Family Handbook

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Our Philosophy

Brattleboro Centre for Children (BCC) is a 4 STARS recognized program, committed to providing high quality child care and early education to young children in the Brattleboro area. As the only child care facility located in downtown Brattleboro, we offer convenience and accessibility to local families.

Our goal is to support each child's natural curiosity and nurture an excitement for learning and exploration. Our developmental approach looks at the whole child, with daily activities and experiences to stimulate social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Our emergent curriculum supports each child's unique make-up and interests. Play-oriented, hands-on, activity-based classrooms encourage each child's individual pace for learning.

BCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational or admission policies, or other school administered programs.

Hours of Operation

Children between the ages of six weeks to five years are invited to participate in our program. Operating year-round, we are open Monday through Friday 7:30 am until 4:30 pm excluding holidays, possible snow days, and an in-service week.

In an effort to best meet the needs of working families, one can select a schedule that best meets their needs. Our regular program runs from 8:30 – 3:30 daily, and parents have the option of choosing an extended day beginning at 7:30, or ending at 4:30. Extended care can be used on a regular or drop-in basis, depending upon staffing availability. Drop in care is charged at a higher fee and forms to register are available in the office. Children's schedules can be changed at any time, with approval from the office.

Children are expected to arrive at their selected time. If you intend to arrive at the Centre after 9:00 am, you must call ahead; children arriving after 9:00 am miss out on regularly scheduled activities, including morning breakfast.

If your child is out for more than three days due to an illness a doctor's note is required.

Emergency Closings

On mornings of severe weather, families should listen to radio station WTSA FM 96.7, or www.wtsa.net/cancellations for possible delays or closing information. We will also post this on our Facebook page at Brattleboro Centre for Children, Inc on facebook.com. And on our online service, brightwheel. In the event we must close in the middle of the day, an attempt will be made to reach all families by phone. Additionally, announcements will be made on the radio, posted on Facebook and messages via brightwheel sent to families whenever possible. While we typically follow the closings of Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (Brattleboro area school districts) there are times when we are scheduled to be open and the WSESU is not. In those cases, we will make the best decision we can for the safety of our staff and families-- either to close or delay opening or close early-- and will post that decision on our facebook page and brightwheel, as above, and we will notify WTSA FM 96.7 (Brattleboro radio) for them to include it on their cancellation page.

Parking

When dropping off and picking up children, please use extreme caution as there will be children and adults walking to and from vehicles. Our driveway and parking lot has a one-way traffic flow and is used by local businesses as well as the church. Short term parking for pick-up and drop-off is permitted along the sidewalk in front of our playground. Please drive slowly and watch out for children at all times. Please do NOT park in the two parking spaces designated for Church employees, at any time of day.

Enrollment Process

A tour of the program is important so that families can make an informed decision on where their child will be on a daily basis. During the tour, we provide families with information regarding program policies and procedures. If families are interested, they may request enrollment forms at that time.

The following paperwork must be submitted prior to your child's first day of attendance:

1. Enrollment forms including:
    1. Registration form
    2. Emergency Information
    3. Child's well-child visit record
    4. Parent Authorization Form
    5. Emergency Card Information
2. A copy of your child's up to date immunization record
3. A $75.00 non-refundable registration fee. (This is defined as an adminstrative fee assessed for compensating the time of bookkeepers and school adminstrators to ensure the child's paperwork is complete and in order at the time of enrollment.)

Transition to Program

While each child is unique and may need a different transition time, the following is a recommended plan to transition your child into the centre. The family and centre can determine what is best for the child:

- Day 1 – Child attends for one hour
- Day 2 – Child visits for morning only (8:30 – 11:30)
- Day 3 – Child visits for full day alone

In the Infant Room, the transition period usually lasts for a full five day week before full day. Teachers will communicate with you on a daily basis and will work with families to best meet the needs of child and family. Please understand that our goal is to support your child and you, and to help make your child's time with us as successful as possible.

New students are subject to a 45 school-day/ 9 week (if part time) probationary enrollment period, during which time teachers and the family will communicate about the child's progress in the transition process. If for any reason, within that 45 school-day period, the family and/or the teachers determine that the transition is not being successful or that the program is not

meeting the child's needs, an action plan may be set in place to accommodate those needs within the scope of the program. Every effort will be made to help each child succeed. However, if an action plan does not successfully accommodate those needs, it may be mutually determined to be in the best interests of the child and of the program to have the child withdraw.

However, in accordance with Vermont Law (Act 35 of 2021) and because of BCC's relationshp with the public school districts, BCC will not suspend or expel a child unless there is proof of the threat of imminent harm to self or others. This will be taken into consideration with the probationary enrollment period, but also will be considered at any time during a child's enrollment at BCC.

Following is from a memo from the state on this subject:

Act 35 is intended to reduce the incidence of suspension and expulsion in Vermont public schools and ensure that, where disciplinary exclusion is necessary, it is applied equitably across Vermont school systems. The law creates one new immediate requirement (outlined below), to consider additional measures to combat disciplinary exclusion. Suspension and Expulsion of Students Under 8 Years Old Act 35 adds a section, banning suspension and expulsion of students under eight years old, except in cases of imminent harm or danger to others. Going forward, suspension and expulsion shall not be allowed for students under age eight, enrolled in public schools, except in the very rare occurrences when a student poses an imminent threat of harm or danger to others in the school.

Tuition Payment Policy

Our program operates year-round and tuition is expected in full regardless of your child's attendance. Each program year, you will receive a calendar notifying you of our scheduled closings. In addition to some holiday closings and monthly half days, our program closes for one week of scheduled staff training and program preparation at the end of summer. Tuition remains the same during the weeks we have a closing, as these days have been included into our tuition.

Tuition is billed a week in advance and the bill is emailed to families directly from the bookkeeper's office. Tuition payments may be made by check, money order, and cash in person or directly online through our website or from the emailed invoices and are due by the end of that Monday. Payment schedules can be flexible if arranged through the office. If payments get behind by more than one month, the Director or a member of the Board of Directors will contact the family to discuss a payment plan. At that time, the family and BCC must make every effort to arrange for the required funds. If a family has questions about their bill they may contact the Director. **Regular payments are expected for all overdue balances until paid in full.** By the start of the next billing period, if payment is not received in full and/or a regular payment plan is not being paid, **the child may be asked to withdraw from the program, effective immediately.** A fee of $25 is charged for a returned check. See policy for Withdrawal.

Brattleboro Centre for Children is committed to helping every family. Please note that:

BCC is a tuition based program – it does not rely on any other funding sources to operate. Outstanding balances will not be tolerated unless regular weekly payments are made by the family until paid in full (along with regular tuition payments).

The tuition chart below shows the fees charged weekly for regular schedules, full five days per week. Extended care (beyond 8:30 to 3:30) is available for regular scheduling from one to five days per week, or on an occasional drop in basis at $11 per hour.

	Infant Rooms	Toddler Room	Preschool Room
7:30-3:30	$307.50	$303.82	$300.13
7:30-4:30	$345.71	$342.02	$338.33
8:30-3:30	**$269.30**	**$265.60**	**$261.92**
8:30-4:30	$307.50	$303.82	$300.13

Part time tuition rates are shown in the following chart:

Part time Rates	Infant Room	Young Toddler Room	Preschool Room
2 days, 8:30-3:30	$112.78	$111.72	$109.62
3 days, 8:30 -3:30	$167.59	$165.48	$163.37
4 days, 8:30 -3:30	$220.29	$218.18	$215.02
Half days, noon pick up	$112.78	$111.72	$109.62
Extended Care per hour	$10	$10	$10

Health and Safety

Our program is dedicated to providing a safe, healthy environment for all children. Parents are required by law to provide us with a copy of their child's immunization record prior to enrollment.

We work towards preventing illness and injury in our program. Staff is CPR and First Aid certified and we use universal precautions when treating minor injuries. Families are notified of all injuries through an accident report form, which will require a review and signature.

If we feel an injury/illness may require medical attention we will call you regarding the situation and, if it is not an immediate emergency, you may be asked to pick up your child for medical attention.

If emergency medical response is needed we will call an ambulance. You will be notified of the situation and asked to meet us at the nearest medical facility.

Illness Policy

We work to prevent the spread of illness by following proper hand-washing procedures, disinfecting surfaces and toys, wearing protective gloves when diapering, and administering first aid when necessary.

It important for families to have a plan for caring for their child when he or she is ill and cannot attend BCC. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will call you and ask you to make arrangements to have your child picked up as soon as possible. Please be aware that we are not able to care for sick children. Our policy is to call you if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms while in our care and s/he should not return until 24 hours after the last symptom has occurred, or after 24 hours on prescribed medication:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher (taken under the arm)
- Vomiting
- Excessive diarrhea, or diarrhea that is not contained in diaper
- A crusty or oozing discharge from the eye(s)
- Coughing so hard the child vomits

The following contagious childhood illnesses are likely to occur when children come together in groups. It is our policy that children with contagious illnesses must be treated and we must have a written release from their pediatrician before returning to our program:

Strep Throat, *Scabies*, *Chicken Pox*, and *Impetigo*.

In the case of Head Lice, regulations state that children must leave at the end of the day to receive treatment after first detection of head lice. The child may only return after treatment is given, and it is recommended that the child be retreated in 7-10 days. Families are asked to check their child's head for lice daily, and assure the environment is free from lice through such measures as vacuuming carpets and upholstered furniture, thoroughly washing car seats, etc.

In persistent or recurring cases of headlice the family will be required to present to the school a note from a physician, proving that the child has been seen, given a prescription strength treatment, and treated thoroughly before being allowed back to school. The child's head will be checked upon arrival and if live insects are still found then the family will be asked to take the child home for the day.

Medication

The BCC staff may give prescription medication only after receiving the completed Medication Consent Form, signed by a physician. Please note that sunscreen lotion, free insect repellant and diaper and first aide creams can only be applied if an authorization form has been signed and is in our file. Non-prescription medications must also be authorized with parent signatures on a consent form. Best practice is that parents give medication to their child, so that is encouraged whenever possible.

Arrival and Departure

1. Families must accompany their child into the Centre and sign-in on the classroom attendance sheet in addition to using the brightwheel app.
2. Upon arriving in the classroom, **families** help their child greet their teachers who will help them wash hands and settle in.
3. If a child arrives before their scheduled drop-off time he or she must stay with their family member until the classroom teachers are ready.
4. When picking up your child, you must sign your child out on the classroom attendance form in addition to using the brightwheel app. Families are responsible for notifying classroom teachers and the office if someone other than a parent will be picking-up. We cannot release any student to any person who does not have proper identification, even if they are on the child's authorized list. All adults must be able to present photo ID to verify their identification if requested and be over 18 years of age. Families who wish to make changes to their authorization list may do so at any time.
    1. If both parents are included in the enrollment paperwork, regardless of any change in marital/relationship status, a parent cannot be deleted from a pick-up list or denied access to a child without documented court authorization. A copy of any court authorized documents regarding custodial changes or restrictions must be submitted to BCC before our staff can enforce these changes.
5. If staff have reason to believe the adult picking up a student has engaged in any activity related to drugs or alcohol that would endanger the well being of that child, the employee will call another person on the authorized pick-up list to come or offer further information.
6. Children must be provided with a car seat approved for the child's age and weight when being picked up in a car. Teachers are instructed to notify the police if they feel that a child is travelling unsafely.
7. Pick-up time is promptly at 3:30 pm or 4:30 pm, depending on the plan you have chosen. ***A $10.00 late fee will be charged for families who arrive beyond their scheduled pick up time***. We will begin telephoning authorized adults from your emergency contact list after 5 minutes. ***An additional $1.00 per minute will be added to this fee after 15 minutes of lateness, until your child is picked up***. If we are unable to reach you or an authorized pick up person within ½ hour of your scheduled pick up time, it is our policy to contact the local police department.

Toys From Home

We know children sometimes need a special object or toy to transition to school with, and some children need a soft toy to cuddle with at nap time, but we request that you help your child leave home toys at home. The teachers have made choices about toys and materials that suit the children's development and the classroom's curriculum and when toys are brought in from outside it can change the kind of play in which the children will engage. Please remind your children that there are many and wonderful things to do at school, and their toys will be waiting for them when they get home. If you wish to make donations to the center, please do so through the office.

Parent Involvement

In order for our program to best meet the needs of your child, it is important that administration, teachers and families work together. There are many ways for families to be involved at Brattleboro Centre for Children, and we encourage you to let us know in which of the following ways you will participate:

- Assist with classroom activities
- Join the Board of Directors
- Assist with fundraising events
- Join centre-wide clean up days
- Assist with classroom specials, like foreign language or art lessons

Parent Education

It is important for all of us at Brattleboro Centre for Children to partner with families to provide the best possible experience for the children. We occasionally have parent education or information nights where we can all come together to learn about and discuss topics that are important to us. Some of the topics that have been covered in the past are:

- Healthy eating on a budget
- It takes a Village to Raise a Child – Resources for you and your child
- Book Nights – Making night time reading fun (free books!)
- Fun and physical play
- Your child is going to kindergarten? What to expect in the new school.

Open Door Policy

Family participation can be a rewarding experience for you and your child. We maintain an open door policy for all of our families and encourage visits that support the schedule and routine of our children's day. Please keep in mind that some children may have difficulty during visitation times, so it is best to check in with staff if visiting at a time other than drop off or pick up. All parents who are visiting the Centre must first sign-in at the office and wash their hands upon entering a classroom. (Unfortunately, during the pandemic, most visits will be virtual)

Withdrawal

Families are responsible for providing us with a written notice at least two weeks in advance of their plans to withdraw their child from our program. This will give us time to assist your child with a smooth transition. If you withdraw your child without the required notification, you will be billed for one final 2-week tuition payment.

Collaboration with Area Agencies

We collaborate with several local agencies as part of our goal to provide complete services to our children and families. If you have concerns about your child's growth or development, we encourage you to speak with your child's teacher or the program Director. We will be able to assist you in networking with area resources and can provide advocacy and support on behalf of you and your child. Alternatively, at times we may ask your permission to contact agencies so that we can have supports and/or ideas on how best to meet your child's growth and developmental needs.

Mandated Reporting

As educators who work with children on a daily basis, we are mandated reporters in the State of Vermont. Vermont law requires that any mandated reporter who has reason to suspect a child has been abused or neglected must share this information with the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF). Once a staff person believes that abuse or neglect may have occurred, they must contact DCF. They will also communicate this to the program Director. Our goal is to support families throughout this process and to maintain the relationships we have established with you and your child.

Progress Reports

Parent-Teacher conferences with your child's primary caregiver are offered twice a year. Our teachers complete ongoing developmental observations on all children in their classroom and share information with you about your child throughout the year.

Family Communication

Each child has a mail pouch outside his/her classroom. They are filled daily with important information, class news, artwork, etc. Mailboxes are vital to the daily operation of our program; please make it a point to read the information that is going home.

Family Information Boards are outside each classroom. Posted on these boards are daily activities and upcoming events.

There is also a Family Information Board as you walk into the Centre with upcoming community events and program-wide news, including the weekly breakfast and snack menu.

Parent-Teacher conferences are offered twice a year for all age groups. Additional meetings may be called by the parents or the teachers at any time.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

The guidance and discipline policy at Brattleboro Centre for Children emphasizes building children's social competence. This approach includes activities and experiences to help children develop skills in empathy, impulse control, conflict resolution and anger management.

This preventive approach guides children's ability to:

- Recognize, experience and respect the feelings of others,
- Problem solve in a variety of social situations to resolve interpersonal problems and,
- Recognize anger cues and triggers and use self-calming techniques.

Teaching, modeling and reinforcing pro-social skills will be ongoing and integrated into the daily schedule. Teachers will implement positive behavior management approaches when a child's behavior is disruptive. This includes re-direction, helping to facilitate conflict resolution, encouraging the expression of feelings and, when ready, assisting the child through problem-solving steps in an effort to help them find a solution.
If a child's behavior ever risks physical injury to themselves or others, or the child is in emotional distress, the following procedures will be followed:

- A caring adult will remove the child from the group and stay with the child until s/he can calm down.
- The child's parent/guardian will be notified and an incident report will be completed if a physical injury has occurred.
- If the behavior continues through out the day, staff will further document their observations in an effort to determine if there is a pattern (time of day, type of activity, others involved, etc.) so a plan can be developed to modify the classroom environment.
- If the behavior continues throughout the day, causing further injury to the child, other children or the staff, or the child is not able to reenter the classroom, the parent will be notified and asked to pick up the child.
- The Director/ teachers will meet with the family to discuss strategies and to build consistency between home/school. These strategies may include behavioral plans, referrals, and/or exploring if the Centre is the best supporting environment for the child.
- These strategies may be attempted for up to a two week period.
- If, after this period of time and effort, your child is still creating an unsafe environment, we retain the right to remove your child from the program.

Biting Policy

While we agree that biting is never the correct thing for children to do, we do know that children bite for many reasons. Our Centre does not focus on punishment for biting, but on techniques that address the reason for biting. When biting occurs, our response is:

1. Care for the child who was bitten.
2. Help the child who bit learn another behavior.
3. Examine the classroom, schedule and activities for areas that may need to change.

Our staff expresses strong disapproval of biting. We work to keep children safe and to help the child who bit learn more appropriate behavior. When there are episodes of ongoing biting, we will develop strategies and techniques to address it. We do not use any response that harms a child or is known to be ineffective. When children bite, their parents are informed personally and privately the same day and asked to sign an incident report form documenting that the child has bitten. When biting is ongoing, a meeting will be held between the parents of the child who bit, the program Director and the Teaching Associate to discuss the situation. If parents have concerns, we ask that they be brought directly to the teacher or program Director.

Staff Qualifications

Our program is staffed with a team of teachers for each classroom. Each team consists of a minimum of a teaching associate and a teaching assistant. Their qualifications meet or exceed the Vermont Child Care Licensing requirements.

All staff members have a basic knowledge of child development principles appropriate for their position. Prior to working in our program, each staff member is required to:

- Complete a background check and fingerprinting before being left alone with children.
- Create an Individual Professional Development plan and obtain annually at least 20 clock hours of professional development
- Successfully complete a 90 day probation period.
- Complete a Standard of Conduct and Confidentiality Form
- Attend an Abuse and Neglect training and an Orientation to Vermont Regulations
- In addition, staff must adhere to the following conditions of employment at BCC:

Conditions of Employment

All individuals will be employed and continue to be employed at the will of Brattleboro Centre for Children, Inc. Specific Conditions of employment are listed below.

- Staff must willingly accept and implement the mission, policies and procedures of BCC.
- Per State of Vermont licensing regulations, staff must meet the minimum requirements described within their job descriptions, must read and sign the Employee Handbook, and sign a criminal record release authorization form. These signed documents are kept in staff personnel files to insure compliance with federal and state regulations.
- Staff must report to work on time and have a good record of attendance.
- Staff is expected to behave in a professional manner and represent BCC in the best possible way to the families it serves as well as the public and other early educators. Any concerns regarding the BCC program should be addressed immediately with the Executive Director. Formal complaints should be handled as described in the BCC's Conflict Resolution/Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- Staff may not provide child care services for BCC families outside of BCC while employed with the organization and for a period of one year after end of employment.

Volunteers and Interns

Our program prides itself on being an important part of our community and serves as a site for student internships and community volunteers. All volunteers and students complete an orientation with the Program Director, including a background check and receive direct guidance and supervision while in our classrooms.

Confidentiality

Brattleboro Centre for Children and its employees have both an ethical and legal obligation to respect the privacy of our families. Children's records are kept in a locked file cabinet. Files are accessed by an authorized employee only. All information is considered confidential. Parents may authorize the exchange of information with other agencies/programs by completing an Authorization for Release form. We cannot release any information without this signed form. We request at least 48 hours notice if you need copies of any documents located in your child's file.

Nutrition and Healthy Activity

Brattleboro Centre for Children does not provide snacks or meals. We encourage families to provide a morning snack (usually served at 9am), a healthy lunch (served between 11 and 11:30), and an afternoon snack (to be served at 2:30). We will provide milk or an approved milk substitute (like Lactaid) for all children. Children will not share food brought from home.

Brattleboro Centre for Children supports breastfeeding mothers as parents and staff members. If your infant is fed formula it should be iron fortified unless recommended by a doctor. Breast milk and formula will never be heated in microwave ovens. Infants (6 weeks -12 months) are fed on an individual schedule.

If your child has allergies, please let us know so we can maintain a safe nutritional environment for all.

To keep children healthy and active, we provide daily gross motor activities both indoors and out, allowing children to strengthen those large muscles while learning social and emotional skills at the same time.

Celebrations

In keeping with our focus on providing healthy, nutritious foods for our children, we ask that you help us with this. Many families like to provide treats for the children around birthdays and holidays. Because we model good eating habits, we request that these be healthy treats such as fresh fruit or whole grain granola bars. Please see us in the office for suggestions and to inquire of any special dietary needs in the classroom.

Infant Program

Our Infant classroom is staffed with up to three teachers and has the capacity to care for 8 children, ages 6 weeks to approximately 18 months. Our warm and loving environment allows for children to explore and develop confidence in new skills. The classroom provides a variety of

activities structured for each child's individual developmental ability. Children are outdoors daily, either on walks or in the play yard, weather permitting.

Nursing moms are encouraged to come in; a quiet space is available for this purpose either in the classroom or another part of the centre. There is a refrigerator for breast milk. When children graduate to solid foods, we provide a healthy breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack.

Families in the Infant Room are responsible for providing:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Formula or breast milk
- Diaper Cream when needed with signed permission form
- Two extra outfits
- Pacifiers, if used while sleeping
- We provide bottles, however if a special brand of bottle is used it is your responsibility to provide them.
- In summer, please sunscreen your child prior to entering the classroom
- In winter please provide snowsuit and/or bunting for outdoor weather.
- **All clothes and food must be labeled.**

Young Toddler Program

Our Young Toddler classroom has the capacity to care for 8 to 10 children, ages 18 months to 36 months old. We provide a safe environment where toddlers are encouraged to explore and grow under the nurturing guidance of their classroom teachers.

Children participate in developmentally appropriate activities designed to foster their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth and development. We use a child centered curriculum where activities are designed with the children's individual interest and needs in mind. Routines are established to help children begin to understand a sense of order. Children are outdoors daily, either on walks or in the play yard, weather permitting.

We provide a healthy morning breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack for your child each day. Menus are posted in the classroom weekly.

Toilet training is a unique and individual milestone for each toddler. As your child indicates a readiness for toilet training, we will work with you to ensure this experience is a positive and successful one!

Toddler Parents are responsible for:

- Diapers and/or extra underwear or pull-ups
- Wipes
- Two extra outfits
- Appropriate outerwear for outdoor play (snow pants, mittens, hats, boots for winter months and swim suits and/or swimmies for summer water play)
- All clothing must be labeled with child's name

Preschool Program

Our preschool program is designed to connect teaching and learning to meet the individual needs of children ages 3 to 5. The classroom and staff have the capacity to care for up to 16 children. We partner with several school districts to provide an approved pre-K curriculum in alignment with the Vermont Early Learning Standards, providing experiences designed to foster their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. This Universal PreK connection provides 10 hours of preschool instruction free for 35 weeks to qualified preschoolers. There are age and residence requirements, which the Director can help you with. We are aligned with Teaching Strategies Gold for student assessment for these students and the classroom is designed to allow for exploration in all the core learning areas. The schedule and routines are created to provide a sense of order for preschoolers. Children are outdoors daily, either on walks or in the play yard, weather permitting.

We provide a healthy morning breakfast and an afternoon snack for your child each day. Weekly menus are posted in the classrooms and at the front entrance.

Preschool parents are responsible for providing:

- Two extra outfits (including underwear) because we have accidents and are messy!
- Appropriate outerwear for outdoor play (snow pants, mittens, hats, boots for winter months and swim suits for summer water play). We go outside when the temperature is above 20 degrees.
- All clothing must be labeled with your child's name

Universal PreK: BCC partners with area school districts to provide universal preK for qualified Vermont children ages 3, 4, and 5. Tuition discounts which come from the state through the school district, where children must enroll in addition to enrolling at BCC, are deducted from family tuition bills to provide 10 free hours of early education for 35 weeks (the time of the academic school year). This discount will appear on the family invoice.

Nap and Rest

As required by licensing regulations, all children participate daily in at least one hour of quiet rest time. We provide a quiet, soothing atmosphere conducive to rest, sitting with the children and helping them settle down. If children do not fall asleep after thirty minutes of rest, they are allowed to look at books or play quietly. It is not in our philosophy to wake children who are sleeping, however if the majority of the group is moving on to the next part of their day, children may need to be awakened. If sleep patterns become a concern with families, teachers will work on problem solving with families for the best support of the child.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play and exploration is an important part of a child's development and all children participate in outdoor activities. It is important that your child brings in the appropriate clothing for the season. When our outdoor play area is snowed in, we provide alternate winter activities, including walks, to keep the children active. Families are asked to sign a permission slip when enrolling, allowing children to participate in neighborhood walks. In case of extreme and inclement weather, we will refrain from taking children out, but provide additional gross motor play indoors. It is expected that if your child is well enough to be in school, he/she is well enough for outside activities.

Post-Pandemic Adjustments

- At drop off parents wait at the door to be let in to the center, practice physical distancing and be prepared for a slower than usual wait time
- We will require updated contact information. Your child may not attend BCC if we are unable to reach you in an emergency
- At pick-up time the door will be unlocked but we request parents to practice physical distancing, wait for another family to exit, and not enter the playground areas.
- Children will not go to classrooms other than their own except for transition visits, and if staffing makes it necessary to combine an age group at the end of the day
- Sick children will be isolated and must be picked up ASAP

Emergency Preparedness

Fire drills are required by law and happen on a routine basis at Brattleboro Centre for Children. These help children learn what to do in case of emergency. Fire drills happen regardless of weather. For this reason it is important that all children, except those in the infant room, wear shoes at all times in school. If children need to stand outside for a longer period of time, we move into the Senior Center.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, children will be transported to a designated location that is announced on the radio. Children will only be released to those adults listed on emergency forms. We will not wait for parents to pick up children, but will leave as soon as our prearranged transportation arrives. Families need to listen to the radio for further information.

Emergency Response Plan

Our current Emergency Response Plan can be used in any emergency situation likely to arise in our center and includes the School Crisis Response Procedures Booklet (prepared by the Vermont Safe Schools Partnership) being posted in the office for reference. A poster made by the Department of Public Safety Poster for advising of Shelter-in-Place or Transporting to a Designated Reception Center is located in the office for easy retrieval and use in case of need. Evacuation drills are practiced monthly at a variety of times of day and recorded on a form accessible in the office. Both primary and secondary routes are

practiced and a plan for sheltering-in-place, lockdowns, and lockouts is known to all staff members. Maps of the evacuation routes are posted in the office and in every classroom along with emergency contact information for staff and children. A list of emergency supplies to have ready is posted and backpacks will be maintained in case of need.

NOTIFICATIONS:

BCC is on the state-wide alert list for notifications of emergencies, weather alerts, and natural disasters. We receive notifications via email and phone alerts. A list of emergency phone numbers to notify local authorities is posted in the office and in every classroom and includes contact information to the local representative of Vermont Emergency Management.

SHELTER-IN-PLACE:

The decision to Shelter-In-Place will be made by local authorities, based on an event where air quality is threatened. The Executive Director will inform all staff. Windows will be closed and locked. Air conditioners, if in use, will be turned off, and doors to the outside will be closed securely. Staff will contact families of their students . Students with special needs will be attended to by their primary care teacher. Partner staff, if present, will be told to remain at the center until the emergency is over and we are notified by local authorities.

EVACUATION:

In case of need for evacuation, notified by fire alarm or other authority's alert, everyone at the center will exit by either the primary or secondary route, whichever is safest, and meet at the agreed-upon site outside the center. This location is on the sidewalk in front of the bank to the north of the center. Attendance is taken by each lead teacher upon arrival at the evacuation site, and the Executive Director communicates with each one to confirm all students and staff are present. Students with special needs will be attended to by their primary care teacher. The Executive Director will have a cell phone and emergency contact information for all students. Emergency supplies carried in classroom backpacks will be brought.

Should the evacuation occur during inclement weather, the building at 207 Main St, has access to the interior basement where we can wait safely and out of the cold or wet weather. The same protocol for contacting families and bringing emergency supplies will be followed as in the above scenario.

BCC is on the Town list under the school section for notifications requiring an off-site evacuation. Upon receiving such notification, the staff will mobilize the students, carry backpacks full of all emergency supplies, and transport them to our walkable reception center at the American Legion Post 5, at 32 Linden St, about a 4 block walk from BCC. Parents/guardians will be notified by cell phone or text by the Executive Director or the person responsible in charge in their absence. Infants will be placed in mobile cribs or strollers and walked there. Students with special needs, and toddlers will be walked with their primary caregivers. All emergency supplies, including medications, will be transported in the backpacks. Reunification will occur on site at the American Legion. Families will be notified using the phone call/text method as stated above. Staff will remain until all children are reunited with their families.

LOCKDOWN:

In case of need for a lockdown, when a threat is determined to be present within the building, the Executive Director will communicate to all the classroom teachers and any partner staff, if present.

Students with special needs will be attended to by their primary care teacher. Doors will be locked, lights will be turned off, everyone will be kept out of sight of windows and kept quiet. Attendance will be taken, and families will be notified by office staff if not supervising children.

LOCKOUT:

In case of need for a lockout, when a threat is determined to be present outside the building, the Executive Director will communicate to all the classroom teachers and any partner staff, if present, to bring all children inside via the safest route and lock doors. Students with special needs will be attended to by their primary care teachers. Attendance will be taken and communicated to the office staff who will notify families.

CHAIN OF COMMAND:

While the decisions about what actions to take in an emergency generally fall to the Executive Director, in her absence, the Office Manager will be the leading decision maker. Lead teachers will be responsible for ensuring that their classrooms follow directions, and teachers with primary care responsibilities for students with special needs will attend to those students. If both the Executive Director and Office Manager are not present or able to give directions, Lead Teachers with seniority will take charge.

ATTACHMENTS:

A chart of hazards, emergency phone numbers and an emergency supply list are included to supplement this plan.

Field Trips

As the only early education center located downtown, we take advantage of all that Brattleboro has to offer in town and take walking trips regularly to introduce the children to our community helpers and natural environment. Field trips, other than neighborhood walks, occur with less frequency and are scheduled in advance. Families must sign a separate field trip permission form for your child to participate. We love having families join us on these trips, and ask that you provide us with a copy of your valid driver's license and your automobile insurance with $100,000/$300,000 coverage if you intend to transport.

Board of Directors

Brattleboro Centre for Children is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of community members and families. The Board establishes our program's mission, policies and hires the Director to implement them. We encourage parents or guardians to participate in Board activities; please contact the Program Director for more information.

Sexual abuse and molestation policy:

Although warmth and affection are important feelings for staff/volunteers to communicate toward the children enrolled in the center, it is essential that staff/volunteers' actions do not in any way offend, violate, or have the appearance of being in violation of current laws associated with child abuse.

Staff/volunteers are expected to be attentive to all signs and symptoms associated with child abuse and report them to their immediate supervisor as soon as they are observed and/or disclosed.

Staff/volunteers are prohibited from relating to children enrolled in the center outside of working hours for extended periods of time such as babysitting or weekend trips. (see Conditions of Employment)

Staff/volunteers will not use abusive language, mimic or tease children in a way that insults or embarrasses them.

Staff/volunteers will complete the required Child Abuse Prevention trainings and will receive continued trainings on child abuse regularly.

Reporting Procedures: At first report or accusation that child abuse has occurred, the staff/volunteer to whom an inappropriate action between staff/volunteer and child has been disclosed will immediately confirm the reported facts and the condition of the child. S/he will then notify his/her supervisor, who will notify the Executive Director.

In the event that the reported incident involves a staff/volunteer, the Executive Director will suspend the person with pay, immediately. Regardless of where, or under what circumstances the alleged incident takes place, if a staff/volunteer is involved, it will be considered job related.

The Executive Director, or his/her designee, will lead the investigation of the incident.

The parents or legal guardian of the child or children involved in any such incident will be communicated to only by the Executive Director or his/her designee when a staff/volunteer in involved in the allegation.

Reinstatement of the staff/volunteer will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the investigating agency, in this case the Department of Families and Children of the state of Vermont.

Child abuse incidents not involving staff/volunteers, shall be reported by staff to the Executive Director, who will advise the reporting party of the steps to be taken. The person receiving the report of the abuse of neglect should be the one reporting to DCF, supported by the Executive Director.

I have read and understand the contents of the Brattleboro Centre for Children Family Handbook, and agree to abide by the terms, policies and procedures as outlined.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date _____