



# Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten

## Family Handbook 2023-2024

**Established 1986**

548 Clark Road  
Tewksbury, MA 01876

Tel: 978-640-2565

Kathleen McCarthy, Owner & Director

## **Welcome to the Building Blocks Family**

Kathleen McCarthy ~ School Owner/Director

Denise Tucker ~ Kindergarten Teacher

Christine Regan ~ Kindergarten Teacher

Karen Godfroy ~ Preschool Teacher

Erika Souza ~ Preschool Teacher

Tessa Murphy ~ Preschool Teacher

Jamie Breslin ~ Preschool Teacher

Karen Spizuoco ~ Preschool Teacher

Samantha Woolaver ~ Preschool Teacher

Tammy Demers ~ Preschool Teacher

Amanda O'Hearn ~ Support Team Teacher

Kathy VanGreenby ~ Support Team Teacher

Susan Ritchie ~ Support Team Teacher

Janeann Kay ~ Support Team Teacher

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Educational Philosophy</b> .....	5
<b>Goals</b> .....	5
<b>Program Highlights</b> .....	5
<b>Curriculum Programs</b>	
3 Year Olds.....	6
4 Year Olds.....	6
Transitional Kindergarten.....	6
Kindergarten.....	6
<b>Daily Schedule, Hours &amp; Calendar Info</b>	
Sample Daily Schedule.....	7
Hours of Operations.....	8
Late Pick-Up.....	8
Snow and Inclement Weather Days.....	8
<b>Tuition</b>	
Tuition Policy.....	8
Extended Hours.....	8
Holiday Closings.....	8
Vacation Policy.....	9
Additional Fees.....	9
Sibling Discount.....	9
<b>Medical</b>	
Health Policy.....	9
Plan for Mildly Ill Children.....	9-10
Ill Children.....	10
Health Records.....	10-11
Medication Administration.....	11
EpiPens.....	11
<b>Safety</b>	
Emergency Evacuation.....	11-12
Fire Drills.....	13
Flip-Flops.....	13
Insect Repellant.....	13
Sun Safety.....	13

**Additional Center Policies**

Non-Discrimination..... 13  
Referral Policy..... 13-14  
Child Abuse Reporting Policy..... 14  
Discipline Policy/Behavior Management..... 15  
Suspension and Termination Policy..... 15  
Cell Phone Policy..... 15-16  
Name to Face Policy..... 16  
Transitioning Policy..... 16  
Plan for Volunteers and Interns..... 17

**Helpful Hints & General Information**

Drop-Off..... 17-18  
Pick-Up Time for Half Day Students..... 18  
Clothing..... 18  
Duffel Bags/Toys..... 18  
Newsletter..... 18  
Snacks..... 18  
Change of Clothes..... 18  
Reading..... 18  
Breakfast..... 18  
Picture for Cubby..... 18  
Lunch..... 18-19  
Label Everything..... 19  
Parent Visits..... 19  
Ragtime Program..... 19  
Department of Early Education and Care..... 19  
A Few Words for Our Parents..... 19  
The Child Has Several Tasks to Master..... 20  
Is My Child Ready?..... 20  
Children’s Record..... 20  
Progress Reports..... 20-21  
Child Guidance..... 21  
Library..... 21

# Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten

“Where each child is special”

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:**

We believe preschool should be an exciting and educational experience for children. Because preschool is usually a student’s first exposure to peer group interaction and the basic fundamentals of education, it is our intent to provide an environment that enriches these first experiences and instills in the child an enthusiasm for school now and in the years ahead.

## **GENERAL GOALS:**

The Building Blocks staff aims to accomplish the following goals:

- Build self-esteem by encouraging students to express themselves in daily creative activities and projects.
- Provide a creative but structured program that makes learning exciting. This includes special events that not only involve students but parents as well.
- Creating an enthusiastic learning environment.
- To provide the “basic” fundamentals of education with an emphasis on listening and thinking skills.

These goals will be accomplished through a creative but semi-structured program. To accomplish these goals, we offer a comprehensive curriculum for preschool three and four-year-olds, and transitional kindergarten and kindergarten, five and six-year-olds. Preschool is a big step for all of us, and we at Building Blocks want it to be the first of many productive and rewarding school days for your child. Every child is unique, and we will do everything to make school a fun first experience.

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Semi-annual progress reports
- Parent/Teacher conferences upon request
- Teacher/pupil ratio of 1:10
- Licensed biannually by the Department of Early Education and Care
- In house special activities featuring guest speakers
- Holiday parties
- One field trip annually for 4–5-year-olds
- Computers and iPads (in kindergarten)
- Science, Cooking and Yoga
- Summer Camp Program

## **CURRICULUM PROGRAMS**

### **THREE YEAR OLDS**

Our objective for the three-year-old is to develop social relationships within play groups and to expose the child to a positive learning environment. We assist each child in mastering expressive and receptive language skills that are necessary for the development of problem solving and critical thinking. Taught throughout the year are colors, shapes, nursery rhymes, games, songs, fairy tales, and creative learning projects. These are just a few of the fun learning experiences that we expose to the children. Memorizing poems is also a big part of this curriculum.

### **FOUR YEAR OLDS**

Our objective for the four-year-old is to prepare them for kindergarten. More time is spent discussing the world around us. Basic pre-reading readiness, language development, fine motor development, and number concepts are a large part of this year's program. All of these prepare the child for the next step in his/ her development. Our learning centers provide projects where through positive reinforcement the child can express their own creativity and independence. Our main emphasis is creating an exciting and educational experience for the children through their freedom of choice. We stress the importance of being socially ready for kindergarten. Learning cannot take place unless children are comfortable with their environment and surroundings. At Building Blocks our philosophy is to become social before we become smart! A large part of the morning is spent in "teacher directed" time; therefore, the children learn by example and direction.

### **TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN**

This program is for the child who turns 5 by September 1 and attends school 5 days a week (full or half). These same children will attend a regular kindergarten the following year. Pre-reading and basic math concepts are taught at a very slow pace. We use "High Reach Reading Program". Many parents use this year as a preparation year for the fall birthday child or those who are not developmentally ready for a Kindergarten program. This program is mainly for the child who has been in preschool for one or two years and who is socially adjusted and ready to learn some pre-reading and math fundamentals.

### **KINDERGARTEN**

A child enrolled in our Kindergarten class will go to a 1<sup>st</sup> grade class the following fall. We use a phonetic approach to reading. Several assessments are used throughout the year. Journal writing is offered to those who demonstrate a writing ability and understand the skill of creative writing. The math curriculum is "Guiding Kinders". The literacy curriculum is Letterland. It's a comprehensive early literacy program that is child-friendly and aligned to the Science of Reading. It provides multisensory phonics instruction with an integrated phonological awareness strand.

## DAILY SCHEDULE, HOURS AND CALENDAR INFO

### SAMPLE OF A DAILY SCHEDULE:

<b>A.M.</b>	
7:00-8:45	All Day children arrive between these hours
8:45-8:55	Doors open to accept Half-Day children
8:50-9:00	“Good Morning to You” music time
9:00-9:20	Circle time-flag, attendance, group discussions, make a plan for the day!
9:20-10:00	Teacher directed time (art, cooking, & science activities)
10:00-10:20	Bathroom and snack
10:20-11:10	Indoor or outdoor free play
11:10-11:20	Clean-up
11:20-11:30	Gross motor movement activities
11:30-12:00	Lunch and bathroom
12:00-12:10	Story time
12:10-12:20	Finger plays and “Goodbye” song
12:20-12:30	Ready for dismissal
<b>P.M.</b>	
12:30-12:50	Bathroom, settle for rest time
12:50-2:20	Rest time with music and/or stories on tape
2:20-2:40	Wake up, put mats away, pack up, bathroom and snack
2:40-3:40	Free time and P.M. activity time
3:40	All children wash up and pack belongings to go home
3:50	Story time as 4:00 children await pick-up
4:00-5:00	Varied activities focused on cooling down, as 5:00 children await pick-up

### **HOURS OF OPERATION:**

Building Blocks is open from 7 am to 5 pm. Hours for half-day students is 8:45-12:30.

### **LATE PICK-UP:**

Parents of children not picked up by their scheduled time (12:30, 4:00 or 5:00) will be issued a warning for the first occurrence and then charged \$1 per minute for the first 5-minute occurrence and \$5 per minute for the next 5 minutes and \$10 per minute after 10 minutes late. For any that occur after that, a meeting will be held to find a solution that works for everyone. Late pick-up fees will be invoiced on your tuition sheet. Parents will receive a copy of the tuition sheet with the invoiced amount. Please include any late pick-up fees with your tuition payment. If you need to make a change to your scheduled hours, please let us know A.S.A.P.

### **SNOW AND INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS:**

We follow the Lowell Public School Closings (**NOT Tewksbury**). If Lowell closes, we close. However, if schools delay opening, we will also delay and open at 8:00.

## **TUITION**

### **TUITION POLICY:**

Tuition payments can be made weekly or monthly, whichever you prefer. **Tuition is due one week in advance.** Tuition **must** be paid on time. If you are late with your payment, a **late fee notice** will be sent home reflecting the amount owed. A \$20 fee is imposed if tuition is one week overdue. Your child will not be allowed to stay in school if tuition is more than 2 weeks overdue without an explanation. Weekly tuition remains the same despite absence due to illness, holidays, and snow days. Exceptions to this will be made for prolonged hospitalizations, Christmas, February, and April vacations weeks. If you pay monthly, that payment is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

### **EXTENDED HOURS:**

Any part of 7:00-8:45 is \$6 additional per day.

### **HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:**

Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and the following Friday, Christmas Week, January 1st, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, February Vacation Week, April Vacation Week, Memorial Day and Graduation Show Day for non-graduates (date TBA). **Weekly tuition remains the same except for the three vacation weeks when no tuition is charged.**



### **VACATION POLICY:**

We provide 3 vacation weeks per year. You will not be charged tuition for these weeks. However, if a parent elects to take a vacation other than the weeks provided by the school, the parent will still be responsible for tuition.

### **ADDITIONAL FEES:**

- A non-refundable registration fee
- Registration fee for camps

### **SIBLING DISCOUNTS:**

A 10% discount is offered on your second child's tuition.

## **MEDICAL**

### **HEALTH POLICY:**

The following are the health policies for Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten. We ask that you become familiar with the policies to help us promote a healthy environment for all the children and adults at our program.

We need your help in protecting all the children from contagious illnesses. If you suspect your child is ill, please keep your child home. We realize it is difficult to manage workdays when you have an ill child. An alternative plan for childcare in the event of illness is an important consideration. Remember **that no child will be allowed to stay at school if the child arrives with a fever.** We ask that **no medication be given to reduce a fever as it wears off by noon time and your child always tells us they have been given medicine!**

Medication that reduces fevers can mask symptoms of a more acute illness when the child is in a highly contagious phase of the disease. If your child becomes ill at school, please be prepared to pick up your child in less than one hour after you are notified. If both parents are unable to do this, an alternative individual should be designated to ensure the child is picked up as early as possible. If your child does become ill, please call to let us know so that we can alert parents of a potential contagious illness and to be on the alert. Early detection and treatment protects all the children. Please call if your child is displaying symptoms of illness, or if you have any questions regarding the illness policy prior to bringing your child to school.

### **Plan for Mildly Ill Children While in Care**

When a child is mildly ill and cannot keep up with group activities, he/she is cared for by the Director. A mat is placed in the office and the child is kept as comfortable as possible. The child is given fluids and a snack as needed. The child will be offered quiet activities and is able to rest until it is convenient for his/her parents to take him/her home.

If a child is mildly ill but not contagious, he/she may remain in the classroom doing quiet activities or rest in the Director’s office if needed. Any items used by an ill child will be cleaned and disinfected by the teacher/director.

**ILL CHILDREN:**

To help ensure the health of our children and staff at Building Blocks, the following is a guide for dealing with some common illnesses.

Illness or Condition	When can the child return to school?
Chickenpox	Children should be excluded from school after the rash eruption first appears until the vesicles become dry (usually about 6 days).
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until: Child is examined by their Health Care Provider and has been approved for admission after 24 hrs. of initiating antibiotic treatment. If no treatment is recommended, child must be <b>free of symptoms.</b>
Diarrhea	Exclude until symptoms have completely resolved.
Ear Infection	Child has been on medication for 24 hrs. and pain is gone.
Fever	Exclude if the child has a temperature over 100. They may return when they have been fever-free for 24 hrs.
Head Lice	Exclude until initial treatment is completed at home and no live lice or nits are found.
Rashes	Once the rash has been identified by their Health Care Provider, and a note has been provided that identifies the condition and states that the condition is not contagious they may return to school.
Strep Throat	Child has been on medication for 24 hrs and fever free.
Vomiting	Exclude after one episode and they may return after they have been vomit-free for 24 hours.
Antibiotic	Anytime an antibiotic has been prescribed your child can not return until 24 hours after the initial dose.

**HEALTH RECORDS:**

It is required that we have a current medical record from your child’s Health Care Provider on file before your child begins school. Children who do not have this information cannot begin classes. Your child’s last physical examination must have occurred within one year

and must document all immunizations required by the State of Massachusetts and may need to be updated throughout the year. For detailed information regarding immunization regulations and recommendations, please visit the [Center for Disease Control](#) website.

### **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION:**

We will gladly administer medications your child needs during the school day. We require that you provide the medication, a doctor's order, and sign our Medication Administration form, giving us your permission to administer the medication at school. **It is required that this form be filled out for both prescription and over the counter medications (such as Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.).** Prescribed medications must have the prescription sticker including the child's first and last name, dosage information and date of prescription in order for us to administer the medication. Medications will be secured in the refrigerator if required or in the first aid cabinet. Prescriptions prescribed for an earlier illness will NOT be administered without the current written authorization from your child's Health Care Provider. The first dose cannot be administered by staff. Parents will provide the program with an Individual Health Care Plan for a chronic medical condition.

**Non-Prescription Medication:** Non-prescription medication needs a written order from the physician. The statement must include the listing of the medication(s), dosage, and criteria of administration. This statement will be valid for one year from the date it was signed.

**EpiPens:** If your child is required to have an EpiPen at school, training must be provided to the teacher by the parent. It is also the responsibility of the parent to replace expired EpiPens. Be aware of the expiration

## **SAFETY POLICIES**

### **POTENTIAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION:**

In the event of a Confined Environmental Emergency, (e.g., fire, chemical spill, etc.) during which the childcare facility must be evacuated, in accordance with Public Safety officials, staff will assist the children and will leave the building and gather in the open area at 600 Clark Road. We will rely on local law enforcement agencies to obtain information on the need of evacuation or use of shelters in the event of a natural disaster. After the evacuation, a check and recheck will be done by the Director to ensure the building has been evacuated.

After an evacuation, the fire department or other law enforcement agencies will be contacted by land lines in the building we are in or by personal cell phones carried by staff members. Parents will also be contacted by the staff using the same phone methods.

In the event staff and children are required to leave the Immediate Area due to a Non-Confined Environmental Emergency, (e.g., flood, chemical spill, etc.) both children and staff will be transported by (staff vehicles, emergency vehicles, buses, etc.) to the following Non-Immediate Area.

- As instructed by enforcement officials

If necessary, children will be transported to the following Health Care Facility:

Lowell General Saints Memorial Medical Center Campus  
Lowell, Massachusetts  
978-458-1411

In the event of a **Major Environmental Non-Confined Emergency** that necessitates the evacuation of a large area, children will be transported by buses to a Red Cross designated mass shelter. There they will be cared for while parents/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements are made for their pick-up. At all times during the crisis, staff will remain with and care for all children in our care. Staff will check attendance whenever children are moved. Staff will maintain accurate Attendance Lists and bring any necessary medications/supplies and emergency records. Any child who needs assistance will be helped by staff members and documentation of date, time, exit route and number of children will be noted.

**Evacuation Routes:** As in all emergency exit situations, the children will follow the following evacuation routes.

First Level (Apple Ave) – Classrooms closest to the front door, exit out the front door, the other two classrooms, exit out the back play yard door.

Bottom Level (Ladybug Lane) – File out of classroom to the exit that leads to the driveway. Follow the driveway heading to the front of the building where rollcall will be taken and numbers reported to the Director.

Top Level (upper deck) – Exit downstairs and outside ramp door by car port.

### **PATRIOT PLACE**

- Classrooms closest to the Office, walk out of classroom to the exit by the Office. Follow the walkway to the back “teacher” parking lot. Classroom near the kitchen area, will leave by the kitchen door, up the walkway to the back “teacher” parking lot.

**FIRE DRILLS:**

Evacuation/fire drills are conducted six (6) times throughout the year. This gives the teachers, staff, and children the opportunity to practice our roles and routines in case of a true emergency.

**FLIP-FLOPS:**

Flip-flops are **NOT allowed at school**. Our ground covering is NOT conducive to this footwear.

**INSECT REPELLANT:**

If you choose to have your child use insect repellent at school, please apply to your child's skin prior to his/her arrival. If you would like to have the staff apply insect repellent to your child during the day, please be sure to have signed the Insect Repellent Permission Form.

**SUN SAFETY:**

Please apply sunscreen to your child's exposed skin when preparing for school each day. If you sign the Sunscreen Permission Form, the classroom teachers will apply sunscreen to your child before any outdoor activities.

## **ADDITIONAL CENTER POLICIES**

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:**

We shall not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, disability, or national origin. Toilet training is not an eligibility requirement for entrance into our program.

**REFERRAL POLICY:**

Referrals to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services may be needed by children in our care. Parents may request such referrals or staff may assess the need for these additional services to benefit the child.

Responsibilities for the implementation of a referral plan belong to the program director. Parents are to be involved in the process to the maximum extent possible.

Concerns regarding potential referrals may be brought to the program director. Referrals will be discussed at staff meetings, if appropriate, with input from appropriate consultants if needed.

Program director documents the referral concern and determines if further action needs to be taken.

When appropriate, information about chapter 766 will be provided.

The program director serves as primary liaison with the family, documents concerns, and the action taken on behalf of the child. A written record will be provided of all referrals, parent conferences and team meetings.

Regular contact with the family is maintained and followed up is conducted according to established principles of good social service.

Written progress reports will be made available to parents twice a year.

Phone contact may be made by agencies to discuss, in general terms, the appropriateness of the referral.

When written referrals are prepared, parents must sign a “release of information,” form giving consent. Parents will receive a copy of any written reports about the child.

A staff member may accompany family to the agency or team meetings if requested.

766 REFERRALS/EARLY INTERVENTION REFERRALS The Special Education Department of your city/town will be the contact if Building Blocks staff sees a need for student referrals. Parents need to write a request for testing and the town/city Special Ed need to reply to that request in 40 school days – this is the law.

#### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY:**

According to DEEC, Section 7.04 (2) (F) (I), all staff are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made to the Department of Children and Families. Parents will be notified of allegations of abuse and neglect involving their child while in the care of the program.

#### **Discipline Policy/Behavior Management 7.10 (10)**

Our objective is to provide a safe, caring, respectful environment and to prevent inappropriate behavior before it starts. The plan is as follows:

- Provide interesting, challenging, flexible and open-ended activities
- Facilitate the development of self-control by modeling, encouragement and setting clear limits.
- To treat everyone, children, and adults, with respect and dignity.

Mistakes need to be valued as learning opportunities. Conflict can be an opportunity. Everyone is encouraged to express their true feelings without the worry of others being judgmental. We listen attentively to what people have to say. Building Blocks is committed to having policies and rules that are reasonable and appropriate to children's understandings and needs. The goal is to maximize the growth and development of the children and to protect the group of individuals within that group. Our staff is committed to using developmentally appropriate techniques of guidance including redirection, anticipation, positive reinforcement, and encouragement. We strive to offer consistent, clearly stated rules which are explained to the children and understood by all adults.

### **Rules**

- Hurting is unacceptable
- Walking is acceptable inside; running is acceptable outside in play areas
- Weapons, imaginary or not, are unacceptable

Building Blocks prohibits spanking, cruel punishment including humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment. There will be no denial of food, force feeding or disciplining of a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Children will participate in the development of rules when possible.

### **SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION POLICY:**

On occasion we find it necessary to conference with parents and advise them of our concern regarding possible learning disabilities and/or emotional problems. We will work with the family to discuss options other than suspension or termination. We are concerned with the safety of all our children in the program. If we find the problem is potentially serious, we will refer you to medical or educational professionals whom we feel can help. If necessary, we will develop and follow a plan for behavioral intervention at home as well in our program. It is essential that you cooperate fully with us. If we do not receive that cooperation, we may be forced to suspend or even terminate your child's enrollment until professional help has been sought.

### **PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION - CELL PHONE POLICY:**

Building Blocks is a cell phone free school. This means that both parents and staff are not allowed the use of cell phones while on Building Blocks property. Talking while in a car is certainly permitted.

Parents **will not be** allowed to enter the building while on the phone. Some of our children are away from their parents for 10 hours during the day. We feel it's essential that they be greeted with the same enthusiasm and attention as they show to you.

Over the last several years we have noticed that Teachers and Assistant Teachers receive text messages and phone calls from parents during the course of the school day. Due to this, we have initiated a policy for our staff stating that they **will not have** the use of their cell phones during the day. **Teachers may be reached during the day by calling the school phone at 978-640-2565.**

It is Building Blocks policy that our staff always provide direct supervision to the children in our care. We strive to create an atmosphere in all our classrooms that will minimize any and all distractions to the staff while children are present.

In regard to personal communication with your teacher, she will provide you with a method of communication that works well with her schedule. Handwritten notes sent to her will be addressed the same day and sent home by way of your child. Whatever method is chosen by your classroom teacher, please know it will happen after school hours or when she can get coverage during a break.

Also know, we are only a phone call away, by means of the Preschool Office number. The following number may be used by you to reach us at any time during the school day.

**The appropriate number to always us is:**

- **978-640-2565**

Our phone is checked for messages, so feel free to leave a message. Always give a call back as we may be busy when you first try.

### **NAME TO FACE POLICY**

Name to face attendance check is policy for all Building Blocks teachers and staff. Attendance is taken frequently in the classroom and especially at transitions. Teachers use attendance list and matches name of child to face of child.

### **TRANSITIONING POLICY**

When a child leaves one classroom for another the following policy will be followed.

There will be a joint effort to share information about the child transitioning by staff members from both classrooms. All this will be done with parental permission.

There will be a plan determined for assisting the child transitioning in a manner consistent with the child's ability to comprehend and understand.



## **PLAN FOR VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS**

Building Blocks will conduct a formal orientation program for any volunteer or intern interested in unpaid hours. This will be followed up by supervision and transitioning them into the program.

There will be documentation, provided by the school of dates, hours of service and responsibility of each volunteer.

The volunteer or intern will be told and must understand that they will always be under direct supervision by an EEC qualified staff member.

They must be in compliance with EEC regulations regarding Background Records Check (BRC) policy for Volunteers and Interns.

Volunteers and interns are not included in the ratio count.

## **HELPFUL HINTS & GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **DROP OFF LINE:**

Doors open at 8:45 A.M. Please do not arrive before 8:45 unless you have signed up for extended morning hours. Teacher coverage is the reason we cannot accept half day children before that time. Car drop off begins the second week of school. Children are transported to and from school by a parent, there is no bus service to BB.

### **PICK UP TIME FOR HALF DAY STUDENTS:**

For half day children doors will open for dismissal at 12:25. It is important that you are on time. Children tend to get anxious when a parent doesn't arrive when all the other parents do. If a situation arises and you are running late, please call so we can explain the delay to your child. Anyone who is consistently late will be asked to pay for the extra time.

### **CLOTHING:**

When buying clothes for your child, please select clothing that is easy for him/her to button and snap themselves since teachers are not allowed in bathroom stalls with a child. One-piece outfits are very difficult for children to maneuver. Sweat suits are the easiest and most practical for nursery school. Clothing that a child cannot maneuver can be frustrating. Please leave belts at home!

### **NAP BAGS / TOYS:**

Nap bags with zippers, one crib sheet and blanket is **required** for all day children. All bags must be taken home on Thursday/Friday so that blankets, sheets, and any other included

items can be laundered. This is a state law. **Absolutely, NO SLEEPING BAGS, NO PILLOWS, NO ROLL-UPS AND NO TOYS FROM HOME**, exception is a favorite stuffed toy or book for nap time. Lost or broken toys tend to create obvious problems.

### **NEWSLETTER:**

Each month a newsletter will be sent home. **Read these carefully**, they contain **important information on monthly activities.** Children have missed out on functions due to a parent not reading the newsletter, this is heartbreaking. If you have not received a newsletter by the 5th of the month, please call or send a note. We are sorry to say that over the last several years parents have **NOT** been checking paperwork in backpacks each day. Reading and checking notices is essential to the well-being of your child. Please do not rely on social media or teacher texts. **Any and all information you need is in your monthly newsletter.**

### **SNACKS:**

Each parent is responsible for bringing a snack or juice to school each month. You will be given a schedule; please do not lose your dates because we get really hungry from playing! Unless your child has a food allergy, each child will eat the school snacks.

### **CHANGE OF CLOTHING:**

All children need to have a spare set of clothes left at school. If a spill or accident occurs and you have not sent in spare clothing, we will have to call you at work or at home to bring in a clean set.

### **READING:**

Take 10 minutes a day to read to your child. This develops reading enthusiasm.

### **BREAKFAST:**

The most important thing you can do for your child is provide a nutritional breakfast for them before starting their day at school.

### **PICTURE FOR CUBBY:**

Each child must have a picture to help identify their cubby.

### **LUNCH:**

Please be practical and pack a lunch that your child will eat. We send home anything not eaten. We encourage healthy eating habits; however, for obvious reasons we don't force. Please do not send overwhelming amounts of food. Half a sandwich is sometimes practical along with milk in a thermos, fruit, and a cookie. We will not allow whole grapes and peanuts. Grapes cut in half are acceptable. If we are having trouble with your child's eating

habits, a note will be sent home by your child's lunch table teacher. Children are given 30 minutes for lunch.

**LABEL EVERYTHING:**

Indelible ink works well for labeling hats, jackets, bags, lunch boxes, pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, toys, and anything else your child may wear or carry with them.

**EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE LABELED!!** As much as we say this, we have mounds of unclaimed clothing at the end of each year!

**PARENT VISITS:**

Parents may visit the school at any time. Parental input is welcome! If you are a parent who has the time and would like to substitute or get experience in our Early Childhood field, please call, and speak with Mrs. McCarthy. Many of our staff are parents of Building Blocks alumni.

**RAGTIME PROGRAM:**

(Read Aloud Grandparents Program) Building Blocks is pleased to offer this wonderful program. If you are a grandparent and would like to become a member, simply contact the child's teacher, and let her know when you are available to come in and read to your grandchild's class. Sharing a great book is a timeless memory.

**DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE:**

You may contact the EEC for information regarding our program's regulatory compliance history.

360 Merrimack Street, Bldg. 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
(978) 826-1337

**A FEW WORDS FOR OUR PARENTS:**

The first day of school is an important event. It is a normal event that does not need to be constantly talked about as departure day nears. Anxiety is normal and your child should not feel ashamed. Be reassuring. Be confident and enthusiastic and explain to your child what to expect. Show positive feelings about school, your child will pick up on those feelings. Long goodbyes add more anxiety to the young child. Teachers understand such anxieties and have been trained to handle the upset child. Parents will be informed and advised if after a few days the anxiety continues.

## **THE CHILD HAS SEVERAL TASKS TO MASTER:**

- To expand their dependency from a parent and a secure home environment to include peers, other adults, and the school environment.
- Manage separation anxiety; some accomplish this with a minimum of distress. For others, the threat of the loss of mom or dad is frightening and extremely stressful for both the child and the mother/father.
- Accept the friendship of adults other than family members. This is a new experience for them. Realize that the word “stranger” can be good or bad. Remember, their new teachers are strangers. They must know they are “good strangers”.

## **IS MY CHILD READY?**

Children cannot be forced to succeed at any of the following tasks too rapidly. Certainly, we expect our children to gradually develop independence. If the youngster cannot attend to most of these tasks, he/she may be very unhappy at school and probably will not get along with his/her classmates. When children begin mastering these tasks, they are ready for preschool:

- Knows his/her own clothing and attempts to put on outer clothing and boots.
- Toilet habits: cares for self at toilet; does not wet or soil clothes; is able to wash hands after toileting.
- Language: is able to talk in short sentences instead of pointing or crying; puts 6 or more words together in a sentence to express their needs or wants. Paying attention: is able to give fairly constant attention to a play project; listens quietly to a short story; and sit reasonably quiet for periods of 10 minutes at a time, especially circle time.

## **CHILDREN’S RECORD**

Information contained in your child’s record is privileged and confidential. Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten may not distribute or release information in your child’s record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without your written consent. Upon written request, you may elect to have your child’s record transferred. You have the right to add /delete information, comments, or other relative materials to your child’s record. If a parent(s) is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child’s record, parent shall have the right to have a conference with the director to make objections known. Within one week after the conference director shall render a decision in writing to the parent(s) stating the reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent(s), she shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress reports will be issued every 6 months, in January and June. Parent conferences will be scheduled to discuss your child’s progress. This report will become part of your child’s

record. Staff will bring any special problems or significant developmental issues to your attention as soon as they arise. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher if an issue occurs during the year.

### **CHILD GUIDANCE**

Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten will provide positive and consistent guidance based on a child's individual needs and development. Staff will encourage self and control and positive guidance techniques. Children will learn social, communication and emotional skills. The staff will use positive strategies when children are physically aggressive. Classroom rules and consistent techniques will be used throughout the program.

### **LIBRARY**

Our children's library is called ***The Book Salon***. Each week all children visit the library for a story then are allowed to borrow 2 books. Responsibility plays a big part in our library protocol. If they don't return the books, they cannot be allowed to borrow more. This is their responsibility, not the parents.