

Beyond Alphabets
Handbook & Contract
www.BeyondAlphabetsPreschool.com

WELCOME

Welcome to **Beyond Alphabets** Preschool. I am a professional preschool provider, who has been a teacher since 2002. To facilitate greater understanding between us we have created this handbook. It covers my preschool philosophies, business policies and expectations.

In order to make our relationship as enjoyable as possible, the following pages contain mutually beneficial requirements, which are necessary to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between either parties. The words "I", "we" or "my" refers to the preschool provider. The word "you" or "your" refers to the child's parents or guardian.

Please read this handbook carefully, and feel free to discuss with me any questions that you may have.

Beyond Alphabets PHILOSOPHY

As a family preschool provider, my goal is to provide a safe and happy place for children where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, academically and socially at their own pace. We believe children learn through play and benefit from a structured yet flexible schedule. Activities will be offered which stimulate sensory motor development, language development and social interaction. The development of strong self-esteem is also a major goal. Children will be taught to respect each other, adults, and property.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to me. When we accept a new family into my business, We like to be sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar preschool philosophy between us. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive issues will be discussed in private outside of regular preschool hours either by telephone or conference.

Conferences will not be scheduled as a routine part of your child's care; however, should you like to have a conference, you may request one at any time.

We publish a monthly lesson plan that will explain some of the activities we are doing, our current curriculum themes, events that will be happening during that month, my days off, and any other pertinent or fun information that may be of interest to you.

Parents of preschoolers will not receive a daily note unless there is an unusual reminder or a situation we need to make you aware of.

You are encouraged to call me at any time between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. If you call during the day, please be aware that we may be busy with the children and may not be able to answer the phone. If you would leave a message on my voice mail, we will call you back as soon as possible. The best time to call during the day is during our snack/lunch time.

We are looking forward to a terrific relationship with you and your child!

ENROLLMENT POLICY

There are several forms that we must have completed and in my possession before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child. NO EXCEPTIONS. This is to ensure that your child will get the very best care possible from me. The forms are as follows:

- Handbook
- Material Fee
- Enrollment Form
- Contract & Rate Agreement
- Affidavit Regarding Liability Insurance For Family Child Care Home
- Notification of Parents' Right
- Parent/Provider Contract
- Fee Agreement
- Health Record
- Blue card Immunization

- Emergency Information
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Permission to Pick Up

You are required to keep me informed of any change in addresses, telephone numbers, and other pertinent information listed on any/all of the above forms. If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please feel free to ask.

MATERIAL FEE

Each year charged \$175 for material fee. The annual material fee is non-refundable.

TRIAL PERIOD

All new children will be cared for on a two-week (14 calendar days) trial period beginning on your child's first actual day of care. During that time the parent or provider may terminate the preschool agreement with 24 hour notice. No pre-paid fees will be credited upon cancellation during the Trial Period. After the trial period, a two-week's written notice is required by either party to terminate the agreement (See Parent/Provider contract #7).

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Your specific rates will be outlined in your Contract and Rate Agreement. Payment is payable in advance and is due no later than drop off time first day of each month, unless another arrangement has been agreed upon. If this day is a holiday, payment is expected on the previous day. If you go away on vacation, payment is due BEFORE you leave. If it is my planned day(s) off, your payment is expected BEFORE we leave. In cases of illness, your payment is still expected unless other arrangements have been previously made. If we close the preschool due to my own illness or emergency, payment will be accepted on your first day back to preschool.

Payments may be made by check or cash, as long as no checks are returned to me for non-payment. Checks must be dated for the day they are due, no post-dated checks will be accepted. There will be a late fee of \$10 for each day that payments are received late. This includes post-dated checks. We ask you to consider how you would feel if your employer came to you on your expected payday and told you that your paycheck would be delayed? We will give you a minimum of two-week's notice of any increases in your preschool fee.

TAXES

We will supply you with Beyond Alphabets EIN number during the year for tax purposes. This will be given to you in January each year or when services are terminated.

NSF CHECKS

If a check is returned to me for non-sufficient funds, you will be required to pay all fees that I incur as a result of the returned check. Preschool services will be immediately halted until full payment of tuition and NSF charges has been made, in CASH. In addition, we will only accept cash payment from you from that point forward.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We require two-week's notice if you need to change your enrollment hours. We also reserve the right to terminate if the new hours will not work well for my preschool business.

We offer both full-time and part-time care. Full-time positions will generally be preferred over part-time positions. We reserve the right to terminate a part-time position, if the position can be filled with a full-time family. You may opt to pay for a full-time slot in order to keep your part-time position. You only can change your child's schedule one time a year.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

We maintain an open door policy for parents. This means that you are always welcome to call or drop in to see your children at any time during regular preschool hours. Open door policy does NOT mean that my door will be kept unlocked. We believe that it is extremely important to keep the doors locked for the safety of the children. We do not want unwanted or unexpected visitors to enter without my permission or knowledge. We also do not want little ones leaving the house unsupervised. Your child's safety is my first priority. We would appreciate your taking into consideration my schedule when dropping in or calling, and remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when we am alone with the children.

LATE FEES

You are scheduled for preschool for the hours listed in your Contract and Rate Agreement. If you drop off before or pick up after these times, you will be charged a late/early fee. (Examples: If you put 5:00 p.m. as your pick-up time, your late fees will begin at 5:10 p.m. If you put 8:45a.m. as your drop-off time and you drop off earlier than that you will be charged an early fee.) The late fees will be as follows: We will charge an overtime rate of \$15.00 per child per every 10 minutes that you are late or early. Calling me to inform me that you will be unavoidably late does not waive your late fees. If overtime is pre-arranged, my fee will be \$10.00 per every 10 minutes. This is to assure that children are picked up on time as not to impose on my family time. Late drop off does not constitute late pick up. Payment is expected, in CASH, at the time of pick up or drop off. If cash payment is not made at this time, you will be given a bill due on or by your next regularly scheduled fee payment due date. These rules will be strictly enforced, and your habitual tardiness may result in termination of services.

The above late fees will also be charged to you if grandma or another person is supposed to arrive to pick up your child and is late.

It is your responsibility to have your child picked up on time. If you know you will be unavoidably late, it is your responsibility to have an authorized alternate person pick up your child. It is not my responsibility to tell you that we have plans after preschool hours so that you can be here on time. Bad traffic or weather (except in extreme situations) will not be an accepted late excuse and you will be billed accordingly. Please remember that it is your responsibility to allow ample time to get here to pick up your child on time. Job-related lateness will not be excused for any reason. Continued late pick-ups will mean breach of contract and you will forfeit your child's position in the preschool.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Children are to arrive clean and fed in the morning. It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when being dropped off. Please be very brief (no more than 5 minutes is sufficient) during drop-off times; the longer you prolong the departure the harder it gets. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back are all that is needed. In my experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as parents are gone.

Please be very brief at pick-up times also. This is a time of testing when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the provider), and all the children will test to see if the rules still apply. An early arrival to pick up your child does not mean you may stay until the close of business. If you'd like to stay and visit please arrange this with me beforehand. But typically pick-up time needs to be kept brief.

During arrivals and departures, we expect you to back up my rules (see House Rules), but if you do not, we will remind your child that their behavior is inappropriate and take action to correct, if needed. Please be in control of your child during these times.

Do not allow your child to run out to your car while you are still inside. The safety rule is "No one goes outside without their parent with them."

Drop-off and pick-up times are not good times to discuss problems. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. We are not comfortable discussing children in the presence of anyone except their parents. Topics that concern day-to-day events, or light-hearted discussion are fine.

My normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents or someone else the parents designate. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, please notify me ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we MUST have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, that if I do not know them, we would need to ask for photo identification. We do not mean to offend them. This is simply a measure taken for your child's protection. We will not let a child leave without a parent's verbal permission even if that person is listed as one of your designated pickup people.

No early drop off please!

SIGNING IN & OUT

We are required to have all parents sign in and out for pick-ups and drop offs each day. A sign in/out sheet, pen, and a clock are located by the door for your convenience. This gives me a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up the child each day.

ABSENCES

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to your preschool fee for your time missed due to illness, holidays, or days off. A place has been reserved for each child that cannot be filled on a short-term basis.

Although we will make every attempt to be available each day, there will be occasions when another family member or we are ill and we are unable to provide service. You will be notified as soon as possible of any personal or family illness, funeral, or emergency. It will be your responsibility to obtain substitute care on such occasions and to arrange payment to the substitute. If we are unable to provide care for any of these reasons, the teacher assistant will take responsibility for that day.

When we must be away for a short time (1 - 5 hours), backup care will be provided by one of my substitute teachers. My substitute provider is authorized to carry out the terms of this contract.

HOLIDAYS & VACATIONS

December 30th, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King Day, President Day, One day off in March (Persian New year March 21st), Three days in April (spring break), Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, December 23th, Christmas Eve (24th), and Christmas Day (25th) and the day after Christmas (26th). When a Holiday (listed above) falls on a Saturday, Beyond Alphabets preschool will be closed the preceding Friday with pay, when a holiday falls on a Sunday, Beyond Alphabets preschool will be closed the following Monday with pay. You will pay for these Mondays and Fridays taken if that would be a normally scheduled day for your child.

Each year we may take up to 2 weeks' vacation time. Regular payment rates apply for the both weeks of vacation time. We will give no less than 3 week's advance notice of all vacation dates.

Occasionally, we may need to take additional days off for appointments, family activities, to catch up at home or attend trainings. We will try to schedule these days as far in advance as possible so that you can arrange other care for your child. We also will try to pick a day that is convenient for the majority of parents, if possible. These days will be unpaid.

Parent agrees to provide 2 weeks' notice prior to any vacation time. Parent agrees to pay one half of the regular preschool fees to hold child's position during any vacation time or extended leave (4 days or more) due to illness, etc., up to 2 weeks per year. NO EXCEPTIONS! Regular payment will be required for any other time off that is taken. Two-week's vacation will be equal to the same number of days you are contracted with me for preschool services. Example: if your child attends preschool on only Wednesdays and Thursdays, you will receive four vacation days per calendar year. If you would prefer to use your two-week's vacation as separate days that would be acceptable, but I also require a two-week's written notice. NO EXCEPTIONS! Any vacation days not used within your one-year period will be forfeited. Vacation days may not be applied to your final two weeks of preschool nor may they be applied to any outstanding preschool debts you may owe such as late pick up or late payment fees, etc. You may not use any of your vacation days for days when your child is in attendance. We will keep a record in your folder of your vacation days used.

SUPPLIES

You are responsible for supplying water bottle and a full change of clothing (including socks and underwear) appropriate for the weather, and any other supplies that your child may need. All items need to be labeled with your child's initials. You must maintain these items at all times. Failure to do so is grounds for termination.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Young children enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly, allows the children to anticipate coming events, and aids in achieving a variety of goals. We will adhere to my written schedule to the best of my ability, keeping in mind that anything can happen when children are involved. There will be times when we have to make adjustments to the schedule. We would appreciate it if you consider my schedule when picking up or dropping off your children.

MEALS

Nutritious meals will be served to all children at no extra cost to you. Lunch/Snack menus for the week are posted at the front door; and all menus are available for you to look at per your request. You are responsible for feeding your child if he/she will arrive at preschool after a mealtime. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Except for special occasions and when requested, please do not send any food, drink, or candy (except the water bottle) with your child. We believe mealtime should be a pleasant time; therefore, children are always offered food but are not forced to eat it. We do encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything, and they must eat a little of everything before given seconds of anything. Sometimes they are surprised by what they like! If a child refuses to eat their meal, there will be no food served at any other time.

We will not administer a modified diet to your child.

CLEANLINESS & HYGIENE

We do my best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed before and after meals and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. We wash our hands frequently and also use antibacterial gel. We have a strict "No Shoes" policy inside the house and classroom to prevent spreading germs.

Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils that have been washed in the dishwasher and dried on the heat setting. Chair, tables, etc. are disinfected after each use.

ACTIVITIES & CURRICULUM

The main goal of this preschool is to have fun, improve social skills, and encourage creative expression. We will utilize a variety of activities to accomplish this goal. Free play, reading, writing, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic play/pretend, puzzles, and educational TV/videos are just some of the activities we will be doing. Some of the activities include arts & crafts, music, math, science, stories, games, as well as letter, shape, color, and number recognition in a monthly theme format. Some of the projects will be taken home to share with the family. The monthly activity schedule is posted on the bulletin board. The goal of preschool is to have fun and provide a little extra learning stimulation for all children. It will not be a rigorous academic program as young children still learn best from participating in and observing the environment around them.

Music helps to develop young brains and will play a strong role in day-to-day activities. We may have special music activities and may also play music during other activities, for example, during arts and crafts or meal times.

Pick up homework is on every Monday and return finished homework is on every Friday. We call Friday "Fun day" because it is toy share day and children enjoy that a lot.

For toy share day each child can bring only one toy.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There will be times and ways you can get involved in your child's preschool experience. You are welcomed and encouraged to participate in any or all of these. Some examples of ways to be involved include:

- Chaperoning on field trips
- Lending objects for units of study
- Coming and talking about your job, when asked
- Helping your child at home with the concepts we are studying here (see monthly lesson plan).
- Helping your child prepare for "Show and Tell"
- Helping to provide treats or other items for our parties

BIRTHDAYS & PARTIES

Each child's birthday is his/her "Special Day. If you feel you must purchase a personal gift for the birthday child, we ask that you give this outside of the preschool. It will be your responsibility to provide a cake, cupcakes, or treats for your child's special day. I will let you know which day we will celebrate. We also have holiday parties occasionally throughout the year. Signup sheets will be posted at the front door for your assistance with these days as needed on a voluntary basis.

HOUSE RULES

Please respect my profession, my home, and me. The respect that you show me, including my home, furnishings, equipment, yard, and other children will communicate itself to your child and will make for a better working relationship. There are certain house rules that all children will be taught and expected to follow.

The following rules are enforced for the safety and well-being of everyone. There will be no running permitted in the house. Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children/adults will NOT be allowed. No standing or climbing on chairs, tables, or furniture. There will be no use of obscene, derogatory or disrespectful language. Children may not walk around the house with food, cups or bottles. Children are not permitted to lift and/or carry other children while in my home or on my property. Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected. Willful destruction of property will be charged to the parent at the cost to replace the item. Toys are meant to be played with, and if they break it is most likely from wear and tear. Unless a child deliberately takes a toy and breaks it, you or your child will not be held accountable. Please support me in the enforcement of these rules, in order to create a better environment for all.

No smoking is permitted on the premises.

Children and families are welcome in any areas of the home that are used for preschool purposes. My family and I also need some privacy and separation from the preschool. Please respect this.

If your car is leaking oil, please park along the street and not in my driveway while picking up and/or dropping off your child.

DISCIPLINE

My philosophy is that you use discipline to teach a child. We achieve this through love, consistency, and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules of the preschool home frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines.

Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Young children, especially, who are not adept at communication; have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit or throw toys, etc. Although teaching children appropriate behavior is what I will be doing, remember that this behavior is normal in most cases.

The following methods of discipline will be used:

- Encourage children to solve problems themselves
- Intervention and discussion
- Re-direction to another play area
- Loss of privileges
- Time out (read a book by teacher's choice)

If we feel there is a chronic behavioral issue that needs attention, we will let you know so that you and I are handling it in the same way and your child has continuity in discipline between our homes. These types of behaviors might include such things as biting, use of bad words, chronic hitting, etc. Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents me from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and well-being of all.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name-calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.

As a home care provider, I have a responsibility by law to recognize and report any evidence of child abuse--physical or emotional-or neglect. This is strictly for the benefit of your child.

ILLNESS POLICY

Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to bring a sick child to my home. Sick children expose other children, as well as myself and my family, to the spread of their illness and require additional care and attention that we are unable to give. Moreover, sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to preschool before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. If my family or I become ill due to exposure to a sick child, all of the children may need to arrange alternate care, and it is possible that we may lose a portion of my income. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, as well as my own, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being and safety of all concerned.

SYMPTOMS REQUIRING REMOVAL OF CHILD FROM PRESCHOOL

Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature over 98.6°F taken under the arm, over 99.5°F taken orally, or over 100.4°F taken rectally. A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to preschool; that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol or any other fever reducing substance.

Diarrhea: runny or watery stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours.

Vomiting, Runny nose: Your child may be brought to care if he/she has a common cold (slight cough, clear runny nose, occasional sneezing). Discharge of any color other than clear is not acceptable in preschool.

Runny and/or Crusty Eyes: Watery, matted, and/or red/pink eyes are not acceptable in preschool.

Unexplained Rash

Excessive Crankiness: Child is irritable, excessive whining or crying, wants constantly held, or requires more attention than I can provide without jeopardizing the health, safety, or well-being of the other children in my care.

Your child will not be accepted into preschool if he/she has had any of the above symptoms within the last 24 hours. A sick child should be allowed to recover fully after an illness so that other children in the group do not risk exposure and so that the child is able to fully participate in preschool activities. If you are unable to remain at home with your sick child it will be necessary for you to make substitute preschool arrangements at your own expense. If your child becomes ill while in my care, we will notify you immediately. You are required to pick up your child within 60 minutes of notification. If you cannot be reached then your emergency contact will be called.

If your child is out ill regular fees still apply. We reserve the right to determine when a child should be sent home due to illness. Children may return to care 24 hours after symptoms of illness end or with written authorization from your doctor stating the name of illness and when child may return to group care. Please notify me as soon as possible when your child becomes ill so that we may notify the other parents.

If your child is thought to have a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick him/her up. He/she will be isolated from the other children and given special attention and comfort until you arrive. Your child will be accepted back into care when no longer contagious. All other parents will be notified of the possibility of a communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for.

Many times the preschool may get blamed for the illness of a child, meaning that I have "allowed" sick children to come here. Parents may not stop to think that when sick children are brought to my home, my entire family is also at risk of exposure.

Further, there are times when a child is not that ill, but is terribly uncomfortable, and really needs some "one on one". At those times we strongly urge you to consider keeping your child at home. If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the daily schedule, then your child must stay home.

MEDICATIONS

If the child should be given prescription or non-prescription medicines Beyond Alphabets will not take any responsibilities in administering the drug. This is the sole responsibility of the Parents or Guardians.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of EMERGENCY, we will administer the necessary first aid. The Stow Police Department or Paramedic Unit will be called and your child will be transported to the hospital designated on your Emergency Transportation Authorization form. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY. If an ambulance is called to transport your child, the cost of the ambulance will be your responsibility.

We are prepared with emergency caregivers in cases of unplanned absences of short duration caused by unanticipated circumstances such as illness or accident. You will be notified when an emergency caregiver will be used. If an emergency caregiver cannot be located, you may be requested to pick up your children.

You are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required. The owner of Beyond Alphabets preschool, or my family will not be held liable for any sickness/injury of either parent/guardian or child while on these premises, or while the child is in the company of myself during field trips or outings.

FIRE SAFETY

We have a written fire evacuation plan and practice a fire drill with the children at least once each month. In addition, we incorporate fire safety curriculum into my program occasionally. My home is inspected regularly for fire safety.

FIELD TRIPS, Events and Holidays Party

Occasionally, we may have the opportunity to take a field trip. For example: Park or any kid's play house. All children will be placed in safety-approved car seats as required by State laws. You may be requested to provide a car seat for the day and/or pay any fees associated with the trip. You will be required to sign a permission slip that we will carry with me. We also carry copies of the emergency forms with a picture of each child attached. In the event of an emergency away from the preschool home, your child will be cared for and you will be notified. It is not required that your child attends the field trip, but it will be your responsibility to find and pay for alternate care if you do not wish for them to attend. You still pay your regular preschool fees.

TERMINATION POLICY

I reserve the right to terminate for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the preschool after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- My inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

- Serious illness of child or provider
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing

I appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating, and will give the same courtesy in return. You are required to give one month written notice when you decide to terminate preschool. The one month will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not your child is in attendance.

You will give one month written notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not your child is in attendance. I reserve the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of myself or other children in attendance. In this situation, the one month's payment of tuition is still required. Termination notice will not be accepted while provider or parents are on vacation. You may pay one month fees in lieu of one month notice.

REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK AND CONTRACT

There will be a yearly revision to this handbook and the accompanying contract. All families will sign a new contract each year. I reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies, as I deem necessary. You will be notified, in writing, of any changes that may occur. Every attempt will be made to give at least two-week's notice of changes.