



# Early Beginnings Learning Center

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## Parent Handbook

# **EARLY BEGINNINGS LEARNING CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK**

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## **PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY BEGINNINGS**

At Early Beginnings Learning Center, we believe that learning is a process involving the whole child. The physical, intellectual and social needs of each child are fostered by our professional staff who are specialists in early childhood education. Our program recognizes the fact that children learn in different ways and at different paces. We strive to develop and strengthen positive feelings by providing a safe, loving, responsive, and sensory rich environment.

Our child development center provides the children their creative space where they learn by exploring, playing, reading, and doing what their intellectual curiosity leads them to do. We encourage socialization, or they also have the freedom to sit and observe until they are comfortable to join in. Early Beginnings recognizes and supports the interconnectedness of the child and family. We believe that parental involvement with the center and staff has an important impact on their child's development.

## **DAILY PROGRAM**

The daily program will include academics, motor skills, and socialization. The children will be exposed to music and dance, science, art, language, math, reading, and writing.

The infant program will focus on basic care like diaper changing, feeding and nap time. The care givers will play with the children down at their eye level. We offer a variety of sensory-motor toys and activities for the babies to explore. Cleanliness will be a high priority in order to keep germs from spreading at a minimum. Only parents of the infants or authorized people will be allowed in the infant room with the teacher.

The preschool program will include children between the ages of 2 to Pre-Kindergarten. Curriculum will involve hands-on and open-ended activities and play. It will promote problem-solving skills, socialization, and building of self-esteem and independence. As they move into the Pre-K class, they will learn cooperation, taking turns, using their words, and patience. Academics will also start to be focused on more. Our goal, by the time they graduate from our preschool program, is for each child to be academically, physically and socially ready for kindergarten.

The school age program will consist of homework time and fun planned activities. The children will be involved in the decision making of classroom rules, responsibilities like keeping their area clean, and in the decision making of what activities they want to do or field trips they would like to go on.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

We will potty train your child if you are also doing this at home. There is a Toileting Plan Form we will require you to complete for potty training. Also, it is your responsibility to provide extra clothes during this time. See your child's teacher for more information.

If your child is potty trained but still has accidents during nap time, please bring pull-ups.

## **AGE BRACKET POLICY TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Early Beginnings cares for children between the ages of 6 weeks old to age 12.

Infant Program - 6 weeks old through 23 months.

Preschool Program - Age 2 through age 4.

School Age Program - Kindergarten through age 12.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Early Beginnings operates from 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except on Holidays.

## **HOLIDAYS**

There are 13 holidays that Early Beginnings observes and will be closed. They are New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Lincoln's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving (and the day after), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

## **ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND PICK-UP POLICIES**

When arriving and departing from school please park your car and walk your child into the facility. Sign-in and sign-out sheets are located inside the front door of the school. **The state law requires all children to be signed in with a time and full signature, and signed out with a time and a full signature.** If the school is fined for your child not being signed in or out properly, the fee will be billed to you. They are very strict with this regulation, so please make sure to sign with full signatures every day. Once the child is signed in, the child may be accompanied by the parent to the appropriate area. If there is an occasion where someone other than the parent is picking up your child from school, please contact the office and your child's teacher by telephone and with a written note. The Identification Authorization Form must have this person's name listed. **We will check for identification.**

All full-time children must be picked up within ten hours of drop off. In an emergency situation we will allow pick up beyond ten hours, but the parent is responsible for calling the office and speaking with the Director before the regular pick up time. If a child is using more

than ten hours of full time care, parent will be billed at an hourly rate of \$15.00 per half hour.

Early Beginnings closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. If you should happen to be late, there will be a fee of \$1.00 a minute per child after 6:00 p.m. which is payable to the teacher on duty (not to Early Beginnings). Habitual lateness may result in dismissal. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation regarding this matter.

## **ENROLLMENT FORMS**

Upon enrollment to our school, all enrollment forms and immunization records must be turned in and completed. It is important that the school maintain current and accurate records for each child so that we can contact you when needed. We require you to update the office with any changes in phone numbers, work, and home address as they occur. More importantly, parents are also required to update the office when there is a change in physician, dentist, authorization for who can pick up the child, and guardianship forms if applicable. If there is an issue of custody, who is permitted to pick up or drop off the child, and who is responsible for your child, court papers are required to be on file. Early Beginnings is required by law to carry a signed Physician's Form of file for each child enrolled in the infant and preschool programs. School Age children are not required to have a Physicians Form. However, all children must be updated on immunizations. Parents and children's rights forms – we adhere to Community Care Licensing regulations that children and parents have rights. The appropriate forms are provided as part of the enrollment packet. All other forms must be completed to the best of your knowledge and signed.

## **HEALTH POLICIES**

The following are guidelines that Early Beginnings adheres to:

1. State Department of Health and Welfare Services requires all children to receive polio, measles, diphtheria, pertusis, tetanus and tuberculosis immunizations. If there is a religious difference regarding immunizations, California law requires an affidavit to be signed by the parent which is to be filed in the child's school file.
2. We understand that children will have minor colds, coughs or allergies. They may attend school as long as their symptoms are minor. If they take medication, be sure to give it to them before bringing them to school. We will conduct informal daily health checks. When you bring your child to school, if we notice he/she may be showing signs of illness, he/she may not be admitted into the center.
3. In any case when illness occurs resulting in a fever of 100 degrees F or higher, a contagious infection, diarrhea (two instances in a day), or heavy excessive coughing that interrupts the child's ability to perform in class and/or nap, the parent must keep the child at home or make other arrangements. If your child becomes ill while they are at the school, we will call you and ask that you pick up your child within one hour. If your child is ill at elementary school, do not bring your child to the center.

They will not be admitted. **The child may only return after the temperature has been normal (98.6 degrees F) for 24 hours.** For an infection you must have a doctor's note and/or medical prescription. Allergies and minor cold symptoms are exceptions. For diarrhea, the child may return 24 hours after it has subsided. Tuition credit is not given for absences due to illness.

4. Accident and illness forms will be written any time your child is involved in an accident or becomes ill. An original will be given for you to sign. We keep the original on file, and a copy will be given for you to keep.
5. Please contact the office as soon as possible if your child develops any communicable illness. They are as follows: chicken pox, strep infections, flu, conjunctivitis, and lice.
6. For liability reasons **Early Beginnings will not administer medication.** The exception to this rule is in the case your child is allergic to bees and requires an epi-pen or any other necessary emergency medication with instructions. Notify your child's teacher if he/she is taking medication at home. This will enable the teacher to be aware in case allergies arise or the child has side effects at school. Parents will be notified immediately.
7. In a medical or dental emergency we will call 911 and then call the parent. We will perform any lifesaving treatment within our ability until medical personnel arrive.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

It is the policy of Early Beginnings to allow children to attend school when they have minor allergies. Any illnesses that are contagious are subject to absences. These illnesses must be clear for a period of 24 hours with the prescribed medication or a doctor's note before the child may again attend school. Please call the school if your child is absent for more than two days. **It is the intent of the facility and administration to hold all occupied spaces for enrolled children during any illness. Therefore, credits for illness are unfortunately unavailable due to the nature of the business.** If the occasion arises where an illness is present, please notify administration as soon as possible.

## **NUTRITION**

Early Beginnings Learning Center does not provide breakfast, however you may bring breakfast for your child to eat when they arrive between 6:30-8:30.

SNACKS are provided for all children on a daily basis. Children who remain at school throughout the day will receive a morning snack as well as an afternoon snack. We encourage the children to eat a variety of foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, various types of crackers, cheese, applesauce and juices. If your child is allergic to any types of foods, please list them on the emergency card and the student information sheet. Please also notify the staff to

ensure that your child will avoid those food. Snack is an exciting way for your children to socialize with their peers. We discourage candy, donuts, gum, etc. from our students' daily diet.

LUNCH is provided for all children enrolled full time or in the morning half day program. We provide a well-balanced lunch including food from all food groups. Your child may bring a sack lunch if you prefer. The menu will be posted next to the parent board. If we make changes on the menu, it will be posted.

## **NAP/REST TIME**

Early Beginnings has scheduled nap/rest time. We are required to provide a time for the children to rest. We supply cribs for the infants and mats or cots for the preschool and school age children. Parents are required to supply at least a sheet and to take nap items home on Fridays to launder and then bring them back on Monday for the week. Please label all items.

## **CLOTHING**

We feel that your child will be happiest when dressed in casual, comfortable clothing that fits well. No strapless sandals please; shoes are safer. Please dress your child according to the weather. It is suggested that you keep an extra set of clothes in their cubby and bring a jacket just in case. Label all belongings and place them in a zip-lock bag in order to help prevent problems with any lost items.

## **LOST ITEMS**

In the event that a piece of clothing, etc. is lost, there will be a lost and found area. Any clothing un-recovered after 30 days will be donated to local charities on a regular basis. Please help us to minimize lost clothing by labeling all your child's clothing and other possessions.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children love to share their birthdays with their friends. If you would like to share your child's birthday, we will celebrate it during our group time. Ask your child's teacher if you need any suggestions. Please consult with your child's teacher with respect to his/her celebration time.

There may be celebrations where we take pictures of the children, their families, and also the staff and their families. These pictures will be used to show on the parent board or given to parents. Occasionally, an employee may need to take pictures of the children for a class project/assignment. In this case written permission will first be obtained from the parent.

## **TOYS AND SHARING**

Participating in sharing at group time enables the child to feel important and special. It also facilitates verbal expression. Good suggestions may be seashells, rocks, library or special books, or treasures from a trip somewhere. Please consult with your child's teacher with relationship to suggestions relating to the unit of study for the week.

We do ask that toys be kept at home or leave them in the car when it is not your child's share day. When toys are brought to school it often creates power struggles among other children. See your child's teacher for their scheduled share day.

## **SEPARATION**

It is often difficult for both parent and child to make it through the first few days of school. If you anticipate tears or other anxious expressions, here are some suggestions based on our experiences: Read a book about the first day of school (the Director may have one to loan to you) and bring your child by for a visit before his/her first day of school. Make sure that your child knows when school is over and who is picking him/her up. Express your own happiness about school. Encourage a hug and kiss, wave goodbye and promptly leave. Your child will usually get involved in an activity after a few minutes. It is normal for your child to feel separation anxiety, however it is best to make your goodbyes short. We will do our best to offer reassurance and to help your child feel comfortable. We encourage you to call during the day if you would like to know how your child is adjusting. Once this process has successfully passed, we do encourage parents to become reacquainted with your child's teacher and classroom.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an integral part of the learning process in any educational setting. When we have field trips we will be letting the parents know usually a month ahead of time. Early Beginnings staff will transport children to and from field trips. Parents will be able to help transport children only with Early Beginnings staff also in the vehicle. Prior to any field trip, parents will receive a permission slip that must be signed and returned for insurance purposes. Volunteer drivers will be asked to provide the school with a certificate of insurance and valid driver's license. Field trips are usually reserved for potty trained children. If your child is not fully potty trained and you would like him/her to participate, you would be required to come.

## **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

The Early Beginnings approach emphasizes the need to encourage the children to create his or her self-discipline through observation of role models (both peers and adults). This is established through the teacher's education in positive discipline and re-directing in a manner that encourages positive communication with the child. Rather than disciplining a child on what "not" to do, we encourage by communication that our children can learn from their mistakes by



role modeling from each other what “to do.” An example may be when a child is running indoors. We sensitively but firmly interrupt them and say “I need you to walk when we are inside” instead of “Don’t run.” This will in time enable the child to learn and know their limits. It will also enable them to follow rules for safety reasons.

Sometimes a child may be having a difficult day and start misbehaving. In this case we give them space and try to understand why they are behaving a certain way. We give them reflection time. They sit near the teacher or away from the other children, depending on the situation. We also use natural and logical consequences for misbehavior. If a child is throwing blocks, he/she loses the privilege of playing with them. We set limits and boundaries with their safety in mind.

When a child faces a problem with another child, we stand near and observe to first let the children talk through their problem and come to a solution. We encourage them to use their words. If we feel they need help, we will intervene.

No corporal punishment is used or incorporated into the values of Early Beginnings Learning Center. We feel, as professional individuals, that there are numerous ways and alternatives available to help a child in making better choices that are socially acceptable. If communicated appropriately, the behavior becomes a developmentally appropriate expectation and is a learning experience for everyone.

If the situation arises where the child’s needs are not being met by the school, it is in the best interest of the child for the school and parents to hold a conference on the necessary changes needing to take place. This process is best accomplished by the teacher, parents, and administration, observing and consulting with one another for the best solution. Early Beginnings reserves the right to terminate a child’s enrollment if we feel it is the best interest of the children.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is due every 3 months, monthly, or bi-monthly. See Director to set up your payment plan. There will be a late charge for all payments made after 12:00 noon on the Tuesday of your preferred payment week. See Director for current late fee amount. If tuition payment is 5 days late, a suspension notice will be given. If tuition is still delinquent at 10 days, your child will be suspended unless other arrangements are made with the School Director. There will be a charge for all returned checks. See Director for returned check fee amount.

**TUITION PAYMENT IS CONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. NO TUITION CREDITS WILL BE GIVEN FOR ABSENCES, ILLNESS, HOLIDAYS OR VACATION.**

Parents are required to give the school a one month notice in writing prior to withdrawing your child from the center. Failure to give the center a one month notice will cancel any tuition reimbursement. Early Beginnings reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any students who display inappropriate behavior that might negatively influence other students. Additionally, we reserve the right to dismiss any student whose tuition is not paid in a timely manner.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL TUITION**

Tuition will be figured according to your child's school schedule. The full day rate will apply when your child has a minimum day or is in our care a full day. The director will calculate what the extra cost is and inform you.

## **TRANSPORTATION SERVICE**

If your child is absent or will not be needing to be picked up from elementary school, you are required to call us before the drive times. If we go there unnecessarily, you will be billed \$10.00.

For children using transportation service who normally would not, the rate is \$10.00 minimum plus \$10.00 each way. Extra transportation will depend on staff availability and drive scheduling. We will do our best to accommodate, but it will be based on staff availability. The days will be adjusted and entered on your next month's tuition.

## **ANNUAL MATERIAL FEE**

There will be an annual material fee due each year on the month you enrolled. See Director for current year's fee amount. The Director will notify you when your fee is due. This fee is used to purchase materials like paper, paints, etc. Please add this into your tuition.

## **BITING POLICY**

When a child bites, the following actions will be documented and carried out:

1. First bite – firm warning and teacher or director will speak with parent to set up a plan in order to resolve the biting problem. The child will be closely observed by the teacher.
2. After we have arranged a plan of action to best fit your child's needs, if he/she should bite again, the teacher will keep the child away from other children. Depending on the severity of the situation, parent may be called to pick up the child. When your child is picked up we will then discuss putting him/her on a two week probation.
3. If the child should break the agreed upon resolution and bite again, he/she will be suspended for a length of time decided by the administration. When the child is suspended we will credit those days to the following month.

## **CAR SEAT LAW**

Current state law requires that children must be in an age and height appropriate child car seat or booster until they reach the age of 8 or 4' 9" in height. If we see you transport your child without a proper car seat, we are mandated to report this to the authorities because it is against the law and puts your child in danger. We will give you a written notice and expect you to correct it immediately. For the safety of your child, please provide them with an age appropriate car seat.

My signature indicates I have received a copy of the Early Beginnings Learning Center Parent Handbook.

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Parent/Guardian Signature & Date

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Director Signature & Date