

# Little Blessings Childcare Center

*"And He took the children in his arms... and blessed them"* Mark 10:16



A division of  
**Christian Life Academy**

"A vibrant, Christ-centered school of excellence!"

**Contact Information:**

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**Administrative Staff:**

Joan Freeman, Principal and Director

Emily Uskudarli, Acting Director

**Childcare Workers:**

Infant - 3 Year Olds: Emily Uskudarli, Shelby Neglio,  
Kathleen Weiss, Fernanda Mendes



## *Welcome to Little Blessings Childcare Center (LBCC)!*

We are honored that you have chosen us to partner with to care for your precious child. LBCC offers developmentally appropriate care and activities with specific learning and developmental goals in mind. Our staff of nurturing professionals take seriously our responsibilities to both you and your child, and have dedicated ourselves to creating a loving community where your child's physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual growth are our utmost concern.

Close communication between LBCC and our families is crucial to each child's adjustment at the center and to his or her daily care. You are the most important people in your child's life, and we welcome and value your input. We invite you to visit LBCC anytime of the day to observe in the classroom or playground, to join your child for meals or to share a special event or talent with your child's group. We encourage you to contact our Center Director, teachers and staff whenever you have any questions, concerns, or just want to check in.

This handbook will familiarize you with our center's philosophy, policies, procedures, and programs. Please read it carefully and thoroughly, then sign and return the last page stating that you have read, understand, and agree to follow LBCC's policies.

### Philosophy and Statement of Faith

We believe that every child develops according to his or her God-given pace, personality and learning style. We strive daily to lovingly meet each child's needs while offering stimulating and varied experiences to help them discover and grow.

As a division of Christian Life Academy, LBCC is a ministry of First Assembly of God Church. We do acknowledge that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and approach teaching from this point of view, honoring God as our Creator and loving Father.

## State Approval and Memberships

LBCC, under Christian Life Academy, is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the largest Christian school organization in the world. LBCC is licensed under the Connecticut Department of Health.

## EDUCATIONAL GOALS

At Little Blessings Childcare Center we believe that young children are learning constantly. From the first moments after birth, every interaction with family, caregivers, peers and the environment presents a message that affects young children in a positive or negative fashion. Additionally, we recognize that the first three years of a child's life are a season of unmatched growth and a crucial window in which each child's personality and well being are forming. Our staff has dedicated themselves to being a message of love and security, while encouraging natural curiosity and opportunities for learning and exploration, all in an atmosphere that breeds peace and comfort for each child.

### Curriculum

We have organized the curriculum in a thematic format with your child's developmental goals in mind. As each child grows at their God-given pace, we carefully observe them to determine what skills they are mastering as well as where the natural growth process will take them next. In this way we can offer various opportunities to practice a skill, enjoy the success, and stretch forward to the future. We carefully structure the days to include experiences that will enrich your child's growth in the following areas:

Body / Physical Development:	Fine and gross motor activities, such as climbing and tumbling, stacking and balancing; sensory exploration and enjoyment, such as sand or water play; music and movement; artistic expression and experiences.
Mind / Cognitive Development:	Reasoning; communicating through expressive and receptive language; problem solving; pre-math concepts, such as sorting and ordering; observing and enjoying science in nature; holidays and special day celebrations; imaginary play; and social growth through interactions with peers and caregivers.
Emotional and Spiritual Development	Developing a sense of self, security, and worth; bonding in a loving relationship with caregivers; finding peace and joy in God's love; an awareness of others and learning character traits such as kindness, friendship and compassion.

## Your Transitioning Child

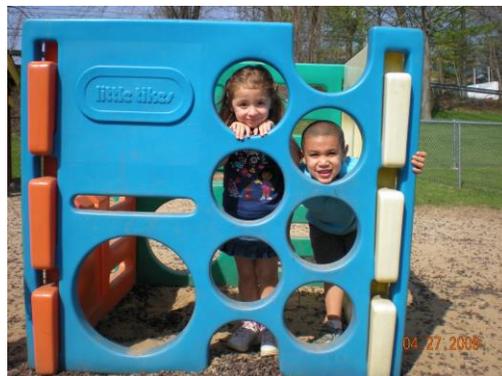
CLA has provided an excellent preschool education for children since 1987, and has the reputation for outstanding early academics, such as early reading and phonics skills, math and science, coupled with a special emphasis on the arts and drama. CLA's goal is to balance these structured and semi-structured learning times with ample time for each child to make their own play and creative choices. As age 3 approaches, Little Blessings will partner with you in preparing your child to meet the K3 programs requirements based on the teachers discretions and "Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards." For a copy of the state's requirements, please visit [www.ct.gov.oec.elds](http://www.ct.gov.oec.elds).

Little Blessings and CLA reserve all rights to dismiss your child at the age of 3 years and 3 months if these requirements are not met.

## Outdoor Play

Young children love being outside; they are "*natural naturalists*", with an innate sense of curiosity and wonder. The experiences shared during outdoor play are life-enhancing moments that cannot be duplicated even in the best indoor situations. A love of nature and appreciation of its beauty and complexity is a valuable attitude to bring into adulthood. Being involved with natural elements and the changing surroundings of the outdoors brings a sense of peace and a balance to our primarily indoor world.

Because of these convictions, our children will go outside to play every day, except in extreme weather conditions. Please be sure to include weather-appropriate clothing, and clothing that is appropriate to play in. Mud play and fussy dresses are not a happy mixture. We cannot be accountable for damaged clothing. Snow pants, boots, hats and mittens will be needed daily in winter months. In warm weather, please send in your choice of sunscreen. Non-toxic insect spray, a hat and sunglasses are also recommended. Please note that if your child is not well enough to go outdoors, they should be kept at home.





## WORKING TOGETHER

### Family Communication

We are committed to developing a strong tie between the center and your home in order to provide an optimal care experience for your child. You will receive daily communication from your child's teachers letting you know how the day has gone, what your little one especially enjoyed or what didn't seem to go so well, along with the day's schedule, meals and diapering (if applicable). Your teacher will keep a portfolio and journal for each child. A periodic center-wide newsletter will be sent home to keep you informed of news, events, and any special projects or needs coming up.

Our Director as well as teachers and other staff are easily contacted for conversations throughout each day. In the interest of confidentiality, we may suggest a phone call or separate time to discuss something in greater depth.

Please be sure to keep us informed of any significant home happenings, care tips, milestones, any new foods introduced for young children, and any upsets in their usual routines or health. We *really* value your input, and will observe strict confidentiality for sensitive issues.

In addition to the above ongoing communication, our staff will be frequently assessing your child's development in the event a formal parent and teacher meeting is needed. During these times, we will work together to focus in on your child's growth and achievements, as well as address any changes or concerns either you or our staff may bring up. These in-depth meetings are always very fruitful and give home and school a chance to renew and revive our partnership for the very best care and education of your child.

## Visitors to the Center

Only children who are registered as students along with their caregivers, members of the faculty or staff of the center and CLA are to be in the classroom or have contact with our children unless the Director has given explicit permission.

In keeping with our open-door policy for parents at our center, we'll be pleased to welcome you at LBCC any time. Please sign in at CLA's office to receive a visitor's badge to help us track who is visiting whom.

All other visitors must also sign in at the CLA office; receive a visitor's badge *and permission* to enter the center or school for an approved purpose and length of time. The CLA office will notify the Little Blessings staff when a visitor is arriving, the reason for their visit, and the expected length of the visit.



## Discipline & Guidance

Toddlers' and young children's behavior is naturally self-centered and motivated by self-interest, often demanding immediate attention. The goal of discipline is to help children develop inner controls so that they move towards appropriate social behavior. As they come to know their caretakers, to know that they are loved, safe, and tenderly cared for apart from Mom and Dad, they will find it a bit easier to wait, to delay what they need, and not become agitated and upset, demanding that immediate attention. They will find themselves at peace once this trust has been earned and internalized.

Methods for resolving conflicts between children include providing guidance, and praise for appropriate behavior, setting clear limits and redirecting their actions when undesirable behavior occurs. No child will ever receive physical or humiliating punishment at Little Blessings. Instead, we will consistently help them to verbalize their emotions or concerns, often supplying them with the vocabulary they need. American Sign Language has proven to be very helpful in lowering frustration for toddlers who can't always find the words to express themselves when emotions run high. We will help them find solutions and see the logical consequences of their behavior. By being given the opportunity to make their own decisions—knowing what the natural consequences will be in advance—they will gradually grow in self-control.

## Encountering Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior and language is not permissible at Little Blessings. Like all of us, children will occasionally exhibit behavior that is hurtful to themselves or others. If the conflict is a minor issue, it will be dealt with by reminders and redirecting to kinder, more appropriate methods. If the behavior is putting him/herself or another in danger, it will be handled more decisively.

Such behavior would require the child being physically separated from others by moving to a quiet place. The child may also choose another activity away from the conflict area. A caregiver will monitor the child until the child's emotions and behavior are under control. Staff will never be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal punishment under any circumstances. The child will be given a choice to make, and will rejoin the group only when we are assured that there will be no repeat of the unsafe behavior. Rarely does it occur that a child does not regain control. In such an instance, a parent may be contacted to take the child from the center for the remainder of the day.

The first time a child acts aggressively or puts him/herself or another person in danger, the parents will be notified as soon as possible. A child will not be physically restrained, except as a last resort when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others. If aggressive behavior should recur, parents will receive an incident report detailing the incident and, if possible, the events that led up to the episode. Often this will give us insight into why this child is reacting so strongly. If aggressive behavior should continue and occur a third time, a meeting between parents, teachers and the director may be called to devise a plan of action to help the child get past acting destructively. If a parent refuses to meet with the teachers and directors, this may be grounds for dismissal, since we have little hope of extinguishing the hurtful behavior without parental cooperation.

While biting is a natural part of toddler development, we recognize that it is particularly upsetting to parents. Toddlers may bite for a number of reasons, such as frustration and lack of language to express their emotions, or painful teething. Our staff will do their best to prevent a recurrence, such as separating the child who is biting, redirecting their behavior in a more positive way. The child who was injured will receive appropriate TLC, first aid, and soothing to help him/her feel safe again. An incident report will be filled out for both sets of parents. If a bite seems particularly bad or has broken the skin, we will telephone the parent before pick up time. Our policy is to not reveal the name of the "biter" to the parents of the injured child. If biting becomes chronic, we will meet with the child's parents and devise a plan of action to try to put an end to the behavior. Because biting is a common toddler behavior, it is not grounds for automatic dismissal. We will, however, vigorously work to end it.

Dismissal will be considered if the child repeatedly acts out in ways that harm others. If our attempts to eliminate the behavior have met with little success, and we don't see a marked improvement in the child's reactions, dismissal may be our only recourse to keep others safe.

Expulsion

Expulsion will be considered if child repeatedly acts out in ways that harm others. If our attempts to eliminate the behavior have met with little success, and we do not see a marked improvement in the child's reactions, dismissal may be our only recourse to keep others safe. Reasons for expulsion will determine if the departure is immediate, or if a minimal notice will be given to allow for other care arrangements to be made.

Payment for the current day, week, or month will be due in full if expulsion results. This is determined by the payment plan in place at the time of enrollment.

I/we have discussed the disciplinary policy with the teacher or administrator who signed, below, before enrolling my/our child in Little Blessings Daycare. I/We understand the policy as it was explained to me/us.

Parents' Signatures

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Teacher or Administrator's Signature

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## Parental Involvement

Parents may be as involved in Little Blessings as your schedule allows! We know that working parents are very busy people, and that you have many pulls on your time. The following are some of the ways parental involvement may take shape:

- Opportunities for volunteering, such as during special days or field trips.
- Be recruited to work on carrying out special projects or enrichment events for our children.
- Sharing a special talent, project or treat with the group.
- Daily, weekly and monthly communication is exchanged through such means as: morning and afternoon greetings, toddlers' daily student sheets, student's journals with photos and anecdotes of events, bulletin boards, teacher newsletters, phone conversations and conferences.
- Center-wide calendar, daily sheets, and newsletters to keep you informed.
- Parents are encouraged to share thoughts or concerns with our staff and director at any time. For working parents, e-mail is a great, convenient way to do this.

## Emergency Plans

### **A. Medical Emergency Plan:**

1. Assessment: As each class has a staff person with an up-to-date pediatric first aid and safety certificate the staff will assess an injured child's need for care.

- a. Minor first aid will be administered by nurse or trained staff.
- b. Parents will be notified as to nature of accident and care.
- c. A log will be maintained on such incidents.

2. Severe Cases:

- a. A 911 call will be made to emergency medical services and the child will be transported to Danbury Hospital. (Parents will be notified of incident by telephone as soon as possible.)
- b. Emergency treatment forms will accompany staff persons.
- c. Other CLA staff will be called upon as needed to insure adequate supervision is maintained.

### **B. Fire Emergency Plan:**

1. In the case of a fire emergency the fire alarm will sound.
2. The teachers will follow an emergency evacuation plan and will evacuate them in evacuation cribs to a safe place.
3. The teacher will check the room to make sure no students remain behind.
4. The director will check the entire building including the bathrooms and unused rooms to assure all students are safely out of the building.
5. Classes will assemble on the upper right side of the parking lot near the basketball hoops. There, the staff will double check class role making sure all are accounted for.
6. The fire department will be alerted automatically via alarm system.
7. In the event that staff and children are not able to reenter the building, they will be transported to the YMCA's Green Knoll Center or Prince of Peace. There, the parents will be contacted to arrange for pickup. Parents will be asked to sign out their children upon arrival.



### C. Severe Weather Plans:

1. When a winter's storm makes conditions hazardous, school will be closed. Such closings are announced over the radio stations under the title Little Blessings/ Brookfield. WLAD 800 AM, and TV's channels 6 and 8. You may also check CTweather.com
2. Delayed openings will be handled announcements over these same radio and TV stations.
3. In the event of an early dismissal, parents will be notified by telephone, and over the same radio and TV stations.

**Please note:** Full tuition is still due despite closings for storms or other emergencies.

***IMPORTANT: Travel conditions may be different where you live or on your route to the center. Each parent must decide if the trip is safe for them.***

### D. Emergency Evacuation Plan:

1. Christian Life Academy is listed on the town of Brookfield's Civil Preparedness Plan. CLA has been issued a Public Alert Radio by the Dept. Of Homeland Security as an emergency alert signal for major events that might require evacuation. All procedures given by town officials would be followed in a severe emergency situation of such a high magnitude.
2. Children will be transported to one of two evacuation sites, depending on where and what the emergency is; one, next door, the Prince of Peace Church or transported to the YMCA Green Knoll Center in Brookfield.
3. Teachers will take all class rolls with them in any emergency evacuation.
4. Parents will be notified to pick up children at one of those sites.
5. Staff members will stay until all children are picked up.

## Supervision Plan

1. The following staff ratios will be maintained at all times in the center:
  - a. Children under 3 years ~ One staff member for every four children present.
  - b. Children 3-5 years ~ One staff member per ten children in attendance.
  - c. Mixed ages 6 weeks-5 years ~ Ratios for the youngest age will be maintained for mixed age groups. This includes indoors and outdoors. At least two staff members will be present at all times.
2. The group size shall not exceed twenty children over three and not more than eight for children under three.
3. Children are watched carefully while outside at play. Staff members are stationed at equipment at all times. Other staffs rotate among play areas.
4. Children are never to travel outside or inside alone. A staff member is designated to make bathroom trips, ect. with them.
5. Children are carefully watched while at play or during an activity within the center. This includes bathroom time. A staff member is always present and available for help.

Hours of Operation

LBCC is open 50 weeks of the year, Monday through Friday, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and closes promptly at 5:30 p.m.

Holidays, Closings & Special Events

The center will be closed according to the following list

Labor Day	Columbus Day	Thanksgiving Break
Christmas Break	New Years	Civil Rights Day
Presidents Day	Good Friday	Memorial Day
4 <sup>th</sup> of July Vacation	TBD- Teacher In Service Days	TBD- Early Dismissals

You will also receive a listing of these closings as well as any scheduled special events.

**Please note:** In order to compensate our staff in a fair and honorable manner, tuition must still be charged for these days.

Drop Off Procedure

Morning drop off begins at 7:30am. Be aware that there is a **5 m.p.h speed limit** on school property.

- **Between 7:30 and 8:00am:** You may park in front of the building, in the spaces under the overhang and alongside the building.
- **After 8:00 a.m. please restrict all parking to the regular parking lot spaces as buses start arriving.** Please remember to turn off the engine of your vehicle before departing it.

After appropriately parking your vehicle, please come in, help your child take off their shoes and get settled in.

To help establish trust and a predictable routine, we ask that parents say a quick goodbye to your children and not “sneak away” while they are distracted.

Most children will need a few weeks to become adjusted and comfortable in a new care giving situation. If your child has had a difficult time separating from you, feel free to phone the center to ask how they are doing.

If your child will be absent or late arriving at the center, please phone Little Blessings at 203-775-5191 extension 630 no later than 9:00.

**Security System:** We have incorporated what we believe to be a highly effective safety/security identification system to keep important information at our staff's fingertips in the unlikely case of an emergency or a questionable person arriving at pick up time. While the system may take a bit longer at the beginning and end of your busy day, we know that your child's safety is first in your heart, and we thank you for your cooperation.



Parents or guardians are required to sign children in and out each day in our Attendance Log, which will be kept at the entrance to your child's room. State regulations require that we keep accurate and detailed attendance records. We hope these measures coupled with our visual identification door release system will help you feel secure in your child's safety while at Little Blessings.

**Please note:** LBCC is not be responsible for any child whose care has not been given over to the staff on duty, or for children who have been "signed out", even if that child is still on the premises. It is a parent's or guardian's responsibility to supervise and safeguard their child(ren) as well as any accompanying children while you are on the premises. Since we share a facility with First Assembly as well as Christian Life Academy, **there will be traffic** in and around our parking area, doors and driveways, so please, be extremely cautious for all our children's safety.

### Pick up Procedures

1. Please park in the regular parking area in front of the building. Turn off the engine of your vehicle. Please call our classroom to tell us you are here. We will come and open the "middle doors" for you to enter the building. Once inside the staff will collect your child's belongings and give them to you. Please remember to sign your child out daily.
2. This is a wonderful time for parents to go over the events of the day, and to check your child's mailbox. An unhurried reunion will help your child make the transition from center back into your care seamless.
3. Children in our care will be released only to their parents or those persons over 16 years of age that are on the authorized pick up that you fill out upon enrolling you child. We will ask for photo identification anytime a person is

unfamiliar to the staff. In the event that the staff member feels the child would not be safe with the person they are being released to, for example, an intoxicated parent, the local authorities will be called. If such a situation arises, we will contact an alternate authorized person. In legal situations where the child cannot be released to a particular person, legal documentation must be provided.

**\*\* LBCC cannot legally deny access to a parent or guardian unless we have on file a current legal document restricting or denying custody or visitation. If a situation is unclear, we request that the family return to court and resolve the issues.**



### Closing Time Plan

Your child as well as our staff needs to know if you are going to be arriving later than your usual pickup time. Children worry when parents are late, and we want to let your child know that you will be delayed, and what time you expect to arrive. However, it is still extremely important that you pick your child up before the center's closing at 5:30pm.

If an unavoidable situation arises that will cause you to arrive after 5:30pm, please phone Little Blessings directly at 203-775-5191 ex: 630 as soon as you become aware of your situation.

If you do not pick up your child by 5:45 and we have not heard from you, or have been unable to reach the other emergency numbers on your Emergency and Contact Form, our only recourse may be to notify the Brookfield Police Department to take custody of your child.

We ask you to recognize that these *are not* arrangements that anyone wants to resort to. Make every possible effort to arrive before 5:30. If a parent has recurring episodes of late pickup, we may need to terminate your enrollment at the center.

To maintain a professional status of our staff, we cannot allow privately arranged babysitting services to take place at the center. However, in the case of a true emergency, our staff will do everything we can to help keep your child safe until you or your authorized person comes to pick up your child. Two staff members will remain with your child at all times.

### Late Pick up Fees

Parents arriving after 5:30 will be charged a fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes after 5:30. Late fees are expected upon arrival and should be paid directly to the staff person

who has waited for you. If you do not have the funds on you, they will be due before your child returns back to the center.



## Health & Illness

Please notify the center if your child will be absent. If illness is the cause, please inform the staff as to what the illness is. Little Blessings Childcare Center stringently adheres to Connecticut's Child Care regulations regarding excluding ill children from childcare centers. While we understand that it can be difficult for parents to miss or have to leave work, it is sometimes necessary to exclude children from the center to reduce the transmission of illness. In addition, our staff will not be able to adequately meet the needs of children who are in a weakened state. We *strongly recommend* that families be prepared with alternate care arrangements for children who are ill.

In keeping with state regulations, children must be kept at home if they have shown any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- \* An elevated temperature (+100°)
- \* Reddened or crusty eyes
- \* A rash or pustules
- \* Any contagious condition, including head lice, or other parasitic organisms
- \* A frequent cough or difficulty breathing
- \* An episode of vomiting
- \* Lethargy that prevents the child from comfortably participating in active play
- \* Active cold symptoms copious nasal secretions (any color or clear)
- \* Diarrhea more than 2X in a day

If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms of illness during their time at LBCC, in accordance with State Regulations, our staff will phone the parents to arrange for the child to be taken home. Parents are asked to pick up children within 1-2 hours after being notified. Children are to be kept at home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the center, or to present a physician's note stating that the child's condition is not contagious. The final decision whether to exclude a child from the center will be made by the Center Director.

If a child has been diagnosed with or is suspected to have a reportable communicable disease (as defined by the Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention) a note from a physician will be required before re-admittance to LBCC. Please notify the center if your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease so that we can alert other parents to be on the lookout for symptoms, and so that we can disinfect the childcare areas. LBCC will inform parents of any confirmed communicable disease encountered in the center within 24 hours of discovery.

**Health Records** - A physical exam dated within one year of entry is required prior to attendance at LBCC. By January 15th an up-to-date vaccination record is required to ensure all children are on schedule for their vaccinations.

**Medications:** LBCC will dispense medications provided by the parent provided the parent has administered the first dose, and has filled out the appropriate authorization form. All medications must be in its original container. Prescription medication must bear the prescription label with the name of the child, the doctor's name and telephone, the dosage, and a non-expired date. No over-the-counter medicine will be given to a child unless the parent has on file either a Medication Authorization Form which has been completed by *the child's physician*, or a note or phone call from the child's physician authorizing the medication and the dosage. Please send along an accurate measuring tool.

\*\* Please remember a child with a fever will be given authorized medication only to keep the child comfortable while awaiting the parent/guardian's arrival to take them home. A child cannot be readmitted to the center until he/she has been fever free for at least 24 hours, and with no other symptoms of illness.

Any product our staff is asked to apply or administer, including diaper rash cream, sun screen, bug spray, etc. must be in its original container, labeled with child's name, with written and signed permission and directions.

**Accidents:** Any injury requiring more than TLC and a band-aid will be documented in an Accident Report. We are required to keep these records on file, so we ask that parents sign, date and leave the report at the center. You may have a photocopy of the report if you desire.

It is LBCC policy to have at least one staff in the building trained in basic first aid and CPR, in addition to the school nurse. If we have a question as to the severity of a child's injury, we will telephone a parent. If in our staff's opinion medical attention should not wait, the child will be transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital (either Danbury or New Milford), and you will be telephoned immediately with what has taken place.

## Guidelines for Child Abuse and Neglect Procedures

As a Christian institution of education, Christian Life Academy has a basic and legal obligation to protect the health and welfare of the children it serves. We recognize that health and safety are inextricably interwoven with the academic achievement and spiritual growth of our students. Child abuse and neglect are a direct violation of the school's ministry to provide for a student's intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. Therefore, Christian Life Academy staff members are legally, ethically, and spiritually mandated to work collaboratively with appropriate agencies regarding suspected child abuse and neglect, by immediately reporting any suspicions or actual knowledge of child abuse or neglect to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families (DCF), as required by Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 17a-101a-d. Further, it is our policy to cooperate with DCF and law enforcement agencies in the course of investigations into alleged child abuse or neglect.

### Definition

Staff members frequently become the people to whom a child discloses the presence of abuse or neglect because the staff member is a stable and abiding adult influence in that child's life. The first step in helping abused and neglected students is learning to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.

According to Connecticut General Statutes, Section 46b-120, child abuse and neglect are defined as:

- I. A child who has had:
  - a) Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
  - b) Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
  - c) Is in a condition, which is a result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to: malnutrition, sexual exploitation and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.
- II. Child Abuse includes:
  - a) Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, burning, beating)
  - b) Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation); or
  - c) Neglect of a child (failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision); or
  - d) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent

maltreatment of neglect; or

- e) At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

III. Child neglected is defined as a child who has been:

- a) Abandoned by his parents, guardian, or custodian; or
- b) Denied proper parental care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally,
- c) Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being.

### Procedures

If any staff member suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, he/she will immediately share this suspicion with the school principal (and the school nurse for evaluation as needed). Should the abuse or neglect require medical attention, every effort will be made to provide those services. The nurse will determine what, if any, further medical attention is needed. If the recommendation for further attention is determined, the child will be transported by ambulance to Danbury Hospital and the parent/guardian will be notified.

The staff member who suspects abuse and neglect must make an oral report by telephone within 12 hours to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Hotline at 1-800-842-2288. This ensures that the report is made firsthand, in a timely and accurate manner. If collaboration with the school principal is not immediately possible, for whatever reason, the staff member must report suspicions immediately and directly to DCF. Proof of abuse or neglect is not required before reporting. Early reporting of abuse and neglect is important in preventing future harm to the child and his/her family.

After the normal business hours of Christian Life Academy and/or DCF, if it is believed that a child is in imminent danger from abuse and/or neglect, the staff member will call the local police department (Brookfield Police at (203) 775-2575) or the police department in the town in which the child resides. In addition, the employee must make a report to the school principal and to DCF at the earliest opportunity, even if a report has already been made to law enforcement.

DCF may request the staff member to submit a written report within 48 hours of making the oral report. A copy of the written report must be kept in a confidential file in the principal's office, apart from the student's academic or health files.

The staff member may reserve the right to remain anonymous, according to state law. When intervening in families, DCF focuses on the content of the report, not on

who called. Unless the staff member gives consent, or unless the court orders otherwise, DCF will not reveal the reporter's name. Connecticut General Statute, Section 17a-101e assures that anyone making a report to DCF "in good faith" is immune to any civil or criminal liability. It is in the child's best interest to report first and let DCF assume the responsibility to further investigate suspicions.

After consulting with DCF and the school principal, and potentially the school nurse, a collaborative decision with the reporting staff member will be made concerning whether the school will reveal the report to the family. It is important to be honest with families. Discussing concerns regarding abuse or neglect, and employee responsibilities to report suspicion may remove the burden of disclosure from the child.

### Documentation

If a staff member has a conversation with a student who discloses the presence of abuse and/or neglect, or presents information suspicious of abuse or neglect, the staff member needs to document exact statements made by the child, using quotes whenever possible. The staff member should also document the exact date and time of disclosure or observation, under what circumstances the student disclosed, the demeanor of the student at the time of disclosure, and the nature of what was observed. Inquiry should be limited to such questions as how the injuries happened and/or whether medical needs have been attended to by a parent. The purpose of this documentation is to assist the staff member in accurately recalling what led them to suspect abuse or neglect, should law enforcement, DCF, or the court need that information.

As required by Connecticut General Statutes, the report shall, if known, specifically contain the following:

- 1) Name, address(es), and home phone number(s) of the child suspected of being abused or neglected;
- 2) Date of birth and current grade of student;
- 3) Name and address of the person responsible for the child's welfare;
- 4) Specific information indicating neglect or the nature and extent of the child's injuries (including any evidence of previous injuries);
- 5) Identity of the person or persons suspected of being responsible for such abuse and neglect;
- 6) Identity of other children and adults in the household, and
- 7) Any other information that might be helpful in establishing abuse and neglect for DCF.

When anyone reports abuse or neglect to DCF, the intake worker will ask many questions but knows that the reporter may not have all the answers, Information concerning and documentation of suspicions, or actual knowledge of child abuse and/or neglect are confidential and must be protected. Staff members may share only necessary and appropriate information in order to protect the safety of the child. All written documentation or reports, data collection, nursing assessment and interventions, or proof of child abuse or neglect will be maintained in the student's confidential file in the Christian Life Academy principal's office. The school nurse will make a simple notation of the report's existence in the student's health file.

### Staff Education

Christian Life Academy's Policy for Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect is reviewed with all faculty and staff members annually before the beginning of the school year, by the school nurse and/or school principal. Each new staff member attends training classes on the signs of child abuse/neglect and reporting requirements. The school nurse will also provide a review of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect which the school staff should be cognizant of and watching for among our students.

### Personnel Policy

At CLA, every effort is made to prevent the hiring of child abusers through background checks, which include state and federal criminal checks and sex offender list checks. If at anytime, an accusation is made against a staff member, it should immediately be brought to the Director's attention. The administration will protect the child, immediately notifying a parent/guardian. The Director will immediately respond to and investigate the allegation, calling in DCF and/or the police if necessary. The staff member may be put on a leave of absence until the investigation is complete. If the staff member is found to be innocent, he/she may be restored to his/her position. If guilty, he/she will be dismissed immediately. A copy of this policy will be included in our information packet, and is given to every family upon enrollment. A copy is also posted on the parent bulletin board.

Any report of a staff member accused of child abuse/neglect will be reported to parents via a letter written by the Principal or CLA Board Chairman. School officials will be available to answer questions and offer support and guidance.

**All staff members are hired on a 60 day probationary basis.** A review is done with the head teacher or director before being classified as a permanent employee.

### Rest Time and Bedding

State law requires that any child in care for longer than five hours must be provided an opportunity for nap or quiet time. We recognize that children have different sleep patterns and needs. LBCC will provide a mat, or crib for each child. We ask families to provide an appropriate sheet, a blanket, and a small pillow if desired for toddlers and preschoolers. These items will be sent home weekly for laundering. Feel free to send in one favorite comfort toy or blanket. Be sure to label each item, and launder it a minimum of once a week.

After lunch, toddlers and preschool children will have an afternoon rest period. If your child is not able to sleep, the teacher will give a simple, quiet activity to be enjoyed while resting.

### Meals and Nutrition

Parents will need to supply all meals, beverages and snacks your child will need for the day. State Regulations require that all lunches be sent in with an ice pack as well as at least 3 of the major food groups. High sugar drinks and snacks are strongly discouraged, since these will not meet the nutritional needs of a child's growing, busy body. Ask your teacher for a list of suggested snack/lunch items if you are having a difficult time choosing healthy food. Please keep in mind that we are now "nut free." Please do not send your child to school with any nut based products.

Be sure to clearly communicate to staff any food allergies, since LBCC may occasionally provide or allow special snacks or beverages. We reserve the right to make any or all classrooms free of a particular food, such as nuts, if an enrolled child has a severe reaction to such foods.

**Toddlers:** "Finger foods", such as fruits, vegetables, cheese, pieces of meat or chicken pre-cut into bite-sized pieces that are easy to chew and swallow, are required for all young children. Their budding independence is nurtured as they pace their own meals. Include disposable spoons or forks if needed, and be sure to label all plastic containers, lunch boxes or.

It is required that you use ice packs to keep lunches cool, and that you pack warm food in thermoses. We have a microwave in the class for heating.



## Clothing & Diapering Supplies

**Toddlers:** Either keep at school *or send daily* 2 full spare sets of clothing, including socks and one additional pair of footwear (slippers, etc.) in case of an accident. Be sure that your child is dressed in appropriate footwear and clothing to suit the weather and outdoor, active play, including hats, mittens and boots when appropriate. Please don't dress your child in clothing that you don't want to get soiled.

**Children in diapers:** Send in sufficient diapers (at least 6 each day), wipes and any ointment you would like applied. Label the package of diapers, wipes and the ointment. We are not set up for cloth diapers, but if you prefer to use them, please see your teacher for what you will need to supply for sanitary storage. We will alert you as supplies are getting low.

We follow proper diapering guidelines as stated by the Connecticut Child Daycare Licensing guideline book which is as follows:

- Staff and children will wash their hands thoroughly and dry them with a paper towel.
- Staff will wear protective gloves.
- Children will be placed on changing table, on top of disposable changing paper.
- Soiled diapers will be changed, the child will be wiped with wipes, and diaper will be disposed of in a plastic bag and put into the receptacle.
- Staff and child will wash their hands.
- The changing area will be disinfected.
- Staff will wash hands again and dry with a paper towel.

**Other Items:** Please bring in a blanket, a crib sheet, and a “cuddly” item for your child's rest time. Please don't send in any other toys from home. Precious things are too easily broken, and can sometimes be very difficult to share. If you'd like to send a book in to share, we will accommodate your child as the curriculum and time allows.



## Birthdays and Special Days

Nothing is quite as exciting to young children as their own birthday! Parents may send in a special snack, drink and party cups & plates, if desired, to celebrate your little one's birthday. Please, no super hero themes. Invitations to private parties may be handed out at the center only if every child in your group will be receiving one. We will also discourage talk of, "You're coming to my party," or "You're not coming to my party." This can be so hurtful to the one left out. Your teacher will give a list of names, addresses and phone numbers or email for invitations to be sent. **NOTE:** If you do not want your contact info given out, you need to let us know and we'll leave you off the list.

If your family has a special day that you'd like to share at the center, please give the details to your teacher. While we respect the diversity and beliefs of families, as a Christian school, there are some things that may not be appropriate for our center, but we'll do our best to accommodate you.

**Field Trips:** Toddlers and preschoolers may take part in a few trips to special places in our area, such as an indoor playground, parks, a kid-gym, or an age-appropriate puppet show. Special permission and pre-payment, as well as sufficient chaperones and transportation are pre-requisites for the trip. Those wishing to chaperone or drive children will need to furnish proof of insurance and a copy of their CT driver's license. All children will need appropriate car seats and seatbelts. We encourage families to try to join us for one of our trips. It's a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other better, and children are so excited to share the event with their own family! You'll receive at least 2 weeks' notice before a trip to allow you time to request off work, if needed. Speak to your teacher if you have a suggestion for an appropriate trip.

We occasionally have people come into the center to do a presentation for our students. We've worked with travelling zoos, art and drama companies in the past. Once again, special permission and pre-payment are needed. We'll give ample notice of these events.

## Admission & Enrollment Procedures

**Admission:** A registration form should be completed and returned to the office along with a registration fee per family to enroll your child in our center. Enrollment is based on availability.

Tuition payments can be made weekly or month. Weekly payments are due the Friday prior to attendance. All enrollment fees and tuition are non-refundable.

A late fee of \$25 will be billed to any family for a payment not received on time. Monthly payments not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will be assessed a \$25 late fee. Your child may not return to the center until your account is brought current.

Concerning tuition, please note that you owe the full dollar amount regardless of the absent days. In other words, your tuition is not affected by the number of days your child does not attend school. If you sign your child up for three days of the week, then you owe the tuition for those three days even if your child is not in attendance. Missing one or more of those three days does not grant a discount in tuition.

Each child entering the center will need to submit an updated physical form annually, signed and dated by the child's physician, including immunization documentation.

**Enrollment:** Before actually enrolling your child, you are welcome to accompany your child for a short time (usually for half an hour) in our center to be sure that both you and your child are comfortable with our methods, our staff, and other enrolled children. This is a wonderful opportunity to help your child begin to feel "at home," and a chance for you to feel at ease with our staff and facility.

In order to ensure appropriate staffing levels, it is necessary to provide specific hours of care needed for your child. Families are expected to follow the agreed upon schedule. If you need to change your child's typical schedule, however, please submit a written request to the director at least two weeks in advance. If an emergency situation requires immediate changes, do not hesitate to contact the director.

### **Notice of Non-discrimination Policy:**

Little Blessings/CLA admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid program, athletics and other school-administered programs.

As part of the enrollment process, and before your child's starting date, the following documents will need to be completed and returned to our office:

- Registration forms including developmental/behavioral history, along with appropriate fees and deposits
- Emergency contact information and permission to procure emergency treatment
- Child's physical health and immunization forms completed by your child's physician, which must contain detailed information regarding any medical concerns or limits
- Permission and Authorization to Pick up Form
- Signed parent handbook agreement form
- Permission to administer medication, such as children's Tylenol (in case of unexpected fever or discomfort) as you specify.
- Permission to administer any regularly needed medications with appropriate physician involvement.

**Trial Period:** Each child is accepted on a 90-day trial basis. At any time during this period, either a parent(s) or the center may decide that our program or center is not a "good match" to a child's temperament or needs. LBCC/CLA reserves the right to end the enrollment of such children. If a parent decides that LBCC/CLA is not the setting they are comfortable with, they may end enrollment with the understanding that all fees paid are non-refundable.

**Withdrawing Your Child:** Our policy is to require a 30-day written notice when you are planning to withdraw your child from the center. This is important to allow closure for your child as well as for classmates and our staff. It is also necessary from a business standpoint so that we may begin the process of filling the spot being vacated. Full tuition is still due for the remaining 30 days. We will be happy to confer with your child's next caretaker, if you request it.

### Financial Policies

At Little Blessings we recognize the financial strains families can experience. However, we have an obligation to our staff and our creditors to keep current with our commitments. Tuition payment options include weekly and monthly payment plans. Lack of attendance does not constitute a discount in tuition; full tuition is due regardless of the child's absence.

Tuition payable on a weekly basis is due each Friday *before the upcoming week*. Payments made after Friday will be charged a late fee per school day late. Tuition is due each week that your child is scheduled to attend, regardless of absences,

vacations, holidays, snow days, or other closings. If payment is delinquent for more than two weeks, the childcare space can no longer be reserved for you, and your child may not be brought back to the center until the balance is made current. Once the space is no longer reserved for your child, we will seek to fill that space from our waiting list. If a monthly payment schedule would be more convenient for your family, arrangements can be made with the office to set up a monthly payment plan. The due date for monthly payments is before the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. A late fee of \$25 will be applied to any monthly payment account that is late. Please realize you are jeopardizing your child's space at the center after tuition is late.

We urge families to make payments via ACH automatic withdrawals or by credit card. Forms are available in the CLA office. Teachers will accept payments only if another day's delay would result in your child's space being lost, and not just to prevent a late fee. Payments made in cash will require a written receipt that you and the staff person should sign. We must be firm about these policies, and ask each family to be diligent with keeping their accounts current.

## **Summer Fee Policy**

Thirty percent of your month's total is required to hold your child's position if you are planning to take your child/ren out for the summer and then return in the Fall. There will not be an option for your child/ren to attend on a drop off basis during the Summer months.

Please advise either the staff of Little Blessings or the office of your decision to leave for the summer.

## Procedures for Resolving Conflict

As in any community, we may occasionally find ourselves holding differing viewpoints and opinions, particularly when strong emotions are involved as in caring for our children. While this may be inevitable, at Little Blessings, we make an earnest effort from the very beginning of our partnership to foster mutual respect, understanding, with clear and honest communication. Our goal is to respond within 24 hours to a family's concerns, and to bring a compassionate resolution as soon as possible.

Please join us in our efforts to follow these principles of reconciliation and peacemaking

- If you find you are upset about an issue regarding center-wide policies or practices, please take your concern to the Director, who will set time aside to meet with you to hear and discuss your concerns.
- If you are unhappy with the way a staff person has acted, go to the person you have offense with and make your concerns known. Be honest and open about what you would like to see as a resolution. Please, do not involve another person to discuss your issues. This will do nothing to resolve the issue, but much to cause further difficulty.
- After meeting with the person(s) involved, if you do not feel that the issue has been resolved to your satisfaction, please let the Director know. A meeting between the Director and both parties will likely be held to try to mediate a solution.
- If after following the above steps you feel that your problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you are free to contact the Principal of Christian Life Academy.

Little Blessings Childcare Center & Christian Life Academy are private entities and are ministries of First Assembly of God Church. The Director, Principal and/or the School Board may, at their discretion, seek advice or decisions from the pastors of First Assembly. Any difficult situations or unresolved questions may be taken to the above mentioned bodies by our management. The decisions reached by these governing bodies are considered final.

**Please carefully read, sign and return this page** before the first day of your child's attendance at the center. It is considered part of the enrollment packet, and therefore your child's enrollment will not be considered complete without it. Thank you for complying with all policies and procedures. The safety of our students, their families and our faculty and staff are of utmost importance to us.

If there is anything we can do to make your child's stay with us more enjoyable, please don't hesitate to let us know.

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I have read the Little Blessings Childcare Center Policy and Procedures Handbook, and I agree to uphold and submit to all policies written therein. With Little Blessings being a division of Christian Life Academy and subject to the authority of the Advisory Committee, I understand a policy is subject to change throughout the year if the Advisory Committee determines it is in the best interest of the academy and/or its students, faculty and staff. You will be sent notification of any changes should a policy change.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date