

2024-2025

Parent Handbook Lil' PAWS Preschool

BEAR VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Lil' PAWS Preschool Administrator 310-4122 Executive Director 310-4122

15001 Mountain Air Drive, Anchorage, AK 99516

website: www.alaskabvca.org

Tax ID #86 -1112914

Lil' PAWS Preschool 2024 – 2025 PARENT HANDBOOK

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Bear Valley Community Association Lil' PAWS Preschool

Bear Valley Community Association is a self-supporting, non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. For the 2024-25 school year we will operate the Lil' PAWS Preschool (PAWS) program starting the week of September 1st, 2024 and ending the week of May 9th, 2025. We will operate two sessions; session A and Session B. Session A will be held on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9 am – 12 pm. Session B will be held on Wednesday and Friday from 9 am – 12 pm. Sessions A and B will not meet over winter break or spring break. We are a licensed facility and can see up to 20 children ages 4 to 5 Children must have turned 4 on or before September 1^{st,} 2024, in order to attend (matches ASD policy for Kindergarten cut off). You must be enrolled in the PAWS program before attending. It is also a requirement for your kiddo to be able to go to the bathroom with no assistance for them to attend. The Municipality of Anchorage-Child Care Licensing licenses this program. BVCA has general liability insurance in accordance with MOA licensing regulations. Our program has been planned to meet or exceed Anchorage Municipal and State of Alaska Licensing standards.

Our Philosophy

(Contributions by management, staff, children, families and school community)

Children: We recognize that children learn best when following their own interests, making their own choices, having hands-on experiences, and interacting with others. Personal growth in children is encouraged by offering opportunities for them to develop and practice the core strengths of being a friend, thinking before acting, joining in, thinking of others, accepting differences, and respecting themselves and others.

Families: We encourage families to have active participation in the development and delivery of the service. We do our best to accommodate individual family needs.

Children's Program: Staff understand that children learn in many ways, enjoy varied experiences and benefit from time for exploration. For instance, at Preschool children may paint, read, cook, weave, dance, experiment with materials, write stories, play games, and build forts with blocks, building sets or pillows.

Management: Our management is responsible to reflect our philosophy by creating a safe and healthy environment that is enjoyable and engaging for children and responsive to family needs.

Staff: Our staff members are committed to making everyday practice a reflection of the philosophy, policies, shared goals and procedures.

Community: We see our school community as within a greater community and seek opportunities for connection and service.

Social Issues: Children learn by observing the differences and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken messages about those differences. We promote inclusion and the feeling of belonging in the program without regard to physical or mental abilities, gender, family, social or cultural background.

Organization and Staffing

The Bear Valley Community Association Board of Directors administers Bear Valley Community Association PAWS. Program operation and quality is the responsibility of the Childcare Administrator who works half time hands-on with children and staff, and half time in the office managing operations. The Assistant Administrator has a key role in guiding and maintaining program quality, meets the Administrator qualifications (per MOA licensing code) and is designated in charge when the Administrator is off site or not in the office. The Lead Child Care Associate, or Program Coordinator, works directly in the program and is designated in charge when the Administrator and Assistant Administrator are off site or not in the office.

Our staff ratio is one staff person per ten children. Each classroom will consist of one Lead Staff and one Aide. Substitute staff that meet the required qualifications are called when regular staff are not able to attend. Volunteers are encouraged to participate but are not counted in the staff ratio. All volunteers must meet required qualifications per MOA licensing. Our goal is to provide a successful and stable service for the Bear Valley community.

We recruit staff members with attributes, experience and education that complement our team. Likely people are those with backgrounds in recreation, child care/education, physical education, art and music. New staff members undergo a 4-hour orientation and are guided by established staff members. Staff members also take a 6-hour Health and Safety Orientation as well as a Mandated Reporter Orientation, per MOA licensing requirements. Staff meetings and 24 hours of annual training enable all staff to meet mandatory training requirements (per MOA licensing code plus our own standards) and enhance their professional development. Training includes CPR and First Aid, Kitchen/Food Handling and Nutrition, plus child development and appropriate activities, etc. If you would like to see a complete list of mandatory training, just ask the Administrator for a copy.

Please feel free to discuss your needs and to make suggestions. We encourage families and staff members to share their thoughts. If you find a situation arises that needs resolution, please bring it to the Administrator right away. If the situation is not corrected, please contact the Executive Director of Bear Valley Community Association at 907-310-4122. If it is still not resolved, contact the Bear Valley Community Association Board of Directors in writing.

Sign In-Out Procedures:

Drop off: Please escort children into the building and sign them in at the front office. Drop off will start at 8:45 am. It is our policy that an adult brings the child(ren) into the building.

► Pick Up:

Pick up will begin at 12 pm and end at 12:15 pm. You will need to sign your kiddo out at the front office. Upon leaving the program children must be signed out by a family member (must be at least 16 years old) or others designated on the Emergency Child Record/Card. *Non-family members must be at least 18 years of age.* For your protection, staff will check identification of unfamiliar persons who may be picking up your child.

Please inform those people who are picking up your child to expect to show identification. If you wish to have someone pick up your child who is not on your emergency card, we must receive that information in writing; you can email us at sacc@alaskabvca.org. It is important to update the Emergency Child Record Card when you have any changes in your personal information. Licensing requires us to have you update your child's Emergency Card at least two times throughout the year.

Absences:

We accommodate families with many schedules, variances, and special conditions. It is imperative you let us know if your child will be absent on a day she/he is expected.

If your child will not be attending when they are scheduled to be here, we must have notice from you. You may email us at sacc@alaskabvca.org, or call or text the BVCA cell phone at 907-310-4122.

Photo Permission:

At enrollment you have the choice to authorize permission for photos to be taken of your children while at PAWS. The purpose of photos is to share visuals of children's projects for newsletters, display, training purposes, and on our website.

Program Planning, Play & Development

Our philosophy guides the planning of the program. Our goal is to create a comfortable and interesting environment that is safe and healthy for children. We aim to create a learning environment that includes diverse family and cultural traditions that challenge biases based on race, creed, gender, national origin, age, religion, physical or mental abilities, family, social or cultural background.

We plan ahead, but also observe and respond to children's interests. To be responsive to the specific needs, interests and abilities of children requires flexibility and adaptability, often at short notice. The general flow provided below is a typical day at PAWS.

Daily Schedule Outline:

8:45 am to 9 am: Kids will show up and get signed in at the front office.

9 am to 9:15 am: Get settled in the classroom and wash hands.

9:15 am to 9:35 am: Circle time/daily run down.

9:35 am to 10:05 am: Structured play time/Centers.

10:05 am to 10:10 am: Transition

10:10 am to 10:40 am: Planned Activity.

10:40 am to 10:50 am: Transition to snack.

10:50 am to 11:15 am: Snack/Story Time.

11:15 am to 11:25 am: Transition to Outside.

11:25 am to 11:45 am: Outside.

11:45 am to 12 pm: Transition from outside to pick-up.

12pm to 12:15 pm: Pick-up at the front office.

Belongings Brought from Home:

Our guidance rules ask that children are careful with other's belongings. Children may bring belongings from home on special show and tell days. We will notify you when these days are coming up.

Only bring a toy if there is no great consequence if it is lost or broken. We appreciate children wanting to bring a special item, but cannot guarantee it will return home intact. Please keep this in mind when allowing your child to bring items from home.

PAWS is closed when ASD is closed for weather days. You will be notified through the ProCare app of any cancelations.

Food Allergies:

We have a number of children who attend program who have life-threatening allergies to several foods. In order to provide a healthy environment for your children, we ask medical health questions at enrollment. At program we act to eliminate foods that cause allergic reactions.

Foods from Home:

On the occasions that you may be asked to send food from home, please send nutritious foods. Please avoid high sugar products and "junk" foods, and remember – peanut/tree nut free.

Health

Staff members are trained in, and follow procedures on awareness of symptoms of disease, CPR & First Aid, and universal precautions in the prevention of contagious and infectious diseases. Staff members are encouraged to be in good health and are required to have a medical self-report on file.

Peanut-Free Zone:

Because children with lifethreatening allergies to peanuts and tree nuts are enrolled, we have declared program a peanut-free zone. We do not provide or allow peanut and tree nut products to be brought from home. Please keep this in mind if you are sending food on any special occasion.

Excluding Sick and/or Contagious Children:

If your child becomes ill while at preschool we will notify you immediately and ask you to pick up your child as soon as possible. If you are not available, we phone your designated emergency contact person. We will help your child be comfortable until picked up, and kept separated from the other children in order to prevent the spread of illness.

No one with a contagious condition (chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, and mumps, amongst others) is allowed to remain at preschool. Before returning to preschool, you must have a written clearance from a medical professional stating that your child is clear of any contagious condition. We will notify you in writing if there is any incidence of contagious condition at the program.

If your child has head lice, they are **not allowed to attend preschool** until it has been treated and cleared. This is different from ASD's policy; they may attend school with head lice. You must treat your child (and family/household if necessary) with the recommended products. In order to return to preschool, you must have a written clearance from a medical professional stating that all knits (eggs) are gone.

Bear Valley Preschool PAWS Schedule



Session A Meeting Days
Session B Meeting Days

Anchorage School District

2024-25 School Year Calendar*

In order to maximize student involvement in school activities and to accommodate the needs of students and families, no after-school activity shall be scheduled or hosted by the District on the dates highlighted in green. Activities include but are not limited to: sports team competitions, school open houses, academic competitions, dances, student performances, retreats and student government conferences. This prohibition does not include regular practices or regular club meetings.

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								Cultural date of significance	29	30					
							1	Cultural observance begins at sundown							
								on this day							

Other Policies

Baby-sitting Policy

Bear Valley Community Association and the SACC program do not endorse or recommend staff for private babysitting services, nor do we arrange such services. We are to be held harmless for any situations or issues that may arise from private babysitting arrangements that are made between parents and SACC staff. We can only be responsible for the services that we provide during our normal scheduled hours of operation.

SACC is a smokefree zone!

Smoking and tobacco products are prohibited on or near Anchorage School District property and at any time during our hours of operation.

Clothing that is appropriate for the weather: Outside time is a

big part of learning and development. We will be going outside everyday as long as it is safe to do so. Please pack appropriate gear for your kiddo. We do follow ASD guidelines and do not go outside if it is -10 degrees or below.

Please bring a set of extra clothes in a baggie at the beginning of the program as we will keep this in the classroom in case they need to change for any reason.

PAWS will be closed on days that ASD is closed for weather; you will be notified through ProCare of cancelations.

Registration Fee and Cost

Children are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. The parent or guardian must register the child. A waiting list is kept in chronological order.

PAWS does not discriminate in the registering of children due to sex, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or physical abilities in accordance with AMC 5.20.50. We will do our best to accommodate youth with varying abilities.

Registration:

- 1) Download the ProCare App and complete the registration form
- 2) \$200.00 registration fee (non-refundable)

Once you have been given a confirmed spot in the program, you will be requested to submit additional paperwork to include:

- 1) Immunization Record (dated within a year)
- 2) Physical Record (dated within a year)
- 3) Emergency Card
- 4) Any medical specific forms such as allergy/asthma/on-site medications

Fee Policies:

A non-refundable \$200.00 registration fee is due upon enrollment. Your child's place is reserved in the program when you have paid the registration fee and have filled out the registration form. If the program is full the \$200.00 registration fee holds your spot on the waitlist.

Fee Payment:

Fees are due by the first of each month on the ProCare app.

Late Payment fees:

Fees received later than the 3rd of the month will be charged a \$15.00 late fee.

There is no credit or refund for absences or vacations.

Changes of Enrollment

A change in enrollment must be submitted two weeks prior to the date that the change will take effect. This must be in writing submitted to the administrator. Your tuition will be prorated to the date of change.

Late Pick-Up of a Child: If you arrive after 12:15 PM to pick up your child you will be charged a \$15.00 late fee for every 15 minute increment.

Licensing Agency

The Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health & Human Services, Child Care Licensing Office is the agency responsible for licensing childcare centers, supervising, monitoring, and investigating complaints involving childcare centers. They are located at 825 "L" Street, 3rd Floor, phone 343-4758.

PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE

► Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care and educational homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

Licensing is a key to quality child care.

It promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet health, safety, and program requirements. A Child and Adult Care Specialist from the Municipality of Anchorage visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensing specialists visit one to four times a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the

program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether child care meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact the local licensing office. The licensing office will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of the local licensing office

Additional information regarding the location of child care facilities licensed by the Municipality of Anchorage can be found online at:

Licensed Child Care Licensed Child Care Homes Centers (Including children related and unrelated to caregivers) - 9 or more children - No more than 8 children total - No more than 6 children total if only one - 1 caregiver for every 4 door exit infants - No more than 3 children under 30 months (6 weeks thru 11 - No more than 2 non-walking children months) - At least 1 adult caregiver - 1 caregiver for every 5 - No more than 5 children in nighttime care toddlers (including provider's own children) (10 (12 thru 18 months) PM - 6AM) - 1 caregiver for every 6 - Children who live in the household under toddlers the age of 12 count in the total (19 thru 35 months) - 1 caregiver for every 10 children (3 thru 12 years) - At least 2 adults on premises

http://neighborhood.muni.org/

Municipality of Anchorage Child/Adult Care Program

825 L Street, 3rd floor

P. O. Box 196650

Anchorage, AK 99519-6650

(907) 343-4758

Website: http://www.muni.org/ healthssd/child.cfm

HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY BE IN CARE?

Summary of Child Care Licensing Requirements Within the Municipality of Anchorage

Parents

- → Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- → Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- → Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child
- → Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- → Receive written child care policies

Licensing

- → Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregivers) are in care
- → License must be renewed prior to expiration (annually or biennially)
- → Facility (including building, staff and program) is evaluated before a license is issued and is periodically monitored thereafter
- → Complaints are investigated
- → Licensing files are open to public review

Caregivers

- → Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- → May not have physical, health, mental health, or behavior problems that might be a risk to children
- → May not have domestic violence or substance abuse problems that might be a risk to children
- → Complete child care training each year
- → Persons 16 and older have a criminal background check including submitting fingerprint cards
- → Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements

Safety

- → Children are always supervised by an adult
- → Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times
- → Caregiver(s) with First Aid and CPR training are present
- → Facility is free of hazards, inside and out
- → Gates are required at accessible stairways if children under 36 months are in care.
- → Medicine and poisons are stored safely
- → Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- → Emergency information is kept for each child and is reviewed and updated quarterly

Health

- → Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- → Meals and snacks are nutritious
- → Children are immunized or exemptions are on file
- → Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- → If it chooses, a child care home may care for mildly ill children
- → Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance
- → Drinking water is safe
- → Smoking is not allowed
- → Medicine is given only with parent permission
- → Food preparation and handling are sanitary

Equipment and Supplies

- → Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- → Infant walkers are not allowed
- → Toys are adequate and varied
- → Children have storage space for their belongings
- → Children under 5 years have a cot/mat/ bed
- → Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that would increase the risk of suffocation

Program

- → Promotes children's healthy development
- → Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- → TV and video are limited to children's programs and limited to no more than 1&1/2 hours in a 24-hour period
- → High risk activities are not allowed
- → Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)
- → Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours the child is in care between 7 am and 7pm

Behavior Guidance

- → Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- → Sets realistic expectations and clear, consistent limits
- → Is not related to eating, napping, toileting, or removing from other children for more than 10 minutes
- → No corporal punishment is allowed (Corporal punishment means "the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, pinching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.")

Fire Safety

- → Facility meets fire safety standards
- → Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented

BER

Behavior Policy & Contract

Safety of the children while at Preschool PAWS is the top priority for the staff. We want all children to feel comfortable and secure while in program, in addition to having fun and learning!

To help families understand the expectations of them while in program, we provide a behavior contract. We expect all parents/caregivers to read this and discuss with your child if appropriate. Part of our program will be working with the kids to ensure they meet these expectations.

After you have reviewed the **Behavior Contract** with your child, you both will need to sign the last page and return it to the SACC program.

All staff are trained on how to help children solve their problems. All children are told to use their "good words" ("please stop..." or "I don't like it when...") when trying to solve a conflict (not hurtful words like "you're dumb" or "I hate you", etc.). If their words don't work, they are told to come get a staff person to help. The staff person lets each child explain their side. The staff asks the children how they think it should be resolved, or helps give a solution.

Through a process of dialogue, modeling, re-enactment, and guidance, the child is given <u>multiple</u> opportunities to use appropriate or constructive behavior. If this process does not yield success, then the involved staff member will do a write-up.

Preschool PAWS Four Behavior Guidelines:

These are the four main behavior rules that guide the daily workings of program. These are the rules that the staff communicates to the children every day to help keep everyone safe and feeling welcome.

- 1) Be gentle to yourself and other people. We are not hurtful in our words or actions.
- 2) **Be safe inside and outside.** We follow safety rules inside and on the playground.
- 3) Be careful with our environment, our own and other people's work and belongings. We do not damage the environment. We take care of our own belongings. We respect other people's belongings.

4) **Be healthy.** We wash hands before eating. We wear appropriate clothes for the weather.

Inappropriate Behavior

Preschool PAWS does not accept behavior that threatens the physical or emotional safety of the self or others. Should a child display inappropriate behavior, the administrative team will contact the registered parents or caregiver, and discuss strategies for promoting appropriate behavior. Below is a list of behavior that is considered inappropriate.

- → ignoring staff direction
- → swearing or other inappropriate language
- → destructive behavior
- → behavior that is a detriment to the quality of the program
- → behavior that impedes other participants from engaging in program to the full extent
- → behavior that is of a sexual nature
- → disrespectful behavior
- → using physical force to solve problems or get their way
- → bullying or being emotionally hurtful to others
- → dangerous behavior; disregarding safety protocols and policies

If a child is to break or damage an item during program operation, families may be expected to pay for or replace the item(s). These items may include...

- → Preschool PAWS property, toys, equipment
- → Bear Valley school's property
- → another child's property

Suspension & Expulsion

We may request immediate pick-up and/or temporary suspension from program depending on the frequency or severity of a child's behavior. In this case, a parent meeting may be required to develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Open communication and full cooperation is required from the child's parents or caregivers while enforcing the BIP. If attempted interventions fail, we may determine that a child's need falls beyond the parameters of our program, and will suggest alternative childcare.

Playground Rules:

- No jumping off of the swings while swinging
- Do not climb up the big slides
- Do not climb on the outside of the playground equipment
- No climbing on the fence and stay on the inside of the fence
- Climbing is only allowed on structures that have pea-gravel underneath
- Do not throw rocks, gravel, dirt or sand

Gym Rules:

- Use good sportsmanship
 - no put downs to other kids
 - follow the rules and abide the staffs' decisions
 - keep temper under control.
- No boots or high-heeled shoes in the gym
- No hanging on the bars unless there are mats underneath and a staff person has said its okay, and is there to supervise.
- Shoes must stay on your feet
 - no wearing the type of shoes that will come off when you kick a ball

Classroom and Hallways:

- Use an inside voice when in the Classroom/hallway
- Walking feet in the Classroom/hallway—no running
- No ball throwing or roughhousing in the Classroom or hallways
- Please play with the toys appropriately, carefully and respectfully

Parent Agreement Form



Please read the contents of the Parent Handbook, then read and sign this form and return it to an administrator. Child's name: _____ **Payment Agreement** _____ (parent/guardian print name) agree to pay the Bear Valley Community Association Preschool PAWS program \$250.00 (tuition) per month, by the 1st of each month, and understand that there will be a \$15 late fee applied to payments received after the 5th of that month. I also understand that there are no refunds given for absences or vacations. I am aware of the "Change of Enrollment" policy that I must give written notice of any changes or withdrawals to the Administrator two weeks prior to the date of change. I understand that tuition will be prorated and I will pay that amount. Parent/quardian please initial here: _____ Parent Handbook _____ (parent/guardian print name) acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Parent Handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures stated within the Parent Handbook. Parent/quardian please initial here: **Behavior Policy** I have read and understand the behavior policy and agree to follow the Preschool PAWS behavior policies and procedures stated within the parent handbook. Parent/quardian please initial here: **Private Babysitting Policy** I have read the babysitting policy in the Parent Handbook and understand and agree to the terms of the "hold harmless" policy in regards to the Bear Valley Community Association. Parent/guardian please initial here: _____

Date

Parent/quardian please sign