

07/08/2026

Family Handbook

Early Childhood Programs

FAMILY HANDBOOK



Committed to providing nurturing early learning experiences that form the foundation for children's educational journeys!

Contents

Welcome	3
Vision	3
Philosophy of Education	3
COMMUNICATION	4
Ongoing Child Assessment	5
Parent Involvement Information	5
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	6
School Readiness Advisory Committee (SRAC) _	6
Great Start Collaborative (GSC)	7
Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition	7
Program Options	7
Tuition	8
Due Dates	8
PICK UP TIME	9
Admissions Policy	9
Change of Address or Telephone Number	10
Attendance Policy for Preschool	10
Withdrawal	10
Referral Policy	10
Confidentiality Policy_____	11
Staff/Volunteer Screening Policy	11
School Calendar	11
Outdoor Time	12
Weather	12
Clothing	12
Rest Time Policy	13
Medication Policy_____	13
Health Policy	13
Nutrition Policy_____	14
Parent Notification of Accident/Emergency/Incident Policies	14
Discipline Policy/Conflict Resolution	15
Child Protection Policy	16
Grievances	16
Subject to Change Notice	16
Licensing Notebook	17

Preschool Daily Schedule	18
Infant/Toddler Introduction	19
Infant Routine Typical Day	19
TODDLER ROUTINE TYPICAL DAY	20
Parent Code of Conduct_____	21
Purpose and Scope	21
General Propositions	21
Prohibited Behaviors	21
Consequences	22



Benzie Early Childhood PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

Welcome

Thank you for the privilege of choosing us as partners in the early years of your children's development. We are committed to providing your children with a safe and nurturing environment that supports learning through exploration and developmentally appropriate activities. Please use this handbook as a resource for our programs, policies, and procedures. The program is licensed and complies with all rules and regulations established by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).

It is our goal and responsibility to work with you and your child to provide the best possible experience. In keeping with this idea, we are providing you with this handbook to better acquaint you with the policies and procedures related to the program.

The guidelines included are necessary to make our program a place in which your child can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Please be sure to read this handbook carefully and keep it handy for future reference.

Vision

The Benzie Early Childhood Programs embrace the joy, energy, and sense of wonder of each child, teacher, and family. We work to create vibrant and peaceful classroom environments where children are free to explore, and the teachers are intentional about creating child-centered learning opportunities. We value the cultures of the children and families to foster their growth and independence. We are committed to providing nurturing early learning experiences that form the foundation for each child's educational journey.

Philosophy of Education

We believe that all children develop emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially. All areas of development are equally important and affect one another. We also believe that children develop as a result of their interactions with adults, other children and the materials around them. Based on these beliefs, we provide opportunities for children to develop in all domains through interactions individually, with the teacher, other children, and with materials. Our curriculum is designed to enhance the development of children, to extend their skills and level of understanding as well as foster positive self-esteem and positive feelings about school. We

believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and we strive to partner with parents around the specific development of their child. We encourage parent involvement in their child's schooling.

Communication

As with all relationships, communication is the key. Please let us know what is happening in your family or child's life that may affect behavior, need to be celebrated, mourned, etc. For questions or concerns that require more than a few minutes, please schedule an appointment before or after school.

Parents and staff are expected to communicate on a regular basis. The appropriate times and ways to communicate are at drop-off and pick up, through school email, via the school phone line or through Brightwheel. Brightwheel is the preferred communication method and teachers check that regularly throughout the day. The Benzie Early Childhood Program prohibits communicating through social media platforms or personal text messages.

Every month parents will receive a digital copy of our monthly newsletter and meal calendar. Hard copies can be picked up in the office. Special event days will also be posted in Brightwheel.

Curriculum

Our classrooms utilize the Creative Curriculum to guide our daily activities. The act of play is important in the development of young children and is the strong base for our program. The children will be learning to take turns, communicate wants and needs, increase creativity, and enhance social- emotional skills. We will be introducing areas of study that are based around the interest of the children in our class. While becoming comfortable as a student in school, children will also be exposed to a variety of academic skills, including early literacy and math. All activities are age appropriate and engage your child to want to learn.

Creative Curriculum has also developed a digital curriculum that will support both in person learning as well as remote and virtual learning. More than a digital curriculum, The Creative Curriculum® Cloud...

- supports both teachers and families with developmentally appropriate learning experiences regardless of setting—distance learning, traditional classroom or a hybrid model.
- includes powerful weekly planning tools for teachers that leverage curriculum and assessment data to facilitate informed, individualized instruction.
- provides 24/7 access to all curriculum resources on any device along with content updates to curriculum as soon as they become available.
- focuses on social-emotional learning while delivering academic rigor alongside cognitive skills, meaningful interactions, and physical well-being in a whole-child approach to learning

Developmental Screening

Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ®) provides reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional screening for children between birth and age 6. Drawing on parents' expert knowledge, ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and catch delays in young children—paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring.

Ongoing Child Assessment

We use Teaching Strategies GOLD as our assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic, observational assessment system for children from birth through third grade. It is designed to help get to know children well – what they know and can do, as well as their strengths, needs, and interests. With this information, we can guide children's learning by planning engaging experiences that are responsive to individual and group needs. Parents and families are invited to participate in the online system as well. For more information, please talk to your child's teaching team.

Parent Involvement Information

Children who are successful in school have many healthy interconnections between family, school, and community. Parent involvement in the learning process strengthens learning at home and is directly linked back to positive child outcomes at school. Communication and strong relationships are the keys to successful parent involvement. Parent involvement is a very important part of our program and parents are welcomed visitors in the classroom at any time.

Home visits - Once during the year, we offer a home visit with your family. The goal of home visits is to better meet the needs of your child and family. In promoting a partnership between parents and teachers, home visits provide a time to share the interests of your child and family, information about the program, and how the program can best serve the needs of each family. For example, the home visit prior to the start of the school year is an excellent time to get acquainted with one another and the spring home visit helps to provide a smooth transition to kindergarten.

Conferences – Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year (fall and spring). During the conference, the teacher will discuss your child's progress, answer any parent questions, and develop a plan to address any areas of concern or particular interest. Teachers will work with parents to schedule a time for the conferences.

Open House - Held prior to the first day of school. This is an opportunity for parents and children to come and visit the classroom and meet other parents and students. Participation in this event will help alleviate any first day jitters.

Family Participation Groups/Data Analysis Committee Meetings – Local meetings are held three times a year. Those that attend the Advisory Committee Meetings consist of, but are not limited to, parents, teachers, administrators, Early Childhood Specialist, teachers, Title I preschool teachers, Kindergarten teachers, School specialists, Department of Human Services, Community Health Services, local early childhood programs, elementary principals, and school superintendent. For more information on these meetings, please ask your child's teacher.

OTHER POSSIBLE IDEAS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- Volunteer in your child's classroom – help prepare materials, read to students, or assist at toys and games tables
- Share special interests with children such as fishing, photography or sewing
- Provide recyclables and help to make play materials
- Create displays of child-initiated work
- Support children's learning at home
- Read or contribute to a parent newsletter
- Story time (read aloud to your child before bedtime, nap time)
- Have child write their own story and read it back to you
- Word recognition, touching words
- Word games during road trips
- Visit your local library
- Cook with your child – have your child read the recipe
- Use animated voice when reading to your child
- Memory games

Parent Notice of Program Evaluation

Our Program is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the statewide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Strong Beginnings Program (SB). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP and/or SB staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov
or 217-241-4290

or MDE, Office of Early Childhood Education and Family Services, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Our preschool program participates in monthly MTSS meetings. This is a process that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention for students who are in need of additional support within the classroom.

- *If a parent or teacher has concerns about a child's academic, behavior, or social progress at any time throughout the year, this child may be brought up at MTSS in order to put helpful interventions in place. Parent permission is required to bring up your child at these meetings. **Student names are kept confidential.***

School Readiness Advisory Committee (SRAC)

Due to the rural nature of the 5 county region, this committee consists of multiple collaborative efforts of existing groups including: Great Start Collaborative, 5toOne Parent groups, Great Start Parent Coalition, Great Start Readiness Program Parent Advisory Committees, Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center and continuous opportunities for feedback using technology. The School Readiness Advisory Committee meets as needed for special issues not currently addressed within existing structures. If you would like to be involved in this committee, please contact Northwest Ed Early Childhood Office at 231-922-6437 or find us at www.facebook.com/greatstartparents.

Great Start Collaborative (GSC)

Every county in Michigan is part of a Great Start Collaborative. Every Collaborative includes parents, service providers, partners and stakeholders who contribute their time and expertise to help make sure children receive the best care and education we can provide. Locally the Great Start Collaborative Traverse Bay consists of: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties.

If you would like to be involved in this committee, please contact Northwest Ed Early Childhood Office at 231-922-6437 or find us at www.facebook.com/greatstartparents.

Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition

The GSC Parent Coalition is a volunteer group of parents *working to ensure that all families have access to information, programs and services in their communities.*

If you would like to be involved in this committee, please contact Northwest Ed Early Childhood Office at 231-922-6437 or find us at www.facebook.com/greatstartparents.

Program Options

GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) is a state funded preschool program. This program may be available to children who are age 4 by September 1. Eligibility is based on income and student need. This program is a school year program that runs from approximately October—mid-May Monday thru Thursday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Families who are accepted to the GSRP program, but fall above the “250% of the Poverty Line” level will be asked to pay some tuition based on a sliding scale.

Strong Beginnings is a preschool program for three-year-old children with factors that may place them at risk for low educational attainment. This program is based on research that shows similar children, who attend a high-quality preschool for the two years prior to kindergarten, have significant positive developmental outcomes when compared to their peers who attended a high-quality program for only one year. These materials are funded through a grant provided by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential. Our Strong Beginnings classroom offers the opportunity to work with a Family Liaison. The Family Liaison can support in the following ways: Offer Connection to a wide variety of resources to meet family needs and interest in the community; Walk beside families in navigating services; Parent Coaching; Support family and classroom participation activities; and attending family conferences and home visits.

This program may be available to children who are age 3 by December 1 but not age 4 by September 1. Eligibility is based on income and student need. This program is a school year program that runs from approximately mid-September to mid-May, Monday thru Thursday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Families who are accepted to the Strong Beginnings program.

Tuition preschool program options for 2.5-3.5 -year old children at Lake Ann Elementary, Betsie Valley Elementary, and Homestead Hills Elementary. Typical days run 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Tuition schedule options are below.

The infant/toddler program is for children ages 6 weeks to 30 months at Homestead Hills Elementary and Lake Ann Elementary. The program operates 7:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday, and is tuition-based.

Tuition

There is a \$50 annual school year registration.

HOMESTEAD HILLS:				
Weekly Schedule Options	Early Pre-K Tuition	Infant/Toddler Tuition		Full Time Benzie Employee Discount
Part-time (M/W, T,TH, or M,W,F) or Full Time Monday - Friday	\$45 a day	\$65 a day		10%
Lake Ann:				
Weekly Schedule Options	Early Pre-K Tuition	Infant Tuition	Toddler Tuition	Full Time Benzie Employee Discount
Part-time (M/W, T,TH, or M,W,F) or Full Time Monday - Friday	\$45 a day	\$65 a day	\$55 a day	10%
Betsie Valley:				
	Early Pre-K Tuition			Full Time Benzie Employee Discount
	\$45 a day			10%
Late Pick Up Fee (after 4:05)	\$10 for every 15 minutes	(after 4:30) \$1/minute		(after 4:30) \$1/minute
Before/After Care (PK-5 th)	\$15 a session			
Summer Program (7am -5pm)	Infant/Toddler \$65 PreK - School Age \$55 Registration Fee \$50			

***NOTE:** Families attending less than 5 days a week may NOT change the days in which their child(ren) attend. This is to respect other families' reserved days and to abide by child teacher ratio laws. If a day is missed, weekly tuition rates still apply, and no other days may be subbed in to make up for missed days. To request a permanent attendance change, please request a schedule change form from the EC Coordinator.

Due Dates

- ✿ All program payments are due on Monday, before the week of attendance. Parents may pay weekly, semi-monthly or monthly.
- ✿ A \$10 late fee per child is assessed to all payments received after the Monday of the week of attendance.
- ✿ All DHHS child care state assistance copays are due on the first day of each week, prior to attendance.
- ✿ Children will not be allowed to attend the program without advance payment. If a parent has an unpaid balance, the child may be dis-enrolled from the program.
- ✿ Payments are non-transferable and non-refundable (unless there are unforeseen circumstances and to be determined by administration staff ONLY).
- ✿ A \$25 non-sufficient funds (NSF) will be applied to each returned check.
- ✿ If a day is missed, daily tuition rates still apply, and no other days may

be subbed in to make up for the missed day.

Drop OFF/PICK UP TIME

Upon departure at the school, the following guidelines will be followed:

- ✿ Children must be dropped off no later than 9:30 am unless coordinated with the onsite director.
- ✿ Children will be released **only to those persons listed on the Family Information form** as authorized to pick up identified by the parent/guardian.
- ✿ If the parent/guardian wants to change the pick up person over the phone, **the new person must show proof of identification**. The parent/guardian **must sign a written permission** for the new person at the first available time.
- ✿ If a parent/guardian or person authorized to pick up a child is intoxicated or substance impaired when they come to the Center, staff will offer to call a cab or another person to transport them. If the person insists on leaving, they will be informed that the police will be called about an intoxicated or substance impaired driver leaving our premises. Additionally, Child Protective Services will be called.

Admissions Policy

Anyone interested in a **Strong Beginnings or GSRP** slot will need to fill out an application. The program coordinator can help you with this. Items needed for your application to be completed include:

- ✿ Child's birth certificate
- ✿ Household Income
- ✿ Address/Phone Numbers
- ✿ Names and DOB of Everyone in the home

Enrollment documentations needed for **All enrolled include:**

- ✿ Fully completed Child Information Record(emergency card)
- ✿ Certificate of Immunization showing up-to-date status
- ✿ Current Health Appraisal completed within the last twelve months
- ✿ Enrollment Packet
- ✿ Annual Enrollment and Permission Forms

A Health Appraisal must be on file within the first 30 days of initial attendance or the child will not be able to attend until it is submitted. The Health Appraisal must have a physician's signature, recommendation, stamp and the date.

Enrollment Prioritization Policy

**In the event of a waitlist the following policy will be followed to ensure in district students have priority enrollment in early childhood programs:*

1. Full-time that has already been enrolled in Benzie early childhood programming.
2. Full-time students with siblings attending at Benzie County Central Schools
3. Full-time in district students
4. Full-time out-of-district students
5. Part-time students that have already been enrolled in Benzie early childhood programming.
6. Part-time students with siblings attending at Benzie County Central Schools
7. Part-time in district students
8. Part-time out of district students

Change of Address or Telephone Number

Please inform the program director or teacher as soon as possible if there are any changes in address, phone number or email. If we need to contact you in case of an emergency, current information is essential.

Attendance Policy for Preschool

Regular attendance is expected in order to maintain your child's placement within the classroom. As parents, valuing your child's education early on is a very important impression that will impact them for years to come in their success in school. The program expectation is that your child attends all class sessions throughout the week. We feel strongly that consistency is important for young children and regular attendance is an integral piece to building a child's self- confidence, language, peer relationships, independence, creativity, trust, problem solving, and cognitive skills. We are happy to offer assistance to help resolve issues that may stand in the way of your child's attendance. If your child is absent, or has a planned absence, please call or message your child's teacher.

Withdrawal

We would appreciate two weeks' notice before withdrawing your child from the program by calling your child's teacher or giving written notice. The advance notice allows us to give your child some closure to the program, gather all papers and belongings, and say good-bye to their classmates. This two-week period also allows for a smooth transition for your child.

Exclusion Policy - Children enrolled in GSRP and Strong Beginnings programs cannot be

excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, needed assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions. If your child is struggling in our program, we will partner with you to help your child succeed.

Referral Policy

If a parent has concerns about their child's development, they should begin by contacting the lead teacher. The lead teacher will partner with the family to incorporate various at home and at school strategies to meet the child's goals. If there continue to be concerns, the lead teacher will initiate the MTSS process. If further interventions are needed, a team will be formed to discuss now to best meet the child's needs. The team may include: parent, the teacher, the building principal, the NorthED Early Childhood Specialist, or other special education staff. If a child is already receiving services for a disability, the program staff will join the IEP team and continue services.

If a parent has a concern or a need for their family, they should begin by contacting the lead teacher, as well. The lead teacher will partner with the family to find various community resources that can directly help the family with their needs and concerns.

Confidentiality Policy

Employees must not divulge confidential information contained in the records and files of all children, except to other employees who may need such information in connection with their duties and to authorize parties in accordance with proper departmental procedures. If an employee is approached to provide information inappropriately, the employee must refuse to release the requested information in accordance with applicable procedures and should refer the requestor to the employee's immediate supervisor. Any employee who inappropriately releases information, or uses confidential information for personal reasons, will be disciplined in accordance with established policies and procedures.

Parent and family involvement is an integral part of the program. Any parents or family members that choose to be part of our day and activities are asked to follow the same confidentiality policy as employees and staff regarding what they learn and observe about children and families.

Staff/Volunteer Screening Policy

Benzie Early Childhood Program complies with federal and state laws regarding screening of staff and volunteers. Comprehensive background checks are required of all staff members and any unsupervised volunteers. Checks include FBI fingerprinting, Michigan Child Abuse and

Neglect Registry, National Sex Offender Registry, PSOR, childcare licensing database for previous disciplinary action and any criminal or child abuse history in previous states of residence in the past 5 years. Volunteers that do not have unsupervised access to children will also go through the PSOR check.

School Calendar

Calendar - Our program will follow the Benzie School calendar for holidays and vacations with the exception of our start and end dates. Preschool start and end dates will be announced each year. Parents will be notified of any additional changes that occur in the schedule.

Hours - Our preschool is a Monday - Friday program from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Before and After Care - 7am - 8:45 am and 4pm - 5pm

Snow days and/or school cancellations - In the event that Benzie Schools are closed due to weather or other emergency situation, our preschool will also be closed. Please listen to your radio or local TV station for announcements of closings.

Transportation

Children that are three years old and older may ride the bus. For more information you can contact the bus garage at 231-882-5072. Please discuss transportation with your child's teacher at orientation to learn more.

Outdoor Time

Physical activity is also an important part of a child's health and development. Our preschool program dedicates at least 30 minutes per day to outdoor physical activity. Please send appropriate clothing for outdoor play, i.e., warm jackets, snow pants, boots, mittens, hats, and proper shoes for recess. Please label your child's clothing with their name. Children will be using the school playgrounds. When the weather is too bad for students to go outdoors, students are offered alternate large motor activities.

Weather

The following weather conditions prevent our preschool program from going outdoors:

- Temperature or wind-chill below 0 degrees
- Rain, hail, or sleet

- Other severe weather such as high winds, lightning, etc.

Clothing

In general, the rules of the season and good taste should prevail with regard to student dress. For safety reasons, appropriate footwear must be worn at all times (except rest time). During winter months, your child needs to bring a **jacket, snow pants, hat, mittens, and boots** each day, as we will go outdoors as weather permits.

Situations do arise in the school day where a child's clothing becomes wet and/or soiled. Parents are asked to send a complete set of clothes to be kept at school for their child. Please send the items in a Ziplock bag clearly marked with the child's name and replace them in the event they are worn home.

Rest Time Policy

In school-day programs, a daily rest time is offered each afternoon. You are welcome to send in a small pillow and blanket for your child to use at rest time. Due to each child's needs being different, not everyone will sleep, but all are asked to "rest quietly" in their rest space. These will be long days for the preschoolers and a rest time may be necessary for most. If there is a small special cuddle your child would like to have for rest time, they are allowed to bring those in for rest time.

Our Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) requires a daily rest time for children enrolled in full-day programs. This rest time is usually 45 minutes long and is intended to allow children to relax and recharge. While children aren't forced to sleep, they are expected to be quiet and may engage in quiet activities like reading or playing with quiet materials.

Our Strong Beginnings Program requires a daily 80 minutes of rest time in school-day classrooms. This rest time can be used for sleeping or quiet play, and it's considered a crucial part of a child's development and learning. Rest time allows children to better remember what they learned and supports their overall well-being.

Medication Policy

Prescription medication can be given to children while in school attendance. It **MUST** be supplied in the original container with the child's name and instructions for administration. Medication will be kept in a locked container in the classroom. Epi pens and other emergency medication will be kept in the classroom first aid backpack. Appropriate paperwork must be kept on file as well.

Health Policy

Each child must have a physical examination within 30 days of starting in the program as required by State Child Care licensing. A Health Appraisal form must be completed by the physician and include physician's signature, recommendation, stamp and date. All children must be up to date on their immunizations or present an authorized waiver form prior to attending school. Michigan recently revised the immunizations rules to require all individuals who wish to waive one or more vaccines to:

1. Seek an authorized waiver for medical contradictions from your family physician.
2. Seek an authorized waiver for all non-medical concerns from a county health department.

The cost of the physical examination and immunizations is the responsibility of the family.

We cannot provide care for your child if he/she is ill. If your child should become ill while in our care, a parent will be notified. Your child should not be sent to the program if he/she has symptoms of illness. To protect themselves and others, children should be kept at home/or sent home for at least **twenty four hours** (or until he/she is completely recovered) if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Severe sore throat
- Temperature above 100.4 degrees (PLEASE wait 24 hours after fever breaks before sending back to school – based on health department guidelines to prevent the spread of flu and other illness)
- Earache/discharge
- Head lice and/or nits from head lice
- Nausea or vomiting
- Skin rash
- Swollen glands
- Overly tired
- Diarrhea
- Inflamed eye/discharge
- Sores on the skin such as impetigo, scabies, or ringworm

A 24-hour period DOES NOT mean that the child returns the next day. Example: If a child leaves sick on a Monday then he/she cannot return to school until a full 24-hour symptom free period has been completed. This means they cannot return until Wednesday. If you attempt to drop your child off before this has occurred, staff is advised to deny access to the classroom. This is to prevent the spread of disease and illness to the other children and staff.

If your child does not feel well, s/he will probably NOT have a good day at school. Please help your

child get rest and recover before sending them back to school. If your child is sick, but you feel he/she can come to school as long as he/she stays inside, **please reconsider: a student well enough to attend school will be considered well enough to participate in outside play.**

Nutrition Policy

Our program understands that a child needs to learn independence and self-help skills. In order to facilitate that, meals and snacks will be served in our classroom. Children are encouraged to try new foods and serve themselves. Teachers will sit with children to facilitate conversations and help when needed.

All food served will be compliant with the nutrition standards of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/ProgramBasics/Meals/Meal_Patterns.htm. In addition, we follow the guidelines of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. Foods served should reflect the home and community cultures and be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. Menus will be posted in the classroom and any food substitutions will be noted.

If there is a need for a child to receive substitutions due to medical or religious reasons, please notify the staff and teacher during registration. You will be required to submit additional documentation if your child needs food substitutions due to an allergy or medical condition. Our program will comply with rule 400.8330 (3) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs.

Parent Notification of Accident/Emergency/Incident Policies

Illness: Parents will be notified by phone/brightwheel of illnesses listed within this handbook as soon as staff is aware of symptoms. If parents do not answer when staff calls, staff will begin calling numbers on the emergency contact list until someone is available to come get the ill child. If a child is too ill to remain in the group, they will be placed in a separate area and cared for/supervised by an adult until the parent arrives. A 24-hour period DOES NOT mean that the child returns the next day. Example: If a child leaves sick on a Monday then he/she cannot return to school until a full 24-hour symptom free period has been completed. This means they cannot return until Wednesday. If you attempt to drop your child off before this has occurred, staff is advised to deny access to the classroom. This is to prevent the spread of disease and illness to the other children and staff.

Injury: If a major injury occurs, including but not limited to significant head injuries, bleeding not contained by a bandage, rising bump or bruise on body, seizure, fainting, etc. you will be notified immediately, and staff will take medical measures necessary to maintain the health and safety of your child until you arrive. This may include 911 services, CPR, and/or First Aid

procedures that staff is trained to administer. If a minor injury occurs, including but not limited to a scratch, a bump without bruising, bleeding contained by a bandage, you will be notified by phone, text, email, or a note home. Discretion is left to the staff based on the specific circumstance. Please note, ALL injuries will include a child injury report for you to review the day the injury occurred. These reports also go to the supervisor. If the child is taken to a medical care facility, parents will need to provide a written statement from the doctor regarding approval to return to school and any accommodations needed in the classroom.

Please see a sample Child Injury Report in your child's classroom. If your child suffered an injury before the school day, please report it to staff so that they are able to keep an eye on the injury for you during the school day.

The parent will be responsible for any incurred medical expenses. For your child's sake, please keep the program staff updated on any change in emergency contact numbers and/or physical illness or conditions.

In the case of fire, tornado, lockdown, or other severe weather/emergency crisis, our preschool will follow the safety procedures as outlined by Benzie Schools. Plans for these safety procedures are posted in the classroom. Teachers will take copies of the student's emergency cards with them and take attendance once the children reach the predetermined safety site.

Discipline Policy/Conflict Resolution

Our program provides a warm, positive environment which meets children's daily needs. There are times when conflicts occur and need to be addressed. The following discipline guidelines have been developed in support of this environment.

Teachers and assistants will support children as they solve problems with materials, do things for themselves, and assist them in resolving conflicts with peers. In the classroom, adults:

- ✿ Encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day;
- ✿ Treat conflict situations with children matter-of-factly;
- ✿ Approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions;
- ✿ Acknowledge children's feelings;
- ✿ Involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children and restating the problem;
- ✿ Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together;
- ✿ Give follow-up support when children act on their decisions.

Staff are prohibited from using these forms of discipline/punishment:

- ✿ Hitting, spanking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.

- ✿ Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- ✿ Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
- ✿ Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- ✿ Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross-motor activities
- ✿ Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.
- ✿ Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle.

Summer Camp Behavior & Discipline Policy (Grades K–4)

Our goal is to create a safe, respectful, and fun environment for every child. Positive behavior is encouraged through clear expectations, consistent routines, and kind guidance from staff. When behavior challenges arise, we respond with age-appropriate interventions focused on learning and growth.

Core Behavior Expectations

Campers are expected to:

- Be kind and respectful to others.
- Listen to and follow adult directions.
- Keep hands, feet, and hurtful words to themselves.
- Use appropriate language and tone.
- Take care of camp materials, property, and spaces.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Unacceptable behaviors will be addressed promptly and appropriately. These include (but are not limited to):

- Hitting, kicking, biting, or any physical aggression.
- Verbal threats, bullying, or intimidation.
- Intentional destruction of property.
- Running away or leaving assigned areas without permission.
- Repeated refusal to follow directions or disrupting the group.

Fighting & Threats

Fighting (physical altercations) and **threats of violence** (verbal or written) are taken **very seriously**. Depending on the severity, these may result in:

- **Immediate removal from group activity.**
- **Incident report filed.**
- **Parent/guardian contact the same day.**
- **Temporary suspension (1–3 days)** from camp.
- **Possible removal from camp** for repeated or severe incidents.

Our staff will:

- Separate and ensure safety for all involved.
- Speak calmly with each camper to understand the situation.
- Help children express feelings and solve problems when possible.
- Work with families on behavior plans if needed.

Discipline Process

1. **Verbal Reminder:** Campers are reminded of the rules and asked to make a better choice.
2. **Cool-Down or Break:** Campers may be moved to a quiet area to calm down and reset.
3. **Loss of Privilege:** May include sitting out of a game or special activity.

4. **Parent Contact:** For repeated issues or serious behavior.
5. **Behavior Plan:** If necessary, a personalized plan will be created with the family.
6. **Suspension/Expulsion:** If behavior threatens safety or continues despite interventions.

Partnering with Families

We believe discipline works best when families and staff work together. Please communicate any concerns, needs, or strategies that help your child succeed. Our shared goal is to support every child in learning to make safe and respectful choices.

Child Protection Policy

The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. Under the Act, our employees are considered Mandated Reporters and are required, by law, to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Under the Act, Mandated Authorities can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. Our employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents before reporting the matter, nor are they required to investigate any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition before making a report. We take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities.

Grievances

Should you have a complaint or concern, please discuss it with your child's teacher and try to resolve the issue as soon as possible. If you feel the situation is not resolved to your best interest, please contact the program director at your building.

Subject to Change Notice

Items in the Participant Handbook are subject to change. Written notification of changes will be provided to parents and will supersede this handbook.

Licensing Notebook

Our program's "Licensing Notebook" is available on-site for parents to review. The following are available in the licensing notebook:

- The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action (CAP) plans since May 28, 2010.
- The licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past 2 years are available on the child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Preschool Daily Schedule

Arrival/Breakfast/Greeting Time – Children enter the classroom at their own pace. Parents/guardians are encouraged to stay until children are ready for them to leave. Children have choices about whether to eat, spend time with books, or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the daily announcements.

Large-Group Time/Music and Movement – All adults and children participate in activities planned around children's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects; and events meaningful to children.

Planning Time – Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).

Work Time (children's hour of uninterrupted Choice Time) – Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

Cleanup Time – Children and adults clean up together keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up. Adults accept children's level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.

Recall Time – Gathered in small group settings, children choose Work Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or

spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting). Adults are unhurried in their approach and may complete Recall Time with four or five children each day.

Small Group Time – An adult-initiated learning experience based on children's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.

Outside Time – Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Work Time indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and also join in their active outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.

Bathroom/Wash Hands/Prepare for Lunch – Children assist in preparation and set up. Children choose where they would like to sit and are encouraged to serve themselves.

Lunch – Family-Style meals support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

Quiet/Resting Time – Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary, on-your-own-cot play. Rest Time plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each child. Quiet play could include books, soft music, baby dolls, or fine motor manipulatives.

Wake/Bathroom/Snack – As children wake up, adults and children work together to put away cots and set up for snacks. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.

Plan/Work/Cleanup/Recall – (refer to AM descriptions).

Outside Time/Dismissal (refer to AM descriptions).

Infant/Toddler

Infant/Toddler Introduction

Thank you for trusting us to care for your child in their earliest time of development. We take this responsibility seriously and look forward to working with you to provide a warm, supportive, caring and fun environment for your young child to grow and develop.

Communication is especially important in the infant and toddler time of development. We will utilize Brightwheel to communicate throughout the day. This includes when your child eats, when their diaper is changed, when we want to share fun pictures, and when we have any questions. We encourage you to do the same. We understand families, especially with infants and toddlers, need regular communication during the day and are happy to respond throughout the day. We will have enough staff to ensure supervision and communication.

Infant Routine Typical Day

Below is a typical day in your child's classroom, however, please note that all schedules are not the same and are subject to change at any time depending on the needs of the children. Licensing requires that infants eat and sleep on demand, therefore the infant schedule does not follow a rigid routine. Daily activities include reading, music, art, sensory activities, outdoor activity (weather permitting), gym time, and free play. Children are diapered every two hours or more frequently if necessary. In addition to these daily activities, we also focus on gross and fine motor skill development, as this is imperative in the first 6 months of a child's life.

REST TIME

Licensing requires children birth to 18 months to sleep on demand. During rest time, there is soft lighting and soft music will be played. Please take your child's bedding home every Thursday/Friday to be washed and returned clean on Monday. Licensing prohibits any child under 12 months from resting or sleeping with soft objects that could easily smother a child, such as bumper pads, stuffed toys, blankets, quilts and comforters.

NUTRITION

Licensing requires that children birth to 30 months eat on demand. Parents can participate in the food program. If opting out parents must provide all formula and food for meals and snacks. Please let us know if your child has dietary needs so we can make necessary arrangements. A meal modification form signed by a doctor is required for food allergies or intolerances.

DAILY FOOD SUPPLY

- All bottles must be covered and labeled with the child's first name, last name, and intended date of use.
- All formulas must come premixed.

- All extra food that is not consumed by the child will go home at the end of the day.
- All extra food served from a dish that was not eaten by the child will be discarded, per licensing regulations.

MULTI-DAY FOOD SUPPLY

*Multi-day is up to considered up to 7 days

- Must be in an unopened commercial storage container
- Must be labeled with child's first and last name and date opened
- Food will be returned to the parent or discarded 7 days after opening

TODDLER ROUTINE TYPICAL DAY

Below is a typical day in your child's classroom, however, please note that all schedules are not the same and are subject to change in rotation at any time, in the best interest of the children.

- 8:30am Breakfast
- 9:00am Free play
- 10:00am Circle
- 10:15am Small group/Large group
- 10:45am Morning snack
- 11:00am Outside/playground
- 12:00pm Songs/Finger play songs
- 12:15pm Handwashing & Lunch Prep
- 12:30pm LUNCH
- 1:00pm Story time (diaper changes, lunch clean up, etc)
- 1:30pm Nap
- 3:30pm Wake up/Afternoon snack
- 4:00pm Dismissal Begins (as we wait for all children to be picked up we will read books, play together, etc)

Parent Code of Conduct

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Parent Code of Conduct is to provide a mutual understanding to all parents/guardians and visitors to our school about conduct expectations while on school property, at school district events and when interacting with District employees and/or students.

General Propositions

We expect parents/guardians and visitors to have a fundamental understanding and commitment to the following general propositions:

- o Teachers, administrators and parents/guardians want all children to learn in a safe environment
- o Teachers, administrators and parents/guardians must work together for the benefit of all students
- o All parents/guardians and visitors, as well as all members of the school community, deserve to be treated with respect
- o

Prohibited Behaviors

In order to provide a peaceful and safe school environment, the District prohibits the following behaviors by parents/guardians and visitors:

- o Abusive, threatening, profane or harassing communication, either in person, by e-mail or text/voicemail/phone or other written or verbal communication
- o Disruptive behavior that interferes or threatens to interfere with District operations, including the effective operation of a classroom, an employee's office or duty station, a campus lobby, or school grounds, including sporting events, parking lots and car-pickup
- o Threatening to do bodily harm to a District employee, visitor, fellow parent/guardian or student
- o Threatening to damage the property of a District employee, visitor, fellow parent/guardian or student.
- o Damaging or destruction of school property
- o Excessive unscheduled campus visits, e-mails, text/voicemail/phone messages or other written or oral

- School staff and administration may not always be immediately available to speak with you. The only way to *ensure* that you are able to speak with a staff member or administrator is to schedule an appointment. Staff and administrators have a practice of attempting to return all phone calls/emails within 24 hours with great success. Your calls and visits will be responded to consistent with this practice if someone is not immediately available to speak with
- o Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or school staff made publicly to others.
- o Any concerns that you may have regarding these matters must be made through the appropriate channels so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all
- o This includes use of any social media medium, including but not limited to: websites, blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Google+, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr

Consequences

Depending upon the severity of the incident, parents/guardians or visitors may be ejected from or otherwise banned from campus and participation in school-sponsored events under the criminal trespass laws. In situations involving lesser infractions or where remediation is viable, a warning will be provided, either verbal or in writing, prior to the filing of trespass and issuance of a formal ban. Should a parent/guardian or visitor fail to heed the direction issued in the warning, a ban or other restrictions designed to deter the conduct will follow. No restriction, however, will prevent the parent/guardian from working collaboratively with the district to meet the child's educational needs, nor will a parent/guardian be excluded from a child's IEP meeting.

Receipt of Participant Handbook

My signature below verifies that I have received, read, and understand the Benzie Early Childhood Program Handbook policies and guidelines. I agree to abide by the policies and guidelines.

Child's Name (Printed) _____

Parent's/Guardian's Name (Printed) _____

Parent's/Guardian's Signature _____

Date: _____

- ☐ I _____, give Benzie Early Childhood Programs permission to take pictures or videos of my child to be used for classroom and program use and may be posted on School Social Media.
- ☐ I _____, give Benzie Early Childhood Programs permission to use lotion, bug spray, and sunscreen on my child as needed.

Parent Signature: _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETE AND RETURNED TO THE TEACHER BY THE FIRST DAY OF THE PROGRAM.