



Parent Handbook

4200 N. 204th St. Elkhorn, NE 68022

Director: Shandra Landrum

Shandra.landrum@bethanyfirststeps.org

402-289-3284

Updated June 2024



Dear Bethany Preschool Parents,

Young children are filled with curiosity, enthusiasm and an inexhaustible desire to know more about the world around them. Our school days never seem long enough to fill the needs of helping children grow in the areas of cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

Our early childhood educated, and trained teachers are dedicated to making the very best use of the time your children are in their care.

As a Christian Preschool, we are fortunate to include a Christ-centered spiritual emphasis along with the other aspects of growth and development. It is a privilege to be able to share the beautiful Bible stories and the Christian message with these impressionable young children.

We support our families in their experience of raising children in this modern world. We realize that families make huge efforts to bring their children to school. We encourage and support these families.

The teachers, our staff and I look forward to sharing a time of learning and growing in a safe, nurturing environment at Bethany Christian Preschool.

God Bless,

Shandra Landrum

Director, Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out



Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out

Philosophy Statement

- We believe children are loved and treasured by God. It is our goal to help them grow closer in their relationship with Christ.
- We believe children learn best in an environment that is child-led and structured at each child's current level of learning. Our teachers reach each child where they are ready for learning.
- We believe children learn best when provided with a variety of different learning environments that include play, educational small and large groups led by teachers, imagination, music, nature and outdoors.
- We believe teachers play an important role in early childhood. Our teachers provide a loving, God centered, child focused, and rich educational environment for all children.
- We believe all children can learn and each child is unique in their path towards learning. We are dedicated to meeting each child where they are and helping them grow at their speed.
- We believe in positive reinforcement and providing guidance to each child who may be struggling. We will offer them time to understand and think about right and wrong choices.
- We believe in providing children with a variety of social situations to help them become self-aware, gain awareness of others and be able to communicate their wants and needs in a positive way.
- We believe communication with families is key to a great relationship between home and school. We will do all that we can to foster a positive and fulfilling relationship with each family at our school.
- We believe that early childhood education is a monumental milestone in creating a life-long love of learning.
- We believe in offering research-based curriculum that offers many different aspects of learning. These aspects include language & literacy, approaches to learning, health & physical development, social and emotional development, math & science, arts and spirituality.



Administration

Bethany Christian Preschool is an agency of education established and governed by Bethany First Steps. By authority from the Council and Preschool/KDO Ministry Team all policies and administration of the school are directed by these two organizations. Bethany Christian Preschool does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, or any other school-administered program. Registrations for each school year start at the beginning of January, but children may be enrolled in available classes at any time as space permits. Our school year is from late August to May. Office hours are generally 8:00am - 3:00pm Monday through Friday. We are always happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We are also available to schedule a tour of our school for you and your child.

Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out Staff 2024-2025

Our preschool teachers are either degreed or trained in early childhood education. The more experienced teachers serve as mentors to the less experienced teachers. Working as a team brings out the best qualities in all involved. All teachers are certified in CPR, First Aid, and use of the Epipen and Defibrillator. Teachers and aides attend educational seminars and instruction throughout the school year as required by the State of Nebraska.

Name	Hire Year	Position
Shandra Landrum	2014	Director
Lynette Montes	2006	Assistant Director, Aide
Brooke Nigh	2021	Finance
Lynn Fast	2011	Aide, KDO
Alissa Fisher	2015	3-4 Teacher
Katy Wilson	2019	3-4 Teacher
Christy Jensen	2022	4-5 Teacher
Dani Stanek	2018	4-5 Teacher

Leslie McCaslin	2022	4-5 Teacher
Sandi Moore	2017	4-5 Teacher
Joanna Murnan	2017	High 5's
Kelly Klever	2023	Pink Room KDO
Nichole Montgomery	2022	Pink Room KDO
Pam McCarville	2012	Pink Room KDO
Randy Placek	2023	Rainbow Room KDO
Hallie Paulson	2023	Financial Coordinator

Program Information

Our programs focus on social development and learning through play. Our main goal is to educate the whole child: spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Each year's class builds on the previous year's program in curriculum experiences and activities offered. The classrooms are set up to invite exploration and foster a life-long love of learning. Our staff is committed to young children and the importance of early childhood education.

Curriculum

Bethany preschool classes and KDO classes are theme-based and adhere to accreditation guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Nebraska Department of Education standards. The teachers give thoughtful consideration each year based on students' needs and level changes.

Get Set for School: Our 4-5 and High 5 classes are using the curriculum Get Set for School. This curriculum is a flexible, play-based and offers a full pre-writing program and materials that build critical skills like early math and literacy. It includes three programs designed to prepare children for school: Readiness & Writing, Language & Literacy and Numbers & Math. Our teachers have been trained on the Get Set for School curriculum. For more information about this curriculum please visit their website at: <https://www.lwtears.com/gss>

Kids Day Out and Preschool

Kids Day Out (KDO): The focus of this class is on social development and learning through play. Separating from parents, learning to take direction and being nurtured by people outside of the immediate family are important parts of early childhood. The building of trust and growing peer awareness are enhanced by a safe environment that provides a foundation for learning. There are two options for KDO. One is for children ages 18 months-3 years of age who are not fully potty trained. The other option is for children ages 3-6 who are potty trained and seeking an additional option.

Ratio: 1 teacher:6 children

MTWThF: 9-11:30am, Extended Day Options on Tuesday & Friday until 2:30pm

3-4's: The focus of this class is to continue to encourage further socialization and reinforcing how a child's choices affect their relationships and environment. This class fosters independence, creativity, cognitive growth and motor coordination. Children are introduced to letters, phonemic awareness, numbers, patterns, and curriculum.

Ratio: 1 teacher: 9 children

MWF, TTH AM: 8:45-11:30am

MWF PM: 12:15-2:45pm

4-5's: The intent of this class is to further support the development of social awareness, emotional intelligence, and kindergarten readiness skills. Children develop their gross and fine motor skills by working in small and large groups. The Get Set for School curriculum offered is flexible, play-based and offers a full pre-writing program and materials that build critical skills like early math and literacy. It includes three programs designed to prepare children for school: Readiness & Writing, Language & Literacy and Numbers & Math.

Ratio: 1 teacher: 10 children

MTWF, MWF AM: 8:45-11:30am

MTWF, MWF PM: 12:15-2:45pm

High 5's: This class is designed for children who have turned 5 by October 15. The intent of this class is to foster an additional kindergarten readiness year. These children will build upon the Get Set for School Curriculum offered in their previous year. This class encourages growth in reading readiness, math & science skills, as well as exploring literacy in different capacities.

Ratio: 1 teacher: 12 children

M-F AM: 8:45-11:30am

Extended Care Options

Rise ‘N’ Shine: Children enrolled in our preschool programs are welcome to begin their day earlier than their class begins at 8:15am. You can register your child in one or more mornings a week. The fee for each morning is \$5. Prior registration is required, and payment will be billed on the parents’ monthly statement. Limit is 10 children per morning.

Kids Day Out Extended Day: Children ages 3-6 years old can extend their day in the morning or afternoon on Tuesdays, or Fridays. Children are required to bring a **nut free lunch** for this program. This program is designed for additional play and social opportunities. These children enjoy an informal, creative play environment.

AM: 9:00-11:30am

PM: 11:30am-2:30pm

Full Day: 9:00am-2:30pm

Lunch Bunch: Children enrolled in preschool have the option to stay for lunch. This is an opportunity for children to share mealtime with their friends under the kind guidance and support of teachers. The lunch period is from 11:30am-1:00pm or 11:30am-12:15pm for afternoon students. This program is designed to give your child an opportunity to build on their social learning, develop self-help skills, and build relationships. Lunch Bunch is offered most Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year. The cost for lunch bunch is \$10.00 per day. You will be billed on your invoice for your lunch bunch dates. **Prior registration is requested. Limit 20 children per day.**

- Lunch Bunch fees are added to your account invoice monthly.

Registration, Admission and Tuition Policy

Children enrolling in Bethany Christian Preschool must be three or four years of age before July 31st (3's) or July 31st (4's) of the current school year to be eligible for enrollment in that age class.

All Children attending preschool 3-4's, 4-5's and High 5's must be toilet trained.

The following items are required for admission into the preschool program at Bethany:

1. REGISTRATION FORM AND \$75.00 registration fee per student or \$100 per family. This fee is non-refundable, and no portion is refunded at the end of the school year.
2. STATE OF NEBRASKA HEALTH RECORD, which includes current shot record for each child.
3. READ THIS HANDBOOK, sign and return the handbook confirmation sheet.

Preschool/KDO Tuition

Payment of tuition – is due on the 1st of each month. You will receive an invoice prior to the beginning of each month via email. Please make sure we have a valid email on hand starting at the beginning of the school year. There will be a \$25.00 late fee per child on all monthly payments received after the 5th of the month. This will be enforced. If you find you must withdraw your child from Preschool or KDO, you are responsible for tuition the following month of withdrawal. No credit is given in case of absences. If you have any problems or concerns regarding tuition, please speak to the director or Hallie Paulson, Financial Coordinator, immediately (402 -289-3224). We are happy to work with you whenever possible. If you fall behind in tuition, arrangements will have to be made for your child to continue to attend. Please speak to Brooke or Shandra on this matter. If we have not received tuition payments for more than two months your child will automatically be withdrawn from the program.

Tuition is based on the number of sessions per year divided equally by nine months. Based on these numbers, our costs are very reasonable and the ratio of teacher to child is low.

Tuition Rates

High 5's M-F: \$240.00 per month

4-5's MWF AM: \$190.00 per month

4-5's MTWF AM: \$200.00 per month

4-5's MWF PM: \$190.00 per month

4-5's MTWF PM: \$200.00 per month

3-4's MWF AM: \$180.00 per month

3-4's TTH AM: \$160.00 per month

3-4's MWF PM: \$180.00 per month

Tuition for Kid's Day Out is \$100.00 per month for half day and \$140.00 per month for a full day per class.

*If you wish to make your entire payment for the school year you will receive a 3% discount PAYABLE IN SEPTEMBER ONLY.

Prorating – We do not prorate for breaks during the school year or during the last month of school. Full tuition is required during those months of school. Tuition is equally disturbed based on the number of sessions your child is in school. Since a place is being held for your child and Bethany's Preschool is a tuition-based program, there are NO deductions or refunds for absenteeism due to illness or vacations.

Tuition Express: We offer the option of automatic withdrawal through Tuition Express. Checks can be written to Bethany Christian Preschool. The first payment will be deducted in late August or early September. The last payment will be deducted in May.

Extra Fees

Supply Fees: To cover the cost of supplies for the school year, we ask that each parent pays a supply for the year. **Preschool supply fee is \$25 for the school year and Kids Day Out is \$25 for the school year.** If your child is in multiple days of KDO, you will be charged one fee for each day they are enrolled. This fee is charged one time on your first invoice. The supply fee is used to provide for the various paper products, hand sanitizer, wipes, cups, etc. that we use throughout the school year.

Stretch-N-Grow: 4-5 and High 5 classes will take part in a program called Stretch-N-Grow. This is a program that comes into our school and teaches children about the importance of nutrition and staying active. This program runs on Mondays a couple of times each month. A staff member from Stretch-N-Grow comes in to teach the children. **The cost of this program is \$60 per school year. You will be charged \$30 on your first bill and then again on January 1st for the cost of this program.** For more information about Stretch-N-Grow, you can check out their website at <http://sng-ne.com/>

Arrivals and Departures

Classes begin at 8:45/9:00am or 12:15pm. Please do not bring your child more than five minutes prior to class time and pick them up promptly when class is over. The time before and after class is an important time for teachers, as they plan and prepare for the very best preschool experience for your child. Please plan to bring your child on time each day.

We are asking for caution when dropping off and picking up children. The parking lot is the only place to park your car when dropping off children. **The drive at the front of the church should be used only as a drive and not a parking lane.** For the safety of all children, please always keep your child at your side when arriving and leaving the building.

Parents will park their car and bring their child into their classroom or take them to their assigned door. Your child will have a designated coat hook and cubby for storing backpacks. Please avoid lost items by labeling items such as coats, jackets, backpacks and lunch boxes.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS A CHILD TO BE ALLOWED TO FIND HIS/HER OWN WAY TO OR FROM THE CLASSROOM. We become responsible for your child after he/she has been delivered to his/her teacher.

We will not allow a child to leave with an unauthorized person.

Dismissal Policy

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents, or someone else the parents designate on the Authorized Pick up and Emergency Contact Form. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day, if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we MUST have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, that if we do not know them then we will need to ask for identification. This is not meant to offend them. This is simply a measure taken for the child's protection.

Communication

One important means of communication is our monthly newsletter. It is sent home with the children on or before the first class of each month. This document will also be emailed. Please make sure we have a valid email that will be checked on a regular basis. Please read this document carefully for field trips, special events and snack schedules.

While school is in session you may reach the preschool at 402-289-3284 or email shandra.landrum@bethanyfirststeps.org.

Brightwheel App – we ask that one parent utilize this app to communicate with teachers and staff. It is one of the easiest ways for you to reach out to them. At the start of the school year, you will receive an email containing a link to connect with your child and our school.

Social Media – another means of communicating is via our Facebook group. Please request to be added to this private group. We use this site for reminders and teachers will be posting pictures throughout the year of the wonderful things our students are doing at school. Our Facebook page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bethanychristianpreschool/>

Conferences - Conferences are held for preschool aged children only. In November, a progress report will be sent home with your child. This is an early indication of how your child is adjusting to preschool. Parents and teachers will meet in the beginning of February 2024 for a face-to-face conference to discuss your child's progress. We always wish to keep the lines of communication open. Informal or formal visits that pertain to the growth and development of each child are always encouraged. **Parents are welcome to arrange times to discuss their child's progress at any time throughout the year. If you have any concerns, please contact the office at any time.**

Health, Safety and Attendance

Health Policy

Good daily school attendance is a very important habit to establish with your child during their early years. Dropping children off and picking them up promptly also sends your child a message of responsibility. If you are planning an extended absence for your child due to a family vacation, etc., please notify the preschool. This will help in our planning. If your child is overly tired or not feeling well with fever, undiagnosed rash, cough or runny nose, it is better for him/her to be kept at home. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will call the parents or the emergency number on the child's health form. If your child contracts a contagious disease, please notify the preschool so that other parents can be prepared. Proper care in the early stages of an illness can reduce recovery time for the ill child and reduce the possibility of spreading the illness to others. The following are guidelines to assist you in deciding when your child should stay home from school:

- Irritability, poor appetite, tiredness, and achiness are vague symptoms. Changes in a child's normal behavior can often signal the beginning of an illness.

- Fever of 99.9 degrees or higher. A child should be fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT the use of medication before returning to school.
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. Keep your child at home for the duration of these symptoms.
- Suspected communicable conditions such as undiagnosed rashes, pink eye, ringworm, chickenpox. A child must be sent home until identified symptoms are evaluated and conditions for return to school are provided by a health care provider.
- Please see the updated illness policy located in your packet. This will need to be signed and returned with your paperwork before school begins.

Child Illness Policy

If your child has 1 of these symptoms they cannot return to school until symptom free for 48 hours.

- • Fever: 99.9 degrees and above
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea or loose stools
 - Infectious disease
- Presence of head lice or nits
- **Our school has always followed CDC guidelines per the direction of The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.**

Medications

If your child requires a certain medication, an EpiPen and/or inhaler, the medication must be brought to school. Medications are labeled and stored in a lock box. You must provide an Action Plan for medications that is written by their doctor. Please drop off your child's medication on the first day of school with Shandra Landrum. There is paperwork that will need to be signed when you drop off and when you pick up your medication. Our staff is trained in the use of medication each year.

Discipline Policy

At Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out, discipline is all about communication. We work together with children to set clear rules that everyone understands, and we talk about these rules regularly. Our staff uses positive methods to encourage good behavior, like guiding children away from problems before they happen, praising them for doing well, and using logical consequences when necessary. We focus on talking through feelings and ideas rather than using physical force to solve problems. If a child gets physical, we step in right away to help them understand and respect each other's feelings.

If a child continues to have behavior issues, the parent or guardian will be contacted. We'll work together with our staff and director to develop a plan to help the child behave better. If the behavior doesn't improve and becomes a safety concern for the child, others (including our staff), or disrupts the class, Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out may need to discontinue services.

Field Trips

Permission slips for all field trips are to be signed and returned to school. Announcements about field trips will be in the monthly newsletter.

The 3-4 and 4-5 students will either have an in-house field trip or will go off-site. We require one parent to attend. High 5's **may** use the Bethany van for transportation. Due to the number of children, we do not have room on the van for parents to accompany us. Depending on the type of field trip attended, we may need parent volunteers.

Field trips are a desirable learning tool. Due to the age of our children, we are very conscious of the safety and security of these preschoolers. Field trips are for children involved in the preschool program and we ask that other arrangements be made for siblings and other children. Please respect this request.

Emergency Disaster Preparedness

Bethany Preschool staff provide a safe place for all our children – especially during a disaster, weather emergency, or other emergency. We are asking parents to cooperate with us and adhere to the emergency procedures. In the event of a major emergency and damage appears to be extensive, come to school as soon as possible to pick up your child. **DO NOT** call the school. The telephone lines will be needed for emergency communication. If we would need to evacuate the church building and move to another safe location, we will proceed to St. Patrick's Catholic School. The school is within walking distance. The address is 20500 W. Maple Rd. Elkhorn, NE 68022.

Each year our staff has a meeting to discuss disaster preparedness plans for tornadoes, fire and lock-down drills. We hold monthly fire drills, tornado drills and lock downs, so staff and students are prepared in the event of an emergency.

School Closings

In the event of inclement weather, the school closing policy follows that of the Elkhorn Public Schools. If Elkhorn closes, Bethany Christian Preschool and Kids Day Out will close as well. This information will be posted on our Facebook page and a message will be sent through our Brightwheel App.

- **Bethany Christian Preschool will follow the “School Closure Guidance” offered through the DHHS website:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

Snacks

Parents are asked to provide a healthy snack for their child’s class five to six times during the school year. Exact numbers will be listed in the newsletter. Water or milk will be provided by the preschool. If you have any questions about your designated snack day, please call the preschool. Please check labels carefully.

Snack Suggestions: The State Licensing Department recommends that we serve healthy snacks. Because we are licensed as both daycare and preschool, we are required to provide only store-bought and packaged snacks during the school day. There is a grey area regarding what is healthful packaged snacks. Please use good judgment and lean toward fruits, vegetables, cheese, crackers, yogurt, etc. **NO CUPCAKES PLEASE, even for birthday snacks!**

We have encountered more food allergies with young children. **Bethany is a NUT-FREE ZONE.** This means that due to nut allergies we are asking that no peanuts, peanut butter...anything peanut/nut tree-related be brought into the building. When peanuts and children with this allergy come into contact, there can be a life-threatening situation. Please remind us in writing if your child has dietary restrictions (health form should state this, as well).

KDO & Lunch Bunch Lunches

All children who attend KDO extended day or a full day of KDO are required to bring a lunch from home. Remember we are a NUT-FREE Zone. Please do not pack anything in their lunch that may contain peanut/nut-tree related items. **This includes desserts.** Parents may wish to use an ice pack to keep items cold. We do serve milk with lunch unless your child brings a drink from home. Please label all lunch boxes on the OUTSIDE with your child's name.

Birthdays

Each child will be scheduled for a snack on the day closest to his/ her birthday and we will make it an important event for that child. Please try to save birthdays for special snacks like cookies. **Parents, please no cupcakes!** Muffins are a great choice, and cupcakes can be part of your at-home celebrations, if you wish. Summer birthdays will be scheduled during the school year. **NO HOMEMADE SNACKS PLEASE.**

Birthday parties outside of school: Please be aware of children's feelings when planning birthday parties outside of school. Handing out invitations and picking up only a select few from school for a party has happened in the past. You would not want your child to be the one left out from the party list. If you are not inviting the entire class, plan to mail invitations outside of preschool.

Fall Registration Policy for 2025-2026 School Year

Due to the growing numbers of children and limited space for preschool, registration will begin on January 13th, 2025, for current families. It is the responsibility of the families to register their child during this time period if they want a specific space for the next year. Open registration for the public will begin on January 27th, 2024. When a class is full, your name can be placed on a waiting list for that class.

Helpful Hints

Separation can be hard for some little ones. It is normal for children to feel this way and it can happen multiple times during the school year. Here are a few suggestions to make those difficult drop off times a little easier:

- Keep talks about school simple, do not overwhelm. Constant reminders tend to overwhelm children.
- Drop and Go: the best way for parents to handle an apprehensive child is to deliver them, tell them goodbye with a hug and kiss, reassure them you will return and leave with a smile. When they know you are comfortable, then it will help them to be comfortable. Staying in the classroom or coming back will not help the situation.
- Bedtime: It is essential for children to get a good night sleep each night.

A Preschooler Needs...

Love - to be cared for as an individual

Protection and physical care - to be healthy and safe

Security - to be comfortable and free from anxiety

Acceptance - to be included and approved by teachers and peers

Self-control - to learn acceptable ways to express feelings

Independence - to have freedom, within limits, to make choices and accept responsibility

Recognition of worth - to accept, like, and have confidence in oneself

“Teach a child how he should live, and he will remember it all his life.”

Proverbs 22:6



SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

8:45-9:15 Arrive/Free Play/Calendar, Weather, Sharing

9:30-9:45 Large Group Time (varies by days)

**9:45-10:15 Small Group Learning Centers,
Arts & Crafts, Music and Movement**

**Readiness Games—Numbers, Letters, Colors,
Shapes, Science Activities**

10:15-10:30 Snack Time

10:30-10:45 Outdoor (weather permitting)

Indoor Active Games/Large Motor Activities

10:45-11:20 Small Group Time—Language Arts Activities

Story Time

11:20-11:30 Songs, Finger Plays, and Good-bye Prayer

- **Chapel: Children will go to Chapel once a week with Mrs. Landrum. We will be learning a new Bible story each week. Times vary throughout the year.**

**Bethany's Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out
Shandra Landrum, Director, shandra.landrum@bethanyfirststeps.org
4200 North 204th St. Elkhorn, Nebraska 68022
(402) 289-3284**

Agreement Form

I/We have read the Bethany Christian Preschool & Kids Day Out Parent Handbook.

I/We the parents/guardians understand the policies and procedures of this handbook and agree with the guidelines set forth.

I/We commit to upholding these policies and procedures.

I understand and will follow the tuition statement as stated in the handbook.

Parent Name (Print) Date

Parent Name (Print) Date

Signature

Signature