





Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence, Inc.  
280 Royce Circle, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

Website: [www.blossomcenter.org](http://www.blossomcenter.org)

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# **Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence**

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

2023-2024 School Year

*Blossom Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. It is supported in part by tuition fees, grants, and other donations. Blossom Center complies with the licensing requirements as outlined by the Department of Human Services and other stakeholders. Blossom Center is inclusive of all- and operates without regard to race, color, creed, gender, ability, or economic status. As a nonprofit corporation, donations to Blossom Center are tax deductible.*



## WELCOME

Dear Family,

Thank you for choosing **Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence, Inc.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABOUT US</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Philosophy.....	1
Mission/ Vision .....	1
Certification .....	1
Definition of Family.....	1
Hours of Operation.....	1
Holidays .....	2
Admission & Enrollment.....	2
Inclusion .....	2
Non-Discrimination.....	3
Family Activities .....	3
Confidentiality.....	3
Staff Qualifications .....	3
Child to Staff Ratios .....	3
Communication & Family Partnership.....	4
Open Door Policy .....	4
Publicity.....	5
<b>CURRICULA &amp; LEARNING</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>GUIDANCE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>TUITION AND FEES</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Important Notice.....	9
Tuition Rates .....	9
Payment.....	9
Methods of Payment .....	10
Late Payment Charges .....	10
Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges.....	10
Late Pick-up Fees .....	10
Credits & No Credits .....	10
<b>ATTENDANCE &amp; WITHDRAWAL</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>PERSONAL BELONGINGS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>NUTRITION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>HEALTH</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>SAFETY</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>EMERGENCIES</b> .....	<b>17</b>

## ABOUT US

### *Philosophy*

Blossom Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation chartered by the State of Tennessee in 2015. A Board of Directors (BoD), which serves without monetary compensation, oversees Blossom Center. The BoD has ultimate decision-making authority over policies and procedures.

To aid its work, the BoD employs an Executive Director (ED) to implement its policies and administer the organization's daily functions. The ED reports to and makes recommendations to the BoD on matters affecting the organization in carrying out its mission. With BoD approval, the ED hires and supervises a team of staff, whose roles are clearly defined to carry out the organization's mission and vision.

The policies in this handbook are intended as guidelines to help the organization function smoothly. Unless otherwise stated, an executive committee of the BoD, consisting of the officers, has the power to make a final decision on all matters of interpretation of Blossom Center's policies. Anyone wishing to appeal any decision may do so, in writing, to the BoD. Any such appeal will be considered at the next regularly scheduled board meeting and, in any case, will be decided within a maximum period of thirty days.

### *Mission/ Vision*

*Mission—to partner with families to provide excellent child centered programs that are affordable and accessible.*

*Vision—to see all children reach their full developmental potential so families and communities thrive.*

### *Certification*

Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence, Inc. (Blossom Center) is approved by the State Department of Human Services to conduct and maintain an *extended child care* center for a maximum of ninety (90) children, ages six (6) weeks through twelve (12) years of age. Blossom Center is located at 280 Royce Circle, Oak Ridge, in Anderson County, Tennessee.

The State of Tennessee licenses Blossom Center and outlines all safety and child care standards with which Blossom Center must comply.

### *Definition of Family*

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

### *Hours of Operation*

Child care services are provided from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

School age care will also be conducted at these times during holidays and breaks as well as: 3:45 p.m.to 6:00p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 1:45p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays while school is in session.

### **Holidays**

We are closed for the following holidays: Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Blossom Center remains open with possible adjusted hours for the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Christmas Eve.

There will be early closings at 4:00 p.m. on the following holidays: Christmas Eve, New Years Eve with the addition of a late start of 7:00 a.m. on New Years Day.

**Temporary Closures:** While Blossom Center strives to remain open, there are occasional situations that require the center to close temporarily. These situations include, but are not limited to illness, inclement weather, and unexpected facility maintenance. Notice of temporary closures will be communicated to parents in a timely manner via Brightwheel.

**Staff Inservice:** Blossom Center will close up to 5 days per year so staff can participate in required child development and safety professional development.

### **Admission & Enrollment**

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 15 months to 11 years of age.

Our process for enrolling children to our program is

(a) Tour—parent or guardian must conduct an onsite tour of Blossom Center with Blossom Center's Program Director prior to a child's enrollment.

(b) Medical—upon acceptance, students must provide a completed and signed Immunization Sheet from their physician stating that the child is up to-date/ current on all their immunizations.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

### **Inclusion**

**Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence** believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, please provide documentation from a physician as well as an action plan.

**Non-Discrimination**

At Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

**Family Activities**

Each family is a child’s first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children’s classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

A Blossom Center Calendar of Events—highlighting various meeting and center activities is published is posted on Blossom Center’s website: [www.blossomcenter.org](http://www.blossomcenter.org) and its contents are subject to change. Any changes or additions to the calendar will be communicated as they occur.

**Confidentiality**

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

**Staff Qualifications**

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Education/Certification</b>	<b>Experience</b>
Teacher	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or higher/CDA/TECTA	1 year
Teacher Assistance	High School Diploma	1 year

Teachers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Blossom Center.

**Child to Staff Ratios**

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Please note: The first and last hour and a half of the day some classes are combine within State regulation combined ratios.

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size
15 – 30 months	6 to 1	12
24 - 35 months	7 to 1	14
36 - 47 months	9 to 1	18
3 - 5-year-olds	13 to 1	22
4 - 5-year-olds	16 to 1	24
5 - 11-year-olds	20 to 1	No Max

Source: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

### **Communication & Family Partnership**

Blossom Center must have the current contact information for all authorized caregivers.

Blossom Center uses the Brightwheel app as a main form of communication to parents.

Blossom Center seeks to facilitate regular communication between parents and teachers. Please contact the lead teacher if there are factors at home that may impact your child’s experience at school. Likewise, the lead teacher might contact the parents from time to time through the app.

**Daily Communications.** Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child’s activities and experiences at the center. Notes can be found on the Feed tab of the Brightwheel app.

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the sign-in/sign-out desk as well as on Brightwheel.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor’s badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur twice each year. Conferences help foster supportive relationships and dates are published on the center’s calendar. During these conferences, we will discuss your child’s strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child’s growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child’s progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

### **Open Door Policy**

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours.



Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### ***Publicity***

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained prior to use of photographs. Parents are asked to sign media release waivers before Blossom Center can use photographs or work of their children or themselves in promotional material. Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### ***Learning Environment***

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

### ***Curricula & Assessment***

**Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence** uses the Creative Curriculum. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see Feed tab of Brightwheel, daily schedules, and lessons plans posted in each classroom.

### ***Transitions***

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

#### ***Transition from home to center***

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

#### ***Transition between learning programs***

Children are transitioned to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Before transitioning to a new classroom, a transition letter will be sent home. During the transition week, the child will spend a portion of

their day in their new classroom while retuning to their current classroom until transition day arrives.

### *Transition for before/after school care*

Children who are of school age may continue with before/after school care at our center. The center will provide staff to ensure that your child arrives at Willow Brook (before school) and back at Blossom Center after school in a timely manner. The Transportation sheet must be completed and on file with the center to be eligible for this service.

### *Electronic Media*

Our normal daily routine does not include electronic media (television/TV, video, DVD) viewing and computer use but from time-to-time, we may use a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. All Electronic Media will be screened prior to use and will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world. Electronic Media will be offered only as a free choice, used to meet a developmental goal, and limited to no more than 30 minutes per week per child.

Tennessee States rules prohibit any screen time for children under two. This includes TV, videos and computers.

Cell phones must be turned off and left in the child's cubby during Blossom Center activities. Children are not permitted to send or receive text messages during school hours. If cell phones ring or are being used by students during program hours, staff and administration reserve the right to confiscate them and check the calling and/or text message history. Parents will be asked to come to the office and retrieve confiscated cell phones.

Other electronic devices will only be allowed if provided by the classroom teachers for instructional purposes.

### *Multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

### *Celebrations*

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

Parents should coordinate arrangements for birthday celebrations with the a teacher or Director at least one week ahead of time.

- If invitations to off-site parties are handed out to children in a group or class—then ALL children in that group or class must be invited to the party, otherwise the invitations cannot be distributed on Blossom Center premises.
- All food brought into the center must meet Blossom Center's requirements for nutrition: Individually-wrapped, Low-sugar and/or healthy options.

## **Rest Time**

After lunch, all children, participate in a quiet/rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

All children are offered the opportunity to rest/nap during designated nap time. Each child naps/rests on foam mats covered with a fitted sheet. Parents must provide fitted sheet and blanket that is label with the child's name.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

## **Toilet Training**

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **General Procedure**

**Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence** is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### **Discipline Policy**

We have created a discipline policy that reflects our philosophy of positive guidance with children. A copy of the discipline policy is included in your enrollment package for you to review and sign.

## ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

## ***Physical Restraint***

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

## ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Destruction of Blossom Center property.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

The goal and expectation for staff at Blossom Center is to model and nurture positive behaviors in children. The following disciplinary procedures will be taken when student behavior does not meet expectations:

- (a) Conference with student and parent notification.
- (b) Conference with student, parent, and staff to develop a behavior management plan.
- (c) Suspend (1-3 days) the student from Blossom Center with written notification to the parent.
- (d) Excessive and/or repeated behaviors that result in major disruptions to the learning environment or are harmful to staff and /or students can result in permanent expulsion from Blossom Center.

School-aged students who are serving an out of school suspension are not eligible for attendance at Blossom until they return to their primary school.

## TUITION AND FEES

### ***Important Notice***

Blossom Center strives to offer high quality child care at competitive prices for ALL families. Current fee structures are listed on our [website \(www.blossomcenter.org\)](http://www.blossomcenter.org). Families are encouraged to explore tuition voucher assistance from Families First and Smart Steps (links to these programs can be found on our website).

All payment and fee processing will be completed by Executive Director or the Program Director. The Executive Director is in charge of collecting tuition and other fees and contacting families regarding payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact the Executive Director .

### ***Tuition Rates***

Full-Time Rate: \$156 per week

Before and After School Rate: \$50 per week

School Age Full-Time Rate: \$110 per week

ORPS Afterschool Rate: \$53 per week

ORPS Full-Time Rate: \$ 156 per week

**\*\*School breaks are billed as fulltime\*\***

Families contract for a specific weekly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every week year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

### ***Overtime Rates***

Overtime rates are contingent on prior agreement of hours or days of care needed. When your family surpasses 50 hours of childcare per week or 12 hours a day, a fee of \$15 will be charged to your account for EACH incident.

### ***Payment***

Payments are due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

**Payment is due weekly by end of business every Friday**, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*. All tuition must be paid a week in advance. All accounts must be kept current. If fees are not paid by this deadline, then the child cannot attend Blossom Center the following Monday and a late fee of \$15 will be added to the account.

### ***Methods of Payment***

We accept personal check, money order, cashier's check, or electronically through the Brightwheel app. There will be a \$50 fee for returned checks and must be paid before the child(ren) can return to Blossom Center.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. **Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees of \$15. Failure to pay child care payments after 3 weeks will result in child care services being terminated.**

Repeated late payments or failure to pay will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than 25 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$50. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$15 per 10 minutes will be assessed beginning at 6:10 PM and will be due upon arrival. **Repeated late pick up may result in childcare services being terminated.**

### ***Credits & No Credits***

**Weather-related or Environmental Disaster or Pandemic** – in the event of a serious crisis during which we are prohibited from operating, families shall pay 50% for the next 4 weeks. Payment of your tuition allows us to retain staff, pay operating expenses, and hold open your child's spot for when we are safely able to reopen.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### ***Absence***

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 a.m., please contact us through Brightwheel.

If a school age child will not be attending before or after school care, please notify us through Brightwheel

### ***Vacation***

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

### ***Withdrawal***

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Parents are responsible for remaining tuition fees in the event of a failure to notify.

### ***Closing Due to Extreme Weather***

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced via Brightwheel.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### ***General Procedure***

Our door opens at 5:00 a.m. Per Tennessee State rules and regulations, parents must sign their child in at drop off.

We close at 6:00 p.m. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Pick up and drop off is done in each child classroom by a parent or guardian.

### ***Cell Phone Usage***

In order to best communicate, we ask all cell phones are put away during drop-off and pick up. Viable information is passed during those times.

### ***Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up***

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must add to your list in Brightwheel. Your child will not be

released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 30 minutes we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### ***What to Bring***

- **All Children:** at least two changes of clothes(including socks and shoes), a cot cover and blanket.
- **Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training process, diaper and wipes, a cot cover and blanket.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

### ***Cubbies***

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

### ***Toys from Home***

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. A small soft toy for nap time is acceptable.



## NUTRITION

### *Food Prepared for or at the Center*

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service. A menu is posted in each classroom as well as at the front desk.

### *Food Allergies*

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions with a doctor's note. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

### *Meal Time*

At mealtime the dining table is set with plates and flatware, and the food is placed onto plates with correct child sized portions. A teacher is always present at the table. Children are encouraged to feed themselves and use good table manners. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

### *School Aged Participants*

- Before and after school child care participants will be offered a light snack at each session. These snacks are not a meal. If your child will be arriving before 8:30 AM, arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please make sure your child has had breakfast before arriving at child care and is supplied with an adequate lunch if required for school.

## HEALTH

### *Immunizations*

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Every November, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 10 days after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

## Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores that cause drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- When a physician or other health professionals written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours without medication.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.
- Children sent home for illness may not return until they meet the above requirements. For example, a child who goes home with a fever on Tuesday, may not return to Blossom Center until Thursday.

### ***Allergy Prevention***

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

### ***Medications***

Our center does not administer prescription or over the counter medication to children. Please make arrangements for medication to be given before and after Blossom Center attendance.

### ***Communicable Diseases***

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- H1Ni Virus
- Heamophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Hepatitis A
- HIV/AIDS
- Influenza (Flu)
- Measles
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Poliomyelitis
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- Any Cluster or Outbreak (Hand Foot & Mouth, Strep throat, Rotavirus, etc.)

## **SAFETY**

### ***Clothing***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 32 °F or less than 95 °F degrees.

### ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to simultaneously contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Biting***

Biting is a stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

### ***Smoking/Vaping***

We are a smoke-free facility. No smoking or vaping on the premises. Please refrain from dumping tobacco products on grounds.

### ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the Department of Children's Services if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

The Child Abuse Hotline is 1.877.54ABUSE (1.877.542.2873).

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Lost or Missing Child***

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 15 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### ***Fire Safety***

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms, sprinklers, fire extinguishers, and panic doors.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

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# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Blossom Center for Childhood Excellence Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

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Center Staff Signature

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Date

