



# **Parent Handbook**

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# Welcome!

The Little Blessings Christian Childcare Center Board of Directors, Director, and teaching staff would like to thank you for choosing our school to join you in nurturing your child's early development. We look forward to supporting you and providing your child with a warm and memorable school experience.

**Mission Statement:** As a Christian outreach, the mission of Little Blessings Christian Childcare Center is to provide young children with a quality education that is grounded in the Holy Scriptures and exemplified by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ.

**Philosophy of Education:** The educational philosophy of Little Blessings is God centered and supports our statement of faith and mission statements. We believe that each child is unique and created in the image of God. Therefore, every child is accepted, honored, and loved. Our aim is to incorporate Biblical principles throughout all learning opportunities and provide a Christian perspective of the world. We firmly believe that the love of Christ can be experienced early in a child's development. Our team of early childhood educators strives to use developmentally appropriate practices, focusing on the child's social, emotional, academic, spiritual, physical, and aesthetic growth. Small class sizes allow for individual success during teacher-directed instruction. Child-directed activity centers, enriched with hands-on experiences, engage each child's natural curiosity and encourage exploration of God's world at a child's own pace. While we believe that education is the responsibility of parents, Little Blessings works cooperatively with parents to implement the process of a Christian education. As a Christian early learning center, we welcome a diversity of children who can experience God's love, grow in it, and carry it into the world.

Children at Little Blessings will follow a flexible daily schedule that meets the individual needs of the diverse population of children and families served by our program, including those with cultural, language and developmental differences. The daily schedule shall include indoor and outdoor physical activities, which will allow for fine and gross motor development. The daily schedule will include opportunities for problem-solving experiences that help to formulate language development and sensory discrimination. Children will have the opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings through creative experiences in all parts of the program, including:

- Arts and media
- Dramatic play
- Music
- Language
- Motor activity
- Language learning experiences
- Experiences that promote self-reliance
- Health education practices
- Child initiated and staff-initiated experiences
- Exploration and discovery
- Varied choices in materials and equipment
- Individual and small group activities
- Active and quiet play
- Rest, sleep, or quiet activity
- Nutritious meals and snacks from home
- Toileting and clean up

**Faith Statement:** We believe that the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are the inspired Word of God and contain all things necessary for salvation. We confess belief in the triune God-eternally existing in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human, who lived a sinless life, died on the cross for our sins and the sins of the world, was resurrected from the dead and offers salvation to everyone who puts their faith and trust in Him.

### **Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy**

Little Blessing Christian Childcare Center admits students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or other school-administered programs.

**Little Blessings Board:** The Little Blessings Board oversees and governs Little Blessings Christian Childcare Center. J. Thomas Macy is the Chairperson of this Board. If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach him at 203-848-7880. The Little Blessings Board meets monthly to discuss important and pertinent information.

**Staff:** Little Blessings employs Christian individuals who are experienced and nurturing. Staff members include the Director, Program Coordinator, Teachers, and Teacher Assistants. In accordance with State regulations, staff members continue their education by taking college courses or attending a variety of early childhood workshops. Robin Costa, the Director, can be reached in the office at 203 421-2878 or on her cell phone at 203-260-5189.

**Consultants:** An education consultant, dental consultant, nurse consultant and social services consultant is contracted annually by Little Blessings. Please consult our Licensing Board, located in our foyer, for a current listing of each consultant.

**Smoking:** Smoking is *not allowed anywhere* in Little Blessings or on the grounds of the school. This includes e-cigarettes, vaping, or any electronic nicotine delivery system. **There is no exception!** All staff, Little Blessings families and guests must abide by this policy.

**Class Sizes:** Our rooms are designed for groups of up to fourteen children. State Licensing requires that a 10:1 ratio be maintained at all times for children aged 3 and older. Children under the age of 3 have a 4:1 ratio maintained at all times.

### **\*Supervision of Children 19a-79-3a(d)(5)**

State Licensing requires that a 10:1 ratio be maintained at all times for children aged 3 and older. Children under the age of 3 have a 4:1 ratio maintained at all times.

The following procedures will be followed at all times when supervising children:

- At no time will a child be left unsupervised
- The child:teacher ratio will be maintained at all times. Children under age three (3) will maintain a ratio of 4:1 with no group larger than eight (8). Children over age three (3) will maintain a 10:1 ratio with no group larger than twenty (20). This includes naptime, outside time and barn time.
- Children will be closely monitored while outside or in the barn. Staff members are positioned around the play area to observe all children at all times, especially those using equipment.
- Children will be carefully supervised while using the bathroom. No child shall be left alone in a bathroom with the door closed, nor should a child be left alone in the classroom while a child is attended to in the bathroom. A staff member will place themselves between areas or call for assistance.

- When possible, a teacher shall lead the children while walking to a new area, not allowing children to move ahead of the teacher. If more than one teacher is present, the second teacher should be positioned at the end of the children to be sure no one is left behind.
- Staff shall always maintain an accurate count of children in the classroom. A count of children shall be made every time the class moves to a new area (outside, barn, etc.). All staff members shall be aware of the number of children in that class at all times.

**Open Door Policy:** Although we keep our doors locked for security, parents/guardians may visit at any time. (Except during COVID times) You are welcome to observe a session, assist in classroom projects or attend a variety of special events announced throughout the year. You may use your code for the door and enter anytime. For security reasons, please do not give this code out to anyone. Anyone without a code should report to the Director's Office for access to the building. (Please see COVID policies for current procedures)

**Parent Obligations:** The parent or guardian, at least one week prior to the child's starting date at Little Blessings, must provide:

- Completed Enrollment Form.
- Signed Parent Financial Agreement outlining your child's schedule of days and hours at Little Blessings and your financial obligation.
- Completed Emergency Medical Permission Card.
- Current Physical Examination Form, signed and dated by the child's physician. This form must be updated as necessary so that it is current, within one year of each exam.
- Various permission slips (transportation off property, social media)
- Signed Handbook Acknowledgement Statement, agreeing to comply with all policies and procedures as outlined in this Handbook.

**Registration Fee:** Each year parents are asked to register their child for the upcoming school year. A non-refundable registration fee will be collected annually in March.

**Deposit:** A deposit is also necessary to enroll your child. Your deposit is due at the time of registration and is equal to your one-week tuition fee. This deposit will be applied to your child's last week with Little Blessings, provided your child attends Little Blessings for a minimum of four weeks.

**Tuition and Late Fees:** Payment is due the first scheduled day that your child attends school each week. If payment is not made by Wednesday, a \$25.00 late fee will be added each week until your payments are made current. If tuition becomes past due for more than three weeks, your child may be asked to leave the program until your balance is made current. Full payment is required each week, even if your child is absent for any reason. Statements and current balances can be accessed on our Brightwheel app.

**Returned Check Fees:** A returned check fee, as established on your Parent Financial Agreement Form, of \$30.00 will be charged to your account for checks or Brightwheel payments returned for any reason. If you have more than two returned payments, you will be asked to pay by money order or cash.

**Holidays:** Little Blessings is closed Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the day after Christmas, New Year's Eve (early closing), New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day and two teacher development days per year (February and June). No fee adjustment is made for these closings. Little Blessings is also closed the last week before the start of the new school year for a teacher work week. No tuition payment is due for this week.

**Sibling Discounts:** A family with more than one child in attendance at Little Blessings is eligible for a 10% sibling discount. This discount will be applied to each additional child's lowest priced tuitions. No other discounts apply.

**Referral Tuition Credit:** The best advertising is word of mouth. To show our appreciation when you recommend Little Blessings to your friends, we will credit your tuition account \$25.00 for each new family that signs up for part time hours and \$50.00 for a new full-time family (8 hours a day, 4+ days a week). Credit will be deducted from your account after your recommended family attends for two (2) months and their account is in good standing. Be sure the enrolling family mentions your name at the time of registration. Social Media reviews are appreciated to help the community learn about Little Blessings.

**Fundraisers/Community Outreach Programs:** We do conduct fundraisers during the school year as well as numerous outreach programs within our community. Family participation in our fundraisers is appreciated. Fundraisers benefit all children in such ways as the purchase of classroom supplies or special presenters. Community outreach is a way for our children to learn how to give to others as well as showing empathy.

**Transportation:** Parents/guardians have the responsibility to transport their child to and from school. To ensure the utmost safety, please secure your child into a car safety seat and hold your child's hand in the parking lot. An adult must escort the child into the building and out of the building\*. Please keep children with you at all times. Do not leave siblings unattended in your vehicle. **DO NOT LEAVE ANY CHILD ALONE IN YOUR CAR** while dropping off or picking up. \*Connecticut State Law Sec. 53-21a. states that:

*“(a). Any parent, guardian or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, Of any child under the age of twelve (12) years who knowingly leaves such child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child’s health or safety, shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.”*

\*Please **DO NOT** leave your vehicle running while it is unoccupied.

\*Please see our current COVID policies and procedures

**Procedure for Dropping Off and Picking Up Children:** Parents dropping off infants and waddlers should enter the school by using the door up the ramp off the courtyard to building one (to the left). Parents dropping off toddlers should enter by way of the non-ramped door to the right of the courtyard (Building 2). Preschool and Pre-K students should enter the door at the top of the ramp to Building 2. An adult should sign the child into Little Blessings by way of our Brightwheel app QR code located at the entrance. Please make every effort to have your child in class by the time that you have designated on your Financial Agreement Form so that teachers may plan their activities accordingly. **If your child will be late (more than 15 minutes) or absent, please be sure to notify Little Blessings as soon as possible.** Please inform the staff in writing if you give permission for your child to be picked up by someone other than a parent. This includes the people on the emergency contact list. This person must have a photo ID in order for the child to be released to their custody. If no written note has been provided, the child will not be released until a parent can be contacted for verification. Please do not give the door code out to anyone. Other adults picking up a child should knock on the Director's door in Building 1 for access to the buildings.

**Late Pick-Up Fee:** Please be prompt when picking up your child. It undermines your child's sense of security when children are picked up late. The Late Pick-Up Fee, will be enforced as follows:

5-10 minutes late \$25.00	11-16 minutes late \$30.00
17-25 minutes late \$35.00	26-30 minutes late \$50.00
\$50 for each additional half hour or fraction thereof.	

If a child has not been picked up within 15 minutes of our closing time, two staff members will be present and attempt to reach the parent at one of the numbers on our emergency contact sheet. If they cannot be reached, an authorized contact person will be called. If after one hour no one has been reached, the police will be contacted. At that point, the child will be released to the police.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** In the event of inclement weather, Little Blessings will make every effort to open. If it is not safe for staff or parents to be driving, Little Blessings will post a closing or delayed-opening notice on Channel 8 News – WTNH, on our Facebook page, and through our Brightwheel app. There are no refunds of tuition for missed days due to inclement weather.

**Extreme Weather/Air Quality Policy:** In the event that an extreme weather advisory, heat or cold weather advisory, or air quality alert is issued for New Haven County, outside play will be moved indoors to the barn.

**Crisis Management Plan:** Please see separate provided “Crisis Management Plan” packet.

**CoVID 19 Procedures:** Little Blessings follows the guidance of the CDC, local Health Department and the Office of Early Childhood when developing their policies and procedures. Please see separate CoVID Policies and Procedures Plan posted on our website for specifics. Please note that policies may change without notice due to recommendations of one of the previous resources.

**Health Policies:** Our primary consideration is for the well-being of all the children and staff. Children with the following symptoms must be kept home or will be sent home:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Strep/sore throat
- Ear Pain
- Lice
- Rashes or any type of skin eruption
- Congested cough
- Apparent yellow or green discharge from eyes or nose
- Conjunctivitis
- Chills
- Elevated temperature (100°F)
- Very pale or flushed
- Listlessness
- Fatigue
- Cannot function normally

If the symptoms develop while your child is in attendance at Little Blessings, you will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible. Our health consultant will be called for advice or emergencies in the event that a parent or child’s physician is temporarily unavailable.

**Illness Forms:** In the event that your child is sent home from Little Blessings due to illness, a form detailing their symptoms, when they may return and if a doctor’s note is required will be filled out and require your signature.

The child may return to school **the day following** being symptom free for 24 hours and fever free for **48** hours without the use of fever reducing medications. In some cases, a note from the child’s physician may be required as proof that the child is not contagious, and it is safe for him to be in a school setting.

There are no make-up days for missed sessions due to illness and tuition remains the same. Your child may be able to make up his time only if space is available and ratios can be maintained.

**Medication:** No medication of any kind including non-prescription drugs will be administered to any child without a completed authorization form—signed and dated by your child's doctor and yourself. These authorization forms are available from your teacher, the Director, or through our website. Medication must be supplied in the original container with the original container prescription label bearing the child's name. This container will remain at Little Blessings for the length of the prescription—it cannot go back and forth from home. Parents will provide any special tools or equipment (i.e., measuring spoon, nebulizer).

Application of non-prescription topical medications/preparations such as insect repellents, sunscreens and diaper rash ointments do not require a physician's authorization; however, a written parental consent is necessary.

If your child is sensitive to the sun or insect bites, it is your responsibility to notify us and provide appropriate sunscreens, protective clothing and/or insect repellent. We will re-apply on an as-needed basis.

There is a certified staff member available at all times to dispense the medications.

**PLEASE...Advise us if your child has any allergies to insect bites or bee stings. \*\*\***

### **\*Administration of Medication Policy 19a-79-9a**

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

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

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the medication administration form clearly states that it is for licensed childcare centers. Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization. All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with child's name, name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for nonprescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e., EpiPens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Non-prescription topical medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children. Staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete and that the medication being received matches the medication orders and stored as directed. The center staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not limited in the documentation are:

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

Parents will be notified by phone when/if a child has been administered any EMERGENCY medication. Staff are trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every three years. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications. All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/guardian or disposed of if it is not picked up within one week following the termination or the order, in the presence of at least one witness. The center shall keep a written record of the medications destroyed which shall be signed by both parties.

**Communication:** Parent/school communication is very important to us. Our partnership supports your child’s growth and development. Please provide the teacher with pertinent information about home situations and the teacher will provide you with information about your child’s activities during school. The Director can support you by discussing and working through any concern you may have or any situation that may develop during the year. Confidential matters will be handled as such.

**Facebook:** Little Blessings has two Facebook pages

- *Public Page:* “Little Blessings Christian Childcare Center”
  - Like our Facebook page where we post general announcements
- *Closed Facebook Group:* “Little Blessings Madison”
  - Request to join our private Facebook group where we frequently post announcements, event information, photos and more.
  - Only current Little Blessings parents and grandparents are granted access to our closed Facebook group. You may not copy, share, or download any photos from this page.
- Please do not take personal pictures of children other than your own or post pictures on Facebook that include other children.

**Brightwheel App:** Your teacher will communicate with you by way of Brightwheel. This communication may include pictures of daily activities of your child as well as of classmates. Please notify Little Blessings if you do not want your child included in posting to other families.

**Email System:** An email communication system has been developed at Little Blessings for the furthering of parent/teacher communication. Email addresses for each specific classroom are as follows: (coming soon)

**Infant Classroom:** infants@littleblessingsmadison.com

**Waddler Classroom:** waddlers@littleblessingsmadison.com

**Toddler Classroom:** toddlers@littleblessingsmadison.com

**Preschool:** preschool@littleblessingsmadison.com

**Pre-K Classroom:** pre-k@littleblessingsmadison.com

As time permits, teachers will check emails and Brightwheel messages in the morning before students arrive, at naptime, and at the end of the day. After sending an email or Brightwheel message to a teacher, you should expect a response within 24 hours or the next business day. Our teachers main focus is the children in the classroom which may prohibit an immediate response. As usual, the best way to contact a teacher for an immediate issue or question is by calling Little Blessings at (203) 421-2878. Please note that this communication is strictly related to individual classrooms. Anything related to schedules, tuitions, vacations, hours, program concerns should still be directed towards the director at director@littleblessingsmadison.com

**Parent Bulletin Board:** Located in the foyer of each building, please check the Parent Board on a regular basis. Copies of the Little Blessings school year calendar, tuition rates, newsletters, office memos, a variety of public announcements and photographs from school events will be displayed in our foyer for your convenience.

**Weekly Newsletters:** A newsletter containing the concepts that were covered each week, announcements of upcoming events and classroom news will be posted weekly on the Brightwheel app.

**Lesson Plans:** The teachers will post their lesson plans in their classrooms and on the Brightwheel app. Review the plans to see how monthly concepts, themes and Bible stories are being introduced to your child's class and how you can reinforce these areas at home.

**Incident/Accident Reports:** Teachers will document incidents (i.e., hitting a peer) or accidents (i.e., a scraped knee) relating to your child while at school. These reports will be shared with you at the end of the session. Parents are contacted immediately if a situation requiring parental/medical attention is necessary.

**Toys:** We provide developmentally appropriate toys for the purpose of enhancing your child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth and development. A "security item" such as a stuffed animal, doll, blanket, or special photo may be brought to school and stored in their cubbies until nap time. All other toys should remain at home.

\*Show and Tell may be a monthly activity in some classes that permits and involves a selection from home. Classroom teachers will offer you direction each month. Items of a superhuman or violent nature are never allowed at school. We do not allow pretend shooting, threatening physical actions toward children, or harmful physical contact between children at Little Blessings.

\*Not currently allowed due to COVID restrictions.

**Meals/Snacks:** Most children will have their breakfast at home. Children arriving before 8:00am may have breakfast on an as-needed basis at Little Blessings. Infants, of course, have their own individual feeding plans.

Parents will provide all the food for their child(ren). An icepack is necessary to keep food fresh. Depending on the hours your child attends, you may need a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack along with appropriate beverages. Please send only healthy choices, especially for snacks. **No candy, cupcakes, donuts, or sugary juices.** Good choices would be fresh fruit, vegetables and dip, cheese and crackers, yogurt, and water to

drink. Teachers reserve the right to send home inappropriate food choices. **ALL INDIVIDUAL ITEMS and CONTAINERS MUST BE LABELED!** Please be sure to include appropriate, **labeled** utensils.

Before we eat our meals, we wash our hands, and we say Grace and thank God for the food He has provided for us.

We try to have the children eat the most nutritious portions of the meal first. We encourage good table manners and have children clean up their spot after meals, allowing children to share in classroom responsibilities.

\*\*\*\*Please notify us about any FOOD ALLERGIES your child might have.\*\*\*\*

**\*We are a nut free school. Please do not send any items such as peanut butter, almonds, cashews, or peanut butter crackers, cookies, or granola bars, etc.\***

**Special Snacks:** At times, a class may choose to provide a special snack as part of the curriculum or a special celebration. Parents will need to sign permission for their child to participate in that snack to avoid any allergy concerns.

**Birthdays:** You may choose to send in a healthy treat to celebrate your child's birthday. Good choices would be mini muffins, bagels and cream cheese, fruit and dip or popsicles\*. Please make plans in advance with your child's teacher. You may need to be made aware of allergies of the children in the classroom. Parents wishing to donate a book in honor of their child's birthday are encouraged to do so. We will share the book on the day of your child's celebration, and we will place a name plate inside as a remembrance of this happy occasion. Thank you for your donation as we build a special Little Blessings library of our children's favorite books. Special snack stipulations apply. \*COVID restrictions must be prepackaged options.

**Holiday Celebrations:** Holidays may be celebrated in your child's classroom. If you have a special celebration or tradition within your family that you would like to share with us, please let your child's teacher know. Your classroom teacher may request items or a helping hand or two at these times.

**Naps:** Infants will nap according to their individual care plans. Please provide two porta-crib sheets for their cribs. No blankets, stuffed animals, etc. may be put in the crib with the child. All infants under the age of 12 months will be placed on their backs to sleep. A sleep sack is allowed.

Waddlers and Toddlers will nap for approximately 2 hours (12:30 - 2:30). Please provide a crib sheet, blanket and if your child would like, small pillow for their cot.

Threes and Fours will nap/rest for approximately 2 hours. By this age, many children are giving up sleeping during naptime. It is a state regulation however that all children in childcare over 5 hours must nap/rest for 2 hours. All children will rest quietly on their cots for at least 30 minutes allowing time for those children that will fall asleep to do so. After that period, if your child does not seem to be ready to sleep, a quiet activity from home may be offered. Good suggestions would be books, coloring pages, or a small manipulative toy that is kept in their nap bag. Please provide a crib sheet, blanket, and small pillow if desired for their cot.

All sleep materials should be labeled and stored in a cloth (recyclable) bag or backpack, **labeled on the outside** with your child's name. No plastic grocery bags. Sleep materials will be sent home on the last day of the week that your child attends school. Please wash and return the following week.

**Personal Belongings:** Please label all of your child's belongings, including lunchboxes, food containers, cups, backpacks, nap bags, and clothing, especially hats and gloves. This avoids confusion and the loss of items. ***IF YOU PLAN TO LEAVE IT, PLAN TO LABEL IT!!***

**Dressing for School:** Comfortable clothing is important for learning and playing. Please do not send your child to school in any clothing that you will be heart-broken if it gets dirty or stained. We will be messy! Proper footwear is vital for outside play. Closed-toe shoes with rubber soles are recommended for staying safe. Sneakers are an EXCELLENT choice. If you should not choose to have your child wear sneakers for inside play, please bring them along so your child can change into them for outside play. Please dress your children in appropriate clothing for the seasons. We try to go outside daily even for a short while.

Please provide a set of seasonally appropriate clothing, labeled, in a Ziploc bag to be kept at Little Blessings.

Under the recommendation of the State of Connecticut Department of Health, our policy states that all soiled clothing is to be sealed in a Ziploc bag and returned home AS IS. Little Blessings is required to wear gloves when cleaning up any bodily fluids (i.e., urine, feces, vomit, mucus, blood.) Little Blessings staff is not required to rinse out or wash soiled clothing. This is to protect children and adults from transmitting bacteria and viruses.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** We hold Parent/Teacher Conferences in March for our Preschool and Pre-K classes. This provides an opportunity for parents to meet with their child's teacher and discuss the child's progress and development at that time. If desired, arrangements may be made with the teacher in any classroom for a conference at any time during the school year.

**Parent Annual Meeting:** Each year Little Blessings will conduct a parent meeting. Representation from the Board will also be present. Parents are encouraged to use this forum to voice their thoughts about their experiences at Little Blessings, as your opinions are valuable to us. This will also be a time to share any new experiences we have planned for the coming school year.

**Adjusting:** Your positive outlook regarding school will encourage the same attitude in your child. A more relaxed parent makes a more relaxed child. During the first weeks of school your child may:

- Be shy and cling to you.
- Not say much about the school day.
- Tire easily and cry more than usual.
- Be aggressive and have difficulty sharing.
- Resist using the school bathroom and/or have "accidents."

These behaviors are in response to the stress of a new situation and should slowly disappear as your child becomes familiar with the staff, classroom routines, and other children in the group.

Families can be understanding and emotionally supportive by:

- Having a positive, cheerful attitude when bringing their child to school.
- Ensuring consistent bedtime rituals and a good night's sleep each and every night.
- Allowing lots of time for personal routine, a nourishing breakfast, and a pleasant ride to school.
- Asking specific questions regarding school such as: "How did you create this artwork?" "What was your favorite part of morning circle?" or "Who did you play with on the playground today?"
- Allowing children time to adjust to the new routines of school.

We plan for success for each child in our childcare program. We will work together, as a team, to support a positive learning experience for everyone. In the event that it becomes necessary, Little Blessings reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program. Some of the reasons this action may be initiated include:

- Financial obligations are not met.
- A child becomes a constant disruption in the class affecting the atmosphere for all others.
- It is determined that Little Blessings is not a good fit for the expectations of the parents.
- Parents are not in compliance with Little Blessings policies.
- A child becomes a serious danger to himself or others.

In the event that Little Blessings dismisses a child from the program and there is prepaid tuition, you will be reimbursed for the unused amount of prepaid tuition within ten business days of the withdrawal date.

**Withdrawal & Schedule Changes:** Two weeks' notice is required if it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your child from Little Blessings. A parent or guardian is responsible for the tuition for that two-week period, even if their child does not attend. Two weeks' notice is also required for a change in your child's schedule. Changes should be made in writing and given to the Director. Little Blessings does not accommodate rotating schedules.

**Discipline Policy:** Teachers plan a balance of quiet and active times, as well as individual and group involvement during each session. We consider what is appropriate for each developmental stage of your child and believe proper planning reduces the need for disciplinary action. However, sometimes discipline is necessary for all of us to live in the world together. The ultimate discipline comes from within and does not depend on external reward or punishment. An important part of teaching involves helping children develop self-discipline. At Little Blessings we empower children with responsibility for their own behavior by:

- Using a gentle, objective speaking voice and being attentive with our presence.
- Using positive verbal comments such as: "I like the way you shared the blocks with your friends." In this way the child's good feeling about his own behavior is reinforced and he serves as a role model for other children.
- Being consistent and setting limits because helping children know what is expected of them leads to their success.
- Setting clear limits while stating the expected behavior in positive terms. For example, "You need to walk indoors." rather than "Don't run!" Sometimes the combination of acceptable behavior and specifying the unacceptable behavior is used. For instance, "Blocks are for building, not throwing."
- Redirecting the child's attention when behavior is becoming inappropriate. On this occasion, we help the child to see choices and options available to them. We allow the child to make a choice for self-redirection. This teaches children to problem solve appropriately and to eventually follow rules and make appropriate choices throughout the day.
- Giving the child an appropriate task to complete. Occasionally the child may make inappropriate choices that require the teacher to make a choice at that instant for him. The teacher redirects the child from one specific area to another. The teacher then communicates with the child as he makes attempts towards appropriate behavior; for instance: "You're molding your piece of clay and sharing ideas with your neighbor."
- Removing the child from an activity if he has caused harm to another child. We want to help children understand there are consequences for their actions. We will provide some time and space for him to refocus. The affected child will be attended to. Then, teacher and child together will discuss the incident before the child returns to the activity. Incident and Accident Reports will be given to parents at the end of the day.

- Never, under any circumstances, using abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment, or any kind of physical restraint, unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people. Children will be supervised and monitored at all times during all discipline procedures.

**\*Child Abuse/Neglect:** Background checks are conducted on employees working directly with the children. Should an employee be suspected of child abuse/neglect after they are hired, the employee will be immediately removed from the school for the duration of the investigation period. Parents will be notified in writing if such an instance occurs. The outcome of the investigation will also be communicated to parents in writing.

Little Blessings is dedicated to providing a safe and loving environment at all times. As educators in the State of Connecticut, we are mandated to report all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. “Mandated reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected, or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm by a person responsible for the child’s health, welfare or care, or by a person given access to the child by the responsible person.” \*(CGS 17a-101a).

*Child abuse is defined as:* a child who has had non-accidental physical injury(ies) inflicted upon him, or has injuries which are at variance with the history given of them, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. \*(CGS 46b-120)

*Child neglect is defined as:* a child who has been abandoned, is being denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally, or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances, or associations injurious to his well-being. \*(CGS 46b-120)

As a result of the above Statute, the following procedure will be put in place for anyone suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- A. If it is suspected that an adult that is transporting a child is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, an attempt will be made by the Director or designated teacher to approach the adult to determine if alternate driving and care arrangements can be made.
- B. If the adult is belligerent, combative, or non-compliant to the school’s request for alternate arrangements, the police will be called for assistance.
- C. All encounters will be documented and filed in both the child’s file and the school’s file.
- D. If suspected incidences continue to occur, the Department of Children and Families will be contacted, as required by State Regulations.

The Little Blessings Director will telephone the Department of Children and Families (DCF) within 12 hours of suspected abuse. The incident will be documented on a Little Blessings and Child Care Center Accident/Incident Form. The Director will notify the Little Blessings Board of Directors.

A full report will be filed with DCF, and we will be in full compliance with the DCF while an investigation takes place. Documentation and records will be kept by Little Blessings. Should the allegations include a Little Blessings staff member, that person will be suspended and replaced with a substitute teacher until a conclusion is reached. Immediate termination will occur if the staff member is found to be guilty of the charges. Little Blessings has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse and neglect.

***At all times the children's safety, security and well-being will be the priority!***

Little Blessings will review and discuss this policy annually. Little Blessings encourages all staff members to attend additional workshops on this issue.

DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Careline: 1-800-842-2288

**\* Per the Connecticut General Statutes for Daycare Licensing**



## Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received, read, and agree to follow the terms and policies as outlined in the Little Blessings Christian Childcare Center Parent Handbook, revised as of 08/2022. I understand and have had the behavioral policy of Little Blessings explained to me.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date