



*Little Beginnings*  
Learning Center



## *Parent Handbook*

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## Little Beginnings offers these unique advantages:

- ❑ A Christian environment rich in opportunities for discovering and learning.
- ❑ Special guests and enrichment programs offer a variety of opportunities for learning.
- ❑ Highly qualified, educated staff meets and exceeds State requirements.
- ❑ Program director available for parents, staff, and children.
- ❑ Occasional field trips enhance your child's early education.
- ❑ Indoor large muscle room for active play.
- ❑ Family events promote closeness and self esteem.
- ❑ State of the art building equipped with heated floors.

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## *Mission Statement*

Little Beginnings is a Christian center dedicated to the family and recognize it to be the primary source of love and care for a child. We believe in the support and supplementation of training in the home, which we believe was ordained by God to be carried out by loving parents.

Because children learn best through play and discovery, the center will offer developmentally appropriate practices that will encourage individuality as well as promoting the joy and excitement of learning.

## *Welcome*

Little Beginnings is licensed by the Department of Human Services (651-296-3971) and serves children 6 weeks to 12 years old. We are a warm and friendly place that has a loving concern for children and parents in our area.

Our qualified teachers are here to offer expert guidance for each child to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually in a loving setting. Our teachers are certified and meet all requirements of the state of Minnesota and the Department of Human Services.

Your child will always be supervised by a skilled teacher or assistant who will give him/her the freedom to explore his/her new world of educational toys and learning materials.

Little Beginnings will seek to model and educate toward basic Christian principles in the following areas:

- \*developing a positive self-concept in relationship to God and others
- \*appreciation of God's creation
- \*discipline
- \*readiness skills
- \*large and small motor development
- \*art and music appreciation and involvement
- \*social interaction

Because a child learns each minute of the day, the environment of the center will offer each child, at his own level of development, a wide variety of experiences that will encourage him to explore and learn in his/her own way.

## *Health Information*

**Health Care:** A Health Care Summary must be signed by a physician and be on file within 30 days of attending Little Beginnings. All immunizations must be up to date and in your child's file at the time of enrollment.

If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program, children who are under-immunized due to a medical condition, or for family beliefs, those families will be notified. The parents will determine whether or not they want their child to be excluded.

**Medications:** No medication (prescription or non-prescription) will be given to your child unless it is contained in its original container and a medication permission form is filled out and signed. You can obtain one of these forms from the teacher. All medication will be kept out of the reach of children and

refrigerated when needed. Non-prescription medications for children under age two may require the signature of a physician for dosage information.

**Personal Hygiene:** Each child is encouraged to develop independent habits of personal hygiene such as washing hands and face before snacks, meals and after toileting. We try to help children gain an appreciation and a feeling of responsibility for personal cleanliness and neatness.

Your child should wear washable play clothes that are easily taken on or off for bathroom purposes. This encourages older children to be independent in dressing and makes diapering easier.

**Illness:** If your child cannot participate comfortably in group activities due to the following symptoms, he/she must be kept at home. If these symptoms occur at Little Beginnings we will contact you to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, your emergency alternate will be asked to pick up your child immediately. Your child will be provided with a cot and separated from the other children until they have been picked up. These symptoms include:

- ❑ Vomiting two or more times that day
- ❑ Three or more abnormally loose stools that day
- ❑ Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from eyes
- ❑ Bacterial infection such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo (must complete 24 hours of medication)
- ❑ Unexplained lethargy
- ❑ Lice, ringworm, scabies (must be treated before child can return)
- ❑ 100 degree temperature of undiagnosed origin
- ❑ Undiagnosed rash or rash attributed to a contagious

illness

- ❑ Significant respiratory distress
- ❑ Chicken Pox
- ❑ A child who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in care

A doctor's note may be requested before a child returns to daycare, but may not be sufficient if the child has any of the above symptoms.

We ask that you report to the daycare director within 24 hours if your child is diagnosed with a medical or dental disease that is contagious. This will allow us to take the proper precautions for the other children who may have been exposed. We will also post any diagnosed contagious illness.

The above symptoms have been established by the State Department of Human Services with concern for the health and welfare of all children. Please help us keep illness to a minimum by being aware of these symptoms and keeping your child at home if he/she comes down with any of them.

**Treat Free Birthdays:** We are a Birthday Treat Free Zone. Birthdays are a special day in which children can celebrate in other ways than food.

Here are some options for alternative ways to celebrate:

- ❑ Wear a special birthday outfit or fun pjs
- ❑ Bring a book to share with the class
- ❑ Bring a special birthday show & share
- ❑ Bring a non-edible birthday gift for the classroom
- ❑ Bring a small token to pass out to friends such as stickers, tattoos, or pencils

**No Smoking:** Little Beginnings is a smoke-free environment.

## ***Child Abuse Reporting***

Every Early Childhood professional engaged in the practice of child care, who know or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, shall immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, police department or the county sheriff. As staff of Little Beginnings, we are mandated reporters and if abuse is suspected, we will responsibly report it to the local child protection unit, police or sheriff.

## ***Emergency procedures***

Little Beginnings has special written policies and procedures for dealing with such elements as fire or natural disasters. For your child's safety, each staff member is trained in these procedures.

Fire drills are staged monthly, year round, under the supervision of the school staff and local authorities. Tornado drills will also be held monthly April through September. If the school building itself is ever damaged severely enough to be unsafe, all children will be evacuated.

## ***First Aid Procedures***

1. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. All teachers and assistant teachers have first aid training. A first aid kit is available to each age group. The most common treatments given are ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing and a band-aid on a

minor wound.

2. We make every effort to contact you or the person you have chosen to be called if we cannot reach you.
3. Depending on the injury, we may contact your physician or call 911 for immediate medical service. You are asked to sign the hospital release to give us permission to secure whatever care your child needs.

***Emergency Information:*** Each parent is required to fill out an Enrollment Form prior to their child's entrance into the program. This form includes the name and telephone numbers of your doctor, dentist, hospital and a friend or relative to be contacted in the event of an emergency if the parent cannot be reached.

***Injury Report:*** Any injury that occurs at Little Beginnings is recorded on an injury report. The child's name, date, nature of injury and first aid treatment are recorded. This will be signed and dated by the parent or guardian who picks up the child. This report will be placed in our injury report file. Injury reports will be evaluated annually by the director.

For your child's safety, no unauthorized person will be allowed to pick him/her up. Be sure to call or notify a teacher if your child is to be picked up by someone other than you. All authorized persons will be asked to provide identification when picking up a child.

## ***Emergency Calls to Office***

At times, it is necessary for us to put our telephone on our voice mail. If you have an emergency and need to contact us, please leave a message. Frequently we leave the office for a few minutes and could return your call immediately.

***Parental Permission:*** Little Beginnings will inform you and receive your written permission if your child is to be involved in any type of public relations activity or experimental research. This would happen for each occurrence.

## ***Curriculum***

At Little Beginnings we believe a child learns best through directed play experiences. Each day's program is planned to stimulate each child physically, intellectually, and emotionally,

Each child is unique with individual interests and needs. The daily activities and play experiences are planned in accordance with the ages, developmental levels and interests of the child.

Infants receive quality care and individual attention. Their day is set up in order to keep important routines like eating and sleeping as much like home as possible. Their physical and emotional needs are monitored carefully by trained staff. Activities are planned to encourage your infant's development.

Children in the transition/toddler classrooms learn to participate in large and small groups as well as individual activities. They are encouraged to gain independence as they explore their environment.

In our preschool classrooms, we encourage creative learning through investigation, imaginative play, and experimentation. Each day's program is planned to stimulate learning through conversation, music, art, and group activities.

***Child Care Program Plan:*** A Child Care Program Plan has been developed for each age group and is on file in the Little Beginnings office for your review.

## ***Behavior Guidance***

At Little Beginnings we will strive to work with your child in developing acceptable behaviors. If a discipline problem arises we will first redirect your child from the problem area to an alternate activity. We will teach your child acceptable alternatives to his/her behavior. If the problem continues, or your child is a threat to other children's safety, he/she will be separated from the group for a short time. This separation time will be recorded in a "Separation Log" book, kept in the classroom. This method gives a child a few moments to think about his/her actions before rejoining group activities. It helps the child gain self-control through learning appropriate behavior rather than forcing the child to conform to adult standards. If your child is separated from the group three or more times in one day, you will be notified.

If your child is separated from the group five or more times in one week or 8 or more times in two weeks, a plan will be established to deal with this behavior. The plan will be prepared in consultation with the parents, staff and professionals, if appropriate.

Harsh or threatening methods will never be used. Instead, encouragement and praise will be used along with firm and loving correction and guidance.

In extreme cases, Little Beginnings reserves the right to release a child from the program if it is advised during consultation.

## ***Field Trips***

Field trips are an integral part of a child's educational experience at Little Beginnings. A blanket permission notice will be signed at the beginning of each year. The staff will inform you of the date, time, cost, destination and purpose of each event. Each child must have this notice signed and on file before attending. Children eligible for field trips are toddlers, preschool, and school age. Children whose schedules do not coincide with a field trip may inquire about attendance availability to attend the field trip. Please allow ample time for the teacher to plan for your child to participate. We will rent a bus or van to transport us to our destination.

## ***Visits***

Little Beginnings has an open door policy and welcome all parents to visit anytime. We encourage parents to share their culture with us by attending special events, field trips, or by sharing their time with us by reading books or sharing their career with the children. We do ask an appointment be made if the parent would like to talk with the teacher. This will enable us to find a substitute to care for the class.

## ***Pets***

Parents will be informed of the presence of a class pet or visiting animal.

## ***Conferences/Assessments***

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled formally twice a year for the toddler and preschool, and three times a year for infants. Informal conferences may be arranged with your child's teacher at a convenient time for both, by phone, email, or in person. The teachers will inform you in their monthly newsletters when they will hold conferences. You will have the opportunity to sign up for a time that best fits your schedule. The teachers will offer daily written reports for the infant and toddler children to take home and a report of the preschool daily activities will be posted at the parent information board. Conferences will include a written assessment of your child's cognitive skills, language, social emotional, approaches to learning health, and physical development including self help skills. All children are assessed in their normal environment through a variety of methods such as observations, checklists, rating scales, and individually administered tests. Assessments are integrated with teaching and planning by the teachers. Assessments are kept confidential in the child's individual file in the classroom and also in the office. Written consent is required to share the information with a third party. Parents are encouraged at conference time and through the use of intake forms, to offer suggestions in the planning and implementing of assessments for their child/ren.

Norm-referenced and standardized tests are used primarily

when seeking information on eligibility for special services or when collecting information for overall program effectiveness. Formal methods of assessment are combined with informal methods.

Translation services will be provided upon request.

### ***Primary Referral Source***

As a child care provider, we continually monitor the development of all children in our care through ongoing observation and recording. We want the best outcomes for all children. Child care providers are considered a primary referral source for early intervention under federal IDEA special education law. We are required to refer a child in our program who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral as soon as possible, but in no case more than seven days after the identification. While this is a mandate, we want to keep open communication with parents and caregivers about their child and any concerns we have before a referral is made. We can assist the parent with the referral or partner with them in the referral process.

***How to make a referral:*** Make an online referral at:  
[http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/Newborn/HelpMeGrow\\_SpecialNeeds/ReferChild/index.html](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/Newborn/HelpMeGrow_SpecialNeeds/ReferChild/index.html)

Call 1-866-693-GROW (4769)

Call your local early intervention/ECSE office

### ***Communication/Relationship***

Communication and family relationships are of utmost importance to us at Little Beginnings. The director and staff will

use a number of ways to communicate with families some of these are listed below but are not limited to:

- daily information sheets
- face to face
- email
- conferences
- newsletters
- calendars and lesson plans
- phone conversations

We also know that some families will remain with us from infancy through school age and we believe it is important to foster strong relationships with families over time. Another way we foster these relationships is by holding various family events each year. Some examples are listed below:

- Mother's Day Tea
- Father's Day Ice Cream Social
- Family summer picnic
- Grandparent's breakfast
- Harvest Festival
- Christmas Pageant

We also encourage parents to join us for special events we hold each month such as puppeteers, musicians, animal shows, magicians, etc.

### ***Parent feedback***

Little Beginnings encourages feedback through the use of yearly family surveys as well as teaching staff surveys. We use this ongoing monitoring system to ensure that all program goals and requirements are met. Upon collecting the evidence via surveys, the program will evaluate the evidence through the



use of parent meetings, and team meetings, as well as director evaluation. This evidence will be collected with the purpose to incorporate these goals in the annual program evaluation.

## ***Infants: 6 weeks to 12 months***

Little Beginnings will follow the parental written diet plan for each infant or toddler until they are on table food. The plan can be updated as the diet changes.

Parents are asked to provide the following:

- \*formula (2% or whole milk can be provided by the center)
- \*Diapers (diaper wipes provided by center)
- \*At least 2 complete changes of clothes, which are kept at Little Beginnings
- \*Baby food and cereal
- \*Bottles and nipples

All infants will be held during bottle feeding. When an infant or toddler shows evidence of wanting to feed himself, he will be encouraged to do so. Little Beginnings is licensed for eight infants.

## ***Waddlers: 12 months to 24 months***

This classroom focuses on transitions. Your child will master walking skills, drink from a sippy cup, use utensils at mealtimes, sit at a big table, and sleep on a cot.

Parents are asked to provide the following:

- \*healthy snacks
- \*Diapers (diaper wipes provided by center)

\*At least 2 complete changes of clothing which are kept at Little Beginnings

\*sippy cup

\*crib sheet and blanket for nap

## ***Toddlers: 24 months to 33 months***

***Toilet training:*** During the important toilet training phase of childhood, it is helpful if home and center work together. Every effort will be made to coordinate toilet training in the center with the program started by the parent. We will not attempt to begin toilet training until the parent agrees that the time is right to begin. We need you to provide 3-4 complete changes of clothes (socks too), diapers, and training pants (*no Pull-ups please*). If he/she is just beginning toilet training, he/she may wear a diaper during the rest time until better bladder control is achieved. Our working goal with the parents is that all toddlers are trained before entering the preschool program. Little Beginnings is licensed for up to 29 transition/toddlers.

## ***Preschool: 33 months to six years***

Our preschool program is divided into two age groups. The younger preschool room has 20 children ages 33 months to 4 years. The older preschool room has 34 children ages 4 to 6 years.

All of these classrooms begin the process of preparing children for the transition to school through exposure to large and small groups, math, literacy, and dramatic play activities, as well as developing social relationships.

## ***School Age: K-5th grade***

Our school age program is a group of 34 children ages K- 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Currently our school age program is held only during the summer months.

### ***Our transition policy***

Little Beginnings is committed to developmentally appropriate practice. Children are especially susceptible to changes in routine, new environments and to separation from their parents or guardians. It is particularly difficult for children to be placed into the care of someone with whom they are not familiar. Therefore, we have developed a highly effective, developmentally appropriate plan for transitioning children into our center and, once they have entered our program, from one class to another.

#### ***Transition at drop off***

At Little Beginnings, trust is everything. We expect our parents to stay for a few minutes to settle their children. They are welcome to play together with whatever transitional activity the teacher has provided for the children, such as playdough, cars, puzzles or building materials. Many parents find it comforting to read a short book or two. Once the parent feels ready to leave, she is expected to tell her child that she's leaving, and that she (or dad, or a caregiver or grandparent) will be back later. The teachers are alert for that moment and stand nearby in case the child has trouble saying goodbye. Many children offer a kiss goodbye and turn to their friends to continue playing.

Sometimes a child will become tearful and the parent needs to hand the child to the teacher, reassuring her that she'll be coming back later.

The favorite spot at goodbye-time is the window facing the parking lot. Parents can promise a number of horn beeps and waves. Some partings are especially tearful, and parents are always welcome to call anytime to see how their children are doing. Many children cry only until the family car is out of sight and then they settle down for some fun.

#### ***Transition from one class to another***

Our transition process is designed to build trust between the children, their teachers and their parents. As children move from one class to another staff will do their best to make this transition as comfortable for each child. Some children transition seamlessly with no visiting time, while others require a slower more intentional visiting schedule. Your child's new teacher will be in communications with the parent to discuss this transition and invite any questions you may have regarding it.

#### ***Transition from Little Beginnings to Kindergarten***

Whether or not we're ready to see them go, sooner or later our preschoolers leave us to attend Kindergarten in their home school districts. Many of our children have been together since they were infants. Over the course of their time with us, they have grown in every way possible: emotionally, socially, physically and developmentally. They have made good friends and developed good problem-solving skills.

But before we say goodbye, your future kindergartners will enjoy a summer getting ready for their new adventures.

Eventually our little birds will leave the nest and will be secure in the knowledge that we have done everything we could to build good character, model good behavior and develop that lifelong love of learning that will carry them right through to college and the world of work and beyond. Research tells us that the first five years of a child's life are the most important for developing all those things that make a successful adult. We are honored to be entrusted with such an awesome responsibility.

## ***Consistency for your child***

Little Beginning strives to provide a stable consistent environment for your child.

Consistent, dependable relationships are the foundation of children's secure attachment to adults in their family. Stable and predictable relationships are just as essential to children in child care settings. Changing child care providers and environments too often is disruptive for a child. Children should be in the same child care setting with the same adult caregivers for as long as possible in order to build the sense of security and trust that leads to secure attachment. Children in child care need familiar routines to encourage learning and provide a sense of control.

## ***Hours***

Little Beginnings opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 p.m., please arrange for someone to pick him/her up, then call and inform us. After 6:00 p.m. a late fee of \$6.00 for each fifteen minutes or portion of 15 minutes will be

charged and must be paid directly to the staff person in charge.

***Arrival and Departure:*** For your child's safety, we require that you or other authorized adult bring your child into the program each morning. Sign your child in upon arrival and departure. Be sure that the caregiver is aware of your child's arrival before you leave. Please notify us if your child will not be at Little Beginnings that day.

***Cell phones:*** Cell phone usage during drop-off or pick-up is prohibited. Please complete your calls before dropping off or picking up your child. Thank you.

## ***Meals and Snacks***

We serve breakfast consisting of cereal, waffles, french toast sticks, oatmeal, fruit, milk, and juice. We also serve an afternoon snack. Lunch is provided and catered in by a local restaurant. Little Beginnings will provide milk. We refrigerate all perishable foods and have a microwave for heating food at your request.

## ***Nap Time***

All children in our center participate in a time of rest. Each child will have a cot and will be expected to remain quietly on it for at least 30 minutes. Children who remain awake will be allowed to have quiet play. Please bring a small pillow and blanket for your child to use during naptime. These should be labeled and taken home each Friday to be washed.

## ***Things to bring***

Each child will be provided with a cubbie in which to keep his/her belongings. One change of clothing, including underwear, socks, pants and shirt should be kept in a ziploc bag in your child's cubbie. Be sure your child comes prepared for the weather. In cold weather, a coat, boots, snowpants, hat, and mittens should be brought to school each day. Children may bring special items to school on "sharing day". The teacher will establish a sharing day for your child to bring items from home. *All items brought to Little Beginnings should be clearly marked.*

## ***Financial Policies***

A non-refundable registration fee is payable upon acceptance for enrollment. All parents must read and sign the Little Beginnings financial agreement. All policies and procedures as outlined in the parent handbook should be read and understood. Tuition is due on the Friday before each week of care, **we do not send out bills.** A 10% late fee will be charged to your account for the week, if your tuition is late. Tuition may be paid by cash, check, or automatic withdrawal, which may be set up with the center director.

There will be no refunds for legal holidays or days your child is absent due to illness. For year round daycare ONLY there is a two-week vacation allowance. This applies ONLY TO FULL-TIME enrollment. Part-time will only get the total number of days contracted for. Example: If your child attends 2 days a week, you can only receive 2 days of vacation. Vacation time

runs from September 1st - August 31st and does not carry over. One week of vacation may be used in the first six-month period or the second. The second week of vacation can only be used during the second six-month period. A two-week written notification is required.

## ***Holidays***

Little Beginnings will be closed on eight holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. On floating holidays such as the day after Thanksgiving, we may close early due to low numbers or close completely. Floater holidays may be used as vacation days, otherwise they will be paid days regardless of whether the center remains open or closed.

## ***Withdrawal***

A written 2-week notice is required for withdrawal.