

A Better Choice Preschool Parent Handbook

Please take the time to read and understand all of the attached material.

Office Hours

- 9:00 am-2:30 pm
- Students may arrive no earlier than 8:55 am, when *Student Drop-off/Pick-up* door will be unlocked for entry.
- Office/Attendance Line – 816-246-6562

A BETTER CHOICE Preschool is a private preschool. Our goal is to provide quality early childhood education that fosters the development of the total child. Our program uses a brain-research based curriculum to prepare students for Kindergarten and beyond. Our student/family focus builds a dedication to education with emphasis on community, service to others, and an appreciation for the diversity of all of the children in our community.

Enrollment Information

- Children may be enrolled if they are three years of age or older.
- Children must be potty trained before attending preschool.
- A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$75 is due at the time of enrollment. (\$20 summer session)
- A BETTER CHOICE Preschool offers a multi-family discount of 10% when you enroll multiple children.
- The following items are necessary for enrollment:
 - Enrollment form
 - Contract
 - Medical form
 - Copy of Immunizations
 - Developmental History form
 - Photo Permission form

Classes Offered

- Morning Primary Class: 9:00am-11:45am, & 9:30 am-12:15pm
- Pre-K Class: 9:00am-11:45am
- Extended Class: 11:45am-1:00 pm, & 12:15-1:30 pm

All classes are multi-age classes, except for the Pre- K class, which is limited to students who will be attending Kindergarten the following year.

Attendance Days/School Year Calendar

A BETTER CHOICE Preschool full yearly calendar will be posted on the website during the month of August. Our school calendar is NOT the same as the Lee's Summit R-7 School District. While we try to have them as close as possible, the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool calendar differs slightly. Lee's Summit R-7's early release days, or late start days, do not affect our preschool schedule.

The First Days of Preschool

Our goal is for your child to love preschool. We want them to enjoy coming, and enjoy the activities for the day. Please remember that some children adjust readily, others may take two- to eight-weeks, or even longer to adjust. If your child is terribly unhappy, we will let you know. Many times, this unhappiness occurs for a few minutes in your presence. Please trust us, and leave with confidence that your child is in a safe place with safe people. When our activities begin, typically children calm down. Crying is very normal the first few days or weeks. Please let us help your child adjust. We encourage you, instead, to call or text our facility to check on your child.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

- Arrival Times: We encourage all children to arrive as close to our start time as possible. We have an exciting day planned, and a dependable regular routine has a positive effect on preschool children. Please schedule your arrival no more than 5 minutes before class begins. If your child is more than 10 minutes late, staff will attempt to contact parents/caregiver.
- Dismissal Times: Your child needs to be picked up at our dismissal times. All children are expected to be picked up within 5 minutes of the dismissal time. If your child is picked up late, a \$10 late fee will apply for every 10 minutes past the dismissal time.

- Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian into our classrooms at our start times, and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at our dismissal time. The teacher will open the classroom door when the class is ready to come in or be dismissed.
- Please note: We want to be respectful to the other classes in our building. To receive the full benefits of our program, and to help your child adjust accordingly, we ask your child maintain a regular arrival and dismissal schedule. Please do not allow your children to run and/or use loud voices in the hallway. Children must be accompanied by their parent/guardian at all times, both inside and outside the preschool property. As a part of our security process, all persons entering our building will use their key code each and every time they enter the building.
- If your child will be absent for the day, please inform your child's teacher via email, phone call or text to the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool office/attendance line (816-246-6562).

Tuition

- Tuition is to be paid at the beginning of each month, regardless of illness or vacation.
- Tuition fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not attendance. To maintain a reserved space, fees must be paid even during a child's absence, whether due to illness, holidays, vacation, or for any other reason.
- Tuition payments can be administered through *Tuition Express*, by cash, or by check made to "A Better Choice Preschool" or "ABC Preschool". Contact the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool Director to enroll in Tuition Express. It is your responsibility to keep your form of payment up to date.
- Monthly receipts will be made available upon request. All families will receive an end-of-year tuition receipt.
- If payment is not received by the 10th of the month, you will be subject to a \$10 late fee, which will be added to your bill. Our Director will email an invoice when your tuition account is overdue.
- Should your account become more than 30-days overdue, your child's attendance at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool will be suspended. Our Director will notify your family that your account is delinquent, and to bring it current. Your child may return to A BETTER CHOICE Preschool when account is paid in full.
- If child's attendance is terminated due to non-payment, A BETTER CHOICE Preschool will notify your family through certified mail, stating the account must be paid in full within 90 days of receiving the letter. Failure to pay in full will result in the inability to enroll your child, or prospective children, at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool in the future.
- Insufficient funds must be resolved within 5 days of notification, with a \$25 fee assessment. Failure to pay in full will result in your child's attendance at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool being suspended.

Tuition Fees

Your child's tuition for the preschool year is split into 9 equal monthly payments. Short months, long months, holidays and teacher in-services are all taken into account, and distributed through the year, for monthly payments to remain consistent. Preschool rates are as follows:

- Two Days a Week Enrollment: \$160 monthly
- Three Days a Week Enrollment: \$225 monthly
- Five Days a Week Enrollment: \$340 monthly
- Extended Day Enrollment: \$20 per day for the month/\$80 monthly

Weather Cancellations

We follow the Lee's Summit R-7 School District with regard to inclement weather. If the school district is closed due to the weather, we will also be closed. Early release, or late start, does not affect our schedule. Snow days will NOT be made up.

Clothing and Attire

Your child will be playing outside and will be doing art activities at preschool. Please have your child wear clothing that you are okay with occasionally getting "messy".

- Students should wear clothing that they can manage independently at restroom times.
- No flip flops or clogs are allowed. These can slip off easily and can be a safety issue when running and playing outdoors as well. They may wear sandals with a strap around the back of the heel.
- We do go outside to recess when the air temperature and/or wind chill is above 30-degrees, and the heat index is below 95-degrees, with no precipitation. Please dress your child appropriately for the temperature outside.

Safeguards

- For safety reasons, anyone trying to gain access to the preschool must enter through the *Student Drop-off/Pick-up*

door. Parents can gain access through their assigned keyless entry system code. Visitors must ring the *Guest Doorbell*, sign in, and obtain a visitor badge.

- Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian into our classrooms at our start times, and must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at our dismissal time.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the classroom with any person other than a parent or guardian, unless they have been preauthorized by the parent as indicated on the enrollment form. We also ask that the parent notify the teacher if someone other than the usual person will be picking their child up that day. Even with these notifications, the teacher may require that person to show a picture I.D. before releasing your child to them.
- The teacher will not dismiss your child until you come *into* the classroom. The teacher will tell your child that she sees his/her dad, mom, grandma, etc. before allowing them to go to you. This is an important safety precaution, and it also helps to ensure a calm and courteous dismissal.
- Preschoolers and siblings may not be in any portion of the building, including hallways, or on school grounds, unaccompanied by a parent/guardian.

Emergency Procedures

A BETTER CHOICE Preschool performs monthly fire drills, and tornado drills every three months, with our students. Lock down drills are performed once per semester without students present.

- **Fire:** In the event the fire alarm is activated, students and staff will move to the nearest door, and leave the building. Students and staff will meet on the sidewalk near Miller and 5th streets. Teachers will carry the class roster, taking roll once arriving at our meeting place. Director, or Assistant Director, will check all classrooms and restrooms before leaving the building. Students and staff will evacuate the building EVERY time the fire alarm is activated. Practices will occur every month. If there is a fire in our building, we will remain on the sidewalk near Miller and 5th streets.
- **Tornado:** In the event of a tornado warning, students and staff will move to the Library, located in the center of the building (between Room B and Room C). Students will take cover in the proper position on the floor. Dangerous weather will be monitored in the preschool office through a weather alert radio, located in the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool office. Practices will be every three months.
- **Lock Down:** In the event it is deemed necessary by local law enforcement officials, A BETTER CHOICE Preschool staff will implement an immediate lock down procedure.
 - Phase 1:
 - a) A BETTER CHOICE Preschool staff will check, and lock all doors that lead outside.
 - b) All curtains/blinds throughout preschool building will be closed, and lights turned off.
 - c) Parents, or guardians, entering the building will be identified at the door by preschool personnel, rather than at the classroom door by the teacher.
 - Phase 2: Once Phase 1 is implemented, Phase 2 will be put into effect, if necessary.
 - a) Children and staff may be moved to the Library in order to ensure further safety in certain situations. The Library is an area removed from windows and outer doors.
 - b) Staff will place a green placard on the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool office door to alert parents, and local law enforcement, the preschool facility is safe. Staff will place a red placard on the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool office door to alert parents, and local law enforcement, of a threat, or emergency, in our specific area.
 - Phase 3, Safety Drill: Doors that lead outside will be checked, and locked. Classroom doors will be closed and secured. Children and teachers will be completely silent, and out of site. This is to be practiced once per semester.
- **Long Term Evacuation:** In the event A BETTER CHOICE Preschool students and staff need a location for a long-term evacuation, Boone Preschool (*407 SE Douglas Street, one and one-half blocks northeast of A BETTER CHOICE Preschool*) will serve as a safe-haven until parents and/or guardians can be notified to pick up children. Arrangements have been made with the Director of Boone Preschool for the use of their facility in case of emergency. A BETTER CHOICE Preschool will also serve as a safe-haven for Boone Preschool, in case they are in need of evacuation facilities.

Illness

- A child is considered ill if his/her fever is 100 degrees or higher, if he/she is vomiting or has diarrhea, has a persistent cough along with new cold symptoms, or has an undiagnosed rash or eye infection.
- It is understood, and agreed, that a child may not be accepted for care and will be sent home if any of the above symptoms occur during the preschool hours.
- A child will need to be free of these symptoms at least for a 24-hours period before returning to preschool.

Accidents and Accident Reports

Injury reports are prepared for any accident occurring during the course of a child's preschool day. The accident

report needs to be signed by the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool Director and the parent.

If your child is injured at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool the staff will provide initial emergency care. For more serious injuries, we will initiate first aid as required by the condition and call for help. You will always be notified via telephone call if your child receives an injury that is minor, but more serious than a small scrape or bump.

If your child requires medical attention, you will be notified. If the parent cannot be notified, persons listed on the Emergency Medical form will be advised. If the parent and/or emergency contacts cannot be reached, a decision will be made as to whether to proceed to the emergency room via ambulance. You will be responsible for this fee.

Medications

- Medications will NOT be given to students at preschool.
- If emergency medications, such as epi-pen or inhaler, are needed for your child, the items will be securely stored and must accompany a medical authorization form completed by a doctor.
- The staff members at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool are not health care professionals. They will only be responsible for providing the care reasonably expected of a layperson.

Allergies

It is imperative that you inform A BETTER CHOICE Preschool of any allergies that your child may have. You must also provide any emergency medications (like an epi-pen or inhaler) that your child might need for an allergic reaction. A BETTER CHOICE Preschool will take reasonable steps to help your child avoid contact with his/her allergens.

Discipline

Whenever possible, it is our belief that natural consequences help guide a child's behavior. However, when necessary, a child may sit in a "Safe Spot":

- The teacher will always have a discussion with the child regarding why he/she needed to go to the "Safe Spot". A child will never stay in the "Safe Spot" longer than one minute times the age of the child.
- If a child ever requests to go to our "Safe Spot" to help him/herself feel better, calm down, or just have some alone time, they may do so. Our "safe spot" will always be in our classroom area, so that the child will still be a part of our class and also under supervision.
- At NO TIME will corporal and/or physical punishment ever be used with a child at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool.

Admission/Discharge

- A BETTER CHOICE Preschool is a private preschool. Parents and prospective students may schedule a private tour of our preschool by appointment on Fridays at 10:00 am.
- Enrollment fee, and all enrollment paperwork, are due upon enrollment into our program. Enrollment is limited to ten children per class (*15 children per extended learning classes per 2 teachers*).
- When attempts have been made to meet a child's individual needs, any child who demonstrates an inability to benefit from our preschool program, or whose presence is detrimental to other children and our learning environment, may be discharged from the preschool program. A 30-day written notice will be given if this facility cannot meet a child's individual needs, except where less notice is deemed necessary by A BETTER CHOICE Preschool due to safety concerns.
- If persistent problems with a child have not been resolved over a period of time, parents will be asked to work with the child's teacher, and A BETTER CHOICE Preschool Director, to correct the disruptive behavior. If a reasonable time has passed with no improvement, A BETTER CHOICE Preschool reserves the right to dismiss the child. Grounds for termination shall include, but not be restricted to, the following:
 - violent behavior towards self, other children, or staff.
 - severely disruptive behavior.
 - biting.

Three documented incidents/accident reports of any of the above will result in dismissal. Dismissal may occur after fewer than three incidents if one or more incidents is deemed to be severe, and to create a significant risk of harm to students or staff, in the discretion of our staff members. Except when the conduct presents a significant risk of harm to others, dismissal will only occur after notice has been provided to parent/guardian each time of child's documented incident/accident. Our first priority always has to be the safety of our students and providing an environment where the students (and their parents) can feel safe without worrying about another student hurting them.

- If a student voluntarily withdraws from A BETTER CHOICE Preschool a 30-day written notice and the applicable payment must be given at the time the family gives their notice or leaves the facility.

Disabilities

A BETTER CHOICE Preschool does not have the staff or facilities to provide special education or to accommodate the needs of students with severe disabilities or significant developmental delays. A BETTER CHOICE Preschool will take reasonable steps to accommodate a student's disabilities or special needs. It is important for the parent to inform A BETTER CHOICE Preschool of any disabilities, and input from the parent(s) and the student's health care providers will be needed to help craft any reasonable accommodations.

Outside Play

We believe outside play is critical to your child's motor development and social skills. Children will have scheduled outdoor play and activity each day, weather permitting:

- We will have outside recess every day if the air temperature and/or wind chill is above 30-degrees, and the heat index is below 95-degrees, with no precipitation.
- If weather does not permit us to play outside, we will have indoor recess. Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play each day.

Snack Time Treats/Special Helper

Special Helper sign-ups are posted on the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool website, under the Teacher tab. It is the parent's responsibility to sign up their child to be Special Helper to bring snack time treats for the class.

- Treats must be pre-packaged, store bought, with ingredients listed (*per Missouri state guidelines*).
- Healthy snacks are encouraged, so please do not send snack cakes or cookies.
- Please do not bring drinks. Cold water will always be provided.
- If your child was not able to be the Special Helper during the month, please email your child's teacher to ensure your child will be placed on next month's calendar.

Lunch Days

If your child attends a Pre-K Class, your child will need to bring a lunch for the day:

- Lunches will be refrigerated, so there is no need to include an ice pack. Because refrigerator space is limited, we ask lunchboxes be a manageable size.
- Your child will need to bring a drink in their lunchbox, as well.
- Your child's lunchbox MUST be labeled with their name.
- For PreK students, it is very important your child can open the packaging for their own food. This is something we will work toward during our lunch time, preparing them for shortened Kindergarten lunches. A child in Kindergarten will not have time to eat if they have to wait for a teacher to arrive at their table to open their food items.
- Your child will always bring home any uneaten food, so you have a better idea as to the types of food - and the amounts - you should pack.

What to Bring To Preschool Each Day

- Your child should bring a backpack to preschool each day, labeled with their name. The backpack should contain one complete change of clothing, in case of spills, "accidents", etc.
- Your child should also bring a show-and-tell item each day.

Birthdays

- Birthdays are a special day, and we want each child to be the Special Helper on, or near, their birthday. To ensure this, the teacher will sign up your child to be Special Helper during their birthday month.
- However, the snack still needs to meet Missouri state guidelines. The fun is not always in the snack, but the joy of having their friends sing "Happy Birthday".
- Many children also enjoy bringing a small birthday "treat" to pass out to friends, such as treat bags. Treats do not need to be elaborate: a sticker for each friend, a cool pencil, or even a glow stick are exciting items to give, and receive.

Holiday Parties

Each attendance day will have one scheduled holiday party during the school year. Teachers and the Director will organize and plan for parties for the classroom. Parents may be asked to donate items or help volunteer at the party. ALL parents and siblings are welcome to attend.

Show-and-Tell

To encourage communication skills, and an appreciation for individuality, we will have Show-and-Tell every day:

- Your child may bring one item small enough to fit into his/her backpack.
- He/She will be encouraged to tell about their special item while showing it to their friends.
- It helps to extend their learning if the Show-and-Tell item begins with our Letter of the Week, or has something to do with the concepts being learned.

Daily Journals/Text Reminders for Parents

Each day, a Daily Journal with photos and detailed information about your child's preschool day will be made available to you, through email. Parents are encouraged to provide an updated email address at the beginning of the preschool year, to receive our Daily Journal as a way to create more opportunities to discuss their child's day with them:

- The Daily Journal will include what they did during play time in the Activity Discovery Room, what center they visited during Center Time, who their Center partner was, and any other notes about their day.
- The Daily Journal, in combination with the information on the monthly calendar, is meant to give you - the parent - information about your child's time at preschool and help jumpstart conversations about their school day.
- A BETTER CHOICE Preschool also utilizes the free Remind texting service that notifies parents about important information, such as upcoming events, and school closings.

Parent/Teacher Communication

A BETTER CHOICE Preschool staff strongly believes in the value of the bond between preschool and families:

- We believe it is always in a child's best interest to have ample communication from your child's teacher, as well as the parent to the teacher.
- We are eager to communicate what your child is doing at preschool, and are always interested in knowing what your child is doing at home. This allows us to be better teachers, and helps you to be a great parent.
- Please be respectful of our class time by setting an appointment to talk privately with your child's teacher, or the A BETTER CHOICE Preschool Director, if you have a concern.
- Please keep your email address and phone number current, in order to remain attentive of the latest news at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool. It is the responsibility of the parent to check their email, and the preschool website, often.

A Better Choice Preschool Facebook/Instagram Page

Our preschool has a private Facebook and Instagram page for our families, in addition to a public Facebook business page:

- Pictures on our private pages are only able to be viewed by preschool families that have been accepted as "friends" or "followers". It is a great way for our teachers to share fun things with you, and it is a great way for our preschool parents to connect with each other.
- If you wish to be a part of our A Better Choice Preschool Facebook and Instagram family, it is under the email address abcpreschoolinfo@gmail.com
- Please note that social network websites, like Facebook and Instagram, are not 100% secure. Even with restricted access to the pages, there is a risk that unauthorized individuals could view those pages, either through hacking or some other improper method. We will not be responsible for the improper or unlawful activities of third-persons.

Progress Reports / Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Student Progress Reports will be sent home with your child every two months during the regular preschool year.
- Progress Reports will have information regarding your child's achievement, with the specific academic skills we have been learning during those two months.
- It is important to keep in mind Progress Reports are a simple "snapshot" of the learning your child demonstrated at that time. Each Progress Report will contain important specific social skill evaluations, as well.
- All PreK students will have an additional PreK Progress Reports, which will be sent home and updated monthly beginning in February.
- Progress Reports are not intended as a grade, nor are reported onto a child's future elementary education facility, or educational or healthcare specialist. Its purpose is to report staff observations of child's academic comprehension and social development for parent's knowledge.
- Our facility hosts Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences for all preschoolers, and Spring Pre-K Parent/Teacher Conferences. Our parents-only conferences help our staff communicate your student's progress in preschool through a 15-minute one-on-one session. You will be notified when sign-ups become available on our website.

Book Orders

Scholastic Book Orders will be available each month:

- Orders may be placed online by visiting the *Links* tab on our website.
- Paper copies of Scholastic Book Orders will also be placed in your child's mailbox each month.
- Our Scholastic Book Club online order code is **P9H7M**.

School Supplies

School supply lists for our regular preschool year, and Summer Camps, will be posted our website, prior to the beginning of the session. These will be classroom supplies that will be shared by all students, so there is no need to label them with your child's name.

Education Goals

The goal of A BETTER CHOICE Preschool is for each child to have fun while learning, and to attain the social and academic skills to prepare them for entering Kindergarten after their preschool years:

- Each child will be encouraged to grow at his/her own pace.
- Learning will be established through exposure to new skills, hands-on activities, creative opportunities, and through play with their friends.
- We truly appreciate how each child learns by seeing, touching, thinking, singing, experimenting, talking, listening, and "doing".
- In a multi-age classroom, all children benefit from each other's strengths and skills.

Confidentiality

Parents may be present when issues or discussions arise during preschool hours. Please respect the privacy of our students and their families, and **DO NOT** discuss what takes place in the area where you are volunteering, or visiting with other parents, family members, students or staff members. By volunteering in the preschool, you are agreeing to maintain that confidentiality. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in a parent not being allowed to volunteer in the preschool.

General Guidelines

This Parent Handbook is intended to set out general guidelines for how we do things at A BETTER CHOICE Preschool. It is not a contract, and it is not intended to create any contractual obligations. A BETTER CHOICE Preschool reserves the right to modify, amend, or rescind these guidelines at any time with or without notice. A BETTER CHOICE Preschool reserves the right to deviate from these guidelines in specific instances when such deviation is deemed appropriate in the discretion of our staff members. The document titled, "A Better Choice Preschool CONTRACT," executed by the parent(s), is the governing contract between the parent(s) and A BETTER CHOICE Preschool..

Handbook revised for the 2020-2021 School year