



2021-2022

**Parent Information Handbook for
BECP at DiPietro Elementary**

NAME: _____

Welcome to the Bellingham Early Childhood Program. We look forward to sharing in the growth and development of your child over

the next several months. This short handbook will acquaint you with general information about our program. However, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's teacher or office staff if you are in doubt about anything. Enjoy your preschool experience!

Location and Hours:

We are located in Rooms 106 and 107 at the DiPietro Elementary School. Our preschool office is located at the Stallbrook Elementary school. We ask that all payments and correspondence be mailed to the Stallbrook Elementary School at 342 Hartford Ave., Bellingham, MA 02019 or emailed to swhite@bpsdk12.org

Phone number: 508-966-2512

Fax number: 508-966-4679 – Please mark you fax - **Attn: Preschool**

Program Hours: Mon.-Friday, 8:50 a.m. – 2:45p.m., following the Bellingham Public Schools calendar except for early release days and conference days.

Program Director: Pam Fuhrman - Office Hours: 12:15pm-3:00pm Monday-Friday

Program Clerk: Sylvia White: Office Hours: 8:30am-2:30pm, Monday - Friday.

School Nurse/Absence Line: Holly Barros, RN/ absence line: 508-966-2512

Preschool Sessions:

Your assigned preschool sessions (days and times) remain the same for the entire year.

Your child's classroom and schedule:

Room #:

Teacher:

Assistant Teacher(s):

Philosophy

The Bellingham Early Childhood Program recognizes that parents are the first teachers of their children. We work with families of children ages three through six, forming a partnership for quality education and care. Our staff values the uniqueness of each child, and is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, positive environment. Focusing on a balance of activities appropriate for young children, the curriculum gives equal regard to all areas of development: cognitive, social, emotional, aesthetic, and physical.

Goals and Objectives

For Children:

- to be comfortable, curious, creative, and critical in their thinking
- to be planners, doers, evaluators
- to be life-long learners

For Families:

- to be teaching and learning partners with BECP
- to assist at all levels with our shared goals for their children
- to be part of the BECP community

For Staff:

- to be honest, comfortable, and caring within the BECP community
- to grow and learn with and through the children, families and colleagues
- to be true to the values and ethics of the profession

Program Staffing:

- Each classroom has a Massachusetts Department of Education licensed teacher and at least one certified assistant teacher.
- A speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and behavior specialist are included in the BECP staff and are all fully licensed in their fields and any other services needed to ensure a child's school success will be worked out with an interdisciplinary team including professionals and parents.
- The program director and all teachers hold either a Bachelors or Masters Degree in Education, and are licensed by the MA Dept of Education.
- Several teachers in the program are also certified in the teaching of Young Children with Special Needs.
- All teachers and teacher assistants meet standards set by the Bellingham School District
- All staff has been chosen due to their commitment to improving the lives of young children and their families
- Students are supervised throughout their day by preschool staff. At least one staff member is stationed in a classroom at all times. Any child traveling out of the classroom is closely supervised in direct sight of adult staff. In the event of an emergency, our classrooms are equipped with intercoms to alert the support team that added adult assistance is required to support and supervise students in the classroom. During classroom play the staff will be mobile within the classroom to make periodic visual contact with students in all activity areas to ensure safety.

Health Policy:

If your child will be absent from school for any reason, please call the preschool office at 508-966-2512. You may leave a voicemail if not during office hours. Please give your child's name, teacher's name and the reason for absence. Parents are asked to exercise reasonable caution when sending a child to school that appears ill. **Please do not send a child to school with a fever, uncontrollable cough or runny nose, unidentified rash, or if they have vomited or had diarrhea in the last 24 hrs. School policy states a child must be fever free with no medication for 24 hours before returning to school.** If your child has any symptoms of COVID19, do not send them to school unless you can provide a Dr. note or negative test result. All contagious illnesses must be reported to the preschool office at 508-966-2512 within 24 hours of diagnosis. If your child becomes ill at school or shows symptoms of COVID we will request that someone pick them up within the hour. Please keep your emergency contacts up to date for this purpose. Your child will be kept in isolation until they can be picked up. A Dr. note or negative test will be required to return to school. Medications will not be dispensed at school without the written consent of your doctor. Please ask the school nurse for a medication form if needed. Physicals and immunizations must be kept up to date. (within 12 months from the last exam) You will receive notice from the school nurse when your child's physical form is due to be renewed.

Arrival and Pick-up Procedure:

Please be on time, but not early, for drop off and pickup of your child. For the safety of all students, the preschool doors will not open until 8:50 for AM classes and 12:15 for PM classes, and will be locked 5 minutes after the start of classes until dismissal time. During this COVID time, the Preschool will use Door #14 (across from the Garden area). Parents with students in Mrs. C's class will line up on the sidewalk closest to the rear playground, Mrs Duquette's class will line up on the sidewalk closest to the driveway. Please maintain 6 ft separation and masks must be worn by both parents and students. If you must take your child out of school early or drop them off late, please call the Preschool Office at 508-966-2512 and let your child's teacher know in advance if possible. You will then need to enter in the front of the building and show ID before being buzzed into the DiPietro office area.

Traffic & Parking

Parking for drop off and pickup will only be allowed in designated parking areas. Bus and fire lanes must remain open at arrival and pick up times. Parents parking in unauthorized areas will be asked to move immediately. We strongly request that parents utilize crosswalks in the parking lot and have full control of their children at all times. The safety of all students is our foremost concern.

Release information:

Children will be released only to parents or legal guardians unless we have your written consent. This is absolutely necessary for the safety of the children. Release forms and emergency information cards and forms will be sent home and can be updated at any time during the school year. Positive ID will be requested from anyone other than parents picking up your child.

School Cancellation:

In the event of inclement weather, BECP will follow the same procedure as the Bellingham Public Schools. You will receive a phone call from the Superintendent's office early in the morning if a snow day is called. Please make sure your contact information is up to date so you don't miss any calls. In the rare instance of a two hour delay, there will be no morning preschool, but afternoon sessions will meet as scheduled. If school is dismissed early there will be no afternoon session. Most Boston television stations announce school closings for Bellingham.

Tuition Payments:

(Please disregard if your child is receiving services on an IEP)

Tuition payments are due on the 1st business day of each month, starting in June and ending in March. Program tuition is a yearly rate, broken down into ten monthly payments for your convenience. Payments in the form of check or money order should be made out to *BECP*, and mailed to BECP 342 Hartford Ave., Bellingham, MA 02019. Please include your child's name on the check. If you are using on-line banking, use your child's name as the account number. The option to set up online payments through UNIBANK is now available as well.. To set up an account, visit <https://unipaygold.unibank.com/CustomerInfo.aspx?Customerid=1627>.

Payments are collected in the preschool office and sent to the Town of Bellingham Business Office for deposit around the 15th and 30th of the month. It may take several weeks for your check to clear your bank. If paying in cash, you must pay the preschool clerk at the Stallbrook Preschool Office directly to obtain a receipt. ***(Please place your payment in an envelope and call before you come and you will be met at the door).*** Check payments can be mailed to the preschool office at BECP 342 Hartford Ave or dropped in the box at drop off or pick up.

Timely tuition payments are a condition of your child's attendance. A \$10 late charge will be assessed if payments are not received within 10 business days after the due date. After 15 days, your account will be forwarded to the Town Business Office for collection and your student's enrollment will be suspended until payment is made in full.

Clothing:

Please dress your children in play clothes suitable for outdoor and indoor work and play. Remember, work at preschool often involves messy materials, and although we smock children for all messy activities we all know that they have a way of finding a gap somewhere to let that water, paint, glue, or marker in!. Please send in a labeled and seasonal change of clothes, underwear, socks, pants and shirt. Keeping in mind that your child will grow from September to June, please send in new sets of clothing in proper sizes periodically. Outside play is a daily part of our schedule, so dress children for the weather and for active play and climbing (especially footwear, sandals or flip flops collect wood chips and stones). Please label all clothing including coats and backpacks.

Personal Belongings:

Children should come to school each day with a bag or backpack in which to carry any work or correspondence between home and school. In choosing a bag or backpack, please consider your child's ability to independently open, close, and carry it. A shopping bag or simple cloth bag works just as well as a designer backpack.

As a general rule, we highly encourage children to leave all other personal belongings at home or in the car. We have ample equipment chosen due to its suitability for an inclusive early childhood classroom. There will be numerous opportunities for children and families to share materials with the program, relating to happenings in your child's classroom at the time. Watch monthly newsletters for more info.

***If your child is having adjustment problems and needs a special security item, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

During this COVID time, items from home are not allowed to be removed from a child's backpack during the school day.

Discipline Policy:

The Bellingham Early Childhood Program adheres to the following discipline policy, as advised by the *National Association for the Education of Young Children*:

Children learn self-control when adults treat them with dignity and use discipline techniques such as:

- Guiding children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior: or in the case of older children, helping them to set their own limits
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children to solve their own problems
- Patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed

Holidays and Birthdays:

Holidays are important to young children and are experienced in many different ways in early family life. An important aspect of the BECP curriculum is the sharing of differences and likenesses in all areas of a child's life, including holidays and birthdays. However, there are innumerable other wonders of our world to explore in the short time the children are at school. Therefore our policy for holidays and birthdays is to acknowledge them, spending some school time discussing how families (both ours and others) celebrate such times, while leaving the majority of related activities for special family time.

Family Participation:

Home-School Communication: Newsletters and bulletins are sent home regularly to keep families updated on the latest happenings in the classrooms as well as any special events coming up. During this COVID time, information from the Preschool office, district or your child's teacher will mostly be sent home via email, SeeSaw or the "backpack" feature on our website. The BECP website is also a good source of information. <http://becc.bellinghamk12.org>. You can also join the Bellingham Early Childhood Program (BECP Moms Facebook Group). Search BECP Moms and join.

Conferences: Formal conferences to discuss your child's development are held in November and May. Information will be sent home a few weeks before scheduling. Informal

conferences will be held as needed. At this time, we believe that conferences will be done virtually until such time that we can meet in person.

BECP Parent's Fund: The BECP Parent's Fund is an account fed by fundraisers and used in various ways to directly benefit BECP families. Past uses have been special entertainment and cultural programs, a subscription for every family to a parenting magazine, improvements to our playground, as well as special program materials not affordable within our limited supplies budget. Fundraisers are kept to a minimum and are never mandatory. Details are sent out to all families as they occur. We typically do 2 fundraisers per year.

SNACK POLICY:

Snack is provided by students on a rotating basis. Your child will be asked to bring a snack for the class once/twice every month, depending on class size. Watch for a snack calendar to be sent home by your child's teacher each month. Children look forward to their "snack day" when they can share with the class.

Please help your child make healthy snack choices so that all families know their child is getting a nutritious snack each day. The BECP staff will work closely with families to ensure that foods brought from home meet food standard guidelines and the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Guidelines.

Due to increasing incidents of peanut/nut allergies, the BECP has adopted a **peanut/nut free policy** in all classrooms. Please review snack ingredients since there are sometimes hidden ingredients found in the food label. Many products now have label disclaimers stating: *"Manufactured on equipment that processes products containing peanuts/nuts"*. This product would not be accepted as a snack. If in doubt about a certain snack choice, please ask your child's teacher.

If your child has had a peanut/nut food product at home before coming to school, please make sure their hands and clothing is cleaned before arrival at school.

If your child has an allergy or sensitivity to any foods, please contact the school nurse and your child's teacher.

State regulations allow for a wide variety of foods when serving snack in a preschool program. Many are listed on the next page for your convenience.

SNACK SUGGESTIONS

- Skim, 1 or 2% milk, **100%** fruit juice or water (FDA recommends one 4 ounce cup of juice per child) Please do not send HI-C, sports drinks, soda or other drinks with sugar or sweeteners.
- Whole grain crackers
- Whole grain cereal (no sugar coating)
- Oatmeal cookies (packaged)
- Pretzels
- Applesauce
- Rice cakes
- Popcorn (not suitable for 3 year olds)
- Vegetables and dip (hummus, low fat veg. dips)
- Cheese sticks or slices (prepackaged)
- Fruit (whole only, staff will cut up)
- Muffins (prepackaged and labeled with ingredients)
- Low fat yogurt
- Whole grain bagels or breads with fruit jam

If you are ever in doubt about the acceptability of a particular snack choice, please do not hesitate to ask your classroom teacher. Also, please do not feel insulted if an unacceptable snack is sent back home. We are under strict obligation to adhere to the guidelines set for by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Guidelines.