



**Parent Handbook
2016-2017**

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Introduction

Bright Beginnings is a weekday ministry of Cypress Lake United Methodist Church, serving children aged 2 - 5, who reach that age by September 1st. The school is committed to the developmental needs of young children and encourages growth in all areas - social, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual - as a continuous, interrelated process. Being a Christian preschool, we want children to experience what it means to be the child of a loving, caring and dependable God.

We are licensed by the State of Florida #C20LE7499 and have been designated as a "GOLD SEAL" school by the State of Florida. We are inspected regularly by these organizations. You may be assured that our facilities meet, and in most cases, exceed, all licensing requirements.

Program Goals

To support the mission and ministries of CLUMC through providing an Early Childhood Education Program

Provide service and outreach to the families of the local community through a weekday preschool program

To meet the developmental educational and spiritual needs of the preschool-aged child and to include the families through a variety of educational and fellowship programs

To stay on trend with current academic requirement standards at the preschool level and beyond

To encourage physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth for each child

Provide the children with a safe and faith-based learning atmosphere that introduces the concept of what it means to be a child of a loving, caring, dependable God

Philosophy Statement

The purpose of the Bright Beginnings Early School is to provide preschoolers ages 2 -5 with a Christian-based educational foundation through play-based learning and exciting curriculum. Each child will receive guidance in all areas of their development: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The education of the child also includes outreach and fellowship programs for the families as well. Families are invited to participate through volunteer opportunities in classrooms, attendance in chapel and other presentations such as Holiday and end-of-year programs. Family nights, fundraisers, picnics, bible studies, prayer groups and other fellowship gatherings with the staff and the families are sponsored, organized and encouraged by the school and by CLUMC.

Parents are encouraged to attend conferences with the child's teacher and engage the child at home with activities that support classroom learning. Teachers provide families with weekly and/or monthly communication about classroom goals and curriculum. Bright Beginnings Early School strives to stay ahead of current educational trends and child development needs while maintaining a school atmosphere that teaches children and their families that we are all children of a loving, caring and dependable God. It is our belief that when they "graduate" from our program, these experiences will stay with them.

Vision Statement

To support and educate children and their families so they are prepared and equipped for their educational and spiritual future.

ENROLLMENT

It is the policy of Bright Beginnings not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in its educational programs, admissions policies, employment and general policies.

Bright Beginnings closely follows the public school calendar, with some exceptions. School hours for 2's, 3's & 4's are from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Our Stepping Stones class ends at 1:30. Lunch Bunch is available for 3's, 4's & 5's until 2:45 every day and includes a special area class.

Our programs are as follows:

Two Year Old classes - 2 year old classes meet two or three mornings per week from 8:30 - 12:30. A time of exploring and developing through play, this class has a maximum of 12 students with two teachers to make for a great time of socialization and learning.

Three Year Old classes - 3 year old classes meet 2, 3 or 5 mornings per week. The class begins the year with an emphasis on socialization and then moves into more purposeful learning experiences as the year goes on. Children learn through play, observation and experimentation.

Four Year olds (VPK) - VPK classes meet five days per week. We prioritize our waiting list & enrollment by those families who will agree to be a part of our "extended VPK" program, for which a fee is charged for hours over and above the hours paid for by the State of Florida. These classes follow the state's standards and place a strong emphasis on literacy.

Stepping Stones - This is a five day class, meeting from 8:30 - 1:30 and meeting the needs of those five year olds who are eligible for Kindergarten, but whose parents have chosen to give them "the gift" of an extra year to grow & develop.

All classes include Center Time, Circle Time, Snack, Outdoor Play, Story Time and weekly Chapel Time to form a well rounded educational experience and develop the whole child.

Where We Are Located

Bright Beginnings Early School
8570 Cypress Lake Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33919
Telephone: 239-433-2232 ~ Fax: 433-5996
www.brightbeginnings.online

Email: brightbeginningsearlyschool@gmail.com

Our school is located at Cypress Lake United Methodist Church, which is on the corner of Cypress Lake Drive and Winkler Road in So. Fort Myers. Classes take place in our Education Building which is located on Winkler Road and next door in our Fellowship Hall building.

Tuition

We are a nonprofit organization funded primarily from our tuition. In order for our preschool to operate efficiently, it is necessary that tuition accounts are kept current at all times. Our staff is hired on with the assumption that a specific number of children will be attending our preschool. When parents meet their financial obligations to our preschool in a timely manner, it enables our preschool to meet its obligations.

A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration.

Tuition is a monthly fee and is the same each month regardless of how many days or weeks are in a month. Lunch Bunch is also a monthly fee and your payments depend on how many days your child is enrolled in lunch bunch. Please see the office staff for pricing. **All the same policies concerning tuition and discipline apply as well to Lunch Bunch tuition.**

ALL FAMILIES ARE REQUIRED TO USE TUITION EXPRESS unless payment is made in full by September 15th. An enrollment form was included in your summer mailer and needs to be returned by September 6th for entry into our system before our first batch is run on September 15th. If you have been using Tuition Express already—there is no need to fill out a form unless credit card information/expiration dates have changed OR your bank account has changed.

Tuition will be debited from a credit card or your bank account on the fifteenth of each month through our Tuition Express program. If the 15th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, we will debit the accounts on the next business day. Please keep us up to date in the office of any changes you need to make in your Tuition Express account including expiration dates on credit cards. **Your account is subject to any fees incurred due to a closed account or expired account. There will be a \$25.00 charge to your account for any NSF or declined credit cards and any additional fees incurred. After two NSF or CC decline occurrences, ONLY cash or money orders will be accepted for all future payments.**

Any accounts that are not paid in full by the end of each month may result in dismissal from our program. This applies to Lunch Bunch and summer camp as well.

Parents will not be reimbursed for tuition if a child is dismissed from the program for any reason.

Other situations concerning any tuition reimbursements will be handled on an individual basis. We cannot guarantee a full reimbursement of any tuition regardless of the situation. Only half tuition will be considered.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Within Bright Beginnings, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of the school who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents. Bright Beginnings strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with Bright Beginnings or CLUMC. Outside of school, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Bright Beginnings are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Florida law states that mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Bright Beginnings are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the law, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Bright Beginnings take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Mandatory Reporting Law is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of Bright Beginnings cannot be held liable for reports made to the Department of Children and Families which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Parents Code of Conduct

Bright Beginnings requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Bright Beginnings is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Bright Beginnings, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing school property.

1. SWEARING/ CURSING

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on school property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

2. THREATENING OF STAFF, PARENTS, CHILDREN OR OTHER ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH BRIGHT BEGINNINGS:

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, Bright Beginnings cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES

3. PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT BRIGHT BEGINNINGS:

While Bright Beginnings does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in

our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

4. SMOKING:

For the health of all Bright Beginnings employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Bright Beginnings. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

5. VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of Bright Beginnings. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any suspicions to the Director.

6. CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH STAFF, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF BRIGHT BEGINNINGS:

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Bright Beginnings or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

7. VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:

Bright Beginnings takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with Bright Beginnings. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

Parents Right To Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Bright Beginnings, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Innovative Preschool must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Bright Beginnings, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Bright Beginnings cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Bright Beginnings suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Bright Beginnings staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise

DISMISSAL FROM PROGRAM

Bright Beginnings reserves the right to dismiss any child from the program at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. A check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the school's legal counsel for collection.

The Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave the property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. Bright Beginnings will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gather their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to school property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by Bright Beginnings.

WITHDRAWING FROM OUR PROGRAM

Thirty days written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the required notice is not given, parents can be charged tuition for up to two additional weeks.

Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex. Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Bright Beginnings must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Bright Beginnings administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Bright Beginnings cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Bright Beginnings suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Bright Beginnings is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of Bright Beginnings cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. Bright Beginnings will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Attendance and Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Consistent Attendance and Prompt Arrival Are Essential. Doors will be opened at 8:25 a.m. for our preschool time and learning begins upon entering the classrooms. Children have specific routines that they will follow in class each morning and we encourage them to become independent in those routines within a few weeks of school starting.

At 8:45 we will close the front and classroom doors. You are considered tardy after 8:45 a.m. and will be required to sign in at the office. Your child will have to wait in the office until the appropriate time to interrupt the class in progress. **They will be escorted to class by a Bright Beginnings staff member.** Late arrivals to class are disruptive to the learning process and cannot be tolerated.

Please remember that your child depends on you to be there at pick up time. **If you are consistently late, you will be notified and you are subject to a *1.00 charge for every minute you are late.** This can be paid when picking up your child from the school office. This late fee policy we be strictly enforced. Of course, if there is an emergency, please call and let us know and we will help in any way we can!

No child will be released to an unauthorized person. We must know **IN WRITING** (or in an emergency, by a phone call from the parent) any change in the person or persons authorized to pick up your child.

We require a copy of a single or divorced parent's Child Custody Agreement on file, if one parent is not to be allowed to pick up the child from school.

A car "pick-up" line is used at dismissal time. WE REQUIRE ALL FAMILIES TO USE THE PICKUP LINE. When everyone cooperates, our procedure is quite efficient! This system keeps your children safe from a busy parking lot full of moving cars.

Car Line Procedure

**FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY YOU MUST USE THE CARLINE!
WE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO PULL YOUR CHILD FROM A LINE AS WE EXIT THE
BUILDING OR ONCE WE ARE IN THE PLAYGROUND AREA WAITING.**

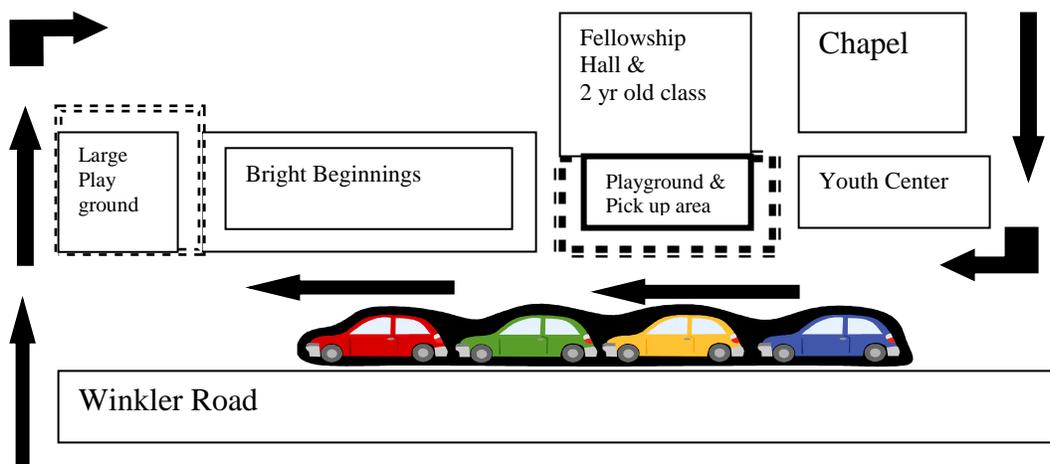
We certainly understand that **EMERGENCIES HAPPEN** and you must speak to the director or assistant director before taking your child from the line or playground. If you must pick up your child early, please notify us in writing the day before or day of. Picking up early from class disrupts the learning of all students and is discouraged. If you must pick up before our carline, **YOU MUST** stop in the office to sign your child out and a Bright Beginnings staff member will walk to the classroom to get your child. Consistent early pickups will need to be discussed with the director.

Please enter the premises from Winkler Road and follow the arrows as shown on the diagram to line up, beginning in front of our smaller playground. PLEASE have your car sign visible on your dashboard. A BB staff member will call your child's name and the 4 cars behind you. The teachers and assistants will be on the playground to collect the children whose names have been called and assist them into their cars. **Please DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR CAR.** If your child needs help buckling the seat belt, please pull up past the pick-up point to do so, as not to hold up the line. Please exit onto Winkler Road.

Thank you for your help with this!

Note that pick-up for Lunch Bunch and Stepping Stones will follow this same car line procedure.

Special circumstances may require a change in dismissal procedure. If it is a rainy day or there is an issue requiring inside dismissal, we will hang a windsock from a sign in our front lawn. That will be a signal that we are asking you to park and come inside to get your child.



Calendar

Bright Beginnings will be closed for the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day/Eve
2. President's Day
3. Memorial Day
4. Independence Day
5. Labor Day
6. Veteran's Day
7. Thanksgiving
8. Post Thanksgiving
9. Christmas
10. Christmas Eve

We are closed for most of August for cleaning, planning and training. We are also closed for up to two weeks in December. Monthly tuition does not change because of these closures. A full calendar of school closure dates will be provided upon enrollment

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

The Bright Beginnings classroom provides a wide variety of opportunities for children to learn about themselves and their world in a nurturing environment. Various activities are offered to develop children's skills in the following areas: pre-reading, pre-math, science, art, language and communication, culture and community, food preparation, perceptual and sensory motor, nutrition, dramatic play, problem solving and large and small muscle activities.

Our preschool offers a variety of learning environments including activities for individual children and large and small group experiences. Balances of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, as well as active and quiet activities are also provided. Bright Beginnings has highly qualified staff members that create a safe learning environment for children including those with special needs. Because of the joint relationship we are able to better meet each child's individual needs.

Visitations and Conferences

Please feel free to come into the room, to ask questions, and to visit. Remember, however, that the teacher's first responsibility is to the children. Arrival and dismissal time are not appropriate times for a serious conference. Our teachers welcome parents, and will be delighted to set a time for a conference. Likewise, if the teacher feels a need for a parent conference, she will contact you for an appointment. Time will be scheduled each year for parent conferences. Check the school calendar for that date.

Daily Schedule

Our classroom activities will vary from day to day. Our teachers are flexible. Activities throughout the year will involve art, music, science, cooking, reading and math readiness, large and small motor activities, "circle time," field trips and visitors, dramatic play, and story time. The

following is **just a sample** of our schedule, as each teacher's daily plans will be slightly different.

8:30 - 8:45	Children arrive.
8:45 - 9:45	Center time— children participate in a variety of learning activities at different centers in the room.
9:45 - 10:15	Circle time— children gather together with teachers for singing, finger plays, etc.
10:10 - 10:30	Snack time— a healthy snack is served. The children will often help prepare it.
10:30 -11:15	Outdoor time— playground play, outdoor games, nature walks, etc.
11:15 - 11: 45	"Special" time— arts and crafts, movement, and puppetry.
11:45 - 12:15	Story time
12:15 -12:30	Wrap up day & Dismissal for those not attending "Lunch Bunch"
12:30-2:45	Lunch Bunch

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Bright Beginnings reserves the right to re-assign children with or without cause at anytime during the child's enrollment. Parents/Guardians may request re-assignment at any time, yet Bright Beginnings makes no guarantee of re-assignment.

STAFF TO CHILD RATIO

Under current licensing standards, our staff to child ratio is as follows

2 year olds—1:6

3 year olds—1:8

VPK 4 year olds: 1:9

Stepping Stones 1:9

Toileting

As part of our **two year old classes**, teachers will work with parents to begin "toilet learning" with the children. If your child is still in diapers or "pull ups", please send a supply, along with wipes, each day to class.

****It is required that all children are out of diapers and "pull ups" by the time they enter our three year old program, VPK or Stepping Stones.** *We cannot accept children in these classes that are still dependent on "pull ups" or diapers.* They are expected to take care of their own toileting needs. This includes dressing/undressing, wiping, flushing the toilets and washing up. Accidents will happen, and we will handle them in a matter-of-fact way. Many toilet accidents are prevented if children can unbutton or unbuckle pants and belts without a struggle. Please make sure we always have a clean change of clothes for your child.

If accidents occur frequently we will ask that you spend some time at home working on the potty training before returning to school.

EDUCATIONAL/PERSONAL CARE SUPPLIES NEEDED

Bright Beginnings requires that all parents/guardians supply certain items each day for their child to participate in our program. The supply list will be given to you upon enrollment. Teachers may ask for additional supplies as the year progresses.

Parents/Guardians with children in diapers and/or potty training are required to supply an adequate supply of diapers and wipes each week. If you are unsure of what amount is appropriate, please contact the Director. Parents/Guardians are also required to maintain 1-2 seasonally appropriate changes of clothes on site. Please be reminded that potty-training children will need more changes of clothes during this time. Children that attend Bright Beginnings during lunchtime are required to bring a lunch. Please see Food Policy for further information and instructions.

Clothing and Possessions

Please mark any personal possessions with your child's first and last name. Children should wear clothing that is durable, comfortable, and is easy to manage by your child. **We go outside daily, so please dress children accordingly.** Children must wear sneakers to school each day which have support and allow freedom of movement for climbing, skipping, dancing, and running. A complete change of clothes, labeled and placed in a Ziploc bag, is necessary for each child, in case of spills, accidents, etc.

Guns, ropes, knives, and other toys of destruction are not to be brought to school. We discourage the bringing of violent "action figures" to class. We provide hammers to bang, clay to pound, etc., to help express feelings of aggression.

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SENDING TOYS FROM HOME.

We realize that a favorite doll or toy sometimes helps ease your child's transition from home to school. Please label any of these items if this is necessary. Your child's teacher may designate a "show and tell" day. You will be notified of this by the teacher. Pets, interesting nature items, and many other things are a welcome addition to class . . . but please check with your child's teacher first.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

Bright Beginnings recognizes the excitement that surrounds a child's birthday, yet we try to keep birthday's low key. At school, we make a birthday crown and present it to the child at circle time. If a parent/guardian chooses to send a snack to school, we ask that it remains simple (cupcakes, juice bars, cookies, etc). Please contact your child's teacher as to the appropriate amount of treats to bring. Also be reminded that you are invited to join us on your child's special day.

The first Wednesday of every month at 11:45 is our special Birthday Blessing in the sanctuary. This is a special time for your child to be recognized and prayed over by our Pastoral staff. They are also given a special bracelet to show that they have had their birthday blessing. ALL are welcome to attend this special time.

Bright Beginnings celebrates all types of holidays. Our school makes every effort to incorporate various religious and or cultural traditions and uses this opportunity as a method of educating the children about the various religions and traditions in our culture.

Field Trips

Bright Beginnings occasionally supplements the in class curriculum with off premise field trips FOR VPK OR STEPPING STONES STUDENTS ONLY. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher. Bright Beginnings provides required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend.

Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, other than their own, on an Bright Beginnings sponsored trip, unless parental approval is received.

How we communicate with you

Newsletters and calendars are sent home each month. Please read these carefully and save them to refer to during the month to keep up what your child is doing in class. Your child will be designated a "**Snack Day**" on the class calendar. If for some reason you cannot bring snack that day, contact your child's teacher. If you can, please remember the teachers in your snack planning - they get hungry during the morning too!

We will be communicating by email **WEEKLY and sometimes daily**, so make sure we have current email address. You will also be receiving communications from your classroom parent liaison ("classroom mom") concerning things that are happening in the classroom or in our school.

Also, please like us on FaceBook  and join our **private** FaceBook group!!

Please remember that a crisis at home affects your child's behavior at school. Let us know the joyous happenings, the upsetting experiences, the important changes in the home, which may affect behavior. These will be held in confidence, but will help teachers to understand your child's behavior. Also, let teachers know what a child has been told about an impending birth, serious illness, being adopted, or recent death. This will help us hold intelligent, informed, and helpful conversations with your child.

Discipline

Proverbs 10:17 tells us "He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray".

It is our desire for the Bright Beginnings students to be the salt and light in the world, showing the way to live and not leading others astray. A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, and to follow the direction of an adult OTHER than a parent or family member. A caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. The staff will focus on the POSITIVE behaviors of our children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. Our goal is to help children develop self control and responsibility for their actions.

Our discipline procedures will consist of the following strategies:

1. Encouraging children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child. Facilitating children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
2. Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.
3. Separating a child from the group (Quiet place/Safe place) one minute away for each year of age
4. Counseling children individually about their behaviors
5. Making parents aware of disciplinary concerns. (Incident report)

There are three distinct types of behavior that we may need to report to parents.

Disruptive behavior--A child who is being disruptive, is disrespectful to people or property, lying, interrupting speakers, making excessive noise, or not listening.

Abusive behavior—a child who is being abusive is hitting, kicking, punching, biting or stealing. He or she is being abusive when destroying property, or being unkind, abusive, threatening and/or obscene language.

Dangerous behavior—a child who is endangering himself, herself, or others is one who runs away from the staff or group, or who cannot follow safety recommendations on the playground or in the building. ANY behavior that requires the teacher to be devoted solely to one child for an extended period of time endangers the other children in the group and is therefore considered dangerous.

ABUSIVE or DANGEROUS behavior will not and cannot be tolerated and therefore may result in immediate and strong action. This applies to field trips, special events, our regular school day and Lunch Bunch!

These behaviors will be addressed in an incident report. This will be completed to document and inappropriate behavior and will need to be signed by a parent and returned to the teacher. After the third incident report is sent home, the child will be sent to the office if the behavior continues and he or she will be sent home. The parent, teacher and director will need to come up with a plan at this time to help the child manage his/her behavior. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive, abusive or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent

home for a longer time period to be determined OR to be removed from the program all together.

Children cannot become self disciplined unless adults teach them right from wrong. At Bright Beginnings, children will be taught expectations for correct behavior and encouraged to live and act accordingly. When children know something is wrong and choose to do it anyway, consequences will follow to communicate that the behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Pre-Enrollment Requirements

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at Bright Beginnings. This is per our licensing regulations. Immunizations may be waived for certain reasons. Parents are required to have a written statement and a form from the health department, exempting child from immunizations because of religious beliefs on file in place of an immunization record, so that the center can maintain compliance with licensing regulations.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend Bright Beginnings. The Physical Examination Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend Bright Beginnings, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the office within the first 30 days of enrollment

Daily Requirements

No child should attend when visibly ill. Keep your child from school if any of the following symptoms are present:

- ◆ Fever of 100° or above. Child should be fever free **WITHOUT medication** for 24 hours before returning to school.
- ◆ Severe or constant coughing or constantly running nose
- ◆ Pinkeye
- ◆ Unusual spots or rashes
- ◆ Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of the school start time. Child should be vomit or diarrhea free for 24 hours **WITHOUT medication** before returning to school
- ◆ Head lice, ringworm, or other contagious conditions. Children that are found to have lice or eggs will be sent home and head checks on all children in the preschool will be done. Parents will also be notified. A child identified with head lice will not be permitted to return to school unless verification of treatment has occurred and no nits/eggs are present. Verification of treatment includes a product box top or empty bottle and a head check in the front office before returning to class.
- ◆ Unusual fatigue or lethargy

If we witness any of these symptoms in your child, we will call and ask you to take your child home

until he/she is well again.

If your child should become ill at school, we will call you or your emergency contacts. *****It is imperative that we have current emergency information at all times!** If we cannot reach you, your child will be kept isolated from other children until you come pick him/her up.

If immediate medical attention is imperative, we will utilize the notarized emergency treatment form, which you will have provided, to obtain medical care for your child.

Children With Severe Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy. This form can be obtained by request from the Director.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases Bright Beginnings from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, provided Bright Beginnings exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

Communicable Diseases

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick his or her child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Bright Beginnings reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a

fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hours period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the office. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. Bright Beginnings will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

BITING:

Bright Beginnings recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate stage of development. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit, or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations that provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will use the behavior management procedures outlined in the behavior management section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Bright Beginnings cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

DISPENSING OF MEDICATION:

Bright Beginnings will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions. Bright Beginnings will only give medication to the child for whom the doctor's note is written and for whom the medication container is labeled. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be

given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor's note must identify the dates that the medication is to be given.

Parents are required to complete a Medication Form each day that medication is to be dispensed. Medication Forms can be found by the sign in sheets. Medication Forms, doctor's notes and medication are to be turned into your child's teacher.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS:

Bright Beginnings conducts fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

Emergency Information

We will follow the decision of the Lee County Public Schools regarding closing school due to weather. Please listen to local television and radio stations in the event of severe weather. Please know that the children participate in monthly fire & safety drills.

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS:

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be placed in the child's parent cubby.

Parents or persons designated to act "In Loco Parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information.

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets)

Bright Beginnings never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in lunch or snack time for behavior reasons.

All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks. Treats will be reserved for a "dessert" when an adequate amount of their lunch has been eaten.

All lunches require an ice pack or other chilling device, as there is not adequate storage space for lunches in the refrigerators. Please provide variety in your child's lunch; this increases the interest in eating and lunchtime. Alternatives to sandwiches can include: chicken, pasta, roast, quesadillas, grilled cheese, nuggets, burritos, any leftovers, etc.

PEANUT FREE POLICY

If a child at Bright Beginnings has a peanut allergy in our center, we will make every effort to inform parents in the class and check all labels on food that come into our center. Parents of the child with a peanut allergy may be asked to supply alternate snacks and birthday & holiday celebration foods so the child can still actively participate in class.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY:

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

HIRING STAFF FOR PRIVATE BABYSITTING

Parents may employ Bright Beginnings staff as long as both client and staff member maintain confidentiality regarding program matters as well as a professional relationship on and off-site. Bright Beginnings reserves the right to terminate any staff member and/or client that violates the aforementioned policy. Parents may hire staff at their own discretion and Innovative Preschool is released from all liability.

Employment refers to any relationship outside of the agency's services, which involves an employee of Bright Beginnings to interact with a current or former client of. Such relationships include but are not limited to: baby-sitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.



Sunday worship at 8 am and 11 am (traditional) and 9:30 am (contemporary).

Nursery for infants and toddlers, and children's programming for preschool children is available at the 9:30 and 11 am services.

www.cypresslakeumc.com/connect/children/

If you do not have a church home, we invite you to visit!

**We welcome families at all our services. The contemporary worship service at 9:30 am is most popular with young families. On the first Sunday of each month, children worship with their families and serve in leadership roles during worship (Family First Sunday).*

**Wednesday Night Live programs for children, youth, and adults are an opportunity for the whole family to grow in faith.*

**Healthy living classes such as Body & Soul Christian Yoga, Tai Chi & Christian Line Dancing are available to enrich your health & wellness.*

**See the online calendar at www.cypresslakeumc.com/info/calendar/ or the bulletin board in the school hallway for activities and events you might enjoy.*

Please call our church office at 482-1250 or visit our website at www.cypresslakeumc.com for more information



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

SIGNATURE PAGE

I/We, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of _____,
acknowledge that I/We have received a copy of Bright Beginnings Parent Handbook and have been
given the opportunity to read the manual and ask questions about and understands the policies
contained therein. Furthermore, I/We agree to abide by the policies set forth in the manual.

I/We understand that the policies described in the Parent Handbook are not conditions of
enrollment, and the language does not create a contract between Bright Beginnings and the parents.
Bright Beginnings reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its
sole discretion, without prior notice.

Signature:

Date:

Print Name:

Signature:

Date:

Print Name: