



Parent/ Guardian Handbook

Policies & Procedures

2026-2027

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

Welcome to Little Blessings

The Policies and Procedures outlined in this handbook have been created to support clear communication and shared expectations between you, your child's caregiver, and our program. These guidelines help ensure that every child experiences a safe, nurturing, and predictable environment—one where they feel secure, valued, and loved while away from home.

We want to personally thank you for choosing Little Blessings PDO! We know there are many preschool options in Castle Rock, and we are so grateful that you chose to be part of our Little Blessings family.

We don't take your trust for granted. It is truly a privilege to partner with you in your child's early learning journey, and we are honored to care for and encourage your little one each day. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this special season in your family's life.

With your partnership and adherence to the Policies and Procedures in this document, our team is able to provide the warm, loving environment your child needs to thrive.

Commitment to Licensing & Excellence

These policies are written in accordance with the **State of Colorado's licensing requirements**. As regulations evolve, updates or addendums may be required. Families will receive as much advance notice as possible regarding any changes.

Our commitment is to operate with integrity, transparency, and excellence—honoring both state standards and the values that guide our faith-based mission.

Our Shared Purpose and Philosophy

Together, we aim to create a place where:

- Children feel safe, loved, and supported
- Families feel welcomed, respected, and informed
- Staff members feel empowered to serve with compassion and professionalism
- Christ's love is reflected in daily interactions, routines, and relationships
- We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with your family and to walk alongside your child during these foundational years.

At **Little Blessings**, we believe each child is a unique creation of God, deserving of care that reflects God's love, gentleness, and compassion. Our staff strives to model Christ-like kindness, patience, and respect in all interactions, creating a community where children can grow academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Our goal is to provide a place where your child feels comfortable, supported, and valued. With your partnership and adherence to the Policies and Procedures outlined in this document, our staff will be able to create the safe and nurturing experience your child deserves.

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Admission & Placement Policies

Enrollment & Eligibility

Eligibility

Children ages 12 months (walking independently) through 5½ 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, national origin, or disability in the administration of educational or admissions policies.

Admission of children with special needs is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We make every reasonable effort to accommodate individual needs and provide an inclusive learning environment. Conferences with families, teachers, and administration may be scheduled as needed to support each child's success within the program.

Program Schedule

School Year

The Little Blessings Parents' Day Out program operates August through May and follows most of the Douglas County School District calendar for holidays, weather closures, and safety-related closures. Please refer to the attached school calendar for specific dates.

Program Options & Class Times

Little Blessings offers flexible scheduling options ranging from two to five days per week.

- Full-Day Program: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- Half-Day Program: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- *Half-day enrollment is limited and based on availability.*

Before & After Care

Little Blessings provides extended care for currently enrolled students:

- Before Care: Monday–Friday, 8:30–9:00 a.m.

- After Care: Monday–Friday, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

Families who pre-register for ongoing extended care receive discounted rates. Drop-in extended care charges are added to the following month's tuition invoice and are due by the 10th of the month.

Refunds are not provided for extended care during school closures.

Drop-In Days

Enrolled children may request additional “drop-in” days depending on classroom availability.

Please note:

- Drop-in days are not guaranteed.
- A minimum of 24 hours' notice is required.
- Missed days cannot be exchanged or substituted.
- Additional drop-in fees apply and will be added to your monthly invoice (or may be paid the day of attendance).
- Requests must be submitted through Brightwheel, email, or by contacting the PDO office.
- Office confirmation is required before attending a drop-in day.

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	Ranges from 5:1 to 7:1	7
Toddler 2	18-36 months	Ranges from 5:1 to 7:1	9
Toddler 3	12-36 Months	5:1	7
Early Preschool 1	2.5- 4 years	8: 1	14

Preschool 1	3-4 years	10: 1	15
Preschool 2	3-4 years	10:1	16
Preschool 3	3-4 years	10: 1	7
Prekindergarten 1	4+ years	12: 1	15
Prekindergarten 2	4+ years	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

Biting

- Little Blessings recognizes biting as a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the toddler through 2-year-old classrooms.
- Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten or may bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior, so it can be prevented in the future. In the younger classrooms the staff will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.
- Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the guidance procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child

control this behavior.

- Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident has occurred during hours of care. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed.
- The staff of Little Blessings cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the Parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

Behavioral and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures:

Our staff is skilled in observing children's behavior and identifying when extra support may be helpful. If we notice patterns that are not typical for a child's age, we come alongside families and connect them with community specialists who can provide additional guidance.

Our staff is well trained to observe and support the social, emotional, and developmental needs of each child. While we strive to meet children where they are and provide individualized care, there may be times when a child requires support beyond what our program can safely provide.

If a child's behavior poses a safety concern for themselves or others, we will notify the family and begin with a parent-teacher conference to share observations and collaborate on next steps.

To best support your child, we may recommend partnering with an **Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist** or other community resource. Together with the family, we will develop a plan of action designed to help the child succeed across all environments.

If, during this process, the child continues to exhibit behaviors that endanger themselves or others, a temporary suspension may be necessary. This allows time for the family, staff, and specialists to create and implement a support plan. When the child returns, we will continue to monitor progress closely. If safety concerns persist, we will work with the family to determine whether Little Blessings is the most appropriate setting for the child's needs.

Asking a family to withdraw is considered a **last resort**, and when necessary, up to two weeks' notice may be provided to allow time to secure alternate care.

At Little Blessings, our goal is always to strengthen relationships with children and families. Through ongoing specialized training and open communication, we work together to ensure every child receives the support they need to thrive.

Threats to Employees, Children, Other Parents or Adults Associated with Little Blessings

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, Little Blessings cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. At all times, parents are expected to compose themselves in a calm, appropriate way, speaking in confidence at a reasonable volume and without profanity.

Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children

Corporal punishment of children is not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents may not address - for the purpose of correction or discipline - a child who is not their own. If a Parent should witness another child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the Parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or the director. It is inappropriate for one Parent to seek out another Parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention.

Swearing/Cursing/Confrontational Interactions

Parents and other adults are asked not to curse or use other inappropriate language on Little Blessings property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

We understand that Parents will not always agree with the employees of the Little Blessings or parents of the other children, but it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are an inappropriate means to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

Financial Obligations & Policies

Registration/Enrollment Fee:

Registration in the Little Blessings PDO program begins in February 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** administration fee is due at the time of registration:

- \$200 – Students new to Little Blessings
- \$150 Administration fee for students 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 are 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 or May's tuition.
- 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."
- You may also set up recurring credit card payments through your Parent Portal on Brightwheel.

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.**

Tuition Rates

Toddler Classrooms (12 Months/walking to 30 months)--full day

2 days/week-	\$444/month
3 days/week-	\$667/month
4 days/week-	\$888/month
5 days/week-	\$1110/month

Preschool Classroom (2.5 years old to 5 years)

2 days/week	\$407/month
3 days/week-	\$611/month
4 days/week-	\$814/month
5 days/week-	\$1018/month

Alternative Schedules & Programming

2 Half day/week \$400/month

9:00-12:30 pm (Price is monthly charge per scheduled days per week)

Drop in Care-Full Day

\$ 70/day for additional day for those students currently enrolled/billing will be on the next months invoice

\$ 50/half day for additional day for those students currently enrolled

Extended Care

Before care–

\$6.50/day (8:30-9:00)

After care–

\$12.50/day (2:30-3:30)

10% discount on before and aftercare pre-enrollment

Annual Fees

Administrative Fee:

Returning Student: \$150.00

New Student: \$200.00

*Prices here are superseded by the prices on the enrollment sheet.

**30 days notice will be given before any price changes.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) & Scholarships

As a ministry of First United Methodist Church, Little Blessings PDO is committed to serving our community and ensuring that all children have access to a high-quality early childhood experience. To support this mission, we proudly accept **CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program)** from **Douglas County, Arapahoe County, and Jefferson County.**

Families can learn more about CCAP eligibility and application steps by visiting the Colorado Department of Human Services website:

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

If your family does not qualify for CCAP but is experiencing financial hardship, you are welcome to apply for a **Little Blessings Scholarship.** Scholarships are awarded on a case-by-case basis and are determined by financial need.

For scholarship information or assistance, please contact the Little Blessings office at **303-660-2170** or email **littleblessingspdo@gmail.com.**

Parent Communication

Brightwheel:

Brightwheel Communication Platform

Brightwheel is our primary communication and billing system. Through Brightwheel, families can:

- Communicate with teachers and administration
- Receive announcements and reminders
- Pay tuition and fees
- Complete required forms
- Update student and family information
- Retrieve tax-statements

For safety and smooth daily operations, all individuals who regularly drop off or pick up your child should have their own Brightwheel account.

Brightwheel is our primary communication platform for families. Through the app, parents and guardians can message teachers and administration, receive important alerts, and stay updated with reminders throughout the school year. Please ensure the Brightwheel app is downloaded on your phone so you can stay connected and informed.

Translators:

Little Blessings is committed to supporting children whose primary language is not English, as well as children who use sign language, to ensure full participation and engagement in the classroom.

For onboarding and administrative communication, we utilize professional interpretation services through go.jeenie.com or Google Translate to ensure families receive accurate and accessible information. All essential forms and documents will be provided in the family's home language whenever possible.

The Brightwheel app is helpful with language translation of forms. Parents are able to change the language on the form. Families can switch the brightwheel app language to Spanish or English, so they can fill out the form in their preferred language.

To change it in the mobile app:

1. Open the app and tap the ≡ menu
2. Tap Edit Profile

3. Under Language, choose Spanish or English

If they're using a web browser, there isn't a built-in language switch, but they can use the Google Translate Chrome extension to translate the page

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.

Information Boards/Desk:

Inside each classroom, or directly outside of the classroom's main entrance, teachers will have sign-in/sign-out sheets, class schedules, 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 inside of the double doors inside the main entrance, there are resources for parents of toddlers and preschoolers. Please feel free to take any of the materials there.

Parent Observations & Conferences:

Pre-Kindergarten Parent/teacher conferences will be offered during the school year. The conferences will be offered for each Pre-K classroom according to the calendar (attached). Sign-up for conferences will be posted on the information boards by teachers 2 weeks prior to the start of conferences. All other classroom teachers will set up parent/teacher conferences on an as needed basis.

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 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. Parent class opportunities will be posted and sent out via email to parents when available.

Operational Policies & Procedures

Arrival & Departure Policy:

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 if the main entrance of the church is closed you may ring the doorbell and someone will buzz you in. This entrance may be unavailable to Little Blessings families if the church sanctuary is being used (e.g., funeral, wedding, etc.)

Program doors open at **8:57 a.m.** When you arrive, please take your child directly to their classroom's designated hand-washing sink (located either inside the classroom or near the West exit bathrooms). After washing hands, walk your child to their classroom and **sign them in on the sign-in/sign-out sheet.**

If you arrive early, please wait with your child outside until the doors open. Families using **Before Care** should ring the doorbell to be let in.

Doors remain open from **8:57–9:15 a.m.** Teachers begin their instructional day at 9:15, so we ask that all children arrive by this time. Late arrivals can be disruptive to the classroom routine. Excused late drop-offs include appointments or special family circumstances.

The State of Colorado requires that each child be **signed in and out daily**. Please sign your full name (not initials or relationship) and wait until the teacher has received your child into the classroom before leaving.

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). After 3:35 a charge of \$15 will be charged on Brightwheel.

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.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up

Staff of Little Blessings will contact local and Federal police and/or the other custodial Parent should a Parent appears to the staff of the Little Blessings to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The Parent's right to immediate access does not permit the Center to deny a custodial Parent access to their child even if the Parent is or appears to be impaired; the center will detain impaired Parent as long as possible, while contacting the other approved adults for pick-up, the police, County and/or Child Protective Services.

Transitions Within the Program Day18/19

Little Blessings classrooms follow a consistent **daily routine** that is posted in each room. While exact times may vary slightly, each day includes the same sequence of activities—free-choice play, snacks, lunch, bathroom breaks, group time, small and large group activities, and outdoor play. This predictable structure helps children transition smoothly because they know what to expect.

To support successful transitions, our teachers use the following practices:

- **Consistent daily schedule** — Children follow the same order of activities each day, which builds confidence and reduces stress during transitions.
- **Generous playtime** — We minimize the number of transitions by providing long, uninterrupted periods of play.
- **Advance reminders** — Before moving to a new activity, teachers give time warnings such as “In ten minutes, we will clean up for group time.” Children may also help announce transitions to their peers.
- **Engaging waiting-time activities** — During brief waiting periods (such as before meals or bathroom breaks), teachers use songs, finger plays, and movement activities so children stay engaged and learning.
- **Team-based transitions** — Teachers work together to reduce wait times. For example, after meals, one teacher may begin sending small groups to wash hands while another finishes the mealtime routine.

These practices help children feel secure, supported, and ready for each part of their day. 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.

Continuity of Care:

Little Blessings PDO is committed to providing stable, consistent, and nurturing care that supports each child’s emotional, social, and cognitive development. As a ministry of First United Methodist Church, we believe that children thrive when they experience dependable relationships with caregivers who reflect Christ-like compassion, patience, and love. Continuity of care strengthens a child’s sense of security, fosters healthy attachment, and promotes positive developmental outcomes.

Guidelines for Ensuring Continuity of Care

- Consistent caregiver assignments — To support secure attachment and emotional well-being, children are placed with a primary caregiver or small team for extended periods (typically the entire 10 months and transition to a new classroom each fall. This practice minimizes unnecessary transitions and aligns with Colorado licensing expectations for stable staffing. When changes are unavoidable due to staffing needs or extended leave, families will be notified in advance and supported through a planned transition.
- Caregiver familiarity and individualized care — Primary caregivers maintain knowledge of each child’s routines, preferences, developmental progress, and individual needs. They serve as the family’s main point of contact for daily updates and developmental communication, ensuring continuity between home and school.
- Staff stability and retention — Little Blessings prioritizes hiring and retaining qualified, compassionate educators who are committed to our mission. To promote staff stability, we provide ongoing professional development, competitive compensation, and supportive working conditions. In the event of a staffing change, families will be informed promptly, and transitions will be managed with the child’s best interest at the center.
- Collaborative communication with families — Open, ongoing communication between caregivers and families is essential to maintaining continuity of care. We encourage families to share significant changes in their child’s life, behavior, or health. Teachers provide regular updates through conferences, written communication, and daily interactions to ensure alignment and support across environments.

- Family partnership and faith-centered support — We view parents as partners in ministry and in the care of their children. By grounding our work in Christian principles of compassion, service, and community, we strive to create a nurturing environment where every child feels known, loved, and supported. We believe that smooth transition encourages learning and supports the personal, social, and emotional development, as well as the future success of every child.

Continuity of care is a foundational practice at Little Blessings PDO. By prioritizing stable relationships and integrating our faith-based mission into daily interactions, we aim to provide an environment where children can grow confidently in God's love and develop the skills they need to flourish. 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.

Prescription cream needs to have a signed doctor's note provided to the office. Parents will need to fill out a medication authorization form.

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.

Bodies, Language, and Development

Here at the Little Blessing, we strive to implement best practices for ensuring children are safe as they interact with their own bodies and society at large. One protective factor for children is their ability to use anatomical names for their body. Accordingly, we use words like "privates" and/or "bottom", rather than confusing, non-specific words. If you have questions about our policy, please see the Director.

Handwashing Policy:

Teachers will ensure 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 provide your own sunscreen please label them with **first and last name**. 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. Student/Parent Permission form lists these three options as part of your child's registration documents so you may decide what is best for your child. Please give the teacher personal sunscreen and do not leave it in your backpack.

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.

Snacks & Nutrition Guidelines:

Parents are responsible for providing your child's daily snack and lunch. Please send 2 healthy, nutritious selections with them daily. (Little Blessings will offer healthy options when USDA guidelines are not met) 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.

Little Blessings PDO partners with families to support each child's health and well-being. To meet Colorado licensing requirements and ensure children receive proper nutrition, the following guidelines apply to all meals and snacks provided during the program day.

Family-Provided Meals and Snacks

Families provide all meals and snacks for their child. Food must be sent in a **lunch box with an ice pack**, as refrigeration space is limited.

Each child will be offered their **morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack**. Mealtimes vary by age group and daily schedule. Teachers encourage healthy eating habits and support communication skills by sitting with children, modeling positive interactions, and engaging in conversation. Children are **never forced to eat**.

Nutrition Expectations

A balanced diet supports each child's physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Families are encouraged to send **fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and protein-rich foods**, and to limit items high in added sugar.

To help families prepare meals that meet licensing requirements, we reference the **USDA Child Meal Pattern** guidelines. If a meal arrives missing required components, Little Blessings will supplement the missing items. Parents will be asked at different times of year to help by donating snacks.

BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERNS

Serve Milk, Grains*, Vegetables or Fruit

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Vegetables, Fruit or Both	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

* Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week. oz eq = ounce equivalents

LUNCH & SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

Serve all 5 components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
Meat & Meat Alternates	1 oz	1 1/2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
Vegetables	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/8 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq

*A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults

oz eq = ounce equivalents

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Serve 2 of the 5 components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-18	ADULTS
Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Meat & Meat Alternates	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Vegetables	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq

oz eq = ounce equivalents

Bottles

Licensing rules and regulations state that children cannot have bottles at nap time. Children are not to be laid down with a bottle with or without any fluid in it. All children must be sitting when eating and drinking. The **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** recommends **weaning children from bottles by 12 months of age**, ideally around the first birthday [UPMC HealthBeat+1](#). This is because prolonged bottle use — especially with milk or juice — can lead to:

- **Dental caries** from constant sugar exposure, including at bedtime
- **Overweight/obesity risk**; each extra month of bottle use beyond 12 months is linked to a higher BMI-for-age percentile at 36 months
- **Nutritional imbalances** from reduced intake of essential nutrients

Special Dietary Needs & Allergies

For children with food allergies or dietary restrictions, accommodations will be made based on the severity of the allergy and the safety needs of the classroom. This may include:

- **Separate seating** for the child
- **Classroom-wide food restrictions** when necessary

Decisions are made **case by case**, prioritizing the safety and well-being of all children.

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.**

We have many different food allergies in the building. Please check outside your child's door for a posted sign of allergies that pertain to your child's classroom. Please label if using seed butter for sandwiches.

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, Erika Foster (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/Policy

Little Blessings PDO requires all enrolled students to be **up-to-date on all immunizations** as required by the State of Colorado. Immunization records must be submitted prior to the child's first day of attendance and kept current throughout the school year.

Children on a Delayed or Alternative Schedule

If a child is receiving immunizations on a physician-directed schedule, families must provide:

- A written immunization plan
- Signed by the child's licensed healthcare provider
- Printed on the provider's official letterhead

This documentation must outline the specific schedule the physician has approved.

Exemptions:

Little Blessings PDO **does not accept personal exemptions.**

The following exemptions may be accepted **only with proper documentation:**

Medical Exemption

- Must be completed and signed by a licensed physician, or accompanied by a written medical release on official letterhead.

Religious Exemption

- Must reflect sincerely held religious beliefs that:
 - Address “fundamental and ultimate questions having to do with deep and imponderable matters,” and

Are “comprehensive in nature,”

- rather than based on personal philosophy, preference, or convenience.

All exemption forms must comply with CDPHE requirements and be renewed as required by state law.

Record Maintenance

Families are responsible for providing updated immunization records whenever new vaccines are administered. Failure to maintain current records may result in exclusion from care until documentation is received, in accordance with Colorado licensing regulations.

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. We will need updated health appraisals throughout the year. **Please remember to bring a new health appraisal into the office any time you have gone to a well check. Up to date health appraisals are mandatory for your child's file to be compliant with state licensing rules and regulations.**

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:

Little Blessings PDO is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children, including those with allergies, asthma, or medical conditions requiring emergency treatment. In accordance with **Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC)** and **Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE)** regulations, individualized **Health Care Plans** and **Medication Orders** are required for any child with a diagnosed allergy, asthma, or risk of anaphylaxis.

Health Care Plan Requirements

A written Health Care Plan is required for any child with:

- **Food allergies**
- **Environmental allergies**
- **Insect sting allergies**
- **Asthma or reactive airway disease**
- A prescribed **Epinephrine auto-injector**, inhaler, or other emergency medication

Plans must be:

- Completed and signed by a **licensed healthcare provider**
- Signed by the **parent/guardian**
- Updated **every 12 months** or sooner if the child's condition changes
- On file **before the child begins care**

Medication Requirements

All medications must:

- Be in the **original pharmacy-labeled container**
- Be **unexpired**
- Match the dosage and instructions in the Health Care Plan
- Be stored in a location that is **secure yet immediately accessible** to trained staff

Staff administering medication must hold current training in:

- **Standard Precautions**

- **Medication Administration**
- **Epinephrine auto-injector use**

Children may not attend without required emergency medication on site if the Health Care Plan states it must be available at all times.

Children with Severe Allergies

As stated above, the Center complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act as it relates to all children, including children with allergies. For the safety of your child, Parents are required to provide a signed copy of the “Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies” form, detailing any allergies - food or otherwise from which their child suffers. This form must be provided at the time of enrollment or when an allergy is discovered. It must be completely filled out by the child’s physician and parent(s) and must be updated every six months, or more frequently if needed. In addition to this form, Parents must provide a copy of any additional physician’s orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child’s allergy. This form can be obtained by a request to the director.

Parents must also execute a “Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies” form. This form releases Little Blessings from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the “Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies” form, provided Little Blessings exercises reasonable care in taking such actions. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

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.

Children With Special Needs

Little Blessings PDO seeks to accommodate children with special needs—whether physical, behavioral, cognitive, developmental, or medical—in accordance with all applicable laws and licensing regulations. Close, ongoing communication with families is essential to providing high-quality care. If staff observe developmental or behavioral concerns and believe a child may benefit from evaluation or early intervention, we will share recommendations with parents in a supportive and collaborative manner.

Non-Discrimination Under the ADA

In accordance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Little Blessings PDO does not discriminate against any child on the basis of disability. The Center will make reasonable modifications to policies, practices, or procedures when such modifications are necessary to ensure equal access to our services—unless the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the program.

Case-by-Case Evaluation

Working together with parents and relevant medical or developmental professionals, the Center evaluates each child's needs on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations. This may include:

- Modified routines
- Behavior support strategies
- Adaptive equipment
- Additional staff training

Accommodations are approved when they are safe, feasible, and do not fundamentally change the nature of the program.

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. Parents are required to pick

up an ill child as soon as possible after being notified by phone that the child is ill. If a Parent is reached, but cannot pick up his or her child, it becomes the Parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick-up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. If a parent cannot be reached, staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Whether a child's symptoms require going home will be determined at the discretion of the director or designee. Little Blessings reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Below is a list of some conditions which may warrant sending a child home. This list is not all-inclusive:

- Unexplained fevers of 101 degrees or greater (100 degrees for children six months or younger)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Undiagnosed rash
- Respiratory symptoms
- Discharge from the eye
- Severe discharge from the nose
- Severe pain
- Head lice
- Unexplained behavior change (lethargic, irritable, persistent crying)

See a list of communicable diseases at Appendix A.

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.

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:

Little Blessings PDO follows the **Douglas County School District Emergency Response Protocols** to ensure the safety of all

children and staff. Our designated evacuation shelter is **South Ridge Elementary School**, located directly next door to the church.

To maintain preparedness, the following drills are conducted regularly:

- **Fire drills** — conducted monthly
- **Tornado drills** — conducted seasonally
- **SECURE drills** — conducted several times per year
- **LOCKDOWN drills** — conducted several times per year
- **EVACUATE drills** — conducted several times per year

These drills ensure that all staff and children are familiar with procedures and can respond calmly and effectively in the event of a real emergency.



SECURE– “Secure the Perimeter”

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



LOCKDOWN – “Lock, Lights, Out of Sight”

Lockdown 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 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

Arrival and Departure Safety

To help ensure the safety and well-being of all children, parents and guardians are responsible for supervising their child during arrival and departure times.

At arrival, children must remain with their parents or guardian until they have been signed in and safely transferred to the care of their classroom teacher. At dismissal, once a child has been signed out, they must remain with their parent or guardian while exiting the building and throughout the parking area.

We appreciate your cooperation in following these procedures, as they help maintain a safe environment for all children, families, and staff.

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.

In addition, you could provide a book that is special to your family. The classroom teacher will read the book to your child's class. You and your child can inscribe the book and it will remain as a reminder of your child's birthday in the classroom library.

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 may occasionally show G-rated videos to children over 2 years of age. Parent or legal guardian permission for video viewing is obtained through the child's enrollment forms.

Television use is **limited to 30 minutes per week**.

When a short video or book-based story supports the classroom's educational theme or weekly lesson, teachers will list the video title and purpose in their **lesson plans** so parents are aware of the content being shown.

Lost and Found

"Lost & Found" items are kept in a bin located in a bin outside of the office under the visitor sign-in book. The staff will collect any found and/or unclaimed items and place them in the "Lost & Found."

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 do note that your presence in the classroom could be disruptive to your child's

learning, and the learning of other children. For this reason, you may be asked to limit your visits to short periods of time.

We want you to be well informed of your child's progress throughout the school year. Please schedule times to visit with your classroom teacher. Pick up and drop off are often inconvenient times to visit as they are busy times in a classroom and the teacher is unlikely to be able to provide undivided attention at that time.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Little Blessings must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed. If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

In the absence of a signed court order on file with Little Blessings, all Parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Little Blessings cannot — without a court order — limit the access of one Parent by request of the other Parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one Parent does not want another Parent to have access to their child, Little Blessings suggests that the Parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other Parent's right to immediate access. Little Blessings staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Little Blessings is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of Little Blessings cannot, at the request of anyone — except the issuing judge — allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. Little Blessings will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Should we at Little Blessings become aware of a Protection from Abuse or a Restraining Order, we will insist upon the protecting party serving the local police department with a certified copy of the order if they have not already done so. Very often the Parents protected by the Order will serve the police department where they live and work, but will forget about the police department in the jurisdiction where the Center is located.

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 offer before care at 10:00. •
- 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

Little Blessings adapted the Teaching Strategies The Creative Curriculum. The Creative Curriculum is often used because it promotes a child-centered approach to learning, encouraging active exploration and imaginative play, which is considered highly beneficial for early childhood development and fostering creativity, critical thinking and social-emotional skills through hands-on activities and a well structured learning environment.

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

Little Blessings continues to follow the state rules and regulations through Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines. For more information see the CDEC website where the state rules and regulations are available in full.

Assessments

The ASQ assessment is used to assess the child's development within the first 45 days of school. Parents will be informed of the results.

Teachers will be using GOLD assessments for ongoing observations and continuous documentation of the children's learning.

- **Tailored Activities:** Use GOLD data to select and adapt classroom activities that meet each child's developmental needs
-  [Teaching Strategies](#).
- **Integration with Curriculum:** Align observations with The Creative Curriculum or state early learning guidelines to ensure

instruction is developmentally appropriate and standards-aligned

- **Goal Setting:** Develop individualized learning goals based on documented observations and checkpoint ratings, revisiting them regularly to track progress

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 programming includes **Bible-based stories, prayer, movement, and music** shared during our weekly chapel time.

We strive to help children understand and practice **basic daily life skills through the principles of Christ**, nurturing kindness, empathy, respect, and a sense of God's love in their everyday experiences.

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, and activities.
- **Before and After Care:** Extended care for those with pre-reservations.

Staff

A loving and dedicated teaching staff is at the heart of Little Blessings PDO. Our team is trained to promote the best developmental outcomes for every child in our care. We are fortunate to have well-qualified educators, many of whom hold **Bachelor's or Master's degrees** in a variety of fields and continue to grow their expertise in **Early Childhood Education**.

All staff members receive specialized Early Childhood Education training through the **Colorado Professional Development Information System** and maintain current **CPR and First Aid certifications** to ensure a safe, nurturing, and developmentally supportive learning environment.

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 various fields and develop their training in ECE . 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 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 Camp

Little Blessings offers summer 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.

Parent and Family Experience Survey

Each year, all families are invited to participate in the Parent and Family Experience Survey. The survey provides valuable feedback about our school and helps us identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for growth.

We encourage every family to complete the survey. Your responses help guide school improvement efforts and ensure we continue providing the highest quality educational experience for all students and families. All feedback is reviewed and used to support ongoing planning and decision-making.

Thank you for partnering with us to help make our school the best it can be.

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 45 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.

For children age 3-5 please reach out to DCSD directly:

Child Find Information Line: 720-433-0020

Child Find Fax Number: 720-433-0021

Email: Child_Find_Intake@dcsdk12.org Website: [DCSD Child Find](#) Appointment Request & Intake Form: [HERE](#)

Child Find Coordinator: [Annika Barton](#)

- To refer a child under age 3, go to the **Early Intervention Colorado Centralized Referral System** or call 1-888-777-4041.
- Developmental Pathways offers free screening to children under the age of 3. www.dpcolo.org/

Mental Health Resources

- AllHealth Network, a non-profit mental health system in Castle Rock. AllHealth Network is a nonprofit mental health organization providing counseling, psychiatry, crisis services, substance use treatment, and more. We accept Medicaid and commercial insurance plans. www.allhealthnetwork.org/

Local Resources

- Douglas All Health Network
- Douglas Catholic Charities of Central Co
- Douglas Denver Indian Family Resource Center
- Douglas Douglas County ECC
- Douglas Douglas County Human Services
- Douglas Douglas School District
- Douglas Families Forward

- Douglas Grace Chapel (Englewood)
- Douglas Help & Hope Center / Douglas / Elbert Task Force
- Douglas Manna Family Resource Center
- Douglas Parker Task Force
- Douglas SECORCares
- Douglas Shiloh House

For a list of doctors, dentists, hearing, vision, and developmental screenings please see the office at Little Blessings for a list of providers in the area.

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

Information of Communicable Diseases

-For a list of communicable diseases and information go to:

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/> or go to <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dcphr/communicable-disease-manual>

Trauma Support

At Little Blessings, we understand that life is filled with both joys and challenges. Families may experience difficult circumstances such as the loss of a loved one, illness, divorce, financial hardship, natural disasters, or other unexpected events. These experiences can have a significant impact on both children and adults.

Our staff desires to be part of your community of support during these difficult times by offering compassion, understanding, and encouragement whenever possible. As followers of Christ, we believe we are called to care for one another, bear one another's burdens, and walk alongside families with love and grace. We are committed to fostering the emotional, social, spiritual, and physical well-being of every child and family in our program.

Children experience and express trauma in many different ways. Some children may become withdrawn or anxious, while others may display changes in behavior, difficulty concentrating, increased emotional reactions, sleep disturbances, regression to earlier developmental behaviors, or physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches. Every child's response is unique, and there is

no "right" way to process difficult experiences.

Our staff members strive to provide a safe, predictable, and nurturing environment where children feel secure, valued, and loved. We use developmentally appropriate practices that promote emotional regulation, positive relationships, and resilience. When a child is experiencing a difficult situation, our teachers will respond with patience, empathy, and consistency while maintaining routines that help children feel safe.

We encourage families to communicate with us about significant life events or changes that may affect their child. While you are never required to share personal details, knowing that a child is experiencing a difficult season allows us to provide additional understanding and support throughout the school day. All information shared with staff will be treated with respect and handled as confidentially as possible, with consideration for the child's safety and well-being.

Although Little Blessings is not a counseling or mental health service, we are committed to partnering with families and, when appropriate, can provide information about community resources that may offer additional support. We believe that working together with families creates the strongest foundation for helping children heal, grow, and thrive.

Above all, we want every child and family who enters our doors to know they are welcomed, cared for, and deeply valued. Through God's love, supportive relationships, and a caring community, we hope to provide a place where children can continue to learn, grow, and experience hope even during life's most challenging moments.

2026-2027 School Year Calendar

*Subject to change

2026-2027 School Event Calendar

July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

October 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

December 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

July	
4	Independence day
31	Last Day of Summer Camps

August	
6	Open House/Meet Your Teacher
10	First Day of School
24-25	Photo day with Sugarlight Photography

September	
7	Labor Day/NO SCHOOL

October	
12	12-16 Fall Break/ NO SCHOOL
28	Trunk or Treat for all Families
31	Halloween

November	
20	Pancake Breakfast/NO SCHOOL
20	Pre-K Parent/Teacher Conference/ NO SCHOOL
23-27	Thanksgiving Break/ NO SCHOOL

1	Daylight Savings
11	Veteran's Day

December	
10	Christmas Programs at 10am and 6pm
18	NO SCHOOL
21-31	Winter Break/ NO SCHOOL

January 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

March 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

January	
1	Winter Break/No School
4	First Day Back from Winter Break
18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day/NO SCHOOL

February	
2	Groundhog Day
12	Lincoln's Birthday
14	Valentine's Day
15	President's Day/NO SCHOOL
25-26	Art Show
	ENROLLMENT WEEK FOR 2027-2028 8TH-12TH

March	
17	St. Patrick's Day
14	Daylight Saving
15-19	Spring Break/NO SCHOOL
28	Easter Day

5-Jan	SUMMER ENROLLMENT WEEK 1ST-5TH
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April	
1	April Fool's Day
22	Earth Day
23	Pre-K Parent/Teacher Conference/ NO SCHOOL

May	
9	Mother's Day
14	Pre-K Graduation
21	Last Day of School
31	Memorial Day NO SCHOOL

June	
1	First Day of Summer Camp
14	Flag Day
20	Father's Day

UPK Policies

1. Healthy Development & Child Screenings

To support your child's healthy development, our program provides information on voluntary developmental screening services. Please speak to Theresa Kepple, Tonia Paben or Delaney Petersen or email litteblessingspdo@gmail.com for information on obtaining any of the following:

- **Developmental or Health Screenings**
- **Vision, Hearing, or Dental Screenings**
- **Social-emotional, Cognitive, or Language Screenings**
- **Mental Health or Special Education Referrals**
- **Translation Services**

2. Family and Community Engagement

We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher. Our program is committed to partnering with you in the following ways:

- **Language Support:** We provide opportunities to utilize interpreters or other language resources as needed to ensure clear communication.
- **Cultural Sharing:** We invite and encourage you to share your home's cultural and social practices within our classroom community.
- **Goal Setting:** We will partner with you to set individual learning and development goals for your child.
- **Program Decision-Making:** We offer opportunities for families and community partners to engage in our program's operational decision-making processes.
- **Transitions:** We will actively involve you in your child's transitions between classrooms or when moving to a new school.
- **Feedback:** We value your perspective and provide opportunities for you to give feedback on the quality of program-family and program-staff interactions.

3. Annual CDEC Family Survey

Each spring, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) conducts an annual family survey. You will be notified of the opportunity to participate and share your experiences regarding your meaningful and culturally appropriate involvement in our program, as well as the healthy development supports provided.