to complete and sign a Financial Agreement upon enrollment. This agreement outlines your child's tuition rate, scheduled days of attendance, contracted drop-off and pick-up times, and payment responsibilities.

Financial Agreements are reviewed and updated twice each year (August and February) or whenever a change in enrollment, tuition, or schedule occurs. Families are responsible for notifying the administrative team of any changes that may affect their agreement.

Tuition Policies

Barrels of FUN is a tuition-based program, which means you are reserving a space for your child—not paying only for the days your child attends.

Tuition is due regardless of attendance, including absences due to illness, vacations, holidays, weather-related closures, or other personal reasons.

Because staffing is scheduled based on enrollment and Pennsylvania staff-to-child ratios, tuition cannot be reduced or prorated for missed days.

Payment Policies

Tuition is due according to the schedule outlined in your Financial Agreement. Families are responsible for ensuring payments are made on time. Accounts that become past due may be subject to late fees, suspension of care, or termination of services in accordance with the Financial Agreement.

A \$15 returned payment fee will be charged for any payment returned by the bank. Questions regarding billing or payments should be directed to the administrative team as soon as possible.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Barrels of FUN close promptly at 5:30 PM. Children who remain in care after 5:30 PM will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$5 per minute until they are picked up.

If a child has not been picked up by 5:45 PM, and we have not been able to reach a parent or authorized emergency contact, local law enforcement may be contacted to assist in locating a responsible adult, as required for the child's safety.

Schedule Changes

Staff schedules are planned based on each family's contracted attendance schedule and Pennsylvania's required staff-to-child ratios. Following your child's scheduled drop-off and pick-up times helps us ensure that classrooms are appropriately staffed throughout the day without inconveniencing other families.

If your child's regular drop-off time, pick-up time, or scheduled days will change, please notify the Director through BrightWheel as soon as possible. Whenever possible, schedule changes should be submitted by Thursday of the previous week, so we have adequate time to adjust staffing.

We understand that unexpected situations and emergencies happen. If you need to make a last-minute change, please notify us as soon as possible. We will do our best to accommodate your family's needs while continuing to meet Pennsylvania's required staff-to-child ratios and provide a safe, high-quality experience for all children in our care.

Withdrawal & Termination of Services

Family-Initiated Withdrawal: If you choose to withdraw your child from Barrels of FUN for any reason, a minimum of 30 days' written notice is required. Written notice must be submitted to the Director through the BrightWheel app. Once notice is received, a Change in Care Form will be provided for review and signature.

Because Barrels of FUN is a tuition-based program, tuition remains due throughout the entire 30-day notice period, regardless of attendance. Tuition is not prorated for partial months or for children who withdraw before the end of the notice period.

Termination of Services by Barrels of FUN: Our goal is to partner with every family to provide a positive, successful experience for each child. In most situations, concerns can be resolved through open communication and collaboration.

However, Barrels of FUN reserves the right to terminate childcare services when continued enrollment is no longer appropriate or when program policies are not followed. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to pay tuition or fees according to the Financial Agreement.
- Failure to maintain required health assessments, immunization records, or other required enrollment documentation.
- Failure to comply with the policies outlined in this Family Handbook.
- Repeated failure to follow contracted attendance schedules or center procedures.
- A child's needs exceeding the level of care the center can safely provide after reasonable efforts and support have been implemented.
- Situations involving serious safety concerns as outlined in the Behavior Guidance and Suspension & Expulsion Reduction Policy.

Whenever possible, families will receive advance notice and the opportunity to work with administration to resolve concerns before services are terminated. Immediate termination may occur when necessary to protect the health, safety, or well-being of children, families, or staff.

Daily Procedures & Communication

Arrival & Departure

To help your child have a successful day, please follow your contracted drop-off and pick-up schedule whenever possible. Parents or guardians must accompany their child into the building and to their classroom each day. Upon arrival, please take a moment to share any important information with your child's teacher that may help us provide the best care throughout the day.

At dismissal, children will only be released to a parent, guardian, or an individual authorized on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

If you are bringing medication, diaper cream, sunscreen, bug spray, or any item requiring secure storage, it must be handed directly to a teacher upon arrival. These items cannot be left in your child's belongings and must be stored immediately in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations.

Authorized Pick-Up

The safety of every child is our highest priority. Children will only be released to individuals listed as authorized pick-up contacts on the child's Emergency Contact Form.

If someone not listed on your child's emergency contacts needs to pick up your child, you must notify the Director through BrightWheel or speak directly with a member of the team before arrival. Please provide the individual's full name, address and phone number.

Photo identification is required before a child is released to an unfamiliar authorized adult. Children will not be released to anyone under 18 years of age.

Please notify administration immediately whenever your emergency contacts, phone numbers, or authorized pick-up information changes.

Sign In & Sign Out

Pennsylvania licensing regulations require every child to be signed in and out each day. Parents or guardians must sign their child in and out using the tablet in the center or personal cell phone via BrightWheel.

If a child is not properly signed in or out, a member of our staff will contact the family to correct the attendance record. Accurate attendance records are required for your child's safety and are mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Family Partnership

At Barrels of FUN, we believe children thrive when families and educators work together. We value open communication, mutual respect, and strong partnerships with every family we serve.

As members of our childcare community, we ask that all families treat our staff, children, other families, and our facility with kindness, courtesy, and respect.

Your ideas, suggestions, and feedback are important to us. We welcome input regarding our program, curriculum, communication, transitions, and daily operations as we continually strive to provide the highest quality care and education.

Families are encouraged to participate in parent-teacher conferences, classroom activities, and special events throughout the year. We also invite families to share their talents, careers, hobbies, or special experiences with our children whenever opportunities arise.

To ensure the health and safety of everyone in our program, pets are not permitted inside the center unless prior approval has been granted by the Director.

Communication & BrightWheel

Strong communication is an important part of the partnership between families and Barrels of FUN.

BrightWheel is our primary method of communication and is used to:

- Send daily reports, including meals, diapering or toileting, naps, and activities.
- Share photos and updates from your child's day.
- Communicate with teachers and administration.
- Report absences, late arrivals, or schedule changes.
- Send newsletters, reminders, announcements, billing notices, and important center information.
- Complete and sign required forms electronically.

Families are always welcome to call the center during business hours to check on their child or discuss urgent matters. For emergencies, please call the center or send a BrightWheel message.

While our teachers strive to respond to messages promptly, their first responsibility is providing attentive care and engaging with the children. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Parent Access

Parents and legal guardians have the right to access their child at any time while the center is in operation unless a court order limiting access is on file with the center.

To help maintain a positive learning environment for all children, we ask that visits be respected of classroom routines and kept as brief as possible unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

Individuals who wish to volunteer in classrooms or remain in the center for more than an occasional visit may be required to complete all Pennsylvania Department of Human Services volunteer requirements before participating.

Health & Safety

The health, safety, and well-being of every child in our care are our highest priorities. At Barrels of FUN, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment by following the regulations established by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the nationally recognized *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards*.

Caring for Our Children provides evidence-based health and safety recommendations that represent best practices in early childhood care and education. These standards help guide our policies, procedures, care plans, and daily practices to ensure we are providing high-quality care for all children, including those with special health care needs such as asthma, medical conditions, food allergies, and medication administration needs.

By following these trusted standards and guidance, Barrels of FUN strives to create an environment where children feel safe, supported, and cared for while they learn, explore, and grow.

Child Health Reports

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Regulations requires every enrolled child to have a current Child Health Report on file.

- An age-appropriate Health Report must be submitted within 60 days of enrollment.
- Children under 24 months of age must have updated Health Report completed every February and August.
- Children 25 months of age and older must submit an updated Health Report each August.

Failure to provide the required Health Assessment may result in a delay or suspension of care until the required documentation is received.

Immunizations

Current immunization records are required for all enrolled children in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Health requirements and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

Child Health Reports and Immunization records must be filled out in entirety and be signed and dated by the child's healthcare provider.

Families are responsible for keeping all health and immunization records current throughout their child's enrollment.

Daily Health Checks

To help prevent the spread of illness, every child receives a brief health screening upon arrival each day. Staff observe children for signs of illness or injury, including but not limited to:

- Fever
- Cough, congestion, or difficulty breathing
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Rashes or unusual skin conditions
- Eye drainage or redness
- Changes in behavior or activity level
- Injuries or unexplained marks

If a child appears too ill to participate safely in daily activities, they may not be admitted for the day.

Illness Policy

To help keep our children, families, and staff healthy, please keep your child home if they are ill.

Barrels of FUN is not equipped to provide one-on-one care for sick children while maintaining Pennsylvania's required staff-to-child ratios.

If your child becomes ill while attending the program, every effort will be made to keep them comfortable while a parent or authorized emergency contact is notified for prompt pick-up.

Children who develop symptoms of illness while in our care may be required to go home before the end of the day. For example, if a child develops two (2) or more symptoms of illness, we may require that they be picked up. Depending on the child's symptoms, severity of illness, and overall condition, we may also require that the child be evaluated by a healthcare provider and provide documentation indicating they are able to return to care before being readmitted to the center.

This policy is intended to protect the health and well-being of all children and staff, minimize the spread of illness, and ensure that children who are ill receive appropriate care and treatment.

Please notify the center if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, including but not limited to:

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox
- Measles
- Mumps
- Meningitis
- Pneumonia
- Strep throat
- Scabies
- Hand, Foot and Mouth

Children should remain home if they have symptoms including:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Undiagnosed rash
- Severe sore throat
- Ear pain is accompanied by other symptoms

Children may return when symptoms have resolved, they have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and when applicable, a healthcare provider has approved their return to childcare.

If a child has diarrhea related to medication, teething, or another diagnosed medical condition, written documentation from the child's healthcare provider may be required for continued attendance.

If head lice, bed bugs, or fleas are suspected, families will be notified immediately. Children must be picked up as soon as possible and may return once they are free of all evidence of infestation.

Infectious Disease Procedures

Barrels of FUN will continue to follow the most current guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regarding COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

Families should notify the Director as soon as possible if their child has been diagnosed with or exposed to a reportable communicable illness. The center will communicate any necessary guidance or recommendations while maintaining the confidentiality of all children and families.

Medication Administration

Medication will only be administered when all Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requirements have been met.

Prescription medications must:

- Be in the original labeled container.
- Include the child's name.
- Include the prescribing healthcare provider's instructions.
- Be accompanied by a completed Medication Log signed by the parent or guardian.

Approved over-the-counter medications, including children's Tylenol, children's Motrin, and Baby Vicks, may be administered with completed medication log signed by the parent or guardian and in accordance with program policies.

Medication logs remain valid only for the prescribed treatment period and do not transfer between classrooms. Expired or unused medications must be taken home by the family.

Safe Sleep Practices

Barrels of FUN follows the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services safe sleep recommendations.

For infants:

- Infants always sleep on their backs unless otherwise directed by a physician.
- Blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, and loose bedding are not permitted in cribs or pack-and-plays.
- Full-zip sleep sacks are recommended.
- Each full-time infant is assigned their own crib or pack-and-play.
- Part-time infants may share a pack-and-play with another child attending on alternate schedules; bedding is never shared.

Children transitioning to cots may use a blanket and a comfort item during rest time. Families are encouraged to provide age-appropriate nap mats, blankets, and pillows for children over 13 months of age. All sleep items are sent home monthly for laundering or more frequently upon request.

Emergency Procedures

The safety of every child is our highest priority. Barrels of FUN maintains written emergency preparedness plans in accordance with Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services requirements.

If an emergency evacuation becomes necessary, children will relocate to our designated emergency evacuation site. Families will be notified immediately with instructions regarding reunification and emergency pick-up procedures.

Children will only be released to authorized individuals, and all children must be signed out before leaving the emergency location.

Fire Drills & Emergency Drills

Fire drills and emergency evacuation drills are conducted every 30 days in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations.

These drills help children and staff practice emergency procedures and ensure everyone is prepared in the event of an actual emergency.

Weather Closures

Barrels of FUN remain open during most weather conditions whenever it is safe to do so. To help minimize disruptions, our facility is equipped with a backup generator that provides power during most electrical outages, allowing us to continue operating safely when conditions permit.

The Director monitors weather forecasts, road conditions, utility conditions, and local emergency recommendations when determining whether to delay opening, close early, or cancel care.

If the center closes early or is unable to open due to severe weather or another emergency, families will be notified through BrightWheel or by phone as soon as possible.

If an early closure is necessary, families are expected to arrange for prompt pick-up so that children, families, and staff can travel home safely.

Because tuition reserves your child's space, regular tuition rates remain in effect during weather-related closures.

Daily Life of Barrels of FUN

Staff-to-Child Ratios

The safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. Barrels of FUN follows the staff-to-child ratios always established by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).

Required Staff-to-Child Ratios

Age Group	Staff-to-Child Ratio
Infants (Birth–12 months)	1:4
Young Toddlers (13–24 months)	1:5
Older Toddlers (25–36 months)	1:6
Preschool (37 months–Kindergarten)	1:10

When children of different ages are grouped together, staffing ratios are based on the age of the youngest child in the classroom.

Naptime Ratios

Age Group	Staff-to-Child Ratio
Infants (Birth–12 months)	1:4
Young Toddlers (13–24 months)	1:10
Older Toddlers (25–36 months)	1:12
Preschool (37 months–Kindergarten)	1:20

Our staffing schedules are carefully planned based on children's contracted attendance schedules, scheduled vacations and Pennsylvania licensing requirements.

CLASSROOM TRANSITION

We believe in the practice of continuity of care in which we strive to keep the same teachers with their age group and limit transitions throughout the fiscal school year. Research shows that best practice is to limit staff changes and transitions to allow bonds to form and limits disruptions in the child's time here at Barrels of FUN.

Prior to enrollment, we invite families to schedule a tour of the center. We provide an overview of our facilities, curriculum and daily routines. On the tour, Parents/Guardians will get a chance to meet our teachers, and we insist your child/s comes along as well; to help foster relationships and it helps everyone feel more comfortable.

Every child develops at their own pace. Classroom transitions are based on a combination of age, developmental readiness, classroom availability, and state licensing requirements. We will slowly introduce the child to their next room by allowing them to explore the new room, children, and staff when ratio permits in that room. Our goal is to make each transition a positive and comfortable experience for both children and families, and we welcome any questions during this process.

Another common transition children face will be the move to kindergarten. We work with families and the school districts to make the transition process smooth. In the child's last year in a preschool setting, we will work on skills necessary for success in kindergarten such as turn taking, self-help skills, letter and number recognition, and cooperation. We will also offer parents information on how to register their child for kindergarten!

Clothing & Personal Belongings

Children learn best through hands-on exploration, which means they will likely get messy! Please send your child in comfortable clothing that can get dirty from paint, water play, outdoor exploration, sensory activities, and creative experiences.

We recommend always keeping at least two complete changes of clothing at the center. Children are encouraged to express their individuality. Whether they choose mismatched patterns, their favorite superhero shirt, or a holiday outfit in the middle of spring, we celebrate their creativity and independence. Please simply ensure they are dressed appropriately for the weather.

As children grow, they are encouraged to practice putting on and taking off their own shoes to build independence and self-help skills.

Please label all clothing, jackets, shoes, blankets, and personal belongings with your child's name. While we make every effort to keep belongings organized, Barrels of FUN is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor learning is an important part of every child's day at Barrels of FUN. Weather permitting, children spend time outdoors exploring, playing, and learning in our Outdoor Classroom. Barrels of FUN promotes active play every day using Go NAPSACC best practices and Pennsylvania Childcare Regulations.

Children generally play outside when:

- The temperature or wind chill is above 25°F
- The heat index is below 90°F
- There is no active precipitation
- Air quality conditions are considered safe

Because we spend time outdoors throughout the year, please send weather-appropriate clothing, including:

- Rain boots and raincoat
- Snow pants and snow boots
- Hats and gloves
- Warm coats
- Extra socks and clothing as needed

Families are encouraged to leave seasonal outdoor gear at the center whenever possible. Please provide

sunscreen, insect repellent, or other approved outdoor products if you would like them to be applied to your child. All products must be in their original container and accompanied by the required authorization forms.

If obtaining seasonal outdoor clothing creates a hardship, please contact the Director. We are happy to help connect families with available community resources.

Nutrition

Barrels of FUN encourages healthy eating habits and family participation in meal planning by following Go NAPSACC recommendations and Pennsylvania Childcare Regulations.

Families are responsible for providing:

- Breakfast (optional if your child eats after arriving)
- Lunch
- Healthy snack options

Refrigerators are available for storing perishable foods, and microwaves may be used to warm fully cooked meals. Raw or uncooked meat is not permitted, and Styrofoam containers should not be used in the microwave.

If a child in the classroom has a documented food allergy, families will be notified if certain foods must be avoided to protect the health and safety of all children.

Children are never forced to eat, and food is never withheld as punishment.

Infant Nutrition: Families of infants are responsible for providing bottles, formula, breast milk, baby food, or other nutritional items.

Parents should provide written feeding instructions and update them whenever their child's feeding schedule changes. For safety reasons, bottles are never warmed in a microwave.

Diapering & Toilet Learning

Families are responsible for providing diapers, wipes, diaper cream, and any other diapering supplies their child requires. If supplies run low, reminders will be sent through BrightWheel. If supplies are not replenished, a \$10 per day supply fee may be charged until the necessary items are provided.

United Way Diaper Bank: Barrels of FUN proudly participates in the United Way Diaper Bank Program.

All diapered and potty-training children are automatically enrolled while the program is available. Each participating child receives one package of diapers each month at no cost to the family, regardless of household income. Families who prefer not to participate may opt out at any time by notifying administration through BrightWheel.

Toilet Learning: Toilet learning is a developmental milestone that occurs at different times for every child. Most children begin showing readiness between the ages of two and four, but there is no "right" age.

To support a successful experience, we ask families and teachers to work together before beginning toilet learning at the center. Consistency between home and school helps children gain confidence and

independence.

Our teachers encourage and support children throughout the process using positive reinforcement and developmentally appropriate practices. Children are never punished or embarrassed for toileting accidents.

Toys from Home

Barrels of FUN provides a wide variety of age-appropriate toys, learning materials, and classroom resources that are cleaned and sanitized regularly.

To help prevent lost or damaged items and reduce conflicts between children, we ask that toys remain at home unless requested by your child's teacher for a special classroom activity or sharing opportunity.

Children may not bring toy weapons, including toy guns, swords, bows and arrows, or similar items, to the center.

Infant Comfort Items: We understand many families would like infants to have familiar teething toys or comfort items. These items are welcome; however, please understand that personal belongings may occasionally become misplaced despite our best efforts.

Any personal infant equipment brought into the center may be used by other infants if appropriate and will always be cleaned and sanitized between uses.

Learning & Development

Our Curriculum

At Barrels of FUN Exploration Center, we believe every child is naturally curious and capable of learning through meaningful experiences. Our unique Barrels of Learning Through FUN curriculum is inspired by the Reggio Emilia and Montessori approaches and is designed to encourage children to explore, discover, create, and develop a lifelong love of learning.

Unlike traditional classroom models, our child-led approach allows children's interests and curiosity to guide daily learning experiences. Teachers thoughtfully observe, encourage, and extend each child's learning by providing engaging opportunities that promote growth in every area of development.

Our curriculum aligns with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards while providing hands-on, play-based experiences that support each child's individual needs and developmental goals.

Learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. Children regularly explore our Outdoor Classroom and, with written parent permission, may participate in supervised learning experiences throughout the Ebensburg community, including visits to the Ghost Town Trail, Lake Rowena and other educational destinations. Through exploration, creativity, problem-solving, and meaningful relationships, children develop the confidence and skills needed for success in school and throughout life.

Developmental Screenings & Assessments

Barrels of FUN uses developmentally appropriate screening and assessment tools to better understand each

child's strengths, monitor progress, and identify opportunities for growth.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ): Within 45 days of enrollment, Barrels of FUN teachers will complete an Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ) developmental screening for your child. The results will be shared with your family, and you will be offered a parent-teacher conference to review your child's progress, discuss strengths, and establish individualized goals for learning and development.

The ASQ is a research-based developmental screening tool that helps us:

- Understand your child's current stage of development.
- Recognize individual strengths and areas for growth.
- Establish meaningful, individualized learning goals.
- Determine whether additional evaluation or support may be beneficial.

The ASQ is a screening tool and is not intended to diagnose developmental delays or disabilities. If the screening indicates that your child may benefit from additional evaluation or support, we will discuss the results with your family and, when appropriate, provide information about community resources and Early Intervention services. Our goal is to partner with families to ensure every child has the support they need to thrive.

Ongoing Assessment: Teachers use Teaching Strategies to observe, document, and monitor each child's development throughout the year.

This assessment system measures progress across all areas of development and helps teachers individualize learning experiences while ensuring children continue to grow at their own pace.

Teaching Strategies Checkpoints are completed four times each year, and families receive updates regarding their child's progress.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Barrels of FUN believe that families are essential partners in every child's education. Parent-teacher conferences are offered four times each year following each Teaching Strategies Checkpoint to review your child's growth, celebrate accomplishments, discuss goals, and answer any questions you may have.

Families are also welcome to request a conference with their child's teacher or the Director at any time during the year. Open communication and collaboration help us provide the best possible experience for every child.

Preparing for Kindergarten, and Beyond

Kindergarten readiness begins long before children learn to write their names or recognize letters and numbers. At Barrels of FUN, we prepare children for kindergarten by fostering curiosity, independence, confidence, creativity, problem-solving, communication, and social-emotional development through meaningful play and exploration.

Our curriculum intentionally builds the foundational skills children need for future success, including:

- Early literacy and language development
- Mathematical thinking
- Scientific inquiry
- Fine and gross motor development
- Social-emotional learning

- Executive functioning and problem-solving
- Independence and self-help skills

Our goal isn't simply to prepare children for kindergarten. We strive to nurture confidence, compassionate, curious, and capable learners who are prepared for success in school, in their community, and throughout life.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) & INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFPS) SUPPORT

To ensure that all children, particularly those with special needs, receive individualized instruction that meets their unique needs through the collaborative efforts of families, educators, and specialists.

Policy Overview:

1. **Permission to Obtain IEP/IFSP:** Families will be asked for written consent to obtain their child's IEP or IFSP. This consent will be discussed in a supportive and transparent manner, ensuring families understand the importance of sharing this information for the child's development and educational success.
2. **Utilization of IEP/IFSP:** Our program will use the information from the IEP/IFSP to tailor instructional strategies, classroom activities, and assessments to meet each child's specific needs. We will regularly review these plans and make necessary adjustments to ensure that goals are met effectively.
3. **Participation in Meetings:** It is strongly recommended that the child's teacher and the program director participate in IEP/IFSP meetings. These meetings will include family members, early childhood educators, Early Intervention (EI) specialists, and other relevant professionals. Our program will actively facilitate these meetings to ensure all voices are heard and to create a collaborative environment.

Discussion with Families:

1. **Initial Conversations:** During enrollment and orientation, we will provide families with information about our approach to IEPs and IFSPs, emphasizing our commitment to inclusion and individualized support.
2. **Ongoing Communication:** Updates will be given in the same way as all other kiddos receive updates. Parents may request a conference at any time. Teachers may recommend a conference at any time to discuss any changes that may need adjusted to the IEP/IFSP. We encourage an open dialogue to foster trust and collaboration.

Staff Inclusion:

1. **Training and Awareness:** Staff will receive training from the director on understanding IEPs and IFSPs, including their roles in the implementation process. This training will be ongoing to keep staff updated on best practices.
2. **Meeting Participation:** Staff will be encouraged to attend IEP/IFSP meetings relevant to the children in their classrooms. We will ensure that schedules allow for participation and that staff feel confident contributing to discussions.

Implementation in the Classroom:

1. **Individualized Instruction:** Teachers will utilize information from the IEP/IFSP to develop personalized learning plans, adapting activities, materials, and assessment strategies to align with each child's goals.
2. **Collaboration with Specialists:** We will establish regular communication with the specialists and other professionals involved in the child's care. This will ensure that everyone is aligned and can provide a cohesive support system.
3. **Monitoring Progress:** We will track each child's progress toward IEP/IFSP goals through regular assessments and observations, adjusting instructional strategies as needed.

Our program is committed to creating an inclusive environment where every child can thrive. By actively involving families, educators, and specialists in the IEP/IFSP process, we aim to provide tailored support that empowers children with special needs to succeed.

Behavior Guidance

Positive Behavior Support

At Barrels of FUN Exploration Center, we believe every child can learn appropriate social and emotional skills with guidance, patience, and positive relationships.

Our approach to behavior guidance is rooted in the Reggio Emilia and Montessori philosophies, recognizing that behavior is a form of communication. Rather than focusing on punishment, we work to understand the reason behind a child's behavior while teaching appropriate ways to express emotions, solve problems, and build positive relationships.

Teachers use developmentally appropriate, research-based strategies to support children, including:

- Building positive relationships and trust.
- Creating predictable daily routines.
- Redirecting children to appropriate activities.
- Teaching problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Encouraging communication and emotional regulation.
- Modeling respectful behavior.
- Providing positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- Helping children understand natural and logical consequences.

Physical punishment, humiliation, ridicule, withholding food, or any other form of inappropriate discipline is never permitted.

When behavioral concerns arise, teachers will communicate openly with families so we can work together to develop consistent strategies that support the child's success both at home and at school.

Learning Adventures & Safety

At Barrels of FUN, learning extends beyond the classroom through outdoor exploration. Because many of these activities occur outside our fenced-in play area, children's safety is always our highest priority.

All children participate in outdoor learning experiences within our fenced Outdoor Classroom. As children demonstrate readiness, they may participate in supervised community learning adventures based on their

individual ability to safely:

- Follow directions.
- Stay with their group.
- Demonstrate safe behavior toward themselves and others.
- Stay with staff during walks and outings.

A child may temporarily remain at Barrels of FUN for certain outings while these skills continue to develop. This decision is never intended as a punishment, but rather to ensure the safety of every child while allowing teachers to continue building the skills needed for future participation.

Suspension & Expulsion Reduction Policy

Barrels of FUN is committed to keeping children successfully enrolled whenever possible. We recognize that suspension and expulsion can negatively impact a child's development and a family's access to quality childcare. For this reason, suspension or expulsion is considered only after every reasonable effort has been made to support the child and family.

When ongoing behavioral concerns arise, Barrels of FUN will partner with families through the following process:

1. **Observation and Documentation:** Teachers will observe and document behaviors to better understand what occurred before, during, and after the behavior, identify possible triggers, and determine effective support strategies.
2. **Family Communication:** Families will be informed of concerns in a timely manner and receive updates regarding strategies being implemented in the classroom.
3. **Individualized Support Plan:** Teachers and administration will develop individualized strategies to help the child build the skills needed for success.
4. **Staff Training and Coaching:** Teachers may receive additional professional development, coaching, or classroom support specific to the child's needs.
5. **Family Conference:** A conference will be scheduled with the family, classroom teachers, and administration to review progress, discuss concerns, and develop a collaborative action plan.
6. **Outside Support Services:** When appropriate and with family involvement, Barrels of FUN may recommend or seek assistance from community resources, including but not limited to:
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Keystone STARS Quality Coach
 - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) through the PD Registry
 - Early Learning Resource Center – Rapid Response Team
 - Local Intervention Unit: 1-800-CONNECT
 - Pennsylvania Department of Human Services consultation resources:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/PAExpulsionHelp

Suspension or Expulsion: Throughout this process, our goal is to provide the support necessary for every child to succeed within our program.

While our goal is always to work collaboratively with families to support every child, there may be rare situations in which continued enrollment is no longer appropriate.

Suspension or expulsion will only be considered after reasonable efforts have been made to support the child and family, unless immediate action is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child, other children, or staff.

Examples of situations that may result in immediate suspension or termination include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior that poses a serious or ongoing safety risk to the child, other children, or staff.
- Repeated aggressive behavior that does not improve despite documented interventions and support.
- A child's needs exceed the level of care that Barrels of FUN can safely provide.
- Failure of the family to partner with the center in implementing agreed-upon support strategies.
- Any circumstance in which the Director determines that continued enrollment would compromise the health, safety, or well-being of others.

Whenever possible, Barrels of FUN will work with families to identify appropriate community resources and alternative placement options to support a successful transition.

Family Responsibilities & Program Policies

Communication

A strong partnership between families and Barrels of FUN is essential to each child's success. Families are responsible for communicating any changes that may affect their child's care, including:

- Changes to attendance or schedules.
- Changes to emergency contacts or authorized pick-up individuals.
- Updated phone numbers, addresses, or email addresses.
- Changes in medical conditions, allergies, medications, or healthcare providers.
- Changes in custody arrangements or court orders.

Prompt communication helps us provide the safest and highest quality care for every child.

Respectful Conduct

Barrels of FUN is committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for children, families, staff, and visitors.

We ask that all interactions between families, staff, and other visitors remain courteous and respectful. Disruptive, threatening, discriminatory, abusive, or inappropriate behavior toward children, staff, or other families will not be tolerated.

If concerns arise, we encourage families to discuss them directly with the Director or a member of the administrative team so they can be addressed promptly and professionally.

Keeping Records Current

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations require the center to maintain accurate and current records for every enrolled child.

Families are responsible for ensuring all required documentation remains current throughout enrollment, including but not limited to:

- Emergency contact information.
- Authorized pick-up information.
- Child Health Reports.

- Immunization records.
- Financial Agreements.
- Enrollment forms and permissions.

Some required forms must be reviewed and updated periodically throughout the year. Families will receive reminders whenever updated documentation is needed.

Failure to provide required documentation by the requested deadline may result in delayed or suspended care until all required records have been received.

Mandated Reporting

Under the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law and Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations, all Barrels of FUN employees are Mandated Reporters.

If a staff member has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, they are legally required to immediately report the suspected abuse to Pennsylvania ChildLine or the appropriate authorities.

These reports are made in accordance with state law and are intended to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children.

Incident Reports

The safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. If your child experiences an injury, accident, or other significant incident while in our care, families will be notified as soon as possible.

Depending on the nature of the incident, notification may include:

- Immediate verbal or telephone communication for urgent situations.
- A BrightWheel message or Incident Activity notification.
- A written Incident Report requiring a parent or guardian's signature.

Incident reports include a description of what occurred, the care provided, and any follow-up recommendations. When appropriate, photographs may be included to help explain the incident.

All incidents are documented promptly and confidentially. Information regarding other children or staff members involved in an incident cannot be shared to protect the privacy of everyone in our program. Families are encouraged to ask questions regarding any incident involving their child. Our goal is to maintain open communication while ensuring every child's safety and well-being.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

At Barrels of FUN, we believe that inclusion is fundamental to the development of all children. Our program provides an environment where children of all abilities, cultures, and language background can learn, grow, and thrive together. We recognize that every child has unique strengths and needs, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive atmosphere that promotes meaningful participation for everyone.

Access to Enrollment:

1. **Equitable Enrollment Practices:** We strive to make reasonable efforts to enroll all children, including those with special needs. Our enrollment process is designed to be transparent and accessible, ensuring that families are aware of our commitment to inclusion.
2. **Accessibility of Facilities:** All children will have access to learning centers, materials, and activities regardless of their abilities. Our facility is designed to accommodate diverse needs, and we continuously assess and improve accessibility.

Participation in Activities:

1. **Adapting the Environment:** We will adapt our physical and learning environment to ensure that all children can participate fully. This may include modifying materials, adjusting activities, and providing additional support when necessary.
2. **Individualized Support:** Each child's individual needs will be met through personalized plans developed in collaboration with families and, if needed, external professionals. This ensures that every child can engage meaningfully in our program.

Support for Families and Staff:

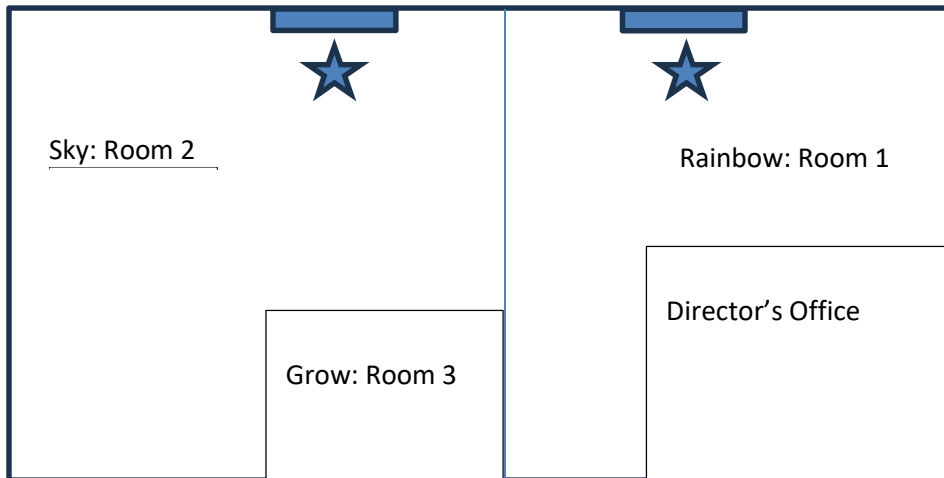
1. **Collaboration with Families:** We encourage families to be actively involved in decision-making regarding their child's participation and needs. Regular communication and family meetings will be held to discuss progress and any necessary adjustments.
2. **Partnerships with Agencies:** We will establish partnerships with local agencies and specialists to provide additional resources and support for children with special needs. This collaboration will enhance our capacity to meet diverse needs.
3. **Staff Development:** Professional development opportunities will be provided to staff, focusing on inclusion strategies, family perspectives, and best practices for supporting children with disabilities. Ongoing training will ensure our staff feels confident and prepared.

Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the DHS Bureau of Equal Opportunity (BEO), and/or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC).

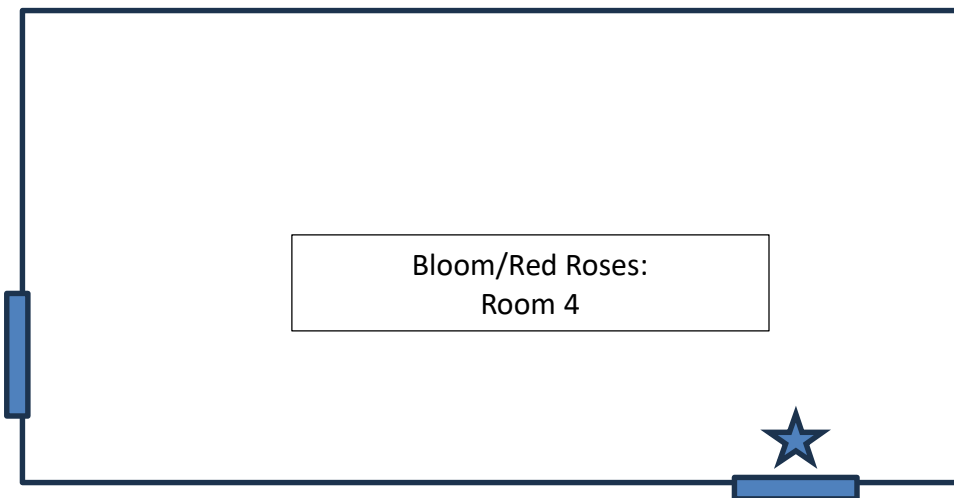
PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF PROCEDURE

Upper Level: Reddinger St.

Parking Lot in front of center:
Enter gate and proceed to your child's room with



Lower Level:



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Parents Park along retaining wall:
Enter front door on the right with
Staff park along the back of the
lot on the grass line

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STATE REGULATION: Cars must be turned OFF when you exit the car if no other adults are in the car. Children under the age of 15 are NOT ALLOWED to remain in the car during drop off and/or pick up *if* there is no other adult present in the car.

FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and reviewed the Barrels of FUN Exploration Center Family Handbook. I understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook and agree to comply with them throughout my child's enrollment.

I understand that the Family Handbook may be updated periodically to reflect changes in program operations, licensing regulations, or center policies. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to review any updates provided by Barrels of FUN Exploration Center and to comply with all revised policies and procedures.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the contents of the handbook and understand that my signature indicates my acceptance of the policies contained therein.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____