

# Birdsall House Early Childhood Discovery Center

Parent Handbook

2022

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# Mission Statement

The Birdsall House mission is to provide quality, respectful programs that help children and families to be their very best.

We follow the philosophies of Magda Gerber, and Reggio Emilia, of respect for and trust in the child to be the initiator, explorer, and self-learner. We are here as facilitators to provide the optimum environment for children to learn and grow.

## We strive to

Nurture each child's unique qualities and potential.

Support families through strong partnerships.

Create a work environment that encourages professionalism, growth, and diversity.

We aspire to do this so successfully, that we make a difference in the lives of children, families, and the surrounding community.

## What to expect

At Birdsall House we strive to bring back the childhood experiences of the past. There was a time when children spent a lot of time with their siblings and often played with the younger brothers and sisters of their friends and neighbors: a time when children got lost in pretend play in the backyard for hours. There was a time when childhood was about joy. there were no schedules to keep, no planned activities taking up most of their days.

We mix the relaxed times of the past with a knowledge of early childhood education and child development.

At Birdsall House your child will eat paint, grass, sand, dirt, crayons, and many other gross things.

Your child will be read to, held, snuggled, and laughed with.

Your child will play music, sing songs, kick, throw, run, jump, climb, and fall.

Your child will get dirty, wet, bumps, bruises, scrapes, and hugs.

Your child will laugh, cry, whisper, and yell.

Your child will feel the softness of a cat's fur and put a puppet on their hand.

Your child will feel pride, love, and acceptance.

You and your child will become part of the Birdsall House family.

Welcome!!

## Family involvement

Birdsall House partners with our families to ensure your child's success in school and in life.

Family involvement, family satisfaction and shared decision making about your child's experiences are fundamental to the Birdsall House philosophy.

Family involvement encompasses family partnerships, volunteering, family education and special events. We believe that the key to family involvement is giving families a variety of ways to be involved in the life of the center, including the following:

- Our open-door policy that welcomes and encourages you to call or visit at any time.
- An annual survey that allows you to rate and comment on all aspects of the program.
- Special events held throughout the year.
- We encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with the center management and staff at any time.
- You are invited to come into your child's classroom and may choose to share a special activity or project.
- Family members are always welcome to join us on our field trips.

## Family communication

We at Birdsall House are committed to creating a strong home and center connection by developing a process of open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and daily experiences.

Information will continually be exchanged between you and the center staff through many ways including the following:

- daily communication at drop off and pickup.
- email
- daily sheets
- our private Facebook page for families.
- phone calls or texts

## What to bring

Each child enrolled needs to have the following items

- Weather appropriate change of clothes (at least two)
- a sheet
- a blanket

Infants and toddlers need to have the following items

- diapers and wipes until the child is consistently using the toilet.
- bottles until the age of one
- breast milk or formula for as long as required.
- We encourage our families to use the baby led weaning method but if you choose to give your child baby foods and cereals they will need to be brought from home.

**All items need to be marked with your child's name!!**

## Positive Guidance

At Birdsall House, we consistently emphasize basic respect for the individual child. Young children are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting, testing the limits of their environment, and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, and appropriate assertiveness. We strive to provide a relaxed, supportive, and understanding environment that understands the child's struggle toward independence.

At Birdsall House, children are accepted for who they are, development is viewed as a process of growing with each stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by staff as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling respectful interactions, staff members help children to develop positive feeling about themselves and our school community.

In our approach:

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the child and are clarified for the children, so they understand what is expected of them.
- A “yes” environment is created, which enhances and encourages children's positive behavior.
- Teachers model appropriate behavior.
- Children are given alternatives which enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperation, helping, negotiating and problem solving are encouraged.

### Policies and Procedures

## Physical activity

Physical activity is an important part of development. We start promoting healthy physical activity with our infants. Infants are never restrained in bouncy seats or chairs by are placed on the floor or in a play pen, when not being held. Infants are placed on their backs to allow them to move and discover their bodies.

Toddlers and preschoolers are encouraged to run, climb, jump, and swing during outside time and are given regular opportunities to move inside. Staff encourage physical activity by organizing and actively participating in short structured physical activities throughout the day, including a weekly yoga class and daily times for active songs and activities. We limit screen time to 5 minutes a day, and it is only used for action songs.

We understand that regular physical activity is important not only for healthy growth but also for cognitive and social emotional learning. Physical activity is never withheld for any reason while under our care.

## Healthy eating

At Birdsall House we understand that healthy eating habits start early. We provide a variety of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables with each meal. We avoid over processed food and try to keep food as close to its natural state as possible. If the menu says pears, your child will be given a whole pear to eat. We never serve canned fruits or vegetables.

## Child Nutrition in Our Early Care and Education Program

We are committed to providing healthy foods and beverages and positive mealtimes so that your child can learn good eating habits and grow up strong.

### Foods and Beverages

- 🏠 Children are offered a fruit and/or vegetable at every meal and snack.
- 🏠 We offer only healthy beverages like milk and water.

### Mealtimes

- 🏠 Television and other screens are turned off (or nonexistent) so that teachers can talk with children about healthy habits and healthy foods and check-in with them about hunger and fullness.
- 🏠 Teachers never force or bribe children to eat any particular foods or to clean their plates.

### Nutrition Education

- 🏠 Children learn about food and eating each week through stories and activities.
- 🏠 Each year, all staff and teachers participate in training on nutrition topics.

### Farm/yard to table

- 🏠 We encourage the children to pick berries and herbs whenever they choose. We have raspberries, blueberries, black berries, and mulberries that have berries available throughout the spring/summer/fall seasons. We also grow mint and other herbs in the yard for the students to graze on.
- 🏠 We harvest dandelions and other naturally growing edible plants in our yard and incorporate them into our menu.

- 🏠 We never use any chemicals on our yard so that even the clover flowers can be picked and eaten at any time.

We are committed to providing healthy food grown nearby. Buying and teaching about local, healthy food can help children form healthy eating habits and support local farmers. Through our Farm to ECE program, we will

- 🏠 Offer a variety of local fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, dairy products, and/or protein foods throughout the year.
- 🏠 Offer local fruits and vegetables 3 times per week or more during the growing season.
- 🏠 Educate children about food and where it comes from. This includes tasting and cooking activities.
- 🏠 Share information with families about local foods on the menu, children's learning activities, and ways to purchase and prepare local foods at home.
- 🏠 Keep a garden that supports children's learning and grows fruits and/or vegetables for meals or snacks. Families are invited to help us plan and maintain the garden during weekend workdays and other opportunities.
- 🏠 Provide gardening time to preschool children at least 1 time per week or more.
- 🏠 Children will help plan, plant, care for, harvest, and learn from the garden.

## **Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding**

Giving infants a healthy start helps them develop healthy habits for life. Our program is committed to breastfeeding and other developmentally appropriate infant feeding practices.

### Providing Breastmilk to Infants

We invite mothers to breastfeed on site and/or provide breastmilk for us to feed to their infants. Mothers may breastfeed enrolled infants at any time during the day. There is always refrigerator space available for daily storage of breastmilk. At the end of each day, we return unused breastmilk to families. We also provide freezer storage for breastmilk.

### Infant Foods

Around 6 months of age, we work with families to begin introducing solid foods. Our program provides a variety of healthy meals and snacks for infants each day. Families will provide information about known allergies and already introduced foods on the infant “feeding plan” they are asked to complete for our program.

### Infant Feeding Practices

We strive to use “best practices” when feeding infants to help them build healthy eating habits right from the start. These best practices include feeding infants when they begin to show signs of hunger and ending feedings when they show that they are full. Our feeding practices are flexible to the needs of families. For example, we can avoid large feedings at the end of the day before mothers’ plan to breastfeed. Families should inform us of their preferences and instructions in writing on the infant “feeding plan”.

### Registration procedures

When space is available you will be contacted, and a starting date agreed upon. A registration form must be completed in full and returned to center management along with a nonrefundable registration fee before the agreed upon start date.

### Enrollment procedures

During the enrollment process you must complete a family information form and provide an updated physical and immunization form for your child. Birdsall House requires all students to be up to date on their immunizations unless a doctor's note is provided stating a medical reason for not giving or delaying immunizations. Please remember to provide the center with updates as needed for immunizations and personal information.

### Tuition/fees

Tuition is due in advance at the beginning of the month with no deductions for any absences, holidays, illness, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages or other situations beyond Birdsall House's control.

If payment has not been received by the fifth business day of the month a late fee will be added. When tuition is late by two weeks, care may be suspended until the balance is paid or a payment plan is agreed upon.

There may be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips for the children.

Each family has two weeks of vacation available to them yearly in which they are not charged tuition. To use this vacation time a written notice or email must be turned into management at least two weeks in advance.

Vacation time may also be taken by Birdsall House. There may arise a time when the center will close for family vacation or staff attendance at a conference. If the center is going to be closed families will receive at least one month's advance notice and will not be charged tuition for any closures lasting three days or longer.

### Drop-off and pick-up

To ensure each child's safety and to encourage daily communication between staff and families, parents/guardians are responsible for physically checking their child in and out of the center.

Parents/guardians must accompany each child into the center and confirm that their child is under adult supervision before leaving the premises. Parents/guardians are required to reenter the center when picking up children at the end of the day.

Children will only be released to parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names are listed on the child release form. Authorized persons picking children up for the first time will be required to show a photo ID.

If Birdsall House has reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, is physically or emotionally impaired, or in any way may endanger the child, we may refuse to release the child to that person. If this occurs, we will request that another adult (parent/guardian or someone listed on the child release form) pick up the child. We will assist in contacting another person to pick the child up. If need be, we will call the police to prevent potential harm to the child.

### Child custody

To ensure that all parents/guardians feel equally welcome at the center, Birdsall House strives to remain neutral in all custody disputes. Legally, unless there is an active restraining order, court order, or court-ordered visitation schedule on file at the center that designates otherwise, the center cannot deny a parent or legal guardian access to their child.

### Late pick up

Please allow enough time to arrive at the center, pick up your child, and leave the center by closing time.

We do, however, understand that special circumstances arise. If you cannot pick up your child on time or send one of your emergency contacts, please notify the center immediately.

In the absence of contact from a parent/guardian, we will call all numbers listed on the child release form: please make sure these contacts are kept up to date. Child protective services will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after two hours.

A late fee of \$5.00 a minute will be charged if a child is picked up after the center's closing time.

### Classroom observations

As part of the center's activities, outside childcare professionals and students not employed by Birdsall House may observe children in their classrooms from time to time. In addition, teacher candidates may spend supervised time in the classroom with our regular staff as part of our hiring process.

### Child suspension

Our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences; however, on occasion a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include but are not limited to the following

- A child who cannot participate safely in our program, appears to be a danger to themselves or others, despite our best efforts to reasonably reduce the risk of harm or injury.
- Medical, psychological, school district, or social services personnel, or the family determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child.
- Any other situation in which the accommodations needed for the child's success in the program conflict with the fundamental nature of our group environment, or when a different environment is in the best interest of the child/family or the center.

At any point that a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern to a teacher or administrator, written documentation and family/teacher communication will begin as the first steps to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

### Process of disenrolling a family

Our program is based on developing partnerships with and supporting families; however, despite our best efforts, on rare occasions a parents'/guardians' actions or requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child. Examples of such instances include but are not limited to the following

- The parent/guardian fails to abide by the center policies, or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children's families and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent or guardian is physically or verbally abusive to center staff, children, or anyone else at the center. This includes any communications through emails, texts, or on social media sites.

## Child Illness Policy

Our child illness policy is based on the standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At Birdsall House we understand that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, we recommend alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must be picked up or remain out of center care due to illness. Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness, or because the center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child.

Children will be excluded from the center for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the care given to other children.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading to other children.
- Fever of 100 degrees F that is accompanied by behavior change or other signs or symptoms such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, irritability, constant crying, or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea – diarrhea that is not associated with medication or change of diet. Defined as two or more runny stools in a one-hour period or three loose stools in a two-hour period.
- Vomiting, more than the usual spitting up of infants.
- Symptoms suggesting an infection including frequent coughing, drainage from the nose, eyes, ears, or mouth.
- A rash of any kind until diagnosed treated or declared non-contagious by a health care professional.
- Head lice until after treatment and all nits are removed.

### **Children who have been excluded may return when**

- They are free of fever (without medication), vomiting, and diarrhea

for a full 24 hours.

- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions unless the child's medical provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
- If a child is excluded because of a communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required.

## Medication Policies

All medication (including non-prescription acetaminophen and antihistamines, as well as all ointments, lotions, and sunscreens) will require an Authorization of Medication form signed by the child's medical provider.

All medication (prescription and non-prescription) must be brought to the center in the original container and labeled with the child's full name, instructions, precise dosage, time administered, current date and name and telephone number of physician, where necessary. Medication spoons and other dosage implements must be provided and labeled with the child's name.

## Outdoor Policy

The Birdsall House policy is to spend most of the day outside. We follow the guidelines of the Child Care Weather Watch chart from the Missouri DHSS and stay inside when it is deemed dangerous to be outside. This chart is posted by the back door. We have a very shady yard and water is always available for the children. Please make sure that your child has weather appropriate clothes. Also, remember that learning and exploring are messy!! **ALL CLOTHING NEEDS TO BE MARKED WITH THE CHILD'S NAME.** Birdsall House can supply you with clothing labels upon request.

### Meals and Snacks

Lunched is served between 11:15 and 11:45 am.

Afternoon snack is served between 3:00 and 3:30 pm, depending on when the children wake up from nap.

We strive to provide the highest quality fresh foods for our students. We serve only fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables. State licensing requires a doctor's statement for all food allergies or food substitutions.

### Rest Periods

As required by licensing, there will be a rest period each day. If a child does not need to nap, they may rest on their cots for a required 30 minutes. A cot, mat or crib will be provided for each child. School age children are not required to rest.

### Rates for 2022

Registration fee (one time)	\$75
Infants (monthly)	\$1300
Two & up (monthly)	\$1100
School age care (daily)	\$40 a day

### Closing dates for 2022

New Year's Day

March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> for the Conference on the Young Years

Memorial Day, May 30<sup>th</sup>

June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> for the NAFCC conference

The fourth of July

Labor Day, September 5<sup>th</sup>

We will close at 12:00 (after lunch) on the Wednesday Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>

Thanksgiving and the day after.

We will be closed Monday December 26<sup>th</sup> as Christmas falls on a Sunday.

We will be closed Monday January 2<sup>nd</sup> as New Year's Day falls on a Sunday.

### Professional Development days

We will be closed on May 20<sup>th</sup>, August 19<sup>th</sup>, and October 7<sup>th</sup> for professional development and teacher workdays.

### Vacation

We will be closed the week of July 25<sup>th</sup> to July 29<sup>th</sup> for staff vacation. Tuition for this month will be reduced by 1/4<sup>th</sup>.

### Inclement weather

Birdsall House will follow the Kansas City, Missouri school district for bad weather closings with the exceptions of closings for very cold weather.

In the event of a power outage due to the weather or any situation beyond the control of Birdsall House, we will stay open for two hours without power. If the power has not been restored within two hours' parents will be called and children will need to be picked up within 30 minutes. In the case of a power outage, we will do our best to contact everyone as soon as power goes out to give you warning that we may be closing.

I have read and understand the policies stated in the Birdsall House 2022 parent handbook.

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Mark your calendar

March 26<sup>th</sup> Movie night in the back yard – weather permitting

May 14<sup>th</sup> Movie night in the back yard – weather permitting

August 6<sup>th</sup> POT LUCK!!!!

October 30<sup>th</sup> Halloween event - trick or treat in the back yard

November 12<sup>th</sup> Movie night in the back yard – weather permitting

There will probably be more family events and I will let you know when they are planned.