



# Parent Handbook

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center accepts applications for enrollment without regard to race, religion, gender, national origin, cultural heritage, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or any other basis prohibited by law.

## Welcome to Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center!

Thank you for choosing our learning center. Today there are several different types of early childhood programs available to working families. These include care provided by relatives, family care providers and center-based facilities such as Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center. Each family has unique needs which may or may not be best met by a program such as ours. Before deciding on the type of care that you feel best meets your family's needs you must first assess your expectations.

The benefits of center based early childhood programs are many. Most parents' priority is the safety and well-being of their child. Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center is fully licensed by the RI Department of Human Services. This department is responsible for regulating and closely monitoring all childcare programs in the state. Parents interested in finding our regulatory compliance history can call the Department of Human Services at 401-462-1000 or visit them at 25 Howard Ave, Building 57, Cranston RI 02920.

They have developed a set of operating standards which we are mandated to always adhere to. These standards govern all areas of our program including health and safety, care giver certification, environment, curriculum, administration, etc. In addition to these standards, Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center has several additional policies and procedures which were created to further ensure the safety and well-being of your child.

An additional benefit of a center such as Blackstone Valley is the many opportunities your child is provided to interact socially with peers and care givers. Such interactions promote the development of not only social emotional skills, but also the development of language skills and critical thinking skills. Although this means your child will be a part of a larger group of children, we think you will agree that these are important skills that your child will benefit from, long after they leave our program.

We respect that parenting is rewarding, but not without challenges. We value open communication between our parents and staff. Our educated and experienced teachers provide support not only for your child, but also for you as a parent and guardian. It is essential for your child's well-being to establish a relationship of mutual trust and respect with your provider. Children benefit most when the significant people in their lives are working together to give them the support and guidance they need. We always strive for excellence in partnering with our families. While we will not compromise our general philosophy or our standards with the DHS, we will always try to find a balance in accommodating needs of a child or parent as long as it is also in the best interest of most of the children in our center.

The following parent handbook was designed to answer some of the questions you may have regarding our policies and procedures. This handbook is yours to keep and you may refer to it as needed. Please read through it before your child's first day. Any new policies or amendments to existing policies will be presented to you in writing as soon as they occur. If you have any questions regarding the information presented, you are asked to see the Director at your convenience.

### **Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center Mission Statement**

**Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center provides a safe, nurturing, and educational environment through a play based, developmentally appropriate curriculum provided by a consistent group of qualified and dedicated educators. These educators will provide a strong learning foundation that our students will carry with them for the rest of their lives.**

### **About Our School**

The vision and goal of preparing children for a lifelong love of learning coupled with giving each child a solid foundation to build all other successes on has driven Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center to be designed around the belief that children must be active agents in the learning process. Children of any age must be free to explore their environment, be introduced to new concepts, and challenged to meet with success. We believe that some of the most important aspects of our education are received between birth and 5 years of age. It is during this time that children not only learn what to learn but how to learn. Through a play based, age-appropriate curriculum focused on the development of cognitive, communication/language, social, emotional, gross, and fine motor skills, children at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center will learn through discovery, peer modeling, problem-solving, open-ended lesson plans, and social interactions which are all facilitated by a group of consistent, dedicated, and qualified educators. The BV environment offers an abundance of various hands-on materials to stimulate exploration and discovery along with a highly focused program of curriculum to combine the development of cognitive skills and positive attitudes towards learning, leadership, and socialization.

### **Our Goals for All Children Are as Follows:**

- Children will develop a sense of trust in their environment and those who care for them.
- Children will develop a growing sense of autonomy and initiative.
- Children will develop a sense of confidence and a strong self-esteem.
- Children will develop and demonstrate pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, respect for diversity, and caring for our environment and those around us.
- Children will acquire problem solving, logical thinking and communication skills.

**Above all, Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center provides a warm, safe, loving, environment where children feel welcome, secure, and nurtured while in our care.**

### **Our Owner/Site Coordinator**

Marissa Crawley is the sole owner of Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center. She has over 25 years' experience working with children. Her passions are her husband Mike and children Ella and Jack. Another of Marissa's passions is music and in her spare time she is a vocalist in a wedding band. Marissa holds a degree in Early Childhood Education and is committed to providing every family with the best experience possible at BV.

### **Site Director/ Education Coordinator**

**Danielle Dragon** is our Director/ Education Coordinator at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center. Prior to this position, Danielle was the Director/ Education Coordinator at Early Learners Academy in Seekonk. She also worked as the Education Director at our site in North Smithfield. Danielle holds an associate's degree in early childhood education, a bachelor's degree in psychology and is a certified teacher in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Her background in teaching and experience with all ages and stages is extensive. Danielle has been working in the childcare field since the age of 18. She began her career in a toddler classroom right out of college, then preschool, then kindergarten- Prep.

Working as a director involves inspiring growth, ensuring smooth day-operation, and building meaningful relationships with families, staff and children. Having teaching experience herself offers her the opportunity to share her assistance and skills with staff in the classroom. Danielles management skills ensure guidance and support to the teaching staff and cultivates an environment in which children and their parents can feel safe, secure, and excited about-education.

### **Assistant Director**

**Nancy Alvarado** has worked in the early childcare field for 9 years. Nancy comes to us from our Seekonk School where she excelled as lead teacher in the pre k classroom. Nancys calm and nurturing personality are not only a positive influence for the tea chers but our infants and children as well.

Nancy is bi-lingual, which is a support for many of our families. We are very fortunate to have Nancy on the BVELC team.

### **Our Director of Operations**

Lynn Nadrowski has worked with youth for most of her 48 years in the work force. Lynn worked for over 25 years at the Wanskuck Boys and Girls Club in Providence, starting as Program director and then as Facility Director. She left the Boys & Girls Clubs to pursue her own Performing Arts Studio where she produced and directed performances for children and teens from 2006 to 2018. During that time, she was Drama Coach at Lincoln Middle School and taught theatre arts at Kats Dance Centre and Performing Arts. Lynn has brought her many years of youth development experience along with her Facility management skills to BV.

### **Our Teaching and Care Team**

All staff members are carefully chosen after a rigorous interviewing process which includes reference checks, a comprehensive background check which includes- RI Child Abuse and Neglect Registry check (formerly DCYF CANTS), State Sex Offender Registry (RISOR), National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR), BCI check, and a national fingerprint check.

Children learn best when their teachers are deeply committed to delivering high quality care and education. We carefully select our team members based on their own education and experience in the field of early childhood education. We dedicate time to ensure that each team member is trained in our methods of curriculum development and delivery, our mission, and our dedication to "Building Tomorrow's Leaders." We also mandate twenty hours per school year of professional development in the field of early childhood education.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer and school. We do not discriminate in employment or in providing services due to race, gender, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center does not require toilet training status as an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

## **Philosophy**

The main goal of Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center is to provide the highest quality childcare and early childhood educational services in a safe, clean, diverse, and nurturing environment designed to best meet the needs of the children. At BV the children's safety is our number one concern.

Our program philosophy is based on the concept of developmentally appropriate practice. We are committed to providing experiences which will aid in the cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language development of each child. An atmosphere will be created to encourage children to learn through exploration, providing care with concern for each individual child's needs, interests, and ability levels. Each child's developmental progress is fostered as he or she is guided through a program filled with stimulating learning centers and creative activities. All areas of growth and development are provided for. Curiosity, exploration, and sharing are encouraged. Accomplishments and creativity are nurtured and praised.

An integral aspect of our philosophy is the importance of open communication between the Center and individual families. The child's parent/guardian and family members are the most significant people in a child's life. Therefore, building a positive, communicative relationship with each family is of the utmost importance. Mutual respect and cooperation between the adults in a child's life is essential for them to develop trust in the world. Parents are asked to share relevant information pertaining to their child with their child's care giver and vice versa to establish a mutually supportive relationship. This ultimately allows for the most positive overall experience for parents, children, and staff members.

## **Research, Experimentation, & Publicity**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center does not participate in research and experimentation. Parents would be supplied with a release form should any photographs, media interviews or publicity occur at Blackstone Valley.

## **Partnering with Parents and Families**

We make every attempt to insure effective communication with all families. We actively encourage you to come to us whenever you have a question or a concern regarding your child's care. These concerns may be brought to the attention of your child's teacher and/or the Director of operations and we will be happy to schedule a conference. We ask that all conferences be scheduled in advance. If the outcome of such conferences is not satisfactory to you, kindly commit your concerns in writing and forward them to the Owner.

It is expected that all representatives of Blackstone Valley treat parents fairly and respectfully and that we are treated the same in return. We reserve the right to end any conference (formal or informal) if we feel parents have become abusive or combative. We also maintain the right to ask parents to find alternative childcare arrangements if we feel it is the best interest of the child and the center.

## **Communication**

Some of the ways we strive to keep parents informed about their child's day are:

- ProCare, an interactive App for parents and teachers.
- The parent information board and individual file folders in your child's classroom
- Classroom bulletin boards.
- Developmental evaluations for each child enrolled at the center three times per year (generally October, January, and May), (and every three months for infants and children with special needs).
- You may request a conference with your child's teacher and the Director at any time during the year.

**We ask that you take the time to read all correspondence that is sent home with your child. This can be found in your child's file folder located in their classroom. All information sent home is essential to keeping you informed, as well as for the proper operation of the school.**

### **Discipline/ Child Guidance Policy**

At Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center, **positive guidance and redirection** are our only forms of acceptable discipline. Discipline is always developmentally appropriate and based on the individual child and circumstances. Whenever possible, children will be given the opportunity to solve conflicts, find resolutions independently, and when possible, participate in the development of the classroom rules. When redirection is ineffective, a teacher will then engage the child in a conversation to clearly explain what the inappropriate behavior is and why. Certain situations in which a child needs assistance in regaining control may warrant a brief period away from the group. This period will not exceed one minute per year of age and will be supervised by a teacher. When the child has maintained control, and feels ready to rejoin the group, he or she will discuss the inappropriate behavior with a teacher and collaboratively they will decide upon appropriate behaviors to use in the future.

If circumstances warrant, (one child putting others or him/ herself in danger), a child may be removed (ratio) from the classroom and assisted by the Director and/or another qualified staff member in regaining composure.

As your partner in caring for your child, it is important for good communication to exist between you and the Center. **If your child is experiencing a change in their home environment that may impact his or her behavior, it is important to inform your child's teacher and /or the Director.** Likewise, we will keep you informed of any concerns we may have regarding your child. All information disclosed will be treated with sensitivity and held in the strictest confidence.

Guidance provides a positive and consistent way of learning and growing that is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of children by implementing the following:

- Blackstone Valley teachers will encourage self-control, using positive reinforcement when a child displays developmentally appropriate behaviors and pro-social behaviors. Each classroom utilizes developmentally appropriate expectations that set clear and consistent limits and allows for positive redirection.
- At Blackstone Valley, it is our philosophy to help children learn social, communication and emotional pro-social skills that they can use in place of challenging behaviors.
- Blackstone Valley teachers continue to train in topics that relate to challenging behaviors so that we may use various strategies to encourage appropriate behaviors and prevent behaviors that are challenging at home and at the school.
- Teachers at Blackstone Valley are trained to intervene quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and to teach children to develop the tools they need to develop more positive strategies for resolving conflict.
- Each classroom works with the children to develop age-appropriate rules that will be implemented for the year. These classroom rules will be explained to the children and reinforced at the start of morning meeting time.
- Blackstone Valley will train staff each year in appropriate behavior management techniques.

- Under no circumstances will a child be spanked or have any form of corporal punishment.
- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks.
- No child will be deprived of outdoor time, meals, or snacks; forced feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence.
- No child will be disciplined for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.
- No child will be confined to a swing, highchair, crib, playpen, or any other piece of equipment for an extended period in lieu of supervision.

Keeping all our children safe is our priority. There are times when the center may not be an ideal fit for your child or family. It is our belief that disruptive and disrespectful behavior creates a serious break in the parent-school alliance and poses an imminent threat to the wellbeing of the children in our care and our staff members. We will strive to partner with our families in using the positive guidance strategies listed above. If it is determined that a different setting would be more ideal, we would provide resource suggestions for alternative care. Please see the Termination/Suspension policy for detailed information.

### **Enrolling Your Child**

#### **Pre-Enrollment Meeting**

Families interested in enrolling their child(ren) at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center are required to meet with the Director or her appointed designee prior to admission. During this meeting parents will be given an orientation to the school, the requirements of our licensing agency, our rules and policies and an introduction to our staff. Parents will also be given a tour of the school and information regarding our evacuation policies, parking lot safety and signing into and out of the school. This meeting is also a means to receive information about your child, your family, your needs, and expectations.

We also want to make sure that prior to your child's first day all services are in place should your child require therapeutic, educational, social, or additional support services that might already be in place or that will be required. For children younger than school age we are required to obtain a child info packet and to discuss any areas of concerns. The state also requires us to update annually the developmental history in the event that any changes might have occurred.

It is important to us that you are both comfortable and confident with your decision to enroll your child in our program. You should be familiar with the concept of center-based care and be pleased with the benefits of such an arrangement. We understand that while we do our best to address the individual needs of all children enrolled, no one program can be ideal for all families.

### **Your Child's File**

An enrollment packet will be provided by the center prior to your child's first day. All forms must be completed and returned before your child's first day. Medical forms must be completed and signed by your child's physician and immunizations must be up to date. If your child is on any medication on a routine basis, an Individual Health Plan must be filled out and signed by the doctor as well as a Medication Consent Form to administer the medication.

All court orders, restraining orders, and custody agreements must be kept in your child's file. IEPs, 504s and any mandated help requested must also be in your child's file.

## **Annual Enrollment Information and Fees**

Our school year runs September to August. At the beginning of each new school year, you will be given certain enrollment forms that are required to be updated annually. However, if emergency numbers, contacts, addresses, or phone numbers change before re-registration please notify the Director of Operations / Director immediately. It is essential that we always have current information on file for parents and children. The re-registration forms as well as the annual enrollment fee; \$60.00 per child or \$100 per family, will secure your child's place for September. If you register between June 30 and August 31 of the current year, you are not required to re-register your child.

## **Children's Record/Confidentiality**

All information contained in your child's file is privileged and confidential. Written parental consent is necessary to release any information to an unauthorized person. Parents may have access to their child's file no more than two days after the request. If a child's records are subpoenaed, the child's parents will be notified. A permanent written log will be kept in the file indicating to whom information was released.

## **Class Lists**

Class lists are not provided. Party invitations, valentines, etc. should be completed inside, leaving the envelope fronts blank. Items can then be distributed quickly and easily without sacrificing confidentiality.

## **Tuition and Fees**

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due on the Friday prior to the week care and education are rendered. There is a two-day minimum for care and education. A late fee of \$25 is assessed when tuition is paid later than the following Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. Upon enrolling your child in our program, we request our standard registration fee be paid in full; \$60 per child or \$100 per family.

Tuition is paid weekly either, cash, check, or via electronic funds transfer (EFT). Prompt payment of your tuition is greatly appreciated to facilitate the payment of our staff and facility charges. For each week that your payment is past due, a \$25.00 charge will be applied to your account. Repeated late payments may be the cause for termination of services.

### **Returned Check Fee**

In the event a tuition check is returned from the bank or is denied due to insufficient funds, you will be charged \$35.00. In addition, we request that the check be replaced within a 24-hour period to avoid an additional \$25.00 late fee assessment.

### **Holidays, Vacations, Weather Related Closings & Illness**

Tuition must be paid in full regardless of days missed due to holidays, vacations, weather related closings, emergency facility closings, or illness, except for one vacation credit per year per family.

### **Vacation Credit**

Each family receives a one-week vacation credit of 50% off per calendar year. During this week, your child is ineligible to attend. To avoid late fees, we advise that you pay your tuition prior to going away on vacation.

### Military Discount

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center thanks those who serve our country. We offer a 10% discount to those in the military with the proper documentation.

### Sibling Discount

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center offers a 10% sibling discount. Any family with more than one child enrolled will receive this discount off their second child's tuition and each subsequent child's tuition. The lowest tuition rate qualifies for this discount.



### Attendance

Please notify the center if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance. We ask this to monitor illness in the center, to maintain proper staffing and programming, and because we care about the well-being of your child.

**Tuition fees will not be adjusted due to absence for whatever reason including illness, holidays, weather or facility emergency related closings, or vacations, etc. (except for the one-week vacation credit that we offer).**

### Termination of Services

If circumstances require you to withdraw your child from Blackstone Valley, it is necessary that you submit written notification to the Director no less than two weeks prior to your withdrawal date. You are financially responsible for these two weeks regardless of attendance.

### Hours of Operation

7:30am -5:30pm



There is a late pick-up fee of \$15.00 per quarter hour that you are late picking up your child after the center's closing. Payment is due upon arrival.

### Inclement Weather

Whenever possible, Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center will attempt to keep our doors open during inclement weather. However, there are occasions when the decision is made to delay opening, not open, or close early for the safety and well-being of our children, staff, and families. If this were to be the case, it will be posted on all of our social media pages, a message will be sent through Procure, and it will be posted to RI broadcasters association. If we decide to close our doors early due to inclement weather, we will notify all parents by email. For this reason, it is imperative that we have at least one email address for you that is checked frequently throughout the day. We will not close until all children are picked up and will call you if we feel you have not received our email notification. If you have any concerns, please call the center for more information. Payment remains the same.



## Arrivals and Departures

Children must be dropped off by 9:00am with (we give 15 minute grace period). This will help with the disruption of the daily routine. When a child is dropped off late it affects circle time and the educational portion of the day. Our teachers must stop implementing their planned curriculum to feed, change or comfort a child. When the entire class is present by 9am it is much easier for them to start their day positively and follow their daily routine.

Each classroom has a "Sign In & Sign Out" sheet that a teacher will record when your child has arrived and when they were picked up each day. In addition to teachers recording arrivals and departures, parents must also document both arrival and departure on the "Parent Sign-In Sheet."

## Appointments

Please let us know in advance when your child has an appointment. We advise that doctors' appointments, or any other type of appointment is scheduled early in the morning or late afternoon. **The latest drop off after an appointment is 11:30am. Drop off during lunch and rest time is not permitted (12:30-2:30pm)** as it is much too disruptive to the rest of the class.

## Afternoon Pick Up

Do not let your child leave the building ahead of you, as this is a very dangerous practice. Parents picking up their child must accompany them from the building or play areas to the car. Parents are NOT to send their child to wait for them in their car while they talk to teachers, other parents, or go to pick up their other siblings. If you need assistance, we will be happy to help.

## Parking

Cars should NEVER be left running in the parking lot. Please do not leave children unattended in the car.

## Tobacco Policy

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center is a completely tobacco-free environment. The use of any tobacco is prohibited in any part of the building or its premises.

## Additional Parent Responsibilities




- When you are present at the center, your child is your full responsibility. This avoids any conflict and confusion for your child, for you are the most important person in your child's life. The exception is when you are visiting a classroom after signing your child in for the day.
- Children should arrive at the center properly dressed, fed, and with a clean diaper (if applicable).
- **Please be sure that staff member is aware of your child's arrival and is under their care before you leave the building.**
- Every child must have clothing appropriate to the weather each day, as outdoor time is an integral part of our curriculum.
- Please send your child in with appropriate footwear (no flip-flops, or open toed shoes, unless they are participating in summer water play) and comfortable clothes so they can participate in all indoor and outdoor activities.

## Transportation Plan

It is our agency's policy that the regular day to day transportation to and from the center is provided by the parents or their designee. Blackstone Valley does not provide transportation to or from the school under any conditions. In the event of an emergency, children will be transported via ambulance to the appropriate medical facility. In the event of an authorized field trip, children will be transported in chartered buses that are fully insured and equipped with the necessary safety features as required by the State of Rhode Island and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### Your Child Needs:

#### **PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL EVERYTHING**

<u>Infants</u>	<u>Toddlers</u>	<u>Preschool/Pre-K/K-Prep</u>
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> One week diaper supply</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> One week wipe supply</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Three changes of clothes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Premade bottles</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pacifier if needed</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sleep sack if desired</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate outerwear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> One week diaper supply</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> One week wipe supply</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Three changes of clothes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Pacifier if needed</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Crib sheet for rest time</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Blanket for rest time</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate outerwear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Two changes of clothes</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Crib sheet for rest time</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Blanket for rest time</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate outerwear</li></ul>

- **A complete set of extra clothing-** This should include socks and underwear (if applicable) and should be appropriate for the season. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag to be laundered at home. If we do not have extra clothes for your child if they are needed and the center is unable to find a reasonable substitute, you will be asked to bring in extra clothing immediately or pick up your child from the center.
- **If you are packing your child's meals** - All lunches will require having a frozen pack inside to keep them cool. Please keep nutritional values in mind. (see "Lunch Box Suggestions" for ideas). We suggest providing your child with a sandwich, a piece of fruit, and a healthy snack such as vegetables, crackers, or yogurt. We will not serve children any type of soda, hard candy, or nuts. **Do not send in food that requires reheating.** Instead, consider using a thermos to keep things warm. Also, please consider the choking hazard when sending in food like grapes and hot dogs. It is recommended that these items be cut into smaller pieces to avoid choking. All food opened and not eaten will be thrown away.
- **Breast Milk/Formula-** If you are sending in breast milk, we require that you label it with the child's name & date. We are allowed to store frozen breast milk up to 3 months and if we have removed it from the freezer to the refrigerator no longer than 48 hours. We will discard both formula and breast milk after one hour after offering it to your child. We also will not be able to put cereal into the bottles without an order from the physician.
- **Cereal/baby food-** All cereal and baby food must be factory sealed containers. If you are making your own baby food the date must be on all sealed containers as well.
- **A crib sheet and small blanket-** All children will be required to participate in mid-day quiet time. Standard crib sheets fit our rest time cots well. **For all infants, we provide crib sheets to ensure the proper fit for our cribs.** In addition, your child may need a small light weight blanket in the toddler and preschool programs. **Per DHS regulations, infants may not have anything in the crib. You may**

**choose to send a zippered sleep sack for your infant.** Storage space is limited so rest time items need to be compact. If your toddler or preschool aged child will be more comfortable resting with a small, soft toy you are welcome to send one in. It will, however, remain in his or her cubby until rest time begins.

- **Sunscreen-** Your child will need a bottle of sunscreen to be always left at the center. Please label the bottle with permanent marker and hand it directly to your child's teacher. Items which are potentially dangerous to children should not be stored in diaper bags or cubbies which children have easier access to.
- **Insect repellent-**We will apply insect repellent prior to going outdoors with a signed consent from the parent.
- **Appropriate outerwear-** We do go outdoors year-round weather permitting. Your child will need clothing appropriate to the season each day. We suggest heavy coats, hats, and mittens during the winter months; a light jacket in the fall and spring; cooler clothing in the summer, and boots on wet and/or snowy days.

**Anything that is brought into the center must be clearly labeled with your child's name in permanent marker. The center will not be held financially responsible for any lost items.**

**We do not allow any toys from home other than a small, soft, rest toy. Please understand that upon arrival we will ask you to take any items home with you that your child has brought to school. The only exception will be if it was requested by the teacher for Show and Tell.**

### **Your Child's Day**

**Children must be dropped off by 9:00am to attend school.** Although our philosophy supports and encourages spontaneous learning experiences, each classroom follows a developmentally appropriate daily schedule and routines by which form the basic structure of your child's day. This is especially helpful in dealing with transition times (going from one activity to the next) which can often be disruptive for young children. It also lends itself to providing your child a consistent environment, which helps build a sense of security and trust.

Each classroom's schedule is slightly different to best meet the developmental needs of its age group. The schedule provides children with an adequate balance between quiet and active times; large group activities, small group activities, and independent play, indoor and a minimum of 60 minutes of outdoor play time; free choice and teacher directed activities, learning centers, morning meeting and story time to name a few. Time for meals, resting, toileting, cleaning up, and transitions are also included. Each classroom has their schedule posted in their room.

### **Curriculum/ Assessment/Progress Reports**

#### **Curriculum**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center's curriculum is developed from the Rhode Island Learning and Development Standards

## Assessment and Progress Reports

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center's teachers utilize ongoing and authentic assessment strategies to actively assess children's progress and developmental stages. Evidence of learning is documented in each child's portfolio, as well as in formal written assessments that are completed three times per year in October, January, and May. Infants and children with special needs have formal written assessments every three months.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are held on an as needed basis.

## Mealtime

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center is a sponsor of the of the CACFP, the Child and Adult Care Food Program! This program is designed to provide meals for participants in any non- residential public or private nonprofit institution that provides child or adult day care.

**We provide breakfast, lunch & snack** to all enrolled participants without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activities, age or disability and will be served at no separate charge.

All new Families are asked to fill out a CACFP enrollment form when enrolling for our school. If you have any questions regarding the form Miss Lynn will be happy to help!

**Monthly Breakfast, Lunch and Snack Menus are posted on our website and also at the school.**

Mealtimes are important times for young children. We believe that many skills can be learned and practiced during mealtimes here and at home. For example, children learn to serve themselves and help others, they learn to eat in a group, and they develop a positive attitude towards food and nutrition. At BV, we value this learning experience and therefore never use food as a punishment. Children will never be threatened with having food taken away nor will they be forced to eat anything they do not want to. During each snack time and lunch time, children will sit with their teachers and discuss the events of the day or what is relevant to them at that given moment.

If you choose not to participate in our meal program and your child is scheduled at our center for more than nine hours, please provide a sufficient amount of food for your child. We ask that you provide snacks that meet USDA standards, we are required by the state to encourage healthy nutrition, so we have listed some suggestions for lunches and snacks below. **Parents will inform the school if their child needs to be on a special diet or has a known food allergy** There will be no denial of food unless there is a written medical statement from your child's physician. Children will be able to eat at a reasonable leisurely rate. **For infants, we ask that all food be packed ready to serve. we require that you try any new foods on Friday or Saturday evening.**





## Food Allergies

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center has several children with food allergies. We ask that your child enter the school without any food or drink in their hands. We work with children to promote hygiene and to prevent allergy contact by washing their hands after hanging up their coats. We are a peanut sensitive school, meaning that we do not serve items with peanuts/tree nuts. We also ask families to refrain from bringing in food

that contains peanuts/tree nuts. If a child has a food allergy, we will provide a space for the child during snack and lunchtime that is free of that allergen. It is our objective to educate children about food allergies and to provide a safe environment.

Below are some suggestions of nutritious foods that you can include in a lunch. The foods carry their weight in food value and do not foster tooth decay. We strongly urge parent to include fruit, not cookies (etc.) in their child's lunch.

## Lunch Box Suggestions

<b>Sandwich ideas:</b>	<b>Vegetables:</b>	<b>Fruit:</b>	<b>Other ideas:</b>
 <p>Cheese Egg salad Tuna salad Meat (cold cuts)</p>	 <p>Carrot Tomatoes Peas Pickles Cucumbers Mashed potatoes Broccoli Green beans Salad</p>	 <p>Apple Strawberries Fruit Salad Banana Peaches Orange Watermelon/Melon Grapes (cut up) Pears Blueberries Raspberries</p>	 <p>Yogurt Crackers Cheese sticks Pretzels Soup Hard boiled eggs Granola</p>

### Rest Time



Toddlers and Preschoolers have a scheduled rest time each day. Although children are not required to sleep, they are required to rest quietly on their cots for a short period, while those children who typically nap fall asleep. Once those children are asleep nonsleepers may enter into a quiet activity such as puzzles or books.

### Comfort Items

To help your child feel at ease, you may send a stuffed animal or comfort item from home. Having something familiar from home can be comforting as they rest and recharge.

### SIDS Prevention and Awareness

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) awareness is the driving force behind our sleep practices in the infant program. We encourage all families to follow these recommended practices at home, as well. Below is suggested practices recommended by the American Association of Pediatrics.



## Transitions

### **Transition Suggestions from Home to Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center**

During this time, we have found that the following suggestions help, and we offer them to you.

- If your child is left with the consistent team members each morning, it develops a relationship that is consistent and beneficial.
- Share information about important events that might have happened at home that morning that are positive in front of your child and new teacher.
- Arrive about the same time each morning. This again provides consistency and establishes a routine that the child will become accustomed to.
- Have a drop off routine share a special good-bye ritual (high-five, multiple kisses, wave at the door).
- Give them a return time for picking them up (I will see you after nap, I will be here in the afternoon after recess).
- Trust us to take care of your child and to help them settle in.
- Leave a small photo album in your child's cubby so that they will have a photo for comfort.

## Program Transitions

Transitions from one program to the next are not automatic. Each situation is dealt with on an individual basis. Deciding factors include a child's readiness and availability of space. If the center feels the expectations of a parent cannot realistically be met, we reserve the right to ask that he or she find another program which may better accommodate their needs.

When we feel your child is ready to begin the transition process you will be notified in writing. This notice will indicate meeting with the teachers, learning about the new classroom, the transition start date and an anticipated end date of the transition. Typically, we will allow no less than two weeks for a child to transition from one program to the next. The process begins with short, frequent visits to the new classroom. Gradually these visits increase in length until a child can remain comfortably in his/her new program for most the day. Tuition rates will not change until your child is officially enrolled in his/her program.

## Dismissal of Children

**Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center strictly adheres to the following procedures with no exceptions.**

Other than the parent, only persons with written authorization from parents shall be allowed to pick up a child from the center. You will be given a form on which you may specify individuals, other than yourself, who maintain a standing authorization to pick up your child.

- A child may be released to a person who is not on the permanent list only if the parent has provided a signed and dated note authorizing the person to pick up and handed to us in person. All persons who do not regularly pick up must present photo identification.
- When a teacher does not recognize an adult picking up a child, she must ask for identification. Please do not take offense. This practice is to ensure the safety of your child.
- Under no circumstances will a child be released to a person who is not authorized. This is the case even if the child and/or staff member is familiar with the individual.
- If a family is going through the process of a custody dispute, be aware that in the absence of a court order we cannot deny any parent access to his or her child. If you have individual circumstances regarding custody, please discuss them with the Director. We will do what is in our power to accommodate your needs.

### **Health & Safety**

A full copy of our Health & Safety Policies can be found in each classroom and in the office.

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

Although we do our best to provide a safe environment for children, accidents do happen. In the event your child receives a minor injury while in our care we will notify you via a written report. This report gives you a brief account of the type of injury, how it occurred, and what steps staff members took. These reports are signed by the supervising teacher and the parent, as well as an administrator. They are kept in the child's permanent file. If your child is injured to the extent that he or she needs medical treatment beyond basic first aid, we will follow the steps outlined below. Incident reports are used to inform the parent of behaviors that are being seen that led to an accident or behaviors that can result in the child, or someone around him or her, being hurt.

### **Authorization for Emergency Treatment**

Upon enrolling at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center, you will be asked to sign an Authorization and Consent Form. This authorizes the Director or otherwise designated individual, to arrange for medical examination and/or treatment of your child in an emergency. In the event of an injury that requires immediate medical attention, we will make a conscientious effort to reach you at the numbers you have provided before any medical action is taken. For this reason, it is extremely important that we have correct names and numbers for all individuals always listed as emergency contacts on file.

In the event of an emergency that requires immediate professional medical attention we will do the following:

- Proper assessment of an emergency (see 9-1-1 Emergency procedure).
- Transportation via ambulance to the nearest hospital.
- Accompanied by the Director or his/her designee (i.e., the child's primary care giver). The staff member will bring along the child's file which includes all relevant forms such as the signed parental permission for emergency medical treatment. The staff member remaining at the Center and designated as responsible, will notify the child's parents/emergency contact and the child's physician, and provide them with all relevant information.
- The Director or designee will remain with the child until the parents have arrived.
- DHS must be notified if any emergency medical treatment is required.
- If a class is on a field trip, we will follow our Center's procedure for illness/emergency. Student emergency sheets will be carried by the Director or designee. Emergency illness or injury, which does not require an ambulance, is handled in the following manner:
- Staff informs the Director of Operations / Director or designee.



- The child is made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children until a parent or other designated contact arrives to pick up the child from the Center.
- The child is supervised by a teacher/qualified staff member who is trained in first aid.

### Care of Mildly Ill Children

In some cases, children with mild illnesses may be appropriately cared for in the center and exclusion is not necessary. Staff is trained in caring for such children. Precautions will be taken to ensure all staff members and children, practice good hygiene to prohibit the spreading of infectious illnesses.

**However, if a child is too ill to participate in the regular classroom routine and appears uncomfortable his or her parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately.**

### Immunizations

All children enrolled in our program are required to be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and Hib in accordance with the criteria established by the RI Department of Public Health. Children who are not properly immunized will be excluded from the program (medical and religious exemptions allowed). Lead testing must also be done in accordance with the guidelines established by the RI Department of Public Health.

In addition, we highly recommend that each child receives an annual flu shot.



### Monitoring Children's Health and Exclusionary Guidelines

The center staff on a daily basis will monitor children's overall health. Concerns will be brought to the attention of the Director of Operations / Director and the necessary steps will be taken. If needed, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately.

Children are excluded from the program according to the Exclusionary Guideline located below. Exceptions will be made only if recommended by the child's physician and providing the Center feels it will not compromise the overall health and safety of other children and/or staff, nor will it compromise the child's ability to participate in the classroom daily routines and activities.

All staff members are trained in recognizing signs and symptoms of illness in children. Fever is a well-known symptom that we use to identify the ill child. You will be notified and asked to immediately pick up your child if he or she is running a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher.

**YOUR CHILD MAY NOT RETURN TO THE CENTER UNTIL HE OR SHE HAS BEEN FEVER FREE FOR A PERIOD OF NO LESS THAN 24 HOURS; TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WITH NO TYLENOL, ADVIL, OR MOTRIN.**

If your child is diagnosed with an illness that warrants antibiotic treatment, we require that he or she does not return to school until a full cycle of antibiotic has been administered.

### Exclusion Policy

Only children who are in good health may be brought to the center. All children will be observed upon arrival for any potential health concerns. Children may not be left at the center if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the previous 24-hour period:



- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher- Children sent home with a fever in the middle of the day may not return to school until they have been fever free for a full 24-hour period.
- Diarrhea- 2 or more instances close together may be assumed to be contagious unless determined by a doctor not to be so.
- Vomiting.
- Pronounced or persistent coughing.
- A contagious condition of any kind, including but not limited to strep, flu, respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, infectious rash, hepatitis, chicken pox, measles, mumps, scabies, lice, etc., unless accompanied by a physician’s note indicating that the child can return to a group setting.

When a child develops signs of illness during the day, a parent will be called and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child will be made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children.

The Director may need to consult the child’s pediatrician or the center’s health consultant as to whether an infectious disease is present and the length of time the child must be excluded. The health consultant will also be notified when a sick child or staff member present symptoms or concerns that might affect the school.

**When sick children are kept at home all children and their families benefit from better health. In some instances, a physician’s certificate of good health may be required before a child will be allowed to return.**



### Exclusion Guidelines

<b>Illness/Symptoms</b>	<b>Return to School</b>
<b>Pronounced/Persistent Coughing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symptoms subsiding – child able to participate in daily activities</li> <li>• Note from a doctor.</li> </ul>
<b>Coxsackievirus</b> (Hand, Foot & Mouth) *Blisters on hands, feet, around and inside mouth, and sometimes other parts of the body. May be accompanied by fever, diarrhea, or vomiting. Highly contagious in children 5 and under.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion five days from start of symptoms PLUS</li> <li>• Fever free for no less than 24 hours without medication</li> <li>• Blisters have scabbed or hardened, and no new blisters have formed for 24 hours</li> <li>• Child is comfortable and feels well enough to participate in daily routine</li> </ul>
<b>Conjunctivitis</b> (Pink Eye)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 hours from start of medication PLUS discharge improving.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please consult with administration as timelines continuously change.</li> </ul>
<b>Croup</b> *Barking cough, fever, sometimes difficulty breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever free for no less than 24 hours without medication.</li> <li>• Doctor’s note required to return.</li> </ul>

<b>Ear Infection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No less than 24 hours fever free without medication and on antibiotics for no less than 24 hours or doctors note saying antibiotics not prescribed.</li> </ul>
<b>Fifth Disease / Roseola</b> *Headache, body aches, fever, sore throat, red “lacey” rash on body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever free for no less than 24 hours without medication</li> </ul>
<b>Impetigo</b> *Red, oozing, blister like sores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No less than 24 hours from beginning antibiotic medication PLUS no new spreading of rash</li> </ul>
<b>Influenza</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 days from onset of symptoms <u>PLUS</u> fever free for no less than 24 hours without medication.</li> </ul>
<b>Lice / Scabies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No less than 24 hours after treatment has begun and all nits have been removed.</li> <li>Doctors note required for scabies.</li> <li>Child will be checked by nurse or experienced staff member before returning to school.</li> </ul>
<b>Measles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 days after onset of rash.</li> <li>Doctors note required to return</li> </ul>
<b>Mumps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 days after onset of swelling.</li> <li>Doctors note required to return</li> </ul>
<b>MRSA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open area must have closed.</li> <li>Area must be covered,</li> <li>Documentation of treatment and doctors note required.</li> </ul>
<b>Norovirus or Stomach flu</b> * Vomiting, diarrhea, fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever free for no less than 24 hours without medication,</li> <li>Vomiting subsided for no less than 36 hours.</li> <li>Diarrhea subsided for no less than 24 hours</li> </ul>
<b>RSV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-7 days from onset of symptoms <u>PLUS</u> fever free 24 hours without medication.</li> </ul>
<b>Ringworm</b> *Reddish, scaling, circular patterns with raised edges and central clearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No less than 48 hrs. after treatment has begun</li> <li>Doctor’s note required to return</li> </ul>

\*Exclusions are subject to change and children are evaluated on an individual bases whenever considering illness. Communication of illness before coming to school is of the utmost importance as a doctor may clear your child before our exclusionary period.

**\*\*A doctors note alone does not guarantee a child’s return to school.\*\***

### **Plan for Dispensing Medication**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center strongly urges parents and physicians to schedule medication before and /or after school hours whenever possible. When medication must be administered during center hours, Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center will follow a strict Medication Policy. All employees at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center are required to participate in the state’s Medical Administration training before

handling and dispensing medication. Medication will be stored, handled, and administered per this policy. Medication must have the correct dosage written on the bottle, the child's name must be on the label, route, and the time to which it will be administered. Necessary Medication Authorization Forms are available in the classroom or from the Site Director, these forms must be filled out correctly and signed.

It is the physician's responsibility to prescribe any medication (both prescription and over the counter) in the correct dosage without endangering the health of the child. This information, including any possible side effects and warnings signs of toxicity must be documented and available. All medication is to be stored out of the reach of children. Refrigerated medication will be stored in the main kitchen. Non-refrigerated medication will be stored in a steel box out of the reach of children, Medication is not, under any circumstances, to be left in a child's lunch box, diaper bag, cubby, etc. Nor shall medication be mixed in a child's food or bottle unless specified by the physician. The center will not be held responsible for any spilled medication, or any medication left behind after the expiration date.

### **Medication is Administered Under the Following Guidelines:**

1. Prescription medications will be administered only if they are stored in the original container, labeled by the pharmacist with the physician's name, the child's name, name of medication, dosage instructions, etc. Non-prescription medications must also remain in the original container. (At our Massachusetts sites, these must be accompanied by a written order from the child's physician with specific instructions for administration, including length of course, any allergies, and possible side effects. The order cannot read "as needed" must specify when the medication should be given.)
2. The initial dose of medication (prescription or non-prescription) will be given at home or by the doctor in order to determine any possible allergies or negative side effects.
3. Children prescribed antibiotics for any reason may not return to the Center until they have completed a full 24-hour medication cycle.
4. Over the counter medications will only be stored and/or administered when accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form.
5. Topical, non-prescription medication can be administered by the Center with a written permission form signed by the parent or guardian. If the Center notices any reaction to the medication, we do reserve the right to request a physician's note to continue the medication. The Center will not administer any medication contrary to the written directions on the original container unless directed to do so by a physician's order.
6. Either a member of the administration or designee administers all medication.
7. If any special devices are required for administering medication (i.e., droppers, measuring spoons, breathing machines, etc.) the parent must supply them.
8. Each dose of medication administered is logged on the Medication Authorization Form. The date, dosage amount, time, and initials of the individual administering the medication will be documented. These forms are available for parent's review.
9. When administering medication, no attempt will be made to restrain children who are upset or uncooperative.
10. Sunscreen-Parents who want their child to wear sunscreen are asked to put on the first application, before leaving their child for the day. Teachers will reapply sunscreen before going outdoors in the afternoon. Parents must supply their own sunscreen in a bottle clearly marked with their child's name and instructions for application, (Parents of infants should check with their physician- certain lotions are not recommended for children under the age of six months.)

## **Allergy Policy** **Reporting Procedures**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center has in place an educational policy to teach children about food allergies and how we can work together when a child has an allergy. Upon entering the school, we ask that no child enters with food or drink. We ask that all children be brought to the sinks after they have hung up their coats and dropped off their lunch box at their cubby. Please do not allow your child to touch any toys until their hands have been washed. Children will be instructed to wash their hands frequently throughout the day for health and safety reasons. At snack times and at lunch, children with specific food allergies will not be placed at a table by themselves they will sit with children who do not have any of the products one might be allergic to. Children are taught as toddlers to understand their space when eating, and not to share food. This policy has been in effect for the past several years and we have done exceptionally well. At the start of the school year, we put into place a peanut/nut sensitive environment and we ask that you adhere to it by not sending anything with peanuts/tree nuts. If there is a student in your child's class with a nut allergy and a food containing nuts is sent in, we will contact you to bring another option for your child before the designated eating time.

## **Missing Child Policy**

To secure the safety of our children at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center, all employees are required to sign in all children upon arrival and to do a head count throughout the day as indicated on our classrooms count forms documenting the number of children and staff. If there is a discrepancy between the count and the actual number of children, the teacher will verify the sign in numbers, check the classroom, and then notify the Administrator immediately. Administration will check the infra-structure and the outside property. If there is still a discrepancy, the Director or his/her designee will contact the local authorities, DHS, and parents. Classrooms will combine to utilize additional teachers until authorities direct us to do otherwise.

## **Infection Control Plan**

All center staff members will follow the DHS guidelines for infection control.

## **Disposable Gloves**

Disposable vinyl gloves, which are approved for clinical use, must be used in the following circumstances:

- Diapering a child.
- Assisting a child with toileting.
- Handling any bodily secretions, including mucous, feces, or blood.
- Administering first aid / medication
- Cleaning contaminated surfaces.

Gloves must be disposed of immediately after each use by placing them in a soiled waste disposal with a lid. Hands must always be washed after removing the gloves.

## **Handwashing**

Handwashing is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of infection. Following the appropriate hand-washing procedure is critical, not only for staff, but children as well. DHS procedures for handwashing are posted at all hand-washing areas. Individual wipes and /or hand-sanitizer, which may contain alcohol, may be used if running water and soap are not available.

## Children and Babies Should Wash Hands

1. Upon entering the classroom each morning.
2. Before eating or preparing food.
3. After toileting and diaper changes.
4. After handling bodily secretions or using a tissue for sneezing or coughing.
5. After outdoor play.
6. Before and after sensory table play.



## Adults Should Wash Hands

1. Before beginning work each day.
2. Before preparing food or helping babies or children eat or eating themselves.
3. After handling bodily secretions, assisting a child using a tissue or using a tissue themselves.
4. After cleaning a contaminated surface.
5. After removing a pair of vinyl gloves.

## Diapering

Children will be diapered in designated diapering areas. All Blackstone Valley members will follow DHS procedures for diapering. Procedures will be posted in each of these areas and should be followed whenever diapering a child. Children's diapers will be changed regularly (every two hours) as well as when soiled or wet. Parents are responsible for maintaining a supply of diapers, wipes, and spare clothing for their children. Staff will alert parents when the supply needs replenishing. Soiled clothing or blankets will be placed in a plastic bag before being placed in the child's diaper bag or cubby. The Center is not responsible for the washing of these items.

## Toilet Training

Toilet training is done in accordance with requests of the child's parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Toilet training will never be coerced. All children will be allowed to use the bathroom when needed. Children will be supervised during toileting but allowed as much privacy as is appropriate. No child will be punished for soiling or wetting clothing.



Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves. Parents of children who are toilet training will receive communication daily regarding their child's toilet progress. We will not, under any circumstances, force children to use the toilet if they are not willing to do so. The Center and parents must both agree that a child has exhibited the readiness skills needed to begin toilet training before we all consent to assisting a child with training at school.

## Biting

Biting is an unfortunate but inevitable phase of most toddler's development. While it is upsetting for the children, the parents, and the teachers, it is important to remember that, like all phases, it **will** pass. If biting becomes a continual issue, we will request that you seek information from your pediatrician.

Biting most often results from children feeling frustrated, over stimulated, angry, hungry, or pain due to teething. Often, toddlers use biting as a means of getting their needs met because they do not have more appropriate methods of communication and because biting generally elicits a strong and immediate response from others.

If a child's persistent biting becomes an issue the center requests that together with the parents, we work to eliminate the biting and teach new skills as soon as possible. A consistent approach at home and in the Center will help the child understand that biting is not an appropriate behavior. In addition, our staff may do the following to decrease biting episodes:

- Offer activity choices at the appropriate developmental level to avoid frustration.
- Teach gentle touch.
- Stop activities that are too exciting before the child bites.
- Teach the child words to use when frustrated.
- Respond to biting incidents with a firm, "No biting" / "Biting hurts".
- Help children get started with appropriate activities.
- Shadow persistent biters in order to intervene **before** a bite happens.
- Provide teething toys for those who are young and teething.

If the above interventions fail to curb the biting, a parent meeting will be requested to determine the next steps of ensuring safety for all children in the classroom.

### **Termination/Suspension Policy**

Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center reserves the right to terminate our services for the following reasons:

- Parents behaving in an unprofessional and/or abusive manner to our staff members.
- Failure to make tuition payments.
- Failure to abide by the hours of attendance determined at the time of enrollment.
- Failure to cooperate in engaging ancillary services for your child if recommended by the center.
- Failure to follow the policies and procedures established by Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services.
- If the center feels it cannot appropriately meet your needs and/or the needs of your child.
- If the child is unable to successfully participate with the appropriate staff to child ratio in reference to their age.
- A child that presents challenging behavior that puts him/herself, other children, or staff at risk.
- Should the center become aware of one of the above as a problem, the possibility of termination or suspension of a family member will be handled as follows:
  - Parents will be notified and meet with administration. Notification of suspension or termination will always be in the form of a written document with the specific reason.
  - Options other than suspension and termination will be discussed. For children with challenging behaviors referrals to parents for evaluation, diagnostics or therapeutic services will be suggested.
  - For children with challenging behaviors Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center will pursue options for supportive services including consultation and educator training
  - For children with challenging behaviors, Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center will work with parents to formulate a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the school.
  - The meeting will be documented, and goals will be set.

If we are unable to resolve the problem after a reasonable amount of time, we will provide written documentation to the parents of the specific reason for suspension and/or termination of the child and we will supply the parent again with information and resources available to them. Should any parent request information for referrals we will provide them with a list. Should a child have to leave Blackstone Valley

Center, we will prepare them according to their developmental level and help to make the transition a positive experience.

### **Children with Different Abilities**

When a child presents with different abilities, the parent will identify in writing the accommodations they need for their child including but not limited to staff/child ratios, special equipment, materials, ramps, aids, or any modification in their child's participation. Then the administration will respond in writing within 30 days to the parents. If additional information is needed from an outside source, such as local education agency, Early Intervention, or health/service providers, parents will sign a consent form. Upon making our decision we will determine the nature and cost as well as the ability to secure funding, the school's financial resources, number of people employed and the effects it would have on expenses, resources, or any other impact. We will provide a reasonable effort to accommodate the child. If the accommodations would cause an undue burden, the notice that the parents receive from us will include the reason for our decision. Teachers would participate in the development and review the child's individual plan with outside agencies, always with parent permission. Toileting needs are not an undue burden.

### **Social Service Referrals**

The teaching staff will be responsible for identifying and reporting any obvious or suspected problems in any of the following areas: educational, behavioral, social, medical, dental, vision, hearing, or mental health. The staff will follow this plan if they have a concern.

1. Teachers are trained to identify issues of concern in the classroom.
2. Teachers request the Director or designee to observe the child to confirm the nature of the problem. Lead teachers will observe the concern and document for no less than 2 weeks.
3. Teacher and the Director coordinate documentation, review the child's record and make recommendations.
4. Director will contact parents to set up an appointment to discuss concerns.
5. A conference is held to review the concerns and recommendations with parents. A written statement to parents is provided including the reason for referral, summary of the center's observations and any plans made by the center. Parents will input to improve the plan.
6. The center will offer to assist parents in making the referral, and if the parents agree, a written parental consent form will be required.
7. Follow up time frame is agreed upon.
8. Recommendations made by an outside source are reviewed by Teachers, Director, and parents. A plan will be made for incorporating recommendations into the child's plan.
9. When indicated, the Director or designee will make parents aware of the intervention services available in the community including but not limited to: Community Mental Health, United Way Family Counseling Services, local director of school administration, and regional child development centers for diagnostic evaluations.
10. All parents will be given a list of agencies that will provide services for the area of concern. This list will incorporate local and state agencies as well as the Department of Early Education and Care, RI DCYF, and Early Intervention.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

All emergency exits are clearly marked. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom indicating two separate means of exiting from each area. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the Center, the children will be taken to the far end of the playground, against the fence or to the far-right corner of the driveway. Daily attendance records are kept in each classroom and maintained by the teachers. During an evacuation, attendance sheets and daily sign-ins will be taken outside by the teachers. Children's individual emergency cards are brought outside by the Director or designee.

All staff not involved with the direct care of children will assist infants, toddlers, or children with disabilities. Infants are placed in an evacuation crib and wheeled to the nearest exit. The evacuation crib is clearly marked, and all staff will be informed of such identification. Toddlers will walk or be carried to the safety area as well as those children with disabilities.

The Director will remain in the Center verify that all persons have been evacuated from the building. No one will be allowed back into the building until the Director, or designated emergency response personnel, determines that the area is “all clear.”

Staff has been instructed not to take the time to put coats on children or prepare them for being outside. Before the Director leaves the building, he/she will gather as many items for warmth as possible, without jeopardizing his/her safety.

The Director will plan and execute evacuation drills at least once a month. A log documenting the date, time, route, and effectiveness of each drill is kept in the office. In the event that the children and staff will have to evacuate the building each site will go to their designated location which is Building B.

### **911 Emergency Procedures**

- Call 911 if you feel unable to handle the situation.
- Have a staff member certified in First Aid and CPR stay with the sick/injured child.
- Have another person go to call 911 and then call the child’s parent/guardian regarding the situation. Emergency phone numbers are located in each Teacher’s binders.
- The person caring for the sick/ injured child needs to assess the injury or situation.
  - Is the child conscious?
  - Is the child breathing?
  - Does the child have a pulse?
  - Does the child have a head injury or possible neck/spine injury?
- Always call 911 if the child:
  - Is unconscious.
  - Is not breathing.
  - Has no pulse.
  - Is choking.
  - Is having a seizure.
  - Has fainted and is not waking up.
  - Has a head injury with unconsciousness, vomiting? clumsiness, abnormal speech/behavior, or blood or fluid from the nose or ears.
  - Has an insect bite with hives, pallor, vomiting, difficulty Breathing or collapses.

**DO NOT MOVE** a child if there is a fall and the child cannot move his/her legs and/or arms (there is a possibility of a broken neck). All other situations will be at the discretion of the Director/Assistant Director.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures**

Who is required to report?

Anyone may report concerns of Child Abuse and Neglect to RI DCYF as non-mandated reporters.

However, anyone falling into the following category is a mandated reporter and must file a report when they believe a child is being abused or neglected.



When a child abuse is reported or suspected, the administrator is notified. The administrator will then contact the DHS and the DCYF regarding staff members. Any staff member accused of abuse is immediately suspended from all duties and contact with the center children. The administrator will then assess the facts. Other staff members may be consulted. Review of the child's records and discussion with parents may also occur. A 51A report is filed by telephone to DCYF by the administrator, along with the person with the most contact information. A written report will follow the oral report within 48 hours. The center will cooperate with all investigative authorities. The staff member will remain on suspension until the investigation is complete and the allegations are founded or unfounded. All findings are treated on an individual basis.

**Mandated Reporter (as defined by chapter 119, Section 51A and as defined by RI Law)**

Any physician; medical intern; hospital personnel engaged in examination, care or treatment of persons; medical examiner, psychologist; osteopath; public or private school teacher; educational administrator guidance or family counselor; day care worker or any person paid to work with a child in any private or public facility, or home or program funded by the State or licensed pursuant, which provides day care or residential services to children or which provides the services of child care resource and referral agencies, voucher management agencies, family day care systems and child care food programs; probation officer; clerk/magistrate of the district courts; social worker; foster parent; firefighter; or police officer.

**Abuse (as defined by Department Regulation 2.01 and as defined as by RI Law)**

The non-accidental commission of any act, by a caregiver, upon a child under age eighteen (18), which causes, or creates, a substantial risk of risk of serious physical or serious emotional injury or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the State of RI. This definition is **NOT** dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home setting).

**Serious physical injury (as defined by Department Regulation 2.47 and as defined by RI Law)**

Death; or fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ and any other such non-trivial injury; soft tissue swelling or skin bruising depending upon such factors as the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises; or addiction to drugs at birth; or failure to thrive.

**Serious emotional injury (as defined by Department Regulation 2.46 and as defined by RI Law)**

An impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within normal range of performance and behavior.

**Emotional Maltreatment**

This term refers to a situation in which there was an act by a caretaker which caused or created a substantial risk of "serious emotional injury" (as defined above). Situations in which a child's emotional stability is impaired due to the failure of a caretaker to act should be considered "neglect" (as defined below), not serious emotional injury.

**Neglect (as defined by the Department Regulation 2.35 and as defined by RI Law)**

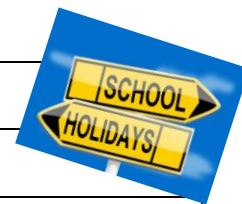
Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home setting).

**Caretaker (as defined by Department Regulation 2.07 and as defined by RI Law)**

A child's parent, step-parent, guardian, any household member, and any other person entrusted with the responsibility for a child's health or welfare, whether in the child's home, a relative's home, a school setting, a day care setting (including baby-sitting), a foster home, a group care facility, or any other comparable setting. Such as, "caretaker" includes (but not limited to) schoolteachers, babysitters, school bus drivers, camp counselors, etc. The "caretaker" definition is meant to be construed broadly and inclusively to encompass any person who is, at the time in question, entrusted with a degree of responsibility for the child. This specifically includes a caretaker who is a child (e.g., a baby-sitter under age 18).

## Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center Holiday Closings

January	New Year's Day
February	President's Day
May	Memorial Day
July	Week of July 4 <sup>th</sup> (days vary) Summer break
August	Victory Day
September	Labor Day
October	Indigenous Peoples Day
November	Veteran's Day
November	Thanksgiving Day
November	The Day After Thanksgiving
December	Week of December 25 (days vary) Holiday Break
December	Date varies- 1 Professional Development Day



### Early Dismissal Days

March / April	One Friday (Date varies – PD Day)	12:00 p.m.
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Payment remains the same for all holiday closings so that we can pay our hard-working team of teachers!



We are thrilled to be a part of your child's most important years. Parental feedback will help create a successful experience for your child. We want all children at Blackstone Valley Early Learning Center to have positive early learning experiences, as they are the foundation for all future learning. Thank you for sharing your child with us!

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