



## **PARENT HANDBOOK 2023**

Preschool & Child Care Center & After School Enrichment Zone

623 6th Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18018  
Phone: (610) 867-9530 · Fax: (610) 868-6784

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Bethlehem Early Learners Preschool & Child Care Center. Our mission is to provide quality age appropriate and child centered development programs to help prepare your children for the future by completing the following:

- Educate with faith based curriculum
- Emphasize in character development
- Display leadership skills
- Learn to serve within communities
- Practice dual language

You are welcomed to visit our facility to spend time with your child and to meet the teachers. You can call our facility at any time during operating hours to ask questions.

This handbook was developed to tell you about our policies and procedures.

Again, welcome to Bethlehem Early Learners Preschool & Child Care.

Very truly yours,

Nancy Pujols  
Owner

## GENERAL FACILITY INFORMATION

### ADMINISTRATION:

Owner: Nancy Pujols Pujols@bethlehemearlylearners.com	Director: Tiffany Pujols Pujols@bethlehemearlylearners.com
Finance Office: Yazmin Gonzalez billing@bethlehemearlylearners.com	

### HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday through Friday	6:00 am to 6:00 pm
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<b>BEL is closed for the following holidays:</b>	
New Year's Day	Columbus Day
President's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday	Friday After Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	New Year's Eve Day

### Inclement Weather & Emergency Closing

If a decision is made to close the preschool center due to inclement weather or other emergency, the following radio and television stations will broadcast information periodically: WFMZ, WAEB, WLEV, and NBC10. We follow the Bethlehem Area School District Child Care Closings. We will also post closures via Class Dojo.

## Table of Contents

	Page
● History & Services .....	4
● Bethlehem Early Learners Preschool Center Philosophy .....	5
● Tuition & Fees .....	6-8
● Child Arrivals & Departures .....	9-10
● Attendance .....	10
● Clothing .....	11
● Health Policies & Practices .....	11-16
○ Health Appraisals	
○ Immunization of Children	
○ Administration of Medication	
■ Prescription Medicine	
■ Non-Prescription Medicine	
■ Illness	
■ Notification of Contagious Conditions	
■ Preventive Dental Care	
■ First Aid and Incident Reports	
■ Emergency Medical Treatment	
○ Care Plan Policy	
● Early Childhood Development Programs & Environment .....	16-17
○ Nursery	
○ Toddler Program	
○ Preschool Programs	
○ School Age Programs	
○ Summer School Age Program	
● Developmental Assessments .....	17-19
○ Lesson Plan Policy	
○ Screening Policy	
○ IEP/IFSP Policy	
○ Transition Policy	
● Celebrating Birthdays .....	19
● Helpful Hints For Your Child’s First Day .....	19
● Positive Guidance .....	20
● Damage to Center Property .....	20
● Parent Involvement .....	20-21
● Biting .....	21
● Problem Resolution .....	22
● Safety .....	22-23
● Non-Discrimination .....	23

## **HISTORY & SERVICES**

Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC was previously known as Bethlehem Academy (a ministry of El Shaddai Bethlehem Ministries). It was established in 2005 by the senior pastor, since then the now Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC is now owned by the Pujols family. Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC will continue to provide a Christian based learning environment that strives with great excellence in everything we do. We will not only strive to provide the best quality care, but to provide the best environment for families and communities in our neighborhood. Our goal is to be an example for any and all rising child care facilities and know and understand that “Through Christ, anything is possible” (Phil. 4:13).

Bethlehem Early Learners is a faith-based learning facility committed to providing opportunities for our students to find and fulfill the purpose for which they were created.

The facility is currently designed to provide students with supervised child care and educational experiences at three levels:

- Nursery (4 weeks to 1 year)
- Early Childhood (2 to 5 years old)
- After school educational experience provides elementary students, ages 5 to 12 years old the opportunity to complete their homework, participate in creative experiences and practice their social skills.

Students at Bethlehem Early Learners will become well educated, charitable, and morally responsible members of the community.

Bethlehem Early Learners, emphasizes character development, leadership skills, and service to the community. We believe these are essential traits for successful leaders of the 21st Century.

## **Bethlehem Early Learners Philosophy**

The continuing goals of our program are to provide its children with the highest quality of age appropriate and child centered development programs that promote physical, emotional, cognitive and social skills.

Our philosophy is intended to aid in the development of healthy attitudes, values and interactions with others. Our qualified team will strive to meet the needs of the children they serve with daily activities and routines that are designed specifically for their age group.

Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC created our vision to declare favor over each student in the eyes of God. The colors that represent Bethlehem Early Learners are Purple and Gold.

**Purple:** is for royalty- Bethlehem Early Learners' students, family and staff are royal in God's eyes and we need to care for them the way God would want us too.

**Gold:** is for prosperity and foundation- Bethlehem Early Learners' students, family and staff will succeed in everything they do--but above all else, will have a faith based foundation that will not be shaken.

## **Tuition & Fees:**

Bethlehem Early Learners students tuition and fees are based on your child's age group and the service provided.

Bethlehem Early Learners reserves the right to revise the Daily/Weekly Rates from time to time. BEL agrees to provide 30 days' notice before adjusting the Daily/Weekly Rates.

**Registration Fee:** There is a \$75.00 non-refundable registration fee per child charged at the time you complete an application for enrollment.

**Deposit:** All new enrollments are required to make a deposit equal to one week's tuition for each child being enrolled. This deposit will be refunded when your child is withdrawn from the facility provided you give a one week's written notice of withdrawal. [Implementation 12/1/2022]

**Withdrawals from Bethlehem Early Learners:** If you are planning to withdraw your child from our facility, you are required to provide us with at least one week's advance written notice of withdrawal. Failure to provide notice will result in you forfeiting your deposit.

If it becomes necessary for us to request that you withdraw your child, we will provide you with at least one week's notice in order for you to make other child care arrangements. However, if the child's behavior is such that the child poses a threat to the safety of themselves, other children, or the staff, immediate withdrawal will be required.

**Tuition:** Bethlehem Early Learners Preschool *tuition includes* basic preschool and child care services, breakfast, snacks, and lunch.

There are two types of tuition plans offered at Bethlehem Early Learners Preschool:

- Full-time
- Part-Time Daily (Max 10 Hours Per Day)
- Part-Time Daily (Max 5 Hours Per Day) For School Age ONLY
- Part-Time Daily (Max 2.5 Hours Per Day) For School Age ONLY

### **Tuition Plan Groups:**

- **Full time** tuition is based on 30 to 50 hours teaching and child care services per week on a regular basis. Tuition will be charged even if your child is absent due to illness, personal reasons, emergency or an official closing of our facility.

Furthermore, substitution of another day will NOT be permitted.

- **Part-time** Less Than 10 Hours Per Day tuition is based on a daily rate. A child in this plan generally attends the center three (3) full days or less per week and it is the same three (3) days every week. Tuition will be charged even if the child is absent due to illness, emergency, personal reasons, or official closing of our facility. Furthermore, substitution of another day will NOT be permitted.
- **Discounts:** Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC offers a discount to clients for prepayment of tuition. If you would like to pay your child's tuition in advance, Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC will provide you with the following discounts:

3 months = 2%

6 months = 5%

12 months = 9%

**Tuition Due Date:** Tuition is due and payable no later than FRIDAY by 4:30pm for care that is being given the next week. Failure to pay your tuition on Friday will result in you being charged a late payment fee of **10% of your total past due balance**.

**Schedule Changes:** All schedule changes require a minimum of one week's written notice. Please note that your schedule change should be considered a "request". Care may not be available because of Department of Human Service regulations regarding Staff/Child Ratios. You must use the Parent Communicator Form to request schedule changes. You may notify changes via Class Dojo or E-mail to the Director/Owner, **any other forms of communication will not be accepted.**

**Method of Payment:** You may pay your tuition and fees for childcare services using any one of the following forms of payment.

- Check (Personal, Cashier, or Money Order)
- Credit Card (Mastercard, VISA, or American Express through our EZ Care software or in person)
- Cash

**Returned Check Charge:** If your check is returned for insufficient funds, you will be charged a fee of \$30.00 and all future payments of tuition must be made in the form of a money order, certified check or cash.

**Multiple Child Scholarships:** If you have more than one child enrolled at Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC you may be eligible for a scholarship equal to 10% of the tuition of the child in the lowest priced age group or tuition plan.

**Late Payment Fee:** If you fail to pay your tuition on FRIDAY by 4:30pm, you will be charged a late payment fee of 10% on the unpaid account balance. If your tuition is still not paid within five (5) business days of the due date, your child must be withdrawn from our facility until the tuition is paid in full. After two weeks of unpaid



tuition, your student will be disenrolled from our program. You will be required to pay the registration fee again to re-enroll your child. For those students who have subsidized tuition, ELRC Office will be notified of your delinquency which will require the family to pay in full their balance and prevent transferring to another childcare center.

**Early Drop-Off and/or Late Pick-up Fee:** If you drop-off or pick-up your child before or after the scheduled time given upon registration (unless schedule has been changed via parent communicator), **you will be charged \$1.00 for EACH minute you are early and/or late.** There is a five (5) minute grace period, which allows you 5 minutes before or after your scheduled time to drop-off or pick-up your child without getting charged an early drop-off/late pick-up fee. Once you have passed the five (5) minute grace period, you will be charged \$1.00 a minute from your original scheduled time. This ultimately forfeits the five (5) minute grace period.

**Late Pick-Up After Center Operation Hours:** One (1) or more occurrences of late pick up will result in a meeting with administration. Three (3) or more occurrences may result in potential termination from our program or other consequences that administrators deem appropriate. As stated in each student's signed agreement, BEL may terminate this agreement at any time by giving the other party at least one week prior notice to terminate the agreement.

**Service Beyond Daily Allowance:** If you require childcare services beyond the daily allowance of 10 hours per day, you will be charged \$25.00 for each additional hour/per child or part thereof. A maximum of three (3) days in a week will be permissible for this arrangement. This can only be accommodated if this arrangement was set up during registration, or notified of a schedule change via Parent Communicator with one (1) weeks' notice.

**Other Services:** Bethlehem Early Learners, LLC will charge you for providing the following additional services:

- **Diaper & Wipes Program:** Bethlehem Early Learners provides diapers and wipes to all children enrolled. This weekly fee will show up on your invoice as a **\$15.00** fee. If your child has any allergies to any brands, we will accommodate them. Please specify what allergies they have to either diapers and/or wipes on the diaper program form.

If your child only uses pull-ups for naptime, the parent will be charged a **\$10.00** weekly fee.

When your child no longer needs diapers, you must complete a Parent Communicator ASAP to discontinue the Diaper Program Fee. Until this is

completed and confirmed by your child's teacher, you will continue to be charged for the Diaper Program.

## **Child Arrivals and Departures:**

### **Arrival & Departure Locations**

- **Arrival:** Between 6:00 am and 7:30 am children are welcome into the Cafeteria (Bottom Floor) . At 7:30 am they will be in their classrooms therefore students should enter the facility based on their designated classroom environment entrance. (0-2 years of age Bottom Floor) (2.5 years of age & up Top Floor)
- **Departure:** Between 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm children will be picked up at the Cafeteria (Bottom Floor).

**PRE-COVID:**It is the parents duty to take all their belongings to the child's classroom and place their items in their assigned cubby. This is to assure that nothing gets misplaced or lost. All parents are required to label their child's belongings, failure to do so will result in teachers labeling the child's items.

If the child arrives after 8:00 am or departs before 5:00 pm, the parent will be responsible for bringing or picking-up the child to/from the classroom. **It is extremely important that all parents sign in and sign out their children via pin pad. This is used to assure accuracy in billing, attendance, and in addition for maximum security. No parent should be signing in a child that is not present for any reason.**

**Schedule:** The hours and days that your child attends Bethlehem Early Learners are arranged at your enrollment meeting. Please provide as much notice as possible of any changes in the hours, so that team members may be scheduled accordingly. We request a **minimum of one week's notice**. Care may not be available for your child at times other than scheduled hours if we do not have sufficient team members to provide coverage.

**DUE TO COVID-19 WE CURRENTLY LIMIT THE GUESTS WHO ENTER OUR FACILITY TO ONLY STUDENTS, HELPING PROFESSIONALS, & STAFF:** Adults must ring the school's buzzard and wait for a staff member to identify you and allow your student to enter the facility. This measure is to ensure minimum spread of illness from outside individuals. Parents do have the right to request to enter the facility. A staff member will escort your student to their assigned classroom and place their belongings in their assigned cubby. All parents are required to label their child's belongings, failure to do so will result in teachers labeling the child's items.

**PRE-COVID:** When arriving at our facility the parent or guardian must follow the procedures outlined in the Arrival & Departure Locations. The sign in/out electronic pad with a pin number is our official record of children who are in attendance any

given day and is used to account for all children in case our facility needs to be evacuated. Each child must be accompanied by a parent. This is a Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare regulation rule, which applies to all children regardless of age.

Please call our office or communicate via class-dojos, or email and inform us if your child will be late or absent. We should update procedures after COVID protocols

**Departures:** We must be notified if you will be delayed picking up your child (a late fee will be applied). Arrangements should be made for someone else to pick up your child at or before the scheduled time if you are going to be late. Children get very anxious if they are not picked up at their regular time. We must be notified prior if someone who is not designated on the Parent Consent/Emergency Contact form will be picking up your child. Unfamiliar escorts are asked for identification and parents are required to sign a release form.

At departure, please remember that you are in charge of your child even when staff members are visible. This clarification of “who’s in charge” is necessary to prevent program disruption and potential child injury which can occur at transition times when responsibilities get confused. In addition, you must sign out your child prior to departure at the same place where you signed in upon arrival.

Furthermore, if your child is on the playground or taking a walk when you arrive to pick him or her up, you must first come into the building and sign out your child for the day.

**Attendance:** All children participate in an organized program each day. Please make every effort to have your child attend regularly to assure greater continuity and sense of belonging. If your child will be absent, please notify our facility by **9:00 am or as soon as possible**. All students are expected to arrive **no later than 30 minutes** from their start time, BEL may not accept students who are late without prior notice. Additionally, **no parent should be signing in a child that is not present for any reason.**

**Absents:** Each student is permitted a maximum of 10 unpaid absences. It is the parents decision when they want to apply for an unpaid absence. This can be used for sick days, vacation days, days the center is closed (inclement weather), and in the event of a family emergency. In order for accurate invoicing it is important that you communicate these days via parent communicator ASAP.

After the 10 allowable days of unpaid absences, there will be NO refunds of tuition for days in which the child(ren) does not report to BEL as a result of illness, personal reasons, emergency, or days BEL is officially closed.

**Clothing:** Please dress your child in garments which are comfortable (seasonal and proper-fitting) and practical (appropriate for playground, painting, tumbling, etc.). Your child should bring a complete change of clothing to our facility including underwear, pants, shirt, and socks. These items must be labeled. Failure to label will result in us labeling the clothing with a permanent marker. If it is necessary to use any of our clothing for your child, please launder and return it the next day. Also, remember that safe and comfortable footwear is very important. We do not allow children to wear flip-flops and we strongly suggest that we refrain from allowing them to wear open-toed shoes to prevent any injuries.

## **HEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Health Appraisals:**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services regulations require age appropriate health appraisals upon entrance to a childcare center and at intervals recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Appraisals will be required at the following ages:

6 weeks	12 months	2 years	8 years
2 months	15 months	3 years	10 years
4 months	18 months	4 years	11 years
6 months		5 years	12 years
9 months		6 years	13 years

The majority of these visits coincide with physicians and clinics. As a parent, you must provide Bethlehem Early Learners with the required update in a timely manner. Unfortunately, failure to provide an updated health appraisal will result in discontinued care on the part of Bethlehem Early Learners.

### **Immunization of Children:**

All parents should make certain that their child is immunized according to recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics to protect against polio, measles, mumps, rubella, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus, and Haemophilus (HIB) infections. Bethlehem Early Learners supports the Centers' recommendations for Hepatitis B (HBU) immunization for infants. Without the required immunizations, these childhood illnesses can cripple or kill. If your child's immunizations are not following the recommended schedule, Bethlehem Early Learners may exclude your child for the protection of the other children until such immunizations are current.

The Immunization Practices Advisory Committee (ACIP) of the United States Public Health Service recommends routine single dose Varicella (Chicken Pox) vaccination for all healthy children between 12 and 18 months. Single dose is also recommended for children 18 months to 12 years who have not had Varicella or who have an undocumented health history.

### **Administration of Medications:**

We have established strict guidelines, in accordance with the PA Department of Human Services and our insurance company, for the administration of medication by our team members to your child. Because of the significant liability and penalties for not complying with the guidelines, we will not make any exceptions.

### **Prescription Medication**

1. The medication must be in the original container.
2. Container must be clearly marked with the child's name and the medication name.
3. You, the parent, must complete the medication log that is located in your child's program area for each medication and each day that the medication is to be administered. You, the parent, must indicate the medication name, the times it is to be administered, the dosage that is to be administered each time, and sign your name.
4. The team member will complete the medication log each time the medication is administered. The team member will indicate the date, time of the administration, the dosage given, and the signature of the team member who administered the medication.
5. ALL MEDICATION MUST BE HANDED DIRECTLY TO A TEAM MEMBER. DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION IN CHILD'S BAG OR CUBBY; NOR PLACE IT IN THE KITCHEN OR MEDICINE CABINET.
6. At the end of the day, you must request the medication be handed directly to you as a team member. AGAIN, DO NOT REMOVE MEDICINE FROM THE KITCHEN REFRIGERATOR OR MEDICINE CABINET YOURSELF. FURTHERMORE, YOU MUST VERIFY THAT THE MEDICATION THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU BELONGS TO YOUR CHILD.

### **Non-Prescription Medication**

1. All medication must be in the original container.
2. The container must be clearly marked with the child's name.
3. PARENTS MUST PROVIDE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM PHYSICIAN ON HOW THE NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUG IS TO BE ADMINISTERED AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS CAN EASILY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY HAVING YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN COMPLETE THE "RECOMMENDED TREATMENT/MEDICATION/SPECIAL

CARE” SECTION OF THE CHILD HEALTH ASSESSMENT FORM OR YOU CAN HAVE YOUR PHYSICIAN FAX INSTRUCTIONS ON THEIR LETTERHEAD TO BETHLEHEM EARLY LEARNERS AT THE FAX NUMBER INDICATED IN THE HANDBOOK SUPPLEMENT. MEDICATION WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED UNLESS THERE ARE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE PHYSICIAN.

4. Verbal instruction from a physician will be accepted in emergency situations.
5. You must follow steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 for the administration of prescription medication.

### **Illness:**

Parents are encouraged to keep an unwell child at home and seek medical attention for severe or chronic illnesses. Parents will be requested to take a child home in the morning if the child appears to be too ill to remain at our facility. If a child appears too ill after he/she has already been dropped off to remain at our facility a parent will be contacted to take the child home IMMEDIATELY. In some cases, a physician’s note may be required prior to readmitting the child from an illness or suspicion of a contagious condition.

The following standards will be used in determining if a child should be sent home:

- **Fever:** A child with an ancillary temperature (under the arm) greater than 100 shall be sent home and may not return until the temperature is normal for 24 hours without the use of aspirin or no-aspirin products.
- **Vomiting:** A child who has several episodes of vomiting shall be sent home and may not return until the vomiting has stopped for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- **Diarrhea:** A child who has several diarrhea-type bowel movements in one day shall be sent home and may not return until the diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours without the use of medication.
- **Eye Inflammations:** A child with an eye inflammation shall be sent home and may not return until the inflammation has cleared or until the parent provides the center with a doctor’s note stating that the inflammation is not contagious.
- **Unexplained Rash:** A child with an unexplained rash shall be sent home until the rash disappears or until the parent provides the center with a doctor’s note stating that the rash is not contagious.
- **Lice:** A child with head lice shall be sent home and may not return until after first treatment has been received. The child’s physician must provide information relative to the child’s readiness to return to the center.

A child who has been determined to be showing symptoms of the aforementioned conditions shall be isolated from the other children until the parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child. It is the policy of Bethlehem Early Learners that the parent or guardian must pick up the child within one hour of notification. Please remember that these rules are for the protection of your child as for the other children at our facility.

**Post COVID-19 Protocol:**

If you checked 1 or more symptoms, the student should stay home from school

**Column A**

- Fever (100° F or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lack of smell or taste (without congestion)

If you checked 2 or more symptoms, the student should stay home from school

**Column B**

- Sore throat
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Congestion or runny nose

**Notifying Families of Student's Illness:** Bethlehem Early Learners has implemented several forms that are used in relation with a child who becomes sick. The first form is the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent form and the second form is the Health Alert Report.

The Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form is mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare. It is your responsibility that this form be updated at least every six months or when there is a change in personal information contained on that form. This form provides us with the emergency information should your child become ill at our facility. It indicates your home and work telephone numbers, along with the names and telephone numbers of other individuals that may be contacted in the event that you are not available.

The Health Alert Report is completed by a team member when your child is being sent home for one of the aforementioned five reasons. The form provides vital information

regarding your child's condition. It also highlights when your child may return to our facility. Please read the report carefully and follow its instructions.

### **Notification of Contagious Conditions:**

Parents are expected to notify Bethlehem Early Learners immediately if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious condition. This will enable us to notify the parents of other children of the possibility of a contagious condition. We will notify you of a contagious condition through a written bulletin called "Health Alert" or through a Class Dojo post. The bulletin will contain the following information:

1. The name of the contagious condition
2. Information about how the disease is spread
3. Symptoms of the condition
4. How to prevent the condition

By using this type of notification system we hope to reduce the spread of contagious conditions.

**Preventive Dental Care: DUE TO COVID-19 WE NO LONGER PARTICIPATE IN DENTAL CARE AT OUR CENTER AT THIS TIME:** We encourage preventive dental care at Bethlehem Early Learners every day. Each child will be provided with a toothbrush and toothpaste to be used at our facility after lunch each day.

**Site Safety:** To ensure that children are supervised throughout the day, in accordance with the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), the following policies and procedures are implemented in our program:

- Active watching of
- Listening to
- Interacting with, and
- Monitoring of Children in care at all times.

All staff are trained and responsible for the supervision of all assigned students. Staff are required to:

- Know the names and the number of children in their care at all times.
- Use Name and Picture badges to account for the children in their care.
- Conduct and record attendance with Face to Name Roll Call.
- Conduct a Head Count whenever a transition through a door or gate occurs.
- Conduct periodic Head Counts throughout the day, in addition to those required during transitions.
- Log in and out whenever they join or leave a group

**First Aid and Incident Reports:** From time to time your child may require first aid as a result of a minor injury. A Bethlehem Early Learners team member will clean any



cut or scratch with antibacterial soap and cover it with a bandage or in the case of a bump or bruise, ice will be applied. No other medicine or ointment will be applied to the injury. In addition, a team member will complete an "Incident Report" regarding your child's injury that explains the nature and causes of the injury. It will be the discretion of BEL staff to indicate if an injury requires immediate notification to parents, otherwise, parents will be informed of minor injuries at the time of departure.

**Emergency Medical Treatment:** In the unlikely event that your child is seriously injured at our facility or requires immediate medical attention, your child will be transported to the treatment facility near the center. If you would prefer that your child be transported to a different medical facility, you should indicate your preference on the "Emergency Contact/Parental Consent" form. A team member of the Bethlehem Early Learners will remain with your child at the treatment facility until you or your representative arrive at the medical facility.

**Care Plan Policy:** Children with special healthcare needs should have a care plan on file with the program. Should your child have a medical condition or special needs such as asthma, diabetes, allergies, ADHD, etc., please see the Director/Assistant Director for a care plan form. This form can be completed by your child's pediatrician and returned to the Director/Assistant Director.

The Director/Assistant Director will review this form with parents/guardians and instructions for the care of your child will be shared with the appropriate childcare staff. A copy of this care plan will be kept on file for easy access for your child's caregivers.

Please communicate any changes to your child's medical care plan immediately to the Director/Assistant Director.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND ENVIRONMENT**

- **Nursery:** Our nursery program is an active learning and loving environment. Our activities develop gross and fine motor skills, as well as provide music, language, art, cognitive, social, and sensory experiences.
- **Toddler Programs:** The toddler program is designed to help the child make the transition from the one-on-one care experienced as an infant to a more structured daily routine. Curriculum and activities are designed to foster positive feelings towards learning, developing self esteem and stimulating social growth. Here the child will learn to sing songs, listen to stories, perform fingerplays, develop creativity, increase awareness, build motor skills, and expand their vocabulary. Structured activities, free play, group and individualized instruction are all important parts of our program.
- **Preschool Programs:** Children experience a variety of learning areas which aid the child's play opportunities for development of language and literacy,

intellectual skills, physical abilities, and aesthetic appreciation. Books, puzzles, art projects, music and songs, fingerplays, games, and dramatic play are just some activities children will take part in. All activities, materials, and equipment are developmentally appropriate. When interacting with others, children will develop greater self-awareness and self-control. Our main concern is that the children have meaningful experiences that foster growth in all learning areas in an environment that is safe and enjoyable. Learning centers are set up to work on math, science, language and reading skills in preparation for Kindergarten. We provide and arrange for experiences, but the children discover the answers themselves through active exploration, experimentation, and interaction with others. Team members help to guide each child and to focus on the “process” rather than the “product” of the activity.

- **School Age Programs:** Bethlehem Early Learners school-age classrooms provide before and after school care for school-age children. We strive to help produce happy, healthy, community oriented young adults. To meet the varying needs and interests of school-age children, our program is both educational and recreational. The structure of the program and activities offered reflect the interests of the students and reinforce skills learned at school. Although time is allocated for doing homework, school age children may also participate in cooperative games, arts and crafts, computer activities, table games. In addition, children enjoy outdoor activities daily.
- **Summer School Age Program:** The summer school age program is designed to provide children who have completed Kindergarten with a variety of fun, educational summer time activities. The program typically runs for ten weeks and includes field trips, guest speakers, and a weekly theme that consists of related activities and lessons.

**DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS:** Students are assessed on a day to day basis. Teachers evaluate children based on their work in class, play, and group and individual discussions. Teachers observe how attentive children are, how they engage themselves in learning activities, and how well they are able to apply what they have learned. We would add the following:

This information is used to help teachers write comprehensive lesson plans and will help to ensure they are meeting the developmental needs of the students. Our school uses the Funshine Express Learning Curriculum, and Montessori Curriculum which gives children the beginning skills they need for future school success. The curriculum is broken up into weekly themes. Each thematic unit features interesting, concrete interactive experiences which address the following:

- Oral language
- Thinking and problem solving
- Development of social skills
- Self-confidence and self-help skills
- Literacy development

- concepts about print
- letter awareness
- phonemic awareness
- comprehension
- Numeracy development
  - basic number skills
  - concepts about space, time and measurement
- Fine and gross motor development

This information is collected in the form of a child portfolio which contains examples of the child's work, process samples (work-in-progress), product samples (finished works), and parent comments. The portfolio assessments will be used to compile a comprehensive progress report twice a year. When the child completes a program a total evaluation will be given to the parents.

**Screening Policy:** All children have a developmental screening checklist completed within 45 days of their start date. These screenings are shared with parents and support staff in developing lesson plans.

In addition, we use **Ages & Stages Questionnaire**. This is the easiest, most accurate, and most cost-effective way to pinpoint delays early and celebrate children's milestones. ASQ-3 screens children between one month and 5½ years, without any gaps between the questionnaire age intervals.

Once the screening tool is completed, parents will be offered a time to meet with the teacher/administration to discuss findings. This can be done via Zoom or in-person meetings. These findings may indicate who may need additional evaluation and/or intervention strategies. Support for referrals is offered.

**IEP/IFSP Policy:** At Bethlehem Early Learners, we do our best to educate children of all abilities. If a child has an IEP or IFSP, Bethlehem Early Learners request a copy of this plan to be kept in the child's file. We do this so we can work alongside the TSS worker to support the child in meeting their IEP goals. In addition, Bethlehem Early Learners requests to be part of IEP meetings to help us support the child's goals. This information will be shared with classroom staff.

**Inclusion/Suspension/Expulsion:** BEL is inclusive of all children with disabilities, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities; facilitating individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), friendships with peers, and a sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities.

Bethlehem Early Learners also strive to use a collaborative approach in order to assist with challenges that may present themselves. Suspension and/or expulsion is used as a last resort. We educate both our staff and students with social emotional skills to promote an understanding and inclusive environment. BEL works with organizations and referral resources to assist while the student is in our care and/or at home for those challenging situations. It is the parents responsibility to follow through with the referral resources to ensure the care and support of the student remains in an open standing at BEL.

**Transition Policy:** When a child meets developmental abilities to transition up to the next learning environment, a Transition Letter will be given to parents and shared with all appropriate classroom staff. This letter states when the transition will begin and how frequently it will occur and the date when the child will permanently join the class.

**CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS AT BETHLEHEM EARLY LEARNERS:** If you wish to send a special treat into our facility on your child's actual birthday, please check with your child's teacher for information regarding the number of children in your child's program.

Please note that due to confidentiality concerns, we are unable to release the full names and addresses of the children if parents wish to celebrate the child's birthday with an event outside of our facility. However, teachers will provide you with the first name and first initial of the last name so that invitations can be distributed at our facility or parents may prepare the invitations and place postage on the envelopes. We will print our address labels for each child in your child's program area and place the invitations in the mail for you.

**HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAYS AT BETHLEHEM EARLY LEARNERS:** On the child's first few days at our facility, you can expect some hesitation and apprehension on his or her part. This is natural when placed in a new situation, even if he or she has been in childcare before.

Our staff will try to make this a little easier by introducing your child and you to the other children and teachers. They will also show your child and you where his/her cubby is, and help him or her get settled with an activity. This would be a good opportunity to say "see you later" and depart. A little kiss and short "see you later" are best. Although this time of separation may also be difficult for you, prolonging departure will only reveal hesitation and increase your child's anxiety. In most situations, your child will settle down and get involved within a short period of time. We encourage him or her to join our activity, but won't force him or her if he or she is not ready.

Bethlehem Early Learners encourages parent involvement and interaction, and has an open visitation policy throughout the day. Keep in mind that seeing a parent in the

middle of the day sometimes disrupts the rest of the child's day. Sometimes a telephone call to your child's teacher is a better way of calming your fears without upsetting your child. If you have any specific instructions for your child's teacher, please write the teacher a short note.

**POSITIVE GUIDANCE:** Bethlehem Early Learners uses a positive approach to discipline. We reinforce actions, which are positive, with verbal praise and affection. When possible, we will attempt to redirect children if they are behaving inappropriately. If your child is harming one of the other children or damaging property, he or she will be removed from the group using "time-out". He or she will remain separate from the group for a few minutes. Your child will be aware of certain guidelines for appropriate behavior and ways to handle a problem situation. Your support is needed in reinforcing our facility rules and policies for the welfare of all the children. In cases of severe or behavioral problems, the parents will be contacted by telephone and asked to come in for a conference.

**DAMAGE TO OUR PROPERTY:** Bethlehem Early Learners takes great pride in maintaining a facility filled with quality equipment and furnishing. We realize that periodically equipment and furnishing need to be replaced due to wear and tear. In addition, the walls are periodically painted and carpet is replaced. However, if your child damages any of the equipment, furnishing, or physical structure, you will be held responsible for paying the total cost of repair or replacement of the item damaged as a result of inappropriate behavior.

#### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT:**

**Communications:** Bethlehem Early Learners uses a variety of methods to communicate your child's progress and center events. These methods of communication include daily verbal communications, portfolio assessments, semi-annual parent-teacher conferences, Class Dojo, Daily Reports, and parent bulletin boards. You are the vital link in your child's development and ongoing communication between you and your child's teacher is very important.

**Parent Conferences:** Ongoing communication between parents and team members is very important. Your participation in semi-annual parent meetings is an important part of your child's development. At these meetings, you will also have the opportunity to meet with the staff responsible for teaching and caring for children at least twice a year. However, you do not need to wait for these circumstances to discuss your child's progress at the academy, you may schedule a conference at any time of the year by filling out a Parent Communicator form and requesting a meeting.

**Fund Raising:** There are several fundraising events throughout the year that are used to upgrade equipment and fund special events at our facility. You will be informed when these events are going to take place. Your support is key to the success of the event.

**Parent Visitations:** Parents are encouraged to visit our facility at any time. Please feel free to voice any questions or concerns to the Directors or your child's teacher. We strongly suggest that your child is not within earshot if you are discussing his or her behavior.

**Newsletter:** Bethlehem Early Learners issues monthly newsletters to keep parents up to date on what is happening in our facility.

**Parent Bulletin Boards:** In order to keep parents current on our activities, a parent bulletin board has been placed in the classroom. This bulletin board will provide information regarding the activities of the day and other important information. We encourage you to take a few minutes each day to review the bulletin board.

**Parent Communicator Forms:** This form can be found at the parent resource form center located near the electronic pin pad. On this form you may make schedule changes, inform us of variations or withdrawals, request meetings, and arrange care for additional days. You may also make changes to your Parental Consent/Emergency Contact form by using the Parent Communicator form.

## **BITING:**

### **If your child is bitten...**

Child development research shows that approximately 50% of all children enrolled in preschool centers will be bitten. Toddlers especially will often use biting as a form of communication. Bethlehem Early Learners will strive to minimize biting incidents. However, it is highly likely that your child will be bitten at some time. If this should occur, we will do our best to comfort your child and care for his or her needs immediately. We will inform the parents of the child you bit and work with them and their child to change this behavior.

The 1993 US Public Health Service Surgeon General's Report to the American Public on HIV infection and AIDS printed by the Centers for Disease Control states that there are no reported cases of HIV transmission from saliva, human bites, or attending school with HIV infected persons. If your child is bitten, you may contact your doctor to determine whether the nature of this bite requires medical attention.

### **If your child bites another child...**

Biting is very serious and unacceptable. If your child bites, Bethlehem Early Learners will work with you to develop a plan to correct the problem. However, if the biting is aggressive, breaks skin, does not lessen within a reasonable period of time, or diverts an inordinate amount of staff from other children and program implementation, Bethlehem Early Learners may have to temporarily suspend your child until the biting diminishes.

**PROBLEM RESOLUTION:** Bethlehem Early Learners is always interested and concerned with the parent's views and opinions. When a problem arises, we will always do our best to resolve the problems to the parent's satisfaction. If you have a concern that needs attention, please follow this procedure:

- Speak to the teacher in your child's classroom about your concern. If your concern is not satisfied,
- Speak to our facility Directors

Assistant Director: Nancy Pujols  
623 6th Avenue  
Bethlehem, PA 18018  
610 867-9530 (voice)  
610 868-6784 (fax)  
Email: Pujols@bethlehemearlylearners.com

Director: Tiffany Pujols  
Bethlehem Early Learners  
623 6th Avenue  
Bethlehem, PA 18018  
610 867-9530 (voice)  
610 868-6784 (fax)  
Email:pujols@bethlehemearlylearners.com

- You may contact the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare at 1-800-222-2108.

## **SAFETY:**

**Child Abuse:** The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare requires that we report all cases of suspected child abuse of Child line as mandated by the Child Protective Services Law. In addition, cases of suspected child abuse must be documented and submitted to Child Line within 48 hours of the original notification.

**Fire Drills:** Emergency evacuation plans are clearly posted in all classrooms. Fire drills are conducted every 60 days to ensure that everyone is aware of how to evacuate the building in case of an emergency.

**Emergency Evacuation:** If it should become necessary to evacuate the facility and relocate the children until parents can be contacted, the children will be transported by bus to an off site location.

**Parking Lot Safety:** It is very important that when you are dropping off and picking up your child at Bethlehem Early Learners you turn your car OFF! Leaving an unattended car running is an accident waiting to happen. The car could accidentally slip into gear and either hit an innocent child walking by or roll into the building. In addition, we have been advised by the local police department that they will be patrolling the parking lots to ensure that running cars are not left unattended. All cars must be parked in a parking space and not left unattended in front of the building as pedestrians are walking in and out of the building.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:** Bethlehem Early Learners will not permit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex in any aspect of admission or care.