**Behavior Guidance:**

Children at Blessed Beginnings will be taught by modeling Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS).  We hope that they learn respect for the personal rights and property of others.  We use several techniques which help children to internalize rules and become self- directed in their behavior. These techniques include giving choices, problem solving, natural and logical consequences, refocusing attention, redirecting, calm down time, separation from the group and/or seeking additional staff support from another staff member. When a child displays undesirable behaviors, one of the above techniques will be used to remedy the situation. It is the goal of Blessed Beginnings to provide a safe, healthy environment for all children.

Blessed Beginnings utilizes a school-wide behavior guidance strategy to create a more positive environment, using three broad expectations: Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible. Each classroom implements the same 5 behavior guidance strategies to build a positive environment: use walking feet, use your listening ears, use our inside voice, use nice touches and take turns with our friends. Using this wording at home will help develop a sense of unity between home and school. We work with children to help them find alternatives to responding physically in stressful situations and strive to make the center a safe place where hitting, biting, and hurting our friends or teachers is not acceptable. Different age levels and mixes of children can bring about different behaviors. Your child may not behave in the same way at school as they would in a home setting. Some of our children have been exposed to situations where they are with many other children or siblings. Other children may not have this exposure and therefore react differently in a group setting. All children are testing their boundaries and learning from their actions and behaviors. Please keep in mind that our teachers deal with many children on a daily basis, and are unable to spend long periods of time on behavior interventions and guidance.

**Blessed Beginnings cannot tolerate certain behaviors:**

* verbal outbursts – screaming, swearing, malicious name calling
* physical actions – striking, biting, pushing, kicking, hair pulling, throwing objects, tantrum throwing or any other intent to harm another child or staff member
* stealing or lying
* destruction of personal or school property
* inability to follow reasonable requests

All behaviors will be documented using the “Behavior Documentation Form”, parents/guardians will be notified of behaviors as they occur via Brightwheel and parents will be required to sign the form at pick-up time. Depending on the behavior, an observation form may also be completed and will also need a parent signature. Should we see re-occurrences or excessive behaviors, a meeting will be set, with the teacher and/or an administrator to discuss the concerns.

When a child causes a physical/harmful action to another, the parent will be notified immediately. Should another offense occur on the same day, the child will be sent home. Depending on the severity of the first offense, a phone call or Brightwheel message may be made for you to come and pick-up your child. If behaviors such as: hurting other children or staff, and/or destroying of facility items occur, your child may be suspended for a 3-day period (you will be expected to pay for your child’s absence during suspension).

We understand that kids will be kids, but we can be patient only as long as the emotional and physical safety of the children in our care is protected. When we determine, a child has serious discipline problems, the teacher, or Director may request a conference with the parent or legal guardian. If an understanding cannot be reached, we reserve the right to terminate our contract in order to guarantee the comfort and safety of the other children in our care.

Prior to denial of service, the director and teachers will meet with parents or guardians in an attempt to establish a plan for the child that will allow for continued enrollment.  This may involve an alternate schedule or perhaps referral to an outside agency or specialist for screening, assessment, and possible follow-up services.  Failure to help develop or follow the established plan may result in termination of services.

We will follow some steps to help ensure positive behavior:

* Children are kept busy - given positive attention, notice and praise – positive actions, sharing, taking turns, and kindness towards others are modeled and expected.
* Children are redirected, or distracted when a negative situation arises – focus is on the behavior, rather than the child.
* Children will be placed in special quiet area to collect themselves – this will help teach inappropriate behavior and physical harm to other children will not be accepted.
* Staff may re-assess the classroom environment, appropriateness of activities and supervision methods.

All situations will be calmly, gently, and positively discussed with your child, focusing on the behavior exhibited. After an understanding is reached, your child may return to the activity or be redirected to another activity. Children will be asked to apologize to the other child(ren) involved when developmentally appropriate. This method not only stops the offending behavior, but also teaches consequences, responsibility and empathy in a positive manner. We at Blessed Beginnings believe in positive reinforcement and will always attempt to acknowledge good behaviors.

For children under the age of 18 months, it is most effective to remove the child from the situation and redirect their attention elsewhere. An explanation will be made, but children of this age are rarely able to understand what they have done. At this age their attention span is usually short, so redirection usually works. We also have a series of books we read to the children about appropriate behaviors.

Sometimes a child’s interpretation of what has occurred at school is not an exact measurement of what has truly occurred.  Parents and guardians are encouraged to discuss any concerns with caregivers, no matter how trivial it may seem.  A friendly relationship between parents and staff benefits everyone, especially the children.

**Biting Policy:**

Blessed Beginnings recognizes that biting is an undesirable, yet age appropriate, toddler behavior. We understand how upsetting it can be when a child bites or is bitten by another child. We also understand that toddlers bite for many different reasons, including: sensory exploration, teething, to determine cause and effect, attention, imitation, asserting their independence, frustration, fatigue and stress. Young children’s language skills are not yet developed and their impulse control is still developing, this can lead children to bite as a means of making their needs known. We realize biting is a concern among parents and we strive to minimize biting. Therefore, Blessed Beginnings does not focus on punishment for children who bite, but rather on teaching effective techniques to help the children learn more appropriate behaviors, as well as preventing biting before it occurs. Children are offered teethers in many cases.

When biting occurs, our staff members immediately care for the child who was bitten. Staff members address a child who has bitten in a firm manner, telling the child that biting hurts. The child is redirected to another activity, presented with an appropriate object to bite, or otherwise distracted. A biting report is completed for each biting incident to be given to the parent, and is also recorded in the center’s Injury Log. The parents of the child who bit are also informed via Brightwheel message and a biting report. These reports are signed by the teacher, and the parent. All information is kept strictly confidential.

If a child bites frequently, Staff members may “shadow” a child to help prevent him/her from biting other children. Verbal and sign language are strongly encouraged. Staff members also help the child to identify his/her feelings through acknowledgement. In addition, we work very closely with the parents to find effective solutions to changing the behavior. Administration may also observe the classroom for any supervision issues and to ensure that staff members conduct themselves appropriately when biting occurs.
**Excessive biting however, will not be tolerated**. If all attempts to stop the biting fail, **we reserve the right to remove the biting child from our program by using the suspension and termination policy.**

Written materials are available regarding biting, which may offer useful information to help parents fully understand biting behavior. Please see your child’s teacher if you wish to get literature on biting.

**Expulsion Policy:**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we will have to suspend or terminate a child and/or family from our facility. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family or the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

Suspension of Services:

* the child is at risk of causing serious injury either to other children, staff or him/herself. In some cases you may be required to pick your child up prior to the end of the day
* failure to pay or habitual lateness in payments
* failure to complete required forms including the child’s health report and immunization records
* habitual lateness when picking up your child

You will be informed of the length of suspension. In cases of failure to return forms or payments, services will be suspended until the forms have been returned or payment has been made.

Termination of services:

* Failure of child’s ability to adjust in a reasonable amount of time
* Uncontrollable outbursts or tantrums and/or physical or verbal abuse
* Ongoing physical or verbal abuse of any kind directed toward other children, staff and /or BB property and parent is not actively seeking help or services for the child
* Disrespect to any staff member, other children or families. Including: parent verbal abuse to staff, parent threatens physical harm or exhibits intimidating actions towards staff
* Inability to meet a child/parent’s specific needs
* Failure to pay
* Habitual late payments or NSF
* Failure to follow policy and procedures
* Failure to follow sickness policy
* Failure to follow discipline policy
* Forcing staff to intervene in custody or personal issues, such as subpoenaing for court or requesting information that is not shared with another parent.
* If, in the administrator’s opinion, the continuation of the child or parent as part of Blessed Beginnings is detrimental to the well-being of the other children in care

Your child or family will not be terminated from services if:

* A complaint has been filed to the Office of Child and Early Development regarding the center’s alleged violations of the state regulations.
* Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center