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***306 1st Street, Suite 3***

***Sergeant Bluff, IA, 51054***

***PH:712-943-2603***

***FAX: 712-943-2928***

***Director:***

***Kelsey Andersen***

***Administrative Assistant:***

***Kayla Schroeder***

***“Learning today...... Leading tomorrow”***

***Parent Handbook***

**Welcome to Bluff’s Little Thinkers!**

**HISTORY**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers has been a licensed childcare facility in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa since 2013. Bluff’s Little Thinkers first opened its doors on October 1, 2013, with about 5 children supervised by Directors at the time, Kelsey Andersen and Stacia Hough. Over the years the center has seen a substantial amount of growth. Gradually classrooms were expanded, and enrollment numbers grew to full capacity.

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is fortunate enough to employ about 20 fantastic teaching staff and has been a Community Based Partner with the Sergeant Bluff-Luton School District since 2013. This gives us the opportunity to offer a statewide voluntary preschool classroom with a certified teacher provided by the school district. We pride ourselves in being a smaller center affording us the ability to create individual and more personal relationships with our staff, families, and children.

We greatly value the support we receive from the community and enjoy being able to contribute to the Sergeant Bluff and surrounding area community. Bluff’s Little Thinkers has been a member of the Sioux City Chamber of Commerce since 2013, as well as participated in the early childhood Iowa Quality Rating System. Bluff’s Little Thinkers is proud to have started as a 3 Star Rated Center and have progressed and improved to a 4 Star Rated Center.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Our focus is to provide a stimulating early childhood care and educational experience which promotes each child’s social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to become lifelong learners.

**PHILOSOPHY**

Based on the needs of the family, we take pride in providing care for children who are 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Our main focus is on the development of the child as a whole, the child within his or her family, and within the community.

**GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers Director Administrative Assistant

306 1st St. Suite 3 Kelsey Andersen Kayla Schroeder

Sergeant Bluff, IA 51054 712-490-5620 712-899-2418

PH: 712-943-2603 [Kelseyandersenteach@gmail.com](mailto:Kelseyandersenteach@gmail.com) Kaylaschroederteach@gmail.com

FAX: 712-943-2928

**Hours of Operation:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is open from 6:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The center follows Sergeant Bluff-Luton School District for weather related delays, early dismissals, and closures. BLT may open late, close early or be closed completely due to inclement weather (blizzards, hazardous road conditions etc.) Look for these announcements on KTIV, KCAU, our Facebook page and the Remind App.

**Holidays:**

The center is closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. If a Holiday lands on a weekend the center will be closed the day prior or the day after in observance.

**Program Ratios and Licensing:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is a licensed center in the state of Iowa. Classroom activities and planning are under the direction of the teaching staff. Bluff’s Little Thinkers accepts children 6 weeks to 5 years old and is currently licensed for 72 children in these ages. Classrooms are staffed based upon the age of the children and according to required state ratios for children and infants, as follows:

* Infants – 1:4 (12 spots)
* One Year Olds – 1:4 (12 spots)
* Two Year Olds – 1:6 (12 spots)
* Three Year Olds – 1:8 (20 spots)
* Four Year Olds – 1:10 (20 spots)

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is a participant in the Iowa Quality Rating Scale and is currently rated a 4-star center.

**Application & Admissions:**

Applications for childcare and or preschool can be picked up at our location at 306 1st street, Suite 3 in Sergeant Bluff Monday through Friday during business hours (6:00am-5:30pm). **Child files must be updated annually including physicals.** Please see Kayla for this.

**The following items will need to be completed and turned in before your child will be able to attend**:

* Application completed entirely with emergency contacts and other authorizations
* Completed Iowa Eligibility Application
* Completed IA CACFP Enrollment Form
* Physical/Well Child Check (completed within the last 12 months) (updated yearly)
* Current Immunization Records (shots)
* Handbook Signature
* First week’s payment or State Assistance approval letter

**FEES & BILLING**

**Tuition Rates: Rates change according to the age of the child and not according to when they transition**

* Infants - $190.00 per week
* 2-year-old - $180.00 per week
* 3-year-old $160.00 per week
* 4-year-old $150.00 per week

**Payments:**

All tuition payments are due Friday for the upcoming week or by drop off on Monday. Receipts are available upon request. Annual W-10 Tax forms will be printed for each family by January 31 each year, stating total tuition paid for the previous year. Payments are handled by the Administrative Assistant, Kayla Schroeder, and can be reached at the center 712-943-2603 and/or by email at Kaylaschroederteach@gmail.com. Please contact Kayla with any questions about payments and/or due dates. We accept cash or check. Tuition can also be paid with a card via invoice online.

**Holidays & Vacation:**

The center is closed on the following holidays: New Year’s Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. If a Holiday lands on a weekend the center will be closed the day prior or the day after in observance.

Weekly tuition paid holds your child’s spot at the center. Due to Bluff’s Little Thinkers consistently maintaining a waitlist for each classroom, parents are required to pay each week even if the child does not attend to hold their spot. Each private pay child enrolled full time after 30 days of consistent attendance earns 1 week (5 days) of vacation that can be used for days missed. These days can only be used in 1 (whole day) increments. A week’s tuition will be pro-rated to reflect the vacation days used. Vacation days can be used for days missed due to vacation, holidays, etc. but a vacation request day form must be filled out at least 2 weeks in advance prior to days being requested. Vacation days do not roll over to the following year. Every private pay full time child gets 5 new days each year.

**Summer Enrollment:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is open 12 months of the year. During summer months we understand some families have different schedules and may take vacations during summer months. Keeping this in mind we allow full time enrolled families to drop down to part time in the summer to hold their spots until fall when enrollment is more consistent. While enrolled, part time families will be limited to 20 hours or less per week. Families are welcome to discontinue enrollment if they choose to, but spots will not be held and may not be available when enrollment is requested again.

**State Assistance:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers does accept state pay through the state of Iowa. Families receiving State Assistance are required to maintain at least 80% attendance. If a state pay family’s attendance falls below 80% attendance, their spot(s) may be forfeited and may be filled immediately. Families receiving State Assistance are required to pay weekly co-payments when applicable. Any unit fees over 2 weeks past due will result in the loss of your spot at Bluff’s Little Thinkers and may be filled immediately.

**Discounts:**

Any family paying their entire monthly tuition in advance by the first Friday of each month will receive a discount of $20. Monthly tuition payments are due on the 1st business day of each month and must be paid by the first Friday of the month to receive discount. Any family enrolling multiple children FULL TIME will be eligible for a discount of 10% off.

**Fees:**

Any late payments will have a $5.00/day fee applied to the balance until tuition is paid in full. Any tuition over 2 weeks delinquent will result in discontinuing of care until balance is paid in full. When tuition is beyond 2 weeks past due a child’s spot may be forfeited and may be filled immediately. Any Tuition over 30 days past due may be sent to a 3rd party for collections and may be reported to the Credit Bureau.

Any returned checks will need to be paid in CASH ONLY and a returned check fee of $30 will be added to the balance due. Bluff’s Little Thinkers currently only accepts cash, check or money order as forms of payment.

Any parent picking up their child(ren) after 5:30pm will be charged a $1/minute/child late fee that will be applied to their balance. Late pick-up fees will be calculated by the total time from 5:30pm until the family exits the center. Multiple late fees are subject to discontinuation of care.

**CLASSROOM & CURRICULUM:**

**Arrival and Departure:**

We require parents to bring their children into the building and drop them off in their classroom each day. All children **must be dropped off by 9:30am each day** unless prior authorization is made by a director. Staff will sign each child in and out each day upon arrival and departure. All children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. A $1.00/minute/child late fee will be added to your bill for any part of 1 minute that parents or caregivers are late in picking up their child(ren). Please call the center if you are running late or if an emergency arises.

At Bluff’s Little Thinkers we feel face to face communication is very important and valuable. We respect your time and know that parents are very busy, and generally have schedules to maintain. We ask that for the few minute’s parents are in the center for arrival or departure, they refrain from using their cell phones. This ensures staff and parents can have undivided attention to communicate important information accurately about your child’s day.

Parents that are sending someone to pick up their child must have that person authorized to do so on the pick- up permission form located in the application for enrollment. In this case the adult picking up will be asked for a valid photo ID and will be cross referenced with the child’s pick-up permission sheet. If you do not have that person authorized that person will not be allowed to pick up the child until authorization from parent has been obtained. If anyone other than a parent is picking up your child, please notify the center in advance.

Please remind any person picking up your child to bring a valid photo ID with them. We understand that this can be inconvenient, but your child’s safety and others is extremely important to us. We appreciate your corporation in this matter.

**Toys or Treasures from Home:**

All toys and treasures from home must be kept at home. We ask that children do not bring any toys, jewelry, games, treasures, tablets, or other belongings from home unless specified by a teacher for a “show and tell” event. Any items such as these will be kept in the child’s cubby until picked up by a parent or guardian. Any of these items from home that are brought into the center are at risk of being lost, stolen, or broken. Bluff’s Little Thinkers staff and/or administration are in no way responsible for these items if brought into the facility.

**Change of Clothes:**

Here at Bluff’s Little Thinkers, we firmly believe that children learn through play. We learn, play, and explore with activities and supplies that can become “messy” (dirt, paint, etc). We ask that you have at minimum TWO (2) complete spare changes of clothes for your child to be kept in their cubby at all times. This includes shirts, pants, socks, underwear (if toilet trained) and shoes.

All extra clothes need to be rotated out as seasons change and your child grows in size. Please be sure to maintain weather and size appropriate clothing throughout the year.

Please write your child's name or initials on the tag or another place where it can be clearly seen. We will change any dirty clothes as soon as possible and use a stain removal spray. Soiled clothing will be washed at the center unless the change is due to a bowel movement. All BM clothes will be sent home the same day in a bag. Bluff’s Little Thinkers uses dye-free/fragrance free detergent only.

Bluff’s Little Thinkers wants to remind parents that childcare can be messy despite our attempts to not stain clothing, messes do happen, and it is a great idea to send your child every day in “play clothes” that you will not mind getting messy.

**Rest Time:**

Rest time will be presented to each child (mobile room, 2’s, 3’s, Preschool) from 12:00 P.M to 3:00 P.M. We ask that you provide a blanket for your child. We ask that children are not picked up during this time as it disrupts rest time for all the other children.

If you feel rest time could be a difficult transition for your child, please talk to your child's teachers about your concerns. Although all children will be asked to lay/rest quietly for the first 45-60 mins, other options can be made available (books, drawing, puzzles, tablets, and other quiet activities).

Infants under 12 months of age are on their own meal and sleep schedules, thus we follow their schedules as requested by families.

Blankets and cot sheets will be sent home every Friday to be washed and returned the following Monday.

**Communication:**

Quality and continuous communication with our parents is crucial and directly related to the ability of Bluff’s Little Thinkers to provide the best care possible to your child. Teachers will be sending home various important documents as communication in addition to morning greeting and afternoon departures. These items may include our monthly newsletter, your child’s daily sheet, as well as important billing statements, notices, and announcements of events from the center directors. It is VERY important for parents to check their child’s folder and cubby DAILY for important papers.

Forms of center and teacher communication may also be in form of the following:

* Newsletters
* Face to face conversations
* Phone conversations via call or text
* Notes sent home
* Email
* Facebook page
* Any other form established by the classroom, staff, and family

**Daily Schedule:**

**All children must be dropped off at the center by 9:30am unless otherwise arranged and authorized by the Director.** This not only helps us maintain consistency in the classroom and maintain accurate lunch counts, but it also allows for your child to take part in important daily learning activities.

A typical day at our center will consist of planned educational activities that stimulate and encourage your child’s development. We focus on all aspects of the child including but not limited to their cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language development.

A daily schedule, which will be followed each day, will be posted in each room for parents to review. If you have any questions or concerns in regard to your child’s daily schedule, please ask your child’s teacher or center Director.

**Lesson Plans:**

The classroom staff uses the curriculum when developing a daily schedule that is predictable, yet flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. The classroom staff uses the Creative Curriculum as a guide when developing a daily schedule that is predictable yet responsive to the individual needs of children.

The schedule provides time and support for transitions, includes indoor and outdoor experiences, and provides opportunities for children to rest and be active. The daily schedule also provides children learning opportunities that incorporate child-initiated centers, large group, and small group activities.

The classroom staff incorporates materials and equipment that reflect diversity, meets the needs of all students, and encourages interaction and independence.

The classroom staff incorporates materials and equipment that:

* Reflect the lives of children and families
* Reflect the diversity found in society including gender, age, language, and abilities
* Provide for children’s safety while being appropriately challenged
* Encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery
* Promote action and interaction
* Are organized to support independence
* Are rotated to accommodate new interest and skill levels
* Are rich in variety
* Accommodate children with special needs

Teaching staff will evaluate and change their responses and interactions based on individual needs of the child. Research based curriculum calls for a supportive classroom climate. Classroom staff will:

* Provide a variety of activities that consider the different abilities of children, different emotions children experience, and activity levels of children.
* Participate in children’s learning to support and extend children’s ideas and learning.
* Provide a variety of materials that encourage learning, interaction, and consider the interests of the children.

Teaching staff will never use threats, derogatory remarks, or withhold food as a form of discipline. Classroom staff demonstrate appropriate behavior and is prepared to keep reminding and practicing with children as often as is necessary.

* Classroom staff are alert to recognizing warning signs of potential problems and redirect or intervene whenever necessary.
* Children are encouraged to “problem solve” with words when there are conflicts with peers.
* Classroom staff are spread out around the classroom to make themselves available to help work through difficulties or intervene when a child is physically aggressive towards others.

Teaching staff talk frequently with children and listen to children with attention and respect. At BLT the role of classroom staff is to support and extend children’s learning by listening, asking open-ended questions, engaging in conversations, and challenging children to explain their thinking.

Teaching staff will support all children’s development of friendship and provide an opportunity for children to play with and learn from each other. Children will have daily opportunities to engage in play and learn from their peers. Classroom staff will plan for these opportunities within centers, small group, large group, and outdoor activities. Classroom staff will model and coach children as they learn to work cooperatively, form friendships, and learn from each other.

Teaching staff will promote pro-social behavior by interacting in a respectful manner with all staff and children.

Classroom staff:

* Model turn-taking and sharing
* Help children negotiate when in conflicts
* Engage children in the care of their classroom
* Ensure that each child can contribute to the group
* Encourage children to listen to one another
* Encourage and help children provide comfort to others
* Discuss ongoing interactions and identify pro-social behaviors with children

**Challenging Behavior:**

For children with persistent serious challenging behavior, the teachers, families, and other professionals will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the children’s inclusion and success. Classroom staff will work with the families and the AEA team in forming a plan to address children with challenging behaviors. The plan created may consider the following:

* Explicitly teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills
* Using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child’s appropriate behavior

Classroom staff will work with the families and the AEA team in forming a plan to address children with challenging behaviors. The plan created may consider the following:

* The reason for the behavior
* Explicitly teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills
* Using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to support the child’s appropriate behavior

**Promoting Self-Regulation:**

Teaching staff will help children manage their behavior by guiding and supporting children.

Classroom staff encourages students to:

* Persist when frustrated
* Play cooperatively with other children
* Use language to communicate needs
* Learn turn-taking
* Gain control of physical impulses
* Express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
* Use problem solving techniques
* Learn about self and other

Teachers help individual children learn socially appropriate behaviors by following these guidelines:

* Model turn taking and sharing
* Help children negotiate when in conflicts
* Engage children in the care of their classroom
* Ensure that each child can contribute to the group
* Encourage children to listen to one another
* Encourage and help children provide comfort to others
* Discuss ongoing interactions and identify pro-social behaviors with children

Teachers manage behavior and implement classroom rules and expectation in a manner that is consistent and predictable. Classroom staff demonstrates appropriate behavior and are prepared to keep reminding and practicing with children as often as is necessary. Teachers notice patterns in children’s challenging behaviors and provide thoughtful, consistent, and individualized responses.

* Classroom staff needs to be alert to recognizing warning signs of potential problems and redirect or intervene whenever necessary.
* Children are encouraged to “problem solve” with words when there are conflicts with peers.
* Classroom staff needs to be spread out around the classroom in order to make themselves available to help work through difficulties or intervene when a child is physically aggressive towards others.
* Classroom staff will never use derogatory remarks or threaten to nor withhold food as a punishment.

**Biting:**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration, and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents, or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Bluff’s Little Thinkers to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

* The biting child is stopped and told, “Stop biting. Biting hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
* The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
* Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary. It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child’s behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting.

Examples of triggers would be communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns.

The following questions should be asked:

* Was the space too crowded?
* Were there too few toys?
* Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
* Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?

1. The teacher will change the environment, routines, or activities if necessary.
2. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways
3. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
4. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
5. The teacher, parent and Directors will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
6. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child’s permanent enrollment file in the office.

**Supervision of Children:**

Teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight. Classroom staff will supervise children primarily by sight during both indoor activities and outdoor activities. Supervision by sound is acceptable when children are napping or using the toilet. When this occurs, the staff will check on the child/children frequently. Classroom staff will:

* Position themselves so that they can visually see the entire classroom, playground, or setting with children
* Position themselves in areas that may need more supervision (near a workbench with tools where an injury could occur)
* Visually scan the classroom, playground, or other setting in order to monitor children and what is happening
* Move around the classroom, playground, or other setting in order to visually see all children
* Count children on a regular basis throughout the class time and when moving from one place to another
* Maintain Child to Staff Ratios

**SAFETY & SECURITY**

**Building security:**

Here at Bluff’s Little Thinkers, we take your child’s safety seriously. Our entrance is secured with a door that is equipped with a fob key entry system. Parents may have a fob key that is to be purchased for $15.00 from a director.

If your key is lost, you will be able to purchase an additional key for $15.00, and your lost key will be deactivated. If you decide to leave the center, or your child is no longer age eligible for our program, we will return your $15.00 when you return your fob key in working condition. If a parent does not want to purchase a key, loses or forgets their key fob they are able to knock and or call the center to be let in. We ask for your patience in waiting for a staff member to open the door for you, as all staff are expected to be always engaged with children in some way.

**Smoke-Free Environment:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers facilities and grounds, including childcare staff vehicles, are off limits for tobacco and nicotine use including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, snus, electronic smoking devices (ESD) and nicotine products that are not Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved for tobacco cessation. This requirement extends to students, employees, and visitors. This policy always applies, including Bluff’s Little Thinkers sponsored and non-Bluff’s Little Thinkers sponsored events. Persons failing to abide by this policy are required to extinguish their smoking material, dispose of the tobacco/nicotine product, or leave Bluff’s Little Thinkers premises immediately. It is the responsibility of the administration to enforce this policy.

**Emergency & Evacuation Plans:**

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE**

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Bluff’s Little Thinkers staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

• If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, a director will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.

• Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director and/or Assistant Director until a parent arrives.

If the child requires immediate medical attention:

• The staff member who witnessed the emergency will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911 and notify a director. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.

• A director will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child’s physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.

**FIRE, TORNADO, BOMB OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire and tornado drills are conducted each month; all classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and meet outside the building.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Children at Bluff’s Little Thinkers take shelter in the preschool bathroom, or back staff bathrooms. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency.

**BLIZZARD/SEVERE WINTER WEATHER**

Directors will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. Directors are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive. All closures and delays will be posted on the center public Facebook page, local news stations, KTIV and KCAU and the Remind App.

**MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD**

• In the event of a missing child, a teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls a director to help with the search. If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, a director will notify the Sergeant Bluff Police Department and the child’s parents.

• In the event of an abducted child, a teacher must immediately contact a director, who will contact the Sergeant Bluff Police Department, and the child’s parents.

**POWER FAILURE**

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes. If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents contacted.

• Directors are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child. All closures will be posted on the center public Facebook page and local news stations, KTIV and KCAU.

• Activities will resume as possible until parents arrive.

**Mandatory Reporting:**

ALL center staff are trained and certified Mandatory Reporters. All Bluff’s Little Thinkers staff are required by law to report ANY suspicion of child abuse. *If program staff feels the child is in immediate danger, they will need to call law enforcement at 911, inform them of the situation and the type of suspected abuse and then call Department of Human Services (DHS) and file a verbal report.*

**PROCEEDURE:**

* As soon as program staff suspects child abuse, they will telephone Iowa DHS at 712-255-2699 during the day or at 1-800-362-2178 outside of normal working hours, to make a verbal report.
* If DHS determines the situation “does not meet legal criteria for assessment,” you will still complete the written report and write at the top of the report: “does not meet legal criteria for assessment” and the name of the DHS workers name you made the verbal report to.
* If DHS determines the situation “does meet legal criteria for assessment,” you will need to complete and submit a written report to DHS.
* Complete the written report. Written reports must be submitted to the local DHS office within 48 hours of the verbal report. A faxed copy can be sent to DHS at 712-255-2676 (send Attn: CPS) and the original mailed to: DHS, Attn: CPS, 822 Douglas Street, Sioux City, IA 51101.

The program has written procedures that outline how information is obtained on students and who has access to student information. All files are kept in a secure location. Parents or guardians may see the child’s file. Other than the parents/guardians, only authorized personnel may access the child’s file without the approval or the notification of the child’s parents/guardians. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be charged. A conference to review your child’s file may be arranged by contacting the principal/director. If there is a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office/director. Unless a court order is on file with the school/childcare center/preschool, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

The program has written up-to-date comprehensive procedures to prepare for and respond to medical and dental emergencies for children and adult staff.Programs will collect emergency information during the enrollment process and specific information about where emergency medical and dental services can be obtained. For children who have special needs or healthcare needs, families should specify a medical specialist that should be contacted in the event of a medical/dental emergency. Programs will have a plan specific to their facility for handling medical and dental emergencies. Program staff will be trained annually or upon starting a position regarding the facility’s specific plan for handling medical and dental emergencies

**Strangulation:**

For the safety of all participants, we follow strict rules to prevent possible strangulation. Strings and cords long enough to encircle a child’s neck are not present in the childcare exclusive space. All cribs and cots will be out of reach of blinds and all loose clothing will be removed for sleeping. Any pacifier with strings or attachments are not allowed for safety reasons. Teething necklaces are not allowed. Sweatshirts or coats with ties will be tied up or tucked in while outdoors to avoid any safety issues as well. Outdoor safety is also a priority. To be compliant with this policy, we have restricted the use of jump ropes, hula hoops, etc.

Children’s accessories and jewelry are extremely attractive to young children. Small objects like barrettes and earrings can be choking hazards and necklaces can pose strangulation hazards. Therefore, we do not permit the following type of jewelry:

Dangly earrings

Necklaces of any kind

Bracelets of any kind

**HEALTH**

**Records & Child Files:**

This program will maintain current health records on each child**.**

The following are on file for each child:

* Immunization record
* Current physical exam
* Insurance information
* Emergency contact information
* List of known allergies
* Specific health needs or information
* Health Care Plans if applicable

All files are kept in a secure location. Parents or guardians may see the child’s file. Other than the parents/guardians, only authorized personnel may access the child’s file without the approval or the notification of the child’s parents/guardians. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be charged. A conference to review your child’s file may be arranged by contacting the director. If there is a court order that limits the rights of one parent in matters such as custody or visitation, please bring a copy to the office/director. Unless a court order is on file with the school/childcare center/preschool, we must provide equal rights to both parents.

At least one classroom staff member who possesses a certificate showing satisfactory completion of pediatric first aid training and CPR will always be present. All classroom staff will receive CPR and infant/child or pediatric first aid training and at least one staff member with this training will be always present while the class is in session.

**Illness:**

A safe and healthy learning environment is a top priority here at Bluff's Little Thinkers. If your child is ill or shows signs of illness, please keep your child at home. If your child becomes ill at the center or is unable to take part in normal daily activities, they will be sent home.

If your child is sent home with a fever, Bluff’s Little Thinkers fever policy is as follows:

Children sent home with a fever of 100.5-100.9 may only return the NEXT day with a doctor’s note. The doctor’s note MUST specifically state that the child has been seen and is NOT CONTAGIOUS and cleared to return to childcare after being fever free.

Children sent home with a fever of 101.0 or above must stay home for a minimum of 24 hours. After that minimum 24 hours, the child may only return if fever free without any fever reducing medication (Ibuprofen or Tylenol) and a doctor’s note. The doctor’s note MUST specifically state that the child is NOT CONTAGIOUS and cleared to return to childcare.

Children that have any contagious illnesses, **including viral illnesses**, must have a doctor’s note specifically stating that they are **NOT CONTAGIOUS** before returning to the center. When children have been exposed to a communicable disease, we will have a posted exposure notice that is accessible for all parents to see.

**\* ANY CHILD WITH A CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS THAT REQUIRES ANTIBIOTICS FOR TREATMENT MUST BE ON THE ANTIBIOTICS FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO CHILDCARE!**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers is a Nit Free Facility. Children found to have nits or live lice will be sent home and may not return until the child has been treated and is nit free. If the child returns and is found to have nits or live lice, they will be sent home again until they are found to be nit free.

Some communicable diseases must be reported to public health authorities so that control measures can be used.  Families of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reportable condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of the local health department.

**\*\*Please remember, if your child is unable to participate in the normal classroom activities (including being able to play outside), then your child MUST stay home.**

In the event a child becomes ill at the center and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be contacted and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come pick the child up. If no contact can be made for the child to be picked up within a reasonable amount of time a director will call DHS child protective services.

**Symptoms requiring the child to be sent home or to stay home:**

* Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.
* Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools- 4 or more loose stools in one day or 2 loose stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/causing accident in underwear.
* Vomiting: Please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night. Any Child vomiting will be sent home.
* Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
* Draining and itching of eyes or ears.
* Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble illness, including ringworm.
* Child is irritable, lethargic, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.
* **ANY CHILD WITH A CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS THAT REQUIRES ANTIBIOTICS FOR TREATMENT MUST BE ON THE ANTIBIOTICS FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO CHILDCARE.**

If you are not sure about whether to bring your child to the center, please call or text Kelsey to discuss the matter.

**Medication:**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers does NOT and will NOT administer any medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor with specific dosage and dates of administration with a prescription label and is to be given more than 3 times a day. A medication sheet will need to be completed entirely by a parent and if the medication must be administered long term, a new medication sheet will need to be completed entirely each month. In addition, Bluff’s Little Thinkers will not administer any medication being given for the first time due to possible adverse reactions.

Any prescribed antibiotics, creams, drops, etc. will only be administered at the center if they are required more than 3 times a day. Medications required 3 times per day can be administered before and after attending and at night. Any other medications will be required to be administered at home or by a parent.

\*DO NOT send any type of medication here with your child in a bottle or sippy cup!

**Insect Repellent:**

Classroom staff will protect children from insect-borne disease when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellants, due to a high risk of insect-borne disease. Parents will provide their own insect repellent of their choosing. Staff will apply repellant no more than once a day and only when there is a health provider’s authorization and parental permission on file. Insect repellent will be labeled with the child’s name, and only used on your child.

**Sunscreen:**

Classroom staff will protect children from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and sunscreen.

Parents will provide a sunscreen of their choosing with UVB-ray protection of at least SPF-15 or higher. Sunscreen may be applied to exposed skin except eyelids, 30 minutes before exposure to the sun and every 2 hours while in the sun. Sunscreen preparations shall be applied according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Sunscreen will be labeled with the child’s name, and only used on your child.

**Diapering:**

Children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, diapering will be implemented in a manner that prevents the spread of communicable disease and maintains the integrity of the diapered child's skin. All diapered children will be changed every 2 hours at a minimum. Parents are required to provide all diapers and wipes. When diaper supply gets low staff will let parents know to replenish their supply. Any child that runs out of diapers after a parent being notified may be charged $1/diaper used from Bluff’s Little Thinkers supply.

A designated area will be established specifically for diapering that is not located in or near any food handling areas and allows privacy for the child being diapered.

* Surfaces will be kept clean, waterproof, and free of cracks, tears and crevices.
* All diapers and wipes that are provided by the parent must be labeled with each child's name and any special instructions and stored off the diapering surface, out of reach of children.
* If a child is observed to develop a rash or broken skin in the diapered area, parents will be notified.
* Only program staff or the child's parent will engage in the diapering of a child. When possible, a second staff person or adult should be present or within visibility during the diapering process.

Steps for proper diapering procedure:

* Gather all needed supplies (Baby wipes, plastic bag for soiled diaper/clothes, disposable gloves, disinfectant) and place near, not on, the changing mat before beginning to diaper. *Never leave the child unattended*. Keep all supplies used in diapering out of the reach of children.
* Wash hands and put on disposable gloves.
* Avoid any contact with child's soiled clothing with exception of gloved hands.
* When preparing to move the child onto the diapering surface be sure to use proper/safe transferring and lifting procedures to avoid dropping the child or injuring your back. If the child weighs more than 50 pounds another adult should assist in the transferring of a child, or a step may be used.
* Help the child, when possible, to remove his/her own clothing, wipe (**ONLY USE BABY WIPES**) their own genitalia and assist in putting on their diaper, underwear, and clean clothing. Be careful when removing child's soiled diaper/clothing to avoid contamination of other objects and surfaces.
* Place soiled diaper into proper receptacle as follows: Fold disposable diaper inward, reseal with tapes, and place in plastic bag, tie off top, place inside an additional bag. Place in foot-pedal operated trash can that is only used for diapers.
* Cloth diapers and or clothing must be placed in a plastic bag, tie off top, place inside another bag and label outside bag, store in secure location, away from food service areas and out of reach from children. *Important*: Soiled diapers and/or clothing must be given only to parent or bus driver to be transported home with child.
* When the child cannot assist you, gently clean the child's bottom and genitalia with a moist disposable wipe, front to back, only once per wipe repeating with another wipe when necessary. Place soiled wipes and wax paper into the same plastic bag with diaper/clothes. Put clean diaper and clothing on child.
* Remove and discard gloves using the same glove removal process that was learned during Bloodborne Pathogen training.
* Assure that diapered child washes hands thoroughly before returning to the classroom.

**Hand Washing:**

Classroom staff and all other adults working in the classroom will teach and model appropriate hand washing practices in order to lower the risk of spreading communicable diseases.

Procedure

1. Staff and children will wash their hands whenever hands come in contact with body fluids and the following times:

* When the child arrives for the day
* Before food preparation, handling, or serving (Including setting the table)
* After toileting or changing diapers
* After assisting a child with toilet use
* Before and after eating meals or snacks
* After handling pets or other animals
* Before and after using disposable gloves
* After coughing or sneezing
* After inspecting hair for lice
* Before and after giving medications
* Before and after water play
* After moving from one group to another that involves contact with other toddlers

B. Clear, simple hand washing procedures will be posted at all sinks and include these steps.

1. Wet hands with water and then add soap

2. Use friction to work up lather and wash hands for at least 20 seconds

3. Rinse well under a stream of water

4. Dry hands thoroughly with a single use paper towel

5. Turn off faucet with the paper towel then discard the paper towel.

Programs will take precautions to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. Communal, unsupervised water play tables shall be prohibited. Communal water tables shall be permitted if children are supervised and the following conditions apply:

* The water tables will be filled with fresh water immediately before a designated group of children begins a water play activity at the table or shall be supplied with the freely flowing fresh water during the play activity.
* The basin and toys shall be washed and sanitized before the next group uses the water table or the next water play activity takes place.
* Only children without cuts, scratches, and sores on their hands, and without colds or runny noses, shall be permitted to use a communal water play table.
* Children shall wash their hands before and after they use a communal water play table.
* Caregivers shall ensure that no child drinks water from the water table.

**ENVIRONMENTS**

**Physical Environment:**

Staff will provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment available indoors and outdoors for children throughout the day.

This equipment includes:

* Dramatic play equipment
* Sensory materials such as sand, water, playdough, paint, and blocks
* Materials that support curriculum goals and objectives in literacy, math, science, social studies, and other content areas; and
* Gross motor equipment for activities such as pulling up; walking; climbing in, on and over; moving through, around, and under; pushing; pulling; and riding.

**Indoor Environment:**

Research based curriculum states that when a classroom is organized and full of interesting materials learning can occur. Indoor space is designed and arranged to allow children to play alone, in pairs, or in small groups. The classroom needs to have space for large group activities and provide full access for children with disabilities. The classroom is divided into areas that are supplied with materials. The materials need to be organized in a way that supports children’s learning.

Documentary evidence, available on-site, indicates that the building has been assessed for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, or any other hazard from friable material. Evidence exists that the program has taken remedial or containment action to prevent exposure to children and adults if warranted by the assessment. Programs will have documentation on site that indicates that the building has been assessed or does not contain lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass or any other hazard from friable material. If such materials are found the program has documentation of remedial or containment action. When the water supply source is from a well or private source, documentation verifies that the local regulatory health authority has determined the water to be safe for human consumption.

Programs provide documentation that they receive their water from the city/county or that their well water is safe for human consumption. All rooms that the children use are heated and ventilated to maintain room temperature and humidity level. The maintenance staff or contractor certifies that facility systems are maintained in compliance with national standards for facility use by children. The facility and outdoor play areas are entirely smoke free. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children. Programs post signage stating that the facility and grounds are smoke free. Smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the Center Campus.

**Outdoor Environment:**

Research-based curriculum states that outdoor activities not only develop motor skills, but also allow children to build structures in a larger area, and experience nature and sensory experiences. Outdoor spaces need to:

* Have age- and developmentally appropriate equipment and activities
* Allow children to play alone or in groups
* Experience a variety of motor skills
* Provide a variety of opportunities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play, or art activities
* Exploration of the natural environment, including a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces, and areas with natural materials such as nonpoisonous plants, shrubs, and trees
* Be adaptable to allow participation for children with special needs*.*

Programs provide for an outdoor play area that is protected by fences or by natural barriers to prevent access to streets and to avoid other dangers, such as pits, water hazards, or wells. We also use the Sgt. Bluff Primary School playground to provide a change for outdoor play. The outdoor play area is arranged so that staff can supervise children by sight and sound.

Program staff inspects the playground monthly to ensure it is safe and report playground needs to the building supervisor. A program staff member will inspect the playground area daily before allowing children outside.

**Cleaning/Sanitizing/Disinfecting:**

Classrooms have written procedures to ensure the frequency of cleaning and sanitation in the facility. All rooms will follow the QPPS cleaning frequency and sanitation guidelines. Program has written procedures of standard precautions taken to prevent contact with bodily fluids. Staff will follow the standard precautions for childcare recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and prevention in handling fluid that might contain blood or other body fluids. Standard precautions require treating all blood, fluids that may contain blood or blood products, and other bodily fluids as potentially infectious. The instructions for implementing standard precautions are:

* Spills of body fluids, feces, nasal and eye discharges, saliva, urine and vomit should be cleaned up immediately.
* Use a barrier such as nonporous gloves (e.g., latex or vinyl) or sufficient quantity of paper or cloth to clean it up without hand contact with the spilled material.
* Be careful not to get any of the fluid you are handling in your eyes, nose, mouth or any open sores you may have.
* Clean and disinfect any surfaces, such as countertops and floors, on to which body fluids have been spilled.
* Discard fluid contaminated material in a plastic bag that has been securely sealed.
* Mops used to clean up body fluids should be cleaned, rinsed with a disinfecting solution, wrung as dry as possible, and hung to dry completely.
* Be sure to wash your hands after cleaning any spill.

Classroom materials are sanitized regularly or when placed in a child’s mouth. A designated staff member in each classroom will be responsible for checking that all toys receive the appropriate care and meet the following guidelines:

* Children in diapers will have only washable toys. Each group should have its own toys and not share toys with other groups.
* All toys that are mouthed during the course of the day will be set aside in an inaccessible container before another child plays with the toy. Mouthed toys will be thoroughly washed with soap and water, and disinfected. Toys may be washed and disinfected by hand or by washing in a dishwasher. To wash and disinfect hard plastic toys: soak and scrub the toy in warm, soapy water. Use a brush to get the crevices clean. Then rinse the toy in clean water.
* Toys used by children who do not put these objects in their mouths will be cleaned at least weekly and when obviously soiled. Soap or detergent and water followed by clear water rinsing and air drying will be used. No disinfecting is required.

**Animals:**

All classroom pets or visiting animals should be in good health and have documentation of immunizations if applicable.

Designated staff will be responsible for checking that the appropriate care instructions for pets are followed. Pets will meet with the following guidelines:

* Any pet or animal present at the facility, indoors or outdoors, must be in good health, show no evidence of carrying any disease, and be a friendly companion for the children. Dogs, cats, and other furry animals will be immunized for any disease which can be transmitted to humans and will be maintained on a flea, tick, and worm control program. The following animals will NOT be permitted in childcare:
* Ferrets
* Turtles or other reptiles that can carry salmonella
* Birds of the parrot family
* Any wild or dangerous animals
* Pets will be kept clean and housed in clean living quarters. Children will not be allowed access to the pet’s food or excrement.
* All pets will be enclosed in cages or separated by some other means from the children except when children are handling them under adult supervision. Pets will not be allowed in areas where food is prepared, stored or eaten.
* Children, caregivers, and staff will follow proper hand washing procedures after handling animals.
* In the event of an animal bite or scratch, procedures for first aid and notification of parents or legal guardians contained in these policies will be followed.

**Screen Time:**

Before age 3 television viewing can have negative effects on the cognitive development of children. Studies also show there is a relationship for children ages 3-5 who watch 2 or more hours of television per day and the risk of being overweight. It is more important for children to have positive social interactions with their parents and caregivers than sitting in front of a screen.

* Less than 30 minutes of screen time each week or no screen time is allowed.
* Screen time will not be used for rewards or to manage behavior.
* When used for educational purposes staff will talk with children about what they are seeing or learning.
* When television or video are shown to children the programming is always educational and commercial free.
* Staff and families will receive education on screen time 2 times per year or more.

**NUTRITION**

**Food:**

Nutritional meals and snacks will be provided and prepared on site (with the exception of lunch) for all children. Breakfast is served from 7:00am-7:30am, morning snack is served from 9:00am-9:30am, lunch is served from 11:00am-11:30am, and afternoon snack is served from 3:15pm-3:45pm.

These meals will be provided at no additional charge. All meals are served within their specific time frame. To maintain a consistent schedule for all children we ask any child arriving after 7:25 be fed breakfast before arriving. Children arriving after 7:25 will eat snack at 9:00am.

Bluff’s Little Thinkers actively participates in the National Child and Adult Care Food Program. This federally funded program requires Bluff’s Little Thinkers to serves meals and snacks that are compliant with specific meal patterns that are considered most nutritious and healthy for children. In addition to this program Bluff’s Little Thinkers takes the extra steps to ensure all food provided for children is of best quality and freshness available. Bluff’s Little Thinkers takes steps to ensure food safety of the meals and snacks that are provided. Food that has expired is thrown out.

Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of the reach of children.Adults shall not consume hot liquids in childcare areas. They shall keep hot liquids and hot foods out of the reach of the children. Adults shall not place hot liquids and foods at the edge of a counter or table, on a tablecloth that can be yanked down, or while the adult is holding or working with a child. Electrical cords from coffee pots shall not be allowed to hang within the reach of children. Food preparers shall position pot handles toward the back of the stove.

Staff takes precautions to prevent choking on food or classroom materials. Caregivers shall not offer to children under 4 years of age foods that are implicated in choking incidents (round, hard, small, thick, and sticky, smooth or slippery). Examples of these foods are raw carrot rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

**Special Occasion Treats:**

If you want to send special treats with your child on holidays and or birthdays, or other special occasions please check with your child's teacher first for any specific food allergies in the classroom. Special treats will be served during afternoon snacks, unless another time is requested by parents and or discussed with your child's teacher.

**Special Diets & Allergies:**

For children who have special health care needs, food allergies or special nutritional needs, the child’s healthcare provider will provide the program an individual care plan. For children with special nutritional needs, program staff will keep daily documentation of the food that was provided and consumed.

Staff and administration need to be informed immediately of ANY and all food allergies and should be written on the enrollment application. A monthly menu will be posted in the center in entry way and by kitchen and sent home with a monthly newsletter. If you have any concerns about the nutrition and or special diets please speak with the directors.

**Bluff’s Little Thinkers is a Peanut Free Facility, because we provide meals and there are children with allergies, we ask that parents and care givers please do not send ANY outside food into the center with your child upon drop-off at any time.**

The program staff will post food allergies in the food preparation area and in an area where food is served to the child. All staff working with children with food allergies or special nutritional needs is informed of the needs and restrictions of the child.

Clean sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day.

**Breastfeeding:**

Scientific research shows a substantial number of potential health benefits come from breastfeeding. Bluff’s Little thinkers strongly supports mothers in their choice to breastfeed and look to offer a clean, welcoming, and nurturing environment for mothers to do so.

* Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to breastfeed at any time in the center and are offered a comfortable private space to breastfeed if requested.
* Stockpile breast milk is welcomed to be labeled and stored in our freezer upon request, to avoid running out or having to use supplemental formula.
* Program staff will be educated on benefits, proper handling, and storage of breast milk 1 time a year or more.

**TEACHERS/STAFFING**

**Teachers & Hiring:**

When working with children, all teaching staff demonstrates to interact appropriately with children, identify safety and health hazards, provide learning and social experiences to children, and communicate appropriately with children and families.

During the hiring process all staff will be assessed based on:

* Ability to interact with children and families appropriately
* Ability to recognize health and safety hazards
* Knowledge of child development, early childhood curriculum and practices
* Willingness to be trained
* Communicate with children and their families
* Enhance program quality

Before working alone with children, new teaching staff is given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of program operations.

All staff receives an initial orientation provided by program director/supervisor that addresses the following:

* program philosophy and goals
* expectations for ethical conduct
* health, safety and emergency procedures
* program policies and procedures information
* personnel policies
* curriculum and assessment
* Iowa’s Quality Preschool Program Standards

All staff will receive on-going professional development on: curriculum/assessment, appropriate practices in the preschool setting, preschool policies/procedures, QPPS requirements, and state preschool requirements.

The program has defined roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized trainings are required of staff. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and procedures for staff evaluation. Programs will comply with the state voluntary preschool regulations in the areas of qualifications and specialized trainings required of preschool staff. Staff responsibilities will be specific to each program and available in writing. Employee selection and evaluation of performance will be based on the merits of the candidates, without regard to age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, or disability.

**Hiring Procedure:**

Employee selection will be based on the merits of the candidates, without regard to age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, or disability. The selection process may vary depending upon the position being filled, but must include the following if the employee will have contact with children:

* An interview
* Reference check
* Background check
* Documentation the candidate meets all education, certification and/or licensing requirements for the position
* Documentation of a current health assessment

Programs maintain current health information from documented health assessments for all staff. Programs will maintain current health assessment on all employees and volunteers that have contact with children and work/volunteer more than 40 hours a month. Health assessments should be updated every two years. This documentation should include:

* Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance

Classroom staff is provided space and time away from children during the day. Programs will provide staff with space and time away from the children during the day. The break schedules will be specific to each classroom and facility. Confidential personnel files are kept in a secure location. All files are kept in a secure location. Employees may see the file at any time. Other than the employee, only evaluations will be kept in each employee’s file without the approval or the notification of the employee. If copies of documents are requested, a fee for such copying may be applied.

**FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION**

Bluff’s Little Thinkers offers a variety of experiences both in and away from the center. Many field trips are planned within walking distance of the center. In these instances, staff will take children by walking or using multi-seated strollers.

Any field trips outside of walking distance from the center will require the use of the Bluff’s Little Thinkers Van. No employee of Bluff’s Little Thinkers will transport any child in their personal vehicle for any reason. While on any field trip all staff will be required to conduct head counts and name-to-face counts of all children multiple times throughout the event. The van will be checked to make sure it is in good working condition, inspected routinely, licensed, and insured within the state of Iowa and will only be always driven by a licensed and approved driver. The van will always be clean, uncluttered, and free of obstructions on the floors, aisles, and seats. The passenger door shall be always locked while transporting children.

While on any field trip all staff will remain in required ratio, and have extra staff sent along when available. Children under the age of two (2) enrolled at Bluff’s Little Thinkers will not be permitted to attend any Field Trips requiring use of the Bluff’s Little Thinkers Van. If a field trip takes place during a scheduled mealtime, each child will be provided with an adequate meal or will be asked to provide a meal.

The Bluff’s Little Thinkers Van will be equipped with a first aid kit, emergency contact information, pertinent health information and a form of communication always. All children will be restrained in a properly installed and inspected 5-point harness based on age, weight and height when permitted. Children who are over the limits will be restrained in their regular seat belt. Individual permission slips will be sent out prior to any time the van will be used for transportation. Procedures are set in place with all staff to ensure that no child ever be left inside the vehicle at the end of a trip or left unsupervised outside or inside the vehicle during loading and unloading the vehicle.

**I have reviewed and understand this entire handbook:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Parent signature Date