



Ohio Valley ESC

Bright Beginnings Preschool

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

2025-2026

Dalton Summers, Superintendent

(740) 373-6669

OVESC

Complex 3 - State Rt. 821

2333-B, Building 16

Marietta, Ohio 45750

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Mission

The Ohio Valley Educational Service Center Bright Beginnings Preschool Mission is to utilize the strengths of each child as they grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically so that all learners have the foundational emergent skills necessary to enter kindergarten on track and ready to learn.

Philosophy

The staff of Bright Beginnings Preschool believes that ALL children are diverse, unique, and naturally curious. Children need to be provided with an organized, child-directed learning environment that emphasizes mutual respect, fun, discovery, and literacy, as well as one that addresses sensory needs. A supportive, developmentally-appropriate environment will provide the conditions for all children to construct knowledge and build upon their strengths, focusing on the learning process rather than the end product.

Admission

Bright Beginnings Preschool is a collaboration between the OVESC and participating school districts located in Belmont, Guernsey, Monroe, Perry, and Washington Counties, as well as the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. Bright Beginnings Preschool provides educational programs for children who are 3 to 5 years old. The organization does not discriminate when enrolling children based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.

Children are enrolled upon the completion and submission of a required Enrollment Application Packet. Children are placed in classes **once ALL required paperwork and documents are submitted.** **We place returning students first, then we place by age of the child (older children are placed first), and last we place by the date of the returned, completed application.** Resident students will be placed first in their home district/site. Open Enrollment requests will be reviewed after initial classroom placements are determined. The enrollment paperwork becomes a part of your child's school record. However, in order to maintain preschool staff/child ratio at all times, enrollment at a preschool center location will be closed after reaching maximum capacity.

Attendance

It is very important for all students to attend their scheduled classes regularly. If for any reason your child needs to miss a day of scheduled class time, please call your child's teacher to inform him/her of the absence.

For children receiving Itinerant Services, it is very important to keep the scheduled visit time with the teacher. If you are unable to keep a planned visit, please notify the teacher/specialist to reschedule.

In extreme cases of consistent absences, specific actions will be taken. After three days of consecutive absences, the teacher will make a phone call to the parent/guardian urging attendance and discussing the reason for the absences. **If a child is absent for 2 consecutive weeks of class, with no notification or contact made with the classroom teacher, they will be WITHDRAWN from Bright Beginnings preschool.** If there are extenuating circumstances, such as a family tragedy or medical emergency, the classroom teacher MUST be notified. If your child is on an IEP and is truant, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss other options to provide services.

Calamity Days

Listen to the radio (WCMJ 96.7 FM, WWKC 104.9 FM, WNUS 107 FM, WVRB 102 FM), watch television (WTAP, WTRF, WTOV, WHIZ), or visit school district websites for school closing information. Visit the OVESC website at www.ovesc.org for links to weather-related announcements, delays, or cancellations. If a school district cancels or calls a 2-hour delay due to weather (or another emergency), full-day preschool classes held in that same district will follow that district's directives. AM half-day preschool classes are canceled in the case of a 2-hour delay, while PM half-day preschool classes remain in session in the case of a 2-hour delay. Please also refer to the Family Portal and/or any other classroom parent notification system your teacher may use for closings due to weather events.

Cancellation of class

Substitute teachers are few and hard to secure at times. In the event there is a last minute call off, or a staff member emergency, in person class may be canceled for the day if substitute staff cannot be secured. If this happens, you will be notified via the classroom parent notification system. In this event, the GOOGLE classroom platform will be used to share videos and activities for your child to view during the canceled day. This is an absolute last resort and all other options will be considered before canceling class for the day.

Child Abuse Awareness

Ohio law mandates the reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the local Children's Services Department. We know that children are active and accidents happen. If your child has a bruise or injury, please make your child's teacher aware of the cause. Bright Beginnings Preschool Staff is trained in Child Abuse Awareness and all staff are mandated reporters for the state of Ohio.

Class Roster

The preschool program prepares a class roster which enables families to contact one another. The roster of all preschool children will only be available to parents of other preschool children. Permission to have parent name, phone number, and child's name on a classroom roster is requested as part of the enrollment process through written consent to disclose personally identifiable information which is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

A developmentally appropriate curriculum has two critical components: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness is guided by the universal sequence of development. That is, children typically learn particular concepts and abilities during the preschool years. "Individual appropriateness" means that activities are designed to meet each child at his/her developmental level.

Bright Beginnings strives to meet the following curricular components:

- activities aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and the Early Learning Program Guidelines;
- programming that addresses all areas of development;
- planning that responds to and builds upon children's interests and ideas;
- opportunities for children to make choices and follow through on plans and develop problem-solving approaches;
- learning that is integrated into daily activities and routines (learning is NOT an isolated event);
- large blocks of time for children to be actively involved in indoor and outdoor activities;

- small group activities, as well as individual activities;
- nutritious snacks and/or meals and nutrition-related activities;
- active times and quiet times;
- developmentally appropriate materials that are convenient for children to find, use and put away;
- the role of teacher as facilitator and play partner is highly valued;
- highly valuing children's, teachers' and specialists' active involvement as "floor time" partners;
- playfulness and viewing the child as an initiator is highly valued;
- daily phonemic awareness instruction, using the Heggerty curriculum
- daily lesson plans that are adapted as a result of continuous assessment of children's progress and the response to their needs;
- activities (itinerant and center-based options) or interest centers (center-based option) that include creativity, pretend play, making and building, science and cooking, rhythm and music, social problem solving, sensory exploration, making friends, large muscle activities, literary experiences, small muscle activities, cultural experiences
- Interventions will be provided to any student who needs extra support to meet a developmental milestone.
- Family Outreach:

The Family Portal : The classroom teacher will be asking each family to join the Family Portal in order to receive emails about special events and lessons during their child's week in the classroom.

Family Application System: This app system may be used by your classroom teacher to relay updates and communicate basic classroom information.

Bright Beginnings Preschool has adopted *The Creative Curriculum* as the foundation of our program planning. The curriculum is aligned to Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and is based on research in child development. Daily lesson plans combine varied activities to help children explore and learn. Teachers use large group circle time and small group sessions to present and practice new skills and concepts, as well as to track child progress. Interest areas (centers) are designed to allow children to make choices and actively explore. Careful planning and adult facilitation result in group activities and interest areas that address all of the areas of development including social-emotional, physical, cognitive and language, and all the content areas including literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. In addition, children learn "how to learn" by setting goals, observing, asking questions, documenting their experiences, and applying knowledge to new contexts.

Bright Beginnings also supplements its literacy instruction with the Heggerty and Read It Again programs. These programs support early literacy instruction.

Heggerty:

Heggerty is designed to support existing literacy instruction with daily lessons that are taught consistently each day. They include explicit teacher modeling and scaffolding to support students' reading, spelling and writing skills as they learn pre-reading skills.

Read It Again:

Read It Again! provides a systematic, intentional, and flexible approach to building children's skills in four key areas of language and literacy: print knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and narrative.

These combined curriculum components and Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives are embedded in play-based activities that are both child-initiated and teacher-facilitated. These activities are aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and The Early Learning Program Guidelines. Extended periods of active involvement in play are encouraged. Ongoing observation and play partnering by the teacher guides facilitation and expansion of children's interests and ideas.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Eligibility

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant funding provides high quality learning services to eligible preschool children in all of our service districts. Eligibility is determined based on age and family income. If your child is eligible for this program, you may be contacted by your county JFS office and/or receive a letter of notification.

Eligibility for Special Education Services

Children referred with a suspected disability meet with the Preschool Supervisor to determine if further evaluation is required. Those students are evaluated, with parent permission and participation, to determine if they qualify for early childhood special education services. Parents receive a booklet (*A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education*) that describes resources and educational process information, in addition to parent and school rights and responsibilities in children's education.

1. The evaluation of preschool children typically occurs in a play-based format and involves the child, parent, teacher and any specialist that may be appropriate. Children learn best through play, and they reveal what they know through play. Assessments may include one or more of the following: observations of your child in various small and large group activities, interview with you or his/her teacher, checklists or questionnaires for parent or teacher to complete, testing by the specialists, a review of records or other activities that would help us plan for your child's education. All areas of development will be reviewed as a part of your child's Evaluation Team Report (ETR). The evaluation not only provides eligibility information, but also forms the basis for the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed for each child who qualifies for services. Parents, teachers and specialists work together to develop individual learning goals and objectives for each child. Parents are a vital part of the IEP team and are encouraged to be actively involved in the process. Least Restrictive Environment placement options will be offered and discussed during the Initial IEP meeting, based on data and all factors shared during the evaluation process. The ODCY LRE Guiding questions form will be used to determine the best placement option for the child.

After an evaluation and IEP development, services (as stated in the IEP) will begin. Early Childhood Special Education services must be available to children; however, it is not mandatory that children who qualify must participate. The services are voluntary, and families may choose whether or not to participate and may withdraw at any time. If parents withdraw the child, they must contact the Preschool Supervisor and complete the appropriate paperwork. If a child moves to a new school district, a copy of the child's records will be forwarded that school district, upon receipt of a signed records release.

Special Education services are based upon individual student need and could include:

- **Itinerant Teacher Services**

The Early Childhood Intervention Specialist works with the child and the family in their current setting. The services include, but are not limited to: referral, direct teaching, consultation with others who work with the child, provision of materials and activities, assessment and observation.

- **Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Therapy**

- **Psychology Services**

- **Nursing Services**

2. Preschool special education services may be provided in various locations such as:

- A public or non-public preschool setting (such as private or parochial school)
- A special school (such as school for the blind, school for the deaf, etc..)
- A service provider location

Field Trips

From time to time children may participate in a field trip. Transportation will be provided either by the child's parent/ guardian or via district transportation, following district policy. Parents must provide written permission and follow site-specific procedures.

Immunizations

All children attending a center-based class must be immunized against poliomyelitis, measles, diphtheria, rubella (German measles), pertussis, tetanus, mumps, and others legally designated in accordance with State statutes, unless specifically exempt for medical or other reasons. In some rare cases, a child may be admitted to a preschool special education program if they are in the process of completing the required immunizations. "In the process" means the child has been immunized against mumps, rubeola, and rubella and if the child has not been immunized against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus and meningococcal disease, the child has received at least the first dose of the immunization

sequence, and presents written evidence to the child's teacher/OVESC preschool nurse of each subsequent dose required to obtain immunization at the intervals prescribed by the director of health.

Any student excluded due to immunization status, may be readmitted upon showing evidence to the student's teacher and the director of preschool services and the availability of classroom space.

Inspections

All Bright Beginnings classes are licensed through the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The most recent classroom inspection reports may be viewed within your child's classroom. Prior inspection reports may be accessed and answers to any questions or concerns may be obtained by contacting the Bright Beginnings Preschool Office (740-373-6669). We strive to provide high quality educational experiences for ALL of the students in our program. However, if a problem arises and a resolution cannot be reached, you may contact the Ohio Department of Children and Youth for further assistance.

Medical and Dental Emergency Procedures

The emergency care card containing parent directions and permissions will be required for enrollment. In the event of an emergency, the parents will be notified immediately and the emergency care card instructions will be followed. In the event of an emergency during a home visit, day care visit or Head Start visit, the emergency care procedures in force at that agency or location will be adhered to.

Medication

Medications should be given at home if at all possible. The administration of prescribed medication and/or medically-prescribed treatments to a student during school hours shall be permitted only when failure to do so would jeopardize the health of the student, the student would not be able to attend school if the medication or treatment were not made available during school hours, or if the child is disabled and requires medication to benefit from his/her educational program

Before any prescribed medication (i.e., a drug) or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, Bright Beginnings Preschool shall require a written statement from a licensed health professional authorized to prescribe drugs ("prescriber") accompanied by the written authorization of the parent. The written authorization must include the child's name and address, school and classroom, name of medication and dosage, time to be given, date administration is to begin and cease, a list of any adverse reactions, and any additional instructions. Only medication in its original container; labeled with the date, if a prescription; the student's name; and exact dosage shall be administered.

In the case of non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medications (Ex: Tylenol, Advil, sunscreen) the same procedures as outlined above are to be followed with the exception of those procedures referring to the written statement from a licensed health professional.

A medical administration form can be obtained from your child's teacher or the OVESC preschool nurse.

Provided they have completed the requisite training, the following staff are authorized to administer medication and treatment to students: (1) OVESC school nurse (2) preschool supervisor/director (3) classroom teacher (4) classroom paraprofessionals (5) others as designated by student's medical care plan and/or IEP.

Illness and Communicable Disease

One of the best methods for the prevention of disease is through appropriate immunizations. All families are required to submit a yearly physician's statement indicating that their preschooler is free from apparent communicable disease. Hand washing is the most important measure in controlling the spread of disease, and all preschool staff are trained in appropriate hand-washing procedures.

Each child will be greeted upon arrival to school by a preschool staff member. If a staff member observes symptoms of illness, the child may be sent home at that time.

The following symptoms could indicate illness or communicable disease:

- fever of over 100 degrees
- skin rash
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- earache or ear drainage
- evidence of lice, scabies, bed bugs, or other parasitic infestation, **following school district policy*
- sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- untreated, infected skin patches and unusual rashes or cold sores/fever blisters
- stiff neck
- persistent cough or yellowish nasal discharge
- irritated, red or watery eye, drainage from eye
- unusual behavior, irritability, listlessness, crying more than usual
- unusually dark urine or gray or white stool
- other conditions suggesting the presence of a highly contagious disease

If your child is experiencing any of the above symptoms, please keep him or her home from school.

If your child is determined to have a contagious disease or head lice, please notify your child's teacher immediately. Parents are required to keep the child at home until symptoms disappear

and/or he/she has been symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of medicine. You may be asked to provide a doctor's statement before your child comes back to school.

A preschool staff member who has been trained to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases and other illnesses shall be available in the preschool room at all times. Additionally, a Communicable Disease Chart and an Emergency Medical and Dental Procedures Chart will be posted in every classroom.

If a preschooler displays any of the following symptoms while at school, the child will be isolated from other students while still supervised by a preschool staff member. You will be notified and asked to pick him/her up as soon as possible.

- fever of over 100 degrees
- skin rash
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- earache or ear drainage
- evidence of lice, scabies, bed bugs, or other parasitic infestation, **following school district policy*
- sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- untreated, infected skin patches and unusual rashes or cold sores/fever blisters
- stiff neck
- persistent cough or yellowish nasal discharge
- irritated, red or watery eye, drainage from eye
- unusual behavior, irritability, listlessness, crying more than usual
- unusually dark urine or gray or white stool
- other conditions suggesting the presence of a highly contagious disease

If a preschooler is suspected of having a communicable disease or other illness, he/she shall be sent home according to the following procedure: a parent or responsible individual (as stated in the Emergency Medical Authorization Form) shall be notified of suspected illness and asked to pick up the child. If the parent or responsible individual cannot be reached, and if the observed symptoms become severe or life threatening, emergency medical treatment shall be obtained per instruction on the Emergency Medical Authorization Form, after consultation with the OVESC or school district nurse. Local emergency numbers will be posted in every classroom.

Children who are mildly ill but do not show symptoms of a communicable disease shall not be encouraged to participate in activities of an active nature, unless they so choose. Parents shall be notified of the child's symptoms and behavior. If your child is determined to have a contagious disease, please notify your teacher immediately. The parent should confer the teacher and physician to determine when it would be advisable for the child to return to school.

A mildly ill child is defined as a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms indicated above. A mildly ill child will be cared for and observed for further signs of illness. We do not, however, care for any child who cannot participate in daily preschool activities. The Preschool will care for the mildly ill child, but the

parent shall be notified if the symptoms listed above occur. The procedure then is the same as any other child with a communicable disease.

If it is necessary for a child to be separated from classmates due to a communicable disease, he/she shall be supervised in a room or a portion of a room not being used for other types of child care. Always under supervision, the preschooler will be given a cot or a mat and a blanket. The child will be observed for the development of worsening conditions or additional symptoms. Upon discharge of the preschooler, the mat or cot will be sanitized with an appropriate germicidal detergent, and blankets will be laundered prior to future use. Equipment in the classroom will be washed and disinfected with germicidal detergent, if needed.

When students are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease, parents will be notified by letter.

Parental Involvement

Parents are a child's first and most powerful teacher. As teachers and specialists, we are available to be your partner as you encourage your child's growth and development. Parents and teachers make a terrific team!

You are welcome to contact your child's teacher to plan a scheduled visit to the classroom or a volunteer opportunity. All school district policies are different, please review your district volunteer policy with the preschool staff.

Parent communication is a two-way street. Teachers maintain close contact with parents in a variety of ways throughout the school year, including home visits, notes, emails, and telephone calls. Parental cooperation helps the staff know how to best serve your child. The Bright Beginnings Preschool staff will make every attempt to involve parents/guardians in various aspects of programming and services. Written progress reports will be provided a minimum of three (3) times per year. If at any time you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, please contact him or her.

Parent involvement and cooperation assists staff in developing a plan to serve your child. Activities which provide opportunities for parent involvement include open house events, parent meetings, progress reports, and volunteering in the classroom. Parents are invited to share hobbies, interests, talents, and/or careers in the classroom setting. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in doing so.

Parent Mentors

The OVESC provides Parent Mentors to assist families who have children with special needs. They are available to provide information, resources, and assistance with educational issues, as well as other supports. Please contact the Bright Beginnings Preschool Office for more information (740) 373-6669.

Tonya Buchanan: 740-439-3558
Mindy Schwendeman: 740-373-6669

Positive Behavior Management and Intervention

Preschool teachers provide developmentally appropriate environments in which children are actively and meaningfully involved. This approach is a powerful tool in the prevention of behavioral problems. Social problem solving, the development of relationships, and self-discipline is a priority in the Bright Beginnings Preschool Program. With positive techniques, teachers will encourage children to learn self-discipline and practice a variety of social problem solving strategies. Techniques could include modeling, redirection, verbal prompts, self-talk, planned ignoring, shared responsibility for developing simple classroom or play rules, frequent review of established rules, quiet discussion, time away from the group so the child can “pull himself together”, holding the child in a protective hug in an effort to help him/her regain control, consultation with parents for insight and suggestions, and consultation with the school psychologist and other staff to map out a course of action to help the child practice appropriate problem solving strategies.

Bright Beginnings Preschool Staff is trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) de escalation strategies and Conscious Discipline self-regulation techniques.

**See page 13 and 14 for behavior definitions and response strategies for deescalation.*

Tuition Assistance

The Bright Beginnings Preschool Sliding Fee Scale is designed to help make preschool more affordable. It is included in the enrollment packet within this handbook. Please contact Terra Wittekind at 740-373-6669 if you have any questions. Online payments are secure and are the preferred method of payment. Payments may still be made by dropping them off at our Marietta office or mailing them to our address.

Online payment link/QR code: <https://portal.icheckgateway.com/OhioValleyEducationalServiceCenter/>



Transitions

When children are ready to go to kindergarten, to another program, change educational settings, or add another program to the day, it is critical that those changes go smoothly for both parents and children. Your child's teacher will help you with those transitions both formally and informally (visitations, transition plans, sharing records, making recommendations, meeting, etc.). It is important that parents and teachers work together to develop the child's transition plan.

Transportation

Transportation policies vary from district to district. Please contact your child's teacher for information about bussing for your school district.

Withdrawing a Student

If for any reason it is necessary to withdraw your child from Bright Beginnings Preschool, please inform the teacher, and call our office at 740-373-6669 at your earliest convenience. The vacancy created will be offered to a child on the enrollment waiting list.

Information regarding the student will be transferred to the school where the student enrolls. If you need specific documents, please make a request and provide the name and address of the new school. Documents may also be given to the parent and/or mailed.

Ohio Valley Educational Service Center
Washington County Administrative Office
Complex 3 - State Rt. 821

2333-B, Building 16

Marietta, Ohio 45750

740-373-6669

OVESC Bright Beginnings Preschool Parent Handbook

Signature Form

I, _____ parent/guardian of _____

have read and understand the information contained in the OVESC Bright Beginnings Preschool Parent handbook.

Parent Signature

Date