



FAMILY HANDBOOK



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“Children learn as they play.
Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.”
– O. Fred Donaldson

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BASIC beginnings



Early Learning Center

Vision Statement

To give all of Laramie's children an opportunity to explore, create, learn and develop self-confidence to their fullest potential by achieving success every day in their childhood.

Mission Statement

Basic Beginnings is a child care center dedicated to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment where children can grow and learn, and where parents, teachers and the community work together in the best interest of each unique child in a respectful and supportive partnership.

 SAFETY	 NURTURING	$e=mc^2$ DEVELOPMENT
 COMMUNICATION	 RESPECT	 SUPPORT
 TRAINING	 MENTORING	 POSITIVE



Welcome to Basic Beginnings! We understand that choosing the right childcare for your family can be a difficult task. We are delighted that you have chosen us. We also know that you have been looking for a preschool or childcare facility where you can leave your child with confidence. Our goal is to create that confidence by providing a safe, healthy and stimulating environment where children may grow, develop, and learn. We value families as the child's first and best teacher. We staff our classrooms with trained teachers who are chosen for their enthusiasm and ability to provide a rich, warm environment for children.

We believe childhood should be a happy, exciting time of life, a time that allows children the opportunities to explore, create, and develop self-confidence. In our program, which is built around this belief, we offer age-specific educational programs designed to help children choose activities that lead to the healthy development of the whole child. Not only is the child challenged intellectually, but also socially, physically, and emotionally. We believe that children learn through play, and that when allowed to explore the world, themselves, and those around them, they develop a positive attitude toward learning that will go with them all their lives. We provide opportunities for each child to succeed every day, developing a self-confidence that will enable them to reach their fullest potential. It is our goal to allow all children to grow at their own unique pace and to develop the special personality that belongs only to them.

We are constantly striving to improve our program and serve your needs better. If you ever have any ideas, suggestions or concerns please feel free to talk to the Director at any time. Thank you once again for choosing Basic Beginnings. We look forward to getting to know you and your child.



BASIC BEGINNINGS PROGRAMS

INFANTS

Our Infant Care Center, for children 6 weeks to 18 months of age, is a completely separated and self-contained facility with a separate entrance and playground. The Infant Rooms operate on a very flexible and individualized schedule, with each child's daily routine arranged by the parents in cooperation with their child's caregivers. Naps, feeding, play, and project times vary with each child's needs and unique personality.

The emphasis in our Infant Rooms is largely placed on individual growth and development. While the youngest 6-week old infants are completely dependent upon adults for recognizing and understanding their needs and wants, the older infants begin to focus on crawling and learning how to communicate with adults to express their wishes. One-year-olds spend their day concentrating on walking, motor coordination, and their developing verbal skills. One-way mirrors give parents the opportunity to observe their child interacting with the caregiver and with other children. The ability to see the children in their regular daily setting at Basic Beginnings without being seen by the child is a special treat. Telephones in each classroom give parents the comfort of being able to talk directly to their child's caregiver at any time. Phone calls from parents who wish to "just check" on their infant are encouraged and cheerfully accepted. Please make sure you have your Emergency Code Word available when you call. We will never release information about your child to anyone you have not authorized for such information. Daily notes from the teachers keep parents informed of their child's day. These notes are available electronically or in paper form.

STAFFING

To facilitate strong and healthy relationships between infants and their teachers, we try to minimize the number of adults the infant or toddler must get accustomed to throughout their time here at Basic Beginnings. Infant and toddler teachers remain with the children for their first three years. As children become developmentally ready for greater challenges in their activities and environment, they move with their teacher and their friends to classrooms that better meet those needs. Occasionally changes in staffing require that a new teacher be introduced to a classroom. When this happens we do everything possible to allow both children and families to become accustomed to the new teacher, with as much overlap between the exiting personnel and the new staff member as possible. Infant care providers are specifically trained in infant care, first aid, and infant and child CPR. A registered nurse is available for conferring with the infant room staff.



INFANT MEALS

Parents are welcome to come and breastfeed or feed formula to your infant as often and for as long as you like. If you are providing pumped breast milk for your infant, please bring it in the ready-to-serve plastic packets, labeled with your child's full name and the date. Fresh milk can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours. Previously frozen breastmilk can only be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours before we must discard it. Milk that has been prepared for serving to an infant must be discarded after one hour at room temperature.

We provide iron-fortified infant formula, cereal, and baby food; however, since we are unable to meet specific requests for brands and types of formula and baby food, parents are welcome to provide breast milk and/or specific formula or food they wish their children to have. Information about the specific brands and types that we serve are available at the front desk or from your child's teacher.



OLDER INFANTS

The older babies in our Infant Program are ready to learn more about their world. They are focused on learning the practical skill of feeding themselves, walking, talking and early social skills. Their day is filled with singing, stories, games, art and indoor and outdoor play. Loving teachers are available for talking with the children, playing with them, and giving hugs and encouragement as the important milestones of this age are mastered.

OLDER INFANT MEALS

These children are also beginning to expand their food experiences. Please let us know as your child adds new fruits, vegetables, grains, meats, and any other new foods to their diet. When you are ready to move them to our regular menu, we would love to have a list of the things your child is ready to begin eating. The full monthly menu is available at the front desk. You may highlight the menu to show us foods for which your child is ready. According to the Child and Adult Care Food Program, infants who have reached their first birthday are allowed to consume whole cow's milk. When they reach their second birthday, they will be served 1% or skim milk according to the CACFP. Your child's teacher will welcome your input as your child reaches these milestones.



TODDLERS

For children between the ages of 18 months and 36 months, our Toddler Program offers a flexible, play-oriented environment that includes lots of singing, stories, art, and movement activities. Verbal skills are developing rapidly at this age, and the ability to communicate more effectively opens up many opportunities for these children. Independence and exploration are the key words for this age group. To encourage those curiosities, hands-on art and sensory experiences are available every day. Story time increases as the children's attention span grows with their heightened understanding. They become more socially aware of the other children and the teacher becomes less important in their lives. As they begin to play more regularly with the other children in their class, we encourage this newfound independence and teach them the basic social skills that will provide the foundation for their

whole preschool and public school experience. "Please," "thank you," and "I don't like that" are phrases we use to provide the cornerstones for good manners and early problem-solving techniques.

The next milestone for toddlers to conquer is that of potty training. Because each family has different views and philosophies about this major step in their child's development, we encourage constant communication between the child's teacher and the parents.

The promotion from a toddler classroom into a preschool room is done through assessment of each individual child's level of development and personality. The youngest toddlers are given the opportunity to move to the next classroom when we see their verbal skills advancing to the point of using simple sentences. The ability to effectively communicate their feelings and needs is a big step. It changes their self-image to one of confidence in their own growing independence.

Determination of the time for changing classrooms is always done in cooperation with the parents. Before any child is moved to a new room, the parents are contacted and given information about the next room. After the parents are comfortable with the change, the child is allowed to explore the new room at their leisure, with the full transfer to the new room coming only when the child is completely comfortable with the new environment.

PRESCHOOL AND EDUCATIONAL CHILD CARE

At the preschool ages of 2 1/2 - 5 years of age, learning and play are synonymous. Our preschool program is filled with intentional hands-on learning center activities that are developed with the Wyoming Early Learning Foundations in mind. We utilize the Creative Curriculum to ensure that all domains of early learning are addressed throughout the day. Supplemental programs include Handwriting Without Tears, Spanish, Music and Physical Education. Each class offers a part-time preschool program from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or from noon to 3:00 p.m. Children who are enrolled in full day child care also participate in the preschool program. During preschool time, teachers are free to cover lesson plan material that is of particular interest to their group of children. The classroom moves at a pace appropriate to the development of their specific age group and appropriate to the individual needs of the children in their class. While teachers work with small groups, other children are at liberty to choose from several other interest centers. These centers are planned to address approaches to learning, creative arts, language development, literacy knowledge and skills, logic and reasoning, mathematics knowledge and skills, physical development and health, science knowledge and skills, social and emotional development, and social studies knowledge and skills.

Cognitive skills such as alphabet and number concepts become a part of every day, as do shape and color recognition, writing, reading and other activities that prepare children for kindergarten. A daily circle time brings the children together as a group to enjoy songs, stories, games, and group discussions of the daily activities. Children attending in the mornings are served breakfast at 8:15 a.m. and a healthy lunch at 11:15 a.m. each day to keep their bodies powered up and their brains ready to learn.



Children who are enrolled in our all-day program not only have the benefit of the morning preschool program, but also are offered another choice of activities in the afternoon. In a less structured afternoon atmosphere, children are directed in art activities, individual or group play, story time, music, and a variety of other activities. A nutritious snack is served at 2:15 p.m. to provide energy for the remainder of the day.

With funding and monitoring from the Wyoming Department of Education, we are able to offer scholarships and financial assistance to qualifying families of preschoolers. If you are interested in seeing if your family qualifies for any of these programs, please ask any member of the administrative team at the front desk.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

The **Wyoming Early Learning Guidelines (birth to age 3)** and **Foundations (ages 3-5)** are a set of documents established by a group of Wyoming experts that serve as a guide for observing and supporting young children's development and learning. Because we know that children grow holistically, these resources support the healthy growth and development of the whole child across all developmental domains. These resources provided developmental benchmarks or "what to look for" items and are meant only to serve as a guideline for development: each child is unique and will not follow the exact pattern of development outlined in these documents. We maintain daily records of children's development in these domains rather than a "report card." You are always welcome to a printed copy of our observations of your child. We will happily provide one at your request. We also hold parent/teacher conferences several times during the year so you are able to discuss your child's development.

The Wyoming Early Learning Guidelines for birth to age 3 provide information about what to look for as a baby grows and develops and how to nurture natural learning patterns and abilities in everyday activities and routines. The guide is divided into 5 age groups, include birth to 6 months, 6-12 months, 12-18 months, 18-24 months, and 24-36 months.

The Developmental Domains for children ages birth to 3 include:

- Communication:** the understanding of the meaning of feelings and ideas expressed by others, the ability to express self, and the foundations of reading and writing.
- Sense of Self and Relationships:** the learning about self as a unique individual, the ability to express feelings, wants, and needs, and the foundations of social skills.
- Curious Minds:** the development of wonder and curiosity, simple problem-solving, creative self-expression, cause and effect, and memory skills.
- Strong and Healthy Bodies:** the use and control of the body, hand-eye coordination and the growing awareness of meeting basic needs.

We invite you to access the full electronic copy of the Early Learning Guidelines here:

<http://wyqualitycounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Early-Learning-Guidelines.pdf>

Here is a collection of activity ideas that you could enjoy with your infant or toddler that support development in these four domains:

<http://wyqualitycounts.org/things-to-do/activities/>

Basic Beginnings infant and toddler teachers use the Guidelines to aid them in planning lessons and daily activities that address the educational needs of children. They also use them to assess children's progress and to determine areas of need. Portfolios of children's work are kept both electronically and in a physical file. Work included in the portfolios is tied to the Guidelines so parents can easily see how their child is meeting these milestones for development. All portfolio and assessment information is kept confidential. Parents may request to see their child's portfolio at any time.

You may also choose to enroll in Kaymbu, our electronic portfolio program, which allows you to receive updates every time we add something to your child's portfolio. We try to send daily/weekly updates via Kaymbu depending on your child's age. Of course, you may request a conference with your child's teacher at any time. We would love to talk with you.

The Wyoming Early Learning Foundations for 3-5 years of age provide a guide to the healthy growth and development of children ages 3-5 that encompasses multiple domains of early development to support their holistic well-being and success. The Foundations are aligned with the Common Core Standards for Kindergarten and offer a road map for school readiness and future success.

The Developmental Domains for children ages 3-5 include:

- Approaches to Learning:** initiative and curiosity, persistence and attention, and cooperation.
- Creative Arts:** music, visual arts, creative movement and dance, and drama.
- Language Development:** receptive and expressive language.
- Literacy Knowledge and Skills:** alphabetical skills, print concepts, early writing, phonological awareness, and book appreciation.
- Logic and Reasoning:** reasoning and problem solving, and symbolic representation.
- Math Knowledge and Skills:** number concepts and quantities, number relations and operations, geometry, patterns, spatial sense, measurement and comparison.
- Physical Development and Health:** physical health status, health knowledge and practice, gross motor, and fine motor.
- Science Knowledge and Skills:** scientific skills and methods, conceptual knowledge of the natural and physical world.
- Social and Emotional Development:** social relationships, self-concept and self-efficacy, self-regulation, emotional and behavioral health.
- Social Studies Knowledge and Skills:** self, family and community, people and the environment, history and events.

We invite you to access the electronic copy of the Early Learning Foundations here:

<http://wyqualitycounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/WYQCEarlyLearningFoundations.pdf>

Basic Beginnings preschool teachers use the Foundations to aid them in planning lessons and daily activities that address the educational needs of children. They also use them to assess children's progress and to determine areas of need. Portfolios of children's work are kept both electronically and in a physical file. Work included in the portfolios is tied to the Foundations so parents can easily see how their child is meeting these critical foundations for school readiness. All information about your child, including the portfolio, is kept confidential. Parents may request access to your child's portfolio at any time.

You may choose to enroll in Kaymbu, our electronic portfolio program, which allows you to receive updates every time we add something to your child's portfolio. We try to send daily/weekly updates via Kaymbu depending on your child's age. At three times during the year we compile information and invite you to join us for parent-teacher conferences. Of course, you may request a meeting with your child's teacher at any time. We would love to talk with you and welcome your feedback as well as your input.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

We strongly encourage all children to obtain a developmental screening before the age of 2 and a second screening before the age of 5. Screenings are free and are conducted onsite by the Early Intervention Staff of the Developmental Preschool and Daycare Center.

The screening will provide information regarding your child's development in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, speech/language, social-emotional and pre-academic skills. Hearing and vision will also be screened. Periodic screenings at an early age are **CRITICAL** in promoting the development of age appropriate skills.

Screening forms are available at the front desk. Parents are always welcome to observe. If you are unable to attend, you will be contacted by letter or phone with the results of the screening. Screenings are done by appointment by Developmental and parents will be notified ahead of time. Screenings should only be done once a year unless developmental issues are suspected in which case we encourage you to connect with the Developmental Preschool directly.



GRADE SCHOOL AGE CARE

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

We understand that the day begins early for our grade school aged children who attend our before-school program. Breakfast is served at 7:00 a.m. Our vans leave around 7:30 a.m. to shuttle children in kindergarten through sixth grade to elementary school. At around 3:00 p.m. those same vans collect the children and return them to Basic Beginnings for the after-school program. Snack time is very popular and immediately follows the children's arrival here. The prime objective of our after-school program is to have lots of fun and burn off some of the energy that has been building all day. Activities include lots of sports and physical play both outdoors and in their classrooms. Arts and crafts, field trips, music, cooking projects, games and stories are also provided. We encourage children to share hobbies, crafts, and interests with their class. Time is offered each day to allow children to work on homework with the assistance of one of our teachers. Books are always available to the children to ensure ample opportunity to curl up with a good book, either indoors or outdoors.



SUMMER PROGRAM

Our summer program for children in grades K-6 is filled with fun activities supervised by trained, caring adults. Arts and crafts, picnics, numerous field trips, guest demonstrations, and plenty of time for outdoor play round out our program. Separated from the preschool program, these children are provided with a more grown-up atmosphere and a completely different set of activities, time schedule and teachers. To accommodate the different levels of development between kindergarten and sixth grade, we divide the group into two smaller sections, one for younger children and one for older children. We welcome your input in determining which group more appropriately meets your child's needs for summer activity.

Because of the high level of activity our summer program provides, we request that you send your child dressed for the daily activities. Sturdy shoes encourage children to run and play more actively. A water bottle will come in handy when they are hiking or biking. A jacket for mountain field trips will really matter when the weather changes quickly, as it often does in Wyoming. And please, check with your child's teacher before you allow your child to bring any electronics, including a cell phone, to the summer program. We try to keep the use of such items to a minimum during the summer to encourage children to experience more outdoor activities.

TRANSPORTATION

Basic Beginnings offers transportation to and from public schools as a courtesy to our enrolled children. In order to ride the vans to school in the mornings, children must be here by 7:30 a.m. to give us time to get everyone buckled into seatbelts. In the event of a schedule change, we must be notified by 2:15 p.m. if your child will not be riding the bus after school for any reason. It is very important for us to know where our children are at all times. Each van will likely be picking up children at more than one school. When we must stop to search for a missing child, other children are left waiting. This creates not only panic on our part, but a potentially dangerous situation if the weather is inclement or the elementary school offers no supervision to waiting children.

Our vans are clearly marked as Basic Beginnings. They are regularly maintained to ensure that they are safe and in good working order. Our drivers have been chosen for their maturity and demonstration of good judgement. They have passed background screens and a review of their driving record. They have completed training in the safe transportation of children. All children are required to be in car safety seats or boosters as required by federal law. A very useful tool for identifying which type of seat best fits your child can be found here: <http://www.safercar.gov/parents/CarSeats/Right-Car-Seat-Age-Size.htm>. This information is also available at the front desk.

Occasionally severe weather strikes Laramie, creating potentially dangerous road conditions. While we do everything possible to ensure that our vans operate in a timely manner to get the children to school on time, there may be times when it is more important that the drivers proceed slowly and cautiously to keep the children safe. While most of our local elementary schools are understanding of this, there are some who will still count the children as tardy under these circumstances.



We will do everything possible to alert the school to this situation when it arises, but we request your understanding that the safety of the children on our vans is paramount.

Distracted driving is a significant concern when transporting children. In the case of uncooperative or disruptive behavior by a child on the vans, our drivers are instructed to stop the vehicle and contact our front desk immediately. The parent of the child may be contacted and asked to provide alternate transportation. We will not proceed until we believe we can safely transport the children to the destination. Thank you for understanding this important policy.

FAMILIES

PARENT-CHILD-TEACHER

Basic Beginnings aims to be supportive of your role as a parent. We do our best to supplement the development of your child's future in a positive and professional way. We realize that many parents feel some anxiety when leaving their child at the center, and that this is a normal part of the adjustment process. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have with the center director at any time. It is also helpful to all of us if you take the time to turn off your car engine, ignore your cell phone for a few minutes, and talk to the front desk staff and to your child's teachers. This makes both drop off and pick up times much more valuable.

Some children are very vocal about their difficulty adapting to new situations and experiences, while others more cautiously take longer periods to accept new surroundings and new people. Much of the grief and anxiety expressed at first is a good way to get feelings out in the open. We find that the concern ends soon after your child enters his or her classroom and becomes involved in the day's activities. Often, readjustment may occur after a long weekend or vacation. Your continuing positive attitude will facilitate this transition.

If your child has an upsetting experience, such as the death of a pet or an illness in the family, please let us know. We want to help your child work out difficulties through play, art, or sympathetic conversation. Your child's total well-being is important to all of us.

Communication is vital to both families and teachers as we partner together in the care and early education of your child. We understand that families have unique hopes and dreams for their child, and that they have differing expectations of our involvement in supporting their family. We hope you will feel comfortable sharing those expectations with us. In exchange, we make open and honest communication with our families a top priority.

If at any point during your experience with us you are uncomfortable with the actions of any of our staff, including any suspicion of abuse or neglect, please contact our director. Rest assured that your concern will be taken into consideration and your information will remain confidential. Additional steps taken may include a further investigation by the director, contact with the Department of Family Services, or even a meeting with the staff member. At all times we will protect the rights of both the child and family, but also of the staff member.

We are available by telephone, by email, or in person if you have anything you wish to discuss with either your child's teacher or the administrative team. We also aim to have at least one parent event per month in our classrooms so watch for invitations!



VISITING THE CENTER

You are welcome to visit the center anytime and to ask questions of the Director and your child's teachers. The classrooms are always open during the day for your inspection and observation. We even provide one-way mirrors into our classrooms so you may observe your child undetected. This allows you to see your child interacting with the teachers and the other children without them knowing you are there. Parents are also encouraged to occasionally stop in to play and interact with your child during our daily activities. We will even provide lunch should you want to share your lunch break with your child.

Communicating with us each morning is a great way to be sure your child's day starts off on a positive note. We enjoy the opportunity to visit with you when you bring your child in for the day. Also, the end of the day is a terrific time to discuss the day's activities with the teacher. If you are unable to visit with us in person each day, feel free to call or email.

Each classroom is equipped with a phone, so you may call in at anytime during the day to check on your child, or to give the teacher specific updated information. Please have your Emergency Code Word from your child's enrollment paperwork handy. We will never release information about your child to anyone without your authorization.

To ensure the safety of the children while maintaining our open door policy, anyone visiting the center who is not a parent or legal guardian of a child in our care must sign in at the front desk. Emergency procedures for unauthorized visitors are in place and are periodically practiced, including methods of locking down the facility. Please note that weapons are prohibited inside our center unless you are required to remain armed by your job as an emergency responder.



OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT POLICY

We ask that you please keep your relationships with Basic Beginnings teachers on a professional level. You are discouraged from utilizing Basic Beginnings teachers for out-of-center child care. However, if you ask one of our staff members to work as a babysitter, please know that this is an entirely separate arrangement from your child's enrollment at our center. Our liability or workers compensation insurance does not cover staff while they are employed by someone else off the premises. In addition, our background research and on-the-job observations do not cover any work done outside the center. The job demands for employment in a licensed child care center are many and the potential for conflict of interest is high. This could place a member of our staff in an uncomfortable position that might even jeopardize their employment status and our ability to adhere to licensing standards.

STAFF MEMBERS

STAFF REQUIREMENTS

The strength of any childcare program depends upon the quality, experience, and training of its staff. Basic Beginnings teachers are chosen with great attention to these details. Each head teacher must have completed either a college degree or a professional certificate in child development, early childhood education, or a related field. The head teacher manages the classroom, including responsibility for maintaining a safe, healthy and stimulating learning environment. The head teacher also provides mentoring and oversight for other staff members in the classroom. All employees have undergone a hiring procedure that requires:

1. A screening for criminal history or substantiated report of child abuse or neglect, followed by a national fingerprint background check.
2. Three positive references.
3. A motor vehicle report for all potential drivers.
4. A current TB test.

After being hired, each employee is required to complete:

1. Certification in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR.
2. A detailed orientation checklist of the policies and procedures required by our inspecting agencies.
3. Signed statements of commitment to our mission, DFS rules and regulations, and confidentiality.
4. An 8-hour course in basic health and safety requirements for child care centers.
5. At a minimum, an additional 8 hours of training in child development or early childhood education including is required



Basic Beginnings is a registered Wyoming contractor for the State-recognized Infant and Toddler Director Credential and for the nationally recognized Child Development Associate Credential. We have agreements for providing continuing education in child development with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, the Wyoming Department of Family Services, and with the Albany County School District Number One. College coursework in child development is available at our center in cooperation with the Laramie County Community College-Albany County Campus. Many of our staff have earned CDA credentials and all have completed training in the Wyoming Early Learning Guidelines and Foundations. All members of our staff are engaged in a continuing professional development program to ensure that we are kept up-to-date on the latest research regarding the needs of young children.

As you can see, Basic Beginnings staff members have been chosen with the greatest of care and are involved in on-going training programs. However, the most important requirement of our teachers is that they understand the importance of a caring relationship with your child. Lesson plans and curriculum details are important, but ensuring that every child in our care feels special and loved is our most important goal.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

LICENSING

Basic Beginnings is licensed by the State of Wyoming Department of Family Services and we operate our center to meet or exceed all state standards. Our license from the State, showing our capacity, is displayed in the front entrance area. Individual classroom capacities and staff-to-child ratios are posted in each room. We receive regular inspections from the Department of Family Services, the Department of Education, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Laramie Fire Department, and the Consumer Health Services Division of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture. In the event of a concern that cannot be resolved with the Director, the Department of Family Services may be contacted. The results of all inspections are available for review at your request from either the Director or from the Department of Family Services directly.

ADMISSION

We accept any child on a space-available basis. No child will be excluded from participation on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. If your child will require special accommodations of any type, please make an appointment to discuss those requirements with the Director to determine if additional support or training is needed. We want to ensure that we can meet those accommodations in a timely manner. We require all children to meet the health and immunization requirements of the State of Wyoming.



HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

Basic Beginnings is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The center will be closed six legal holidays each year, including New Years Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Should the traditional holiday occur during a weekend, we will observe the holiday in accordance with the national Monday Holiday Bill. Full tuition is charged for weeks in which these holidays occur. Occasionally the University of Wyoming and/or the Albany County School District observe holidays on a slightly different schedule. When this happens, the Director may choose to change the school schedule to more effectively accommodate the holidays observed by our families. In this case, advance written notice will be posted at the centers.

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is important to parents that Basic Beginnings provide a secure and stable environment for the children in our care. In order to accomplish this, we must provide our staff the confidence of knowing that their employment with us is also stable and secure. Your tuition is what supports our staff salaries. The parent or guardian must sign a detailed financial agreement prior to enrolling any child. Please notify us in writing when your schedule will undergo any changes. You may request vacation credit for up to 2 weeks per year. Two weeks written notice is also required before removing your child from enrollment with the center or for changing their scheduled hours of attendance.

EXTRA HOURS

Hours of attendance that are more than the written financial agreement requests will be billed at the current overtime hourly rate. You may request additional hours in advance at the beginning of the month, in writing, to avoid paying the higher hourly overtime rate. Attendance on unscheduled days will result in a charge of either a part-time or a full-time day, depending upon how many hours were used.

A late charge will be assessed when a child is left beyond our 6:00 p.m. closing time. Please be respectful of our staff members who are required to stay beyond closing time. Repeated violations of closing time may negatively affect your child's enrollment.

PAYMENT POLICIES

Monthly tuition is due by the tenth of each month. Payments may be made by check payable to Basic Beginnings, cash (correct change is needed), our automated payment system, Visa, or MasterCard. Payment in full by automatic payment, made in advance by the 5th of the month, is credited with a 10% discount. Additional discounts are available to families with more than one child and for parents employed at one of our partnering Laramie businesses.

Payments returned from the bank for any reason are assessed a \$30.00 service charge. Discounts that may have been received for timely payment are also forfeited. If for some reason your payment is not available on the date due, special arrangements with the Director are necessary. Accounts not paid in full at the end of the month may result in immediate termination of your child's enrollment. If you are counting on child care assistance from another agency for part of your payment, please consult with us in advance. You remain responsible for the entire account balance. Past due accounts will be submitted to the collection agency and will be subject to their finance charges.

Child care tuition payments qualify for a federal tax credit for many families. We will be happy to furnish you with a statement of payments made for the previous year. Several Laramie employers also offer childcare reimbursement plans. At your request we will complete the paperwork they require for your participation in the program.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

As part of the admission process, you have completed the enrollment packet, emergency contact information, your child's personal information record, a financial agreement, immunization forms, and several other pieces of information that are more age-specific. You will have also completed an enrollment form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Please remember to update the information on these forms when anything changes, including a new address, new job, new phone number or most recent immunizations. In the case of an emergency, it is vital that we know how to contact you or your emergency contact person as quickly as possible. At the beginning of each school year we will ask you to review the information in your child's file to make sure we always have the most updated information. This file will be kept confidential in the locked administration office and only accessible to your child's teacher, the administrative staff and anyone you have authorized in writing for such access.

EMERGENCIES

The safety of the children in our care is top priority with all of us. However, during play and when interacting with other children, injuries sometimes occur, most of which are minor. In the event of any injury you will receive a completed Injury Report Form that includes the details of what happened and any treatment your child received. As part of the enrollment record you have authorized us to call your doctor and/or take your child to Iverson Memorial Hospital Emergency Room in case of a more significant injury, sudden illness or other medical emergency. A conscientious effort will be made to locate you or your spouse before any action is taken. We maintain an accident insurance policy for each enrolled child. Depending upon the circumstances and your family insurance, you may still be responsible for some expense.



FIRE AND SEVERE WEATHER

Basic Beginnings has an electronically monitored fire alarm system as well as written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies. These procedures have been reviewed by local law enforcement and emergency personnel. We schedule, execute, and document emergency drills regularly and post evacuation plans in each classroom. Every classroom has at least two exits for safety, including one leading into the central hallway and another leading to the fenced playground area. In the unlikely event that the center should ever be severely damaged or declared unsafe, the children will be evacuated to the following locations, where they will await your arrival:

- Basic Beginnings North to the Laramie Junior High School at 1355 N 22nd St.
Basic Beginnings South to the Laramie Recreation Center.

Should such emergency occur, an all-school email will be sent, information will be posted on our [Facebook page](#) and a notice will be posted at the affected center with a phone number where we may be reached.

ILLNESS

At Basic Beginnings we try to guard against illnesses. Most children, however, will experience a normal number of infections. In an effort to protect all children, please do not bring your child to the center if he or she is ill. Specifically, if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he or she will be isolated and you will be required to pick him or her up within one hour.

- *Temperature of over 100 degrees axillary within the last 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
- *Two or more intestinal disturbances such as vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- *Any undiagnosed rash
- *Sore and discharging eyes or ears
- *Abnormal nasal discharge
- *Inability to participate in normal daily activities

If your child has been exposed to any contagious diseases, please keep him or her at home and notify the center immediately. We may require that your doctor send us a note indicating that your child is under proper treatment and no longer contagious to other children before he or she is able to return.

We understand that your attendance at work or school is important. We also recognize that back-up child care is difficult to find. We will do our best to accommodate your reasonable request for caring for your child; however, we must also follow regulations that are designed to keep all children safe and healthy.

You may request the use of some of your allotted vacation days to help defray the cost of alternate care or missed work on the days we require you to keep your child home.



MEDICATIONS

We will be glad to administer either over-the-counter medications or medicine prescribed by your physician to your child. To do this, we ask that you sign the chart at the desk each day authorizing us to dispense any medicines. The medicine must be submitted to the front desk in its original container that clearly states the prescribed dosage, the child's name, date, and doctor's name. We keep all medicines in a secure place out of reach of the children and will refrigerate them as necessary. No medications are stored in the classroom unless their immediate use is required in case of emergency, such as Epi-Pens. Only Basic Beginnings staff members who are certified by the Wyoming Department of Family Services are allowed to administer medication.

SECURITY

No child will be released except to the parent who enrolled the child or to someone specifically authorized by the parent in writing. It is necessary for your child's protection that you sign your child in and out each day. A photo I.D. may be required of anyone picking up a child. Our employees are instructed to question the release of a child to anyone not known to them personally. When you call us to discuss your child, your Emergency Code Word will be required, or we can call you back at the number provided to us in your records. Remember that your child's safety is the goal. While we regret any inconvenience, we believe the security benefits outweigh the bother.

Children are closely supervised both in the classroom and within the fenced playgrounds. Supervision by both sight and sound is required for infants and toddlers. Supervision for preschool aged children is also primarily by both sight and sound, although supervision by sound only is acceptable for only short periods of time. For example, this allows a child to attend to their own toileting needs as developmentally appropriate.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Wyoming State law requires that any child in our care be adequately immunized in accordance with current guidelines, and that proof of your child's immunization status be submitted to the center within 30 days of enrollment. Failure to provide this information may force us to disenroll your child. Basic Beginnings requires current immunizations for all children. If there is a medical reason why your child is on a delayed immunization schedule, please submit the official form including documentation from your child's physician stating the reason for the delay and the plan to fulfill all immunization requirements. Please note that any exceptions to the Wyoming immunization requirements must be discussed with the Director. Please understand that we have a large number of infants in our care who are not yet able to be immunized. For your convenience we have a form to request current immunization records from your child's pediatrician included in your enrollment packet.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Social skills such as sharing, listening, cooperating, and using good manners are important stepping-stones to the future of your child. Setting limits gives children the security of knowing that their strong emotions will not lead them to do things that they will later regret. Our goal is to help children control their behavior while they develop the skills to do so themselves. This includes redirecting the child to acceptable activities and teaching him or her about safety, care of property, good health habits and consideration for others. By allowing the child to make as many decisions as possible and making sure the rules are clearly understood and consistently enforced, we can guide behaviors in a positive way, allowing the child to develop both reasoning skills and self-control.



GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE (cont'd)

Posted in each classroom is a 4-step Discipline Policy which each teacher is trained to follow. These four steps include:

1. **Arranging the classroom or schedule** to minimize problems and increase opportunities for success. By increasing the likelihood of positive behaviors and minimize the likelihood of negative ones, we help the children feel confident in their ability to solve problems and negotiate compromise with other children.
2. **Using positive statements** to redirect children and allow them to make better choices of behavior. This prepares children to approach problem-solving using acceptable methods and positive social interactions.
3. **Using time away** from the activities to calm down and reason with the child. In an environment with many children, individual children will occasionally need some quiet time alone and away from others, much as adults need breaks. "Time Out" is used as a positive time and not as a punishment.
4. **Consulting with the experts.** By working together with the child's parents, other teachers, and our administrative staff, we are better informed and equipped to deal with difficult situations that sometimes arise. This allows for greater consistency across the child's entire day, whether at home with parents or at our center. By all sitting down together to define the difficulties, brainstorm potential actions to take, implementing the plan as determined by the group, and reviewing the results together, we create consistency throughout the child's day and increase the chances for success.

Suspension or Expulsion Policy

It is our goal to provide a positive learning environment for all children and to allow children to be successful and remain in our care. Occasionally behaviors become challenging beyond our abilities. When our Guidance and Discipline Policy has been ineffective and a child continues to exhibit inappropriate and disruptive behavior, it creates a difficult learning environment for children. In such a case we will make every effort to secure expert help from our supporting agencies, with the cooperation of the child's parents. Parent cooperation is an absolute necessity in such cases, and is required to avoid the suspension or expulsion of your child. If this situation should arise with your child, we will send written indication of behavioral concerns and what steps have been taken to change those behaviors. A face-to-face conference will be scheduled with parents, teachers, and the director to discuss next steps. Every effort will be made to connect staff and families with local and national resources that address challenging behavior, including alternative placement options. This policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

GENERAL CLASSROOM OPERATIONS

CLOTHING

Each child needs a complete change of clothing kept here at the school. Please mark your child's name clearly on all clothing brought to school. We cannot be responsible for lost coats, mittens, scarves and hats, but it helps if they are marked. Please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothes and outdoor garments. The children will be playing outdoors every day with few exceptions so please anticipate weather conditions and dress your child accordingly. Please remember that children do get dirty, and our sandboxes are a favorite outdoor activity for most children!

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, food, gum or money to school. Personal belongings from home are not easily shared, and this can create problems in the classroom. We will occasionally have "show-and-tell" days for favorite toys and belongings. Please mark everything your child brings from home, and remember that Basic Beginnings cannot be responsible for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring to the center.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an integral part of our educational program and will be taken periodically to nearby places. Our preschool children remain inside the local Laramie region. If trips are planned for our grade school age classrooms that take the children outside of Laramie, we will ask for your specific written permission. State law requires that children less than 9 years old be in a car safety seat or booster (see TRANSPORTATION on page 13). If your child is to participate in one of these activities and does not meet the age or weight requirement for a booster, we may request that you leave a car seat here at the school marked with your child's name. Children without appropriate car safety seats will not be transported under any circumstances.



BIRTHDAYS

You are welcome to send special treats to school to celebrate your child's birthday. Please check with the teacher and be sure to send enough for everyone, and to confirm that any allergies in the classroom have been considered. We ask that you try to avoid excessively sugary treats, and we request that there be no gifts opened at Basic Beginnings. Family members are welcome to join us at the center for these celebrations. We invite you to work out the details with your child's classroom teacher.

MEALS

Basic Beginnings participates in the United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meal service for infants less than 1 year of age consists of iron-fortified infant formula or breast milk, depending upon parent choice. As infants grow, cereals are added to their diet, then other solid foods including grains, vegetables, and meats. Parents are encouraged to consult with their child's pediatrician regarding the appropriate time to introduce new foods, then communicate that information to our teachers. The teachers will then follow the meal plan developed for each individual infant.

Older infants who are one year old are able to drink whole cow's milk and are usually transitioning to our full monthly menu developed in accordance with the standards of the CACFP. The menu is available at the front desk at the beginning of each month. Breakfast is served to these children at 8:15 a.m. and consists of whole milk, fruit or vegetable, and either a grain or a protein. Lunch is at 11:15 and consists of all four components - whole milk, fruit and/or vegetable, grain and protein. Snack is after nap at 2:15 and consists of two of the four components-dairy, grain, fruit and/or vegetable or protein. There is always a beverage served at snack, whether it is milk, juice, or water.

Toddlers, preschoolers and grade school aged children are served the full center menu. The meal components are the same as those for older infants, with the exception that skim milk is served to children 2 years of age and older. As children grow the quantities are increased, but the basic meal structure is the same.

You are welcome to provide all or part of your child's meal at any time. If this is your desire for any reason, please talk with us about the requirements of the CACFP. This helps us make sure we are continuing to follow the regulations of the program.



REST

Each preschool class will have either a naptime or a quiet activity time. Children are not required to nap but may be expected to engage in quiet activities while others sleep. If you have specific requests concerning your child's rest time here, please discuss them with your child's teacher. To assist in making your child comfortable at naptime, a familiar blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal from home is certainly welcome.

All infants must be placed on their back in a crib with a firm, flat mattress to sleep. They may not be kept in their car safety seat or any other location. They may use an approved Sleep Sack but no other items may be in their crib. Our top priority is the safety and wellbeing of your child. Any special requests must be accompanied by a note from your child's physician and must state the reason for the request. If you have any questions about the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) please ask us.



FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE

We believe that children need fresh air and exercise daily. Please dress your child for the season, or for the several seasons that may occur on any given day! We schedule outdoor play daily, with the exception of days when outdoor conditions may be harmful to the children. When weather will not allow the children outside, they will play games and do other large-motor activities inside to gain exercise. We expect all children to play outside unless we have a written note from you requesting otherwise.

TOILET TRAINING

We will support your desired methods for toilet training your child, so please let us know how we can help. We believe toilet training is most successful when we are consistent with your procedures so the child does not have to adapt to more than one routine. If you are unsure of how to begin this process, we will be happy to work with you to figure out a plan together. Information about potty training is also available from your child's teacher.

Please ask for your teacher for classroom handbooks!

Basic Beginnings South is a participant in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:

program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

05/05/2022