



Best Beginnings

a happy, busy preschool

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

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Best Beginnings Preschool welcomes you to our school community. We are happy that you have chosen us to be a part of your child's early school experience. In this handbook we hope to answer many of the questions that you may have throughout the year.

Best Beginnings is a place for a child to wonder; to develop curiosity; to explore and experiment with resources; to have individual attention from warm, responsive teachers. It is a place that values your child; a place that is healthy, safe, educational and fun, where learning can take place through discovery.

Best Beginnings curriculum has as its foundation the use of developmentally appropriate practices. Activities are selected on this basis and utilize a variety of instructional approaches to achieve our educational goals. Through child-oriented units like community helpers, bears, insects, five senses, etc., the children learn about math, science, the alphabet, health and social studies. Special attention is also given in the child's natural artistic ability with daily opportunities for expression through art, music, and movement. The development of positive social skills is fostered at all times.

Our program is designed to provide many positive experiences for our students so that they can enjoy their accomplishments and develop the self-confidence that is necessary to open the door to learning. It is our goal that your child's first school experiences be fun and rewarding as we are laying the foundation for further education.

PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL HOURS

Best Beginnings Preschool is for children 2 1/2 to 5 years of age. Our school is in operation Monday through Wednesday from 8:55 to 11:15 and 12:25 to 2:45, and on Thursdays and Fridays from 8:55 to 12:15. We offer 2 day, 3 day, 4 day and 5 day per week classes. In addition, we offer an optional extended day program for all morning students.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The first day of school will be Monday September 13 for the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday students, and Friday September 10 for the Thursday/Friday Sunshine students. School concludes on May 16 with a FUN AND GAMES DAY. The following is a list of days on which school will be closed this year:

September 29	SPSG Church Festival
October 16	Staff Development
November 22-24	Thanksgiving Break
December 20—Jan. 8	Christmas
January 15	M.L.K. Day
February 19	President's Day
March 18	Staff Development
Mar 28 – Apr 9	Easter Vacation

Please note that Best Beginnings Preschool follows the snow days of the Westlake City School System. If Westlake Public Schools are closed due to bad weather, Best Beginnings will also be closed.

CLASS SIZES AND RATIOS

Best Beginnings Preschool is licensed to operate with 105 children per session. State required ratios and maximum class sizes are as follows:

1:12 3 year olds maximum 24 students

1:14 4 & 5 year olds maximum 28 students

However, at Best Beginnings, we desire a higher level of quality care and learning, and we keep the ratios much lower than the state requires of us. Our teacher/student ratios are as follows

1:7 3 year olds maximum 21 students

1:8 4 & 5 year olds maximum 25 students

ADMISSIONS

A child is considered enrolled at Best Beginnings Preschool when the registration form and fee have been received, the administrator confirms the availability of space, and the required state paperwork has been completed. Any change in this information should be communicated to our office so that current information is always on file.

We begin registering each January for the following school year. Families currently attending Best Beginnings, and those families who have attended in the past, will receive priority in the registration process.

A medical statement signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of enrollment and must be updated each year.

Children are not required to be immunized to attend our school, but they must submit a medical statement signed by a physician stating that they have been examined and that they are exempt from immunizations, either by choice or medical condition. If there were to be an outbreak of a communicable disease at the school, (chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella, or other diseases that could be covered through immunizations) the parents of the children without immunizations will be notified and these children will be kept at home.

SNACKS

Our snack time is friendly and relaxed, a very special time of the day. It provides an excellent opportunity to develop positive attitudes toward healthy foods and to practice good table manners. We like to serve nutritious snacks at our school. Some suggestions would be fresh fruit and vegetables, muffins, crackers, cheese or pudding. Water will be served to the class. Please send in snacks ready to serve along with 5 oz. cups, napkins and any needed utensils. We have refrigerator and freezer storage. A reminder of the snack date you're signed up for will be on the monthly calendar.

If no one is signed up for snack on a certain day, or if a parent forgets their snack day, snack will still be provided. Best Beginnings always keeps pretzels available and napkins and cups for water.

LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is offered at school Monday through Friday. This optional program gives children the opportunity to enjoy a brown bag lunch at school, while giving parents an extra hour to complete errands or get caught up at work. There are not structured work time activities planned, but rather a relaxed lunch followed by supervised free play with your child's school friends. Lunch Bunch has open enrollment... join us every day, once a week, or just for a special treat. More information will be sent home in the book bags.

BACK PACK

Each child will need to bring a back pack to school every day. It is important that these be large enough to hold your child's proud works. Remember to check book bags each day for special treasures and important notes from school.

MUSIC PROGRAM

Best Beginnings offers a music program to all of our students. Each Monday, our music teacher sings and plays instruments with the students. It is a very movement-oriented program, encouraging children to get up and go. They are given the opportunity to try out many different musical instruments, sing seasonal songs, and practice many finger plays together. Additionally, the music teacher orchestrates the Halloween and Easter Parades, and of course, our wonderful Christmas Program.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

We want each parent to take an active role in his or her child's preschool experience. In addition to giving parents a monthly newsletter and calendar, we offer several opportunities for parents to come to school throughout the year. Included on this list are Open House, Halloween and Easter Parades, Christmas Program, a Date with Dad, and a Mother's Day Tea.

We want our parents to feel comfortable and confident with Best Beginnings. You are entrusting us with your children and we want our relationship to be a good one. If you have any concerns or questions at any time, talk directly with your child's teachers. Bring up any concerns as they arise, and they can be taken care of before they become larger issues.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

We love to brag about your child's progress here at school! To keep you informed about all of your child's accomplishments, we hold formal Parent/Teacher Conferences twice per year. These meetings are typically held in November and February. The information that we give to you is for your own benefit only and is not shared with any school systems or ODJFS unless we receive a specific, written agreement from you to do so.

ASSESSMENTS

We do informal assessments of all students when they enter school. These assessments may include general observations on speech, hearing, school adjustments and social/emotional readiness. These are for our own information only and are not released to any other organization without written or verbal consent from a parent.

SHARING BUCKET

Each class has a special 'Sharing Bucket' that rotates from child to child throughout the year. When your child brings this bucket home, he may pick out a special toy to put in it and then bring it to school to share with his classmates the next day. On the day your child brings in the sharing bucket, he will also serve as a helper with the calendar and weather charts, leading the line,

MOTHER'S ROOM

There is a private, quiet room available at the school for any mother to sit comfortably and nurse or feed her baby. This room is located at the far western end of the building. If you need to be directed to this area, please see any teacher.

GUIDANCE POLICY

A young child who is kept busy and who knows the expectations and limits within the classroom is eager to please. At Best Beginnings, your child will always be treated with love and respect. The guidance policy used at our school is one that guides the child to appropriate and safe behavior without physically disciplining or demeaning the child.

If a child is being disruptive in the classroom, a teacher will speak directly and firmly to the student about the behavior. If a child needs to be removed from a situation, a teacher may sit and hold

him in her lap or have the child sit on a chair until he is calm and has regained his self-control. Of course, a child is never left alone.

If a child demonstrates behavior that causes frequent disruptions in the classroom, the child's parents and teachers will work together to implement a behavior management plan. The plan would be consistent with the requirements of Rule 5101:2-12-22, and these rules apply to all employees of Best Beginnings.

If a situation arises where a child is consistently endangering himself, his peers, or our staff, it may become necessary for the parents to meet with the teachers and/or owners of Best Beginnings Preschool. Every attempt will be made to work together with the parents to correct the disruptive behavior. However, the safety of the children is always our main concern at school, and if the situation cannot be remedied, the child will be asked to withdraw from our school.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule is one of consistency. Children feel comfortable with daily routines on which they can depend. It also gives them an understanding of order, time and security. They know what will be happening next and this allows for an organized system of learning. Below is a list of our daily activities and a brief explanation of each.

Transition Time—Upon entering the classroom, this is a time to become comfortable with the school surroundings, greet friends, and pick an activity of choice.

Work Time— This is planned, developmentally appropriate curriculum of the day is introduced. These activities include math, science, social studies and language arts.

Large Muscle Time—Activities are planned to enhance the development of large muscle skills such as galloping, skipping, balance, and throwing and catching a ball.

Circle Time—A time for sharing and language experience activities. Calendar, weather and Sharing Bucket is done during this time also.

Art Time—Activities which promote self-expression via various art mediums. Additionally, directed activities will allow for development of listening skills, eye-hand coordination and following directions.

Story Time—A time to encourage early literacy development by reciting new and familiar finger plays and listening to a favorite story being read aloud.

CLASS SCHEDULES

SUNSHINES CLASS - 3 YEAR OLDS

8:55 to 9:15	Transition Time
9:15 to 9:20	Welcome Circle
9:20 to 10:15	Work and Art
10:15 to 10:35	Large Muscle
10:35 to 10:45	Calendar Circle
10:45 to 11:00	Snack
11:00 to 11:15	Story

STARS CLASS - 4 YEAR OLDS

8:55 to 9:15	Transition Time
9:15 to 9:25	Welcome Circle
9:25 to 10:25	Work and Art
10:25 to 10:35	1:Calendar Circle

10:35 to 10:45	Snack
10:45 to 11:00	Large Muscle
11:00 to 11:15	Story

EXPLORERS CLASS - PREK OLDER 4 YEAR OLDS

8:55 to 9:15	Transition Time
9:15to 9:25	Welcome Circle
9:25to 10:25	Work and Art
10:25 to 10:35	Large Muscle
10:35 to 10:45	Calendar Circle
10:45 to 11:15	Snack and Story

RAINBOWS CLASS – PRE K 5 YEAR OLDS

8:55 to 9:15	Transition Time
9:15 to 9:25	Welcome Circle
9:25 to 9:45	Large Muscle
9:45 to 10:40	1Work and Art
10:40 to 10:50	Calendar Circle
10:50 to 11:15	Snack and Story

ADVENTURERS CLASS - AFTERNOON CLASSES

12:25 to 12:45	Transition Time
12:45 to 12:55	Welcome Circle
12:55to 1:15	Large Muscle
1:15 to 2:10	Work and Art
2:10 to 2:20	Calendar Circle
2:20 to 2:45	Snack and Story

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All children will be escorted from their car and returned to their car by a teacher. This system is very safe for the children and convenient for the parents. If you wish to discuss anything with your child's teacher, you are welcome to park your car and come into the building after dismissal.

No child will be released from school to any other person than his parent unless we have permission from the parents. Please use issued carpool numbers only. If an emergency arises, and someone other than a parent or guardian will pick-up your child, please call the school and speak with a teacher. The carpool teachers will check the ID of anyone they do not recognize. Your child's safety is our priority.

Also, if there are custody issues involving your child, you must provide Best Beginnings with court papers indicating who has permission to pick-up your child. We cannot deny a parent access to their child without legal documentation.

TRANSPORTATION

Best Beginnings does not transport children at any time. When your children come to school here, rest assured, this is where they will be! We do, however, bring the field trips to our school! We invite monthly visitors into our school to talk with the children. These visitors may include firemen, police officers, nurses, dental hygienists, librarians, etc.

ILLNESS

Good health is more important than perfect attendance. If your child shows signs of being sick, please keep him at home. A child's temperature should be normal, as well as other symptoms gone, for 24 hours before the child returns to school after an illness.

A communicable disease chart is posted in the office. We will observe a child with minor cold symptoms or one who does not feel well enough to partake in the day's activities. If a child's condition worsens, we will isolate the child, provide a cot and then contact his parents for dismissal. Isolated children are always kept within sight and hearing of a teacher.

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness will be isolated and discharged to a parent or guardian: temperature over 100°F in combination with any other signs of illness, diarrhea (more than three loose stool within a 24 hour period), severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or make a whooping sound), difficult or rapid breathing, yellowish skin or eyes, redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning or itching eyes, untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes, dark urine, gray or white stools, stiff neck with elevated temperature, vomiting, sore throat with difficulty swallowing, or evidence of untreated lice.

If your child will not be attending school please call to let us know. Also, please report all communicable diseases to the teacher so that Best Beginnings may send a note home to other parents about possible contagion.

No medication of any kind will be administered by the staff. The only exception to this rule would be the use of an EpiPen, to counter a life-threatening allergic reaction. Children needing an Epi-Pen are not permitted to carry it on their person. The medication will be kept in a cupboard of the student's classroom so that it will be accessible very quickly if it were to be needed.

ACCIDENTS

All children will be supervised by an adult at all times. There is always a teacher present who is Red Cross trained in First Aid, Communicable Diseases and CPR. A first aid box is located in the school office. In the case of a minor accident or injury, our staff will administer basic first aid and lots of TLC.

If the injury is more serious, first aid will be administered and the parents would be notified immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If an injury is life threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a teacher will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. It is an enrollment requirement that every parent grant consent for transportation to the source of emergency treatment.

A state accident/injury form will be completed if any of the following occur: the child has a serious illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid, the child receives a bump or blow to the head, the child has to be transported by emergency squad, or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If an accident or injury form needs to be completed, parents will be given a copy when their child is picked-up from school, or within 24 hours if the child was transported to the hospital. One copy of this report goes to the parent and the other is kept on file in the school office.

EMERGENCIES

Best Beginnings has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is at school. We have fire and tornado drills at various times, and a plan is posted in each classroom that explains actions to be taken and staff responsibilities in case of fire, emergency and weather alerts. Should we need to evacuate, our emergency destination is the YMCA on Columbia Road. A sign would be posted on the front door informing parents of our destination, and the Westlake Police would be notified of our location. Parents would be contacted as soon as possible to come pick up your child.

In the unlikely event there would be an environmental threat or threat of violence, the staff will secure the children in the safest location possible, contact the proper authorities and then the parents, as the situation allows.

PAYMENT OF TUITION

A \$75 non-refundable registration fee must accompany the registration form. Registration will begin in January of each year.

The tuition for Best Beginnings is as follows:

► Yearly Tuition for 2-Day Program	\$2070
(August through April monthly payment \$230)	
► Yearly Tuition for 3-Day Program	\$2205

(August through April monthly payment \$245)

► Yearly Tuition for 4-Day Program \$2610

(August through April monthly payment \$290)

► Yearly Tuition for 5-Day Programs \$3060

(August through April monthly payment \$340)

A 15% reduction in total tuition per month is offered if two or more children in the same family are registered and for families with a parent currently active in the military.

- Tuition will be paid in 9 equal payments from August 1st through April 1st.
- Tuition is always paid one month in advance.
- Tuition payments can be made by check or cash.
- If you add classes during the year, we will update your tuition amount and send you a revised tuition invoice.
- Tuition and teacher staffing are based on a year-long commitment from our parents. We have divided your yearly tuition into 9 equal payments for your convenience. Please note that tuition remains constant even though the number of days in a month will vary. Furthermore, the budget is based on total enrollment. Hence, no deductions can be made for short illnesses or family vacations.

We are so happy that your child will be joining us at Best Beginnings
Preschool this year!

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
CENTER PARENT INFORMATION
REQUIRED BY OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The facility is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the facility upon request.

The administrator and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

Contact information for parents/guardians of the children attending the facility is available upon request. This information will not include the name, telephone number or email of any parent/guardian who requests that his/her name, telephone number or email not be included.

Recent licensing inspection reports and any substantiated complaint investigation reports for the past two years are posted in a conspicuous place in the facility for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The center's licensing inspection reports for the past two years are also available for review on the Child Care in Ohio website. The website is: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm>.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

This information must be given in writing to all parents, guardians and employees as required in 5101: 2-12-30 of the Ohio Administrative Code.