



**BUILDING BLOCKS**

**EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

# **Family Handbook**

VERSION: 9/14/21

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PLEASE NOTE: Information in the Building Blocks Family Handbook is subject to change and interpretation at Building Blocks' discretion.

## WELCOME TO BUILDING BLOCKS!

Welcome to the Building Blocks' family!

Building Blocks Early Learning Center (Building Blocks) offers a unique integrative approach which provides programs for the physical, intellectual, and social development of children during the years that matter most. Our schools are family-oriented, maintaining the feel of a tightly-knit, supportive community that truly is a home-away-from-home. Building Blocks teachers focus on the social-emotional development of each and every child in their classroom, providing a solid foundation for safe and positive learning that enhances children's abilities to succeed in the classroom, in their relationships, and throughout life.

*Choose Love* is a mantra that drives learning in all of our classrooms. Through the "Choose Love Enrichment Program", children learn to choose love in all circumstances as teachers focus on building four important character values: courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action. We are proud to be one of the only early education programs that integrates the "Choose Love" program, as we proudly watch our enrolled children progress to kindergarten with strong senses of optimism, resilience, personal responsibility, and a desire to spread love.

This Parent Handbook provides you with a larger overview of Building Blocks, with a heightened focus on our philosophies and approach to education and childcare. It also includes practices and policies which guide the way we work with our families and our expectations and responsibilities of parents enrolled in our program. Our approach is based on mutual respect and appreciation of the children entrusted in our care, our families and our Building Blocks' team.

Policies, practices and programs may change to assure that we continue to evolve best practices in early childhood education, integrate the feedback from our families, and that we address current State of Connecticut regulatory changes. We will provide updates, modifications and changes to practices and policies in letters we send home with your children. Other updates will be provided through postings on our parents' wall, emails, voicemails, Facebook as well as during our annual meetings with your family.

We ask that you read this Parent Handbook carefully and refer to it as a guidebook. If anything is unclear, please discuss with the Program Director. Additionally, your child's teacher and the Building Blocks leadership team are always available to answer any questions you may have.

We have a great team of people here dedicated to the development and well-being of your child, and we are incredibly excited to welcome you to our loving family. Thank you for enrolling with us at Building Blocks Early Learning Centers!

# APPROACH TO EARLY EDUCATION

## BUILDING BLOCKS' EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The program encompasses a variety of philosophies of child development, Reggio Emilia and Jean Piaget. Building Blocks provides a homelike setting in which children learn through what they do best – PLAY! Our programs offer a flexible schedule that focuses on education, social and emotional skills, language, physical and cognitive development. Our program also meets and enhances the individual needs of a diverse population of children with special physical and developmental needs as well as cultural and language differences. Our curriculum outlines goals and objectives that must be met for each stage in a child's life and our teachers create targeted individual lesson plans for each child so they can attain their very best while having fun.

Our program includes but is not limited to the following:

- Indoor and outdoor physical activities which provide opportunities for fine and gross motor development;
- Problem solving experiences that facilitate concept formation, language development and sensory discrimination;
- Creative experiences which allow children the opportunity to develop and express their own ideas and feelings in all parts of the program, including, but not limited to: arts/media, dramatic play, music, language and motor activity;
- Language learning experiences that provide opportunities for spontaneous conversation, as well as experiences with book, poems, stories and songs;
- Experiences that promote self reliance and build self esteem
- Health education experiences that include modeling good health practices, sound nutrition and safety awareness;
- Child-initiated and staff-initiated activities;
- Exploration and discovery;
- Varied choices for children in materials and equipment;
- Individual and small group activities;
- Active and quiet play;
- Rest, sleep or quiet activity;
- Nutritious snacks;
- Toileting and clean up

## IMPORTANCE OF PLAY BASED LEARNING

Here are five elements essential to meaningful play that create those rich memories we treasure:

### 1. Children make their own decisions.

When children choose how to play for themselves, they experience freedom in making those choices. They also begin to see connections between choice and the consequences or results of that choice. The type of toys or materials schools offer can help the children make more meaningful decisions. Open-ended materials can be used in many ways so children can decide for themselves how to use them. For example, a child can imagine a block to be a fire truck or any number of things. A toy fire truck, on the other hand, is usually used as a fire truck. Foam pieces, little wooden sticks, ribbon scraps, and other reusable resources are all open-ended materials that inspire creative thinking and delight when children use them to make something no one has ever made before.

### 2. Children are intrinsically motivated.

The impulse to play comes from a natural desire to understand the world. This play impulse is as strong as your child's desire for food or sleep. It is this intrinsic motivation that allows a child to regulate his/her own feelings and desires in order to keep playing. Because children eventually find it more important to be part of play with their friends than to satisfy their own wants and needs at that moment, children learn self-control. And self-control has been shown to lead to success in later years, especially in today's information age, where distractions are part of daily life.

### **3. Children become immersed in the moment.**

In true play, children are so fully engaged that they lose awareness of their surroundings, time, and space. In this risk-free atmosphere where reality is suspended, children have the security and safety they need to experiment, try new ideas, and investigate the laws of nature. Although they are immersed in their play, children still can recognize reality versus fantasy, something parents often wonder about.

### **4. Play is spontaneous, not scripted.**

Often, play is totally unplanned. Other times, play is planned but a child impulsively makes a change. One child changes his mind, or perhaps a toy does not cooperate. This sense of the unknown provides children with opportunities to develop flexibility in their thinking and decision making, which is a vital life skill.

### **5. Play is enjoyable.**

Play always has an emotional response attached to it. Without this emotional connection, the experience is simply an activity; it is not PLAY. Enjoyment is the direct result of engaging in play. It is FUN! These five essential elements of play outline why play provides your child with a rich experience. And isn't that what we want for our children, to develop play memories that will become the "good old days"?

## **PHILOSOPHY**

### **REGGIO EMILIA**

The teachers at Building Blocks use the Reggio Emilia Philosophy to develop age-appropriate themes based on the interests of the children. A Reggio teacher takes part in the learning process of each child through interaction and observation. By creating an environment that utilizes the classroom as the third teacher, the staff at Building Blocks is able to develop a theme and at the same time, watch the children grow physically and emotionally. Reggio boards are used as documentation to track each child's progress within the Connecticut Early Learning Development Standards. Teachers are able to observe and document how each child is growing socially, physically and developmentally.

## **EDUCATOR SELECTION AND TRAINING**

All staff undergo a series of assessments prior to hiring, including a Background Record Check (BRC), a DCF background check, and fingerprinting. After careful consideration with reference checks, the new educator will attend a training orientation that reviews company policies, child abuse prevention, and other Office of Early Childhood (OEC) required training. Once a new educator arrives at the school, he or she will be thoroughly trained in school operations and safety policies, curriculum expectations and implementation best practices, and Building Blocks' family and teamwork values. An extensive onboarding program along with ongoing training promote an environment of constant learning, collaboration and excellence.

### **EDUCATOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Our staff are trained upon hire and all throughout the year. Additionally, all staff are required to participate in the Staff Development Program annually. The staff is required to participate, attend workshops and prepare classrooms for the new school year. Staff development includes visits to Building Blocks from childcare related organizations as well as training from outside consultants.

All Building Blocks' staff are required to receive 1% of their annual hours in professional development. All hours are documented by the Program Director and are kept on site for review. Each Building Blocks staff member has a professional development plan and are required to become certified and maintain annual certifications and/or training which go towards their professional development hours, which many include, but not limited to:

- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Child Day Care Regulations;
- DCF training on Neglect & Abuse by the State of Connecticut;
- Office of Early Childhood Health regulations on Administering Medications;
- First Aid, CPR & AED;
- Allergic Reaction Emergency;
- EPI-Pen;

- Asthma & Use of Inhalers and Nebulizers;
- Child and Adult Care Food Program - CACFP guidelines;
- Diabetes;
- Hand Washing;
- Diaper Changing;
- Child Illness During School;
- Posting of a Confirmed Communicable Illness of a Child;
- Child Injury;
- Adult Injury;
- Prevention of Hazards in the School;
- Pet Class Care Plan;
- Birthday Party Policies Including: Planning with Parents; Time of Day; Serving Nutritious Food; Ban on “Goodie Bags”; Invitations;
- Classroom Management & Sanitation;
- Fire Drills;
- Fire Evacuation;
- Weather Emergency;
- Emergency Evacuation;
- Security Threat & Lockdown;
- Building Blocks’ Annual Professional Development Training which includes a review of all Program policies, practices and procedures;
- Professionalism and Ethics;
- Time/stress management;
- Curriculum and Assessment of Children related to the CTEDLS Standards Reggio Emilia Philosophy and Training;
- Assessing and Evaluating The development of Young Children, Language/Literacy development of Young Children;
  - Diversity – cultural and linguistic;
- Children with Special Needs.

## **AGE GROUP AND CLASSROOMS**

Each Building Blocks school offers various classroom and scheduling options depending upon the individual community and facility. Each school is designed to support your child as they learn and grow throughout their early education journey.

### **INFANT**

Building Blocks’ infant classrooms foster an environment of safety, comfort, and security. In classrooms filled with nurturing teachers, sensory discoveries, and new friends, we help babies thrive through age-appropriate and individualized interactions.

Research tells us that the brain develops more in the first three years of life than at any other point in human development. Each moment is intentionally planned in Building Blocks’ infant program to ensure your baby will make the most of this period of rapid cognitive, emotional, and physical growth.

We recognize creating a supportive partnership as you leave your baby in our care is a priority. Our infant programs are designed to make the transition between home and school smooth and enjoyable for the whole family. Individualized schedules, nurturing primary caregivers, and thoughtfully designed classrooms will ensure your infant’s days are enriching and safe.

### **TODDLER**

Your toddler will begin to gain and assert independence through milestones such as first words, drinking out of a cup, and potty-training. Through a combination of personalized instruction and small group time, teachers advance toddlers’

resourcefulness, critical thinking skills, and capacity for compassion. Hands-on learning and play keep toddlers actively engaged and continuously interested in understanding more about themselves, their friends and family, and the world around them.

Our passionate and energetic teachers will provide your toddler with a consistent routine and schedule, filled with exploration and introduction to new experiences. Our toddler program nurtures the “I can do it!” mindset, while also helping toddlers understand their relationship to the environment and peers around them. Regardless of their developmental stage, each day will be filled with laughter and learning to balance independence and collaboration, reading, singing, and hands-on learning.

### **PRESCHOOL | PRE-K**

Building Blocks’ Preschool and Pre-kindergarten classrooms honor and inspire the incredible connections that children infer about the objects, actions, and people in the world around them. Our Preschool and Pre-k classrooms harness the energy of learning to create a focused, engaged environment in which children are poised to thrive. Through play and interactive dialogue, children are encouraged to express their own individuality, as well as appreciate the unique traits of others.

Building Blocks’ Preschool and Pre-k classrooms will prepare your child to enter kindergarten ready to learn and contribute. We nurture inquisitive minds and refine core skills as children prepare to enter kindergarten. With a variety of learning centers throughout the room, children are encouraged to explore at their own pace and experiment with new concepts and skills. Our enhanced literacy program enables children to advance their verbal, written, and aural language aptitude. Activities are individualized for each child’s learning pace as we explore concepts related to language, reading, writing, math, science, social studies, creative arts, motor skills, and social development in preparation for kindergarten.

### **SCHOOL AGE (AVAILABLE AT SOME LOCATIONS)**

Our School Age classrooms are cheerful spaces that promote social and emotional development, while supporting continued learning before and after school. With respect and integrity, our school age students practice cooperation, explore creativity, and continue their studies. With a balance of individual and group time, children may complete homework, play games, create crafts, read books, and more. In our mixed-age classrooms, students have an opportunity to learn from and mentor peers with kindness and respect.

In addition to offering dedicated time for homework, our School Age classrooms enhance children’s education through weekly learning plans. Every week, activities are designed around writing, math, science, art, team building, and exercise to engage growing, active minds.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Daily outdoor play is very important for young children and is an important component of our program. Per the Office of Early Childhood regulations, children will receive the opportunity daily for ample physical activity. The children will spend time outside every day unless the outdoor temperature is not permitted by state guidelines or it is raining. It is our philosophy and policy that if a child is well enough to attend the program, he/she is well enough to play outdoors. If children are properly dressed, weather conditions should not pose a health risk. Please provide appropriate clothing to allow for weather extremes. Every family must also provide their own sunscreen.

## **TRANSITIONS**

It is the goal of Building Blocks to ensure that all children are transitioned into new classrooms in a systematic way. Building Blocks also understands that these times are transitioning periods for parents as well. When your child is ready to transition to a new classroom, you will receive a transition packet that includes a letter outlining the transition process.

Please be aware that the transition process may vary from child to child, depending upon their individual needs. Some children thrive with shorter transitions while others might need a longer period of time to become accustomed to a new classroom. Transitions can be challenging times for children and parents alike, and we do everything possible to support your family by answering any questions you may have and providing an extra level of support and attention to the transitioning child.

## **PET PLANS**

If pets are kept on site, a care plan will be readily accessible for educators to use. The care plan will detail the procedures for care and maintenance, as well as the pet's access to the children.

## **LEARNING GUIDANCE TOOLS**

Our learning guidance tools help customize each child's approach to learning and facilitate conversations between educators and families. Based on each child's individual learning journey, appropriate and attainable goals are set with children's teachers and school administrators to help children achieve the next milestone. Learning guidance tools and strategies may include:

## **CURRICULUM**

### **CONNECTICUT ELDS STANDARDS**

The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) serve as the foundation for supporting ALL young children in Connecticut, no matter where they live, play and learn. The CT ELDS are statements of what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do across the earliest years of development.

The learning progressions within the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards promote:

- Equity for all children, through the setting of high, but appropriate, expectations;
- High-quality early learning experiences, by providing clear goals and trajectories of learning;
- Provision of individual support, based on each child's growth and development;
- Families' understanding of what their children are learning and how they can support them;
- Teachers' understanding of age-appropriate content and approaches to children's learning; and,
- Communication across sectors, based upon these common goals for children.

The CT ELDS were developed through the work of the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet and its Learning Standards Workgroup. In addition, over 100 state and national experts participated in some way during the development process, helping to ensure a strong and comprehensive set of learning standards.

## **DEVELOPMENT BENCHMARKS**

Honoring each child's individual abilities, our benchmark assessments offer teachers and families an opportunity to reflect upon learning objectives. Teachers observe children's behaviors and interactions to develop a comprehensive understanding of each child's skills throughout the year. With an appreciation for age-appropriate milestones, our educators use this benchmarking tool as a way to support the learning journey for the whole group and each child within. Assessments are reviewed and shared with families during parent-teacher conferences.

## **CHILD GUIDANCE PHILOSOPHY**

### **MANAGING CHILD BEHAVIOR-DISCIPLINE POLICY**

This policy addresses how we manage children's behavior that may be challenging. Building Blocks' employees will use a positive guidance approach using various techniques – positive words instead of using the word "no"; using re-direction; guiding children with respect to become self-governing instead of directing them to do what we tell them to do. Our goal is to enable children to listen, think, and promote problem solving, peace-making, and conflict resolution. We teach children how to be pro-active instead of re-active. These skills are taught in daily routines in every activity we will be teaching the children in our care. Emotional feelings are very important to each of us. Our hearts need to be nourished as much as other parts of our bodies. Forming positive relationships is an integral part of life and must be taught to young children if a child is going to develop into

an adult who can be successful and thrive in social and emotional relationships. The behavior education, taught to the children, is designed to help the children self-govern their own behaviors within themselves and with others in a positive way.

**The staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.**

**The staff will set clear limits to help children with self-control, self-discipline and positive self-esteem. Building Blocks' employees will guide and encourage the children to:**

- Listen and think before they react
- Talk their feelings and issues out with others as opposed to using physical force or rude and violent language
- Use positive social, emotional and communication skills

**Building Blocks' staff promotes pro-social behavior in children by:**

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children and all adults
- Modeling taking turns and sharing and caring behaviors
- Helping children to negotiate their interactions with others and with shared materials
- Engaging children in taking care of their classrooms
- Ensuring that each child has the opportunity to contribute to the group
- Encouraging children to listen to others
- Encouraging children to provide comfort to each other when others are sad or distressed
- Using narration (books, pictures, puppets, community agency training for children (such as anti-violence training available in our community for children), as descriptions of ongoing, positive interactions to identify for them pro-social behaviors.

**Building Blocks' staff counter potential bias and discrimination by:**

- Treating all children and adults with respect and consideration
- Initiating activities and discussions that build positive self-identity and teach the value of differences
- Intervening when children tease or reject each other
- Countering stereotypical limitations by providing children with models and visual images of differing adult roles, abilities and ethnic/cultural backgrounds
- Avoiding stereotypes in language

**Building Blocks' staff respond to a child's challenging behavior in a manner that:**

- Provides for the safety of the child and the safety of others in the classroom
- Is calming and respectful to the child
- Provides the child(ren) with information on what acceptable behavior is

**Building Blocks' staff help children to manage their behavior by guiding and supporting them to:**

- Persist when they are frustrated
- Play cooperatively with other children
- Use their language to communicate their needs
- Learn sharing and taking turns
- Express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
- Use problem-solving and peace-making techniques
- Learn about themselves and others

**Building Blocks' staff work to prevent challenging or disruptive behaviors in children by:**

- Creating positive and friendly spaces for children
- Providing schedules that meet the needs of young children
- Providing effective and smooth transitions
- Providing interesting and engaging activities for children

**Building Blocks' staff address challenging behaviors by:**

- Assessing the function of the behavior
- Involving families and professionals to develop individualized plans to address the behavior in the child
- Using positive behavior support strategies

The staff at Building Blocks shall never use abusive, corporal, neglectful, humiliating or frightening punishment techniques with children under any circumstances (i.e.: screaming at a child, name-calling to a child, verbally intimidating a child, holding back outside time or snack time from a child, etc.) No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to do so to protect the health and safety of the child or other children in the classroom. If any staff person at Building Blocks witnesses any of the above behaviors, they must notify their Program Director immediately who will investigate the incident and where necessary, take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of any employee who violates this policy. Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.

## **BITING**

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers - and sometimes even preschoolers. It is something that almost all children will try at least once. When it happens, it can be scary, frustrating and stressful for everyone involved. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families or educators.

Brief episodes of biting do not mean that a child is having a social or emotional problem. It also does not mean that the family is to blame. It does mean that your child is going through a stage in his/her development. As with all developmental stages, biting will end.

**Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:**

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
- Frustration, anxiety
- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- Mimicking behavior
- Inexperienced peer interactions
- A way of showing affection
- Exploring cause-and-effect
- Exploring holding on and letting go
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement and over stimulation

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 techniques that address the specific reason for biting. Delayed punishment at home will not be understood by the child.

An injury report will be written for the child who was bitten. The family of the biter will be notified by the child's educator. We will work together with the families of the biter and the bitten child to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change. We will make every effort to modify the behavior quickly. The name of the child who has bitten will remain confidential.

## **REFERRAL SERVICES**

Our goal is to work with families to meet the unique needs of each individual child. Building Blocks' administrators often make referrals to community resources, in response to individual child needs for assistance with social behavior, mental health, educational development, and medical services (including dental and vision). A referral most often begins with a concern voiced by an educator, an administrator, or a parent. Educators and families should bring these concerns to the school's Director.

While the process for referrals varies on a case-by-case basis, the Director will typically review the child's record and schedule a time for an administrator to observe the child. When the observation(s) is complete, the Director will then arrange a meeting with the child's family to discuss the observations and create a Positive Guidance Plan. If the Director wishes to make a referral,

he or she will ask the family to sign a “Consent for Referral” form. If a referral is made, the Director will follow up with the family on a periodic basis.

Building Blocks remains committed to working with children who are experiencing educational delays, difficult social behaviors, illnesses, and other disabilities. However, there may be cases in which Building Blocks determines that a child’s presence would pose a significant health and or safety risk to others.

In compliance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and pursuant to individual state codes, an individualized assessment of each child will be requested, reviewed or commissioned to determine whether Building Blocks can meet the particular needs of the child. If Building Blocks determines that any necessary accommodations required to serve the child would cause an undue burden to the program or that the child should be suspended or terminated, then such actions and decision will be made consistent with state regulations. The parents and child will be afforded all rights consistent with state regulations and/or other appropriate state or federal law.

## **TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION**

Building Blocks may occasionally terminate families for behavior – from a child, parent, guardian, relative, or acquaintance – when challenges are persistent, or when they are threatening or harmful to other children, other families, or Building Blocks’ staff. It is our desire to work with challenges rather than reject them, but every behavioral situation is different and complex, so each issue is handled on a case-by-case basis and consistent with appropriate state and federal laws and regulations. If this occurs, Building Blocks’ administrators will assist the family with recommendations to help make the child’s transition away from the program as gentle as possible.

Building Blocks may occasionally terminate families at our discretion for adults’ unacceptable behavior. We must consider the safety and happiness of all of our stakeholders, and we will ask families to leave when we believe that their behavior is disruptive, threatening, or deemed otherwise unacceptable within the Building Blocks’ community.

Building Blocks reserves the right to withdraw services at any time. If applicable, reasonable efforts will be made to communicate with the family to resolve any issues that may require termination.

## **CHILDREN’S BELONGINGS**

### **CLOTHING**

Building Blocks requires that all children always have at least two complete sets of clothes within the school, clothing should be changed out seasonally. Oftentimes, particularly for infants or potty-training children, we request multiple sets of clothing. Please label all clothing clearly with your child’s first and last name. If your items are not labeled, Building Blocks educators will label the items for you.

### **TOYS & SUPPLIES**

Building Blocks’ classrooms are filled with toys and activities for the development and enjoyment of your child. We ask that families leave their child’s personal toys at home. It is a natural desire for a child to bring personal items to school, and we encourage children to bring items such as a favorite blanket or soft item for rest time (except infants). Please label all items clearly. Building Blocks’ provides cubbies, but we cannot assume responsibility for items brought from home. A lost and found box is available in the school. Articles not claimed may be donated or discarded.

Some schools may offer storage space for strollers, car seats, or other child gear. You are welcome to leave your belongings in this common space at your own discretion. Building Blocks is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged goods and no reimbursement for personal items is offered.

## BODY BASICS

Quality care for each child starts with making sure that they feel safe, comfortable and nurtured throughout the day. From sleep policies and procedures to food handling, educators recognize the importance of supporting every child's basic needs as a critical foundation to early learning.

### SLEEP

#### NAP AND REST

State regulations require a rest period, the duration of which varies by state. Naptime is generally 1 to 2 hours long. Children who do not sleep will be given a quiet activity, such as coloring or reading, while other children sleep. A restful naptime gives all children the boost of energy necessary for a successful afternoon.

During naptime, we give each child his or her own crib or cot. All children, except infants, are required to bring a sheet and blanket and may bring a small pillow or soft item. For infant sleep safety, only a crib sheet, pacifier, and sleep sack are allowed in the crib.

#### INFANT SAFE SLEEP

Building Blocks follows the safe sleep practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Our staff follow the below policies for safe sleep:

- All infants under twelve (12) months of age shall be placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping in a crib that meets the current safety standards, with a snug fitting mattress and mattress sheet.
- When infants can easily turn over from back to stomach, they shall be put to sleep on their back but allowed to roll over to whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- No blankets, pillows, quilts, comforts, bumpers or stuffed toys (including a pacifier with a stuffed toy attached) shall be placed in the crib at any time. A sleep sack is acceptable.
- No infant will be put to sleep or will be allowed to sleep in any place but the crib.
- Nothing will be placed or hung over the side of the crib to obstruct the staff's visibility of the infant.

### FEEDING

**Snack Time** – Building Blocks provides two snacks per day and generally gives them to the children around 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Snacks are given out by your child's classroom teacher and is a calm time. Teachers post the current snack menu on the Parent Information Wall in the classroom.

Children 12-24 months and older will receive whole milk, water, or juice with snacks which varies by school. Our snack menu is intended to provide children with a balanced healthy snack twice per day. We change our snack menu when needed to meet nutritional guidelines.

The staff supervising snacks washes their hands before and after snacks, wears plastic gloves used for food prep and serving whether serving food to children or helping children serve food to him/herself.

**Feeding Time for Infants** - Feeding time in the infant classroom is a time that is comforting to the infant. Families must provide all milk, breast milk, formula and food for their child's teacher with their infants' feeding schedule and therefore, the feeding time will vary for each child. Breast milk and formula bottles must come in prepared every day and ready to serve.

Building Blocks requires parents of the infant to bring all food in a plastic container, labeled with your infant's name and date each day. If infant's bottles for feeding are brought from home, the bottles can be stored in the infant's lunch bag with an ice pack inside. If the infant's bottles are manufactured from a store, are not made at home, and are not yet opened, the bottles can be stored inside the infant's lunch bag without an icepack inside.

We do not microwave infant's bottles in the microwave - we heat the bottles in a bottle warmer available in the classroom. Additionally, we do not allow infants to be fed foods directly out of a glass jar as this is potentially dangerous.

The staff washes their hands before and after bottle feedings and wears food preparation gloves when preparing foods and bottles for infants.

**Lunchtime Feeding for Toddler and Preschool** - Lunchtime, like snack time, is offered to the children in a family-style way. Conversations with the children are very important during lunch time. It's a time for speaking with them and asking open ended questions to promote their use of language. It's also a relaxing time to promote children's learning and encourage the building of positive and trusting relationships.

**Lunchtime varies by classroom but is generally between 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The following are our procedures as well as parent responsibilities:**

- You are responsible for bringing a lunch for your child to the program each day. The outside lunch bag as well as ALL FOODS INSIDE THE LUNCHBAG MUST BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME. Also, you must provide an ice pack inside the lunch bag designed as a refrigerant for the food inside the lunch bag.
- Building Blocks provides a microwave in each classroom which is used for heating children's lunches.
- Parents must send food cut up into small pieces in its container to be used for the day.

All staff and children wash their hands before and after eating a snack and before and after eating lunch. Additionally, staff wear food preparation gloves when preparing and serving foods for lunch times.

### **BUILDING BLOCKS IS A NUT-SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

Building a good and healthy nutritional plan for children and adults is one of Building Blocks' most important goals. This policy protects children and adults that have allergies to nuts from products made with them. Often, a nut allergy is not known until nuts are ingested and the allergic reaction appears. Because we have children and adults who have known allergies to nuts, we will adhere to this nut-free policy and we ask families to strictly abide by it at all times.

**This means:**

- No peanut butter (or other nut butters – e.g. almond, cashew) in lunches for any employee or child;
- No foods with nuts as an ingredient may be brought into any Building Blocks facility;
- You must read all labels on any food you bring into the program to ensure they are nut-free and nut-derivative free;
- If you are making a recipe for the children in your classroom, or are bringing food into the program, you must have a list of ingredients for the food and for the foods you are using in the recipe and provide this information to your Program Director for review.

## **DIAPERS & TOILETS**

### **DIAPER CHANGING – INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

Diaper changing for infants and toddlers should be a time that is relaxing and comforting for all children. Our staff will change your child's diaper on a changing table, converse with the child, may sing softly, and ask the child a variety of open-ended questions. We change diapers every two hours, even in the diaper is not soiled, or as needed. The time of your child's diaper changing as well as the type of diaper is included on the child's daily note that is emailed home each night to parents.

Diaper-changing gloves are worn from start to finish. Changing takes place in the children's bathroom and/or on the changing table in the classroom – and for privacy only includes your child and the Building Blocks' staff responsible for his/her care.

**Our steps and procedure for diaper changing are as follows:**

- Staff gathers the diaper, child's baby wipes and clothing, if needed;
- Staff washes their hands and your child's hands;

- We lay changing paper down on the changing table;
- Staff puts on diaper-changing gloves;
- Child is placed on top of the changing paper on the changing table;
- Change the child's diaper;
- Staff disposes of diaper in designated trash can;
- Take child down from the changing table;
- Staff removes gloves and changing paper and discards both;
- Staff washes the child's hands;
- The changing table is washed with a bleach and water solution spray;
- The staff washes their hands again.

## TOILET TRAINING

One of the most important developmental steps in your child's life is starting to use the toilet on their own. The staff of Building Blocks wants your child's toileting experience to be a positive one - for your child, your family, and the staff. When your child displays interest in toilet training, we will be happy to work with him/her. Please feel free to discuss this at any time with your child's teacher or with the Program Director. Employees will honor parent(s)' wishes for toilet training their child. We are happy to help you with this important process!

### Our practices are as follows:

- Teacher or parents begin the communication about whether you feel your child is ready to toilet train.
- We ask parent(s) what directions you may have already taken with toilet training your child and if you have any special ways you would like to handle the training.
- Once you choose to have us start toilet training your child, you must provide five changes of clothing for your child each day.
- We will ask you if your child is using pull-ups or underwear.
- "Pull-ups" are discouraged - these feel just like a diaper to a young child and we have found will not enhance and encourage toilet training. If you choose to use Pull-ups, we ask you to supply only those with Velcro on the sides.
- Your child should be dressed in clothing that is easy for the child to pull up and push down by themselves with the guidance of their teacher.
- We request that, before parents put underwear on their child, that the child be dry in pull-ups or diapers for a full two weeks first.
- The staff will take your child to the toilet as often as possible.
- While potty training children, it's inevitable that accidents occur. We ask that all staff show patience with each child during this process.
- Children of all ages may need assistance with using the toilet. This includes assisting children on and off the toilet, wiping when finished, and washing their hands.

This is one of the most important steps in your child's development. We are here to make that transition easy and comfortable for the child during this important developmental process.

## SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

The staff/child ratio is one staff for every four children under the age of three years old and/or one staff for every 10 children over the age of three years old. At no time should the group size exceed eight children under the age of three years old and/or 20 children over the age of three years old, even if ratios are being observed. Group size shall be observed in the classroom, gym, bathrooms, and outside. Children must be supervised by sight and sound at all times including nap time and during transportation. Staff shall position themselves to see as many children as possible. When there is a mixed age group, the lower required ratio and group size for the age of the youngest child shall prevail.

**NO CHILD/CHILDREN SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME.**

**Field Trips** - Staff/child ratios will be maintained while outside of the building. All children must have signed permission slips prior to leaving the building. Staff must bring each child's emergency contact information and the first aid kit on the field trip.

**Bathrooms** - The staff supervises children using the bathroom at all times. When the staff take the children to the bathroom, they are supervised with the appropriate adult to child ratio. Staff follows proper hand washing, diapering and changing clothing procedures for the children and for themselves.

**Transportation to/from school** - All children will be supervised by sight and sound while getting on and off any mode of transportation.

**Playground/Outdoors** - It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety of children on the playgrounds. Supervision of children will include the following:

- A head count will be taken before leaving the building.
- Children will be escorted by the staff to their designated play areas.
- Staff will encourage and demonstrate proper equipment usage and play.
- Staff will circulate through the play areas, supervising and interacting with the children in a positive manner.
- Staff will coordinate positions so that all play activities and equipment is supervised. No staff person is allowed to sit or socialize with other staff.
- A head count will be taken before re-entering the building.
- Staff may not leave children unattended or out of state-permitted ratios and group sizes.
- Children may not go inside for any reason (including to the bathroom); nor may they go back outside unless accompanied by program staff.
- When there are woodchips as surfacing on the playground, accessible to children under age three years, we shall:
  - Be sure that all staff are aware that the woodchips pose a choking hazard to children under the age of three.
  - Have a phone outside at all times in case of emergency.
  - At least one CPR certified staff member will be on the playground whenever there are children under the age of three using the playground.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

Building Blocks Wellness Policy has been created in collaboration with our Nurse Consultant and Connecticut OEC Regulations. Adhering to Building Blocks Wellness Policy is the best way families and schools can partner together to ensure we create a healthy environment for all.

## **HANDWASHING POLICY**

Building Blocks recognizes the importance of hand washing as the first line of defense against infectious disease. Why, how, and how often you wash are all important in an effort to maintain the school's collective well-being. To promote a healthy and safe environment for children and staff, we observe the following approach:

1. Signs are posted at each sink explaining the proper hand washing procedure.
2. All staff and visitors to the center must wash all surfaces of their hands using warm water and soap, working up a good lather and washing for 20 seconds following these steps:
  - a. Get paper towel ready
  - b. Wet hands
  - c. Apply liquid soap to the palm of hand and begin rubbing hands away from the water
    - i. Wash and lather well between fingers, fingers, thumbs, tops, circle palms with fingers of opposite hand/reverse, fingernail areas. Rinse hands well so water runs downward off of hands
  - d. Retrieve paper towel to dry hands

- e. Use that paper towel to turn off the faucet or use elbows before disposing of paper towel
3. Staff, visitors and children must wash hands whenever the following criteria are met:
- a. Upon entry into and exit from program space;
  - b. When coming in to the program space from outside activities;
  - c. Before handling food;
  - d. Before and after eating;
  - e. After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing;
  - f. After handling any bodily fluid;
  - g. After toileting and diapering;
  - h. After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated;
  - i. After handling any garbage;
  - j. After using any shared equipment like toys, computer keyboards, mouse, climbing walls;
  - k. After assisting children with handwashing;
  - l. Before and after administration of medication;
  - m. After handling any animals
  - n. Before entering vehicles used for transportation of children
  - o. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty

## INFECTION CONTROL

All Building Blocks, educators are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices. Building Blocks sanitizes and performs the following duties on a regular basis:

- Cribs and infant toys are washed and sanitized weekly or after they have been mouthed (to the best of the teacher's ability).
- Classroom furniture and equipment is washed and sanitized daily or more often as needed.
- Machine-washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis or more as needed.
- Sheets, blankets and washable toys that belong to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.
- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled diapers/ papers, water tables and water play equipment, play tables and smooth, nonporous floors are cleaned daily or whenever there is visible contamination.

Across all schools, Building Blocks retains professional cleaning services nightly to augment daily cleaning routines performed by staff.

## ILLNESS POLICY

Building Blocks understands that it is challenging for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work. Therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when your children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from Building Blocks is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness. Mild illnesses are common among young children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms.

If any of the symptoms or behaviors listed below occur, we ask families to keep children home. For your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of infection, if symptoms or behaviors manifest themselves at school, we ask that for children are to be picked up within 1 hour of notification. If a guardian cannot be reached within 30 minutes, we will call the emergency contact on file.

Symptoms and behaviors that are grounds for dismissal or temporary program exclusion may include but are not limited to:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.

- Illness that results in greater need for care than our educators can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- **A severely ill appearance**—this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash.
- **Fever** with a temperature of 100 or higher by any method, without any fever reducing medication. A child can return once he/she is fever free for **48 hours without the aid** of fever reducing medication and other symptoms have improved. If your child returns and develops a fever the same day, he/she return he/she will be dismissed and he/she may be asked to submit a doctor's note to return.
- **Diarrhea, stools with blood or mucus**, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet. If a child has 2 or more in this category they will be dismissed from school. Children may return after a full 24 hours, when symptoms cease. If the child is sent home the day he/she returns a doctor's note clearing the child to return is required.
- **Vomiting** once at school or 24 hours prior to the arrival of school. If an infant has excessive spit up, he/she will be sent home. Upon returning to school after the 24-hour period, if child should vomit again, a note from a doctor will be required for the child to return to school.
- **Mouth sore** not associated with drooling.
- **Rash** unless a doctor has determined it is not a communicable disease. A doctor's note must be presented for the child to stay or return to school.
- **Conjunctivitis** (pink eye with eye discharge) Signs of pink eye include redness or pink in the white of the eye with discharge or dried discharge on the eyelashes. Your child will be sent home. Eye(s) must be COMPLETELY clear, be on antibiotic drops for 24 hours and child must be accompanied with a note from the doctor upon return to school.
- **Impetigo** until a full 24 hours after treatment. Child must be accompanied with a note from the doctor upon return to school.
- **Strep throat**, a return is permitted after the child has been on antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- **Head lice**, there can be no nits in the hair and hair has been treated.
- **Chickenpox**, all lesions must be dried and crusted over, and no new lesions can appear.
- **Scabies**, a child can return 24 hours after treatment
- **Hand Foot and Mouth disease or Coxsackie**: child must be fever free, without the aid of fever reducing medicine for 24 hours and all lesions must be dried and crusted over with no new lesions out
- **Ringworm**: Child may return to school after he/she has been on antibiotics for a full 48 hours. Child upon return may remain in school as long as the area is covered with a bandage.

If your child is excluded from the program because of a communicable disease, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

#### **Exclusion from care timeframe example for 24 and 48 hours.**

A child must remain home for a full 24 or 48 hours after being sent home ill from school. A staff member will indicate the child's return to school date on the sent home ill form. While this policy may seem extreme, it has been put in place to limit the spread of illness within a classroom and at the center.

#### **EXAMPLE 1:**

If a child is sent home from school at 10 am with a fever on Monday, the child may return to school on Thursday so long as the child is not exhibiting any additional symptoms.

#### **Example 2:**

If a child is sent home from school at 3 pm on Monday due to vomiting, the child may return to school on Wednesday so long as the child is not exhibiting any additional symptoms.

**Covid Illness Policy**

A child exhibiting two or more symptoms of Covid will be sent home and will need a negative covid test to return. As a reminder, the symptoms of covid are outlined below:

|                            |                                             |                          |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fever or chills            | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | Muscle or body aches     |
| Cough                      | Fatigue                                     | Headache                 |
| New loss of taste or smell | Sore throat                                 | Congestion or runny nose |
| Nausea or vomiting         | Diarrhea                                    |                          |

While we understand that many of these symptoms can also be related to non-COVID-19 related issues, we must proceed with an abundance of caution during this public health emergency.

**MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION**

Building Blocks staff will only administer emergency medication which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e. Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc), non-prescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl). The parental responsibilities include providing Building Blocks with the proper medication authorization form, and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving the center authorization to administer the medication. This form is available at the center.

Building Blocks no longer allows Tylenol or Motrin to be kept on site unless medically necessary for febrile seizures. A medication authorization form would need to be filled out along with a note from a physician.

**The medication authorization form must include the following information:**

- The child’s name, address and birthdate
- The date the medication was written
- Medication name, dose and method of administration
- Time to be administered and dates to start and end medication
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur
- Notation whether the medication is a controlled drug
- Listing of allergies, if any and reactions or negative interactions with foods
- Specific instructions from prescriber how medication is to be given
- Name, address, telephone number and signature of authorized prescriber ordering the drug
- Name, address, telephone number, signature and relationship to the child of the parents giving permission for the administration of the drug by a staff member of Building Blocks.

**If your child does not have the proper required forms filled out correctly, please note your child will not be to attend the center until we receive proper authorization.**

- (1) Prescription medication and the required paperwork should be given to the Director at drop off. A Director must always be informed of any child in the program receiving medication.
- (2) Over the counter medications will no longer be allowed at the schools unless they are life-saving medications, with a doctor’s authorization.
- (3) Nebulizers are allowed as part of a child’s Care Plan for regular treatment. They must be administered in a manner that is safe for the child and staff, including in a separate space, ideally with a door that can be closed.
- (4) A Medical Consent Form will be completed and signed by both the child’s doctor and the parent or guardian. If the medication is prescription, it must be in the original prescription container with the prescription label.

- (5) All medication will be stored out of the reach of children. Controlled substances must be kept in a lock box in the office. Emergency medication must be immediately available. For example, EPI Pens, asthma medications, etc. must never be locked. Refrigerated medications will be stored in the school refrigerator.
- (6) Medication will only be administered by a Medication Administration trained educator.
- (7) No first doses of any medication are allowed to be given by any educator. The first dose must be given by the parent or guardian.
- (8) All persons administering medication must wash their hands before and after.
- (9) Before administering medication, educators will check the “5 Rights of Medication Administration”: right medication, right child, right time, right dose and right route (usually by mouth).
- (10) Each time medication is administered, the educator must log on the Medication Administration Record the name of the medication, the dosage, the exact time and the method of administration and the signature of the educator who administered the medication.
- (11) Once the duration of the medication being administered has expired, the unused portion of the medication must be returned to the parent or guardian.
- (12) OEC must be notified if a medication error occurs. A medication error is defined as: administering the wrong medication to a child, administering the wrong dose of medication to a child or the child requires emergency treatment after the educator has administered medication.

### **SPECIAL MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS – MEDICATIONS**

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with the child’s name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for non-prescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. Epi-pens) glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

All families must abide by the Illness Policy stated in the Specific Medical Procedures section of this Parent Handbook. Building Blocks staff members are trained and certified annually to administer the EPI-Pen and/or Benadryl to children who may require these medications in a life-threatening situation.

### **THE EPI-PEN AND BENADRYL MEDICATIONS ARE SPECIFIC TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CHILD. THIS MEANS THAT WE MUST HAVE ON PREMISES THE FOLLOWING THREE (3) ITEMS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO ADMINISTER THESE MEDICATIONS TO YOUR CHILD:**

- A Physician's written order, with clear directions on the procedures for use of the medication, specific to your child, who states that your child requires the treatments, specifying the need for the medications, and stating the dosages of medication to be administered. Two separate physician's authorization forms, with the above information, are required: 1 for the EPI-Pen and 1 for the Benadryl if your child requires both. The authorization forms must be renewed by your family annually.
- The family **MUST** provide an EPI-Pen specific to your child, to be kept on premises at the program site in the event your child has a life-threatening situation. If Benadryl is also specified by your child’s physician, the family **MUST** supply a new, unopened bottle of Benadryl for the use of your child.
- A Parent/Guardian Consent form, completed in its entirety, and signed which gives Building Blocks full consent to administer the medication(s) to your child.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- If the prescribed EPI-Pen is used by the Building Blocks staff in a life-threatening situation with your child, the Parent/Guardian will need to supply the program with a replacement before the child can return to school.
- If your child’s EPI-Pen, Benadryl or any medication listed on your child’s health form listed as necessary by your physician, has expired, the child cannot return to school until the medication has been replaced.
- If such a life-threatening situation does occur with a child, the Building Blocks Allergic Reaction Policy in the Special Medical Procedures section in this Parent Handbook will be executed immediately. Parent/Guardian or a designated emergency contact person who has been specified on the child's registration form by Parent/Guardian will be contacted and must meet the Building Blocks staff and child at the local hospital.

- Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the medication administration form clearly states that it is for licensed child care centers. Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization. Forms are available through your child's pediatrician or through the Program Director.

#### **Staff Responsibilities:**

Staff responsibilities include but are not limited to, ensuring medication administration is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed.

The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medication administration.

#### **Included but not limited in the documentation are:**

- Name, address and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medication errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

**Note: Please be advised that the staff cannot administer the EPI-Pen or Benadryl to any child without the first three (3) requirements in this section which also include orders specific to your child and the exact dosages to be administered.**

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT FORM**

All children attending Building Blocks are required to have a recent physical exam within one year. All of this information must be included on the Early Childhood Health Assessment Record, signed and dated by a physician. The first page must be completed by a Parent or Guardian. Health Forms must be updated annually for all children. This form must be produced prior to first day of enrollment.

## **IMMUNIZATION RECORDS**

Prior to enrollment, a written immunization record must be submitted for each child in order to be admitted into the program. This record must contain the complete date (preferably month, day and year, but at a minimum, month and year) of each immunization and be signed by the child's health care provider. As the child progresses through the program, ongoing records should be updated to include documentation of annual physical examinations, updated immunizations, and lead screenings.

No unimmunized or partially immunized child shall be admitted to, or allowed to remain in, the program unless they satisfy these requirements:

- A true medical exemption is allowed if a health care provider (child's physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant) submits written documentation that an immunization is medically contraindicated;

For school age children, copies of the child's immunization, physical examination, and lead screening records should also be submitted. Alternatively, a written parental statement that the required information is on file with the child's school is also acceptable.

## **INJURY PREVENTION**

Educators for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury.

Playground safety is a major concern. As such, we encourage all parents/ guardians to be aware of the potential strangulation hazards of drawstrings on clothing. Please check your child's clothing carefully and remove all drawstrings. Footwear, such as

sneakers, appropriate for active, outdoor playing, climbing, running and jumping is strongly recommended. As infant sleep safe guidelines are in practice, bibs or blankets will not be left on infants when they are placed in cribs.

In the event that your child does sustain a minor injury, you will receive an Injury Report outlining the incident and course of action taken by the educator. You will be contacted immediately if the injury is to your child's head, produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, accompanied by a Building Blocks educator, while the school's directors or educators contact you or a designated emergency contact.

## CARE PLANS

A Care Plan must be maintained for each child with a chronic medical condition, which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner. This includes but is not limited to: allergies, asthma, plagiocephaly requiring a corrective helmet, hip dysplasia, hearing aids, etc. The plan must describe the condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment or accommodations that may be necessary while the child is in care, the potential side effects of that treatment and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. All staff working with the child will have access to and will familiarize themselves with the Care Plan to ensure their understanding of the child's needs.

### MONITORING OF DIABETES POLICY

Prior to attending Building Blocks, the parent(s) of a child with diabetes mellitus will meet with the Director and Nurse Consultant to review the center's Monitoring of Diabetes Policy and discuss how the individual needs of the child will be met while at the center.

- An individualized plan of care for the child will be developed with the child's parent(s) and health care provider and updated as necessary. The plan will include appropriate care of the child to prevent and respond to a medical or other emergency and will be signed by the parent(s) and staff responsible for the care of the child.
- While the child is in attendance at Building Blocks, a staff member who has been trained in an approved First Aid course and in the specific needs of the child with diabetes will be on site.
- At the time of enrollment, the child's parent(s) will provide the necessary equipment and supplies to meet the child's individualized needs. The glucose testing supplies and necessary equipment and supplies will be labeled with the child's name and will remain inaccessible to other children when not in use.
- A signed agreement from the child's parent(s) will be provided agreeing to check and maintain the child's equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, restocks supplies, and removes material to be discarded from the facilities on a daily basis. All materials to be discarded will be kept locked in a hazard bin in the Director's office until it is given to the child's parent(s) for disposal.

Building Blocks will keep the following records as part of the child's medical record and will be updated annually or when there is any change in the information.

A current written order signed and dated by the child's physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse indicating:

- The child's name
- The diagnosis of diabetes mellitus
- The type of blood glucose monitoring test required
- The test schedule
- The target ranges for test results
- Specific actions to be taken and carbohydrates to be given when the test results fall outside specified ranges
- Diet requirements and restrictions
- Any requirements for monitoring and child's recreational activities

- Conditions requiring immediate notification of the child's parent(s), emergency contact, the child's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse

An authorization form signed by the child's parent(s) which includes the following information

- The child's name
- The parent(s) name
- The parent(s) address
- The parent(s) telephone numbers at home and work
- Two adult, emergency contact people including names, addresses, and telephone numbers
- The names of staff designated to administer finger stick blood glucose tests and provide care to the child during testing
- Additional comments relative to the care of the child, as needed
- The signature of the parent(s)
- The date the authorization is signed
- The name, address, and telephone number of the child's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse

Building Blocks will notify the child's parent(s) daily in writing using Kaymbu of the results of all blood glucose tests and any action taken based on the test results. Incidents and emergencies will be reported to the child's parent(s) and the child's physician.

Blood glucose testing will be conducted in the Director's office, respecting the child's privacy and safety needs.

### CONSULTANTS

Building Blocks consults with the following individuals to develop and implement policies and procedures in accordance with Section 19a-79-4a(h) of the Connecticut General Statutes. These includes the services of an early childhood educational consultant, health consultant, dental consultant, social service consultant and a registered dietitian consultant if the program serves meals.

**Our consultants provide at minimum the following services to our program:**

- Annual review of written policies, plans and procedures;
- Annual review of education programs;
- Availability by telecommunication for advice regarding problems;
- Availability, in person, of the consultant to the program;
- Consulting with administration and staff about specific problems;
- Acting as a resource person to staff and the parents; and
- Documenting the activities and observations required in a consultation log that is kept on file at the facility for two years.

The selection of our program's consultants is thoughtful, deliberate, and includes the careful examination of each one's qualifications and experience. A written agreement specifying each consultant's services to the program is on file and updated annually.

### BUILDING BLOCKS' REGISTERED NURSE (HEALTH CONSULTANT)

**Building Blocks provides the services of a registered nurse consultant at each school. Our nurse's responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:**

- Making site visits at a minimum, weekly during business hours while the children are in attendance;
- Reviews children's and staff health forms and immunizations and make sure they are kept current;
- Checks each classroom and reviews the school to ensure the safety and health of the children;
- Is the liaison between the medical profession, families and staff. Provides current information about communicable diseases, illnesses, medicine alerts, nutrition, allergies, etc.;

- Reviews the contents, storage and plan for maintenance of first aid kits;
- Observes indoor and outdoor environments for health and safety.
- Observes the children’s general health and development.
- Observes diaper changing and toileting areas, and diaper changing, toileting and handwashing procedures.
- Conducts on-going and annual medical training to the staff. Reviews the policies, procedures and required documentation for the administration of medication including petitions for special medication.
- Assists in the review of individual care plans as needed.

## **QUALITY STANDARDS**

Building Blocks believes that a high-quality experience for children and families is of paramount importance. That is why we have made ongoing self-assessment an integral part of our program.

### **QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

Operations evaluations assess standards pertaining to items such as regulatory compliance, required documentation, health and safety, classroom routines, snack preparation, playgrounds, common spaces, and other functions that help our schools run smoothly and safely.

### **QUALITY STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION**

Education evaluations consider standards pertaining to curriculum fidelity and implementation, lesson plans, evidence of learning, atmosphere and ambiance, teacher-child interactions, displays and postings, professional development hours, curriculum results (e.g., alphabet knowledge), and other education-related activities that help make our schools thrive.

## **NAEYC ACCREDITATION**

Several Building Blocks’ schools have obtained the distinguished accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC has developed standards to define and recognize high-quality early education. To become accredited, a child care program must undergo a rigorous process of self-study involving children, families and faculty. A variety of strict criteria related to providing a developmentally appropriate program must be met. These criteria include a well-qualified and trained faculty, appropriate staff-child ratios and group sizes, and a comprehensive curriculum, as well as meeting stringent health and safety standards. In addition, the program must provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **COMMUNICATION**

At Building Blocks, we believe that our connection to your family is critical to your child’s development. We strive to create deep, caring connections with each and every family and child in our care.

#### **DAILY COMMUNICATION**

Information is available to families every day to offer you a sense of your child’s day and keep you informed about their experiences. Infant and Toddler families are provided with an individual “Daily Note” to track activities, feedings, diaper changes, naps, and more. Preschool and Kindergarten families may read the curriculum postings outside of children’s classroom to discover daily learning initiatives.

#### **KAYMBU**

Kaymbu is an innovative iPad program committed to helping parents remain connected to their child through images, videos and captions. With a click of a button, teachers can “tag” children and securely share memorable moments with you through email and text messaging. Up to eight (8) email addresses for distribution of these moments can be included per enrolled child.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media enables schools to share information with a large group of families. Families are invited to join our Building Blocks social media platforms.

## **MAILBOXES**

When the directors of your school or your child's educators have information to share with you, they may leave the notices in your child's mailbox. The mailbox could be your child's cubby, a mail slot, or fabric pockets. Locations of each classroom's mailboxes vary. Please ask your child's Educator where your mailbox is located and please be sure to check your mailbox daily.

## **PARENT BOARDS**

Bulletin boards or binders are located throughout the school and classrooms to communicate curriculum, news, upcoming events, health alerts, school visitors, and more. Please take a moment to explore and observe these boards when you are in the building.

# **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & PARTICIPATION**

We provide many opportunities for families to become actively involved within our school community. We invite families to participate at any level. Your child's school schedules fun family events such as family breakfasts, cook-outs, art fairs, graduation, classroom readings, and more. Please watch for these upcoming events at your child's school. Engaging in these activities offers your family the opportunity to hear the language educators' use with the children to support active learning and appropriate development of social skills. Getting involved and participating in community activities also creates a valuable bridge between home and school.

## **FAMILY VISITS**

Building Blocks has an open-door policy, enabling you to visit your child's school at any time. We encourage you to come and observe your child's classroom. However, if your child is experiencing separation anxiety, having family members come and go during the day may be more disruptive than beneficial. If we notice that your child is experiencing this problem, we may kindly ask that you limit your time spent in the classroom until your child has successfully passed through this phase. We look forward to working together during this transitional time in your family's life.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

There may be occasional opportunities for your child to take educational field trips. You will be notified at least two weeks in advance of the trip and asked to sign a permission slip for your child. You will also be notified of any additional fees before the trip. We encourage family members to volunteer to chaperone field trips (please note, chaperones are ultimately selected by Building Blocks' administrators). This is a great way to get to know other families and share an educational experience with your child. In addition to field trips, special activities (i.e. an animal show, a gym program, etc.) may be brought to the school to supplement the curriculum. You will be notified in advance and be made aware of any additional fees.

## **EDUCATOR/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Building Blocks is aware that our educators often live in the same community as the families we serve. Often times, our educators may have personal relationships with our families in addition to their professional connections at Building Blocks. All Building Blocks staff members are committed to the confidentiality of our families and children. Educators and administrators are not to discuss family or child information of any kind with anyone other than their co-educator(s) or administrators. A strong educator/family relationship at Building Blocks provides the supportive environment in which your child and family will thrive, which includes privacy and a distinction between personal and professional boundaries.

## **BABYSITTING POLICY**

Some parents may wish to engage a Building Blocks employee for the purpose of babysitting outside of the school. Educators may decide to do so at their own discretion, but we assume no responsibility for any individual who cares for a child outside the school program. Babysitting should not interfere with the employee's work schedule. Specifically, if a staff member has already committed to a shift, they should not be expected to modify their schedule to accommodate a babysitting request.

Building Blocks is not responsible for the care of your child while he/she is not in attendance at the school, nor are we responsible for the actions of any staff member during the employee's non-work hours.

### **NON-SOLICITATION POLICY**

Families that visit or enroll at Building Blocks agree to not solicit, employ or enter into any contract with any employee of Building Blocks to perform childcare or similar services under any circumstances that might interfere with their role or employment at Building Blocks. If a family employs or contracts with any employee of Building Blocks or person who was employed or under contract with Building Blocks within one year of the date of such employing or contracting, that family is responsible for paying Building Blocks a placement fee of \$2,500.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

### **SCHOOL VISIT**

In order to enroll, you will need to make an appointment with a school director to tour the facility. During your visit the director will meet with you to discuss the program's philosophy, policies and procedures, and the specific program amenities as outlined in this Family Handbook. This meeting is the best time to ask questions about the program and the organization, but you can feel free to call the school at any time if more questions arise. We encourage you to bring your child so that he/she can visit the classrooms and observe and participate with the group. A complete tour helps you and your child feel comfortable with the school and enthusiastic about your first day at Building Blocks.

### **ENROLLMENT APPLICATION**

During the registration process, you must complete all registration forms required by the school and the state of service, including an updated medical history form, recent physical and immunization record (see Immunization Requirements section above). There is no provisional enrollment period. All forms are required for your child prior to his or her start date. All forms in your child's file must be updated each year. Please remember to provide your child's school with additional updates as needed (e.g., change of emergency contact information, new allergies, etc.). All enrollment agreements will be kept in the child's folder on site.

## **TUITION & FEES**

### **ENROLLMENT FEES**

Building Blocks will collect a non-refundable registration fee and a one-week tuition deposit at the time of your child's enrollment. This payment reserves your child's enrollment at Building Blocks. At the time of enrollment, the director will be able to share more information about the deposit amount based on your schedule. Enrollment is not guaranteed until registration and your deposit fee is received. All fees are non-refundable.

### **TUITION FEES**

Building Blocks requires all regularly scheduled tuition payments be made even when the school may be closed due to, but not limited to; holidays, professional development trainings days, inclement weather, child absence, vacations, natural disasters, and/or state of emergency.

### **ANNUAL RE-REGISTRATION**

During the annual re-registration process, additional fees may apply including an annual tuition increase and a re-registration assessment. New enrollment paperwork must be renewed annually to keep each child's file up to date.

## TUITION VARIANCES

Tuition rates vary for each school and may even vary within an age group or classroom, depending upon factors specific to each family's enrollment (e.g., date of enrollment, corporate or military discounts, etc.). When you enroll at Building Blocks, you agree to the pricing structure specific to your family and any tuition changes associated with rate increases or transition policies. While we will make every effort to provide ample notice of tuition increases, all fees and tuition are subject to change.

## WAITLIST TUITION QUOTES

We cannot guarantee prices will be the same when families join the waitlist versus when they are accepted from the waitlist. If a waitlist spot becomes available, families will be offered the current market price and an opportunity to join or decline the program.

## REGISTRATION FEES

- First-time registration: \$100.00 per child
- Annual re-registration: \$50.00 per child

If registration fees were waived during initial enrollment due to a corporate partnership or special promotion, please note that future annual re-registration fees are not included in this arrangement. Re-registration fees support school initiatives and must be paid by currently enrolled families on an annual basis.

## MULTI-CHILD DISCOUNT

Building Blocks offers a sibling discount of 10%. This discount applies to the less expensive tuition rate (typically the rate of the older child).

## LATE PICK UP POLICY

If the child has not been picked up within twenty minutes of the child's scheduled pick up time, a staff member will attempt to call the child's parents/guardians using the numbers provided. If they cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to call the emergency and authorized, alternate adults provided by the parent/ guardians at the time of enrollment. The police will be called after one hour if parents or other adults specified on the permission to release forms cannot be reached. At that time the child may be released to the police.

Building Blocks will assess a late charge for families picking up children after our established closing time. Our state license does not permit our school to operate past 6:00pm and two staff members, over the age of 18, must stay with your child until you arrive. The \$20.00 per child fee is for the first 15 minutes after 6:00pm according to our clocks. If you are later than 15 minutes, the additional late fee will be \$2.00 per minute, per child. If your child attends our half-day program, these fees will also be assessed at their scheduled end of day. The additional fee will be charged to your account on the next business day. If a family continues to arrive after our licensed closing time, termination of enrollment may occur.

## DELIQUENT PAYMENT POLICY & FEES

While it is our desire to embrace all families, Building Blocks reserves the right to refuse service. We will terminate families for non-payment or refusal to pay at our discretion. Families whose payments are delinquent will receive notice by telephone or in writing and will be terminated if they do not bring their account current. Upon receiving written notification of delinquency, you must contact your Director. Upon termination for non-payment or refusal to pay, families will lose their priority placement and reenrollment is subject to availability.

Please see your school specific payment policy located in your Enrollment Application for late payment details and insufficient fund fees.

## **ATTENDANCE AND SCHEDULING**

Scheduling options and available days/hours for care vary by location and age group. Building Blocks offers a variety of full-time and part-time enrollment options. Please inquire for more details.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Hours of operation vary by school and can be found in your enrollment packet.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

In order to provide appropriate supervision for children and to appropriately schedule educators, families are asked to follow the schedule they set for their child. Schedule changes should be made at least four weeks in advance, in writing, to the school Director. If you have an emergency and need to change your schedule, please do not hesitate to contact your school director.

### **CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

To ensure that each child is safe and supervised at all times and to foster daily communication between families and educators, a parent or guardian must accompany each child into the school each morning to help him/her settle into the classroom. Your child's educator has a specific attendance procedure, so please be certain that the educator is aware of your child's arrival before leaving the school. If you will not be available at your usual contact numbers for the day, please leave a phone number where you can be reached in case you are needed for an emergency.

Children will only be released to a parent/legal guardian or to persons whose names are listed on the authorized pick up list. Families should advise the school directors in advance, in writing, if a person not listed on the original form is to pick up their child. For the safety of each child, official photo identification will be required of all authorized persons picking up children.

In the event that your child has not been picked up by closing time, we will take the following steps (in order):

- 1) Attempt to reach you at the contact numbers you have provided.
- 2) Call the persons listed on the Emergency Contact and Authorization form as persons to contact in the event that we cannot reach you.
- 3) Call the authorities.

As mandated reporters, all Building Blocks staff members are required to question any family member or authorized pick-up person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or another substance that could impair that person's ability to drive or otherwise safely care for a child. In the best interest of the child, we will attempt to arrive at an alternative transportation solution, such as calling another person or calling a cab. If the pick-up person refuses these options, we are required to inform the proper authorities.

### **HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES**

School closure dates may vary by school and year. Please refer to your particular school calendar for specific closure details. Schools are closed on these days and alternate care should be arranged. Neither substitution nor compensation will be granted.

Building Blocks is closed for the following federal holidays. Schools may be closed additional days which would be outlined in your school calendar.

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Indigenous People's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Building Blocks does not provide reimbursement for holidays or unplanned closures, including but not limited to inclement weather, power/HVAC outages, construction, acts of God, vacations, excessive absences, etc. Schools are closed on these days and alternate care should be arranged. Neither substitution nor compensation will be granted.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

We realize that our families depend on us to be open on a consistent basis. Therefore, we work very hard to remain open every day, regardless of weather conditions. We will remain open on inclement weather days unless there are extreme conditions and Building Blocks' management determines the school should not open (e.g., we are unable to operate the school due to the loss of power, the storm is so strong that our educators cannot get to the school, etc.). Our closings are not tied to local school systems so, if there is an announcement of local schools being delayed or closed, that does not mean that Building Blocks will do the same.

We do expect the cooperation of our families on inclement weather days. It is especially important that families leave work early enough to pick up their children by school closing time. This is so that educators can leave the school in time to begin their commute.

When a major storm hits, our educators may be unable to attend work, causing us to combine classrooms for the day. If we are forced to close early due to extreme conditions, we will contact all families through a variety of tools as specified by your individual school. Service interruptions will also be posted on your local news station, see your Director for more school specific details.

An important reminder: closures for inclement weather will not reduce your tuition charge. Schools are closed on these days and alternate care should be arranged. Neither substitution nor compensation will be granted.

### **ABSENCES**

Please call the school as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent. If we do not hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If your child is absent due to a contagious illness, please let your school directors know so that they can alert other families in the school.

## **EXTENDED LEAVE ABSENCE POLICY**

To provide flexibility to our families, Building Blocks offers a limited leave of absence payment and attendance option. This option allows families to pay a reduced tuition rate to guarantee returning to their normal schedule after an extended leave of absence. Families may use this benefit only once within each 12-month timeframe. Families must submit a Leave of Absence form to the Director four weeks in advance of the leave.

Families may only request a reduced rate for time-off periods that equal or exceed four weeks of consecutive leave. During this leave, families may temporarily adjust their schedules and payment amount down to a minimum of two full days of care per child, per week. The price of two full days of care will be the current school rate. If a family's current tuition is less than this amount, the family will continue to pay their current tuition rate to retain their spot during the leave of absence. This discount may not be combined with any other discounts. Regardless of the length of time-off, reduced payment adjustments will last for no more than eight consecutive weeks. By week nine, normal tuition fees will resume to secure your child's spot upon return.

By continuing to pay a reduced tuition during your family's leave of absence, Building Blocks guarantees that your child will have access to the same schedule and previous rate upon your return (unless a child has transitioned age groups, an annual tuition increase has been implemented, or a child's schedule changes upon return).

If you elect to reduce your schedule during this timeframe but send your child to school for the number of days for which you pay, you are required to maintain a consistent weekly schedule and notify your Director of your specific requested weekdays of attendance.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Building Blocks requires a four-week written notice to drop a day in your child's schedule or to voluntarily terminate your child's enrollment. This policy is by no means intended to be punitive, but is necessary to ensure program continuity, especially for educators, whose hours may be affected by terminations. This written notice must be given to the Director of your school. It will not be honored if given to your child's teacher. You are required to pay for four weeks of tuition following the date of your termination notice. The deposit will be applied to cover part, but not all, of these final payment terms.

Please understand that if you terminate your child's enrollment for the summer months or any period of time, you do so at risk of losing your child's spot. Even if there is not a wait list when you leave, all spots may be filled upon your return.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **FIRE DRILLS**

The Program Director will conduct a monthly fire drill while school is in session, at each of our locations. The drills are spontaneous and unannounced which help the children and teaching staff to become familiar with the procedures in the event of a real fire at any time. Fire drill procedures are located on the walls of each classroom and available for all parents to review. In addition, fire exits are clear and unobstructed for quick means of egress;

### **FIRE EMERGENCY**

- Children will be taken by class (as a group) with their classroom teachers, out of their respective classroom doors, as done in monthly fire drill routines. Each classroom has a fire drill routine posted in writing on the wall of the classroom indicating the procedures to be followed for the specific classroom.
- Teachers will take attendance books with them.
- The teachers will take the children to a designated safe place which is posted inside each classroom.
- The children will be supervised outdoors by their classroom teachers and kept there until fire personnel arrive and give further instructions on where to go and what to do.
- Once children are outdoors from their classrooms, teachers will take attendance and children will be kept in groups outdoors by classroom.
- The Program Director will check all indoor closets, bathrooms and toilet areas, hallways, and classrooms and ensure all children and teachers are out of the building and accounted for.
- Program Director/Teachers will take EPI-pens, Benadryl and Diabetes and any other medications and the orders for their administration with them.
- Teachers will take their cell phones as well as the parent phone/emergency numbers with them.
- If the building is determined to be inaccessible by fire personnel, the Teachers will contact all families and/or emergency contact persons by phone and email that have been listed by the families on each child's registration form, to pick up the children.

### **ONSET OF SERIOUS ILLNESS OR INJURY OF A CHILD AT SCHOOL – EMERGENCY ROOM REQUIRED**

Every staff member at Building Blocks is certified in First Aid and Pediatric CPR and AED and is trained annually.

- A child who may have an onset of an acute illness or be injured will be treated by first aid and/or CPR and AED or EPI-Pen/Benadryl procedures;
- Program Director may call our Nurse Consultant if help is required;
- 911 will be called by the school Program Director immediately, if necessary;

- The teacher(s) in the classroom where the incident took place will have their class sit on the carpet, reading books and story-telling, keeping the children calm;
- Family of child, or emergency contact persons listed on their child's registration form, will be called immediately by the Program Director;
- If the injured child must be treated at a hospital, they will be transported by ambulance to the closest hospital to the Building Blocks facility. One Building Blocks staff member will ride with the injured child to the hospital and will remain with the injured child until the child's Parent/Guardian arrives and makes physical contact with the Building Blocks staff member;
- Staff from Building Blocks will take the child's health records and registration form to the hospital;
- If an EPI-Pen has been used, the pen will immediately be placed into a closed container and be given to the paramedics/ambulance drivers upon their arrival;
- After Parent/Guardian arrives at the hospital, staff involved will complete accident/injury report form in triplicate. The form will be given to the child's Parent/Guardian and must be reviewed and signed by the child's Physician before the child can return to school.
- Child will not be permitted to return to school unless accident form is completed by physician and returned by Parent/Guardian to the program;
- Director must be informed of all medical procedures and be given copies of all documentation involving the child's accident or injury;
- Payment for services rendered at the hospital will be the responsibility of the child's parent/guardian;
- The Program Director will review the accident report to determine what steps may be necessary to prevent similar accidents in the future.

**Note:** See also "Allergic Reactions" in the Specific Medical Procedures Section below.

#### **SECURITY THREATS TO THE SCHOOL - LOCKDOWN**

##### **In the event of a security threat to the school, (bomb threat by phone, terrorist situation, or other):**

- The Program Director will immediately inform all the classroom teachers of the threat and its nature by the intercom system we have in place. Classroom doors will be closed and children will remain in chairs while teachers read a story to them. Teachers will make sure the children are not in sight of any intruders;
- The Program Director will then contact the local Police Department via (911) and report the security threat and its nature, time of threat, etc.;
- Building Blocks staff and children will follow the instructions from the Police Department;
- If we are told to evacuate the building by the Police Department, we will follow the fire drill procedure we have in place (see fire drill procedure) until the Police Department gives us further notice on what procedures to follow;
- Teachers will take attendance books from their classrooms before leaving the classroom with the children;
- Attendance will be taken periodically by the classroom teachers;
- The Program Director will check all indoor closets, classrooms, hallways, bathroom and toilet areas, etc. to ensure there are no adults or children in the building before leaving the building;
- Teachers will take EPI-pens, Benadryl and Diabetes and any other medications and the orders for their administration with them.
- Teachers will take their cell phones as well as the parent phone/emergency numbers with them.
- Teachers will contact all families and/or emergency contact persons that have been listed by the families on each child's registration form, to inform them of the situation, what procedures we are following, where the children will be, and/or to pick up the children from Building Blocks or at the location to which we are instructed to go by the Police Department;
- Each family will be contacted by 6:30 a.m. the next morning to inform them if it is safe to return to school.

#### **EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS**

- Children will be lined up and ready with their teachers to evacuate the building and walk to their designated area of refuge;
- Teachers will take attendance books, cell phones, family contact/emergency contact information, EPI-pens, Benadryl and Diabetes and any other medications and the orders for their administration with them.
- Attendance will be taken periodically;
- The Program Director will check all indoor hallways, closets, classrooms, bathroom toilet areas, etc., to ensure there are no children or adults inside the building before leaving the building;
- The Program Director and teachers will contact all families, or emergency contact persons listed by the families on the children's registration forms, by phone and email and inform them of the event, our procedure, where the children have been taken for safety, and/or to pick up their children.

### **WEATHER & EMERGENCY LATE OPENINGS/EARLY DEPARTURES &/OR CLOSINGS**

To best accommodate our families, we strive to keep our centers open every day that we are scheduled to operate. Occasionally, there may be times that we must close our facilities due to inclement weather such as hurricanes and snow storms, or other emergencies to ensure the safety of children in our care. We may choose to not open the facility for an entire day, we may have a delayed start, or we may close early. When we make a safety decision not to open or to have a delayed opening, Building Blocks will inform all parents by 6:30 a.m. You will be informed by email and phone. Additionally, we will post information on Facebook and on Channel 12 or Channel 8.

If Building Blocks is closing early due to a weather emergency, you will be contacted by our Administration by email to pick up your child from Building Blocks. Teachers will reassure parents that the children are safe while waiting to be picked up.

In the event of a severe weather emergency while Building Blocks is in session, all children must be seated in their classrooms, away from all windows and doors. Emergency lighting is located in all classrooms.

In cases where Building Blocks cannot provide adequate water temperature and/or water supply for the children, lighting, or heat inside the building, the program will close until repairs can be made and the school is able to function normally.

## **WEAPON POLICY**

It is the policy of Building Blocks to not allow dangerous weapons of any kind on its property.

Building Blocks prohibits all persons who enter Building Blocks property, including its parking lot and playground, from carrying a handgun, firearm, or prohibited weapon of any kind onto the property regardless of whether the person possesses a valid concealed weapon permit pursuant or not.

Prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to, any form of weapon or explosive restricted under local, state, or federal regulation such as guns, tasers, stun guns, knives or swords with blades over four inches in length, self-defense sprays, explosives, and any chemical whose purpose is to cause harm to another person.

## **REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

Building Blocks has a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any child enrolled in our program. The company and all employees of Building Blocks are "mandated reporters" for the protection of children from abuse.

**Definition:**

Child Abuse includes:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

**Child Abuse is defined as: A child who has had**

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to:
  - malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

**Child neglect is defined as: A child who has been:**

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well- being (CT statutes 46b-120)

**Staff responsibilities:**

As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report **any suspicion** that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

1. Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288.
2. The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential. Information needed:
3. Name of child/Date of birth
4. Address of child
5. Phone number of child
6. Name of parents or guardians
7. Address of parents or guardians
8. Phone number of parents or guardians
9. Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
10. Exact description of what the reporter has observed
11. Time and date of incident
12. Information about previous injuries, if any
13. Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
14. Name of any person suspected of causing injury
15. Any information reporter believes would be helpful
16. Any action taken to help or treat the child
17. Seek medical attention for the child – if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF.

Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.

The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.

Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

**Staff Training:**

Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

**Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy:**

A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment. A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

Building Blocks Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedures is distributed to all parents upon enrollment, displayed on our parent board and is included in our Parent Handbook.

**THERE IS A ZERO TOLERANCE OF CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT AT BUILDING BLOCKS**

## **CUSTODY AND RESTRAINING ORDERS**

Building Blocks cannot legally deny child access to a parent/guardian unless copies of legal documents have been provided to the school's directors. Therefore, parents must immediately provide the program with copies of any restraining orders involving any child participating in the program at Building Blocks and, if available, a photo of the restrained individual.

If the program receives a court order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a subpoena for records, Building Blocks will notify the parent immediately. All record requests would need to comply with the court order or subpoena.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Building Blocks programs are designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn. Building Blocks views each child as an individual with a unique learning style and way of interacting with the world. Given the diversity of the communities we serve, Building Blocks recognizes and appreciates the characteristics and behaviors that each child, family and employee

brings to our program. Our hope is to build programs that are responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs – programs that truly celebrate and value the individuality of all involved in the program.

Building Blocks confidentiality policy and those of our licensors are intended to demonstrate the utmost respect for every child and family we serve, as well as our employees. We place a high value on the confidentiality of members of our Building Blocks community.

It is Building Blocks policy that any information regarding a child, a child’s family, staff member, or other matters discussed with school management will be held in the strictest confidence.

## **RECORDS AND DATA PRIVACY**

The information in your child’s file is considered privileged and confidential. Only those staff directly related to the care of your child, school management, or part of the Office of Early Childhood will have access to your child’s file. Others will not have access to the record without your written permission. It is important to note that there may be legal circumstances under which we are required to provide access to records. The Director and staff will work to ensure compliance with all the appropriate federal and state records regulations. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child’s record unless there is a legal restriction associated with access. You have the right to add information, comments, or other relevant material to your child’s record.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Building Blocks values every child, every family, and every employee. We feel that the most positive emotional environment exists when families and staff collaborate together as partners. Over the years, families have offered valuable input that we have used to consistently improve and strengthen our program. We solicit this feedback with periodic questionnaires and we hope that you will take the time to fill them out and return them so that we may learn from you.

In the event that you are displeased with a specific issue related to our service, please raise your concern directly and respectfully with your school’s Director who can address the challenge personally. Our administrators are trained to welcome feedback and will make their best effort to respond to your concerns in a fair, reasonable, and timely manner.

If, after speaking with the Director, you believe there is a concern that is in conflict with Building Blocks’ philosophies, or you allege that there is a violation of state or federal laws and regulations, please follow Building Blocks’ complaint procedure below. Even if you believe that Building Blocks has violated a state or federal law or regulation, provided that the health or safety of a person is not at immediate risk, we ask that you follow the complaint procedure before taking other action. You may not be fully aware of the comprehensive details or circumstances of the situation, and we would like to have an opportunity to address your concern directly and quickly.

Building Blocks maintains strict adherence to privacy protection parameters. As such, you may not receive a fully inclusive explanation as to why or how an incident occurred or the rationale behind a corrective action plan to protect the privacy of parties involved. We ask that you please respect these boundaries and find assurance in the fact that we abide by state and federal regulations, as well as involve third-party counsel (e.g., licensing bodies, legal aid, etc.) when necessary.

**A WORD ABOUT THIS PARENT HANDBOOK**

From time to time Building Blocks Early Learning Center will find it necessary to update and redistribute its Parent Handbook. While the core components of the Parent Handbook have essentially not changed, some of the language and the policies have been slightly altered. Any changes made were made to clarify policies and practices and provide required regulatory updates. Additionally, this Parent Handbook is not inclusive of all Company practices and policies. Parents may be informed of the Company’s day-to-day operational policies, practices and expectations through newsletters, the parent’s wall, flyers, emails and voicemails and in family meetings with the Building Blocks team.

The contents of this Parent Handbook are provided as a matter of information and are subject to change or cancellation in whole or in part at any time, at Building Blocks’ sole discretion. Parents will be provided updates in advance of changes that may impact their child or family. This Parent Handbook supersedes all other parent manuals, handbooks and policies whether written or verbal.

You will find the Parent Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement below as well as the Managing Child Behavior policy along with its Acknowledgement & Agreement. Please sign and return the forms to the Program Director immediately upon receipt of this Handbook. We trust you will take the necessary steps to review this Parent Handbook in a timely manner. Questions regarding the information in this Parent Handbook should be addressed to the Program Director.

**PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT (initial)**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received the Building Blocks Parent Handbook and understand that I am responsible for becoming familiar with the policies and practices described in it. Additionally, I will abide by the practices and guidelines to assure a positive, healthy and safe educational experience for my child.

Building Blocks may add, change, or delete practices and policies and I understand that updates will be provided to me in writing and that I will insert them in this Parent Handbook upon receipt.

**PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AGREEMENT (initial)**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and agree to the “Managing Child Behavior Policy” as stated above and the staff at Building Blocks has discussed this policy with me and my family.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child(ren’s) Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Child