



# Parent Handbook



## The Early Childhood Center of Van Buren Public Schools

**Vanburenschools.net**

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Belleville, MI 48111

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## **WELCOME TO THE STRONG BEGINNINGS PROGRAM**

We are happy to have an opportunity to work with your child this year. We hope to partner with you to further your child's intellectual, social and emotional development, and to help and support your parenting efforts. The Strong Beginnings is a free preschool program funded by the Michigan State Department of Education for three year olds who have identified life factors which may place them at risk of educational failure. Research indicates that children provided with a high-quality preschool experience show significant positive developmental differences when compared to children from the same background who did not attend a high-quality program.

The purpose of the Strong Beginnings is to provide a high-quality preschool program for three year olds at risk of school failure. Van Buren Public Schools recognizes the value and need for quality early childhood education programs for three-year-old children. It is a period of rapid growth and development that is critical to the development of well-being, trusting relationships, and a growing knowledge of their world. The Strong Beginnings supports the growth of our three year olds in a nurturing and caring environment aimed at preparing them for kindergarten and school success. In addition, to strengthen learning at home and positive child outcomes, the program provides for active and continuous involvement of parents in the learning process.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

It is the philosophy of the Van Buren Strong Beginnings (SB) that early childhood should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploration, and discovery. Our staff is committed to the development of a solid foundation for lifetime success. We believe it is our responsibility to create a safe environment for learning, while meeting the academic and emotional needs of each child. Preschool children are creative and receptive, so our staff strives to nurture and encourage these qualities.

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum model provides opportunities for children to grow through active learning. The curriculum's incorporation of the plan-do-review process, adult scaffolding of learning, support in developing conflict resolution skills, and opportunities for key experiences in learning are presented throughout the day and produce an early learning environment where all children can thrive.

There is a balance of child initiated and teacher initiated activities during the day. Children's own efforts at their own developmental level are encouraged as opposed to teacher prepared projects. Developing an attitude of competence is the primary goal of the curriculum. By supporting and gently extending children's learning within content areas, teachers ensure that each child is learning and growing in all areas of development.

Every family is encouraged to read each day with their child. Throughout the year, we will provide a variety of resource materials and we encourage you to attend our parent workshops to

learn new ideas to support your child's language and literacy development. Please see the calendar for workshop and meeting dates.

Our curriculum is made of a series of daily activities and interest areas to help your child develop and learn. The **High Scope Curriculum** is a research-based program focusing on developmentally appropriate practices important for the growth of your child. Developmentally appropriate practice means teaching in ways that match the way children develop and learn to promote their optimal development and learning.

The High Scope Curriculum for Preschool addresses children's development through eight content areas. Each one includes key developmental indicators, or specific learning experiences. The curriculum defines **what** to teach; **why** the content and skills are appropriate expectations for young children; and **where, when, and how** to teach effectively. It is linked to an assessment system so the teachers can use information from assessments to plan and guide instructions both for individuals and groups of students.

The High Scope Curriculum for Preschool is based on five fundamental principles. They guide the teacher's planning and help them to understand the reasons for intentionally setting up and operating our program in particular ways. These principles are:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Children will be enrolled based on expected program funding and in consideration of the SB prioritization process. A completed application does not imply acceptance. As applications are completed and returned to the office, they will be reviewed and prioritized.

## **REGISTRATION/ADMISSIONS**

Children who are three years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, and live in a Wayne County School district boundary are eligible to apply for acceptance to the Strong Beginnings. Admission enrollment procedures are as follows:

1. No child will be denied admission on the basis of race, creed or religion.
2. Applicants will be determined eligible by the SB guidelines/checklist.
3. Adequate documentation must be submitted for each qualifying eligibility factor at enrollment.
4. Classes will be filled on a eligibility priority ranking followed by a first come, first served basis according to the date the completed application was received at the school.
5. If classes are filled when a parent completes an application, the child's name will be placed on a waiting list.

6. All paperwork, including health appraisal, will need to be completed and submitted before acceptance.
7. As vacancies occur during the school year, they will be filled from the waiting list or from new registrations according to the above procedures.

### **DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

Classes meet Monday through Thursday from 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. There are no classes on Friday. The SB calendar is based on the Van Buren Public Schools calendar with a minimum of 30 weeks, closing for the same holidays, vacations, or cancellation days. SB also follows the Van Buren Public Schools emergency closing procedures due to inclement weather. Notice of school closings can be found on the VBPS Parent Square, website, automated calls, local radio and television stations.

### **SCHOOL BEGINS AT 8:20 A.M AND ENDS AT 3:20 P.M.**

Teacher discretion will be used to determine excessive absences and/or tardiness. Medical documentation must be provided if excessive absences are a result of chronic illness or medical issue.

### **PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER OF PLANS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PROGRAM.**

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

School bus transportation to and from class may be provided. In the case you drop off or pick up your child from school, remember the safety of all children is critical and building parking guidelines will be enforced. Park in designated parking spaces only. Do not leave a car running and never leave a child in the car unattended. Building security requires that parents wait outside the class for the teacher at arrival and dismissal. You will be asked to sign your child in and out, and children must be received individually by the teacher. Parents arriving to volunteer or conference must sign in at the office. A child will not be released to anyone except a parent or a person whose name appears on the child's information card. Photo ID will be required. In order to deny release of a child to a non-custodial, biological parent, a copy of the legal court document must be on file.

### **DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING**

Initial screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire provides the teacher with a baseline of information needed to plan appropriate activities. Teachers also observe and assess children using COR Advantage, High Scope's research-validated child assessment tool. COR Advantage is a birth-to-kindergarten assessment that assists teachers in supporting children at every developmental level. This guides program planning, staff development, and individualized instruction for each child.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS TO MEET FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S NEEDS**

Our program provides support to families in response to their interest, goals, strengths and needs. Families sometimes need extra help and support, our program maintains a list of resources to assist in meeting child and family needs. If there is ever a non-educational need that your family has, our SB staff will be happy to assist you. To ensure all families have access to basic needs resources, families are asked to share information related to the child's life experiences and current living situation. Staff will partner with community agencies, including Wayne RESA and the Great Start Collaborative to assist families in attaining necessary resources and follow-up accordingly.

**WE STRIVE TO MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM. IF OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT, OR SCREENING RESULTS INDICATE A DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERN, YOU WILL BE CONTACTED BY YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER TO HOLD A DISCUSSION BASED ON DOCUMENTATION. SB STAFF MAY IDENTIFY AND OBTAIN RESOURCES THAT FAMILIES MAY NEED, SUCH AS: INITIAL REFERRALS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND OTHER RESOURCES. IF NECESSARY, SB MAY ALSO PARTNER WITH WAYNE RESA AND THE VAN BUREN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR SUPPORT AND/OR RESOURCES. SB STAFF WILL FOLLOW-UP WITH THE FAMILY THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS TO ENSURE THEY ARE RECEIVING NEEDED SUPPORT. SB STAFF MAY ALSO BE IN CONTACT WITH THE SUPPORT SERVICES IF NEEDED AND IF PERMISSION IS GIVEN TO STAFF BY THE CHILD'S PARENTS/GUARDIANS. WAYNE COUNTY PROVIDES ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, NUTRITIONAL HEALTH, COMMUNITY HEALTH, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL SERVICES TO ALL WAYNE COUNTY RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND VISITORS. VISIT THEIR SITE AT [HTTPS://WWW.WAYNECOUNTY.COM/DEPARTMENTS/HHVS/WELLNESS/MATERNAL-CHILD-HEALTH.ASPX](https://www.waynecounty.com/departments/hhvs/wellness/maternal-child-health.aspx)**

## **PARENT COMPONENT**

Parental involvement with emphasis on increased awareness of child development is a component of the Van Buren SB classrooms. Two parent teacher conferences and a minimum of two home visits per family are required by SB guidelines. Either the parent/guardian or the teacher may request additional conferences at any time that there is a special concern. Please consider joining us for Family Participation meetings which are held to share information about the program and get input from our families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit the program, although advance notice is requested. When visiting the building, we ask that you put your cell phone away and play with the children. During the visit the teacher may not be free to talk with adults. Please understand that the children come first during class time. The teacher will be available to talk with you after the children are dismissed for the day. Volunteering in the classroom or attending Family Participation meetings is also encouraged.

Notes and newsletters will be sent home on a regular basis. **Please check and empty your child's folder and backpack daily.** Please also feel free to share family news with SB staff through the use of their folder. This handbook is supplied in an effort to answer many questions about the Van Buren Strong Beginnings. Please feel free to contact anyone on the staff if you have any other questions. Call the phone number in your child's folder. We may not be able to answer the phone right away, but please leave a detailed message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

### **RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND PLACEMENT**

On-going efforts are in place to identify and reach children and families most in need or at risk. Partnerships with local service agencies and Head Start programs assist in connecting with families through media, fairs, meetings, etc. Prospective children are entered into a data base on a wait list, and formally considered for enrollment after the application has been completed and eligibility factors have been identified and documented and prioritized.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

The Van Buren Public Schools (VBPS) Preschool is sensitive to the fact that information concerning you, your child, and your family is private and personal. Trust and confidentiality are essential to building trusting relationships. We are committed to maintaining your privacy and protecting your personal information. The VBPS will share students COR assessment and attendance records with VBPS Kindergarten programs. Information may be reviewed by Wayne RESA and/or the MDE to ensure and support program compliance. VBPS will provide parents with a copy of student records if attending a Kindergarten program outside of the district. VBPS will not disclose information except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of the individuals and families we serve.

### **DAILY CLASSROOM ROUTINE**

<p>A SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS: (ORDER MAY VARY PER CLASSROOM)</p> <p>8:20-8:35</p> <p>Arrival/Greeting</p>	<p>A transition between home and school. Children gather together with the teachers, talk informally with one another and with adults.</p>
<p>8:35-8:50</p> <p>Breakfast</p>	<p>Opportunity for relaxed conversations, and sometimes the sharing of stories. For meal times, children and adults sit together at tables and share a family type meal. Students help in serving and setting up for the meal.</p>
<p>8:50-9:00</p> <p>Planning Time</p>	<p>Children indicate (through gestures, actions, talking, drawing or writing in various ways) what their intentions are for the work time.</p>
<p>9:00-10:00</p> <p>Work Time</p>	<p>For about 45 - 60 minutes, children carry out their plans, playing and working throughout the room. During work time, children carry out their plans, making choices about where and how to use materials while adults support children's efforts by listening, encouraging children's language, imitating children's ideas and words, and commenting on specific attributes of children's work.</p>
<p>10:00-10:10</p> <p>Clean Up</p>	<p>Everyone puts the materials back where they are stored and helps to clean up the room.</p>
<p>10:10-10:15</p> <p>Recall Time</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to remember something they did during work time, and share it in various ways</p>
<p>10:15-10:50</p> <p>Outside Time</p>	<p>Allows time for children to play outdoors, use their large muscles, and be in contact with nature. Adults intentionally support and extend children's plans. Children are provided two thirty minutes of physical activity per day. This time is additional to the time needed for adults to support children dressing themselves or transitioning to outdoors. The outside time will be daily unless prevented by inclement weather conditions such as heat, rain or wind chill.</p>
<p>10:50-11:20</p> <p>Small Group</p>	<p>A time for each teacher to work with a part of the class usually 6-8 children. They explore materials, create things, read books, solve problems, work on a project, play games, or do a learning activity. This time is adult-initiated, but not adult-dominated.</p>



11:20-11:40 Large Group	Children and teachers gather together for enjoyable shared experiences. During this time, children can be singing songs, making music, playing games, listening to a story, or listening to the teacher talk about a new skill. This time is adult-initiated, but not adult-dominated.
11:40-12:40 Lunch	Opportunity for relaxed conversations, and sometimes the sharing of stories. For meal times, children and adults sit together at tables and share a family type meal. Students help in serving and setting up for meal time.
12:40-1:40 Rest Time	A period no longer than one hour, while accommodating for the individual needs of the children. Children who do not sleep will be allowed to sit quietly and choose a book or activity to complete while on their cot. Children will assist staff in putting out the cots, getting their own blankets and transition items. Adults can assist children by moving among the children in an unhurried fashion, having quiet conversations and providing soothing touch. Soft music may be played during this time as a means of soothing the children's transition to rest time.
1:40-1:50 Wake Up/Put Cots Away	At the end of rest time children will assist in the transition by putting away their cots, blankets and transition items.
1:50-2:10 Snack Time	Opportunity for relaxed conversations, and sometimes the sharing of stories. For meal times, children and adults sit together at tables and share a family type meal. Students help in serving and setting up for the meal.
2:10-2:30 Small Group	A time for each teacher to work with a part of the class usually 6-8 children. They explore materials, create things, read books, solve problems, work on a project, play games, or do a learning activity. This time is adult-initiated, but not adult-dominated.
2:30-3:05 Outside Time	Allows time for children to play outdoors, use their large muscles, and be in contact with nature. Adults intentionally support and extend children's plans. Children are provided two thirty minutes of physical activity per day. This time is additional to the time needed for adults to support children dressing themselves or transitioning to outdoors. The outside time will be daily unless prevented by inclement weather conditions such as heat, rain or wind chill.

3:05-3:20 Backpacks, Dismissal	Adults guide students toward independence while preparing for the end of day, packing folders, getting coats on, and heading to bus for dismissal
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## **ATTENDANCE**

In order to participate in the GSRP program, your child will be required to attend on a regular basis. Extended or unexplained absences not related to sickness or family emergency can result in dismissal from the program.

In order to experience the maximum benefits of the GSRP program, it is important that your child maintain regular attendance. Please make every effort to arrive at school on time. When children arrive after the day has started, they miss out on important parts of the routine. Children who consistently arrive on time and are in school every day quickly master the routine, learn more, are happier to be in school and receive the maximum benefit from our preschool program.

Please be on time to pick up your child at the end of the school day. In the event your child is not picked up by you at the end of the school day, a staff member will attempt to contact the people you have listed for emergencies to pick up and assume the care of your child. If contact is not made and/or the child is not picked up by 3:25 p.m., your child will be placed in our extended day latch key program and you will be invoiced a fee.

## **WEATHER POLICY**

The safety of all children is always a primary concern of Van Buren Public Schools. SB follows the Van Buren Public Schools emergency closing procedures due to inclement weather. Notice of school closings can be found on the VBPS Parent Square, website, automated calls, local radio and television stations: WXYZ-TV (Channel 7), WDIV-TV (Channel 4), WJBK-TV (Channel 2).

Many parents of preschoolers have concerns about sending their children to school on days when severe weather conditions exist. We believe that it is your right and responsibility to decide if the weather indicates keeping your child at home. Please call us if you choose to keep your child home for the day.

## **REST TIME POLICY**

Children in a license center for five or more hours are required to have a rest time during the day. This is so important for children to stay healthy, and renew their energy for the afternoon. Child do not have to sleep, just rest. They are given quiet options on their cot such as books or drawing, or quiet toys.

## **MEDICATIONS, ILLNESS, AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

Children will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

Should a child come to the SB classroom when he/she is not feeling well, he/she will be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of the ill child and of the other children to have a sick child remain at home. Additionally, a child should remain home if he or she has a short term injury or contagious illness that endangers the health and/or safety of children or others.

A child needs to be well to be able to participate actively in the program. If a child is well enough to come to school, he or she is expected to go outdoors with his or her class, weather permitting. If a child becomes ill while at school, parent/guardian will be called immediately by a staff member. Parent and/or caregivers are expected to pick up the child as soon as possible.

### **IF YOUR CHILD DISPLAYS THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS, THEY SHOULD BE KEPT HOME FROM SCHOOL:**

- Coughing, sneezing or runny nose with yellow or green drainage
- Rash or spots on the skin
- Fever (100.4 degrees or above)
- Vomiting and or diarrhea

### **PLEASE FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES BELOW IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN HOME ILL:**

After a fever (100.4 degrees or above) a child's temperature must be normal for 24 hours before he /she may return to school out the help of fever reducing medicine.

- Child must be free from vomiting for a 24-hour period.
- Child must be free from diarrhea for a 24-hour period.

Although a child may ask to come to school when ill, the child must remain at home until well enough to participate in the total program. If a child has had a contagious disease, the parent may be asked to submit a doctor's note that includes a diagnosis for the child to return to school.

In order to adhere to the State of Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing requirements for administering medication, ECC OF VBPS at Haggerty implements the following provisions:

- A Consent for District Administered Medication Form must be completed and signed by a physician for each medication.
- All medicine must be in the original container
- The container must be labeled with the child's name
- If it is over-the-counter medication, it must state the amount to be administered by the child's age and/or weight
- All medicine must be labeled with the date (if prescribed) or the date brought to the Center
- The medicine must include directions on how to administer the medication
- Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label, which indicates:
  - The date to begin and stop medication
  - Time in which medication is to be given
  - The amount to be given
  - The storage instructions for the medication
  - All medications must have an expiration date (we cannot administer medication after the expiration date)
- The medicine can only be administered to the child for whom it was intended
- The parent must complete a Medication Permission Form

Medication is stored in a locked cabinet with access limited to authorized personnel. When refrigeration is required, medication is stored in the refrigerator, in a basket labeled "medication". It is the parent's responsibility to provide the necessary dispensing supplies for administering the medication.

The medication must be left with the administrator/secretary for distribution to the student.

No medication is to be carried in by the student with the exception of an Epi Pen and Asthma Inhaler. All medication brought by parent/guardian must be in original prescribed container.

## **HEALTH PLAN**

Purpose: To promote the healthy development, early learning and well-being of the children we serve. By sharing resources and working collaboratively with our community partners, we support families in making healthy decisions for their children every day.

Why a health plan is important to children, families, and staff: Routine preventive health services for children and adults promote health and reduce diseases. We believe that a child's health and development are directly linked to his or her ability to learn, grow, and thrive. Families and child care staff members that mutually understand and commit to working as partners in the child's care build the foundation for lifelong health and wellness along with educational achievement.

Process for updating and tracking records:

Immunizations: The ECC of VBPS is responsible for accurately reporting children's immunizations to the State of Michigan. Written verification of proper immunization must be received by the start of the student's first day. All incomplete or expired immunizations must be updated and in compliance within 30 days of notification from ECC of VBPS. Families are required to forward updated immunizations to the office immediately.

Health Information: Each child is required by the State of Michigan to have a health statement on file with the signature of a physician. The SB teacher must have on file for each child a signed emergency card which includes emergency numbers for reaching the parent or guardian and another authorized person. If a change of address, doctor, etc. occurs during the school year, the program is to be notified and the card updated immediately.

Staff encourages parents to stay up-to-date on well-child checks and immunizations by having open lines of communication. Staff shares information regarding the child's well-being throughout the year. Academic, social, and physical development are also discussed in detail during parent teacher conferences and home visits, four times a year.

The program provides information regarding:

local health care

immunization information

developmental milestones (see Developmental Screening)

health screenings/health appraisals (required for enrollment)

A Community Resource Guide is available in the office that lists organizations for families such as health and wellness, counseling and crisis intervention, and more.

## **NUTRITION**

Purpose: The plan is to encourage good nutrition to meet the nutritional needs of your children.

Why is this important to children, families and staff: Shared meals are an important part of the program and children can learn to enjoy a wide range of foods in a communal setting.

This plan meets the needs of families, children, and staff by encouraging snack and lunch as a social time. Students will practice self-help skills, and a time to be exposed to healthy eating. Teachers facilitate conversations among children. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and clean up their snack/lunch items. They are encouraged to sample a variety of foods but are not forced to eat anything they do not want.

Tools and Resources: Snack and lunches follow the Child and Adult Food Care Program requirements that include a greater variety of vegetables, more whole grains, and less added sugars and saturated fat. A nutritious, well-balanced breakfast, snack and lunch are provided each day. Training and Print materials are used to empower Child and Adult Care Food Program providers and operators with the knowledge, skills, and expertise to implement the updated CACFP meal pattern requirements.

Information Sharing: The nutrition plan is shared in the parent handbook. Menus and nutritional information are shared on our school website and are posted on classroom windows where parents drop off.

We comply with rule 400.5110 (6) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive their meals and snacks in accordance with the child's needs.

In accordance with federal and U S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint alleging discrimination, write to: USDA, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington D.C, 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339: (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. (Rev. 8/2012)

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

Parents must notify staff of any food allergies in writing on child's information record form. If special dietary changes need to be made, we will need a Special Diet Statement form to be completed by your child's doctor. Forms are available in the office.

## **ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY POLICIES**

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES/LIFE-THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCES**

Children who suddenly become ill or who are injured in an accident while on the premises of ECC of VBPS are given priority attention to assure that they receive adequate care. In the event a child is injured and/or requires medical treatment, steps will be taken immediately by ECC of VBPS staff.

- When the discovery of illness is made or an injury occurs, the involved teacher(s) will seek assistance from other center staff; and the supervisor will be notified
- If the accident or illness appears to present any risk of life, EMS (9-1 -1) will be called first. Then the parent (or emergency contact) will be contacted and arrangements will be made for that person (identified on the Child Information Record/emergency card) to meet the teacher at the emergency room. The teacher will bring the Child Information Record, which has the signed authorization of the parent/guardian to seek medical treatment in the parent/guardian's absence. If the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified, as listed on the Child Information Record
- Client confidentiality is waived in the event of a medical emergency. Information conveyed to outside sources, however, will be limited to that which directly applies to obtaining assistance for the incident
- Parents are financially responsible for any medical expenses incurred

### **MINOR INJURIES**

Here at ECC of VBPS, we do all we can to ensure a safe environment for children. If a child has a minor injury (small cut, scratch, or bruise) the staff will administer appropriate first aid. First aid kits are available in each classroom for minor cuts and abrasions. The kits are not designed for serious accidents. The kits are inspected regularly by the teachers and materials are replaced as used or when outdated. Soap and water will be used to cleanse any wounds. No other topical or internal medication will be administered. Universal precautions are always followed when treating any wound or illness that has discharge of body fluids.

### **FIRE/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The signal to evacuate the school will be a continuous sounding of the fire alarm. A fire alarm is located near the classroom exit door. Students will be led outside by a staff member and the teacher will take roll. Emergency practice drills will take place various times throughout the school year.

## **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE**

It is Van Buren SB's policy to try and prevent behavior problems with good classroom management, consistent daily schedule which encourage cooperative behavior and feelings, and to encourage children to express feelings in an appropriate manner. Our staff uses positive methods while using the High Scope 6 steps of Conflict Resolution. Using this method, we encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day and we treat conflict situations with children matter-of-factly.

### **The High/Scope 6 steps of Conflict Resolution**

1. Approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children
4. Restating the problem
5. Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together
6. Give follow-up support when children act on their decisions

These methods encourage and develop self-control, self-esteem, cooperation, and trust with children. We encourage appropriate behavior, reinforcing positive behaviors, providing alternatives to physical resolutions to problems, and encouraging verbal communications.

Van Buren SB prohibits the use of corporal or physical punishment, shaming, humiliating, frightening or threatening punishment. Discipline is viewed as a learning experience. Staff uses positive guidance techniques in helping children move toward self-control and cooperation. Limits and expectations are stated clearly and appropriately for each child's developmental level. Whenever possible, the child is offered a choice of appropriate behaviors in order to involve the child in the decision making process. Children may be removed from situations in which they might hurt themselves, others or property. Verbal, physical or emotional punishment is prohibited, including spanking, shaming, shaking or threats. It is expected that parents will refrain from using physical punishment or threats of punishments while on the premises.

All school employees are mandated reporters. If a staff member suspects child abuse or neglect, child protective services will be contacted immediately. NO EXCEPTIONS!



A child may not be confined, restrained, or deprived of food, activities or toilet use. If a child exhibits continually challenging, disruptive and/or unsafe behavior that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will discuss the situation with the child's family, Administrative Staff, and/or other professionals to develop an individualized action plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavioral problem. Staff will keep parents informed of the progress made. As a last resort, student behavior plans may include Parent/Guardian working with the child in the classroom, during the school day until the unsafe behavior is improved.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

All volunteers must provide information for a background check prior to the field trips. Parents will be informed of field trips in advance through newsletters, notes, etc. The school staff, under the direction of the administration, will take reasonable steps to safeguard the physical and educational welfare of all students, participating in field trips. The District reserves the right to place restrictions upon a student's participation in a field trip or outing when, in the district's judgment, the student's welfare or the welfare of others requires it. This includes, but is not limited to, exclusion from participation in the field trip or activities and/or attendance only if accompanied by a parent or adult family member. Some field trips may require an adult present for each child.

## **TOILETING PROCEDURES**

It is the expectation that all children enrolled in the SB program are daytime potty trained. If a child is not daytime potty trained, a potty training plan will be developed between teachers and parents, so that consistent methodology and expectations are used, both at home and at school, in regards to the child's potty training. As diapering stations are not available in the SB classrooms or restrooms, children will be able to use the restrooms, as needed, to handle their own toileting needs. Under adult supervision, the child will be responsible for changing their own pull up / under pants, cleaning themselves with wipes and putting their own pull up / under pants and clean clothing back on. If needed, staff will assist children in changing their pull up / under pants, wiping children, and /or guiding them with toileting needs. All wipes, pull ups, extra underwear and clothing are to be provided by the child's family.

## **DRESS AND SUPPLIES**

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and gym shoes. Daily activities include active and messy play and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about their clothes. The child's name should be placed on all outdoor clothing and other belongings to help ensure the return of all their personal possessions. The few supplies that are required will be a backpack LARGE enough to transport papers and projects home. At the beginning of the school year, please send in a complete change of clothes in a Ziploc bag with the child's name on it to be kept at school and used when accidents occur. Please remember to dress your child appropriately for the weather; we go outside every day unless weather conditions prevent. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please send a clean set of clothes back to school when your child returns. Mark all clothing items with your child's name.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

In the event busing is provided to and from school, when the child is not riding the bus to school, you must call transportation at 734-699-5100. If your child misses the bus or will be absent from school, you must call transportation as soon as possible to avoid being dropped from transportation.

***Licensing rules require that an adult is at the bus stop to put the child on and take the child off the bus. Failure to follow this requirement is a violation of the signed SB agreement and could result in busing privileges being revoked. When no adult is present to receive the child off the bus, the child will be returned to ECC of VBPS Extended Care Latch Key, room 4. Parents will be contacted and responsible for picking them up. If this happens, you will be responsible for paying the latch key fee. Failure to pay the required fees may result in busing privileges being revoked and you would be responsible for transporting your child to and from school.***

*If you transport your child to and from school, please arrive and pick up promptly.*

## **RIDESHARE SERVICE POLICY FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

Purpose: This policy outlines the conditions and procedures under which parents or guardians may request the use of rideshare services to transport their preschool child to and from Van Buren Public Schools Early Childhood Program (VBPS) due to their inability to provide their own transportation. The use of rideshare services is intended for temporary and emergency situations, with the parent or guardian accompanying the child in the vehicle and assuming full responsibility for their safety during the trip, including the use of child booster or care seats.

Policy:

### **1. Eligibility and Purpose:**

- The use of rideshare services for transporting preschool children to and from Van Buren Public Schools Early Childhood Center (VBPS) is only permitted under exceptional and temporary circumstances.

- This service is intended for situations where parents or guardians are unable to provide their own transportation due to unforeseen emergencies, medical issues, vehicle breakdowns, or other legitimate reasons.
  - Rideshare services should not be considered a routine means of transportation for preschool children and are not a substitute for regular, established transportation arrangements.
2. Parent/Guardian Responsibility:
    - The requesting parent or guardian must accompany the preschool child during the entire ride in the rideshare vehicle
    - Parents or guardians must ensure that the child is safely secured in an age-appropriate child booster or car seat, as required by law.
    - Parents or guardians are responsible for the child's safety during the entire trip, including loading, unloading the child from the vehicle, and ensuring their proper restraint.
  3. Request Process:
    - Parents or guardians must submit a written request to VBPS administration detailing the circumstances necessitating the use of a rideshare service.
  4. School Approval:
    - Van Buren Schools Early Childhood Center (VBPS) will grant approval for the use of rideshare services only in situations when it is deemed necessary and appropriate.
    - VBPS reserves the right to deny approval if there are concerns about the child's safety or the legitimacy of the request.
    - VBPS will, upon approval, provide the name of the rideshare service provider, the driver's information and the scheduled pick-up and drop-off times.
  5. Liability and Insurance:
    - The rideshare service provider is solely responsible for the transportation service and any liability associated with it.
    - Parents or guardians using rideshare services must ensure that the service provider has appropriate insurance coverage.
  6. Notification:
    - VBPS should be informed immediately if there are any changes to the transportation arrangement.
  7. Documentation:
    - VBPS is required to document all rideshare services of each trip, including the driver's name, vehicle details, and confirmation of the use of appropriate child seats for reporting purposes.
  8. Review and Re-evaluation:
    - VBPS will periodically review this policy and make necessary revisions to ensure the safety and well-being of preschool children.
  9. Termination of Use:
    - VBPS reserves the right to terminate the use of rideshare services if it is found that the safety or well-being of the child is compromised.

- Failure to utilize rideshare services once ordered may result in termination of the transportation agreement.

#### 10. Emergency Contact Information:

- Parents or guardians must provide VPS with emergency contact information and remain reachable during the transportation of the child.

This policy is established to ensure the safety and well-being of our preschool children during exceptional circumstances when rideshare services are necessary for transportation. VBPS will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of parents and guardians while prioritizing the safety of the children.

### **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The Van Buren Public Schools SB staff members encourage parents to discuss concerns with teachers. You are also encouraged to ask the staff any questions you have about your child's care or general center issues. It is important for parents to address questions or misunderstandings quickly. Ongoing communication is vital to smooth running of the center. Most concerns can be addressed at the classroom level; however, if you are not able to reach a satisfactory resolution, you may discuss your concern with the Program Director. Van Buren Public Schools SB strives to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times, concerns may arise. Families that have grievances with some part of the SB should follow these steps:

Step 1: A person who has a complaint and/or grievance about any aspect of a Van Buren Public Schools SB is encouraged to discuss the matter directly with the child's teacher.

Step 2: If Step 1 does not resolve the matter, the person is encouraged to contact the program director by calling 734-699-2180.

Step 3: A written complaint may be submitted to the Director of Student Services. The complaint shall include a) the name of the person filing the grievance; b) the facts of the incident or action complained about; c) the date of the incident or action giving rise to the complaint; d) the specific relief sought. A meeting shall be set up for all parties involved.

### **PARENT NOTICE OF PROGRAM MEASUREMENT**

Van Buren Public Schools Strong Beginnings is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Strong Beginnings (SB).

Information is sometimes collected about SB staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.

- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Please contact: Van Buren Public Schools Strong Beginnings at 734-699-2180 -OR- the MDE Office of Great Start, Early Childhood Education and Family Services, at [mde-SB@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-SB@michigan.gov) or [517-373-8483](tel:517-373-8483).

## **CULTURAL COMPETENCY PLAN**

The Preschool Programs at ECC OF VBPS recognize that our young children and their families reflect a great and rapidly increasing diversity of language and culture. Cultural competency is a broad concept that impacts student self-worth and acceptance in the classroom environment, therefore, we strive to provide a culturally sensitive atmosphere in which all families and children feel welcomed and accepted.

We embrace the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) recommendations that early childhood programs are responsible for creating a welcoming environment that:

- Respects diversity
- Supports children's ties to their families and community, and
- Promotes both second language acquisition and preservation of children's home languages and cultural identities.

Our goal is to provide early childhood educators with professional preparation and development in the areas of culture, language, and diversity while actively involving parents and families in the early learning setting. We encourage all staff, faculty and community stakeholders to provide an atmosphere of respect, integrity and support of cultural differences. We do not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or handicapped status in educational programs, activities or services. Our classroom teachers and support staff will work with each family to create an educational experience that meets the needs of all learners.

All programs, in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality, will show respect for the cultural, linguistic, and family composition of all children. Encompassed within our program and Program Quality Assessment are specific measures to ensure cultural competency within the SB classroom environment. This includes but is not limited to:

- Materials reflect human diversity and the positive aspects of children's homes and community cultures
- Materials reflect both home and community cultures
- Materials depict a wide range of nonstereotyped role models and cultures
- Multicultural materials are integrated into the classroom

Special dietary requirements are posted and accommodated.