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## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Building Blocks Childcare and Learning Center, LLC is to provide exceptional care, nurture, and age appropriate learning opportunities in a safe loving environment. The mission is accomplished through the dedicated effort of qualified owners, management and staff whose concern is for the welfare of the children entrusted to their care.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for choosing our Center to serve you and your family during this important period in your child's life.

We want your child to have the best possible experience while in attendance at our Center. This handbook contains information about our program and policies that will help answer any questions that you may have.

This handbook is intended only as a guideline to familiarize you with our basic policies and procedures. These policies are subject to change and additions. If we are to make a change to the handbook, you will get a copy of the addendum to add to your handbook. If you have questions about any of the policies, please feel free to contact the owner and/or management.

We hope that your association with our Center will be a helpful and pleasant experience as your child grows and learns.

Building Blocks Child Care and Learning Center, LLC.  
Beth Hanna

## **Enrollment Policies**

As stated in the enrollment information, we accept children from the age of 4 weeks to 13 years. Due to state ratio requirements, we ask that all children in our preschool programs be potty trained.

After beginning at our Center, if for any reason termination is to happen, we require a two-week notice from either party.

A current immunization record is required by South Dakota licensing standards before any child may attend a Childcare Center. The record must be kept up to date. Please see the director if you have any questions regarding immunizations.

Effective 1/27/2015, Building Blocks will require ALL children to have current immunizations per the state health department recommendations. There will be no exceptions. This immunization policy change is for the protection of all children and staff in our building.

## **Tuition Policies**

*A. Registration Fee:* There is a \$25.00 registration fee per family. This pertains to new enrollments as well as any return enrollment that have previously withdrawn. This non-refundable fee is paid only once for children attending continuously year-round. We do allow a withdrawal of your child for the summer months if you will be out of the center for two weeks or greater. This can only be done after the regularly scheduled last day of school and your child would need to be reenrolled by the first day of school.

*B. Waiting List Registration:* If a specific classroom or age level program is operating from a waiting list, the registration fee of \$25.00 will be taken in advance to secure a child's space.

*C. Infant Room Deposit/Registration Fee:* To enroll for our infant room, we require a first week nonrefundable deposit as well as the \$25.00 registration fee, made payable in separate checks. The first week will be applied to your account and will count towards your first week of tuition. If after that deposit is paid. You change your mind on enrolling, you will forfeit both the deposit as well as the registration fee.

*D. Payment of Tuition:* Tuition is due weekly. You may pay in advance if you wish to pay for more than one week at a time. There will be a \$5.00 late fee if payment for the current week is not received by 10:00am on Friday of each week. If tuition becomes two weeks delinquent, you may be asked to immediately withdraw your child until the entire balance is paid in full. If payment is paid with cash, please be sure to place in an envelope or give to management. If you need a receipt of payment with each payment for flex spending reasons, please be sure to let the director know. All families will be given a tax receipt at the years end, as a portion of your childcare expenses may be tax deductible.

E. *School Age* rates revert to Summer Rates during Christmas, summer vacations and if for some reason there is a pandemic that requires the kids to be out of school and at the center all day for two weeks or longer. This will include any field trip costs with the exception of swimming pool field trips...a pool pass will be required in the summer months.

F. *Tuition Exemption*: For the protection of all children enrolled in our Center, a child will be sent home with illnesses that are contagious. Please see our HEALTH POLICY for more specific information. In case of major illnesses or hospitalization, credit will be given for days missed, with a doctor's written statement. Examples of illnesses qualifying for exemption are: Meningitis, Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Mumps, Measles, RSV, Pneumonia, Scabies, Influenza, Covid-19 and any hospitalization or surgery. If the time is a partial week of exemption, you will be required to pay for the remainder of the week.

G. *At the Center for Days off of School*: If there are days off of school for weather, inservices or Holidays...the school age kids can be at the Center. If your child has to be out of school for Covid Quarentine...weather themselves or for a class member, they will not be allowed at the Center for those two weeks. Free days (if yhe child has days) could be used for that time or if a positive test result is brought in...a sick exemption credit can be used.

H. *Center Schedule and Holidays*: The Center will be open from 6:00am to 6:00pm each day Monday through Friday with the exception of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. Our Center will close at 2:00pm on Christmas Eve Day. If one of these holidays falls on a weekend, we will be closed on Friday for Saturday holidays and on Monday for Sunday holidays. All families pay for our scheduled closed holidays and you are unable to use free days for the holiday. If you are state assistance, you will be required to pay for the holiday as the state will only pay for hours the child(ren) are in the Center.

*I. Holiday/Summer School Age rate Changes:*

For the two Full weeks over Christmas/New Years Break, our school age rate goes up to a School Age Summer Rate..this will include all of the field trips that we have planned for the holiday break. With the number of days off over the course of the school year...these two weeks should offset the rest of the days off of school that the rate remains the school age rate.

*J. Summer School Age Rate:*

The school age children pay the school age summer rate to include field trips beginning the first full week of summer through the last partial week of summer. For example: if school releases for summer on a Wednesday, the rate will not change until the next Monday. If the kids go back to school on a Wednesday, the rate will remain the summer rate through that entire week and change on the first full week back to school.

*K. Free Days:* Credit will be allowed for the time absent from the Center equal to two weeks of the program in which each of your children is enrolled. This credit may be taken at the parent's discretion during each enrollment year. A free day slip must be submitted anytime before or within two weeks of the day of absence that credit is to be used for. Free days start over on each child's anniversary date. Free days may not be carried over year to year.

*L. Lunches and Snacks:* Lunches and snacks are included in tuition for all programs enrolled. Children may also bring their own lunches to the Center. We are a NUT free Center. Please no peanut butter of any sort.

*M. Charges for Late Pick Up:* The Center closes each evening at 6:00pm. There will be a late charge of \$5.00 per every minute after 6:00pm up to 6:15pm. For every minute after 6:15, you will be charged \$15 per minute. The rate is per child. This fee will be charges up to the exact time the parent and child leave the building. The amount is payable to the Center. If a child is picked up after 6:35..a call to law enforcement and child protection services may be made.

O. *Returned Check Policy*: There will be a \$25.00 service charge on any returned checks. If there are more than two checks returned you will be asked to pay by cash, cashier check or money order.

P. *Withdrawals*: The parent agrees to give the Director a minimum of two week's notice when choosing to withdraw a child from the Center. The Center reserves the right to dis enroll a child if necessary. A two-week notice would also be given to the parent if this situation were to arise.

Q. *Field Trips*: Field trips will be taken outside the Center sometimes require an activity fee to cover the trip. We try to keep fees to a minimum. These fees are made payable to the Center.

R. *Busing Fees*: There will be fees collected semesterly for school agers riding our bus to and from school. There will also be fees collected for summer activities associated with gas prices. These fees are payable to the Center separate from weekly tuition.

S. *At the Center for Days off of School*: If there are days off of school for weather, inservices or Holidays...the school age kids can be at the Center. If your child has to be out of school for Covid Quarentine...weather themselves or for a class member, they will not be allowed at the Center for those two weeks. Free days (if yhe child has days) could be used for that time or if a positive test result is brought in...a sick exemption credit can be used.



## Health

A. *State and Center Health Requirements:* Before a child may be enrolled in a Childcare Center, the Center must require a child's parent or guardian to submit current immunization records that have been obtained from the child's doctor or nurse.

B. All parents and the Department of Health must be notified if any child in the childcare Center contracts a communicable disease. The Center must have on file the name, address and the telephone number of each child's source of regular health supervision as well as other emergency medical information

C. *Medication:* Medications may only be administered with the written consent of the parent or guardian. Medications must be kept in their original container with the original label. The label for prescription medications must contain legible directions for use, the expiration date, the child's name, and the physician's name. A drug container without a label or an illegible label is not permitted. All medications requiring refrigeration will be placed in a specific container marked "medications". Absolutely NO medication should be left in backpacks, diaper bags, etc. Make sure all medications are given to a staff member upon your arrival at the Center.

D. *Illness:* We strive to prevent the spread of illness, and your cooperation with our policies regarding this will be of tremendous help. If your child has a fever (100.0) , diarrhea, or any other symptoms of a contagious illness, in all fairness to the other children, please keep him or her at home. Since minor respiratory problems are common and danger is minimal, we do not require that your child stay home due to a cold. However, all children are taken outside twice a day for fresh air and exercise. If your child is too ill to participate in outdoor activities, your child is probably too ill to attend the Center.

Should your child become ill while at the center we will separate him/her from other children and always phone you to make you immediately aware of his or her condition. If your child has a temperature of 100.0 F Degrees, you will be alerted by phone and you must remove the child from the Center within an hour. Please read the following health guidelines to further acquaint yourself with our policies regarding illness. All infectious diseases must be reported to the state health department.

## **Health Guidelines**

### Guidelines For Sending a Child Home

- \*If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees F.
- \*If a child is vomiting or has any type of undiagnosed rash.
- \* If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees F and/or has one or more of the following:
  - \*Chicken Pox—Slight fever, fine blisters on scalp, face or body.
  - \*Diarrhea—At least two watery bowel movements within two hours.
  - \*Measles—runny nose; watery eyes; fever; cough, rash.
  - \*Mumps—Pain in cheeks; swelling over jaw and front of ear.
  - \*Pink Eye—Red eyes; discharge from eyes; crusted eyelids
  - \*Strep—Fever; sore throat
  - \*Head Lice—Little bugs on scalp; itchy scal
  - \*Ringworm—Itchy, scaly patches on scalp or body
  - \*Impetigo—Small blisters that become crusted and contain pus.
  - \*Thrush—Sores usually in mouth and throat
  - \*Croup—A type of influenza, coughing, fever.
  - \*RSV—Viral respiratory illness, fever, vomiting, diarrhea.
  - \*Hand, Foot & Mouth—Lesions in/around mouth, palms, fingers & soles of feet.
- \*Covid-19—A combination of many of the symptoms above as well as a fever. Would need to be out of the center for 14 days with a positive test result.

The Center may send a child home if behavior indicates illness.

## **Guidelines for Returning a Child to the Center**

A child sent home because of a fever may return 24 hours after their temperature is normal without the aid of aspirin, Tylenol or ibuprofen. Your director may ask for a doctor's note stating that your child may return to the Center. Other communicable diseases will require a note from the doctor in order to return to the Center.

## **Fire, Tornado, Lock Down and Natural Disasters**

Our center has special procedures set up to deal with such emergencies as fire and natural disaster. The center is inspected on a regular basis by the South Dakota department of Health. Fire drills are held 4 times a year and tornado drills-- once a year and Lock Downs—once a year. During severe weather, a constant check is kept for emergency information through internet and weather radios.

Emergency evacuation drills are practiced each year. It is very important for children to know what to do and where to go if an emergency situation exists; this is one way to limit panic and fear and to speed up any evacuation if necessary. In cases of emergency evacuation, children and staff will follow plans posted within the center.

For fire evacuation, children are instructed to use exits as posted and proceed outside and away from building as directed. For other emergency evacuation, children are instructed to follow teacher's directions according to posted plans.

## **Inclement Weather Information**

Our center will not close for business during inclement weather, unless it is extremely severe winter weather or summer storm that causes the functions of the entire community to shut down. It is the parent's discretion whether road conditions are safe or passable.

There may be times when our center may be forced to delay opening or close early due to road conditions which inhibit staff abilities to reach the center by 6:00am. or travel safely home. In the unlikely event of a delayed opening time or not opening at all, we will send out a phone vite message. The message will have all of the details needed and will come through your phone from the Building Blocks phone number.

Please feel free to contact your Director or Assistant Director with any questions you might have regarding the above information.

### **Authorizing Individuals Too Pick Up Your Child**

If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, a written notice must be left with the Director in the morning. We require picture identification from anyone other than yourself picking up the child.

Individuals picking up children must be at least 18 years old or have a valid driver's license/ID card and written permission from a parent. Pick up. We will not, under any circumstances, allow your child to leave with an unauthorized person, and please understand that this is completely for the protection and safety of your child. If custody situations arise, please provide the Director with proper legal documentation. If someone other than yourself will be picking up, please do not provide them with door entry codes. We prefer that they ring the doorbell for entry.

### **Arriving and Leaving the Center**

Center hours are 6:00A.M. To 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. Children should not be dropped off or picked up outside of these hours. All children **MUST** be brought into the building. No child should be left unattended in any area of the building while being dropped off or picked up. Please “sign” your child in and out daily and notify the center when your child will be unable to attend the center that day.

### **Lunches, Snacks, and Feeding Times**

Our menus have been designed to meet state requirements and are intended to give each child a well-balanced meal. A wide variety of food choices are served to help your child begin a lifetime of healthy eating habits. We recognize that all children will not eat all types of foods, but we feel exposure to a wide variety of foods at an early age is important. We strongly encourage each child take a bite of everything on his/her plate.

The menu is posted in the dining area and each of the classrooms. If you are aware that your child will not eat a particular food type, you may send a sack lunch from home. These sack lunches are stored in the kitchen. If your child requires a special diet, food must be provided by the parent.

Lunch is provided from approximately 10:45am to 12:00pm each day. Snacks are provided each morning and afternoon, check with the Director for exact times. We do not provide breakfast, but you may bring a breakfast item for your child to have and we will help assist them in preparation of their food.

Treats: Special treats are permissible if prior arrangements have been made with the Director or your child's teacher. Due to potential allergies, all treats must be store bought and no peanut contained items will be allowed.

Infants will be held while bottle-feeding, or per parent's request. We do not “prop bottles up” while a child is feeding.

No gum or hard candy is allowed in the Center.

### **Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect**

On or before the first day at our center, all staff members are required to read and sign a statement which defines child/abuse neglect and states reporting requirements.

Any staff member who feels that a child in the center may have been abused/neglected is required by law to immediately report to the Director who will inform the Department of Social Services or law enforcement agency. The Director must then ensure that the alleged abuse/neglect will not recur, pending investigation. Protection will be provided if it is felt that the child may be in immediate danger by either reassigning the staff member to a non-child-caring role or by temporarily suspending him or her until the investigation has been completed.

Continued employment ability of any staff member involved in an incident or child abuse/neglect will be evaluated.

### **Child Behavior Guidelines**

Any discipline will incorporate:

- \*positive guidance
- \*redirection of energy
- \*setting of reasonable limits

Any peer pressure as a discipline measure and any humiliating or frightening form of punishment is prohibited.

If your child is experiencing some behavioral difficulty, you will be notified by your child's teacher or the Director and a conference will be scheduled. The Director and teachers will then work closely with you to see if the problem or problems can be resolved. As a last resort, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from the center with a two-week's notice.

The following information is intended as a guideline for working with children who are having difficulty in adjusting to or abiding by certain rules of behavior in a classroom or center as a whole.

- 1.Center management is always obligated to look first within the center, staff, schedules, and/or activities to ascertain if the center can realistically offer any changes in its program that will help the child adjust behavior appropriately.
- 2.Center management and staff will communicate with parents as situations develop to keep them informed and involved.
- 3.As problems continue, the Center Director will hold a parent conference to form an “action plan” to help facilitate more appropriate and/or acceptable behavior on the part of the child. Also, at this time, an agreement should be reached as to when or what behavior should warrant the Director and her/his staff contacting parents during the day regarding the child's behavior and when the Director will call the parents to pick the child up before their normal pick up time.
- 4.The center reserves the right to dis enroll a child when:
  - A. Parent action is not followed or if there is no positive change in the child's behavior as per time limits previously set in the “action plan.”
  - B. Center has accumulated numerous incident reports documenting the child's behavior to this particular point.

## **Transportation**

Transportation is provided to and from Brandon Elementary, Robert Bennis Elementary and Fred Assam Elementary during the school year and we also transport for field trip activities throughout the year. We do not transport to Valley Springs. Our bus will not leave a school until all children are accounted for. If your child will not be riding the bus, please call the center before 2:30pm to let a teacher or the director know. Our center is not responsible for accidents or other problems which occur if your child uses other forms of transportation to and from our center including the public-school buses.

Only children three years and older are allowed to participate in a field trip activity without a parent being present. Insurance is provided for the bus used to transport children. Our bus does not have seat belts on it. The law does not require seat belts on buses. This makes it very important for you to reiterate with your children the importance of bus safety.

## **Field Trip Rules**

Periodically trips away from the center are planned and our wish is to include all children for this special activity. Occasionally we may ask for an activity fee to cover the cost of the field trip.

We do have guidelines that need to be followed by children in order to make it a positive experience for all. Please be aware and supportive of these guidelines.

1. All children must display appropriate behavior at all times. The following behavior is unacceptable on any trip:

- A. Running ahead of the group.
- B. Running away from the group or teacher.
- C. Not listening.
- D. Not following directions.
- E. Showing disrespect to adults.
- F. Profanity of any kind—words or actions.
- G. Throwing temper tantrums.



2. All bus rules must be obeyed(listed below).
- A. Get on and off the bus one person at a time.
  - B. Use quiet bus-voices!
  - C. Keep hands in lap, backs against the seat, and your feet on the floor.
  - D. There is no bouncing or rough housing.
  - E. All items must be put in back packs while traveling on the bus.
  - F. Children are responsible for cleaning up after themselves on the bus.
  - G. No children should put their hands, arms, coats, etc., out of the windows.
  - H. Be polite to the driver and your friends at all times!
  - I. Children will be supervised by an adult at all times.

### **Insurance Coverage**

We ask that all children enrolled in our Center be covered under a health insurance policy. We require that all children have a copy in their file of their current insurance policy. If you do not have coverage, please contact the director for some options.

In the event that your child is involved in an accident while at our center and requires medical attention, our Insurance has a med pay plan that will cover your out of pocket dollar amount up to \$5000.00. If the injury is bigger than that we have additional coverage that would proceed through an investigation before making payment.

If your child has an accident, we require several forms including copies of the itemized billing from the doctor or hospital, and a copy of the explanation of benefits from your insurance company. Your Director will have the forms you need and can explain the process if such a case arises.

**Miscellaneous**

*Clothing*-It's important for children of all ages to have a complete change of clothing at the center, since even those beyond the age of “accidents” will occasionally spill juice, milk, or paint. We ask that you please clearly mark each item and send them in a bag also marked with your child's name. Please dress your child appropriately for the preschool environment and for the weather since we feel it is important for children to get out and get exercise and fresh air each day. Mittens, hats, scarves, boots and snowsuits should be labeled. Please send your child in shoes that are comfortable and easy to play and run in. Open toed sandals are strongly discouraged and not permitted on field trips. We will try our best to help the children keep track of personal clothing, but cannot be responsible for misplaced items.

*Blankets*-Children attending during nap should bring a small blanket and/or a small pillow. These items must be clearly labeled and taken home weekly to be washed. If you would like your child to sleep on a nap mat, please provide a mat with your child's name on it.

*Toys from home*-We allow toys from home on Fridays only. This is our show and tell day. If your child brings a toy from home any other day during the week, they will be asked to put it away or a teacher will take it and give it back at departure time.

*Personal Items*—The department of Social Services has passed a law requiring each licensed child care center in the state of South Dakota to have individual storage receptacles for personal belongings. We ask that each child has a bag for their personal belongings to be stored. The intent of this law is to prevent cross-contamination and the spread of infectious diseases and lice.

*Special program charges*-We may offer special programs, such as swimming lessons, tumblebus, dance and basketball. The fees for these programs are in addition to your weekly tuition. All programs are optional to your child.

*Rest Time*-Our center has a scheduled rest period. Please check with the Director for specific times.

*Custody Issues*-We feel that it is in the best interest of the children to remain neutral in custody issues. We recommend that these issues be resolved outside of the Center. We will provide basic information such as sign in/out records, incident/accident reports, and payment information only.

*Outdoor Activities*-Questionable weather/temperature guidelines for outdoor playtime are as follows, but these are at the discretion of the Director.

**Fall/Winter:** The temperature needs to be above zero with the wind-chill factor not less than zero. Children who do not bring snow pants or boots will be required to go outside but will have to stay next to the building on the playground. All children will have to go outside as a group otherwise one child may potentially put our classrooms out of ratio.

**Spring/Summer:** Unless temperature rises over 100 degrees, the children will go outside as scheduled. In extremely hot weather, shorter periods of outside time will be advised. Staff will encourage children to drink lots of fluids and apply their sunscreen as needed.

*Sunscreen and Bug Spray*-Each child will need to pay \$10 each. The center will provide the sunscreen/bug spray for the summer. If your child needs special sunscreen, we will allow you to bring your own and not pay the fee. You, however, are responsible to replenish and always have some at the Center.

*Refund of Over Payment*-In the event of withdrawal and an overpayment is on your account, we will issue a check refunded to your last known address.

*Reporting of changes of circumstances*-Building Blocks Childcare and Learning Center will report changes of circumstances which may affect ability to comply with licensing rules, i.e. new program location, building renovations/remodeling, suspected in-house child abuse and neglect, ownership change, or new Director.

Announcements of center events and our activities will be posted at the front entrance and also on classroom doors.

### **Parent Referral Program**

Whenever you, as a currently enrolled parent, refer another parent, you will receive a \$100 credit on your account after the new family has completed their first week of enrollment.

Building Blocks Childcare and Learning Center

1714 Frontier St.

Brandon, SD 57005

4 weeks to 13 years

605-582-5437—Main

605-582-4111—School Age

605-582-5685—Fax