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56652 Buckhorn Road

Three Rivers, MI 49093

269-278-8135

**Sue McDonald | Center Director**

**Parent Handbook**

**Mission Statement**

To provide each child with a safe and positive, child-centered learning environment where they will be able to start building their foundation to become a life-long learner.

**Philosophy**

Building Blocks Preschool believes that children enter school at many different stages of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. This belief drives us to be committed to a philosophy that develops confidence, independence, self-respect, and self-discipline within children, as well as a respect and love for others. During the preschool years children learn through discovery, purposeful play, and social interaction with peers.

An open and cooperative relationship between home and school is essential. We believe that parents and teachers together provide learning experiences and models, which build positive attitudes, promote children’s potential and enhance school success.

**Goals**

1. Provide developmentally appropriate environment for learning.
2. Stimulate and guide the child’s natural curiosity to acquire knowledge.
3. Facilitate the total growth and development of the child based on the child’s personality, culture, and learning styles.
4. Partner with families to connect home, school and community to provide a more rounded educational experience.

We believe these goals are best accomplished by following a curriculum that is age appropriate and gets children actively engaged in learning.

**Curriculum**

Building Blocks Preschool uses The Creative Curriculum for Preschool. There is a balance of activities in four types of development which are: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. There is also a balance of individual, small, and large group activities. Your child will take part in quiet listening, problem solving, and large muscle activities. Children are offered a wide range of activities that are suited to their own abilities and interests. Every activity we do is planned with one underlying goal in mind…to allow the freedom of each child to grow and explore through first hand experiences in a warm, secure, and stimulating environment. Along with the State of Michigan we believe children who complete GSRP are well prepared for Kindergarten the following year.

The following curriculum area goals and objectives are some examples but not all inclusive of the curriculum program presented throughout the year:

**Social/Emotional Development**

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
   1. Manages feelings
   2. Follows limits and expectations
   3. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
   1. Forms relationships with adults
   2. Responds to emotional cues
   3. Interacts with peers
   4. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
   1. Balances needs and wants of self and others
   2. Solves problems

**Physical Development**

1. Demonstrates traveling skills
2. Demonstrates balancing skills
3. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
4. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
   1. Uses fingers and hands
   2. Uses writing and drawing tools

**Language Development**

1. Listens to and understands increasing complex language
   1. Comprehends language
   2. Follows directions
2. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
   1. Uses an extending expressive vocabulary
   2. Speaks clearly
   3. Uses conventional grammar
   4. Tells about another time or place
3. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
   1. Engages in conversations
   2. Uses social rules of language
4. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
   1. Attends and engages
   2. Persists
   3. Solves problems
   4. Shows curiosity and motivation
   5. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
5. Remembers and connects experiences
   1. Recognizes and recalls
   2. Makes connections
6. Uses classification skills
7. Uses symbols and images to represents something not present
   1. Thinks symbolically
   2. Engages in sociodramatic play

**Literacy**

1. Demonstrates phonological awareness
   1. Notices and discriminates rhyme
   2. Notices and discriminates alliteration
   3. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
   1. Identifies and names letters
   2. Uses letter-sound knowledge
3. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
   1. Uses and appreciates books
   2. Uses print concepts
4. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
   1. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
   2. Uses emergent reading skills
   3. Retells stories
5. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
   1. Writes name
   2. Writes to convey meaning

**Mathematics**

1. Uses number concepts and operations
   1. Counts
   2. Quantifies
   3. Connects numerals with their quantities
2. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
   1. Understands spatial relationships
   2. Understands shapes
3. Compares and measures
4. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

**Science and Technology**

1. Uses scientific inquiry skills
2. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
3. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
4. Demonstrates knowledge of earth’s environment
5. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

**Social Studies**

1. Demonstrates knowledge about self
2. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
3. Explores change related to familiar people or places
4. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

**The Arts**

1. Explores the visual arts
2. Explores musical concepts and expression
3. Explores dance and movement concepts
4. Explores drama through action and language

**Schedule of Operation**

Tuesday through Friday

**Mrs. Moore’s Class** - 8:00am to 11:15am

**Mrs. McDonald’s Class** – 8:30am to 11:30am

**Attendance**

It is very important that children attend school on a regular and punctual basis. The habits that are formed during these early years carry over to elementary and secondary school. If your child will be absent for any reason, please call prior to the start of school.

**Calendar**

A monthly calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each month. Please also refer to the calendar schedule that is given at the home visits.

**Entry Requirements**

Enrollment in to the Great Start Readiness Program shall be granted without discrimination in regard to sex, ethnicity, culture, race, beliefs or disability.

To be eligible for the Great Start Readiness Program, a child must be at least 4 years old but not older than 5 years by Nov. 1st of the current year. An application must be filled out to determine the eligibility according to standards set by the State of Michigan.

  An enrollment package is required to be completed and on file before the first day the child begins school. This includes:

**Birth Certificate Verification**

A copy will not be kept on file.

**Copy of Income Verification**

**Child Information Record**

(There should be no blank spaces on the Emergency Card,

this includes zip codes, insurance numbers, etc.)

**Building Blocks GSRP Application Form**

**Health Appraisal with a Copy of Completed Immunizations**

(Signed by a physician)

**Child-Parent Information Sheet**

(To assist us in getting to know you and your child)

GSRP staff must have a correct address, phone number and emergency contact number for your child. If there are any changes during the school year, please advise us immediately.

**Withdrawal**

If the parent will be taking the child out of the program for any reason, it is requested that the teacher be informed in writing.

**Confidentiality**

All student records and information will be kept confidential. Only school related personnel will have access to this information.

**Meals**

A daily snack will be served.

**Allergies/Special Diet**

Please alert the teacher to any food or environmental allergies or special diets your child may have, even if they are already listed on your child’s physical form. The information will be posted in the building so all staff members are aware of any special precautions.

**Birthdays**

You are welcome to provide a “treat” for your child’s birthday if you like. The birthday treat will be served as the special snack for that day.

**Health Policy**

Parents usually know best when their child is ill. We assume the demonstration of good judgment by parents when illness dictates keeping a child home. **Please keep in mind that every child in attendance will be expected to participate in outdoor play.** As part of our responsibility in maintaining a safe environment for all children and staff, the following Health Guidelines have been established.

 If your child is unable to attend the center due to sickness, please remember to **contact us**.

When illness does occur, we do require parents to make other child care arrangements.

No child will be allowed to attend school with any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever (100.5 degrees F or above) In order to return to school, the child needs to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication; ie, Tylenol, Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen.

2. Persistent cough

4. Undiagnosed Rash

5. Vomiting

6. Diarrhea

\*Diarrhea being described as 3 or 4 loose stools in 6-8 hours, not just one

watery loose stool.

7. Eye discharge

8. Lice

Should your child develop any of the above symptoms while at school, you will be contacted immediately. Arrangements will need to be made for you to pick-up your child promptly.

**Exposure to communicable disease (chicken pox, strep infection, etc.) should be reported to Teacher/Director. She will inform you if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease while at the center.**

**Hand washing**

Hand washing is probably the most critical element in reducing the spread of germs. It is important to teach children the importance of hand washing early in life to help them develop healthy habits. Children will be required to wash hands before eating, after using the restroom when returning from outdoors and other times as determined necessary by the staff. We ask that you encourage and reinforce this behavior to keep everyone as healthy as possible. Staff also follows this policy and washes their hands before any food preparation. Gloves are also worn when serving food.

The following procedures are considered best practice for hand washing.

1. Have a clean single service towel available
2. Turn on warm water
3. Moisten hands with water and apply soap
4. Rub hands vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 20 seconds.
5. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails and the back of the hands.
6. Rinse hands under running water.
7. Dry hands with a clean disposable paper towel.
8. Throw the towel away in a lined trash container.

**Handling Bodily Fluids**

Our staff will use precautions when handling potential exposure to blood and other bodily fluids. Gloves will be worn and taken off inside out and disposed of in lined trash containers. Any towel or other cleaning materials will be bagged and also disposed of in a lined trash container.

**Cleaning/Sanitizing Equipment**

The following steps will be followed for cleaning and sanitizing:

1. Wash the surface or article vigorously with warm soapy water.
2. Rinse the surface with clean water.
3. Submerge, wipe or spray the surface or the article with a sanitizing solution.
4. Let the article or surface air dry.

**Medication**

In order to dispense any medication to a child at school, we must receive prior written permission. A Permission to Administer Medication Form can be obtained from your child's teacher and must be filled out completely. New forms must be submitted for each month that medication is needed. All medications must be in the original container. Prescription medications must have the pharmacy label in place with the child's name listed. Dosage, instructions for administering the medicine and the physician's name must likewise be present.

**Accidents and Injuries**

Should any minor accident or injury occur involving your child, an Accident/Injury Report will be filled out by staff and presented to you. This form needs to be signed and returned before leaving the school.

**Emergency**

Should a medical emergency arise, resulting from either serious accident or some other cause, we will take the following immediate actions:

1. The staff person in charge will assess the extent of the injury. First aid will be administered on site.
2. A staff member will accompany the child to the Three Rivers Emergency

Room and insure that the child information record is present.

1. Another staff member will contact the parents to join the child.
2. The staff person will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

**Security Measures**

Your child can be released only to adults designated by you in writing. It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the school any time the child is to be picked up by a person not authorized on the enrollment form. Identification may be requested from the designated person.

The Building Blocks GSRP abides by all legally served court orders. We must have an official court order on file regarding parental custody matters.

We are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

**Michigan Clean Air Act**

In accordance with Michigan Clean Air Act requirements (Part 126 of Public Act 368 of 1978 as amended), smoking is prohibited in the school and on the grounds.

Persons witnessing a violation should first report it to a teacher in charge. The Michigan Department of Public Health or the local health department will issue citations to agencies and individuals who do not comply with the law.

**Parent Involvement**

**Open Door Policy**

You are welcome to visit the classroom at any time. Building Blocks GSRP Open Door Policy encourages you to do so, but please give notification prior to the visit to plan accordingly. Spending time with your child in school will help you become familiar with the preschool program.

**Parent Advisory Committee**

Parents are also encouraged to attend meetings and/or be a part of the parent advisory committee.

**Parent Communication**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled by teachers twice a year. Should you desire a conference with a teacher or the director, appointments may be scheduled at any time.

The best way parents can know what is going on in their child’s classroom is by communicating through the take home folder. Every day you child will bring home his/her folder. Please take the time to look through the papers inside and send it back to school the next day. This is where you should put all notes to the teacher.

**Celebrating the Diversity of Families**

If your family participates in a special celebration, has specific customs, knows an additional language, sings or plays music, enjoys certain activities, enjoys a favorite food, would like to share their job, or has any other talent our class would like to learn more about what makes our families special. We seek to recognize, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child and their family. Please consider sharing with our preschool classes. We will work with you to schedule a date and time that works for your family or you can send in items for the students explore.

**Licensing**

The State of Michigan licenses Building Blocks GSRP. The preschool maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and related corrective action plans. This notebook will be available to parents for review during regular school hours. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

**Staff Qualification**

Teaching staff are required to have at least a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. Assistant teachers are required to have an associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education. All staff must also pass a background check as required by the State of Michigan.

**Clothing**

1. Children should dress in comfortable, washable, weather appropriate clothing, free of complicated fastenings. Please do not dress your child in their best clothing. Although we take reasonable care to protect the children’s clothing, accidents do and will happen.

2. Exercise and fresh air are vitally important to your child's good health. There will be a time every day (excluding inclement weather conditions or temperatures below 20 degrees) for your child to spend in outside play activities. Be sure to send your child in weather appropriate clothing. **All outer garments, including coats, boots, hats and mittens should be labeled.**

3. Every child will need a complete change of labeled clothing, including socks and underwear to be kept at school. You can send them in a gallon size bag labeled with your child’s name.

**Personal Belongings and Toys**

Although we do not forbid it, we strongly discourage children from bringing toys and special things from home because of the potential for loss or damage.

**Discipline**

Building Blocks GSRP promotes a loving and positive attitude toward disciplining the children in our care.

1. Our staff shall guide and encourage for good behavior in an attempt to channel his or her energies in a positive direction. Positive forms of discipline include, redirecting the behavior verbally or nonverbally, assisting the child with the task at hand or giving the student a choice.

2. Our staff shall use positive forms of discipline which will encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. Our staff will treat conflict situations with children matter of fact manner.

3. The staff will involve children in resolving conflict.

* We will diffuse the conflict situation before moving into problem-solving by
  + Approaching the children calmly
  + Stopping hurtful actions
  + Acknowledging children’s feelings
* We will involve the children in identifying the problem by gathering information from the children and restating the problem.
* We will involve children in the process of finding and choosing a solution for the problem by asking children for solutions and encouraging them to choose one together.

4. If the above is not effective (especially when a child is causing harm to himself, other persons, or property), he/she will be seated away from the group. The staff person will discuss with the child his/her unacceptable behavior and what behavior is acceptable. When the child is ready, he/she will be invited to rejoin the group and participate fully in the activity.

**School Closing**

All GSRP classes are cancelled whenever Three Rivers Community Schools are closed. Announcements of closings for GSRP will be made on WWMT News Channel 3. If a two hour delay is called, all GSRP classes are cancelled.

**Grievance Policy**

If at any time you have a comment, complaint, or concern please contact your child’s teacher who will work together with you to resolve the issue. If after contacting and discussing with your child’s teacher you are still not satisfied please contact the program director.

**Introducing your Child to Preschool**

1. Tell your child what to expect, but be casual, not superlative. Too high expectations may be followed by disillusionment.

2. Explain that "Mother or Father will stay as long as you need him/her." When your child is ready, don't drag out the departure!

3. On the day of your first visit, allow sufficient time to dress, for your breakfast, and other morning routines, to permit you and your child to arrive at the center feeling relaxed and secure.

4. Refrain from warning your child that "You must be a good boy/girl". It is better to say "I will see you later".

5. Permit your child to cling to you if he/she wishes. You might ask to show you something he/she enjoys in the classroom.

6. Expect your child to grow in his/her own way, at his/her own pace in play experiences. Solitary play, watching others, parallel play and cooperative play are all normal patterns of play followed in that order by most children in the course of their development.

7. Release your child emotionally, especially from demands of perfection.

8. Limit conversation to essentials with other adults.

9. Do not discuss a child in his/her presence.

10. Relax: The others are not here to judge you and your child. They too are learning.

The most important thing to remember is that we are all participating in providing a safe and nurturing place for all of our children. This above all else is the main purpose.