

# Bunny Bears

Infant Toddler Center



Parents Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center – an intimate neighborhood childcare center. Our safe and nurturing environment is a place where our infants and toddlers are well cared for. In our child and family centered environment teachers build trust with families and children; nurture children providing encouragement, protection, security, stimulation and supervision. Children, families and teachers are a part of our community, where we learn from each other. We hope that our home-like environment will be a comfortable place for children to grow and learn as well as provide comfort to families while they are away from their children. Furthermore, we hope that it will also be a place for families to share their experiences and grow together.

We look forward to this special time!

### **The BunnyBears Philosophy**

We believe the early years of a child's life are the most important for growth and development. The purpose of early education is to help nurture and guide children to be creative, thoughtful, and loving, while learning to believe in themselves. Respectful, trusting and loving relationships between teachers, children, and their families are the key elements in creating the bonds necessary for providing the highest quality early care. Families' input and knowledge is especially valuable when transitioning infants into center care.

As Early Childhood Educators, we see all five selves in each child and acknowledge social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative growth. We strongly believe that a supportive, respectful and child-focused environment encourages children to reach their maximum potential. The teacher's role is to provide a safe, clean, and nurturing environment. The teacher is there to support and nurture children, providing encouragement, protection, stimulation and supervision. Art, music, literacy and early social interactions inspire the natural desire to learn.

We believe that the daily schedule for our Seedlings class should be personalized to meet each child's unique needs. As infants grow and mature, they are capable of adjusting to a simple routine, these routines help the children to feel safe and secure in their environment.

Having studied in the field of Early Education, we are strong advocates for children's free play, exploration and collaborative nature of learning. Inspired by social-constructivist systems thinking theories, including the work of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, and Loris Malaguzzi we see collaborative and constructive play as tool for children's language, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Each child is an individual, and we value their personal achievements instead of making comparisons between one child and another, because each child is very unique and special. We also acknowledge each infant's individual needs for growth and development.

Our early care goals for infants are to make them feel comfortable, loved, stimulated, acknowledged and well cared for in a safe, trusting and nurturing environment. Furthermore, we want to teach children how

to cooperate with others, form relationships, share, take turns, and use self-control. Learning this in early years can impact later social development and academic achievements.

### **BunnyBears Values**

- We value the sense of community and belonging.
- We value creative self-expression.
- We value free uninterrupted child's play.
- We value intellectual development and social emotional growth.
- We value mutual respect between children, teachers and families.
- We value open communication.
- We value kindness and empathy.
- We acknowledge and value children's individual strengths and capabilities.
- We value the environment that is created with children and for children.
- We value meaningful conversations and learning experiences.
- We value children's ideas which influence the curriculum.
- We value teachers' professional growth and learning.

### **Program**

BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center is a child-family centered program. Our daily learning and curriculum emerge from the children's interests and curiosities.

We provide our infants and toddlers with safe, rich and stimulating, high-quality environment. In building our environment we think about many comfortable, safe and creative spaces that support growth, stimulation and ultimately motivate learning, develop relationships and promote a child's strong sense of self and security.

Our program is not highly structured and can vary depending on each infant's needs; we do believe that infants and toddlers need a routine in order to feel safe and secure. As infants grow more comfortable and relaxed in our environment, we can slowly adjust their schedule and shift it into a simple routine to make them feel safe and secure in their group environment.

In our Toddler program we encourage children to work together in small groups and value peer interactions that provide opportunities to learn and explore the environment. Peer interactions and engagement with caregivers are valued and appreciated in infant months as well. Teachers' observations and documentation allows us to better understand each child's communication styles, physical needs, learning styles and interests. It also helps us to provide curriculum that is relevant and meaningful to the children.

BunnyBears is an environmentally friendly Center. We use natural cleaners throughout our environment.

We work to create a literacy rich environment. Spoken language is extremely important in developing the infant brain as well as to social-emotional growth. Primary relationships, shared language and concepts become the tools which children use to absorb social practices and construct their understanding of themselves and community. BunnyBears highly values and encourages self-expression through a wide variety of methods, including art media, storytelling, dancing, poetry, puppetry, etc.

All the teachers and caregivers at BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center are well educated and experienced in early childhood education, additionally they all attended infant toddler classes. We are committed to continuing our own growth and development as individuals and teachers by reading professional journals, attending workshops and conferences and supporting each other as colleagues.

### **Hours and Days**

BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center is open Monday through Friday 7:00am to 5:30 pm. We serve children ages 3 months – 36 months. We observe most of the La Mesa – Spring Valley School District Holidays, and we close for two weeks for Winter Break, one week for Spring Break and one week for Summer Break. You will be notified in advance of any other unexpected dates of closure. Calendar is posted on the website.

### **Fees**

There is a \$150 non-refundable application fee. Application forms for enrollment packet are posted on BunnyBears website [www.bunnybears.com](http://www.bunnybears.com). The packet includes California Childcare Licensing forms as well as BunnyBears forms that are required in order for your child to attend. In addition, we are required to keep record of immunizations, we will need the most up to date copy of your child's immunization record before they start. You will also be responsible for providing us the updated records each time they receive immunizations. Your child must remain current on their required immunizations in order to attend.

Tuition will be due on the first day of each month. If tuition is not paid by the fifth of the month, a late charge of \$10.00 per day shall apply. It can be paid using BrightWheel app bank transfer. There is no refund on paid tuition. While enrolled, monthly payment is required whether your child is in attendance or not, including summer months. There is no refund policy, and we require at least one full calendar month advanced notice should you decide to discontinue enrollment for any reason (please see Admissions agreement). The Center reserves the right to terminate enrollment for non-payment of fees.

Annual \$200 supplies fee that due in September.

### **Tuition and Age Groups**

Tuition is based on your child's class not on their age. We have three classrooms: Seedlings 3 months-12 months, Sprouts 12 months- 24 months and a dedicated classroom for toddler age group, Flowers 24 months – 36 months however, movement to the next class is based on availability.

Depending on the availability and parent preference your child might move to the Toddler room sooner (18months). In this case, you will pay the Toddler room tuition (24 months-36 months) according to

licensing regulations, children can stay in the Sprouts room till they turn 24 months. The tuition will be adjusted the month your child starts in their new classroom.

### **Drop off, Pick up & First days**

Our arrivals are scattered, and everyone arrives between 7: 00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. During this time teachers' main focus on greeting and comforting children. This is also a good time to let your teachers know about your child's morning, last night or any other notes.

However, the latest time the child can be brought to Infant Toddler Center is 9:30 a.m. with prior communication and approval from Director. Please note that drop offs directly after receiving shots will not be approved as young children need to be monitored very closely, often do not feel well and need extra comfort that is not possible to provide in a group care atmosphere.

Children must be signed in upon arrival at school with a full signature (no initials) and time. In addition, please write the estimated time of pick-up so that we can plan staff hours accordingly to provide proper ratios and have your child's things prepared.

Please note any special instructions, medications, or information that would be helpful, etc. through the Brightwheel messenger. Your child may be picked up and signed out by a parent/guardian or an authorized adult, at least 18 years of age with a photo ID (the full names of the authorized adult must be on the LIC700 form on file and on the Brightwheel App). We will not allow your child to be taken from the center by someone other than yourself or an authorized adult with ID. To avoid undue stress, be prompt in picking up your child. If you must be late for any reason, please send us a message in the Brightwheel app so we can tell your child. There will be a late charge of \$1.00 per minute after closing.

We ask families to not take children from the center in the middle of their day for special appointments and bring them back, for example lunches with grandparents, doctor's appointments etc. If your child is receiving services, such as speech, OT, PT or something similar please speak with the director to see if it is possible to schedule a time that would be least disruptive for the schedule.

The first days/weeks at the center are a time of adjustment. We recognize that each child's adjustment period will vary depending on his or her age, temperament and prior experience. It is our duty and responsibility to make each family, infant and toddler feel welcomed, attended to and well cared for. There are developmental stages that infants and toddlers go through where separation anxiety might peak, around 8/9 months and come back anytime between 12-24 months. Our educated and experienced staff are well aware of all of the developmental milestones that infants and toddlers progress through and will assist you with helpful tips and give you all the needed support while building trusting relationships with your families, as well as your infants and toddlers.

For some children it will be their first experience away from Mom and Dad and this might be frightening and overwhelming to a child. We ask that that you discuss separation at home (more so with your toddlers) in advance and discuss where family members will be when your child is in school. You are also encouraged to discuss your child's needs with us at the playdate or visit that we will schedule for both you and your child before they begin attending the program. This will give you and your child an opportunity to get acquainted with us and their new surroundings. This also gives us an opportunity to get to know you both, learn a little more about your child's current routine, interests, and past experience in care. This will allow us to start the journey of ongoing, open communication.

Drop offs are typically easiest for the children when they are short and sweet. When parents linger it sends a message to your child that you are unsure which scares them. Bring them in, if they are able to walk in it is great to allow them to, give a big hug, an "I love you," and "have fun," or "see later." Please remember to send information to the teachers through Brightwheel.

### **Mealtimes: Snack and Lunch**

Mealtimes are an important part of our curriculum. Mealtimes are a great learning experience for children, a time for social interaction, fostering self-help skills and good nutritional habits.

Parents provide 100% of the food for their children at our Infant Toddler Center. The children are served the food as it is sent, please be sure that things are cut to the appropriate size, peeled and ready to serve. When sending items such as grapes we ask that you cut them in quarters lengthwise.

### **Food Allergies**

Please notify your teachers if your child has any allergies or dietary restrictions so that we can place your child next to other children with that information in mind.

### **Seedlings Class**

Young infants in the Seedlings class will be fed according to their own schedule written by the families on the Infant Toddler Personal Care Plan. As they grow and start eating solid foods, their eating needs will change, and the eating times will be adjusted toward the group schedule in order to prepare for the next class.

-Parents thereby control baby's exposure to new foods that might lead to allergic reactions. We ask that you give your child new foods at least three times at home before sending it to school.

-If you are doing baby led weaning, or providing whole foods instead of purees, we encourage you to send the same foods to school. Food should always be sent in the way you would offer it to your infant at home: size, softness, etc.

-Formula bottles can be made at home or powder can be sent in a sectioned container with pre-measured amounts per bottle. The container must be labeled with your child's name and exact amount of formula in each section.

-Please bring clean bottles labeled with your child's name and the date for each bottle feeding. As well as one extra in case of emergency to stay at school in your child's cubby along with a single serving of formula or at least one serving of frozen breast milk to keep in the freezer in the kitchen labeled with the name, date and amount.

- "Cocktail" bottles, half milk/half formula, half formula/half breast milk must be mixed up at home and brought to the center in bottles labeled with your child's name and the date.

-Bottles will be warmed up in a bottle warmer. Bottles and food containers will be sent home "dirty" so they can be washed and sanitized at home. Bottles will be sent home with the milk that was not consumed so that you can easily see what they consumed. Infants have one hour from the time they start to drink

the bottle, if the infant needs a short break to burp and digest before continuing their bottle it will be offered throughout that hour but then will be marked “used”.

### **Breast Milk**

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to do so within the Center setting. Staff supports the practice by willingly accepting bottles of breast milk, by allowing, even encouraging, the mother to drop by for feedings for children in the Seedlings Class, and by providing a comfortable place for mother and baby to sit and nurse. Fresh breast milk will be stored for 24 hours in the refrigerator.

Parents may also bring breast milk to the BunnyBears Center to be stored for up to three months frozen. Containers must be clearly marked with your child’s name, the amount and the date. Milk that exceeds this time frame will be returned.

### **Sprouts and Flowers**

Children will bring an AM snack, lunch and a PM snack. We ask that the AM and PM snacks are packed separately and labeled with your child’s name and AM or PM. Lunch should come in a Bento-like box that has a tray that can be removed and used to serve the children. An example of this is the Bentgo boxes that can be found on Amazon. Lunches will be kept indoors but not in a refrigerator, we also don’t warm the food, so please keep that in mind as well when choosing what to send. Always feel free to ask the teachers for ideas, they are happy to share.

We encourage you to pack healthy, nutritious lunches. Lunch may include protein source, fruits and vegetables, but *not candy or sweets (things that are frosted or contain chocolate, including heavily sweetened home baked goods)*. Children transition to nap time after they eat their lunch, and we wish everyone to rest well without any effects of sugary treats. Because we expect parents to provide children with healthy options in their lunches, the children decide what and how much they eat. They may choose the order in which they eat their foods. For example, if you do not want your child to only eat crackers or carb filled snacks then we suggest that you don’t send them in their lunch as they will likely eat those first and may not be hungry for the rest of their lunch. We will not force children to eat or use food as reward or punishment.

Packing and bringing your own lunch is very comforting for children as it connects school to home and home to school. We encourage you to pack your child’s bento box and containers of AM and PM snack in a special lunchbox, which your child will likely attempt to carry into school. We encourage you to keep an ice pack in their lunchbox to keep the lunch items cool; refrigerator won’t be available for storing lunch items. Please label the lunch boxes and Tupperware. Children are provided child sized utensils at the center.

The children all sit together at small tables in child sized chairs to eat their meals. Children are always closely supervised when eating and asked to stay seated. During mealtime teachers sit on the floor next to each table, they encourage children to eat independently and assist when needed. Please keep in mind that some foods might be challenging for children to eat independently (rice, couscous, quinoa) and might not be the best choice for group setting environment.

## **Water**

We ask that all children have a metal water cup with a lid that will remain at school. The cup needs to be dishwasher safe and have a dishwasher proof label with your child's name on it. We have drinking water delivered to the center and have glass pitchers of water in each classroom to ensure that the children always have access to water. The water cups are brought outside as well, we remind the kids to take water breaks throughout the day.

Water and milk are the only beverages that we serve at BunnyBears. In the Sprouts Classroom there is a mini fridge that will keep milk cold throughout the day, and it will be offered at mealtimes. In the Flowers class milk is offered only at AM snack. Baby bottles are not used in the Sprouts or Flowers classroom.

## **Nap/Rest Time**

Infants in the Seedlings class nap according to their own schedules that will be written by the family on the Infant Toddler Personal Care Plan. When entering a group care setting, it takes time for infants to adjust to the sounds and smells of the new surroundings.

First weeks are usually the adjustment weeks and it is expected for the infants to sleep less soundly than they would at home. Darkened space and white noise are a part of the nap time set up.

If an infant should fall asleep while being rocked or lightly bounced, they will be put in their cribs to continue their sleep. Any child who pulls themselves up to stand in the crib will nap on a mat regardless of age.

Staff will position infants under the age of 12 months on their backs when placed in cribs to sleep. If there is a medical reason the child should sleep in a different position it will need to be indicated on the LIC 9227 Individual Infant Sleeping Plan and there will need to be documentation provided by the Dr. to keep on file. Positioning infants on their back to sleep will decrease the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Staff will:

- Lay infants on their backs to sleep
- Require a note from the child's medical doctor stating why an alternative sleep position is needed if families request other sleep positions. Any positioning device will also require a note from the medical doctor stating the need.
- Use cribs only with firm, tight-fitting mattresses and no bumper pads.
- Keep the infant's head uncovered during sleep.
- Dress the infant depending on the room temperature and will not overdress the infant.
- We cannot use a swaddle per licensing requirements. An alternative method is a sleep sack that you can bring to the center for your child.
- Supervise sleeping infants at all times as well as document sleep checks every 15 minutes



Organic cotton crib sheets are provided by the center and washed using baby sensitive laundry detergent.

Toddlers nap following lunch. Children will need their own blanket, crib sheet, and a king-sized pillowcase to store their nap items in, all labeled with child's name or initials. You may also send a small soft toy to cuddle, these items stay at the center and are laundered with sensitive detergent. Teacher/caregivers rub backs, sit with toddlers and use sound machines to help children relax at naptime.

### **Diapers and Potty Learning**

Parents will provide diapers and wipes for their children at the center. We encourage families to keep a sleeve (containing two rows) of diapers in child's cubby. Teacher will send a message via Brightwheel when more are needed. Please do not bring boxes of diapers and wipes since storage space is limited at the center.

Due to strict sanitary requirements for cloth diapers, BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center is asking families to not bring cloth diapers.

To use diaper creams on your child, we will ask families to sign a form, stating the cream brand and simple explanation how to use the cream. If your child needs a prescription diaper cream applied, you will need to fill out a medication log and the cream will need to come in the box with the prescription label from the pharmacy with your child's name, directions and date. If your child has a severe diaper rash; with open sores, that is bleeding, that impacts their mood and or ability to participate in daily activities, it is best for your child to remain at home until it has improved.

Potty learning is encouraged and supported by center staff. We ask families to communicate with staff when they start seeing signs that their child is ready to start potty learning. The timing and strategies will be discussed with families following each child's personal timeline. Small toilets are available for toddlers who are interested in practicing going on a potty. Due to sanitary restriction and licensing code, portable potties are not allowed.

Please note that while your child can be very successful at home, they might still have difficulties at school. We ask you to keep up the good work at home and allow your child to get comfortable with using the toilet in the comfort of their home. Potty learning might take longer at school because of distractions in the group setting, supervision (children are not allowed to go to the bathroom on their own) and proximity to the bathroom. Children are asked and reminded to go use a potty during hand washing, diapering routines, after meals, before going outside and other transitions.

All children succeed at their own pace with patience, support and encouragement. Keeping open communication with your classroom teacher and trusting her observations from school is important and helpful for all parties.

### **"Shoe Free" Environment**

With infants and toddlers commonly on the floor, we want to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in our center. We practice a "shoe-free" policy inside our classrooms. We ask that adults entering our classrooms slip a pair of shoe covers over their shoes or remove their shoes. We also remove the children's shoes and socks to prevent falls on the tile floors.

This helps us to prevent outside contaminants from being brought into the space and spread onto the carpet and floor. The infants spend much of their time exploring on the floor, so it is best that these areas be kept as clean as possible.

### **Clean Environment**

Our caregivers wash their hands after diapering or assisting in the bathroom as well as before and after feeding. Toys and frequently used or touched surfaces are sanitized throughout the day, children's bedding remains at the center and is washed weekly, and rugs shampooed every six months. We use natural cleaners throughout our environment.

### **Termination Policy**

We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of child

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating and will give the same courtesy in return. Parents are required to give a minimum of at least one full calendar month notice, as that is the way billing is processed (notice is to be given prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> of the last month or an additional month will be charged). We will give two weeks' notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not the child is in attendance. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance.

### **Transitioning to BunnyBears Preschools**

In order to continue on to one of our two BunnyBears Preschools, you must submit an enrollment application to the director of the La Mesa or Santee/Fletcher Hills location. Please reach out to schedule school tours, meet the preschool directors and submit the applications in timely manner.

The new enrollment applications along with \$150 application fee must be submitted at least 12 months prior to starting date in order to secure the spot at the preschool and it is family's choice and responsibility to do so in a timely manner.

BunnyBears Preschools enroll new children in August and September, at the beginning of each new school year. Children must be two before enrolling in preschool, because of this, children who turn two after July 31st will transition to preschool the following school year, unless a space comes available mid-year.

*It is in our best interests to continue care for your child in our preschool programs, however, there is no guarantee there will be a space, unless you follow the necessary steps to secure the space in the preschool: pay the registration fee, contact the preschool director and tour the preschool.*

### **Parent Involvement and Communication**

Families are encouraged and welcomed to visit and spend time with their child at the center. For most children, a second goodbye is more than they can handle, so we would ask for the sake of your child, the other children and the teachers that, if you would like to spend time at the center, please do so at pick up time.

Parent/guardians receive a daily report concerning diaper changes, eating and napping via BrightWheel app. The Brightwheel app also allows you to see pictures of your child throughout their day. Please know that our priority will always be the supervision and safety of the children and we do our very best to add photos when possible. Learning stories and mini documentation will be written to show your child's developmental milestones and other achievements and will be kept in their portfolio that will transfer with them when they move up to the BunnyBears Preschool.

Daily communication between families and teachers is important and valuable. Please let us know if there are any changes in your child's life. Parents, teachers and children are all essential parts of our community. We believe that the partnership between family and school enhances your child's educational experience. Please know that while teachers stay busy in the classroom, you can always schedule a phone call to discuss your child's progress or any concerns.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in our program, there are many ways to help, sometimes we will send a message asking for a certain recyclable item, you could come in at the end of the day and read to the kids, do a special project or share your talents in another way, such as singing, playing an instrument or dancing. We are open to your ideas of how you can be a part of our community.

We will aim to have two school workdays throughout the year, when parents can assist teachers with improvements to our environment. Workdays generally take place on Saturdays 9am – 12pm. The workdays are invaluable in creating and maintaining a safe and exciting environment for children as well as having the opportunity to strengthen relationships between teachers and parents. Family picnics and Holiday gatherings will be announced throughout the year.

### **Physical Examinations**

The state requires that before your child begins school, they must have a medical examination and all the required immunizations.

### **Sick Children**

Children often get sick when starting group care; especially when it is their first time being in a group setting. It is all a part of building your child's immunity and your children will surely have a much stronger immune system than their peers once they go to elementary school. If your child shows signs of illness,

please be sure to keep them at home for the well-being of both your child and the other children. The following is a list of symptoms to guide you in deciding if your child should attend school.

Your child should not attend if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Any undiagnosed rash
- Diarrhea – runny, watery, or bloody stools (regardless of the cause i.e. side effect of antibiotics as it is difficult to contain and although it may not be “contagious” it is not safe or healthy to have fecal matter leaking onto surfaces that other children use)
- Vomiting – two or more times in a 24 – hour period or once with other symptoms
- Sore throat- in young children/infants you may notice decreased eating or drinking or excessive drooling as they do not want to swallow
- Cough – new, productive, barky, or wheezy
- Pink eye and or eye discharge – goopy eye discharge in the eyelashes or around the eye, redness in the whites of the eye (child may return with a Dr. note stating they are not contagious or after the have been on the prescribed antibiotic for at least 24 hours) We are happy to administer the medication at BunnyBears Infant Toddler please see the medication section below for more information.
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Unusual irritability or lethargy
- Covid- we will follow the current guidelines set by the state and local health departments
- Chicken Pox, until all sores have dried and crusted
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Any communicable illness

Your child’s fever needs to be controlled without the use of medication (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, etc.) for at least 24 hours prior to returning to the BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center. If your child’s last fever is at 9:45 am for example they may not return the next day.

In case of communicable illness, rashes (HMF, Chickenpox, STREP) we will ask for doctor’s note before returning to school.

We ask that you keep these policies in mind when your child is ill. Beyond that we also ask that you assess your child's state of health in terms of their needs. Some children may no longer have symptoms (vomiting, fever, etc.) after 24 hours, but may still not feel well enough to be in a group environment. If your child is unable to participate in daily activities due to emotional or physical discomfort, we will ask you to come and pick up your child for further observations.

Our teachers check each child daily for symptoms of colds, fatigue and contagious disease. You will be contacted to pick up your child if they show signs of illness. In the event where you cannot be reached, we will notify a person listed on your emergency contact list. Please, keep this information up-to-date.

If your child has any bruising, bumps or injuries that occurred at home please inform your teachers via Brightwheel messenger when you bring your child to school.

BunnyBears also has a "No Nits" policy regarding head lice. In case of head lice outbreak your child can come back to school only if they are nit free. Teachers will be checking children coming to school and if they see any nits or head lice, your child will be sent back home immediately with their parent or guardian.

### **Medication –**

If prescription medication needs to be administered to your child, please fill out the Medication Consent Log. Medicine needs to be in its original prescription bottle, clearly labeled with the current date, child's name, doctor's name, and dosage printed by the pharmacy. Please hand medicine to the teacher in a ziploc bag labeled with the child's name, with the medication form inside and make sure that the pharmacy label is present even if it is on the box it came in.

Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container showing printed dosage amounts and expiration date. Any request by parents for administration of nonprescription medications that is not supported by dosage information on the original container will require a doctor's written instructions. Administration of both prescription and non-prescription medication requires written parental authority on the Medication Consent Log. Consent Logs are completed in the classroom with the date, time and initials of person administering the medication. Non-prescription medication such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) can be administered for teething pain. A teacher will reach out via Brightwheel Messenger for approval before administering these medications.

We cannot administer medication as fever-reducer. The clinical definition of a fever is 100.4 degrees or above. Please refer to the section above for more detailed information on the sick policy. If a child has a fever, the parent may not bring in a fever reducer and administer in lieu of taking the child home. Medication cannot be given by the parent or the teacher if the purpose is to reduce a fever. Per state licensing regulations children with a fever will be sent home, the child must be picked up as soon as possible as we must isolate them from the rest of the children. If we cannot reach the parents through Brightwheel Messenger we will call the parent/guardians if they do not answer we will continue down the list of people listed on the paperwork in your child's file. If it will take you longer than 30 minutes to get to the center please give us an estimated time of arrival.

In case of a medical or dental emergency teachers will call 911 (if necessary); child's family will be contacted immediately. Please keep your primary phone number updated at all times.

### **Birthdays**

Your child's birthday is a special day. We enjoy being a part of your child's birthday celebration. At the Infant Toddler Center we prefer doing a fun activity together to celebrate instead of eating a treat.

Some examples or ideas would be sidewalk chalk, a large classroom puzzle, water activity, a special book, please check with the classroom teacher for more ideas.

### **Clothing**

While at school your child participates in active, busy and messy play and work. Please dress your child in clothes that can be easily washed and possibly stained. Children should concentrate on their play, not on keeping clean. You should also provide clothes that are simple and free of complicated fastenings (belts, suspenders, overalls etc.), so the child can assert their independence by using the toilet without any help. Once your child is standing on their own, without support, we will at times change children standing up, it is very helpful and much faster if they are no longer wearing onesies. All shoes should be closed toed to eliminate stubbed toes and be safe for running and climbing. Please send shoes that are easy to put on, please no shoes with laces.

We suggest that you send a sweater or jacket every day or keep an extra one in your child's cubby. It is important that there is always at least one spare set of old clothes to be kept at school in case a spill or a mishap occurs. Please include pants, shorts, shirt, underwear, socks and please replace them anytime clothes are sent home. Always label everything, shoes, jackets, clothing, hats, cups, bags, and food containers. If items come in and are not labeled, they will likely be labeled by a staff member which takes time away from other things.

### **Play**

Infant/toddlers learn through play. Large blocks of time are allowed for self-directed play so children can explore their environment. Many activities are available from which the child may choose, including sensory experiences, art, music reading, small and large motor development, water play and lots of toys. Children are encouraged to explore each activity at whatever level feels comfortable.

Teacher/caregivers allow children to discover their own capabilities through encouragement and letting children succeed by doing what they can without help. Messy play is a must with infants and toddlers. Please dress your child in comfortable clothes that can get dirty.

### **Cubbies**

Each child has their own cubby where they can keep their personal belongings, a set of extra clothes, extra diapers, and pack of wipes. Some of the classes also store lunch boxes/bags in the cubbies as well. Please keep in mind that the space inside the cubbies is limited.

### **Field Trips**

We don't anticipate many field trips throughout the year. Whenever planning a field trip, we allow ourselves plenty of time to give everyone notice and create the best adult/child ratios with an active parent's participation and involvement in planning and facilitating the field trip.

## **Toys from Home**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. Children who bring toys from home will be asked to keep them in their cubbies. If your child needs a blanket, stuffed animal or other transitional object in order to feel more secure, they are welcome to bring that to school. Action figures, toy guns and other objects which encourage violence in play are strictly prohibited.

## **Biting**

Children biting other children are unavoidable occurrences of group childcare, especially with toddlers. It is a common happening in any childcare program. When it happens, and sometimes continues, it can be scary, very frustrating, and very stressful for children, parents, and staff. Every child in the Infant and Toddler classrooms is a potential biter or will potentially be bit.

It is important to understand that because a child bites, it does not mean that the child is “mean” or “bad” or that the parents of the child who bites are “bad” parents or they are not doing their job as parents to make this stop happening. Biting is purely a sign of the developmental age of the child. It is a developmental phenomenon – it often happens at predictable times for predictable reasons tied to children’s ages and stages.

Why do they bite?

Every child is different. Some bite more than others; or some may not bite at all. The group care setting is where the biting derives its significance. If a child has not really been around other children very much, they probably would not bite because neither the cause for biting or opportunities have presented themselves. There is always the possibility that any child, including your own, can be either a biter or be bitten. Group care presents challenges and opportunities that are unique from home. The children are surrounded by many others for hours at a time. Even though there are plenty of toys and materials available for all the children, two or three children may want that one particular toy. The children are learning how to live in a community setting. Sometimes that is not easy. Biting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or caregivers. Confidentiality is also practiced with biting. We cannot tell a parent who bit their child.

There are many possible reasons as to why an infant or toddler may bite:

1. Teething.
2. Impulsiveness and lack of control. Babies sometimes bite just because there is something there to bite. It is not intentional to hurt, but rather exploring their world.
3. Making an impact. Sometimes children will bite to see what reactions happen.
4. Excitement and overstimulation. Simply being very excited, even happily so, can be a reason a child may bite. Very young children don’t have the same control over their emotions and behaviors as some preschoolers do.
5. Frustration. Frustrations can be over a variety of reasons – wanting a toy someone else has, not having the skills needed to do something, or wanting a caregiver’s attention. Infants and toddlers are simply lacking the language and social skills necessary to express all their needs, desires, and problems. Biting will often be the quickest and easiest way of communicating.

What do the teachers do in response to children who bite?

It is our job to provide a safe setting in which no child needs to hurt another to achieve his or her ends and in which the normal range of behavior is managed (and biting is normal in group care). The name of the child who bites will not be released because it serves no useful purpose and can make a difficult situation even more difficult. Punishment does not work to change a child who bites: neither delayed punishment at home, which a child will not understand, nor punishment at the center, which will not be used and would make the situation worse.

There are several things the teachers do to assess the biting situation and what can be done to prevent it from happening again. Teachers can try to minimize the behavior by:

- Letting the biting child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable.
- Avoiding any immediate response that reinforces the biting, including dramatic negative attention. The teachers will tell the child that “Biting hurts” and the focus of caring attention is on the bitten child. The biter is talked to on a level that they can understand. The teacher will help the child who is biting work on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner, including using language if the child is able.
- Examining the context in which the biting occurred and looking for patterns. Was it crowded? Too many toys? Was the biting child getting hungry/tired/frustrated?
- Not casually attributing willfulness or maliciousness to the child. Infants explore anything that interests them with their mouths, and that includes others’ bodies and limbs!

What do the teachers do when biting becomes frequent?

When biting changes from a relatively unusual occurrence (a couple times a week) to a frequent and expected occurrence, it will be addressed with added precautions. The teachers will keep track of every occurrence, including attempted bites, and note location, time, participants, and circumstances.

- “Shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite. This technique involves having a teacher with a child who bites. This teacher would be able to then anticipate biting situations and to teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior in potential biting situations.
- The teachers may consider changes to the room environment that may minimize congestion, commotion, competition for toys and materials, or child frustration.

Teachers will record and communicate the biting incidents (to both parties), make a plan of action and make sure that families are aware of the group dynamics at school. While we understand that biting is a part of child development, BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center reserves the right to terminate the child if they are continuously biting, affecting other children’s wellbeing in care.

Discipline Policies as stated in section 101323.1 in the Manual of Policies and Procedures of the Child Care Centers, Division 12: Any form of discipline or punishment which violates a child’s personal rights, shall not be permitted.

A child’s personal rights are outlined in Section 101223:

1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.



2. To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/hers needs.

3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, or other actions of a punitive nature, including, but not limited to: interference with the daily living functions, including eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.

4. To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative informed, by the licensee of the law regarding complaints including, but not limited to, information on confidentiality and the address and telephone number of the Department's complaint unit.

At BunnyBears we treat children with respect and we operate on the premise that young children are never "bad." Inappropriate behavior that requires discipline is usually the result of the child's level of development. We believe in working with the child on their development level and helping the child to understand that the behavior is bad and not the child. We always take extra steps to help a child understand the concept of rules and consequences.

We do not use "time out" at BunnyBears instead we try to give the child the tools to work through problems on their own. If a child needs to be removed from a situation they will sit down with a teacher who will help him/her to calm down and to figure out solutions to the problem. Each child is unique in its own way and teachers respect and acknowledge children's feelings.

Instead of asking the children to "say sorry" we ask them to "check on their friend" the youngest children that are not yet speaking do this by gently touching the other child's arm at BunnyBears. It allows children to take care of their friends with more empathy than just saying "sorry" and give a friend a hug, go get a tissue, an ice pack, dust their pants, bring their cuddly toy, sit together and read a book.

At BunnyBears we strive to create an environment that will enhance positive behavior in children, allowing children to feel a part of BunnyBears Family where we all take care of each other. We help children to gain confidence to solve problems on their own, encourage them to speak up and listen to others. When a child has the self-esteem to talk about their feelings and the respect for others, to listen to their peers, a lot of discipline problems get eliminated.

From Infant classroom to Toddler classrooms, feelings are being acknowledged every day, kindness and caring for each other is modeled to children amongst caregivers and children.

When there are concerns about a child's behavior the director will schedule a meeting to discuss an action plan and/or the possible need for further evaluation by a third party (behavior therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist). The timeline will be set for close observations and a meeting to revisit the concerns will also be set.

BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center reserve the right to terminate a child, please see Termination Policy.

### **Key Access**

BunnyBears facility is always locked. The key code is provided to families to enter the center.

**Emergency plan** – In case we need to relocate, a note will be posted indicating our relocation site and parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

**Acknowledgment:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ parent or legal guardian of, \_\_\_\_\_,  
acknowledge that I have read and understand the terms and conditions of my child's enrollment  
at BunnyBears Infant Toddler Center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent or legal guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date