**Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare LLC**

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**Family**

**Handbook**

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**Preface**

Caring for Our Children : National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3 rd edition, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, has been officially adopted as the primary reference for health and safety policies by Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare LLC. A second related resource, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics, is also used as a reference.

The program policies outlined in this document are specific to the current staff and children served. In any case when these policies do not cover a specific event or situation, reference should be made to Caring for Our Children and/or Managing Infectious Diseases for guidance.

**Disclaimer**

This Parent Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks or materials previously distributed. The information contained within this Family Handbook is considered property of the Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare LLC and may not be reproduced without permission from the owner.

I further understand and acknowledge that the center may change, add or delete any policies or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit in its sole judgment and discretion.

**Welcome**

Welcome to Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare LLC.

Blessed Beginnings opened the Loyalsock facility in January of 2006 and the South Williamsport facility in August of 2011. In 2013 we moved our Loyalsock locationThe decision to open a childcare facility was to provide quality, reliable care for my own children.

As a certified teacher I had a difficult time deciding to leave my first child in care to pursue my teaching career. After staying home for 6 months with my oldest, I went back to work. My mother was able to watch him for the first six weeks, and then we placed him in childcare. Unfortunately, things did not work out as we had hoped, and a friend continued his care. When she returned to work, we had 4 more unsuccessful attempts with care, along with having another child. The decision was made to use my teaching experience in a different capacity.

This handbook has been prepared to help you, the parent/guardian of the child, to become better acquainted with Blessed Beginnings. You will find many of our policies and operating procedures explained within these pages. By taking the time to read this handbook, it is my hope you will feel more confident in your family’s adjustment into our childcare program. We suggest that you keep your handbook on hand for reference throughout the year. Whenever you have questions, please feel free to call or stop by the office.

We look forward to working with you and your family and hope to make your childcare experience the best it can be.

Thank You

Tatum & Andy Heiser

Owners

#### Mission Statement

Blessed Beginnings’ mission is to foster children’s educational needs, as well as their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. The first five years of a child’s life are vital. We, here at Blessed Beginnings will see to it that every child with us will learn and grow in a manner that will enable them to succeed in school and life. We are dedicated to instilling family values in a respectful manner. We will provide every child with a safe, secure,

#### Philosophy

Blessed Beginnings is committed to your child’s profound wellbeing. We will provide a safe, stimulating and nurturing environment, while building self-esteem and promoting values in a manner that is respectful to you and your child.

The first five years in a child’s life are vital in their development. Children begin exploring the world around them through books, music, play, creative activities, as well as experimenting with nature and science by being outdoors and in the community. We will ensure that your child has a Blessed Beginning.

#### Objectives and Goals educational, and value-oriented environment so that they can truly have a blessed beginning.

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✰ Development of intellectual, emotional and physical needs to

build happy, healthy children.

✰ Development of social skills through manners, values and

interaction with other children and the community.

✰ Fostering creativity through creative play and exploration of

music, story time and physical activities.

✰ Fostering positive views of self, home, school and community.

✰ Provide nutritious foods, physical health, rest time and hygiene

guidance.

#### Your Child’s Education

**Program Description:**

Blessed Beginnings provides a high-quality early education and childcare program. Our Loyalsock facility is open between the hours of 6:30 am. and 5:30 pm and serves our Pre-K counts program.Our South Williamsport facility is open between the hours of 6:30 am. and 5:30 pm. Monday through Friday and serves children ages six (6) weeks to ten (10) years.

**Daily Schedule:**

Opening to 9:00 – breakfast and free play

8:30-11/11:30 – structured educational activities / curriculum time / outside play

11/11:30 – lunch

11:30/12 – 2:00 – quiet / rest time - free play for those who do not nap

2:30-3 – snack

3- closing – free play / outside play

\*Please see your child’s individual classroom for their class schedule.

Most educational activities occur in the morning hours, please plan to have your child here no later than 10:00am. If your child will not be here by 10:00am you will need to message Brightwheel to let the child’s teacher know they will be late. We will only accept your child after 10am if they have a Dr. note or proof of an appointment. Anytime you have a schedule change please make sure you send a Brightwheel message so that we are staffed sufficiently.

**Free play**

Free play occurs a substantial portion of the day. Free play gives children the opportunity to be imaginative and creative. During free play the teachers observe children in their activity and note the skills they are mastering and their developmental needs. It also allows teachers to ask open-ended questions to prompt critical thinking. Our teachers create several areas of learning for free/ guided play to occur.

Free play is a form of play-based learning that’s beneficial to a child’ overall development. It encourages brain development and creativity, helps children learn and practice self-regulation, improves problem-solving, develops physical abilities, improves social & communication skills, enhances learning development, and encourages independence.

Free play allows the child to be a child. Free play allows that to happen and brings immense benefits to children’s growth and development without any pressure to achieve a learning goal.

**Outdoor play**

DPW State Regulations: § 3270.114 Outdoor play

* Weather permitting, children shall be taken out daily.

Children will play outdoors daily when weather and air quality do not pose a significant health risk. All children will be taken outside daily when the forecast temperature for winter is above 25 degrees F and there is no wind chill, and 90 degrees F and/or beginning to feel uncomfortable in the summer. Children will not be taken outdoors if it is precipitating. Outside time is an opportunity for active, noisy, rowdy play and is much needed for all children.

Getting outdoors daily, even in the winter, helps children develop healthy minds and bodies. Many adults believe children will get sick from playing outside in cold weather. Children are actually more likely to stay healthier if they play outdoors during winter months. Germs are not contained and concentrated outdoors.

Infants will be taken outside in strollers as tolerated. There is no recommended duration for this age.

Toddlers and preschoolers will be allowed 60-90 minutes of outdoor play in the morning and afternoon.

School-age children will be taken out in the afternoons or twice when there is a full day.

During the spring, summer and fall months, children will be protected from the sun between 10am and 4pm. Protective measures include using shade and using sunscreen with UV-b and UV-A sun protection 15 or higher. Parent/ guardian permission is required for the use of sunscreen. Children will have access to drinking water during the warmer months while outdoors.

Please make sure that your child arrives ready to play by sending them appropriately dressed for the weather so they can participate fully, move freely, play safely and be comfortable. This may include: winter coat, snow pants, hats, scarves, mittens, boots and a change of clothes in case anything gets wet while playing outside.

Parents are required to sign a form regarding our outdoor policy.

**Curriculum:**

Blessed Beginnings uses the Creative Curriculum program, a developmentally appropriate support for active learning and promoting children’s progress in all developmental areas and adjusts the lessons to meet the needs of each child’s educational growth as well as captivate their interest. The Creative Curriculum is a research-based and research-proven curriculum that help the education program create a high-quality learning environment enabling children to become creative, confident thinkers. Teaching strategies offers a crosswalk linking the PA Early Learning Standards to their curriculum that our staff use in the planning of their lessons. The curriculum’s themes are based on subjects that highly interest children and include a variety of learning interests. Children will be introduced to the letters and numbers as their teacher sees fit for their age level.

The children will experience:

* circle time
* center time can consist of but is not limited to:
  + art
  + blocks
  + manipulatives
  + reading
* small group and large group activities
* fine-motor skills
* indoor/outdoor free play on a daily basis.
* Tablets are incorporated into some rooms as part of the learning centers ages 3 and up.
* Children are given the experience of religion in their curriculum through a daily Christian curriculum that is designed for each program level from infants to Pre-K

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos focuses on building responsive care through nurturing teacher-child relationships while incorporating objectives that enable teachers to focus on what matters most for young children. This curriculum focuses on five routines and eight experiences that are essential for development and learning, with opportunities for teachers to individualize instruction based on each child’s specific learning needs.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool/ Pre-K focuses on project-based investigations designed to foster social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language development in children. It addresses all of the important areas of learning, from social-emotional and math, to technology and the arts. There are 38 different objectives for development and learning, with opportunities for teachers to individualize instruction based on each child’s specific learning needs.

The Creative Curriculum works hand in hand with the Teaching Strategies of GOLD observational assessment tool. The teachers use this tool to record and track your child’s development based on appropriate developmental milestones for his/her age range. Teachers will share these observations with guardians during the parent-teacher conferences held in November, March and May

A homegrown curriculum is used with our School-age children that varies for the school year and summer program. During the school year our focus is on helping the children complete their homework while also allowing center/free play to occur. Our summer program focuses on a more structured day, starting with a circle time. Centers are available for free play a substantial portion of the day. A science and/or art activity is offered daily. School age children also participate frequently in field trips, as well as going to nearby parts on a weekly basis. Guest speakers may also come a few times throughout the summer based on the theme for the week. The “Desired Results Developmental Profile” is used to assess school age children twice a year. These assessment are shared with parents during parent/ teacher conferences offered twice a year.

**Religious Practices:**

Blessed Beginnings implements a Christian curriculum used by the AWANA clubs of America. Infants take part on a very small level of looking at a picture and listening to a bible verse. Toddlers and Preschool/ Pre-K have a little more engagement with a puppet show, lesson and coloring pages throughout the week. Children are also taught to pray at meals. If you have any objections to your child participating in any religious activities, please let us know so that other arrangements can be made for your child during this time.

**Infant program – 6 weeks to 12 months**

While in Blessed Beginnings care your infant will receive individual attention, affection, love and respect, so that they develop a sense of positive self-concepts and feelings of self-worth.

Our infant caregivers not only address your child’s routine needs of being fed, changed, and kept clean and safe, but they also ensure that your child is talked to, held and loved. The educational program for the infants consists of toys and books to look at and listen to, floor play, finger play and constant supervision in developing their own independent actions. Teachers are expected to plan for daily experiences in: language/literacy development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, self-help skills, physical development, math, sensory & science, art, and finger-plays & songs. The Creative Curriculum is used as a guide and assessments done are based on the curriculum with-in My Teaching Strategies Gold.

At Blessed Beginnings, the day revolves around each child’s individual needs and the daily schedule is only a guide.

**Young toddler program(s) – 13-24 months**

**Older toddler program – 25-36 months**

Blessed Beginnings believes in encouraging toddler’s interests and praising their efforts, while providing a safe, nurturing environment where they can feel secure and loved. Young toddlers are full of interest and curiosity with the world around them. Our staff help focus their energy on learning activities that help them to get along with peers, and develop independence, a sense of self-worth and self- esteem. Their teachers make efforts to teach simple one and two step directions. Self help is encouraged at this age; we do this by teaching them to wash their own hands, clean up after themselves, use utensils and work on potty training. Educational lesson plans are created to stimulate your child’s development in these areas:

Language/Literacy

Cognitive

Social Emotional/Self Help

Physical (both fine motor and gross motor)

Their learning environment includes space for imitation and pretend play, books, sensory, art and playing with toys. When children are in learning areas they are engaged with other peers forming friendships and expressing their creativity. Although the toddler programs have schedules they adhere to, a majority of your child’s day is spent socializing through play with other children. Some play is structured by the teacher and some is free for their choosing. Each group has a large group time where they sit in an area together and complete calendar, weather, reading and singing activities. The Creative Curriculum is used as a guide and assessments done are based on the curriculum with-in My Teaching Strategies Gold.

At Blessed Beginnings, the day revolves around each child’s individual needs and the daily schedule is only a guide.

**Preschool and Pre-K Counts - programs – 37 months - Kindergarten**

The main goal of Blessed Beginnings Preschool programs is to prepare your child for Kindergarten. Our teachers use the Creative Curriculum as the foundation for their educational planning. The Creative Curriculum provides a solid foundation to learn the letters and sounds, mathematics, physical experiences and social emotional development. The curriculum is geared for a range of learning abilities and provides teachers with many activities to encourage learners at their own pace. Your child will participate daily in:

Morning routine – calendar time, fingerplays and songs

Large Group activities

Small group activities – encourages more one on one time

Story time

Learning areas – also referred to as centers

Outdoor play

The preschool learning environment consists of space for art, blocks, computer, discovery, dramatic play, library and toys and games. When children are in learning areas, they are engaged socially with their peers and provide valuable insight to teachers.

**Before and after-school program – Kindergarten – 10 years of age**

Bus/van transportation to and from: Loyalsock Township, Williamsport and South Williamsport Area School Districts. Breakfast and after school snack are provided daily.

We also provide care for in-service and snow days, as well as for any school holidays when Blessed Beginnings is open. Children will complete homework as well as having opportunities to explore learning areas such as: arts & crafts, blocks & construction, math & reasoning, language & reading, science & nature, dramatic play & theater, music & movement and discovery. SACC teachers use Links to Learning Curriculum Framework in coordination with our homegrown curriculum and the “Desired Results Developmental Profile”.

**Summer School-age program – Kindergarten – 10 years of age**

Blessed Beginnings school-age summer program runs all day and serves children who have completed kindergarten up to 12 years of age. It is an extension of our before/ after-care program, however staff concentrate more on the needs of the individual group, creating interesting projects, and taking field trips. School age children also interact with the younger groups. Breakfast, lunch and snack are served. Staff use the same curriculum and assessment method.

**Parent’s Role –**

Blessed Beginnings encourages parents to take part in their child’s education. We have an open door policy where families can come at any time. Conferences are provided to parents to discuss their child's progress and help develop future goals.

**Blessed Beginnings Provided Items -**

Cot or pack-n-play for rest time, wipes, breakfast, lunch, and pm snack, We provide CACFP approved food for infants including formula, baby food and snacks.

**Parent Provided Items -**

For our infant children; please provide: diapers, and a change of seasonal appropriate clothing, as well as formula and food if your child does not eat/drink the formula and food provided by Blessed Beginnings. **Pacifiers, bottles and clothing should be clearly identified.** We request that you do not bring in a diaper bag. Please make sure that just the items for your child are brought in and we will store them in their bins at our center. Any ointments or medication need to be signed in and all items should be labeled with your child’s name.

For our young & older toddler children please provide a labeled crib sheet, and/or blanket for naptime, a change of seasonally appropriate clothing, and diapers.

For our Preschool & Pre-K children please provide a labeled crib sheet, and/or blanket, naptime (if your child will be napping), and a change of seasonally appropriate clothing.

We request that you do not bring in a diaper bag. Please make sure that just the items for your child are brought in and we will store them in their bins at our center. Blessed Beginnings keeps a limited number of clothing in various sizes on hand in case a child needs them, however we ask that you please be courteous and return the clothing washed as soon as possible.

**Transitions**

**Preparing Your Child for Childcare:**

The first days of childcare/school can be a very happy or unhappy experience for your child. By your words and actions on the first few days you can help. Guard your actions about leaving your child in tears. When the child realizes that you are not available, they will accept the teacher’s guidance more readily. We suggest you take a minute to help your child feel comfortable and adjust by offering positive statements, place your child in the hands of the teacher, assure them that you will return for them and leave promptly. Parents who show reluctance to depart only make the transition harder for the child. Please never sneak out without saying “good-bye”. Crying will usually stop a few minutes after you depart.

Many children will cry or act “clingy” during pick-up and drop-off times, but will quickly adjust and start playing happily once Mom or Dad are out of sight. Some children will have a difficult time adjusting to their new surroundings. Your child may have some fears and anxiety about being away from you. Children need time to adjust to their new surroundings. The transition process can take as long as two weeks. The staff will do their very best to settle your child in as quickly as possible. Transition from home to school and school to home can be very stressful for some children. In the morning, they may not want to say good-bye to you and at pick up they may not want to go because they are involved with an activity or another child. This is a natural occurrence and may vary with your child’s age and developmental stage. You can assure them that they are cared for and loved, and it will help your child adapt to the center as quickly as possible. During your child’s first days it is perfectly understandable for you to want to know how he or she has settled in, and so we invite you to call the center at any time to check on your child.

Blessed Beginnings understands that parents want to know that their child is in a safe place and with loving people. We welcome and encourage having you: Brightwheel message, visit, or call, anytime you please. We would, however, appreciate prior notice if you wish to speak at length with a teacher, or administrative staff. Please contact us in advance to schedule an appointment. We will strive to keep the lines of communication open between the facility and family.

Prior to, or on your child’s first day of attendance we ask that you complete and turn in the child information form. This form provides information to your child’s teacher that will help ease the home to school transition. The questions on the form are specific to your child, such as: cultural identity/nationality, religious beliefs, routines and practices that they are familiar with, their fears, living arrangements, etc... Please take the time to complete this form and set aside some time to discuss the form with your child’s primary caregiver/teacher in their first week.

**Continuity of care:**

Programming and policies that ensure children and families are consistently engaged in high-quality early learning experiences through stable relationships with childcare staff. Young children need stable, warm, trusting relationships to grow and thrive. A variety of strategies are implemented in the childcare center to ensure that children benefit from their experience. Group size and ratios are always maintained. Ensuring that group sizes meet ratio requirements, set by the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning, allow for childcare staff to develop positive relationships with children and provide for their needs.Thought is put into the transition process from one room to another. Most children will make this move together in August as a new school year begins. This allows the children to move with most of their peers that they have already established relationships with. Our preschool rooms do not officially transition to the after- school program until they have completed their first day of kindergarten.

**Preparing your child to move to the next Classroom:**

Blessed Beginnings classrooms make peer transitions based on developmental readiness as well as maturation levels and space availability in the next classroom. These transitions could happen at any time during the school year. Children are moved based on their age, oldest to youngest when they are transitioning. When these transitions happen, children are moved in peer groups of 2 or more into the next classroom. Transitioning the children in this manner serves a dual purpose – it allows the child to enter their new surroundings with their peer group, and to also acclimate and learn from the current children in their new class. Since our center encourages mixed-age group activities, your child will be familiar with the other teachers in the center. Blessed Beginnings programs are grouped according to when your child will start kindergarten, with a birthday cut-off of September 1st. Moving all the children at one time to a new educational setting can be both a challenge for the teacher and over-stimulating to the children, therefore we discourage this type of transitioning.

**Preparing Your Child to Enter the Public-School System**

Children enrolled in our centers live in many different school districts, including some that are 30 miles or more from Williamsport. Because of this it is not possible for us to arrange group visits to schools or to provide detailed information about each district’s kindergarten enrollment procedures. Therefore, our transition process to kindergarten is focused on helping families of children who will be old enough to enter school in the fall to understand the process.

Beginning in January, the director, assistant director and/or the classroom teacher in the older preschool room will ask parents where each child will be attending kindergarten, if this is known. As information is made available from the various school districts we serve regarding Kindergarten registration, it will be passed on to the parents about when, where and what is needed for kindergarten registration. During the spring parent/ teacher conference, kindergarten transition will be discussed. Books about going to kindergarten will be available in the room and teachers will provide parents with appropriate articles if requested. Throughout this process, the goal is to create a positive expectation about a new school. The center will provide copies of records if requested by the parent or the school district. In the case of a child with documented special needs, a staff member will be available to attend the transition meeting that the intermediate unit will arrange.

**Preparing your school-age child for self-care:**

Knowing when your child is mature enough to be left alone is one of the most difficult decisions you will make. Blessed Beginnings offers a school-age summer program for children in Kindergarten to the end of their 3rd grade year. Staff discuss self-care situations with the children. They go over how the children should handle situations in telephone conversations and letting people know they are home alone. They review emergency procedures and rules. Our staff work with all of our age groups to teach them skills that will help them when they transition from child care to self-care. Some of the ways they encourage these skills are: expecting children to clean up their own messes, encouraging them to contribute to the common good of the classroom, allowing them the freedom to do things for themselves and help in situations where they can, even though it may be more work for the teacher in the end. Children are taught to be responsible for their actions, and staff are expected to model responsibility and accountability.

**Accommodations and Adaptations for Special Needs**

**IEP/IFSP plans:**

Blessed Beginnings staff treat each child as an individual and attempt to meet individual needs while still providing a good group experience for all the children. Your child may need a specially designed instruction that is not normally needed by other children to make progress. We are also interested in and want to know about any documented special needs. Blessed Beginnings works with agencies outside our center with prior approval from parent/guardian. Examples of these agencies include speech therapy, Early intervention, behavior services and many others. If your child currently has (or has had) an IEP/IFSP, it is required that you provide Blessed Beginnings with a copy at enrollment to keep on file so that our teachers can accommodate any developmental challenges your child may have. Blessed Beginnings will make any reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of all children enrolled. Blessed Beginnings will make every effort to provide coverage for a teacher to attend any Early Intervention Program meetings. Our program welcomes and encourages these providers to service children within our inclusive environment.

**Ages and Stages Questionnaire:**

With-in your child’s 1st 45 days of enrollment we complete the ASQ (Ages & Stages Questionnaire). The ASQ screening tool helps the teachers to evaluate any possible developmental delays in fine motor, gross motor, communication, personal social and problem solving. This screening will be shared with you as part of your first parent/teacher conference and is usually done prior to 45 days of enrollment. Once the screening is complete and scored, the Director will decide if further action is needed. Should your child’s ASQ show a need in any of the 5 developmental areas screened, we will send you a screening to complete yourself on your child to return to the director, as well as a letter explaining Early Intervention. With your permission, Blessed Beginnings will also contact the appropriate agency so you may receive free services for your child. Staff at Blessed Beginnings will make scheduled accommodations so that your child’s teacher can participate in any meetings regarding any special needs/requests that the parent/guardian or outside agency may have. The ASQ will be updated at minimum every year, and may be used at additional times if the staff or family has a concern.

**Inclusion Policy:**

Blessed Beginnings accepts and welcomes children and their families of all abilities. Our program supports the full inclusion of children who have additional support needs of physical, social or emotional nature. Blessed Beginnings believes that each child deserves an environment and experience that promotes growth in all areas of their development. Our classrooms and playgrounds are arranged to the best of our ability so that all children can play freely and make choices that are based on their abilities, interests and needs. Blessed Beginnings provides developmentally appropriate group experiences daily, as well as opportunities for all children to participate in social and structural play with their peers.

Staff at Blessed Beginnings will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Our schedules, and routines, are flexible and our staff work with therapists, special educators, other professionals and many outside programs to integrate children into all classroom routines and activities. Blessed Beginnings welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child’s success. We also encourage our staff to participate in any Individualize Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. Our staff respect and value input from parents and encourage them to be a part of the decision-making process, as well as consulting with the family and all professionals who are involved with them and their child.

Blessed Beginnings staff receive professional development in current areas of child development, research, theory and inclusion practices. Staff are committed to learning more about various challenges that children and their families may have to deal with.

**Dual Language Learners:**

Blessed Beginnings also accepts children whose first language is not English. Our staff will attempt to incorporate the child’s home culture in daily activities, by first connecting with the family and actively involving them with our program. Our classrooms are furnished with culturally diverse learning materials, books and posters displaying photos from around the world. Blessed Beginnings will work to create opportunities for outside programs to come in that tailor to the needs of our families. We will provide our staff with the needed training on cultural competency and diversity when needed. Families will be supported in their home language when possible, staff will work with outside agencies to learn how to use communion devices/ sign language, visuals and picture cues to help with comprehension. Blessed Beginnings is committed to understanding and supporting the development of dual language learners.

**Referral process to community services:**\*please visit our website for an extensive list of resources

When a staff member determines a child or family is in need of outside services such as medical, dental, developmental, financial, mental health, clothing, food, shelter, etc. the staff member will assist the family by following the procedure below. This policy applies to all staff and is enforced by the director or assistant director. Staff will be trained in this policy during orientation and the policy will be reviewed with staff annually. Failure to comply with this policy is grounds for written warning and corrective action. Repeated failure is grounds for termination.

## Procedure

1. The staff member will communicate the need, in confidence, to the director or administrator.
2. The director or administrator will maintain a list of approved organizations and resources for outside services. If no resources are on the list for the particular need, the director or administrator will make inquiries to find the appropriate resources.
3. The staff member and director or administrator will confer on the subject and determine if the circumstance indicates need for a third-party professional. If a professional is required, the director or administrator will contact the professional and assume responsibility for the referral.
4. If no third-party professional is required, the director or administrator and staff member will confer and agree who will communicate the referral to the family.
5. After a reasonable amount of time, the person who communicated the outside resource will check back with the family to make sure the referral was helpful. If it was not, additional resources will be sought.

**Early Intervention and Blast:**

Blessed Beginnings uses the Ages & Stages questionnaires (ASQ) to help caregivers and parents determine if there is such a need. https://d.adroll.com/cm/aol/outThe ASQ is a developmental screener that evaluates gross motor, communication, problem-solving, fine motor and personal-social development. It can be used for infants up to children age 5. The Ages and Stages Question takes 10-15 minutes to complete and 2-3 minutes to score. The ASQ is performed with-in your child’s first 45 days of enrollment and may be completed every 6 weeks or as deemed necessary by your child’s teacher. Should your child’s ASQ shows a need in any of the five developmental areas, we will send you a letter to contact Early Intervention or BLaST. With your permission, Blessed Beginnings will also contact the appropriate agency so you may receive free services for your child. Therapists and special education staff are welcome to come to the Center to work with children in their care, but we do not have specialists on our own staff.

Our Early Intervention programs are provided for eligible preschool children in Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan and Tioga counties. Early Intervention is a comprehensive and collaborative system that optimizes children’s development, supports the family’s responsibility and enhances their capacity to care for their child. Our services are provided based on a Board approved stretch calendar.

A variety of need-based services for eligible young children are provided in the least restrictive environment. Early Intervention services range from consultative to instruction in specialized classrooms. Related Services are available, for example, in the areas of speech, hearing, and vision. along with assistance with psychological evaluations and assistive technology. Services are provided when the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (MDE) team determines the child meets the eligibility criteria of a 25% delay in one (1) or more of the five (5) developmental areas AND demonstrates a need for specially designed instruction. These services are available to children ages 3 to age of beginners. Our staff also works closely with school districts and parents to facilitate the transition-to-school process for eligible children. We provide screenings, upon request, as part of the comprehensive child find effort. Working with our communities we also provide resources, training and outreach programs for schools, preschools, colleges and various agencies.

The Process for Receiving Service

1. Refer a child for evaluation at: 1-800-326-8528 (This can come from parents, care givers, physicians, or teacher).
2. Whether to do a speech-only or full evaluation is determined, depending on the intake paperwork.
3. An appointment for the evaluation is made at an early intervention site located in our service area.
4. The evaluation takes 1 1/2 – 2 hours to complete
5. Parents are then informed by the evaluation team as to the eligibility of the child for Early Intervention Services.
6. If qualifying for service, a return appointment is made to review the Evaluation Report and develop the initial Individualized Education Program.

Have questions or want more information? Contact our Early Intervention Program Supervisor.

[**Angela Sees**](https://www.iu17.org/early-intervention/name/angela-sees/)

Special Education Supervisor Work Phone: 570-323-8561 x1003/2015 Work Email: [asees@iu17.org](mailto:asees@iu17.org)

**Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program (IECMH**):

As a Keystone STAR participant, we are able to refer children to ECMH to receive free services that help us (the teachers and childcare facility) to better understand the needs of your child. An ECMH consultant can help us figure out what your child is trying to tell us through their behavior and help us do a better job of caring for your child. They can help us make a plan to promote better behaviors by meeting your child’s particular social-emotional needs. ECMH consultants are not authorized to make any diagnosis of a child; they are there strictly to help the teacher and the child have a better experience at Blessed Beginnings. There are times when a child displays physical actions, verbal outbursts, and other behaviors that our teachers will ask the parent to complete and sign a form to receive a consultation. This is one step we take to ensure your child is receiving what he needs to meet his/her needs but also keeping the other children safe and secure.

**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.

Blessed Beginnings staff are required to complete training on a yearly basis. Each year they complete training in either effective behavior management or positive behavior techniques.

**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

**Behavior Support**

Blast IU 17 offers a step-by-step process to request a Functional Behavior Assessment.

1. Complete the Online Request to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment. Your IU Contact will determine the availability of Behavior Intervention Staff and assign a IU staff member to complete the request. The IU Behavior Intervention Staff member will then contact the district to initiate the process.
2. The student’s District will obtain permission to evaluate and complete the referral form submitting it to the assigned IU staff member. The IU staff member will schedule a consultation with the IEP Manager I Appointed Teacher and schedule two school based observations.
3. At the first observation/consultation (maximum two hours) the IU staff will review necessary paperwork the district will need to complete including:
   * Functional Behavioral Assessment Interview form completed by parent and teacher
   * Motivational Assessment Scale form completed by parent and instructional teacher(s)
   * Identify an acceptable form to collect ten days of target behavior and identify district staff responsible to collect data
4. IU staff will complete a second observation at maximum two hours
5. District will the return 10 days of data, Interview form and Motivational Assessment Scale from instructional teachers and parents to IU Staff. The IU staff will compile data and complete the FBA Summary and develop and draft Behavior Intervention Plan. The IU staff will the contact referring source to schedule a team meeting.
6. The IU staff will attend the team meeting and will review the draft FBA & BIP and seek’ input from the various team members. The IU staff will modify the FBA and BIP and return to the referring source. The district staff will then disperse to team members.

For more information or to ask questions, contact our Behavior Support Supervisor:

[**Mark Nevill**](https://www.iu17.org/behavior-support/name/mark-nevill/)

Psychologist Supervisor Work Phone: 570-323-8561 x1026/3010 Work Email: [mnevill@iu17.org](mailto:mnevill@iu17.org)

**Family Involvement**

Parental involvement at Blessed Beginnings is highly encouraged. Your child will benefit most from our program if parents and staff communicate regularly in both formal meetings and informal conversation. By working together, we will design a program that will respond to the individual needs of your child.

Blessed Beginnings offers an “Open-door” policy, where parents may drop-by unannounced while their child is in care. You are welcome to observe and participate in your child’s classroom whenever you wish. Please be aware, however, that children do not really benefit from these visits, as it gives them false hope that they may be going home.

We encourage you to feel a part of the center by getting involved in our family events or our Parent Advisory Committee. Family events are always listed on our monthly newsletters and on the parent boards at the entry points. If you would like to participate in our Parent Advisory Committee please speak with the director. The PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) goal is to support the faculty, staff, parents and most importantly our students. PAC will help create environments for families to connect through educational workshops and fun, family friendly events.

Family events are designed for you and your family to get the chance to know the staff and other center families outside of the school setting. Blessed Beginnings plans several of these events through-out the year.

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child’s school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the center. Parents may volunteer to attend field trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or be a part of special events. Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:**

Blessed Beginnings observes and assesses your Infant, toddler and preschool child on an on-going basis using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool. Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic based assessment system that works hand-in-hand with Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum. The GOLD assessment tool consists of 38 objectives that your child will be observed on. Parents are able to contribute to these observations and assessments using their My Teaching Strategies app.

Three times a year parents are offered the opportunity to have a sit-down conference with their child teacher(s) and review their child’s progress. These conferences will occur in November, February and May. A fourth optional progress report will be offered in August. You may request a conference with your child’s teacher at any-time. We highly encourage all parents/guardians to take full advantage of these opportunities to spend time with your child’s teacher learning about their daily education and their developmental progress.

Blessed Beginnings observes and assesses your school-age child using the Desired results developmental profile. Parent/teacher conferences are offered twice a year, November and May, to discuss the results of this assessment.

**Parent Communication:**

Blessed Beginnings uses many ways to convey information to our parents:

Brightwheel: is our major means of communication used at both centers. It is a free downloadable app that you will need to download onto your mobile device and create a 4-digit pin. By signing into the app you will receive information on when and what your child ate, their toileting for the day and their napping. This application is used in replacement of a daily sheet of your child’s day. Billing is managed through Brightwheel and you are able to receive real-time balance information. You can message your child’s teacher(s) at any time throughout the day and receive updates and photos if you choose. This app is also used to clock your child in and out daily. Each child enrolled will have their own account and only those invited by email will have a pin code to view their information.

Facebook: We have a Facebook profile and encourage you to follow/like us. We try to post updates as often as possible as well as post photos of things going on in the centers.

Mailbox or cubby: each child has their own mailbox located in their classroom, please be sure to check it each day as this is one of the most important ways we communicate information to you.

Monthly newsletter: details the month’s field trips, fundraisers, school policies, state regulations and well as other information regarding the center and your child’s education. Please be sure to read over the newsletter each month, as it contains pertinent information about your child’s care and continuing education.

Parent board: the newsletter, menu, notice of illnesses with-in the center, and other information is located near the office

Electronic media: you can receive emails about upcoming events, tuition statements and more by providing Blessed Beginnings with your email. Check out our website – [www.blessedbeginningsonline.com](http://www.blessedbeginningsonline.com)

**Staff:**

Every effort is made to hire the most qualified people to help your child reach their full potential. References are checked on those seeking employment and all state regulations are met or exceeded running all clearances required. Our staff is expected to continually improve their career by attending educational trainings to better themselves and the center. Twice a year both facilities close and provide full days of training for the staff.

Each person working in the facility must be in good health with no communicable diseases. Prior to working in a classroom, all staff must complete a physical exam history questionnaire for the state and provide medical verification of their health as required by law.

Pursuant to state law, the use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal substances is prohibited in the day care facility itself, as well as, school property, at all times for all staff and parents or guardians of the children.

**Stakeholders**

We have a stakeholder list that may be viewed at any time. If you know of any additional stakeholders that should be added to our list, please let the director know.

**Grievance Policy:**

Communication between parent and staff is an essential key to provide the best quality care for your child. Parents are encouraged to raise questions with their child’s teacher to resolve any concerns. If additional assistance is needed, a meeting with any administrative staff can be scheduled.

**Adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Non-Discrimination Policy:**

Blessed Beginnings complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all other applicable regulations pertaining to providing service to individuals with disabilities. We are a full inclusion center and consider each child’s individual needs in order to determine if our program can accommodate a child’s unique need. If your child is disabled or has any other special needs, please communicate this to the Assistant Director or Director to see if reasonable accommodation can be made.

**Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare does not discriminate with regard to religion, color, race, gender, age, national or ethnic origin or disability in our admission policies.**

**Inclusion of Families from Culturally Diverse**

**Enrollment and Attendance Procedures**

#### Enrollment:

Blessed Beginnings admits children without regard to race, color, nationality, sex, disability, or religious background.

Each child is required by Pennsylvania Department of Welfare to have a file on record for up to one year after the child has terminated service. The contents of your child’s file can be viewed by you or your child’s legal guardian at any time with permission from the Director. Family Education Rights & Privileges Act (FERPA) is a federal law which protects the confidentiality of student educational records, by limiting their disclosure. FERPA guarantees parents the right to inspect their child’s file, receive copies of the records and have an explanation of contents of their child’s file.

The enrollment papers given to you upon enrollment will need to be completed and on file by your child’s first day of attendance. The following items must be submitted at the time of enrollment:

**State Required Paperwork**

* Financial Agreement, $60.00 per family registration fee, unless subsidized then CCW takes care of the fee – this form will need to be updated every six months
* Blessed Beginnings Enrollment Agreement - this form will need to be updated every six months
* Emergency Contact/Parental Consent form – this form will need to be updated every six months
* Child Health Assessment – 60 days from enrollment and will need to be updated annually or as immunizations /well-baby check-ups occur – this form can be faxed to our office – it must be the child’ most recent form
* CACFP enrollment and meal benefit application – these forms need updated yearly

Failure to return state required paperwork could result in suspension of care until paperwork is received.

**Blessed Beginnings Required Paperwork:**

* Child information form
* IEP/IFSP if applicable
* Parent handbook sign-off read

All records are kept in the office in a locked filing cabinet and are confidential. Access to individual files is limited to staff and licensed authorities unless prior permission has been granted by the child’s parent or legal guardian. Parents may review their child’s file by asking an Administrative staff. Copies of items can be made by requesting it from an Administrative staff. Upon withdrawal from the center, records will be retained for the minimum period of one year.

Parents may sign a release form to have records transferred to another educational setting. Please see the director for questions or concerns about your child’s records.

**DPW State Regulations: in relation to your child’s file**

#### § 3270.181. Individual records.

 (a)  An operator shall establish and maintain an individual record for each child enrolled in the facility.

 (b)  Information in a child’s record shall be kept current by the operator.

 (c)  A parent is required to review and update the emergency contact information and the financial agreement at least once in a 6-month period or as soon as there is a change in the information.

 (d)  Following review, a parent shall attest to the accuracy of information in subsection (c) by affixing a dated signature to the record.

 (e)  If emergency information is updated in a master file, it shall be updated accordingly in other facility records.

#### § 3270.182. Content of records.

 A child’s record shall contain the following information:

   (1)  Initial and subsequent health assessments.

   (2)  The dates of application, admission and withdrawal of the child.

   (3)  Signed parental consent for emergency medical care for the child. Written consent is required prior to admission.

   (4)  Signed parental consent for administration of medications or special dietary needs.

   (5)  Signed parental consent for administration of minor first-aid procedures by facility staff. Written consent is required prior to admission.

   (6)  Signed parental consent for transportation, walking excursions, swimming and wading.

   (7)  Reports of accidents, injuries and illnesses involving a child in care at the facility. The original report shall be given to the parent on the day of the incident. The second copy of the report shall be retained at the facility in an accident file. The third copy of the report shall be retained at the facility in the child’s file.

1. A copy of the initial agreement and subsequent written agreements between the parent and the operator. The parent receives the original agreement.).

#### § 3270.183. Confidentiality of records.

 (a)  Child records are confidential and shall be stored in a locked cabinet.

 (b)  A facility person may not disclose information concerning a child or family, except in the course of inspections and investigations by agents of the Department.

#### § 3270.184. Release of information.

 (a)  The parent shall have access to the child’s complete child day care record.

 (b)  Except as provided in §  3270.183(b) (relating to confidentiality of records), release or dissemination of information in a child’s record may be made by the operator and only with written parental consent. When file material is released, the person who authorized the release shall record the following information in the child’s file:

   (1)  The name and position of the individual to whom the information was released.

   (2)  The date the information was released.

   (3)  The portions of the record that were released.

   (4)  The purpose of the release.

   (5)  The signature of the person who authorized the release.

#### § 3270.185. Record retention.

 A copy of the child’s record shall be retained at the facility for at least 1 year after termination of service, unless the entire record is transferred by the operator to the parent or guardian or to another agency at the request of the parent or guardian.

**Registration Fee:**

A $60.00 non-refundable registration fee per family, unless CCW, will be due upon enrollment.

**Tuition Policy:**

In order to assure the efficient functioning of the preschool and childcare center, all fees must be remitted on time. Payment is due on Friday for the up-coming week, or on your child’s first program day, unless other arrangements are made in advance. Checking, savings and credit card payments can be made using the automated system on Brightwheel. This is our preferred method of payment; however exceptions could be made on a case by case basis. You are able to sign-up for automatic withdrawal by enabling it on your app within account settings.

If you carry a balance at the end of a calendar month, your account will be accessed a late fee of 10% of the past due. Any ELRC delinquency will be reported to CCW accordingly. If payment is not received by the following Friday, we reserve the right to deny services for your child, until a payment is made. If your services are denied, you are responsible to pay all late fees and two-weeks tuition for immediate termination of childcare services. You will also be held responsible for all court, attorney and agency fees involved in collection of late payment. We do understand that extenuating circumstances sometimes arise. If you find yourself in such a situation, an exception may be considered if you speak with the Director or Financial Administrator, and a payment agreement is arranged. If there is a problem with your account, or if you will not be able to pay on the due date, please talk with the Director, Assistant Director or Financial Administrator before the bill is due. Payment agreements may be made for a one-time situation or to change the normal due date to a different time in the month on an ongoing basis. Fees are reviewed twice a year, once in September and then again in March. A new financial agreement will need to be completed at each review. You will be notified well in advance of any tuition increases. You will be required at those times to update your contract for fees and any schedule changes. If your schedule or payment changes prior to those times, **you** are responsible to come in and update your information; otherwise we will continue to charge the tuition fee on file.

Non-Brightwheel tuition checks should be placed in the payment box and cash should be handed directly to the Director or Assistant Director. Please do not leave it on the office desk or with a staff member. Checks that are returned for non-sufficient funds will be re-submitted automatically by Re-Submit through Woodlands bank, you will be responsible for any associated fees.

Blessed Beginnings does not prorate for holidays, sickness or absentee days. You are required to pay the contract charges on a weekly basis. You are allowed 2 vacation weeks per year that will be charged at half rate. If you pay the daily rate for infrequent or variable attendance, you must give notice of your schedule a week in advance for proper billing. If you are subsidized through CCW and your child is in attendance more than the amount covered by CCW, the parent is responsible to pay the daily rate for any days not covered by CCW.

Families with more than one child will receive a 15% discount off of the oldest child’s tuition fee, and an additional 10% for older additional siblings when 2 or more children are enrolled from the same family. We are not permitted to discount subsidized co-payments, however ELRC upcharges will be discounted as above Additional fees apply to transportation, field trips and “extra-curricular” activities. You will be expected to pay these fees in advance or when due in order for your child to participate.

All families will receive a year-end tax statement by January 31 for the previous year.

Care is provided for school-age children if there is a delay, early dismissal or school cancellation. The tuition for delays and early dismissals remains the same.

**Financial assistance:**

If you may be in need of some financial assistance for child care costs, parents can call the following agency to apply:

Child Care Works (CCW) Helpline - 877-472-5437

Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) region 7 - 570-327-5495

When calling, you may be placed on a waiting list. Parents are responsible for paying all childcare tuition and fees until financial assistance is in place.

**Additional Cost to You:**

CCW upcharge

Families who participate in CCW subsidy program are also charged an additional fee to offset what CCW does not cover for their tuition. This upcharge is treated like tuition and all policies regarding tuition payments apply to the upcharge.

Anything broken as a direct result of child misbehaving the parents will pay full replacement costs of the item(s).

Small claims court fees, Blessed Beginnings lawyer fees, and any other miscellaneous fees, will be charged to your account if we have to settle a payment dispute this way. This also includes all applicable late charges.

#### Attendance and Payment:

Staff are required to clock your child in and out each day. Most educational activities occur in the morning hours, please plan to have your child here no later than 10:00am. If your child will not be here by 10:00am you will need to message Brightwheel to let the child’s teacher know they will be late. We will only accept your child after 10am if they have a Dr. note or proof of an appointment. Anytime you have a schedule change please make sure you send a Brightwheel message so that we are staffed sufficiently.

If your child(dren) have extended absences, (medical, vacation and personal reasons) you can speak with your director about options. Proper notice is considered to be notification to the office of at least two weeks in advance.

**Absence and Vacation Credit:**

Missed days due to illness are still included as your regular rate; there are no refunds or credits for sickness or general absence. Remember, you are paying to keep your child’s space at our facility. We realize childcare is a major expense for most working parents however we rely on this business to support our staff families as well as the center itself. Since we hold your child’s space to use at will, we charge for full time care whether it is used or not.

If your child is out for two consecutive weeks due to an illness, you will be required to provide a physician’s note. You will be required to pay fifty (50%) of the tuition rate to cover your child’s space. If your child will be absent, please call the center to let us know by 9:30am so that we know how many students to plan for lunch.

When taking an extended vacation, if advanced notice of two weeks is given, you will only be responsible to pay ½ of your normal rate to hold your child’s space (i.e. if your normal rate is $135/week, you will need to pay $67.50 to hold your child’s space). Families are entitled to two, one-week vacations per year from January 1st to December 31st. Other vacation time will not be credited the 50%.

**Holidays:**

So that our employees may have the opportunity to spend time with their families, Blessed Beginnings will be closed on the following days:

✰ New Year’s Day ✰ Fourth of July

✰ Good Friday ✰ Labor Day

✰ Memorial Day ✰ Thanksgiving Day and the day after

✰ Christmas Eve and Day

✰ Professional Development Days – 3 per year:

✰President’s Day ✰Columbus Day ✰Monday after Easter

If any major holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday OR a Tuesday or Thursday, there is a possibility we will close the corresponding Monday or Friday. Blessed Beginnings reserves the right to amend the days that the center is closed. If we choose to close on an unscheduled day, ample notice will be given so you may make other accommodations.

\*Please note that you are charged for these closings.

**Emergency Closing:**

In the event that an emergency arises which makes it necessary to close the center, parents will be notified as quickly as possible. We will always do our best not to close on unplanned days, but nature has a way of changing our schedule sometimes! If we decide to close early, you will be notified by either: your child’s teacher, the office assistant, or the Director by Brightwheel or FaceBook – 1 ½ to 2 hours prior to closing. Should it become necessary to close early, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for your child’s early pick-up. If the weather is severe enough and Blessed Beginnings feels that the safety of the children and staff are at risk, we may delay opening or close all together. Should this situation arise, we will post it on Brightwheel and on our Facebook page. You also have the option to receive these notifications via email and text messages if you sign up to receive them. This is for the safety of everyone involved. There is no tuition credit for anytime our center is closed due to weather emergencies.

In the case of School-age children: care is provided for them if there is a delay, early dismissal or school cancellation. The tuition for delays, early dismissals and full day care remains the same. Children who are with us the entire day will receive breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. If possible please call the center to inform or Brightwheel message us of your child’s attendance on a delay, early dismissal, or cancellation.

**Alternate Care:**

In the event that daycare is closed it will be your responsibility to find alternate care. It is also a good idea to have alternate care for your child in case they are too ill and cannot attend daycare.

**Arrival and Departure/Release of Children:**

Prior to 7am, minimal staff are in the buildings. Please keep this in mind if you are dropping off prior to 7am as your child may be dropped off in a room other than their own until more staff arrive. When picking-up your child, you may find that they have been combined with another classroom depending on the time of day you arrive to pick-up.

All children should arrive in their class no later than 9:30am. Most educational activities occur in the morning hours, please plan to have your child here no later than 10:00am. This will ensure that your child receives the best learning experience. Please notify the center by 9:30am if your child will not be attending that day. Children should not be dropped off between the hours of 11:30 and 2:00pm if it can at all be helped. This policy is to allow the other children in the center to have rest time without any interruptions.

If your child will not be here by 10:00am you will need to message Brightwheel to let the child’s teacher know they will be late. We will only accept your child after 10am if they have a Dr. note or proof of an appointment. Anytime you have a schedule change please make sure you send a Brightwheel message so that we are staffed sufficiently.

Your child will be released **ONLY** to parents and person(s) for whom the center has written authorization and are over 16 years of age. Proper identification **IS** required – photo id or drivers license. If we are not familiar with the person(s) picking up your child, we will require a valid photo ID. Please advise anyone who may pickup your child not to take offense to this policy; it is simply the only way to assure the safety of your child. **This authorization must be left with the Director (or whomever is on duty) and also with your child’s classroom teacher. This is for your child’s safety**. If you find yourself in an emergency situation and require someone other than those on your list to pick-up your child, you can call the center or Brightwheel message and give their name, and a brief description of this person. Be aware that we may call you back to confirm this change.

If your family is experiencing a divorce or other legal situation which would affect who is allowed to pick your child up, please let the Assistant Director or the Director know immediately. You may need to change your emergency contact list. Unless proper legal documents are provided, we have no choice but to release the child to the person providing the documentation. If you have legal documentation such as a Protection from Abuse, or a no contact order, or custody agreement please provide that document to the center to insure your child’s safety.

**Late Pick-up Charge:**

#### Families who pick their children up after the regular closing time (5:30pm) will be charged a late fee ($10 for the first 15 minutes and $5 for each additional 5 minutes) which will be added to your account. If at all possible, please call the center to let someone know you will be late. We will usually begin calling after 5 minutes. We try to be generous on late pick-up, because we realize job pressures, traffic, and weather conditions occasionally affect your ability to arrive on time. Parental fees must be paid on a timely basis. If you call the center and let us know that you will be late, we will waive the late fee for your child. However, since a habit of arriving late does affect our staff, late fees will be applied if a pattern develops. If a government or community agency pays for your childcare, please be advised that the late fees for children at the center after 5:30pm and extra hours are not covered. We request you have your caseworker send all contract information to the center.

**Withdrawal/Termination:**

A two-full week’s advance notice in writing is required to withdraw your child from our center. If a two-week notice is not given, you will be charged the regular tuition for the two weeks. Payment is required for these two weeks even if the child is not here.

Should your child be transferring to a different educational setting, and you would like their records transferred, you will need to fill out a “Transfer of Records Request Form” and return it to the director. The director will transfer a copy of the records at your request or give a copy of the records to you.

Blessed Beginnings reserves the right to terminate this contract for any reason.  Two weeks’ notice will be given under usual circumstances.  However, we reserve the right to immediate termination of services under certain circumstances, a list of these reasons can be found on page 18.

#### Health Policies

**Medical Records**

Your child must have on file an up-to-date physical and all immunizations must be up to date. The following physical exam schedule is expected to be in your child’s permanent file from the time they enroll at Blessed Beginnings.

4 months 12 months 36 months

6 months 18 months 48 months

9 months 24 months school-age/ Kindergarten physical

According to Pennsylvania State Regulations, you have 60 days from enrollment to submit the required health forms. If we do not receive your child’s physical and immunization records, we reserve the right to suspend or terminate your care until we receive the state mandated paperwork.

You will be notified when your child is due to receive their physical exam and/ or immunizations. You will be given a sufficient amount of time to return the required forms or face suspension/termination of services. If your child has a scheduled appointment that is past the date you are given to have your paperwork returned, please give Blessed Beginnings a copy of your child’s appointment card to keep in your child’s file until you can return the paperwork.

#### § 3270.131. Health information.

 (a)  The operator shall require the parent of an enrolled child, including a child, a foster child and a relative of an operator or a facility person, to provide an initial health report no later than 60 days following the first day of attendance at the facility.

   (1)  The initial health report for an infant must be dated no more than 3 months prior to the first day of attendance at the facility.

   (2)  The initial health report for a young toddler must be dated no more than 6 months prior to the first day of attendance at the facility.

   (3)  The initial health report for an older toddler or preschool child must be dated no more than 1 year prior to the first day of attendance at the facility.

   (4)  The initial health report for a school-age child must be dated in accordance with the requirements for medical examinations for school attendance in 28 Pa. Code §  23.2 (relating to medical examinations).

 (b)  The operator shall require the parent to provide an updated health report in accordance with the following schedules:

   (1)  At least every 6 months for an infant or young toddler.

   (2)  At least every 12 months for an older toddler or preschool child.

 (c)  A health report must be written and signed by a physician, physician’s assistant or a CRNP. The signature must include the individual’s professional title.

 (d)  The health report must include the following information:

   (1)  A review of the child’s health history.

   (2)  A list of the child’s allergies.

   (3)  A list of the child’s current medication and the reason for the medication.

   (4)  An assessment of an acute or chronic health problem or special need and recommendations for treatment or services, including information regarding abnormal results of screening tests for vision, hearing or lead poisoning.

   (5)  A review of the child’s immunized status according to recommendations of the ACIP.

   (6)  A statement of the child’s medical information pertinent to diagnosis and treatment in case of emergency.

   (7)  A statement that the child is able to participate in child care and appears to be free from contagious or communicable disease.

   (8)  A statement that age-appropriate screenings recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics were conducted since the time of the previous health report required by this section.

 (e)  The facility may not accept or retain an infant 2 months of age or older, a toddler or a preschool child at the facility for more than 60 days following the first day of attendance at the facility unless the parent provides written verification from a physician, physician’s assistant, CRNP, the Department of Health or a local health department of the dates (month, day and year) the child was administered immunizations in accordance with the recommendations of the ACIP.

   (1)  The facility shall require the parent to provide updated written verification from a physician, physician’s assistant, CRNP, the Department of Health or a local health department of ongoing vaccines administered to an infant, toddler or preschool child in accordance with the schedule recommended by the ACIP.

   (2)  Exemption from immunization must be documented as follows:

     (i)   Exemption from immunization for religious belief or strong personal objection equated to a religious belief must be documented by a written, signed and dated statement from the child’s parent or guardian. The statement shall be kept in the child’s record.

     (ii)   Exemption from immunization for reasons of medical need shall be documented by a written, signed and dated statement from the child’s physician, physician’s assistant or CRNP. The statement shall be kept in the child’s record.

   (3)  The facility shall implement dismissal policies in accordance with the Department of Health regulation in 28 Pa. Code §  27.77 (relating to immunization requirements for children in child care group settings).

   (4)  The facility shall comply with the annual immunization reporting requirements in accordance with the Department of Health regulation in 28 Pa. Code §  27.77.

**Sending Children Home:**

Should your child become ill during the day, you will be notified as soon as possible. Parents are required to pick their children up as promptly as possible when asked, to minimize the possibility that other children will become infected. We will not send a child home with the common cold, unless accompanied by a fever or other severe symptoms. A fever is an indication of the body’s response to something, but is neither a disease nor a serious problem by itself. A fever is considered a temperature above 100.4°F or higher taken axillary and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea) and will require that the child be sent home. As a licensed facility, there will be times we will require you to pick up your child and keep them out of the building for 24 hours, symptom and fever free. We ask for your patience in this as we may require a doctor’s note for return. If the child is behaving normally but has a fever of below 100.4°F taken axillary, without any signs or symptoms of illness in children, who are older than six months regardless of whether acetaminophen or ibuprofen was given, the child will be monitored but does not need to be excluded for fever alone. Fever body temperature can be elevated by overheating caused by overdressing or a hot environment, reactions to medications, and response to infection. However, there are times when children are ill, they may not have signs of illness, but will be excessively fussy and/or require constant cuddling and attention. Although we believe in providing as much cuddling as desired, if a child is ill and requires a teacher’s undivided attention this distracts from their ability to provide care to the other children. Therefore, if your child reaches a point when he/she requires constant attention, will not play, cries continuously, whines and wants to be held constantly, etc., you will be notified and asked to come for them. If your child has two diarrhea bowel movements during the day, we will send a Brightwheel message or call to let you know. After the third diarrhea bowel movement, you will be asked to pick your child up.

In the event that your child is sent home, because they have thrown up, have diarrhea or any other illness that could infect other children or staff, they may not return **until they have been symptom free for 24 hours and without symptom reducers**. This policy is intended to help prevent the unnecessary infection of the other children. Although it may seem inconvenient for you when your child is sent home, you will appreciate knowing your child’s exposure is minimized when other children become ill.

You should expect that any time a new child is introduced to the group, colds and other minor illness are likely to occur until everyone’s immune systems have adjusted to the new exposures.

In order to protect the health of all the children and staff, we ask that your child be kept at home if she/he has any one of the following symptoms. We understand this may cause some difficulty for you however, we ask that you please be considerate of the other children and their families, as well as our staff when deciding whether or not your child is well enough to attend. Please keep your child home if he or she displays any of the following symptoms:

* Fever of 100.4 or higher
* Excessive signs of cold: tiredness, nasal discharge, sneezing or coughing, wheezing
* Swollen glands or sore throat
* Ear infection accompanied by discharge from the ears
* Discharge from eyes or red eyes – redness of eyelids with discharge
* Vomiting / diarrhea lasting over several hours
* Any rash or skin lesion that blisters
* Mouth sores with drooling
* Blood in stool
* Respiratory distress
* Unexplained irritability, lethargy, and/or persistent crying

Children who have a communicable disease must remain at home until the condition no longer exists. Possible symptoms of a communicable disease will have some or all of the following: sniffles, reddened eyes with a discharge, sore throat, headache and abdominal pain, accompanied by a fever. Please notify the Director or Administrative staff immediately if your child has a communicable disease. Please use good judgment and do not bring your child to school with an infection that you would not want to take home.

✰ Impetigo ✰ Lice ✰ Chicken pox

✰ Pinkeye ✰ Ringworm ✰ Strep Throat

✰ And many others

We track all illnesses and will send home a letter if any child has an illness we think may be communicable.

If your child has been sent home due to illness, we require that they stay home for **at least 24 hours symptom free without fever reducers.** You will be asked to sign a suspected illness form that will explain the reason for exclusion and how long your child will need to be excluded. By Pennsylvania state regulations, any signs of a symptom of communicable disease or infection, which may threaten the health of other children in care, shall be excluded from attendance until a doctor’s excuse is provided. This notification will be kept in the child’s file.

**Teething:**

Blessed Beginnings will not exclude for some of the behaviors that are associated with teething, such as: diarrhea, crankiness, fever, unusual fussiness etc...

Classic signs and symptoms of teething include:

* Drooling
* Chewing on solid objects
* Irritability or crankiness
* Sore or tender gums

Many parents suspect that teething causes fever and diarrhea, but researchers say this isn't true. Teething can cause signs and symptoms in the mouth and gums — but not elsewhere in the body.

**Medication:**

If your child has been placed on an antibiotic, he/she needs to be taking the medicine for at least 24 hours before returning.

**Prescription medication:**

State law requires that prescription medication be brought in the original container, in order to be administered in a school facility. The prescription medication must contain the following information on the label: Child’s name, prescription name, Doctor’s name, dosage amount, pharmacy name and phone number, instructions for administration, and the dates the medicine is to be used for.

If you fail to bring your child’s prescribed medication to daycare you will be asked to go home and get it, or take the child home and give them the required dosage.

**Over the counter medication:**

May include but are not limited to: 1. Antihistamines, 2. NON-aspirin fever reducing/pain reliever 3. Decongestants 4. Anti-itching ointment or lotions 5. Diaper rash ointments or lotions 6. Sun screen 7. Cough syrup 8. Teething gels 9. Insect repellant

May be administered only with a note from the parent. All medications must be in the original container, indicating the child’s name, and amount and time of dosage. If any of them will be taken differently than indicated on the labels or for more than 5 days, we will need a note from the physician.

Medication is stored in a specific location at each center so that we can control the medication logs and the expiration of medication. Please see your child’s teacher to inform them that your child has medication and the time that it will need administered. At our Loyalsock facility you will need to see the director to sign-in your child’s medication. **Before we can administer any medication, you must sign the medication into the medication log.** At our South Williamsport facility, you will need to go to the Assistant Director's office to sign-in your child’s medication.

We cannot and will not administer any medication that is not signed-in by a parent or guardian. Once a medication has expired we will notify you and you will have 48 hours to pick it up. After 48 hours, we will dispose of it. If your child is no longer required to take a medication, you will have 48 hours to pick it up or we will dispose of it. If your child takes a medication daily and it is recurring, you will be required to complete a new medication form each month.

If a child will be on long term meds, or as needed medications like asthma inhalers, a note from your doctor will be required to put in our files. Medications that are not being used must be sent back home. Only asthma type medications can be kept here to be used when needed.

Please make sure that you notify the child’s teacher or assistant teacher if they need to receive any medicine so that it can be properly administered. Please provide any necessary droppers, medicine spoons or dosage containers needed. Please **DO NOT** leave your child’s medicine in a diaper-bag, mailbox/ cubby and **DO NOT** put it in their sippy cup or bottle.

You may come to the Center at any time during the day to give your child medications. This does not require written permission, although we will ask you to sign our medication log so that we know what you have given and whether there may be side effects.

Because of the possibility of allergic reactions to medicine in young children, the first dose of a new medication must always be given at home. Medications and medical apparatus of all kinds must be given to the staff for proper storage.

NEVER leave medicine or medical apparatus (such as an asthma inhaler) in your child’s cubby or backpack, where other children can reach it.

**Allergies:**

If your child has any allergies of any kind (known or suspected), it is imperative that you notify us when you enroll your child, and we will take all reasonable precautions to ensure your child is not exposed to those allergens. If your child needs to receive any medication when they have been exposed to an allergen, we will need to have that medication on hand, with a copy of the prescription, at all times. Allergies will be posted in the classrooms visible to the teachers.

It is also imperative that you advise us immediately if you suspect any additional allergies at any time, or if your preferred method of managing any existing allergies changes.

**Children with special health care needs:**

Children with special health care needs could have a variety of different problems ranging from asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy, bleeding disorders, metabolic problems, cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease, seizure disorder, sensory disorders, autism, severe allergy, immune deficiencies, or many other conditions. Some of these conditions require daily treatments and some only require observation for signs of impending illness and ability to respond in a timely manner.

Any child who meets these criteria should have a Routine and Emergent Care Plan completed by their primary care provider in their medical home. In addition to the information specified in Standard 9.4.2.4 for the Health Report, there should be:

1. A list of the child’s diagnosis/diagnoses;
2. Contact information for the primary care provider and any relevant sub-specialists (i.e., endocrinologists, oncologists, etc.);
3. Medications to be administered on a scheduled basis;
4. Medications to be administered on an emergent basis with clearly stated parameters, signs, and symptoms that warrant giving the medication written in lay language;
5. Procedures to be performed;
6. Allergies;
7. Dietary modifications required for the health of the child;
8. Activity modifications;
9. Environmental modifications;
10. Stimulus that initiates or precipitates a reaction or series of reactions (triggers) to avoid;
11. Symptoms for caregiver/teachers to observe;
12. Behavioral modifications;
13. Emergency response plans – both if the child has a medical emergency and special factors to consider in programmatic emergency, like a fire;
14. Suggested special skills training and education for staff.

The Care Plan should be updated after every hospitalization or significant change in health status of the child. The Care Plan is completed by the primary care provider in the medical home with input from parents/guardians, and it is implemented in the child care setting. The child care health consultant should be involved to assure adequate information, training, and monitoring is available for child care staff.

#### 3270.133. Child medication and special diets.

 The operator shall make reasonable accommodation in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws to facilitate administration of medication or a special diet that is prescribed by a physician, physician’s assistant or CRNP as treatment related to the child’s special needs. Facility persons are not required to administer medication or special diets which are requested or required by a parent, a physician, a physician’s assistant or a CRNP but are not treatment related to the child’s special needs. When medication or special diets are administered, the following requirements apply:

   (1)  A prescription or nonprescription medication may be accepted only in an original container. The medication must remain in the container in which it was received.

   (2)  A staff person shall administer a prescription medication only if written instructions are provided from the individual who prescribed the medicine. Instructions for administration contained on a prescription label are acceptable.

   (3)  The label of a medication container must identify the name of the medication and the name of the child for whom the medication is intended. Medication shall be administered to only the child whose name appears on the container.

   (4)  Medication shall be stored in a locked area of the facility or in an area that is out of the reach of children.

   (5)  Medication shall be stored in accordance with the manufacturer’s or health professional’s instructions on the original label.

   (6)  A parent shall provide written consent for administration.

   (7)  An operator is responsible to establish and maintain a medication log if prescription or nonprescription medication is administered. A log must include the following minimum information:

     (i)   The name of the medication.

     (ii)   The name of the child receiving the medication.

     (iii)   A requirement for refrigeration.

     (iv)   The amount of medication administered.

     (v)   The date of administration.

     (vi)   The time of administration.

     (vii)   The initials of the staff person who administered the medication.

     (viii)   Special notes related to problems of administration.

   (8)  If a special diet is prescribed for a child and if the diet is administered to the child, written instructions and the parent’s written consent shall be retained in the child’s file.

**Safety and Security**

**Security:**

Keeping your child safe and secure is our first priority. Upon enrollment you will be given a key card for the security doors. Anyone who rings the bell, who is unknown to our staff will have to state their purpose and will be directed to the appropriate place.

**Court Orders Affecting Enrolled Children:**

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex… Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Blessed Beginnings must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with Blessed Beginnings, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. We cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, we suggest that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

Blessed Beginnings will not take sides in the matter of custody orders, unless ordered by the court to do so. Abuse of this policy, including by not limited to: subpoenaing of staff for custody reasons, asking staff to document against a parent for use in court. Blessed Beginnings remains neutral in all custody arrangements and are here solely for the purpose of taking care of children. All incident/injury reports involving enrolled children will be given to all custodial parents.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Blessed Beginnings is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated.

**Releasing Your Child:**

Your child will be released **ONLY** to parents and person(s) for whom the center has written authorization. Proper identification IS required. If we are not familiar with the person(s) picking up your child, we will require a valid photo ID. Please advise anyone who may pickup your child not to take offense to this policy. It is simply the only way to assure the safety of your child. **This authorization must be left with the Director (or whomever is on duty) and also with the classroom teacher. This is for your child’s safety**.

If you find yourself in an emergency situation and require someone other than those on your emergency contact list on file at Blessed Beginnings to pick-up your child, you can call the center, give their name, a brief description of this person and if at all possible their driver’s license number. Be aware that we may call you back to confirm this change.

If your family is experiencing a divorce or other legal situation which would affect who is allowed to pick your child up, please let the Director know immediately. You also may need to change your emergency contact list. If proper legal documents are provided by the person picking up, we have no choice but to release the child to the person providing the documentation. If you have legal documentation, such as: a custody agreement, Protection from Abuse or a no contact order, please provide that document to the center to insure your child’s safety.

**Emergency/Evacuation Plan:**

In the event that Blessed Beginnings should experience an emergency situation while your child (ren) is in our care, we have implemented the following procedures:

An emergency within the **Loyalsock** facility/building itself, children will be moved to: Hampton Inn located at 66 Liberty Lane, Wmspt. Children will be moved in a safe fashion walking from our building down Russell Avenue into The Hampton Inn.

An emergency within the **South Williamsport** facility/building itself, children will be moved to: Saint Lawrence church building located on 812 West Central Avenue. Children will be moved in a safe fashion through the side door of the church. Children will remain in the care of their teacher in the St. Lawrence church, fellowship hall.

Should the situation arise where the entire area will need to be secured, the children will be moved by bus or school vehicle to the other Blessed Beginnings Preschool & Childcare location. Children will be moved the safest way possible by a vehicle equipped with proper seating restraints to ensure their safety or by bus if the situation needs immediate evacuation of all children at once.

Parents will be notified by either the director, or other staff member designated to make phone calls and a mass message will be put out on Brightwheel. Should the children need to be removed from the situation, they will only be released to their parents or those people deemed by their parents as able people to attend to their child. The director or assistant director will inform the families of the end of the emergency and where families can be reunited with their children.

A copy of the emergency plan is kept in the classrooms and the office, and is available upon request to review. Staff are provided with ongoing staff training relating to emergencies and revisions of this plan.

Fire drills occur at minimum once every 60 days. Emergency drills are practiced at minimum once a year. Parents, or other persons in the building at the time of a fire drill must participate in the drill.

**Child Accident:**

Injuries will be reported to you by brightwheel message for any minor injury. An accident or incident report will be completed and need to be signed by a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians will receive a copy of this report.

If your child is injured at the center and needs treatment by a healthcare professional, we’ll make every effort to contact you and/or the health care professional you have identified on the emergency contact form prior to calling for an ambulance. In the event of a critical or life threatening emergency, we will make sure that your child receives any necessary emergency treatment until we reach you. **We are not responsible for any medical bills incurred due to an emergency.**

INJURY RESPONSE

We try to prevent injuries by constant adult supervision and alertness, but occasional accidents are bound to happen whenever active young children are at play. You will probably receive one or more written incident forms at some point in your child’s time with us. We complete these whenever a child is hurt badly enough to require first aid or in any way that has left a mark on his or her body. If your child has an accident, a teacher will give you the form at pickup.

It is important for families to realize that young children sometimes bite when they cannot otherwise express themselves. While distressing to adults, bites are a common occurrence wherever young children are together in groups. You will receive an incident form if your child is bitten, of course, but also if he/she is the biter. Due to confidentiality concerns, staff are not permitted to share the name of the other child involved in these incidents. (See Medical Emergencies, below, for more information about more serious accidents.)

Center staff are also trained in pediatric first aid, including management of a blocked airway. If your child has a health condition that might require CPR or other special emergency interventions, please notify the director prior to enrollment so that staff can be properly trained.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of an illness or accident which requires medical attention beyond simple first aid, we will contact you, your child's other parent (if applicable), your emergency contact person, or your child's physician, in that order. If it is impossible to reach any of these people, and should emergency treatment be required, we will contact 9-1-1 and accompany the child to the nearest emergency facility. A Center employee will remain with the child until he or she can be released to a parent or other authorized emergency person. Your signed permission to obtain emergency treatment was obtained at enrollment. (See “Emergency Information” earlier in this section.)

Please note that your own health insurance will be responsible for bills stemming from injury treatment. If you do not have health coverage for your child, please see the director for information on how to obtain it.

#### Reporting of Suspected child abuse or neglect:

It is our intent to build a partnership with parents to help them provide the most suitable environment possible for children. Toward this goal, we have many resources and referrals available to parents upon request. It is also important, also, for parents to be aware that state laws require that any and all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect be reported to the appropriate agency. It is the responsibility of this agency to investigate each reported case. We will not knowingly allow any form of sexual, physical or emotional abuse of any child at Blessed Beginnings.

Childline - 800-932-0313

**§ 3270.19. Child abuse reporting.**

 (a)  An operator or a staff person who has reason to believe that a child enrolled in the facility has been abused is required to report suspected child abuse to Child Line as mandated by the CPSL.

 (b)  A staff person may be designated by the operator as the person responsible to notify Child Line of suspected child abuse. The operator or designated staff person with this responsibility shall immediately notify Child Line at 1 (800) 932-0313.

 (c)  Within 48 hours, a written report regarding the suspected child abuse shall be submitted by the operator or designated staff person to the CPS unit which has responsibility for investigating the report.

**Weapons:**

Parents/Guardians, staff and guests are prohibited from possessing firearms or any other weapons on our property and at events with the facility. An exception is made for law enforcement officers.

**Smoke Free Environment:**

Parents/ Guardians, staff and guests of Blessed Beginnings are prohibited from smoking on the Center premises – both indoors and out, including the parking lot (in a parked vehicle) and playground areas. You must cross the street or leave the premises to smoke.

**Influence of drugs/alcohol:**

If you or any other person appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of pick-up, you will be asked to have someone come and get you and your child.

If you refuse a ride and leave with your child, we will notify the police department and child protection services with all information required.

**State Licensing Regulations:**

Blessed Beginnings complies with Pennsylvania’s Department Of Public Welfare (DPW) State Regulations and requirements. The center is subject to inspection by the State Office of Child and Early Development at any time. Blessed Beginnings is inspected yearly by a DPW state representative. Any citations we receive at that time are documented and on review for you on our parent board in the hallway.

Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, child to staff ratios, fire safety, the facility building and all equipment within the facility and playground, child and adult health, nutrition, health and safety matters, and record keeping. The State Regulations can be viewed at any time upon request.

An DPW representative can be reached at one of the following:

800-222-2117 or 570-374-2675

**MEALS**

**CACFP Meal Forms:**

Blessed Beginnings participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Our participation allows us to create a healthy and nutritious meal plan for our children, without worrying about the added expense of fresh fruits and vegetables.

You will be required to complete a meal benefit application that asks about your financial information (seen only by the Director, CACFP Administrator and/or a CACFP state representative. The information given has no bearing on your tuition, but does help us to determine the type of funding Blessed Beginnings will receive for your child. You will need to initial meal information on the enrollment agreement in order to provide meals for your child. If you do not initial that form after your child’s first week of care, you may be required to provide your own meals or pay for the meals we are providing. We will be unable to provide any part of a meal, other than water, to your child until one is received. We are required by the CACFP to update this paperwork on a yearly basis for each child in our care. This update occurs each March. If you are enrolling an infant, you will also need to complete the infant enrollment form and update it when your child turns 1 year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department.

The Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program funded through the U.S. Department of (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at

<http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html>

or at any USDA office, or call (866) 6329992 to request the form.

You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Director, Office of Adjudication

1400 Independence Avenue

S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

**Meal Times:**

Breakfast, Lunch and Morning and Afternoon snacks are provided for the children eating table food. Participation in the food program allows us to provide our infants with formula, baby foods, baby cereal and snacks.

Our meal schedule is as follows:

✰Breakfast is served from:

* 6:30am - 8:00am for school-age children
* 7:30am - 9:00am for all other children in the South Williamsport location
* 8:00am - 9:30am for Pre-K Counts program at Loyalsock location

✰A nutritious and well-balanced, homemade, lunch is provided for the children

daily, which includes a grain/bread product, meat or meatless protein, fruit and/or 2

vegetables and milk. Monthly breakfast/snack and lunch menus will be posted on the parent board.

✰Lunch is served at 11:00am for the infants, and toddlers, at 11:30am for the preschool

and Pre-K children and 12:00pm for school-age children.

✰A nutritious snack is served around 2:30pm when the children wake from rest time.

Monthly breakfast/snack and lunch menus will be posted on the parent board.

Children who are here during those times will be served. Children, who choose not to eat during these times, will not be served another meal again until the next scheduled meal time (with the exception of infants, who are fed on demand or by the schedule given from their parents). If your child will be arriving after a scheduled mealtime, prior to their arrival, please make arrangements to feed him or her.

Children are provided with seconds of any or all foods upon request. Servings are proportionate to their age and CACFP food portion requirements. Food will be cut into safe-size pieces and served in the appropriate proportions for the children consuming it. No child is required to eat. Children will eat when they are hungry, and will get all of the nutrients they need when consistently presented with a variety of healthy choices. Most children often like foods they did not initially want to try, once they have been exposed a few times.

**Food Allergies:**

If your child has special dietary needs, such as lactose intolerance, peanut allergies, etc… you will be required to provide a note from a medical professional explaining the allergy and what food may be served as an alternative. We will make every effort to prevent your child from consuming foods/drinks that would cause an allergic reaction. In the event that a child would share or take food from another child’s portions with a staff member’s observation, we will need to know the actions to take and what to do.

If you avoid any foods or combinations of foods for religious, cultural, or health concerns, please let us know and we will attempt to accommodate your requests. In some cases we will be able to provide an alternative. To avoid triggering an allergic reaction, the following foods are not served to children under 2 years of age, unless you specifically approve them for your child:

✰Honey

✰Chocolate

Children under 1 year will not be given food without your approval and signature stating they are “developmentally ready” to start solid foods.

Please refer to the monthly calendar for weekly breakfast/snack and lunch menus. If you have questions or concerns about the menu, please feel free to discuss them with the assistant director or the CACFP food administrator.

#### Classroom Policies

**Birthdays:**

Parents are encouraged to allow their children to share his or her birthday with the class. Please provide your child’s teacher with a few days notice so they may plan their afternoon snack accordingly. The teacher will let you know how many children will be present at snack time. Please keep everything simple. Cupcakes or prepackaged items are recommended. **For safety reasons, balloons are not permitted**.

We cannot hand out invitations to home parties unless all children in the class are invited.

**Clothing and outdoor play:**

Children should be appropriately dressed for indoor and outdoor play according to the season. Outdoor play occurs daily when weather permits. Outdoor play for infants and young toddlers may include riding in a carriage or stroller and possibly engaging in some gross motor activities in the grassy area. If weather poses a significant health risk such as wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F happens, children will not be taken outdoors. In summer, we like to spend as much time outdoors as we can. To minimize exposure to harmful sun, we try to go out early in the day and remain inside between 11 and 3. Children shall be protected from the sun by using shade, and sunscreen SPF-30 or higher (from April to October). Sunscreen will be provided for your child with a signed parental/guardian consent and will be applied before we go out in the morning and again in the afternoon. Parents who prefer to use sunscreen other than that provided by the center may supply a bottle clearly labeled with their child's name. Sunscreen papers will go out in April.

Your child will participate in a variety of different activities throughout their day; your **child’s clothing should be durable and washable.** Please label your child’s clothing. We are not responsible for lost, stained, soiled or torn clothing. If one-piece outfits are worn, the children must be able to get in and out of them by themselves if they are toilet training.

Comfortable shoes that provide protection should be worn. Shoes should be closed toe with rubber soles that are able to be securely tied or fastened (tennis shoes, sneakers). Sneakers are recommended. Clogs, sandals and flip-flops will not be permitted, as they are not conducive to play. If your child wears flip-flops to school, they **MUST** have a pair of sneakers or closed toe shoes, to participate in gross motor or outdoor play. If they do not have a spare pair of close toed shoes, they may be required to sit out during outside time.

All jackets, sweaters, and coats should be labeled with your child’s name in permanent marker. We cannot be responsible for unmarked clothing. You will be asked to supply a complete set of seasonally appropriate extra clothing. We suggest that the clothing be placed in a clear Ziploc bag with your child’s name on the bag as well as the clothing. Blessed Beginnings also maintains a limited supply of extra hats, mittens, jackets, etc., for children who occasionally come to school without proper clothing. In order to protect children from cold and wind chill, we stay inside if the temperature or wind chill is below 20 degrees F.

**Field Trips:**

The preschool and Pre-K classes will take field trips several times throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to help on field trips. All chaperones will need to pay their own admission fees. A field trip form will be sent home prior to all field trips. Please make sure that the form is turned in by the due date. Trips will be made with our bus.Parents will be informed prior to any off-campus field trips taken by a school vehicle. All children traveling in a vehicle will be in seat belts and car seats.

Classes will often exercise by taking walks in the neighborhood around the center. Please make sure your emergency contact form is signed permitting your child to participate in these outdoor activities.

**Special Guest/Visitors:**

The preschool, Pre-K classes and school-age classes willsometimes invite visitors into the classroom. Sometimes these visitors are parents or grandparents who come to read a story, cook a favorite family recipe, or share a hobby. The storymobile comes every other week and on occasion they bring a guest reader. We will sometimes invite guest speakers that relate to our study topic as well.

#### Food:

We ask that all candy, gum, soda, and other edibles be kept at home. If you wish to bring in additional food for lunch or snack, please check with your child’s teacher and plan to bring a sufficient supply for your child’s entire group. You may pack your child’s meals, but you will have to **provide all components** of their meal. We are unable to serve juice or milk to your child if you provide their meal.

**Nap and Rest/Quiet Time:**

Following lunch, children are given a rest or quiet time; infant naps are scheduled to fit their personal needs. We ask that your child not be dropped off during nap/rest time (between 11:30am – 2:00pm). Dropping off at these times are very disruptive for other children in their class, especially if your child hesitates when you depart. All children are expected to sleep or rest quietly during this time. Quiet music is usually played and the teachers use soothing methods to get your child to sleep. Although we will do our best to adhere to your request that your child not sleep, we will not refuse them their right if they fall asleep. Some preschool and Pre-K children have outgrown the need to nap. For these children we offer a “non-napping” room. You will be asked to complete a form for your preschool or Pre-K child twice a year, to use the non-napping room, once in September and again in March, unless a change is determined prior to the designated times.

Families will need to furnish a crib sized sheet with your child’s name on it. The sheet should go home on Fridays to be washed and returned on the following Monday. Each child will have their own regular sleep space such as a crib or cot (that is provided by Blessed Beginnings) and it will be sanitized daily.

**\*All items are to go home once a week to be washed.**

**Parent Donations:**

We welcome donations of almost any kind! Things you throw away can often be used in the classroom. Suggestions include: egg cartons, dishwashing soap and bleach containers, soap cartons, juice cans, toilet paper and paper towel rolls.

We are also ALWAYS in need of extra pants (all children’s sizes) and crib sized sheets.

**Parties:**

Our classes will have parties throughout the year for special occasions, such as; Valentine’s Day, Easter, etc.... A sign up sheet with notice concerning the party will be given to you or posted on your child’s classroom door. Teachers may request food or party items by putting up a sign-up sheet for requested items; your help is greatly appreciated in fulfilling these requests. Please refrain from bringing in sugary snacks and treats. Depending on the occasion and the amount of “treats” received, we may return some things to you for consumption at home, or use as extra snacks.

At Christmas time, teachers will create wish lists for each of their classrooms. Instead of exchanging individual gifts, we encourage (but do not require) you to purchases a classroom gift. Please bring your gift already wrapped with your child’s name or family name on it.

**Personal Belongings:**

Children are permitted to bring a special item for naptime – ex. Stuffed animal, blanket, pillow, cuddly, etc… **We do not want children to bring in toys from home.** When a child brings a treasured object to the center it can create tension and jealousy for other children. Please keep in mind each child’s personal storage space is limited. Blessed Beginnings will provide many toys for the children to play with while at school. If a toy is brought and it is not left in the child’s bag, we cannot accept responsibility for it if it is damaged or lost.

**We are not responsible for any personal belongings, this includes but is not limited to: clothing, shoes, hats, jewelry, backpacks, blankets, sheets or any other item that is brought from home. ALL items should be labeled with the child’s name!**

**Toilet Training:**

Toilet training usually begins around 2 years of age. Each child begins to train at a different age and progresses at individual rates. The task of toilet training is most easily accomplished when the teacher, parent and child work together as partners. Children learn toileting through consistent and positive encouragement from adults. When your child is toilet training, three or four pairs of underwear and pants, as well as spare pull-ups, will need to be left in his/her cubby. The center’s approach toward toilet training is one of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Children are not pushed or shamed into using the toilet. Children are taken to the bathroom every two hours to try, and when they express the need to go. By the age of 2 ½ to 3 years, we find most children no longer require diapers and are using the toilet regularly.

Your child will need to remain in diapers or “pull-ups” during childcare hours until he/she has shown the ability to remain accident free in your home for a period of at least two weeks. We do this is for several reasons. Children often appear to be trained at home (calmer, quieter situation), but are not yet able to “listen” to their body’s signals when presented with the distractions of a group care environment. When you ask that we allow your child to go without diapers before they are truly ready would causes unnecessary stress on your child, as well as the staff.

**Center Events and Activities**

* The James V. Brown Story Mobile comes every other week. All classroom teachers are encouraged to visit the Story Mobile to get resources to share in their classroom.
* Field trips for the preschool and Pre-K occur throughout the school year, as well as school-age during the summer months
* Guest speakers on a frequent basis
* Blessed Beginnings holds fundraisers on a regular basis to purchase items needed for our classrooms. We try to vary the type and number of fundraisers. We hope that you will enjoy helping us provide your children with the best possible materials.
* Portraits are also taken at minimum twice a year. You will be given notice of when these days are.

**Families Events:**

We attempt to host several family events each year. Some of these vary from year to year. Listed below are the ones we do each year:

* February – Valentine’s Day parties
* March – Dr. Seuss Birthday Book Bingo & Easter Parties
* April – indoor pool party & Easter Parties
* May – Preschool graduation
* June – family picnic at the park
* August – Meet the teacher night
* October – Family trip to the pumpkin patch & Halloween Parties
* November – Pumpkin Pie Social
* December – annual Christmas Program & Parent’s Night Out - Cookies & Milk celebration

**Community Resources:**

Below is a list of common community services that can support families with various needs. When aware of certain needs the director, or assistant director, can put the family in contact with resources.

**Behavior Support:**

Blast IU 17 offers a step-by-step process to request a Functional Behavior Assessment.

1. Complete the Online Request to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment. Your IU Contact will determine the availability of Behavior Intervention Staff and assign a IU staff member to complete the request. The IU Behavior Intervention Staff member will then contact the district to initiate the process.
2. The student’s District will obtain permission to evaluate and complete the referral form submitting it to the assigned IU staff member. The IU staff member will schedule a consultation with the IEP Manager I Appointed Teacher and schedule two school based observations.
3. At the first observation/consultation (maximum two hours) the IU staff will review necessary paperwork the district will need to complete including:
   * Functional Behavioral Assessment Interview form completed by parent and teacher
   * Motivational Assessment Scale form completed by parent and instructional teacher(s)
   * Identify an acceptable form to collect ten days of target behavior and identify district staff responsible to collect data
4. IU staff will complete a second observation at maximum two hours
5. District will the return 10 days of data, Interview form and Motivational Assessment Scale from instructional teachers and parents to IU Staff. The IU staff will compile data and complete the FBA Summary and develop and draft Behavior Intervention Plan. The IU staff will the contact referring source to schedule a team meeting.
6. The IU staff will attend the team meeting and will review the draft FBA & BIP and seek’ input from the various team members. The IU staff will modify the FBA and BIP and return to the referring source. The district staff will then disperse to team members.

For more information or to ask questions, contact our Behavior Support Supervisor:

[**Mark Nevill**](https://www.iu17.org/behavior-support/name/mark-nevill/)

Psychologist Supervisor Work Phone: 570-323-8561 x1026/3010 Work Email: [mnevill@iu17.org](mailto:mnevill@iu17.org)

**Benefits Assistance - PA Dept. of Human Services**

PA county assistance office provide aid and support to families in need.

400 Little League Blvd, Williamsport PA

877-867-4014 or 800-692-7462

**Child Care Works (CCW)/ Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 7**

The subsidized child care program helps low-income families pay their child care fees. The state and federal governments fund this program, which is managed by the [Early Learning Resource Center](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/ELRCs.aspx) (ELRC) office located in your county.

If you meet the guidelines:

* + The ELRC will pay a part of your child care cost. This is called a subsidy payment.
  + You will pay a part of the cost. This is called the family co-pay.
  + The subsidy payment and the family co-pay go directly to the child care program.

NOTE: If your child care subsidy does not pay the full amount that your child care program charges, the provider may ask you to pay the difference between the subsidy payment and their private charges.

### Guidelines

You must submit an [application](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Documents/Child%20Care%20Early%20Learning/CY%200868.pdf) to the ELRC to see if you meet the guidelines for the subsidized child care program.

The following are the basic guidelines:

* + You must live in Pennsylvania
  + Have a child or children who need child care while you work or attend an education program
  + Meet income guidelines for your family size
  + Work 20 or more hours a week - or-
  + Work 10 hours and go to school or train for 10 hours a week
  + Have a promise of a job that will start within 30 days of your application for subsidized child care
  + Teen parents must attend an education program
  + The child who needs care must be a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residency
  + Have proof of identification for each parent or caretaker in the home.

#### Income Guidelines

The annual income for a family to be eligible to receive a subsidy is 200 percent or less of the [Federal Poverty Income Guidelines](http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/poverty)

[Opens In A New Window](http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/poverty)

:

| Family Size | Maximum Yearly  Family Income (May 2022) |
| --- | --- |
| 2 | $36,620 |
| 3 | $46,060 |
| 4 | $55,500 |
| 5 | $64,940 |
| 6 | $74,380 |
| 7 | $83,820 |
| 8 | $93,260 |

*(Note: The above information provides only general guidelines. Other conditions may apply. Please contact your county Early Learning Resource Center to apply for assistance.)*

#### Additional Guidelines

* + Each adult family member must work at least 20 hours a week or work at least 10 hours a week and participate in an approved training program at least 10 hours a week.
  + The hours that a child may receive subsidized child care must coincide with hours of work, education, or training.
  + Children are eligible for care from birth until the day prior to the date of the child's 13th birthday. Children with disabilities may be eligible through age 18.
  + The parent is responsible to help pay for child care. This is called a co-payment. The co-payment may be as little as $5.00 per week and varies according to your income and the number of people in your family.
  + The parent may choose the provider of his or her choice. The parent may choose a child care center, a small family day care home, a group day care home or even a relative to care for his or her child.
  + The parent who is receiving a subsidy must choose an eligible child care provider. Relative providers must complete an Agreement with the ELRC, must comply with the participation requirements listed in the Agreement and must complete CareCheck in order to be eligible to participate in the Subsidized Child Care Program. CareCheck is the Department of Human Services' program that requires background clearances (see below).
  + If funding is not available at the time that a low-income, working parent applies for subsidized child care, the child may be placed on a waiting list.

You can also apply for benefits and renew benefits by using [COMPASS](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/), the online resource for cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), child care, health care coverage, home heating assistance (LIHEAP), school meals, SelectPlan for Women and long-term living services.

**CHIP**

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – formerly known as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) – is a program administered by the [United States Department of Health and Human Services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Health_and_Human_Services) that provides [matching funds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matching_funds) to states for [health insurance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_insurance) to families with children.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children's_Health_Insurance_Program#cite_note-1) The program was designed to cover uninsured children in families with incomes that are modest but too high to qualify for [Medicaid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medicaid). The program was passed into law as part of the [Balanced Budget Act of 1997](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balanced_Budget_Act_of_1997), and the statutory authority for CHIP is under title XXI of the [Social Security Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Security_Act).

[Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) | Medicaid](https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/index.html)

**Dental Clinic**

River Valley Health and Dental Center offers preventative and restorative dentistry including:

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* Dental Exams and X-rays
* Cleanings & Fluoride
* Sealants
* Extractions
* Fillings & Root Canals
* Referrals to Specialty Care

In addition to the services listed above, River Valley Health and Dental Center offers [infant programs](https://www.rivervalleyhealthanddental.org/single-post/2017/02/04/Childrens-Dental-Month), dental education and hygiene services for children ages 6 months to 3 years. Our Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioners provide this program every Tuesday. This is a great way to begin learning about how to begin caring for your child’s teeth and get them used to what it takes to have a healthy mouth!

For more information, contact the River Valley Health and Dental Center 471 Hepburn Street Williamsport, PA 17701

**MYRETA CHURBA**

Dental Hygienist Work Phone: 570-692-2518 [RVHDCSupport@aimhealthy.org.](mailto:SCHDCSupport@aimhealthy.org)

**Early Intervention:**

Our Early Intervention programs are provided for eligible preschool children in Bradford, Lycoming, Sullivan and Tioga counties. Early Intervention is a comprehensive and collaborative system that optimizes children’s development, supports the family’s responsibility and enhances their capacity to care for their child. Our services are provided based on a Board approved stretch calendar.

A variety of need-based services for eligible young children are provided in the least restrictive environment. Early Intervention services range from consultative to instruction in specialized classrooms. Related Services are available, for example, in the areas of speech, hearing, and vision. along with assistance with psychological evaluations and assistive technology. Services are provided when the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (MDE) team determines the child meets the eligibility criteria of a 25% delay in one (1) or more of the five (5) developmental areas AND demonstrates a need for specially designed instruction. These services are available to children ages 3 to age of beginners. Our staff also works closely with school districts and parents to facilitate the transition-to-school process for eligible children. We provide screenings, upon request, as part of the comprehensive child find effort. Working with our communities we also provide resources, training and outreach programs for schools, preschools, colleges and various agencies.

The Process for Receiving Service

1. Refer a child for evaluation at: 1-800-326-8528 (This can come from parents, care givers, physicians, or teacher).
2. Whether to do a speech-only or full evaluation is determined, depending on the intake paperwork.
3. An appointment for the evaluation is made at an early intervention site located in our service area.
4. The evaluation takes 1 1/2 – 2 hours to complete
5. Parents are then informed by the evaluation team as to the eligibility of the child for Early Intervention Services.
6. If qualifying for service, a return appointment is made to review the Evaluation Report and develop the initial Individualized Education Program.

Have questions or want more information? Contact our Early Intervention Program Supervisor.

[**Angela Sees**](https://www.iu17.org/early-intervention/name/angela-sees/)

Special Education Supervisor Work Phone: 570-323-8561 x1003/2015 Work Email: [asees@iu17.org](mailto:asees@iu17.org)

**Emergency Housing Assistance**

Eligibility:

Must live in Lycoming county, PA.

Availability:

available

Description:

We provide an array of emergency assistance services to individuals and families experiencing hardship. Although our resources are finite we are able to assist people through our own resources or a huge network of organizations that we work with.

Services:

- Financial assistance (help paying for electric, gas, oil, or rent)

Those seeking rental assistance, must have an eviction notice. Those seeking utility assistance, must have a utility shut-off notice.

If you are not sure if we can help in your situation, it is best to call, make an appointment with our professional counselor -who can assess your needs and develop an assistance plan.

This program is offered when funding is available. If we are unable to help you one week, call back the following week to find out whether we have received more funding.

Cost:

Free

Next Steps:

Call 570-326-9187

**Head Start:**

To complete an Eligibility/Recruitment Form for STEP Head Start, call STEP at (570) 601-9601.

Purpose - The mission of STEP Head Start is to foster hope, growth, self-sufficiency and social competence in children and their families in partnership with parents and the community.

Vision - The vision of Head Start is to be a catalyst for inspiring positive change and fostering hope in children, family and the community.

Program Overview - As part of the STEP Early Learning Pathway, STEP Head Start is committed to helping children and families succeed. Head Start gives children the tools they need to succeed in school and in life and families the tools they need to maximize their children’s success as well as their own. Highly qualified, trained and caring staff provide comprehensive services that help children grow educationally, physically, socially and emotionally. We believe parents are every child’s most important teachers and encourage parent participation in all program activities and partner with parents to help children succeed. There is no cost to participants.

Eligibility

Preschool children in Lycoming and Clinton counties, including those with disabilities, are eligible for enrollment. Head Start accepts applications year-round, and fills vacancies from its waiting list as they occur. While children from low-income families have enrollment priority, children from higher-income families may be enrolled as well.

Services

* Education: Individualized learning experiences that foster every child’s social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.
* Health: Physical and dental examinations, immunizations, comprehensive health screenings, and any necessary follow-up services.
* Nutrition: Nutritious snacks and lunches that meet USDA standards; nutrition education for children and parents.
* Family Engagement: Individualized family partnerships, goal setting and personal support; recognition that parents are every child’s first and most important teachers; volunteer opportunities.
* Parent Decision Making: opportunities for parents to participate in program planning and decision-making, in addition to sharing program governance with the STEP Board of Directors.
* Social Services: Support and referrals that help families improve their lives.
* Support for Children with Disabilities: Early identification and intervention to support children with disabilities and their inclusion in all program activities.

**James V Brown Library**

19 East Fourth Street, Williamsport

570-326-0536

**Lycoming Children and Youth Services**

The children and youth service agency is mandated by the state to guarantee the health, safety, welfare and social growth of the children and youth in Lycoming county.

200 East Street, Williamsport PA

570-326-7895

**Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania**

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania matches parents, family members, and caregivers of children and adults with disabilities or special needs together on a one-to-one basis, according to conditions or concerns. Our program is based on the philosophy that parents of children and adults with disabilities or special needs can be helped by other parents who have traveled the road before them.

Services provided:

- One-to-one peer support

Parents and family members of children and adults with disabilities or special needs may be matched for the following conditions or concerns:

- Physical disabilities

- Developmental disabilities

- Special health care needs

- Behavioral/mental health concerns

- Foster care or adoption

- Educational issues

If a match is found in the Parent to Parent database, the Regional Coordinator facilitates the connection between the caller and Peer Supporter by exchanging information relevant to the match. The Peer Supporter contacts the caller, usually by phone within 24 hours.

If a match cannot be found in our database, then other resources are utilized to help make the match.

Phone - 888-727-2706

**Pennsylvania Promise for Children:**

Pennsylvania’s promise for children is a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of providing Pennsylvania’s young children with access to quality early learning opportunities. It is sponsored by the PA Build Initiative Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality, The Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and William Penn Foundation, in partnership with the Pennsylvania website at [www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com).

**St Joseph the Worker - Food Pantry**

Eligibility:

Anyone can access this program.

Availability:

available

Description:

The food pantry provides supplementary food items to individuals and families in need. This program supplies critical nutrition to people who may otherwise lack it.

This program provides:

- Food to meet basic nutritional needs

Languages:

English

Cost:

Free

Next Steps:

Contact or go to the [nearest location](https://www.findhelp.org/food/food-pantry--williamsport-pa?postal=17701#hoursandlocationbest2)

Call 570-323-9456

**United Way**

Lycoming County United Way's mission is to mobilize resources to improve lives. In Lycoming, Sullivan and Tioga Counties, friends and neighbors need our help and the Lycoming County United Way is uniquely positioned to be that resource. At our organization, we are focusing on the building blocks of a good quality of life; health, education and financial stability, while providing funding for emergency services.

1 West Third Street, Williamsport PA

570-323-9448

**North Central Sight Services**

North Central Sight Services, Inc. is a not-for-profit agency based in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. We are proud to provide blindness prevention education, vision screenings, services and employment to individuals who are blind or visually impaired in the communities of Bradford, Centre, Clinton, Lycoming, Sullivan, and Tioga Counties. North Central Sight Services, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization as designated by the IRS and is registered with the Bureau of Charities in the state of Pennsylvania.

**Remedial Eye Care Program**

Our Remedial Eye Care Program assists low income individuals in obtaining eye exams and glasses. Eligibility is based upon the total household income and the number of people living in the home. This program is designed to provide a complete eye exam and/or basic pair of glasses.

[Download the Remedial Eye Care Assistance Program Application](https://www.ncsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Eye-Care-Assistance-Application.pdf)

**Functional Vision Exams for Children**

Our Functional Vision Clinic provides income eligible children an opportunity to receive a complete eye examination with a pediatric optometrist who specializes in testing for visual-related learning problems. The clinic is held monthly at our facility. Common signs of a functional vision issue include poor eye-hand coordination, alternate uses of the right and left hands, and difficulty when studying visual information. If you suspect your child has a functional vision problem, please contact our [Prevention of Blindness Department](https://www.ncsight.org/vision_services/prevention_and_education/) for more information.

2121 Reach Road, Williamsport PA

570-323-9401

**WIC**

The Pennsylvania Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has improved the nutrition and health of families in Pennsylvania since 1974 by providing nutrition services, breastfeeding support, health care and social service referrals, and healthy foods. Through WIC, pregnant women, mothers, and caregivers of infants and young children learn about good nutrition to keep themselves and their families healthy!

Who is Eligible for WIC?

* WIC serves the following Pennsylvania residents:
* Pregnant women.
* Breastfeeding women, for up to one year postpartum.
* Women up to six months postpartum, who are not breastfeeding.
* Infants and children under 5 years old, including foster children.

T[hese residents must also meet WIC income guidelines](https://www.pawic.com/IncomeGuidelines.aspx), which is 185 percent of the poverty level set by the federal government and is based on household size. They must also have a medical or nutritional risk, which is determined at the WIC certification appointment. There are many qualifying risks. Some examples include: anemia, underweight, overweight, premature baby and pregnancy complications.

How do I Apply?

To apply for WIC, call the toll-free WIC Hotline 1-800-WIC-WINS to be connected to WIC office staff that will answer your questions and schedule your appointment, [or get started online!](https://www.pawic.com/OnlineApplication.aspx) Once your appointment is scheduled, [please take time to review the list of required items needed for your initial visit to the WIC office.](https://www.pawic.com/documents/What%20To%20Take.pdf)