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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY, CURRICULUM & ENVIRONMENT

PHILOSOPHY
Building Blocks programs are play-based which embrace the theory that children learn through play. Teachers view themselves as facilitators. Teachers prepare the environment, offer age appropriate materials, and provide assistance so that children are able to explore their surroundings and make discoveries on their own. We do not believe in imposing academic pressure. Children develop at different rates and what one child may be able to do, another child may not be ready for. By following Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), teachers can foster creative, positive, and self-fulfilling attitudes, rather than creating anxiety or resistance toward school.

CURRICULUM
The curriculum of the Building Blocks Programs is designed to focus on the five main milestones of development which occur at the preschool level:

❖ Social
❖ Emotional
❖ Cognitive
❖ Sensory/Motor
❖ Self-Regulation/Life Skills

We provide opportunities for children to participate in activities based on planned themes and the observable interests of the children. Our curriculum is incorporated through play, art, music, multicultural experiences, movement, using practical life skills, mathematics, science experiments, and cooking. Children are encouraged to use their own creativity in their work. Although planned and prepared by teachers, the curriculum becomes child-directed rather than teacher-directed by allowing for creative expression and imagination.

New this year our curriculum is STEAM Powered: “STEAM is an education approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking.” Susan Riley, Arts Integration Specialist

We are taking this opportunity to enhance our play-based curriculum with elements of science, technology, engineering, art and math. Incorporating these elements as well as expanding our curriculum with help the children in our program engage in experimental learning, become problem solvers and embrace collaboration.

ENVIRONMENT
Children participate in a variety of activities including the following:

Circle Time- Circle time is offered every day. This is a special time for teachers and children to connect with each other. During this time, we sing songs, have conversations, listen to stories, review concepts, and learn how to sit and interact in a group setting. Children practice using their speaking skills and their listening ears.

Learning Centers- The dramatic play area (better known as dress up and house area) offers children the opportunity for social role-play. Children can express themselves freely through play in a safe and comfortable environment. The building area (blocks) provides materials for children to better develop their small and large muscle skills. Through block play children are also able to create structures that represent their ideas and develop team work skills when working with peers. The reading center promotes literacy by offering the opportunity for children to read to each other, with their teacher, or by themselves.

Arts and Crafts- Children are invited to participate in open-ended arts and crafts projects daily. Children are encouraged to engage themselves in the activities and use their imagination and creativity. Children are offered a variety of materials to use but more important is the process of using the materials and experiencing something new. Projects may look “messy” or may not seem to have meaning but be assured they do. Teachers will often engage students in open-ended conversations about their art work such as “how did you come up with the idea for that”, “tell me about your picture”, or “what are you working on today”? You may hear your teachers say “it’s not about the product, it’s about the process”.


**Manipulatives**- Through manipulatives children can learn through hands on experiences such as sorting, matching, classifying, and counting. Children are encouraged to use their fine motor skills by handling smaller objects. Through this type of play, children are learning about important concepts in a way that is fun.

**Indoor Play and Outdoor Play**- Each day the children will have the opportunity to make “free choices” inside and outside the classroom. It is important for young children to have choices as it helps them foster self-confidence and a sense of independence. We play outside every day unless severe weather prevents us from going outside. Outside time is just as important as what happens inside the classroom.

**Curriculum**- Children will be introduced to concepts that are developmentally appropriate for each age group. Children will learn concepts through hands-on experiences, arts and crafts, free play, circle time, demonstrations, and projects. There will also be “teacher directed” time when children work on certain developmental skills. This is an opportunity for the teachers to work with small groups of children and observe and assess children’s progress pertaining to the certain skill being worked on.

**Snack**- Snack time is more than just a time for the children to eat. It is a time for children to interact and practice social skills as well as self-help skills, such as pouring, serving themselves, and cleaning up after themselves. It is a time for building bonds with one another and with teachers, who are sitting with the children, facilitating social interactions, and modeling appropriate language.

**RATIOS**
Our programs are designed around the following teacher to student ratios:
PreK and Tiny Tots: 1:8

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**Parent Volunteers**
The Tiny Tots and Pre-K programs success and strength are strongly influenced by the parents’ involvement to their children’s growth and learning experience at school. We ask parents to make the extra effort in supporting your child’s classroom. Parents are asked to volunteer one to two times per month in their child’s program. A sign-up sheet will be available on the sign in/out table in/near your child’s classroom. On your special volunteer day, you will help the teachers supervise classroom activities, prepare and help with art projects, play games, prepare a snack, or help with whatever the day has in store for us. We welcome mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, close family friends, etc. However, the parent volunteer must be over 18 years of age. Since this is a special time for you to participate with your child, we ask that you to find alternative care for siblings. Your presence in our classroom helps reinforce the positive attitude we are building towards preschool. When adults volunteer, children feel a sense of pride knowing that their school experience is just as important to you as it is to them. This is a precious time in your child’s life and a great opportunity for you to be involved in their first school experience in a special way.

**Field Trips**
Occasionally we will be taking field trips to local areas of interest. Parents are encouraged to assist with these trips by volunteering to be drivers and/or provide extra supervision. Siblings may not be able to attend some trips depending on the location. Teachers will notify you beforehand. **One parent/adult chaperone must attend for each participant.** If the parent is unable to attend a field trip, it is the parent’s responsibility to arrange alternative transportation and supervision.

**Gift Giving**
Gifts are never expected or even anticipated, however families wishing to express appreciation to their teachers are welcome to donate or purchase gifts that can be used in the classrooms. **Teachers are unable to accept personal gifts.** If a teacher receives a gift that cannot be used for the classroom, it will be taken to a chosen charity for a donation. Each program has its own wish list; please check with your teacher for more information.
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE
• Please be on time when dropping off. Late arrivals make it difficult for the whole class to transition.
• Please be on time when picking up. Parents will be charged a late pick up fee of $1.00 per minute – there is no grace period for late pick-ups.
• Please socialize with the parent outside of the classroom to ease the transition for the children and minimize disruption.
• Please sign your child in and out each day they attend program.

If you are going to be late
• Please call if you can safely call and leave a message.
• After 5 minutes with no contact from you, we will contact your emergency contact(s).
• After 30 minutes with no contact, we will contact Children’s Protective Services or the San Mateo Police Department.

For your child’s protection anyone who picks up your child must be:
• 18 years or older
• Have a valid ID
• Listed on your emergency contact form
• Please update your form online ahead of time as it must be done online (ePact)

CLASSROOM BASICS

TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS
• Should remain at home, unless they are for a show and tell day.
• Must never be violent or encourage aggressive play (e.g. guns, swords, knives etc.).
• Labeled.
• Please be aware that toys may be lost or damaged at school.

CLOTHING
• Should be appropriate, comfortable and easy to launder.
• Closed toe shoes are recommended.
• Label all sweaters and jackets.
• Please remember that messy clothes are a sign that your child had a good day at preschool.

TOTE BAGS
• Each child will receive one Building Blocks tote bag, please feel free to personalize it.
• Please bring it everyday for art projects and correspondence to be sent home in.
• Do not put food or drinks in the tote bag.
• Empty it daily.

VACATION AND ABSENCES
• In the case of an extended absence please notify your child teachers.
• There are no refunds or make-up classes for missed classes.
• Tuition must be kept current to maintain your spot.
ILLNESS POLICY

Throughout the school year, it is expected that colds and minor illnesses will occur. In order to protect the health of students and teachers, we ask the following health guidelines be observed.

Children with the following symptoms MUST be kept at home:
- Fever of 100˚ or above
- Severe cough
- Rash from unknown source
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Other contagious disease (head lice, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.)

• **FEVER**
  A child must be fever free for one full day, **24 HOURS**, before returning to school. For example, if a child has a fever on Monday, he or she may not return to school until Wednesday.

• **CLASSROOM ILLNESS PROCEDURE**
  When a child becomes ill, or exhibits any of the above-mentioned symptoms, a determination will be made whether the child requires exclusion from the program. If the child does require exclusion from the program, the parents will be contacted and expected to pick up their child immediately.

• **MEDICATIONS**
  We do not administer any “over the counter” medications at any time. If your child has a prescribed medication that must be administered during our 2-3 hour classes, please speak to your lead teacher about your personal circumstance. We will ask that you fill out the appropriate paperwork.

• **FIRST AID AT SCHOOL**
  When a child receives a minor injury at school, appropriate first aid action will be taken. Please be aware that teachers are not permitted to use any medications or ointments to treat a child. If the injury is serious, parents will be notified immediately. In worst case scenario, 9-1-1 will be called first.

• **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES**
  If your child contracts a contagious disease, please notify your teacher immediately. It is the teachers’ responsibility to post exposure notices to help prevent outbreaks.

We understand that children’s illnesses may be inconvenient and frustrating, but we ask for your cooperation in following the above guidelines. We want to keep our children and families as healthy as possible throughout the school year. Thank you in advance for your help.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The City of San Mateo uses a positive approach to discipline. All classrooms use positive redirection, which is redirecting inappropriate behavior to an appropriate alternative. We praise children for their appropriate behavior by describing what we see and how we feel. “I see that you have picked up all of the blocks and put them back on the shelf. It’s nice to have such a clean room.” We encourage children’s appropriate behavior by giving them positive verbal rewards. This reinforces a child’s confidence and serves as an example to others to act in such a way as to receive this praise.

When inappropriate behavior arises, we believe it is important for teachers to be the facilitators in the problem-solving effort rather than dictate what the solutions should be. Teachers ask questions to encourage problem solving, and help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives and choices.
When a child is not making appropriate choices in a group situation, the child is seated by a teacher and given examples of positive behavior that is considered appropriate, allowing the child to make a positive choice. In a less structured situation, the following steps will be implemented:

1. Verbal reminder that the behavior is inappropriate and given an acceptable alternative

2. The child is re-directed away from the group or objects that are part of the distraction and led toward a constructive activity in order to reduce conflict. The child will choose where they would like to work.

3. If the behavior continues, the child will lose that choice and the teacher will have to make the choice for the child.

We do not use the term “time out” in our program. We instead have the child “take a break” from whatever activity or situation may be causing the issue. The break will not exceed the child’s age in minutes. (3 years old; no longer than a 3-minute break).

There are certain behaviors that are part of normal growth and development, but are not necessarily considered appropriate. Children resort to these behaviors when they are unsure of how to resolve conflicts, how to enter play, or various other developmental social skills. If a child has an ongoing problem with hitting, endangering staff or putting himself or herself in harm’s way, the following steps will be taken.

1. The teacher and program supervisor will meet with the family and a behavior plan will be discussed.

2. If the behavior happens again after the behavior plan has been put into place, parents will be required to pick up the child.

3. In a third instance, another conference will be set up with the teacher and program supervisor to continue the discussion to understand what might be causing the problem. The City of San Mateo reserves the right to dismiss any child from program if any further incident occurs, or we feel that any of the following conditions exist:
   - The program cannot meet the child’s needs.
   - The parents are not able to work with the City of San Mateo to find an acceptable solution.
   - The continuing behavior endangers the wellbeing of other children, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.

**BITING**

Biting may happen in a preschool setting for a number of reasons. The child may be teething, frustrated and is unable to express that frustration and/or difficulty using their words. Regardless of the likely cause, it is important that adults show strong disapproval through words to the child doing the biting. When a child does bite the teachers will firmly say “We DO NOT bite.” The teacher will give medical attention if needed to the child who was bitten.

Both parents will be notified of the incident. The child that inflicted the bite will take a break from the activity and talk to the teacher about the issue. If the biting continues the following steps will be taken:

1. If a child inflicts a second bite in the same day, parents will be notified to pick up the child.

2. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 class days) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken, bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the staff and parents to discuss the child’s behavior and how the behavior may be modified.

3. If the child again inflicts another bite on another child or staff member the child will be suspended for 2 program days.

4. If the child once again inflicts another bite the parents will be asked to make other program arrangements.

At school, we promote using kind behavior and work on skills to ensure that we provide a safe and fun learning environment inside and outside the classroom.
The Building Blocks program finds it important that parents and teachers continuously work together creating a partnership. Parents play the most important role in a child’s life. Positive reinforcement must be consistent between home and school to ensure that the children are successful in using their problem-solving skills.

SNACKS AND CELEBRATIONS

SNACK
• A snack list will be posted
• If your child has an food allergy or food aversion, please let the staff know
• Our snacks will be both low in sugar and salt content
• Snack, consisting of one serving from two different food groups will be provided daily

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS
We love celebrating with our students! If you decide to bring a treat or goody bag to share please let the teachers know ahead of time and to ensure your food item can be eaten by all students.

Please use the following suggestions to guide you:

We CAN accept:
  o Fruit
  o Crackers
  o Homemade fruit breads
  o Muffins
  o Cheese
  o Frozen juice bars
  o Yogurt
  o Bagels and cream cheese
  o Veggie sticks
  o Popcorn

We CANNOT accept:
  o Cupcakes
  o Cakes
  o Cookies
  o Anything frosted
  o Ice cream bars
  o Candy
  o Fast food
  o Artificially sweetened juices
  o Anything with or containing nuts

HOLIDAY/CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS
We will have many classroom celebrations during the year and parents will be invited to attend. Occasionally, we will allow modest amounts of sugar to be served at these celebrations.
BUILDING BLOCKS CALENDAR 2020-2021

2020
August 17     Classes Begin
September 7   Holiday - Labor Day
September 18  No School - Staff Development
September 28  No School - Staff Development
October 12-16 Fall Break – No classes
November 11   Holiday - Veteran’s Day
November 23-27 Holiday - Thanksgiving
Dec 21 - Jan 5 Winter Break – No classes

2021
January 6     Classes Resume
January 18    Holiday - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 15   Holiday - President’s Day
March 12      No School- Staff Development
March 29-April 9    Spring Break – No classes
May 31       Holiday - Memorial Day
June 4       Last Day of School

2020-2021 TUITION SCHEDULE

Program will run Monday, August 17, 2020 – Friday, June 4, 2021
(A calendar of no school dates will be included in the Parent Packet)
The first fee listed in the Resident rate followed by the Non-Resident rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TINY TOTS – Age 3 years by September 1, 2020</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
<th>10 Installments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610103-C1 MWF 8/17/20-6/4/21 9:11:30am Shoreview</td>
<td>$2680/2930</td>
<td>$268/293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610103-C2 TTh 8/18/20-6/3/21 9:11:30am Shoreview</td>
<td>$1840/2090</td>
<td>$184/209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610103-C3 MWF 8/17/20-6/4/21 9:15-11:45am Lakeshore</td>
<td>$2680/2930</td>
<td>$268/293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610103-C4 TTh 8/18/20-6/3/21 9:15-11:45am Lakeshore</td>
<td>$1840/2090</td>
<td>$184/209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610103-C5 MWF 8/17/20-6/4/21 9:11:30am Beresford</td>
<td>$2680/2930</td>
<td>$268/293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610103-C6 TTh 8/18/20-6/3/21 9:11:30am Beresford</td>
<td>$1840/2090</td>
<td>$184/209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-KINDERGARTEN – Age 4 by September 1, 2020</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
<th>10 Installments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610104-D1 M-Th 8/17/20-6/3/21 8:30-11:30am Shoreview</td>
<td>$4440/4690</td>
<td>$444/469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*610104-D2 M-Th 8/17/20-6/3/21 12:30-3:30pm Shoreview</td>
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<td>$444/469</td>
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<tr>
<td>610104-D3 M-Th 8/17/20-6/3/21 8:30-11:30am Lakeshore</td>
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<td>$444/469</td>
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<tr>
<td>610104-D4 M-Th 8/17/20-6/3/21 12:30-3:30pm Lakeshore</td>
<td>$4440/4690</td>
<td>$444/469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*New Spanish Immersion Preschool Class
Tuition Information

Installment Plan

- The first payment is due between July 1st, 2020 and August 1st.
- All additional payments are due on the 15th calendar day of each month (September 2020-May 2021).
- Payments received after the 20th calendar day of each month will be charged a $25 late payment fee per child and per class registered.
- If your payment is not received on or before the 28th calendar day of each month, your child will be withdrawn from the registered program(s).

Withdrawals

- All Withdrawals must be submitted in writing to the Program Assistant at jgaldamez@cityofsanmateo.org by the 5th of the month; email is an acceptable format.
- Withdrawals are effective at the end of the month if you have made your request by the 5th, otherwise they will be effective at the end of the following month.
- If you are paying in installments, this is a reminder that there are NO REFUNDS once a payment has been made.
- If you have paid your annual tuition in full, you will receive a partial refund based on your withdrawal and final attendance date.
- Your $50 registration processing fee is NON-REFUNDABLE after Wednesday, June 24th, 2020.
- We do not accept any withdrawal requests after April 5th, 2021.

Installment Withdrawal EXAMPLE:

If you have made a payment on Tuesday, September 15th and you decide to remove your child from the program on Wednesday, September 30th, you will not receive a refund for either your Monday, August 3rd payment or your Tuesday, September 15th payment. Your child will be eligible to attend the program until Friday, October 30, 2020. In this scenario, you will NOT be required to make an Tuesday, October 15th payment, which would apply to November attendance.

These programs run from Monday, August 17, 2020 – Friday, June 4, 2021. You may choose to pay your annual tuition in full or elect to pay in TEN installments starting on Wednesday, July 1, 2020 and ending on Friday, May 15, 2021.

Additional Fee:

A $50.00 registration processing fee is due at the time of registration. This fee can be refunded if you withdraw on or before June 24th, 2020. The registration processing fee will no longer be refundable after Wednesday, June 24th for any reason.

The annual costs reflect all school days without holidays, vacation days, and teacher work days.

- If paying with installment – the first payment will be due on Wednesday, July 1st all other payments are always due on the 15th calendar day of each month and will be considered “late” after this due date.
- Payments received after the 20th calendar day of each month will be charged a $25 late payment fee per child and per class registered.
- Children will not be allowed to attend class beginning the 25th calendar day of each month until payment is made.
- If payment is not received on or before the 28th calendar day of each month your child will be withdrawn from the program(s) registered.

Mid-year Enrollment/Registration Fees

- Mid-year enrollment is based on space availability. Your child may start on the 1st or the 15th of the month.
  - If your child begins the program on the 1st, the current month’s installment is due at the time of registration, plus the $50.00 registration fee. The next payment will be due the 15th of that month.
  - If your child begins the program on the 15th of the month, 50% of the current month is due at registration, plus the $50.00 registration fee as well as the next full installment.
We do not accept registration in our Pre-Kindergarten classes after Monday, February 1, 2021. All other programs, including Tiny Tots, have open enrollment throughout the year.

- Financial assistance is available to City of San Mateo residents – please contact any of our recreation centers to obtain an application and information on enrollment eligibility.
- Your installment payments may be paid on-line at www.sanmateorec.org, automatically through our auto-credit card billing program, by mail or in person at Beresford or King Center. Payments are not accepted by the teachers or in your child’s classroom.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN, KINDERGARTEN READINESS EVALUATION

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND
In the Building Blocks Pre-Kindergarten program it is our goal to expose our students to healthy social experiences while teaching them the necessary skills to help prepare them for a successful future in school. The Building Blocks Pre-Kindergarten students will be evaluated twice during the school year. These evaluations will provide feedback on skills attained and skills needed to ensure kindergarten readiness.

The City of San Mateo will use an assessment form adapted from the Desired Results Developmental Profile – Preschool (DRDP-PS) model produced by California Department of Education.

POLICY/PROCEDURE
- Evaluation and observation process will begin during the fall.
- Lead Teachers will collect information on each participant.
- First evaluation will be completed before Winter Break.
- Second evaluation will be completed by Monday, June 1, 2021.
- Evaluations will be done through observations made in and out of the classroom.
- All Building Blocks Pre-K Programs will use the same universal evaluation form.
- Parents will receive a copy of results after each evaluation period.
- Teachers will keep original copy for two years.
- Teachers will schedule one parent conference per year completed in February.
Building Blocks Parent/Guardian
Information Packet Acknowledgment Form

Child’s Name: ____________________________  Center: ______________________

I, _____________________________, the parent of____________________________ have read and

Parent/ Legal Guardian First and Last Name  Child’s First and Last Name
understand the Parent Information Packet and agree to abide by the policies and
procedures.

- I understand that my $50 registration fee is non-refundable after June 24, 2020 and I agree to the withdrawal/refund policy stated in this packet.
- I am aware that I must complete an Emergency Form online (ePACT) and Physician’s Report PRIOR to the first day of Program.

Signature _____________________________  Date____________________

Please sign and return this form.