

Blessed Beginnings Preschool

Parent Handbook for the 2011-2012 school year!



Blessed Beginnings is a preschool filled with Love.
Love of learning Love of others Love of God

Blessed Beginnings Preschool
2200 Ridge Avenue
Aurora, IL 60504

Phone: (630) 851-8010 ext. 217
Website: www.blessedbeginnings.info

Dear Families,

Welcome to Blessed Beginnings Preschool! It is my privilege and honor to be blessed with the opportunity to provide your child with a great start on their education, with the love and dedication of our preschool staff, the support of Bethany of Fox Valley U.M.C., and encouraging feedback from our parents. Blessed Beginnings provides a part day preschool program for children ages 2 ½ to 5. We promise to provide your child with the best quality care as we follow state licensing rules and regulations. Our non-denominational Christian program emphasizes strong academics and age appropriate faith experiences.

This handbook contains policies and procedures that are important to your child's education. Please read it thoroughly and keep it handy for future reference.

Blessed Beginnings has an open door policy. If at any time you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the Director. The Director can be reached Monday thru Friday from 8:30-3:30.

Welcome to our Preschool!

Amber Albus

Preschool Director

Mission Statement

By preparing a developmentally appropriate environment, Blessed Beginnings provides a setting where children feel important and successful. Our mission emphasizes the value of play in the development of young children. By planning and implementing learning experiences, children gain skills and attitudes that support their development. The class schedule allows for teacher directed and child initiated experiences in the areas of art, dramatic play, music, literacy, science, and sensory experiences. Children are able to make decisions and solve problems with the support of caring teachers. The program is designed to meet and enhance the development of the whole child: physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.

Center Programs

Blessed Beginnings serves children from the age of two and a half to five with four programs. Blessed Beginnings offers a two and a half year old, a three year old, a four year old, and a Pre-Kindergarten program. Our programs are designed for age appropriate learning that combines Christian concepts. The two and a half year old program emphasizes on social development and an introduction to the school

atmosphere. The program covers shapes, colors, and name recognition. The three and four year old program covers a letter a week, along with recognition of shapes, colors, and many other age appropriate concepts that ready children for Kindergarten. The Pre-Kindergarten program covers a letter a day, reading skills, simple math, and many other skills necessary for kindergarten preparation. All programs intend to give the children the highest academic experience.

Program Selections

2 ½ Year Old Program

Tuesday & Thursday
9:15 – 11:15 a.m.
\$130 a month



3 Year Old Program

Tuesday & Thursday
9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
\$130 a month

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
9:15 – 11:45 a.m.
\$175 a month

4 Year Old Program

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
\$175 a month

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
12:45 – 3:15 p.m.
\$175 a month

Pre-K Program

Monday – Thursday afternoons
12:30 – 3:00 p.m.
\$215 a month

Eligibility

Prior to your child's start date at Blessed Beginnings you must provide the following:

1. A complete health record and medical statement signed by a physician. This includes a physical, TB test, and lead test. This must be done within six months prior to the start date.
2. A certified copy of your child's birth certificate, not a Xerox copy.
3. Enrollment Application filled out in its entirety.
4. Signed copy of the Late pick up policy and Discipline policy.

*** All children are eligible regardless of creed, sex, national, or ethnic origin!**

Birth Certificate

Parents must provide a certified copy of their child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child within 30 days of orientation. We will make a copy of the certificate and return the original to you. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available you must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and a signed affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth

certificate. We are required by law to notify the Illinois State Policy or local law enforcement agency if you fail to provide the documentation within 30 days.

Financial Information

A \$40 non-refundable registration fee is required for all programs to secure a place in the classroom for the school year.

A 5% tuition discount will be given to families that pay the entire year's tuition in advance. To receive the discount, prepaid full year tuition payment must be received by the school no later than August 1 and can be paid by cash or check.

Families enrolling multiple children will receive a 10% tuition discount for the second and subsequent children. The discount will apply to the lowest tuition rate(s).

A security deposit, half of one month's tuition payment, is due by August 1st for all programs unless tuition is prepaid for the entire year. For those who complete the school year, the security deposit will be used toward May's tuition. For those who do not complete the school year, the security deposit is non-refundable. If the security deposit has been paid and the child is withdrawn prior to the start of the school year, the deposit will only be refunded if we were notified of the withdrawal prior to August 1st.

If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, please submit a signed letter to the director. Please include the final date that your child will attend. Payments are required for two weeks from the date the withdrawal letter is received.

Tuition payments are due on the first day of each month September to May. Payments received after the 7th of the month will incur a \$15.00 late fee. Checks are to be made payable to Bethany of Fox Valley, U.M.C. Payments may be brought to the school, mailed or paid through automatic withdrawal. Payment is necessary regardless of attendance or days off.

If there is an outstanding balance of one month and payment arrangements have not been made with the center, your child may be removed from the program. If you are having difficulties making payments, please contact the director to discuss possible payment arrangements.

Arrival and Dismissal

If your child will not be attending, please notify the school prior to the start of class. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged after five minutes of tardiness when picking up your child. Please call if you are going to be late. If the staff is unable to reach those on the authorized pick-up list, the emergency contacts will be called. The center will attempt a minimum of 2 calls to each person on the lists. If unable to reach any parents, authorized pick-ups, or emergency contacts after 60 minutes, the police department will be contacted. A staff member will stay with the child until someone authorized or a police officer comes to pick up the child. This does not waive the fee; however it



does allow us to reassure your child that you are on your way. Staff members will not hold the child responsible for late pick-up and will discuss the issue only with the parent and never with the child.

We will have staff outside during arrival and departure for your convenience. A staff member will come out to the vehicle and have you sign your child in or out. The child will then be escorted to or from the vehicle for their safety. Upon arriving late to the start of preschool, please escort your child into the building.

We will only allow your child to depart with those authorized in writing by the child's parent/caregiver. Any other arrangements must be given in writing by the parent or guardian. Identification will be requested from anyone who is unfamiliar to the staff.

Days off

Blessed Beginnings follows the Oswego District #308 School calendar. School closures include all full day breaks and holidays. School will be in session at Blessed Beginnings on days where District #308 has partial days.

If District #308 is closed due to snowfall or other weather emergencies, Blessed Beginnings will also be closed. For up to date information on school closings, listen to local radio or television stations (WGN, WBBM, WBBM-FM, WFYR, WUSN, and WSPY). Blessed Beginnings will not refund tuition due to snowfall or other weather emergencies.

Pesticide

Blessed Beginnings practices Integrated Pest Management, a program that combines preventative techniques, non-chemical pest control methods and the appropriate use of pesticides with a preference for the products that are least harmful to human health and the environment. Applications are only made when deemed necessary to control a pest problem. We will establish a registry of people who wish to be notified prior to pesticide applications. To be included in the registry, please notify us in writing. Please state "Notification of Registry", your name, your child's name and the date.

Medical Procedures

Emergencies

Our program requires permission to treat children with basic first aid when necessary. Typically, and injury can be treated with a little loving attention and a cool cloth. Children will be treated for their minor injuries and an Incident Report will be completed and given to the parent at pick-up. In the event a child needs more attention than we can provide, the parent will be notified.



If there is an incident that requires more than basic first aid, the following procedures will apply.

1. Paramedics will be called to the center by a staff member with the 911 procedure.
2. A parent/guardian will be called. If he/she cannot be reached, the emergency contacts will be called.
3. If contacts cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the emergency room with a staff member. That person will remain with the child until a contact arrives.

Parents are responsible for keeping all information updated in the child's file and for all medical bills incurred. The preschool is not responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false information given on any forms completed.

Incident Reports

Staff is required to fill out an accident report if any accident or injury occurs. Parents are to read the incident report and then sign accordingly. Parents will receive a copy. The original will be kept by the preschool.

Medication

Medication should be administered prior to or following preschool. If medication is required during preschool hours the medication needs to be in the original package, accompanied by a doctor's note, and a signed consent form. For further information please contact the Director.

Sick Policy

For the children's protection, if a child has any of these symptoms, they are not to attend preschool. If the child displays any of these symptoms during preschool the child's parents will be contacted and the child will need to be picked up immediately.

- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Undiagnosed rash
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe cold
- Contagious illness



Children who have been sent home or have been absent with a fever, of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, may not return to school until they have been fever free for 24 hours. Children who have vomited or had diarrhea should not return until 24 hours after the last incident. A doctor's clearance may be required before the child is able to return to school.

Confidentiality

Family history and children's personal information will not be released without your written consent, with the exception of the Department of Children and Family Services. All information is kept confidential and used for the program purpose only. Federal law mandates all preschool employees to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Family Services. It is the responsibility of the staff to comply with this law.

Personal Property

Students should come to school with a full sized backpack. The backpack should contain a complete change of weather appropriate clothing, including underwear and socks. Please do not allow children to bring any toys to school unless requested for show and tell. Blessed Beginnings is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Curriculum

Blessed Beginnings strives to provide a positive environment that will ready children for Kindergarten. Our teachers give children the academic tools they need while nurturing their emotional needs. We also seek to provide the children with an age appropriate spiritual basis. The program involves snack time prayer and a weekly Chapel Chat (a weekly lesson with Pastor Lyall).

Our program also includes the goals of the state of Illinois Early Learning Project. These are goals created by the Illinois Early Learning Council to coordinate Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start programs.

During the school year we will have a fall and spring parent/teacher conference. Teachers will assess the children on material that has been covered. You may schedule a conference at any time if there are any concerns or questions.

Daily Schedule

A schedule of the daily activities is posted in each classroom. The daily schedule is tentative, and may need to be altered with little or no notice due to special events such as class parties, guest speakers, and other activities.

Group Time will be adapted to be developmentally appropriate for each program. Group Time includes story time, calendar, weather, counting, patterns, pre-literature, music, and more.

Table Time is planned and purposeful activities created to enhance the program themes or learning objectives; they may include art, math, sequencing, science, pre-literature, and more.

Free Play is a time that the child has freedom to choose an activity that they wish to get involved with. These activities may include computer play, dramatic play, blocks, puzzles, art, math, or manipulative areas.

Daily Schedule

9:00/ 12:30	Drop off and Sign-In
9:15/ 12:45	Group Time
9:45/ 1:15	Table Time
10:15/ 1:45	Clean-up
10:20/1:50	Story and a Song
10:30/2:00	Wash hands & Snack Time
10:45/2:15	Free Play
11:15/2:45	Closing Group and Bible Story



Snacks

A snack is served to the children daily. Blessed Beginnings follows the requirements set by the Department of Children and Family Services. We have a Parent Participation Snack Policy. This requires the students to bring a snack (peanut free) and a drink (milk or 100% juice) once per month for their classroom. Each child will be assigned one day per month throughout the school year to bring snack for their entire class. (Please note: if you forget to bring snack on your child's assigned day, we will provide a supplement. Please bring a box of individually packaged non-perishable snacks and juice boxes on your child's next school day to replenish our supply, or add \$6.00 to your tuition payment.)

Discipline Policies

At Blessed Beginnings we respect each child and his/her level of development, individual personality, and their family and cultural influences. We create a positive environment so as to influence behavior. The program has a set daily routine but allows for flexibility. Clear guidelines are provided so that children know what is expected of them. Limits that relate to safety and protection of self and others, and the environment are clear and reinforced consistently in a positive way. Children are given time to respond to expectations.

Teachers may use a variety of strategies depending on the child and the situation. These strategies include, gaining the child's attention, staying in close proximity to the child, reminding, acknowledging feelings before setting limits, redirecting or diverting, age appropriate choices, and natural consequences. If a child is having more difficulty than usual with discipline in the classroom, the behaviors displayed by the child will be discussed with the parents along with specific techniques being used by the staff to help guide the child to more appropriate behavior. Since the children are only in the preschool a few hours a day, support from parents with their discipline at home and of our discipline at school is expected. All aggressive behaviors that are harmful to other children, teachers, or to the child him/herself be documented and signed by the parents. Situations that continue to include harmful behaviors will be evaluated by the director in considering the safety and well-being of all children. The Blessed Beginnings Preschool director will be involved in any final decision to remove the child from the preschool if the behavior continues to be harmful to other children and/or staff. Upon dismissal the director will provide the family with information on how to contact the Childcare Resource and Referral.

All children will be treated with respect. Children will not be disciplined in a punitive manner

Our goal is to encourage children to develop respect, self-control, self-confidence, and sensitivity in their social interactions during their time at preschool.

Parental Involvement

Volunteers

Parents are essential in our preschool program! Please let your child's teacher know what day you are able to volunteer so that



we can ensure that there is only one volunteer in the classroom each day. We encourage families to help with snack, free play, or group time projects (although you are welcome in the classroom at any time).

Our program offers many events throughout the school year in which parents can be involved. Blessed Beginnings hosts a Halloween party, Thanksgiving feast, Christmas program, Valentine's party, Easter party, and a Promotion Ceremony. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help. It provides a great chance to be involved and see how much the children accomplish!

Fundraisers

We have two main fundraisers throughout the school year. The money raised goes towards providing the preschool with new materials and equipment. We appreciate your help in developing these efforts.

Field Trips

There will be field trips scheduled for the children to further develop their educational growth. Parents need to provide transportation and an adult chaperone for the field trip.

Donations

Blessed Beginnings is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. All donations made to our school are tax deductible. Contact the preschool director if you have items that you would like to donate, such as toys, puzzles, books, etc.

Other Information

Blessed Beginnings Preschool is a ministry of Bethany of Fox Valley United Methodist Church. The church has a Steering Committee that governs the preschool. You may reach the committee by calling (630) 851-8010. If there are any questions or concerns with the program you may contact Barb Cobb (Committee President) or Alka Lyall (Pastor).

Bethany of Fox Valley invites your family to participate in the full range of ministries at the church. Bethany of Fox Valley also offers a Vacation Bible School during the summer months. Feel free to contact the church office for more details at 630-851-8010.

Blessed Beginnings Preschool offers summer programs. The summer programs are a time of fun and faith building. They are a wonderful experience which introduces children to their new school or renews old friendships.



Thank you for your interest in our program!
We look forward to getting to know you and your child!