



Parent Handbook

Butterfly Learning Centre Inc.

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Welcome to the Butterfly Learning Centre (BLC)

This booklet is designed to provide information needed to help you and your child enjoy the many benefits of the services provided by the Butterfly Learning Centre.

Vision and Philosophy of Child Care at the Butterfly Learning Centre

In September of 2000, the BLC Task Force felt that the time was right to initiate the development of a new learning centre for early childhood education to fulfil the growing need in our expanding community.

BLC is a non-profit, charitable corporation which shall provide child care and shall continually strive to improve the learning and working environment of an early childhood education institution with the goal to enrich the learning experience of all children, families and staff.

BLC's philosophy is to ensure that all of the children enrolled in the centre are given the best care possible. In addition to a safe and healthy environment, the program should also stimulate development in all areas.

Our science based curriculum recognizes the importance of laying a foundation of base knowledge from which the children build new concepts. Children are helped to develop the skills necessary to become life long learners. Curiosity and exploration are two of the foundations on which our program is based.

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The Board of Directors of the BLC reserves the right to make additions or changes to these policies at their discretion. Notice of (30) thirty days will be given informing the membership of any changes.

Butterfly Learning Centre's Core Values

- ❖ To place the needs of children first and foremost in any decisions related to the business of operating a child care centre.
- ❖ To continually strive to improve the learning and working environment of an early childhood education institution with the goal to enrich the learning experience of all participating children, families and staff.
- ❖ To establish, maintain and conduct a non-profit child care centre licensed under the Day Nurseries Act for the education, care and guidance of children.
- ❖ To establish, maintain and operate a non-profit child care centre for physically, emotionally, developmentally or financially disadvantaged children within the community.
- ❖ To offer on site training, practice and experience to students of child care educational programs.
- ❖ To liaise with other charitable, educational or governmental agencies or organizations in developing child care programs.

Responsibility for Operations

BLC is an independent organization formed of volunteers and professionals. The organization operates under the guidance of a volunteer Board of Directors and professional staff. The growth, development, administration and quality control of the child care program has the leadership of capable, experienced BLC personnel.



Professional Child Care Staff

BLC's child care staff are carefully chosen, qualified professionals, who have early childhood education diplomas and are selected to meet the needs of the children in the care of BLC and their parents.

BLC / Let's Talk Science Initiative

The early years study, led by the world-renowned child development expert Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain provided compelling evidence of the following;

- ❖ a child's brain development, especially in the first three years of life, sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.
- ❖ that development opportunities must be made available to all young children and their families.



Let's Talk Science (LTS) is a national registered charitable organization working to develop a society that is scientifically literate and globally competitive through innovative educational programs, research and advocacy.

BLC and LTS are working together to provide the following:

- ❖ an innovative science based education program for children enrolled in an early years learning environment;
- ❖ on-going training and support for staff in order to ensure successful implementation of the curriculum;
- ❖ an appropriate research partnership to conduct a longitudinal study and publish the outcomes of this new curriculum.
- ❖ create an education product available for distribution nationally to aid other child care centres.



Child Care Programs Offered By BLC

Infant

Full time/part time for children 3 months to 18 months of age.

Toddler Care

Full time/part time for children 18 months to 2-1/2 years of age.

Preschool Care

Full time/part time care for children 2-1/2 years to 4 years of age.

Kindergarten

Alternating full day child care for children attending a junior/senior kindergarten program in Waterloo Region.

Junior/Senior Kindergarten (Lexington Campus only)

Full day seamless kindergarten program with a teacher from the Waterloo Region District School Board and BLC staff.

School Age

After school care, as well as school holidays and P.D. days, for children 6 to 12 years of age.

Program Goals and Objectives

- ❖ To ensure a safe and healthy environment.
- ❖ To provide an environment which supports the child's sense of well-being and competence as well as social and physical development.
- ❖ To provide an innovative science based education program for children enrolled in an early years learning environment.
- ❖ To provide reliable and flexible care to meet the needs of working parents.
- ❖ To provide consistent, nurturing, individual attention for the child.
- ❖ To promote positive family relationships.
- ❖ To provide case management for children with special needs, in co-operation with local agencies.
- ❖ To provide a supportive working environment for staff, with opportunities for professional growth.

Child Guidance Principles

A positive approach is used to guide children. Each situation and child is dealt with individually. Methods include:

Re-direction

Guiding a child into acceptable options when engaged in an unacceptable activity.

Natural or Logical Consequences

Attempting to make the child aware of the result of his/her actions.

Limit Setting

Boundaries are developed by the teacher for the children as a group and for individual children according to each situation.

Modelling

Demonstration of appropriate ways of interacting.

Offering Choices

Appropriate choices are outlined and children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves.

Anticipating Trouble

Planning and preparing the environment.

Ignoring

Some inappropriate behaviour can be ignored with more emphasis given to appropriate behaviour.

Positive Reinforcement

Showing genuine approval when children are engaged in positive activity.



Child Care Procedures

Hours of Operation

BLC will be operational from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It is recommended by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that your child be in attendance at the centre no longer than nine hours per day.

BLC will be closed: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, August Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Monday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day. Should statutory holiday(s) fall on a weekend the centre will be closed the following business day(s).

Meals and Snacks

Depending on the program, the children are served hot lunches and/or nutritious snacks. If a child has food allergies, parents are to provide appropriate food substitutes as necessary.

Any food brought to the centre must be "ready to serve" from a thermos or plastic container. A 25-day rotational menu will be posted.

It is BLC's policy to attempt to avoid any form of nut or nut by-products within its meals or snacks as a result of serious allergies that children enrolled in the centre may have. As we rely on third parties to supply ingredients which are incorporated into our meals and snacks, we request that same be respected by our suppliers. We also require that parents of children enrolled in the centre be sensitive to this issue and not send their children to the centre with any product that may contain any form of nut or nut by-product.



Parents of young infants (under one year) must supply their own baby food, juices, and prepared formulas in sterilized bottles, properly labelled with their child's name. Children may be integrated into the BLC menu once they reach one year of age. Written feeding instructions are requested for young children, and must be updated as your child's menu expands.

Field Trips and Off-Site Activities

As part of the curriculum, field trips and other off-site excursions are planned periodically throughout the year. Parents will be notified in advance of field trips on the monthly calendar and will be required to give written permission for their child(ren) to attend on a case-by-case basis.

Smaller off-site activities such as neighborhood walks are also part of our curriculum planning. Parents are required to sign a permission form to cover all such informal excursions prior to enrolling their child(ren) as such activities are not always planned in advance.

Termination of Child Care Space

A minimum of one month's written notice is required if you plan to withdraw your child from the centre. If written notice is not received, full child care fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

As well, your child's space may be terminated for the following reasons:

Non-Compliance with General Policies and Payment Provisions

Failure to comply with any of the above policies, including any payment provisions, may, at the BLC's sole discretion, result in immediate termination of the space, in addition to any other available legal remedies.

Behaviour Related

This policy recognizes that a child care centre is not always appropriate for all children. This could be because of physical or mental disabilities, or behaviour problems. This termination policy is meant to protect the children and staff of the centre from physical and/or mental stress brought on by the social and behavioural difficulties experienced by some children. A decision to terminate a child's space will not be made unless all alternate avenues have been exhausted.



The following points will be considered:

- ❖ verbal and/or physical abuse of staff and/or children by the child in question.
- ❖ An inability, by the child in question, to follow rules and routines, therefore consistently disrupting the program.
- ❖ Written complaints about the child in questions from parents of other children in the centre.
- ❖ Inappropriate or disturbing behaviour exhibited by the child's parent.



The following procedure will be used in determining when to terminate a child care space. An initial meeting will be scheduled with the respective parent(s) to clearly outline the issue at hand. The issue will be recorded and articulated to parent(s) by staff members for up to a one month period. If the parent(s) are able to follow through on recommended practices, then staff will assist them in making contact with the appropriate agencies. The Board of Directors will be informed of these procedures and kept updated throughout the entire process. If the documentation determines it to be necessary, the Supervisor of the centre (along with the staff) will meet again with the parent(s) to discuss the issue. If the issues at hand continue, one month's notice of termination will be given in writing by the Board of Directors of the Butterfly Learning Centre.

NOTE: We are required by law to immediately report all suspected child abuse cases to the Children's Aid Society.

Absence

Parents must notify the centre before 9:00 a.m. if the child will not be attending on that day.

Registration

Upon completion of registration forms, a \$30.00 per child, or \$50.00 per family, non-refundable registration fee is required. This registration fee is a one time only charge and provides you with your membership in this organization once your child is actively attending the centre. All registration information must be completed and applicable monies received by BLC before your child is considered for admission. You will be notified by a representative from BLC if your registration has been accepted.



A deposit of \$250.00 is required before your child's entry date. This deposit will be refunded upon the return of your security key.

Orientation to Program

Prior to enrolling their child(ren) in one of our programs, parents are required to attend both a tour of the centre and an orientation session with either the supervisor or assistant supervisor. The tour generally lasts 20 - 30 minutes and the orientation session generally lasts 30 - 45 minutes. At the orientation session parents can expect to receive information regarding centre policies, all pertinent paperwork to be completed as well as have an opportunity to ask questions. A parent handbook will be made available at the orientation if requested or can be found on our website. A parent orientation checklist will be completed at the time of the orientation and filed in the child(ren)'s file(s). All paperwork must be completed in full and returned to the centre prior to the child(ren)'s first day of care.

As part of the orientation process, parents are encouraged to have their child(ren) attend the centre tour. It is also strongly recommended that parents accompany their child(ren) on play visits to the centre prior to the child(ren)'s first day of care.

Butterfly Learning Centre has a strong open communication policy and welcomes phone calls or drop-in visits from parents at any time.

Fees

Each month's fees are due on the first day of each month by automatic electronic funds transfer from your account. Full fees are to be paid regardless of days missed due to illness, vacation, inclement weather and/or statutory holidays.

Receipts will be given in February of each year for the previous year's child care fees.

Missed Payment

If your account is not kept current, you will be notified. There will be a \$30.00 charge for all returned payments. If the payment is not received on the due date, the fees will immediately become outstanding and the parent will be deemed to have received notice of the outstanding fees. If the fees remain outstanding for more than 30 days, the centre will have the right to immediately terminate the child care services for that particular child. Any outstanding fees, if not received by the end of the month, may jeopardize the continuation of child care services.

Withdrawal of a Child from the BLC or Reduction of Days of Care

One month's written notification is required for withdrawal of your child from the centre. If a child is withdrawn without written notice, a full month's fees will be charged. The deposit will be applied towards the outstanding fees. If your child is withdrawn at the request of Butterfly Learning Centre, one month's written notice will be given whenever possible. One month's written notification is also required should you reduce the days of care of your child's needs.

Pick Ups

For the protection of all concerned, you must notify the staff if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child at the end of the day.



It is your responsibility to make sure that this person has your issued entrance swipe card to enter the centre. Only you or a person specified as your emergency contact may pick up your child from BLC unless you have notified the centre ahead of time.

If a parent arrives intoxicated, or if this is suspected by a teacher, BLC cannot let the child go with them, and the other parent or the emergency contact person will be called to pick up the child. If the parent refuses, and leaves with the child, the police will be called, given the car license number and informed of a suspected impaired driver.

Late Pick Ups

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged after 6:00 p.m. The fee will be charged to the parents' account. Parents who are consistently late will be asked to withdraw their child from the centre. If you are going to be delayed (overtime, car trouble etc.), please call BLC as soon as possible to minimize the worry of your child and staff.



Assistance with Fees

BLC has a subsidy agreement with the Region of Waterloo. The supervisor of the centre can assist you in accessing information on child care subsidy.

Health Care

The Day Nurseries Act requires that prior to admission, each child be immunized as recommended by the local Medical Officer of Health. Since regulations require daily outdoor play for each child, it is our policy that a child who is too ill to fully participate in all programs is to remain at home. If a child becomes ill during the day, temporary care is provided until a parent can be contacted. The child will be sent home if he/she develops a fever of 101°F or higher, vomiting, diarrhea, or a contagious illness as determined by the local Medical Officer of Health, until the condition has been cleared up. A sick child may not remain at the centre. A child cannot be kept inside during outdoor playtime since we do not have sufficient staff to provide supervision to the ill child.

Medication

BLC will administer both prescription and non-prescription medication to children, in accordance with Provincial legislation. This requires parents to provide:

- ❖ Written authorization, including the dosage and times any drug is to be given;
- ❖ Medication in the original container, clearly labelled with the child's name, the name of the drug, the dosage, the date of purchase and instructions for storage and administration of the drug;
- ❖ Acetaminophen may only be given when ordered by a doctor for an existing condition. It will not be given to reduce a fever in order to keep a child in care who otherwise would be at home or visiting a doctor;
- ❖ Medication must be given directly to a staff member and not left in the cubby area.

If all the above administering requirements are not adhered to, our staff will not administer the medication for the safety of all involved.

Clothing

Appropriate clothing for the season is necessary for comfortable play and activity at all times. Please ensure that an extra set of clothing is



left within your child's cubby at the centre. Labels help both the children and staff to identify belongings. Parents should also bring a rest/sleep toy and a sleep blanket. Items brought to the centre should be labelled with your child's name. Any centre clothing that you borrow must be cleaned and returned to the centre as soon as possible.

Suggested Seasonal Clothing

Winter: snowsuit, mittens (2 pairs), warm hat, boots, etc.

Summer: sunscreen, shorts, long pants, swimsuit, towel, hat, etc.

Diapers

If your child is in diapers, an adequate supply of diapers is to be kept at the centre, along with any wipes, ointment or powder to be used. All items must be marked with your child's name. If a child is in training pants, several pairs must be kept on hand at the centre.



The Butterfly Learning Centre is not responsible for the loss of personal property. Please clearly label any personal property with your child's name. If you are not able to locate your child's belongings, please check the Lost and Found or speak to a staff member. It is requested that special or valuable items and toys be left at home. Occasionally, books, media, and other educational items may be shared at the teacher's discretion. Since we focus on

positive play, please support BLC by keeping 'aggressive' or 'violent' type toys and media at home.

Internet Safety

The Butterfly Learning Centre seeks to continually update our computer technology for the children in our programs. Along with this technology comes access to the internet. It is therefore necessary to put some guidelines in place in order to protect the children in our care who are able to access the internet independently. To this end we have installed filters to screen certain internet sites should someone try to access them. Children's use of the computer in the school age room will be with parental permission.

Inclement Weather

Since BLC is committed to providing reliable child care, it is our policy not to close the centre due to inclement weather. If a weather emergency occurs, where it is impossible for staff to reach the centre safely in the morning, a decision may be made to close the centre at the discretion of BLC's supervisor. Please listen to your local radio stations (i.e. 96.7 CHYM FM, 105.3 Kool FM), phone our centre's voice mail, and/or go to our website at www.butterflylearningcentre.com.

Communication / Centre Involvement

The directors and staff at BLC feel that communication between Educators and parents is of the utmost importance. It is important for parents' peace of mind to receive regular information about their child's experiences. As well, parent participation and input are valuable to the child and the centre. This is not always possible in the rush of morning drop-offs and evening pick-ups. The centre provides the following opportunities to ensure communication between parents and staff:

Open Communication

Our qualified Early Childhood Educators are committed to building a strong and supportive relationship with parents, in order to enhance the care and learning of the children. Parents are welcome to ask questions and offer suggestions to further the growth of BLC.

Daily Information Sheets

A review of each child's participation will be provided for parents to pick up at the end of the day.

Family Participation

Parents and children are invited to attend evenings of fun and excitement offered throughout the year. Parent workshops may be offered periodically with free child care often available.

Newsletters

An informative newsletter will be sent home on a regular basis, and e-mailed upon request.

Notice Boards

There are two notice boards placed in the lobby, posted with various items of interest to parents. Please check these boards periodically to keep aware of issues concerning the centre, like the daily menu, upcoming events etc.



Board of Directors

Parent input is always encouraged and necessary to proactively meet the needs of the children, families and the ECE staff. Parent participation at the board level, on committees and at community events is a positive way to support BLC.

The Board of Directors consists of parents and community members, who meet once a month. They conduct all business activities related to the operation of BLC. Parents are welcome to attend Board Meetings. We invite parents to serve on our Board of Directors. Elections are held once a year and Board members are voted in for a two-year consecutive term by the parents at the Annual General Meeting of BLC. No prior experience is necessary!

Evaluations

A yearly program evaluation will be distributed for parents to offer suggestions and feedback on the services provided by the Butterfly Learning Centre.

Staff are committed to providing an environment which fosters children's growth and learning, and responds to the needs of parents. If a parent feels their child's needs are not being met, they are encouraged to speak directly to the supervisor.

Fundraising

In order to maintain a reasonable program fee for all families, our current fees do not cover all the operating expenses of the centre. The rest of BLC's expenses must be met through fundraising efforts. These expenses may include things like new toys, equipment, tricycles, etc. All fundraising activities require parent participation. If we cannot meet our program's financial commitments, our only alternative is to increase fees.



Confidentiality

We are obligated to maintain the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional dealings with children and families, as outlined in the Association of Early Childhood Educators and Ontario's Code of Ethics.

In order to respect and support every individual's privacy, and to protect all parties involved, we cannot share any information about a child in our care, their families, or any individual on staff.

Media Releases / Cameras

Due to the coverage of the centre's perimeter video cameras, we cannot guarantee that your child will not be photographed.

It is expected that every student enrolled in the centre has a signed consent form authorizing the photography of their child, either digitally or in print, to be used for parental reports and promotion of the centre. No full names will be given in any outside media.

Security Keys

In order to securely enter the building, BLC will provide one specially coded security key per family free of charge. Additional keys may be purchased for \$15.00 each (non-refundable).

When you come to the centre to drop off or pickup your child, please swipe your key each time you arrive. This will log your entry to the centre and confirm exact date and time of each event.

Please do not allow unknown visitors to follow you through the door once your entry is confirmed. Also, do not give your key to someone who is not listed in our records as being authorized to pick up your child.

If you happen to lose your specially coded key, please notify the centre immediately in order to maintain the security of the building. A replacement key and recoding will be billed at \$45.00 per key. If there is a failure to pay the key replacement fee, the amount will be deducted from the initial security deposit.

All security keys given must be returned to the BLC if your child is withdrawn from the centre or if there is a termination of your child care space. Failure to do so will result in a charge to your account of \$45.00 per key.

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If you have any further questions or concerns that are not outlined in this booklet, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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