



# Parent Handbook

4200 N. 204<sup>th</sup> St. Elkhorn, NE 68022

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

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## Welcome Letter to Parents

Welcome to Bethany First Steps. Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your most precious gift. Bethany First Steps is designed to help your child grow in the four core areas of development-Physical, Social/Emotional, Cognitive and Language. We promote Christian values, manners, morals, respect and caring in a nurturing environment.

Bethany First Steps will promote the use of interest areas in the classroom for music and movement, manipulatives, math, science, dramatic play, writing and art as a way of providing experiences that promote Physical, Social/Emotional, Cognitive and Language skill development. Children also participate in Bible time each week where they will learn about God's love for them, sing praise songs and learn more about the Bible.

All children are welcomed and treated with respect. Communication and developing relationships between the parent, child and teachers creates an atmosphere of respect, cooperation, communication, professionalism, and kindness in which to give children the best care possible. It is our goal that all the children that attend Bethany First Steps leave with a strong sense of self and knowing that Jesus is in their heart.

Please see your child's teacher or a director if you have any questions or concerns regarding the care of your child(ren). All concerns about your child's care are important to us and we want to provide them with the highest quality of care possible. The teachers and directors will work with you to create a solution that best supports your child(ren).

If any questions or concerns ever arise, please feel free to ask. I look forward to getting to know your child and family.

Welcome to Bethany First Steps

Katie Apley  
Director, Bethany First Steps

## **Purpose of the Handbook**

Families have many questions when it comes to the care of their children. It is our hope that you become familiar with this handbook and in doing so, answer many of the questions you may have. This handbook supersedes any previous handbooks. The material in this handbook provides you with a description of Bethany First Steps, policies, and procedures. After reading this book, please sign the acknowledgement sheet provided and return it to the director. Should a policy change, the parents will be informed immediately of this change. A letter will be sent home or emailed to each family. If you should have any questions about the change, we ask that you talk with a director.

## Mission

Bethany First Steps' mission is to provide safe, high quality and developmentally appropriate childcare in a loving Christian environment to children ages 6 weeks to 10 years. Specifically, Bethany First Steps is committed to:

- Support and encourage the families we serve.
- To provide for all areas of a child's development
- To teach children to respect themselves, others, and their environment.
- For children to learn self-confidence, grace, forgiveness, accountability, and responsibility.

*"Mightier than the waves of the sea is His love for you" Psalm 93:4*

## Licensing and Child Enrollment

Bethany First Steps complies with all licensing regulations and standards to ensure the best interest of all children and their families. These standards relate to our facility, staff health and safety procedures, meals and nutrition, child to teacher ratio and other administrative tasks. Our facility is subject to routine inspections by the State Licensing Agency, Health Department and Fire Marshal.

State licensing regulations require that childcare centers be staffed at the following staff-to-child ratios:

6 weeks to 18 months	1 teacher: 4 children
18 months to 3 years	1 teacher: 6 children
3 years	1 teacher: 10 children
4 to 6 years	1 teacher: 12 children
School-Age	1 teacher: 15 Children

Prior to enrollment, a visit can be scheduled to introduce the parents and child to the school and to observe the program in which they are interested in enrolling. This is to assure that both the parent and the child are comfortable, and that the program fits their needs. If, after that visit, the decision to enroll the child is made, a registration form and fee must be completed, signed, and returned. Once the registration fee and tuition deposit are paid, the child's name will then be added to the roster.

A non-refundable registration fee and tuition deposit (equal to one week's tuition) must be submitted prior to the child's start date of any given program.

Bethany First Steps requires a two-week notice if you choose disenrollment of your child from our center. This needs to be in written form and handed to the director. A portion of your last week of care will be covered by your deposit.



## Family File Requirements

Prior to starting, all families will need to fill out the following paperwork:

- Registration Form
- Agreement Form from Family Handbook
- Payment Agreement
- Parent Contract
- Tuition Form
- Walk/Photo Permission Form
- State Brochure
- Covid/Illness Policy
- Updated Immunization Records
- Infant Information Sheet (6 weeks to 12 months only)

If any forms are updated, a new form will be given to all families to update.

Immunization records will be turned into the DHHS yearly. We ask that you bring in an updated copy of these as your child gets them so we can stay up to date with this.

### **Hours of Operation**

Bethany First Steps hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

If for any reason the hours of operation need to change, an email will be sent out to all families with as much notice as possible. We will never take this decision lightly as we understand this affects everyone's work schedules. This will only take place if we feel it is necessary and in the best interest for the safety of the children and the staff.

## **Confidentiality**

As professionals, it is our obligation to keep information regarding the children and their families confidential. Each child's records are open to the primary teacher, parents, administration, and licensing. With this commitment to confidentiality in place, the center will be a place of security and trust.

Information about children, families and employees must not be given to anyone other than the people who are authorized to receive such information. This extends to both internal and external parties. If an accident happens between two children, we will not be able to share the other child's identity. Developmental progress will only be shared with custodial parents.

An employee's responsibility to maintain confidentiality regarding information learned about children, families and employees extends 24 hours a day, 7 days per week regardless of how or where the information was attained. All employees at Bethany First Steps will be diligent in our efforts to maintain confidentiality and should be aware that there are job-related consequences for violations of this and rights of privacy.

### **Children and Families Information**

- a. All children's records will be locked in a secure drawer.
- b. Access to these records is limited to the director and financial coordinator only.
- c. Children's records may not be taken off the premises.
- d. Children and family private information must never be discussed among employees except on a "must know" basis.
- e. Discussion of a family or child's information with other families or friends is strictly prohibited.
- f. Information will only be released to persons outside of Bethany First Steps with written consent from family.

The staff at Bethany First Steps treats all information about children and families with the strictest confidence. We ask that our staff never discuss a child or staff member within their hearing or within the hearing of another child and we will ask the same from our parents. Bethany First Steps has a zero-tolerance policy for gossip about staff, children, or families. If a staff member is found to be engaging in this behavior, it may result in suspension or termination, and we will operate on a "need to know" basis.

## **Professionalism and Cell Phones**

The staff is asked not to use cell phones while they are on the clock except for naptime if all the children are sleeping. If you do see this happening, we ask that you make us aware we are not able to be in the rooms at all times to see things like this taking place. Please keep in mind that Brightwheel App is done through the phones, so teachers will need to use their phones to complete and keep the App updated throughout the day.

We have asked that our staff do not give out their personal cell phone numbers to families. Our staff is asked to do all communication through the Brightwheel App so that these conversations can be monitored if they cannot be done face to face.

If something needs to be communicated outside of work hours, a message can be sent through the Brightwheel App, or an email can be sent to a director, and we can address any situations that way.

Communication is key to running a successful classroom, but we want to make sure that it is also kept professional.

## Holidays

Bethany First Steps will be closed the following days: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day and the day after (July 4 & 5), Labor Day, November Election Day (Staff In-service day), Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Break will be December 23-26th.

If we decide to close due to low attendance an email will be sent.

Tuition will not be prorated. Bethany First Steps will close at 3:00 p.m., New Year's Eve.

Tuition is not reduced for these days.

If these holidays fall on a Saturday, we will be closed the previous Friday. If these holidays fall on a Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday. Tuition is not reduced for these days.

There will be a sign-up sheet for the week of Thanksgiving and the weeks between Christmas and New Year's Day. We will simply utilize this for staffing purposes and to plan for accurate meal counts.

## Arrival

As you arrive at the center, please encourage your children to be respectful of their caregivers and the facility. By demonstrating to your child that the rules still apply even when you are present, you are helping us to not only facilitate the transition into the center for your child, but also helping us to continue the work that you do in teaching your child a respect for authority and personal property.

Please accompany your child to their classroom, and be sure center personnel acknowledge your child's presence before leaving. When the center opens for the day, your child may be dropped off in another classroom and then will move to their classroom once their teacher has arrived. This may be the same at the end of the day.

We ask that you take the responsibility of checking your child in and out through the Brightwheel App. QR codes are placed outside all classrooms and the office doors for easy accessibility.

If your child will not be attending for any reason, please make sure to contact a director at Bethany First Steps or mark it on the App or send a message.

### **Releasing your Child**

Children will not be released to anyone other than parents or guardians unless you have input authorized pickups in the Brightwheel App, we do ask for phone numbers and pictures in the profile so we can put a name to a face. If we do not have a picture, when someone new is picking up we require a photo I.D. at time of pickup to verify that person.

Bethany First Steps will not release a child to anyone that seems to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If this is a concern, we will ask that other arrangements are made for that child, or we will call proper authorities. Authorities will also be notified if we are aware of children not being properly placed in a car seat or riding in the front seat of a car without proper restraints.

As Bethany First Steps is located within a church, we recognize that there will be days with public traffic. On these days, such as when there is a funeral, your child's classroom door will be locked from the outside. If you come to pick up during this time, a teacher will need to open the door to let you in. The doors will remain locked for the duration of the church building being used by the public.

### **Late Pick Up**

Beginning at 5:31 pm, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child for the first 30 minutes and then \$5 per minute thereafter. Time will be based on the time clock on the Brightwheel App. Teachers will begin calling parents 5 minutes after closing time. Emergency contacts will be phoned 15 minutes after the closing time if a parent is unreachable. Any charges will be added to the following weeks tuition and an email will be sent stating the charge.

We are required by law to contact legal authorities and Child Protective Services if a child is left one hour after closing time and all attempts to reach emergency contacts have failed.

As a courtesy, if you know you will be late, please call ahead to let us know. This is very hard for children to understand and if you have called to let us make us aware of the situation, we are then able to better explain to the child what is going on.

The late policy will also be put in place when you are called to pick up an ill child. If you are not here within an hour, a late fee will be put in place. Exceptions will be made if you have made arrangements for pick up and have notified the director.



## Rates & Payment

When you are enrolling your child at Bethany First Steps, you are contracting for a time slot that will be held open for your child on a regular basis regardless of attendance. Once we have agreed to keep the space open for your child, we have already incurred all the same expenses whether your child attends or does not attend on a particular day. We have already paid for the correct number of staff to be present, for enough food to be prepared, and may have turned away another child who might have attended in your child's place. For this reason, the tuition of your child will be due whether your child is in attendance or not.

The center's facilities, salaries, supplies, and administrative expenses are supported entirely by parent's fees. Therefore, to provide the best possible care at the most reasonable rates that we can offer, we must insist on prompt payment. No matter how compelling the circumstances, we cannot allow some families to not meet the financial obligations; to do so would require other families to pay more and might jeopardize the future of the center. The following schedule has been set to ensure a fair and equitable situation for everyone involved:

<b>Registration Fee</b>	\$100 per child
<b>Re-Registration Fee</b>	\$50 per child
<b>Registration School-Age</b>	\$75 per child
<b>Starfish (Infant)</b>	\$317 a week
<b>Jellyfish (1-2 yrs.)</b>	\$288 a week
<b>Otters (2-3 yrs.)</b>	\$280 a week
<b>Stingrays (3-4/5 yrs.)</b>	\$267 a week
<b>Turtles (4/5-6 yrs.)</b>	\$256 a week
<b>School-Age (Summer Care)</b>	\$205 (5 days) \$180 (3 days)

**Rate changes are based on your child's age, not on what room they are in as we are not always able to move kids when birthdays take place due to limited space.**

- At time of enrollment, the \$100 registration plus one week's tuition is due to secure your spot. The one-week tuition will go to your child's last week of care.
- Automatic payments will need to be set up through Brightwheel App for tuition payments.
- Even if a child is absent for the entire week, full payment for that week is due.
- To assist with timely payments, all payments will be electronically deducted from your checking account. Tuition must be set up through the app prior to your child's first day to ensure payment is received.

- If your account is not current, care will no longer be provided until full payment is made. If this is not received within 3 business days of the payment due date (Monday of every week), we ask that your child not return to the center until payment is received in full. If this becomes a reoccurring problem, you may be asked to pay in cash only and this must be received by Monday by 5:30 for your child to return the next business day, or care will be terminated.
- Bethany First Steps has a \$25.00 fee for any return payments.
- If you find that you will be **late picking up your child**, please call the center and let us know. The fee for late pick-ups is \$1 per every minute the first 30 minutes and \$5 a minute thereafter that you are late.
- Each year, in January, Bethany First Steps will review tuition fees. Parents should expect some level of increase to cover the cost of inflation, and wage increases for staff. Bethany First Steps will give families at least 30 days written notice prior to the rate increases.
- A re-registration fee of \$50 per child will be charged if you pull your child out for any length of time that exceeds 2 weeks.

Any questions regarding tuition or statements can be addressed to our Financial Coordinator, Hallie Paulson. She can be reached by phone or email, 402-991-2123 or [Hallie.Paulson@bethanyfirststeps.org](mailto:Hallie.Paulson@bethanyfirststeps.org)

## **Parking**

When arriving or departing, please park near the West doors to ensure everyone's safety. The drive at the front of the church can be used to make quick drop-offs or pickups. We ask that if you will be at the center for more than a few minutes, we ask that you park in the parking lot. Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot. Please do not let your child exit the building ahead of you. Please enter and exit the parking lot with care. We have children who arrive at all times of the day.

### **Key Fobs**

Each parent will receive 1 key fob to give you access into the Southwest doors. If keys are lost, a replacement will be \$5.00 per key paid in cash or check made out to Bethany Lutheran Church.

All key fobs must be returned when you are no longer needing care for your child at the center. These may be turned in at the end of your child's last day.

## **Brightwheel App**

Building and maintaining a strong home–school connection and keeping you involved in your child’s day-to-day learning experiences at our school is of the utmost priority. In order to make sure our families are kept informed of all the exciting things that go on during our day we use an app called *Brightwheel*.

The *Brightwheel* program makes it easy for our staff to share real-time information about your child, giving you an unparalleled view into the caregiving events, learning experiences, discoveries, and accomplishments that make your child’s days with us so special.

Your child’s teacher will use *Brightwheel* to share photos, videos, and daily reports with you.

A couple days prior to your child starting, we will send out a Brightwheel invite so you can set up an account for your child and family. This is how registration paperwork will be completed, billing will be set up, your child will be checked in and out and all daily activities and pictures will be logged every day along with so much more.

Below are some helpful links and videos to help navigate the set-up process.

<https://help.mybrightwheel.com/en/articles/2165917-overview-using-brightwheel-as-a-parent-family-or-approved-pickup>

<https://help.mybrightwheel.com/en/articles/6546161-brightwheel-pdf-resources>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zb8suSif0Tk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=169ijh0oLIA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-1AG0Yt-Og>

We ask that all communication outside of face-to-face conversations be done through the app. We ask that our staff does not give out personal cell numbers for day-to-day communication.

## Visitation

Bethany First Steps has an open-door policy and parents are encouraged to visit their child during the day. Your child loves to see you and involve you in their day. This also builds a positive home/school relationship between you, your child, and teachers.

Grandparents or other family members are also welcome to visit. In this case, please inform your child's teacher and a director of a special visitor. The special visitor will need to show identification (driver's license) before entering the classroom.

Bethany First Steps welcomes mothers who are nursing to come to the center to nurse their child. We have rocking chairs in the infant room that you are welcome to use, or we can find a private area somewhere for you if you are more comfortable.

We want you to feel comfortable so please let us know if there is anything we can do to make this time with your child more enjoyable.

## Court Orders

If there is a court order prohibiting one or both parents from having custody of the child, we must have a note from the custodial parent or guardian as well as a copy of the court documentation. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. Please understand that we cannot legally keep a parent away from his or her own child without legal documentation. In the absence of a court order on file with the center, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.

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

### **Toys from Home**

Personal toys from home are not permitted for the following reasons:

- They may not be safe for all the children in the room.
- They may be lost or damaged by other children.
- They may make sharing difficult.



## Mealtime

We provide breakfast, lunch and a p.m. snack to all children and these meals are fully nutritious and meet the Federal requirements for nutrition. Meals are provided by KinderBites every day and meet the requirements for the Nebraska Food Program. If your child has a food allergy or food intolerance, please inform the director. We will NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUBSTITUTES to meet the special dietary needs of your child. KinderBites will provide whole milk for breakfast and lunch for the kids 12 months to 2 yrs. old and 1% milk for kids for breakfast and lunch for the 2-year-olds and older.

Menus are posted in each classroom, on the Brightwheel App, as well as on the Parent Information Board in each classroom. These will also be emailed out monthly.

All mealtimes and snacks are supervised by staff sitting with the children in a clean sanitized eating area. Mealtime/snack time is a pleasant, interactive time between children and staff. Important childcare goals surrounding mealtimes are to help children eat healthy meals today and develop positive eating habits that will last a lifetime.

The program serves meals and snacks at regularly established times. Meals and snacks are at least two hours apart, but not more than four hours apart.

- Breakfast: 8:00-8:30
- Lunch: 11:30-12:00
- PM Snack 3:15-3:45

Key considerations are that children:

- Have a pleasant mealtime atmosphere.
- Practice appropriate mealtime behavior with little intervention.
- Develop good eating habits.
- Eat when they are hungry.
- Stop when they are full.
- Enjoy a variety of foods.
- Will be allowed to help and clear the table.

Meals will be eaten observing the social aspects of family style dining. Family style meal service encourages supervising adults to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered around foods. This approach allows children to identify new foods while developing a positive attitude toward nutritious foods, sharing in group eating situation, and developing good eating habits.

During mealtimes staff will:

- Wash their hands before preparing and feeding.
- Assist children in washing their hands before sitting at the table.
- Sit with the children to eat to model correct mealtime behavior.
- Ensure children are sitting while they are eating.
- Encourage child-directed conversation, focusing on the child's interests and experiences. The children should be talking more than the staff.
- Direct mealtime conversation around food. This may include what kinds of foods are being offered, what color the foods are, how they are prepared, if the children eat these same foods at home, where the foods come from, and a variety of related topics.
- Staff will not reprimand children if they do not taste or eat all the food. Instead, let the children know when the next meal will be served so they can make a final decision about whether to eat more. Also, try to focus on some positive aspects of the children's eating behavior. For example, maybe a child tried the food by using another one of his/her senses rather than by tasting it; this can be acknowledged in a positive way.

As a rule, food from home should be finished before entering the classroom, including breakfast food. Food from home will not be served to the children in lieu of the meals that are prepared at the center unless it is due to an allergy. KinderBites provides a wide variety of food to introduce to the children and we encourage each child to be adventurous and try new foods.

We ask that you provide a doctor note and an allergy action plan for all allergies, this includes any food allergies and detailed information on what they are, what is the reaction will be if accidentally ingested and a plan on what steps need to be taken. If an Epi-Pen is needed, we ask that you provide this as well. These will be kept in the child's classroom.

## Infant Feedings and Mealtime

We ask that all parents/guardians give staff written notices of any special feeding instructions, dietary needs, food allergies, or intolerances that affect their infant/toddler's care. These must be updated in writing as needs change until the child is 12 months of age. All mealtimes and snacks are supervised by staff sitting with the children in a clean sanitized eating area. Mealtime/snack time is a pleasant, interactive time between children and staff. Staff will follow the procedure below for bottle feeding, solid foods, and self-feeding. The staff will work with families (who are informed by their child's health care provider) to ensure that the food is based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and developmental stage.

On the enrollment forms, the parent will inform the childcare staff about any:

- Special feeding instructions
- Dietary needs
- Food allergies
- Food intolerances

The directors will ask the parent/guardian to bring:

- Clean hard plastic or disposable plastic bottles/liners with lids.
- Formula or breastmilk as needed for the child.
- Bottles and all parts must be labeled with the child's name.

Staff will:

- Wash their hands before preparing and feeding.
- Warm bottle using either a bottle warmer or crock pot. The water must be no more than 120 degrees. The microwave will not be used to warm bottles.
- Gently shake the bottle before serving to evenly distribute the heat.
- Temperature tests the bottle before serving by placing a few drops on the back of your hand, not the wrist.
- Hold infants when giving a bottle to avoid the risk of ear infections. Bottles will not be propped.
- Not allow infants/toddlers to walk around the room with bottles. This will prevent bacterial growth in the room from dripping bottles.
- Not offer solid foods in the bottle with the formula.
- Not offer solid foods and fruit juice to infants younger than 6 months, unless that practice is recommended by the child's doctor and approved by families.
- Not offer juice to infants under 12 months old.
- Throw away any formula/milk left in bottle one hour after bottle was heated.

- Not feed cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months and serve only whole milk to children ages 12 months to 24 months.

### **Solid Food and Self Feeding:**

Staff will:

- Wash their hands and the child's hands before eating.
- Clean and sanitize the highchair and/or eating table right before serving.
- Secure infants safely in highchairs with safety belts.
- Ensure all children under the age of 2 wear a bib at every mealtime-NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Sit next to infants in highchairs and sit at the table to observe amount eaten, type of food, likes/dislikes of food, choking and assist with obstructed airway technique when necessary.
- Offer solids to infants ages 6 months old (parent/guardian written permission).
- If developmentally appropriate, offer children over 6 months child size spoons, forks, bowls, and sippy cups.
- Cut firm foods into ¼-1/2-inch pieces to prevent choking.
- Not allow children to walk around the room with food.
- Clean highchairs and tables immediately after mealtime.
- Wash their hands and the child's hands after eating.
- Document meals, snacks and amount ate in the Brightwheel App.

## Breastmilk/Formula

The program supports breastfeeding by:

- Accepting, storing, and serving expressed breast milk for feedings.
- Accepting breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infants' name and date.
- Storing it in a refrigerator until the infant is picked up.
- Ensuring that the breast milk is gently mixed, not shaken before feeding to preserve special infection fighting and nutritional components in human milk.
- Providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinating feedings with the infant's mother.

Infant/Toddler staff will use the following procedures and guidelines when handling breast milk.

- I. The directors or designated staff will ask parents to bring:
  - a. Clean hard plastic or disposable plastic bottles/liners and caps.
  - b. Bottles with child's name on the label.
  - c. Expressed or frozen breastmilk in bottles.
- II. All staff will use proper hand washing techniques when handling body fluids such as breast milk.
- III. Any staff who has open cuts or sores on their hands will wear disposable gloves during bottle prep.
- IV. Storage of Breast Milk
  - a. Fresh expressed milk can be stored in a refrigerator at 39° F or below.
  - b. Store milk in refrigerator as soon as infant arrives at the facility.
  - c. Do not add warm milk to cold or frozen milk as this is a potential area for bacterial growth.
  - d. Milk left in the bottle after feeding may be saved for a period of one hour and then must be either thrown out or placed back in the child's bottle bag to be sent home.
- V. Frozen Breast Milk
  - a. Frozen breastmilk is permitted as a back up to thawed milk.
  - b. Bags of frozen breastmilk must contain the date expressed (labeled E), the date it was frozen (labeled F) and the date it was brought to the center (labeled C).
  - c. Frozen breastmilk will be sent home one month after the date it was brought to the center.

VI. When warming bottles

- a. Place bottle of breast milk in a crock pot containing warm water until breastmilk is lukewarm.
- b. Gently swirl breastmilk, do not shake.

## Classroom Management and Curriculum

Bethany First Steps has developed its curriculum around the ideals of the traditional content-based philosophy. Content-based with some Highscope approaches allows teachers to plan daily activities in which children experience learning initiated by a quality instructor. The curriculum is put together and given out to the teachers each year so we can adjust as needed. Teachers will make their lesson plans based off the curriculum that is provided to them. Please feel free to talk with your child's teacher at any time if you have questions about these lesson plans. The lesson plans will be put in the Tadpoles App so you can keep up with your child's daily activities.

Children will follow a daily plan that produces easily assessed results. Bethany First Steps gives great attention to the look and feel of the classroom. Teachers work as researchers collaborating to advance development in your child. Children are encouraged to dialogue, compare, negotiate, hypothesize, and problem solve through group work and play. Class time is divided between both educational philosophies encouraging individualized learner outcomes.

The curriculum at Bethany First Steps recognizes that children's learning experiences must be fun and exciting for them for it to be of any value. The curriculum focuses on many hands-on activities related to each child's individual development.

Each classroom will set a side time each day to do circle time, art, science, math, sensory, large motor, small motor, music and movement and Bible time. This will be adjusted for each age group to fit the needs of the individual children and their abilities.

Our classrooms are split based on age:

Starfish (Infant room 6 weeks-12 months)

Jellyfish (12 months-24 months)

Otters (2 years-3 years)

Stingrays (3 years 4/5 years)

Turtles (4/5 years-6 years)

School-Age (6 yrs-12 years)

## **Classroom Information**

### ***Starfish (Infants 6 weeks-12 months)***

It is amazing to watch an infant grow and develop. Warm and nurturing care between children and adults, and positive stimulation from the time of birth makes a difference in a child's development. We strive to make life as a parent as simple as possible. Realizing the importance of keeping your child on a routine schedule will assist parents in making the child's day as easy as possible.

Each day your infant attends, you will receive a report through Tadpoles that documents your child's feeding times, diaper changes, and important milestones.

We ask that parents of infants provide formula or breast milk, baby food, diapers, wipes, diaper cream (as needed), pacifiers (as needed), sleep sack and 2 extra outfits. You will be informed when items are needed.

For infants using formula, infant teachers will prepare bottles as needed. We ask that you provide 3-4 bottles that will be used and washed after use.

If you are nursing and will be providing breast milk, we ask that bottles come to the center each day pre-made and labeled with your child's first and last name along with the date and the date the milk was expressed. Infants are fed on-demand, so we ask that if you are providing breast milk that you provide enough for your child each day. If you use a combination of breast milk and formula, please let the teachers know.

We ask that parents drop off and pick up at the door to the classroom. This is to prevent any outside debris from being tracked into the classroom. Infants spend much of their day exploring on the floor we want to keep them as safe as possible.

### ***Jellyfish (Toddlers 12 months-24 months)***

The best type of learning environment for toddlers is one that allows them to explore and play in a safe, impressionable setting. Young children need to be introduced to activities that engage their attention and hold their interests enhancing their growth and development.

Bethany First Steps toddler curriculum encourages toddlers to explore the world around them through monthly themes. Toddlers build vocabulary, use small and large motor skills, creative expression, socialization, and much more. We provide opportunities to engage play, concrete and abstract manipulation, interaction, and problem solving. We will start introducing the children to circle time and have them sitting down as a group to go over our colors, shapes, numbers 1-10, sing songs, do a bible story, and read books.



Each day, Bethany First Steps will document your child's day, telling you how your child napped, ate, drank, played, and diapered/potty trained.

Children will also start going outside twice a day, weather permitting. As your child enters this classroom, we ask that all children are dropped off to a teacher at the doorway, this will limit the traffic in the classroom as most of these children are still little a on the floor most of the day. Please send your child with appropriate outer wear when the weather is cool.

Toddlers will also be introduced to solid foods if this has not happened already, sippy cups, sitting at the table for "Family Style" meals and snacks, table manners and table prayers. One nap will be given after lunch. You may bring a blanket and/or soft toy for your child to sleep with. They will begin to transition napping on a cot.

We ask that parents of Toddlers provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream (as needed), 2 extra outfits, a fitted crib sheet a blanket and/or soft toy for naptime, and appropriate clothing for outdoor play. During the summer months you will be asked to bring in sunscreen, swimsuit, towel, and water shoes of some sort to go out and play in the sprinkler.

#### Otters (2-3-year-old)

Children's needs change as they become a two-year-old. They start becoming more independent and curiosity abounds. Teachers will interact one-on-one with each child and have a short circle time (5-7 minutes) to teach your toddler about shapes, colors, numbers, animals, families, and the community they live in and talk about the bible story for the month. Teachers will read books, show pictures, and complete projects to enhance learning. Meals will include sitting at tables, using table manners, silverware, prayers and serving "Family Style."

We ask that parents provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream (as needed), a fitted crib sheet, a blanket and/or soft toy for naptime, 2 changes of extra clothes and appropriate clothing for outdoor play. As children become interested in potty training we will work with the child and parents to keep this a positive experience. Please provide extra sets of clothing during this time as accidents do happen. During the summer months you will be asked to bring in sunscreen, swimsuit, towel, and water shoes of some sort to go out and play in the sprinkler.

*Stingrays and Turtles (Preschool 3-4 and 4-6)*

Preparing children for school success is essential. We provide a wide variety of activities for the preschool child aiding in a strong basis for learning. Our curriculum focuses on fun, hand-on activities to keep children actively engaged as they learn to recognize letters, explore sounds, understand number concepts, and develop positive character traits.

Bethany First Steps preschool program builds a strong foundation upon which children construct a world of knowledge. Each day provides for a balance of individualized, small group, and large group activities. Classroom activities focus on several themes. This approach enables the instructors to address the various interests of young children, while including an interactive approach to overall growth across developmental areas. Each child will be assessed throughout the year to evaluate progress and develop individualized instruction. Preschool years are very important, and we want to help ensure your child is not only academically ready to go to kindergarten but also socially ready.

Naptime is offered after lunch. Children are not required to sleep, but we do ask that non-nappers rest quietly for 30 minutes to be respectful of our children who do nap. After 30 minutes they may do quiet activities with the teachers (books, puzzles, drawing, etc.).

Please provide 2 extra sets of clothing, a fitted crib sheet, a blanket and/or soft animal for naptime and appropriate clothing for outdoor play. During the summer months you will be asked to bring sunscreen, swimsuit, towel, and water shoes of some sort to go out and play in the sprinkler.

Bethany First Steps partners with Bethany Preschool. If your child is enrolled to attend Preschool at Bethany, he/she will be walked to and from preschool by their center teacher.

## **Classroom Transitions**

Bethany First Steps strives to keep classroom transitions positive. Parents will be notified in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the transition. If you have any questions or concerns about a transition, please talk with the director and your child's teacher.

The week before the move, your child will begin spending time in their new classroom.

As we know that each child will need to transition differently, we will make this schedule based on each child's individual needs.

One of the harder transitions is the infant room to the toddler room. The toddler room is when the kids will start following more of a schedule throughout the day, they will sit at the table for meals, they will be down to one nap a day from 1:00-3:00, they will start going to the gym and outside. We will also start introducing them to circle time and art.

The teachers in the infant room will start weening the babies from the morning nap a few weeks before the transition will happen to help this process be as smooth as possible.

## Nap Time

A rest period is scheduled for each day. For children 12 months and younger, naps will be given on an as needed basis. Our teachers will work with you to match your child's routine from home to give them consistency in their days. Children 12 months and older will have a scheduled nap time from 1:00-3:00 every day. For non-nappers, we require that they have a 30-minute rest time after which they will be able to participate in quiet activities while giving our nappers time to sleep. Cribs/Cots and sheets will be provided by Bethany First Steps for 2 yr olds and younger. Children 12 months and older may bring a blanket and/or soft toy to sleep with. Please label these items with your child's first and last name.

Blankets and sheets will be kept here and washed a couple times during the week unless you prefer to take them home and do it yourself.

We ask that the kids in the preschool rooms bring in a sleeping bag that will be kept here in cubbies.

Children younger than 12 months will be placed on their back to sleep. They may not use blankets or a soft toy during nap time. Sleep sacks and swaddles are permissible to use during nap time. Please provide one for your child if you wish.

We will transition kids from a 2 hour nap the summer before they go to kindergarten to a short rest time.

In the summer, when school-age children are present, they will have a quiet time every day from 2:00-3:00. This time can be spent reading, watching a movie or doing a puzzle. The children will NOT be allowed to bring electronic devices from home.

### **Back to Sleep Policy**

All children 12 months and younger must be placed on their back to sleep in a crib that is free of soft objects, bumper pads, toys, or loose bedding. Children must be gently rolled onto their back if they roll over and they are not at a stage in their development that they can roll over. Infants need to be checked on periodically when napping to ensure that they are not over heating or too cold.

If a parent is requesting the infant to sleep on their stomach, we will need a written note from the child's doctor. One copy will be kept in the family file and another in the infant room.

All staff, including infant teachers, will be trained in the Safe with You series within the first 60 days of employment. This series of classes goes over SIDS, Shaken Baby and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. This class needs to be renewed every 5 years.

All cribs, sleeping bags and cots need to be 3 feet apart per State Regulations.

## **Outdoor Play**

Children need to be outside each day, even if it is for 10 minutes, when the windchill is above 32 degrees and below 90 degrees. Please make sure your child is always appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Our activities will include walks, playground, water play, bike days, and others. The increased space helps children to develop physically and gain coordination. The outdoors also allows for several unique games and activities that promote teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Teachers will need to take the first aid bags and iPad with them whenever they go out to the playground. Once on the playground, teachers make sure to position themselves so they can see all areas where children are playing. Kids will be transitioned on the App when they get outside to ensure everyone is accounted for and then again once they get back inside. Our teachers will do their best to ensure to clean children's faces with wet wipes either at the end of outside time or as parents are picking the children up from the playground.

### **To ensure the children remain safe while outside:**

Children should wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in the cold weather, this includes a coat, hat, gloves, and boots, if necessary.

Sunscreen must be applied before going outside each time during the warm months.

In extreme heat or cold, children will play in the gym.

If playground equipment is wet, dry off with a towel and bring the towel inside to be washed.

Teachers will make sure they always have a first aid kit with them when they are out on the playground.

Please bring in a water bottle for your child to use when they are out during the warm and hot months to ensure the kids are staying hydrated.

Children may not climb the fence.

Children may not climb up the slide.

Children may not eat the dirt and mulch.

Staff will help remind the children that the mulch stays on the ground and not dumped on the equipment, our friends or themselves.

## Discipline Policy

Bethany First Steps' philosophy of discipline focuses on communication. Consistent, clear rules are developed with children. These rules are discussed often to make sure the children understand them. The staff uses positive approaches to help children behave constructively. Among the guidance methods are redirection, planning to prevent problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior, and the application of logical or natural consequences to problem situations. Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and ideas rather than using physical force in solving problems. Teachers help the children to recognize another child's feelings and will intervene immediately if another child becomes physical.

When rules are broken, we:

- Remind the child what the rule is,
- Ask the child to follow the rule, and
- Explain the reason the child needs to follow the rule.
- If this does not correct the behavior, then we explain the consequences if the rule is not followed.
- Enforce the consequences using time out or a brief denial of an activity, such as story time or gym, if child cannot exhibit self-control.
- Talk with the parent.

If a problem behavior persists, the parent/guardian of a child will be contacted. They will be asked to work with the staff and director as a team to develop, carry out, and support a plan focused on helping the child behave more constructively. If these combined efforts, a behavioral problem continues that causes a child to be a danger to himself or others (including staff) and/or consistently requires the attention of staff beyond those assigned to the child's class, Bethany First Steps reserves the right to discontinue services.

## Biting Policy

A child biting another child is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors in group childcare. It can occur without warning, it is difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the parents, and the caregivers involved.

For most toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. Toddlers try it out to get what they want from another child. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. They discover that biting is a quick way to cause another child to drop what they are holding so the biter can pick it up. However, they experience the disapproval of the adults nearby and eventually learn other ways of gaining possession of objects or expressing difficult feelings. For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem.

They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

No matter what the cause, biting in a group situation causes strong feelings with all involved. It does help, however, to be aware of the potential problem before it happens, and to form a plan of action if it does occur. The staff of the center has developed the following plan of action to be used when biting occurs in any of our rooms.

Before biting occurs:

1. Discuss the issue of biting with all parents at the time of enrollment.
2. Distribute written policy to all families in the enrollment packet.

When a child is bitten:

1. The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as “No Biting, it hurts.” Avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. Caring attention is focused on the victim.
2. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that the child can understand. “I can see that you want that truck, but no biting. “We don’t put our teeth on other people.” Or “That hurts when you bite him, he is sad.”
3. Redirect the child to other play.
4. Write an accident report and notify the parents of the biter.
5. Separate the victim from the biter.
6. Comfort the child.
7. Administer First Aid.
8. Write an accident report and notify the parents of the victim.



If biting continues:

1. Room staff meets with the director on a routine basis for advice. Support and strategy planning.
2. Chart every occurrence, including attempted bites, and indicate location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances.
3. Let all parents know that there is a problem and the procedures that will be followed to deal with it.
4. “Shadow’ children who indicate a tendency to bite:
  - a. Head off biting situations before they occur.
  - b. Teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior.
  - c. Adapt the program to better fit the individual child’s needs.
5. “Shadow” children who have a tenancy to be bitten:
  - a. Head off biting situations.
  - b. Teach responses to potential biting situations.
6. Work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
7. Hold a conference with the parents of the biting child to develop a written plan of action. Schedule follow-up meetings or telephone conversations as needed.
8. Consider early transition of a child “stuck” in a biting pattern for a change of environment, if developmentally appropriate.

### **Personal Property Policy**

Bethany First Steps is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. This includes toys from home, eyeglasses, hearing aids, backpacks, electronic devices, and any other items that are brought into Bethany First Steps.

## **Celebration of Holidays and Birthdays**

Holidays can be a very exciting time for children.

To help them fully enjoy the special days of the year, we often do related crafts and may have special snacks and activities. We understand that not everyone celebrates the holidays in the same ways, so we will try to observe holidays from different cultures.

For birthday celebrations, parents who wish to bring a special snack on their child's birthday are welcome to do so, although this is in no way expected or required. If you do decide to bring something special, please check with a director or your child's teacher ahead of time to make sure that it meets childcare guidelines or any allergies that may be in your child's class.

Please note that due to severe allergies, we never serve peanuts or peanut products.

## Cubbies/Cubby Supplies

To help children feel secure and to encourage a sense of responsibility, we provide cubbies for our toddlers and pre-school children, which can be shared with another child. The cubby is for your child's personal property: clothing, naptime items, etc.

PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME WITH A PERMANENT MARKER!

For germ and disease control, we will wash all blankets, pillows, and other sleeping items at the center a couple times during the week.

### ***Cubby Supplies:***

#### **\*\*Children in our Infant Room\*\***

Diapers

Wipes

Diaper Cream

Breast Milk or Formula (Please write the child's first and last name, the date expressed, and the date Bethany First Steps receives the milk)

2 complete changes of clothing (including socks)

Paba free sunscreen for children over 6 months (summer)

At least 2 pacifiers if used

Sleep Sack (3 months and under) or Swaddler

Other items that may make your child more comfortable.

Bottles need to be brought daily (Please label)

#### **\*\*Children Toddler Age and Above\*\***

Diapers/ Training pants if needed.

A complete change of clothing (including socks & underwear)

Two or three changes of clothing (If your child is potty training or still in diapers)

Child-Sized Blanket

Fitted Crib Sheet

Travel-Sized Pillow (if desired)

Stuffed animal (if desired for naptime)

Paba Free Sunscreen, swimsuit, towel, and swim diapers if needed in the summer.

### **Extra Clothes/Dressing for the Day**

We want your children to enjoy their day to the fullest. As much as we try with our paint shirts and washable markers, children's clothes do sometimes stain. Please keep this in mind and dress them comfortably for a day of adventure and fun. Please always make sure to have at least two or three extra sets of clothes in your child's cubby, this should include socks, underwear, and shoes.

For water play in the summer, your child will need a swimsuit and water shoes or an extra pair of shoes to wear to play outside in the water. These can be water shoes, flip flops, crocs as an example.

## Diaper and Potty Procedure

Diapers are changed every two hours or as needed. Parents of children in diapers or pull-ups will need to provide diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream (as needed). Teachers will label each of these items with your child's name to ensure that the correct items are being used. Staff members wear gloves while changing diapers. All children will wash their hands after having their diapers changed. Staff members wash their hands and sanitize the diapering area after each diaper change. Cloth diapers are welcome. Parents will need to provide a separate bin with a lid to place used diapers. Each diaper will be put into a sealed bag. Diapers will be placed in the bag "as is."

If your child is still in diapers or using training pants, you will be asked to provide them. When you feel your child is ready for toilet teaching, we ask that you begin the teaching process at home, we will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. We ask that the child must be showing signs of readiness. Parents need to supply training pants or pull-ups, plus a couple of extra changes of clothing each day (do not forget socks and possibly an extra pair of shoes).

During toilet training, we ask that the child be dressed in "user friendly" clothing, as much as possible. If your child is beginning potty training, please help us work with you and encourage independence by dressing your child in elastic waistbands and clothing they manage by themselves. A few seconds can make all the difference.

All staff at Bethany First Steps will be trained on the proper procedures for changing diapers.

1. Diapers need to be checked every two hours if the child is awake.
2. Diapers need to be changed when they are wet or soiled.
3. Make sure all diapering items are gathered before changing child: gloves, diaper, diaper cream if needed, wipes and plastic bag for soiled diaper.
4. Wear gloves.
5. If clothes are soiled or are wet, staff will put the clothing items in a plastic bag, tie shut and place in an area for the parents to take home at pick-up time.
6. If cloth diapers are being used, the diaper needs to be placed in a sealed container and sent home at the end of the day.
7. After diapering is completed, the child and the staff must wash hands with soap and water.
8. Disinfect the diapering area and let air dry before changing the next diaper.
9. All diaper changes will be documented in the Brightwheels App.

Staff will always need to accompany children to the restroom except for our Stingrays class. A teacher will watch them at the doorway until they return to the room.

Staff are not allowed to use the restrooms at the same time a child is using the restroom.

All children and staff will wash hands with soap and water when done before returning to the classrooms.

All toilets, faucets and towel dispensers need to be sprayed with disinfectant spray after your class is done.

If the church is having a function, everyone will need to use the restrooms in the gym.

## Hand Washing

Bethany First Steps strives to maintain an environment that is both safe and healthy for the staff and children.

Frequent hand washing is the best means of preventing the spread of disease.

Staff is asked to wash their hands:

- When entering the classroom
- Before handling food and bottles
- After using the restroom, themselves or helping the children
- After handling or coming in contact with bodily fluids
- After using cleaning products
- After taking the trash
- After handling an ill child

Children will be assisted in hand washing:

- Before and after meals
- When entering the classrooms
- After toileting and diaper changes
- After playing outside
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids

Steps on hand washing:

- 1- Always use warm water and a liquid soap
- 2- Wet hands and apply a small amount of soap to hands.
- 3- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds
- 4- Rinse hands with warm water
- 5- Dry hands with a paper towel

\*The use of hand sanitizer is not an acceptable alternative to hand washing with soap and water. Washing with soap and water must occur whenever it is possible. If hand sanitizer is used as a temporary measure, enough must be used to keep hands wet for 15 seconds. Hand sanitizer will not be used and must be kept out of reach of infants and toddlers or in a locked cabinet since it is alcohol based.



## Cleaning Toys

Toys in the classrooms will need to be cleaned according to the following procedures:

\*If toys have been in a child's mouth, they need to be removed from the area and put in a "Yuck Bucket" until they are cleaned and sanitized with Sanitee.

\*All toys need to be sanitized with Sanitee spray at nap time and at the end of the day.

\*All toys need to be run through the kitchen sanitizer at least twice a month.

\*Any soft toys that can be put in the washing machine need to be washed weekly.

Staff will check toys on a regular basis to check the condition of them. Any toys that are broken need to be thrown away if they are not able to easily be fixed.

Our staff will always to their best to ensure kids are keeping toys out of their mouths and cleaning them if they see this is happening. We will also rotate toys out so we can make sure we are always keeping clean toys out and available for the kids.

## Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Our staff will ensure that their rooms have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized daily to help prevent the spread of germs.

### ***Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures***

Our staff will always make sure to:

1. Wear gloves.
2. Wash tables, highchairs, and chairs after each use with soap and water, wipe down and then spray with the Sanitee Spray, let air dry.
3. Spray down all toys used by the kids during nap time and at the end of the day with Sanitee Spray. Spray and let air dry.
4. Use Sanitee Spray on all faucets, soap dispensers, towel dispensers, door handles.
5. After nap, remove sheets and spray down all cots with Sanitee Spray, let air dry.
6. Use disinfectant spray after each diaper change and on toilets after each use.
7. Use disinfectant spray on all toys in the gym after each use and let air dry.
8. After cleaning up any bodily fluid, the area needs to then be sprayed with disinfectant spray. If needed, please notify a director so the carpet can be cleaned with the shampooer.
9. Use Sanitee spray on all counter tops at nap time and at the end of the day.
10. All floors will be mopped on Monday and Thursday evenings and more if needed.
11. All nap and bedding items will be washed at least twice a week, this includes crib sheets, sleeps sacks and swaddles.
12. All floors will be swept after every meal.
13. As time allows, staff take toys down to the kitchen and run them through dish sanitizer. They will try and do this at least twice a month.

The items listed below will be sanitized with appropriate bleach/water solution which consist of 1 tsp bleach to 1 gallon of water or ¼ tsp bleach to 1 quart of water (or other approved sanitizer, Sanitee), and let air dry:

The items listed below will be cleaned with sanitizer spray:

- Crib rails
- Pacifiers
- Teething rings
- Counter tops
- Highchairs
- Tables
- Infant bouncers and jumpers

The items listed below will be cleaned with a disinfectant daily at the end of each day, this consists of ¼ cup bleach to 1-gallon water or 1 Tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of water (or other approved disinfectant):

The items listed below will be cleaned with the disinfectant spray:

- Hand washing sinks
- Soap dispensers
- Nap cots
- Toilets
- Doorknobs
- Diaper changing areas.

### **Illness Policy/Exclusion of a Sick Child**

To maintain the health of all children at Bethany First Steps, we ask that parents NOT bring children who exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- A temperature of 99.9 or higher is considered a fever. We will always check a couple times and with a couple different thermometers to ensure your child does indeed have a fever if it is hovering around the 99.9 mark. Your child may not return until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication.
- Any contagious condition (chicken pox, Roseola, mumps, measles, influenza A or B, conjunctivitis, just to name a few)
- Unusual rashes (Must be checked by a doctor and can return with a note from the doctor if they are NOT contagious)
- Confirmed Strep (children can return 24 hours from start of antibiotic), Hand Foot and Mouth (Fever free 24 hours and NO OPEN BLISTERS) Ear and sinus infection (fever free 24 hours),
- Excessive unexplained drowsiness
- Vomiting (Your child may not return until they are symptom free for 24 hours. This means your child has gone 24 hours or more without vomiting)
- Discharge from eyes or ears. If diagnosed with Pink Eye, your child must be on drops for 24 hours before returning.
- Diarrhea (if your child has more than 3 loose diapers in a 2 hour time frame, an exception to this would be if your child were on an antibiotic and then we will need a doctor's note explaining this is the reason) (They may not return until they are symptom free for 24 hours, this means they have not had a loose stool for 24 hours or more)
- Flu like symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, fever, body aches)
- Head lice (must be treated and have no live louse present before returning)
- If your child exhibits any of these symptoms while in our care, we will notify you and expect you to plan pick up arrangements for your child within an hour. If this is not possible, we will contact your emergency numbers.
- Again, if your child has any of the above symptoms and is sent home from Bethany First Steps, they will need to be symptom free without medication for 24 hours before returning to the center.

The late policy will also be put in place when you are called to pick up an ill child. If you are not here within an hour, a late fee will be put in place. Exceptions will be made if you have made arrangements for pick up and have notified the director.

## Covid-19

We must be hyper aware of parents sending children to school with illness symptoms. If a child has a temp of 99.9 degrees or higher, the child will not be able to attend school for that day and must be symptom free for 24 hours without medication before returning.

If a child is ill with any of the following symptoms parents are asked to please keep the child at home until they are no longer contagious or have a doctor's note stating that they are no longer contagious.

If a child has two of these symptoms, they may not return to school until they are symptom-free for 24 hours or cleared by a doctor to return.

Sore Throat

Muscle Pain (Aches and pains of the body)

Persistent runny nose

Diarrhea or loose stools

If a child has one of these symptoms, they may not return to school until they are symptom-free for 24 hours or cleared by a doctor to return.

Fever 99.9 or above

Vomiting

Persistent cough

Shortness of breath or trouble breathing.

Loss of smell and/or taste

\*This will be updated as information from the Health Department is given

## Communicable Diseases

If a staff member or child were to contract a communicable disease you would need to notify the center immediately so that we can alert the other families and staff in the center. We would distribute detailed description detailing the disease, symptoms, and infected classroom, but we will protect everyone's privacy according to state regulations.

We are required to report certain diseases to our local health dept. Take note that communicable diseases can be spread through direct contact with body excretion or discharge or open sores. Indirect contact can occur through inanimate objects such as drinking glasses, toys, blankets, etc.

The list below lists some of the possible diseases your child could come in contact with along with the exclusion period:

Chicken Pox- 6 days after rash appears or all sores are dried and crusted over.

Pink Eye- 24 hours after treatment has begun.

Measles or rubella-6 days after onset of rash

Hand Foot & Mouth-after sores on hands and mouth have healed, usually 3-5 days.

Hepatitis A-Once treatment has begun.

Impetigo-24 hours after treatment have begun.

Mumps-9 days after onset of swelling

Ringworm or scabies-24 hours after first treatment

Strep-24 hours after antibiotics have begun.

Thrush-24 hours after first dose of medication

Tuberculosis-After health Dept verifies that child is no longer contagious.

Pertusis-5 days after treatment begins.

## Universal Precautions

All our employees are required to use Universal Precautions when handling blood and other potentially infectious materials.

Other infectious materials include any bodily fluids that contain blood.

Universal Precautions Procedures involve the use of gloves and a CPR guard when available. If our staff is preparing to come in contact with blood or other potentially infected materials which could include, but not limited to cleaning up blood or other unknown bodily substances, cleaning broken glass or other sharp objects, giving first aid to someone, changing a diaper or assisting in toileting or, when using a needle to administer medication or test blood sugar.

The following preventive measurements will be used to reduce the spread of all infectious and contagious diseases.

1. Wash hands regularly. Make sure to use antibacterial soap and scrub for at least 1 minute. Scrub the tops of your hands, palms, and in between fingers. Rinse your hands under warm water. Dry off with a paper towel. Turn off faucet with a paper towel and then dispose it in trash can.
2. Wear disposable gloves while cleaning up blood, bloody saliva, urine, feces, or vomit. If skin comes in contact with these substances, wash your hands immediately with soap and then notify your director.
3. Follow diaper changing procedures every time a diaper is changed.
4. Change gloves after contact with each individual child and wash hands in between.
5. Place soiled articles in a bag and tie the bag shut.
6. Disinfect the area where bodily fluids came in contact.

Bethany First Steps provides the following PPE: gloves that are stored in all classrooms, bathrooms, office, and hallway. Staff must bring the First Aid bag with them whenever they leave the classroom, which should include a couple pairs of gloves. Any items that are used to clean up the blood, must be bagged and tied shut and immediately placed in the dumpster located in the back of the church. Once all items are properly disposed, all parties need to wash their hands with soap and water and disinfect the area with proper sanitizer and disinfectant spray.

Bethany First Steps is not responsible for any personal items that may get contaminated when coming in contact with blood or other bodily fluids. We do suggest keeping extra clothes with you or in your car in case you were to get bodily fluids on your clothes.

## **Medications**

Bethany First Steps will not administer any forms of medication that is not considered a rescue medication. If a child needs medication, a parent, or other approved adult will be required to come to the center to personally administer medication.

Topically applied medications, such as diaper rash ointment, sunscreen, lotion, lip balm and insect repellent can be administered at the parent's request and with a Medication Authorization Form. We do require each child (12 months and older) to have sunscreen during the summer months (May – October). Parents supply such items as needed.

All containers need to be clearly labeled with the child's first and last names.



### **Epi-Pen other Rescue Meds**

We will make sure that if a child has an allergy that it is clearly posted in the classroom along with the action plan. All action plans should be kept in your locked med box.

If a child has an allergy that may require the use of an Epi-pen, Bethany First Steps will require the child's own Epi-pen to be kept on site in the child's classroom lock box, which will be provided by the parent or guardian. We must have a note from the doctor with a rescue action plan and a Rescue Medication Form will need to be filled out.

It will be the parent's responsibility to make sure to provide a new Epi-Pen when the current one is expired. If the child would require the use of an Epi-pen while in attendance, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Epi-pen would be injected by a staff member.
2. 911 would be called after the Epi-pen is injected.
3. The parent or guardian would then be contacted and given further information.

Benadryl may also be kept on site as a rescue med. We will require a note from the doctor with an action plan.

Action plans for both an Epi-Pen and Benadryl will need to state the following:

The child's allergy, the type of reaction to look for and the steps that need to be taken was the child is showing signs of an allergic reaction.

## Allergies

If your child has a food or environmental allergy, Bethany First Steps will work with the family to develop an individualized action plan specific to your child and the severity of the allergy.

This will be done at the time of enrollment or at the onset of a new allergy. Bethany First Steps will need a note from the doctor stating the allergies the child has as well as an action plan for the individual child. If the child has a food allergy, we will need a list of foods the child may not. The parents will need to make sure to either provide an alternative meal for the child or Bethany First Steps will only offer the child the foods we know the child can eat.

**BETHANY FIRST STEPS IS A PEANUT AND NUT SAFE CENTER!**

## Medical Emergencies

### **In case of minor injury:**

1. First Aid will be given by a trained staff member (washed off with soap and water),
2. The staff will give lots of TLC,
3. An accident form will be filled out and given to parents at pick up time.

### **Moderate Injury:**

1. First aid will be given by a trained staff member.
2. A parent may be called and given details of injury for them to decide the best plan of action to be taken.
3. An accident form will be filled out and given to parents at time of pick up.

### **Head Injury:**

1. A parent will be notified immediately to inform you of the injury, and you can choose to pick up your child to supervise the injury. If there is a great deal of blood or child is inconsolable, we will ask that you come pick up your child.
2. An accident form will be filled out and given to the parents at time of pick up.

### **Major injury:**

1. Determine the extent of the injury and administer first aid.
2. If the injury needs medical attention and is not life-threatening, we will contact a parent immediately to inform and receive instructions.
3. If the injury is life-threatening, we will:
  - \*Call 911 and administer first aid until EMS arrives.
  - \*Call parents
  - \*Go with child in the ambulance to your specified hospital and bring the child files with to hospital.

In the event of a medical emergency when 911 must be called, the staff will notify the director of the situation and parents will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so.

Bethany First Steps is not financially responsible for any medical bills related to the ambulance transportation if needed.

If a child must seek medical care for an injury that took place at the center, we ask that you notify us, in certain cases, we have to notify our State Rep of the situation and injury.

### **Accident/Incident Forms**

Incident and accident forms will be filled out by the teacher when a child either gets hurt or has injured another child.

Parents will be asked to sign the form at pick up time and we will file these away for the duration of the child being at the center. If you would like a copy of this, please let the teacher know and they can provide a copy for you.

## Child Abuse/Neglect

Children who attend our program are cared for, nurtured, and always kept safe. Child abuse is a very serious allegation, policies are intended to protect both the children in our care as well as colleagues at the center.

It is the center's goal to employ childcare professionals who are committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior. To ensure the health and safety of young children in care, a policy of "Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse" is strictly enforced.

Children at the center should expect to be treated with kindness, concern, and respect always. An employee who exhibits unprofessional behavior that could be construed as abusive in any way may be dismissed from work without accrued benefits or assistance in legal representation. Any evidence of physical or sexual abuse or misconduct will be grounds for immediate dismissal.

Any person who has information about behavior that may reasonably be characterized as known or suspected abuse or neglect shall make a report to the director and to appropriate authorities, as required by law. Allegations of abuse shall be reported to parents and investigated.

Any employee accused of abuse or neglect shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Until the issue is resolved, an employee suspected of abuse or neglect may be reassigned, suspended, or placed on administrative leave, either with or without pay, at the discretion of the director.

On the other hand, if any staff member suspects a child may be the victim of child abuse or neglect either by another staff member or outside the center, we as childcare providers are obligated to report this to proper authorities. We ask that they first come to a director either in person, by phone or email as soon as you have any suspicion what-so-ever. We will then, together, decide what would be the best direction to take the issue and possibly contact the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 1-800-652-1999 for a further investigation.

Bethany First Steps staff and management do not take any situation in a light manner, so we need to make sure that we have all the possible facts laid out and discussed before taking further action. Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- \* Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the body
- \* Severe verbal reprimands
- \* Improper clothing cleanliness
- \* Transporting a child without proper restraints.
- \* Dropping off or picking up a child under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- \* Children who exhibit behaviors consistent with an abusive situation.

Any individual that is a registered sex offender will not be allowed in the center regardless of if they are a parent or family member, other arrangements will need to be made.

## Disaster Preparedness

Bethany First Steps is open year-round, except for the listed holidays. In the event of inclement weather such as ice, snow, other storms, power failure, etc., we will evaluate each situation on its individual merit before deciding to alter our normal business hours. In the event of a closing or late start, an email will be sent as well as messages will be sent through the Brightwheels App.

In the event of an early closing, you will receive an email, and a message through Brightwheel from the center. We will make every effort to remain open; however, if we find it necessary to close, we will not credit or discount tuition fees.

*\*Bethany First Steps does not follow the same schedule as Bethany Preschool/KDO in the event of closing.*

Teachers will take children to the St. Patrick's Catholic School front door loop. A sign on the door will notify you of your child(ren)'s location. Parents will be notified by phone/email of their child's location. Children will **only** be released to custodial parents.

St. Patrick's Catholic Schools address is: 20500 W. Maple Road Elkhorn, NE

## **Fire/Tornado Drills**

We are required by state law to do one fire drill per month and four tornado drills between the months of March and September. We vary the time of day to help the staff and children prepare to evacuate the building quickly and safely. We will not do fire drills when the temperature is below twenty degrees or above eighty-five degrees. Evacuation cribs with wheels are used to transport infants and non-walking toddlers to the emergency meeting area.

### **Fire:**

- When the alarm sounds, gather all children, children in the infant and toddler room will be put in a crib with wheels and children that are in the twos room and older will line up at the door.
- Teachers will need to grab the first aid bags, cell phones and iPad. If they have another emergency bag, this will need to be grabbed as well.
- Teachers will need to do a quick name to face head count to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Teachers will exit the building, go out the door and cross to the grassy area. If we are having a true fire and cannot return to the building, an email will be sent to all parents along with a message through the Brightwheels App and we will take children to the St. Patrick's Catholic School front door loop. A sign will also be on the door to notify you of your child(ren)'s location. Children will **only** be released to custodial parents. St. Patrick's Catholic Schools address is: 20500 W. Maple Road Elkhorn, NE
- A director will do a room and bathroom check to make sure that no one was left in the building. Once the building is cleared the director will notify the staff it is safe to return to the rooms.



### **Tornado:**

- When a tornado warning is announced, gather all children, children in the infant and toddler room will be put in a crib with wheels and children that are in the twos room and older will line up at the door.
- Teachers will need to grab the first aid bags, cell phones, flashlight, and iPad. If they have another emergency bag, this will need to be grabbed as well.
- Teachers will need to do a quick name to face head count to ensure all children are accounted for.
- Teachers will move children away from the windows and get to the basement door, the gym bathrooms or room 302. All walking children will go down the stairs first and sit down, the children in the cribs will be moved one by one down to the basement with the help of all available staff members. In the event of an actual tornado, everyone will remain in the safe rooms until cleared by a director. Parents will be notified if the building is unsafe and children need to be picked up at St. Patrick's Catholic Schools address is: 20500 W. Maple Road Elkhorn, NE
- When given all clear, staff will bring the children back to classrooms and do a name to face head count to ensure all the children are accounted for.

## **Missing Child**

If a child is found to be missing, staff will report the missing child to a director immediately and all available staff members will assist in searching for the child.

### **Procedure:**

- A. If a child is thought to be missing
  - 1) Stop all activities.
  - 2) Separate children by class
  - 3) Check roster or attendance on Brightwheels App and put a face to name with everyone on list.
  - 4) If the child is found with another group, have child rejoin the class.
    - a) Report to a director.
    - b) Each staff involved will need to write a statement on how the incident occurred and an incident will be filled out and signed by the parent.
  - 5) If the child is not found with another class
    - a) Notify the director immediately.
    - b) Director or other designated staff member will alert other teachers that a child is missing, and they will do a face to name check.
    - c) Any extra staff will coordinate with other to begin a search for the child.
    - d) If the child is not found within 10 minutes, the parents will be notified.
  - 6) Once the child has been found
    - a) A director will let all staff know that the child has been found.
    - b) A director will talk with the child to make sure they are okay and unharmed.
    - c) A director will notify the child's parents.
    - d) Staff involved will need to write a statement on how the incident occurred and an incident report will be filled out and signed by the parent.
    - e) Licensing will be notified to report the incident.

### **Gas Leak**

In the event of a gas leak in the building, the kids will be evacuated from the building in the same manner as a fire drill. In extreme weather conditions we will take the kids to St. Patrick's Church located at St. Patrick's Catholic Schools address is: 20500 W. Maple Road Elkhorn, NE. until parents can get the children if necessary. If it is nice out, we will wait outside until parents are able to pick up their child if necessary. MUD will be notified. In the case of a true gas leak, all children will be picked up and we will be closed for the remainder of the workday. If given all clear from MUD, we will resume normal work hours the following business day.

### **Active Shooter**

In the event of an active shooter in the area, this means a 5-mile radius of the church, we will lock all outside doors, all classroom doors and close all blinds until we are notified that the area is cleared, and we are no longer in harm's way.

In the case of an active shooter in the building, we will notify each teacher that there is an active shooter in the building. All classroom doors, gym doors and office doors will be locked. Each classroom has a key to the room inside one of the cabinets. All lights will be turned off, all blinds will be closed, and staff will help move the kids to an area away from any door and windows until the area is cleared by local law enforcement.

Parents will be notified as soon as it is possible and asked to pick up their kids as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **No Electricity or Water**

In the event of having no electricity in the building, we will not be able to properly care for the children. If this happens before works hours, the director and contact Chad Witt immediately. Parents and staff will then be emailed, and a text message will come through on the Brightwheels App. If power and water can be restored in a timely manner, we plan on doing a late start of 9:00. If power is still not restored by 8:30-8:45 parents will be notified once again and we will plan on a closure for the day if they do not believe the power or water will be restored by 10:00 a.m.

If we lose power during operating hours, we will contact the power company to get an estimate on when power will be restored. If it is longer than a 2-hour period or we are unable to provide meals for the kids, we will ask parents to come pick up their children and we will resume normal business hours the following day.

If we have no water during operating hours, we will contact the water company to get an estimate on when water will be restored. If it is longer than a 2-hour period or we would be unable to provide meals, use the restrooms, wash hands, or make bottles for the kids, we will ask parents to come pick up their children and we will resume normal business hours the following day.

### **Flooding in the Building**

If we have standing water in the building and the water needs to be turned off, we will not be able to provide meals, use the restrooms, wash hands, or make bottles for the kids. We either not be able to open or we will ask parents to come pick up their children and we will resume normal business hours the following day or once the water is back on.

### **Blizzard or Icy Conditions**

If we decide to close, start late, or close early you will receive an email from us, and a notification through the Brightwheels App. We will make these decisions by 10:30 at night or before 5:30 a.m. if the weather were to get bad overnight.

For late start, we will open by 9:30/10:00 to give our staff plenty of time to get to work safely.

If we decide to close early, we will give everyone at least 2 hours' notice, if not more based on predicted weather for the afternoon or early evening.

If we lose power due to an ice storm, we will not be able to open or will need to close early. We will send everyone an email and a notification through the Brightwheels App.

### **Pandemic**

In the event of a pandemic, we will follow all CDC recommendations and make frequent contact with parents and staff as things are updated.

Bethany First Steps will always do our best to keep the health and safety of the staff and kids our main priority.

### Summer Extended Leave Policy

We will offer a discounted rate for the months of June and July only. This will be 50% off your normal tuition rate starting the first full week of June and running through the last full week in July. You can either do, the entire month of June only, the entire month of July only, or both June and July.

During this extended leave, your child/ren **MAY NOT** attend Bethany First Steps. If you need to have your child to attend during this time, you will be asked to pay the normal tuition rate for that week and you will need to call ahead of time to ensure that we can accommodate this with our current staff.

The extended leave will not be offered for any other circumstances at this time.

### School-Age (Summer Care)

Bethany First Steps will offer a Summer Care program for school age children that are entering kindergarten through the completion of 4<sup>th</sup> grade during the summertime only. This will start after Memorial Day and run through the first week of August. We WILL NOT be able to extend these dates, due to staffing.

When enrolling your child, we will need a non-refundable, \$75 registration fee per child, completion of all paperwork, and sunscreen for all children attending. Weekly tuition is \$205 a week for 5 day care and \$180 a week for 3 days only. We will NOT be offering a sibling discount for those enrolled that have a sibling attending.

Each child will also need to bring a change of clothes, swimsuit, towel, sunscreen, and shoes that can get wet for water days. We ask that they DO NOT bring any type of electronics to the center as we will not be held responsible for any lost or broken items.

The teachers that will be running the program in the summer will have activities planned for the kids every day, they will follow a schedule, they will go on walks, may visit the nursing home in the neighborhood and have trips to the park in the neighborhood, these will all be places they can walk to, we WILL NOT be transporting the kids anywhere.

We will not offer care when the church has Vacation Bible School. These dates will vary each year. Tuition will be prorated for this time.

All the other policies and procedures that are listed in the handbook will be followed for the school-age program.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of our Families**

### **Rights:**

1. To know all aspects of the program
2. To know all about your child's experiences in the program
3. To feel welcome to visit or observe.
4. To feel free to ask questions.
5. An assurance that your beliefs, concerns, and values are sought out and respected.
6. An assurance of complete confidentiality on all matters involving the welfare of your child and family.

### **Obligations:**

1. To read handbook and parent agreements and follow all policies.
2. To read all notices that are sent home with your child.
3. To keep all important information current- addresses, medical exams, etc. and to respond to requests for information from staff.
4. To respect staff as professionals who work with you to provide quality childcare.

### **Bethany First Steps Aims to:**

- Promote all aspects of development-social, emotional, perceptual, motor, language, and intellectual-in a loving, nurturing environment.
- Allow each child to develop his or her unique individual talents.
- Develop a foundation that promotes success in later schooling.
- Be free of discrimination or prejudice.
- Be a wonderful place for being a child.

*Working together we can accomplish this goal!*

POLICIES LISTED IN THIS HANDBOOK MAY BE UPDATED WITH A TWO-WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE. IF POLICIES WILL BE CHANGING, PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN AN UPDATED HANDBOOK AND A NEW "PARENT/CENTER AGREEMENT" TO SIGN.



**Agreement Form**

I/We have read The Bethany First Steps Parent Handbook.

I/We the parents/guardians understand the policies and procedures of this handbook.

I/We commit to uphold these policies and procedures.

**Parent Name (Please Print)**

**Parent Name (Please Print)**

**Signature**

**Signature**

\*Updated December 2023

