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Message from the Director

Dear Parents:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Cherry Blossom Learning Center. Our program is designed to provide a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate educational environment for the youngest members of our community. Families are the key to the success of our program. In order to successfully implement our teaching model, we emphasize an active partnership among our families, our staff, and our community.

Our goal is to provide a multi-sensory learning environment that augments the social and emotional development of our youngest, inquisitive scholars. This program enhances our children's natural curiosity to explore and investigate the world around them in a language-rich, developmentally appropriate environment.

With your assistance and support, we shall continue to employ the highest standards in our delivery of Early Childhood Education.

With our sincere best wishes,

Dr. Claudia U. Orrett
Cherry Blossom Learning Center

About Cherry Blossom Learning Center

Cherry Blossom Learning Center (CBLC) is an innovative learning, teaching, and training facility dedicated to elevating the quality of early care and education nationally. Parents can see the results of the proven best practices modeled at CBLC. At CBLC you can observe high-quality early child care education that raises the standards of early learning and supports sustainable and lasting change.

CBLC provides children with learning opportunities of a lifetime. Children of varying abilities, ages three months to five years old, received the highest quality early care and education to prepare them cognitively, physically, and emotionally to enter school eager and ready to learn. Wonder and discovery are a part of their “curriculum.”

CBLC provides:

- Developmentally appropriate early care and educational programs for young children of all races, income levels, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds;
- State-of-the-art facilities and the newest technology, elevating the quality of early childhood care and education; and
- A model program that incorporates environments and experiences for children together with activities and experiences for parents, because family involvement is crucial to a child’s success.

Our Philosophy

We believe that young children learn through one-on-one hands on experience in a developmentally appropriate environment. Physical, social, emotional, motor, cognitive, and language development are introduced through child-centered “play experiences” that are developmentally age appropriate. Classroom routines allow for students’ active involvement and encourage meaningful experimentation, creativity, and thinking skills.

Our program provides an excellent nurturing environment in which safety is a primary concern. Our classrooms incorporate the following:

- Certified Teachers who are trained in CPR and First Aid
- Developmentally appropriate materials
- Well-maintained and safe playgrounds

🍏 Daily reports to parents in applicable classes

The beginning weeks of a family's entrance into the program are devoted to establishing partnerships with parents and developing trust. We strive to create a welcoming, homelike environment to ensure that both children and adults feel comfortable. From this foundation of security, a child can begin to form trusting relationships and develop a positive self-image.

We also focus on the important role of language and culture on children's learning. Our program provides young children opportunities to explore and learn about the diversity in language and cultures in their community. Our goal is to provide culturally relevant education in which caregiving routines, teaching strategies, and curriculum match the child's home language. We teach children to respect, appreciate, and positively interact with people who are different from them.

The overall framework of our curriculum is firmly rooted in activities of daily life such as saying hello and goodbye, building friendships, talking about who we are, what we look like, what our families look like, and what we celebrate and value. We invite and encourage family members to visit and participate throughout the day.

We look at the pre-dominant intellectual and emotional abilities in each child and determine different strategies needed to support growth in every area of development. Teachers create individualized activities to meet each child's physical, emotional, social, language, and cognitive needs. This approach enables children with the delays and disabilities to participate fully.

Our Environment

Research shows space matters – the color, size and shape of a room are all factors that affect the way a child experiences and learns from his or her surroundings. CBLC collaborates with teachers and professionals of early childhood education to create an ideal space to promote physical and emotional development for our students. In addition to their experience in the classroom, children explore, learn, and grow through field trips and community activities.

Children who attend are challenged to think, wonder, and imagine. Our program utilizes the highest quality and most innovative teaching

methods and techniques while offering children patients, love and understanding, and encouraging play and socialization.

With the emphasis on continuity of care, children enrolled in CBLC are grouped as “families,” and have the same caregiver for his/her three years.

Our Staff

One Director is responsible for the operation of all of the schools. Each school has a Program Director and a Program Administration as members of the administration team. All classes have a Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistance, and each school has an assigned Lead Teacher. As used in this Handbook, the term “caregivers” also refers to teachers who provide “hands on” care and instruction.

Program Overview

Infant/Toddler Curriculum (12 months to 36 months old)

The Creative Curriculum is an effective tool for achieving the best standards in a high-quality early childhood program for infants and toddlers. It uses a framework in which caregivers are the foundation of the curriculum and play a central role in nurturing relationships among caregivers/teachers, children, and families. The curriculum uses a daily schedule and routine to give infants and toddlers a feeling of consistency. It promotes creative activities, pretend play, reading and alone play, as well as group play and time.

Preschool Curriculum (3 to 5 years old)

We believe the children learn best by pursuing their personal interests and goals. Children are encouraged to make choices about materials and activities throughout the day. As they pursue their choices and plans, children explore, ask and answer questions, solve problems, and interact with classmates and adults. In this kind of environment, children naturally engage in key experiences—activities that foster developmentally important skills: creative representation, language and literacy, initiative in social relations, movement, music, and learning concepts of numbers, space and time.

School Programming (all ages)

Cultural Relevance

CBLC believes that culturally relevant early care and education requires caregiving routines, teaching strategies and curriculum matching the child's home culture. Miami is a place where families and children can retain their unique cultural identities while maintaining their places in the larger framework of our society. Our program brings that reality to life in the classroom as children learn about their own and their peers' cultural practices. By implementing a cultural relevance program, we teach acceptance of all people, all appearances, and all cultures.

Anti-Bias Philosophy

CBLC demonstrates an ongoing commitment to integrate an anti-bias philosophy into every aspect of its program. "Anti-bias" refers to teaching children to respect, appreciate, and positively interact with people who are different from them.

Dual Language Acquisition

This vital program will focus on any parent/guardian or child learning a second language. Strategies are introduced to help parents/guardians increase their understanding of the importance of communicating in the home/heritage language, while supporting a child in the process of learning a second language.

Inclusion

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care to every child. Training sessions, conferences and workshops for parents/guardians as well as caregivers will be conducted to provide information describing specific disabilities. CBLC welcomes therapists to visit the school for therapy sessions to improve the child's performance. (CBLC is not responsible and does not interfere with student/therapist relations.)

CBLC provides children with disabilities the opportunity to function in a group situation with children who do not have disabilities.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is an emotional intelligence program whereby children learn to express their emotions and resolve problems with words. Rather than punishing a child, teachers use conflict as an opportunity to teach children how to respond to and interact with others. Teachers will never withhold food or threaten to withhold food as a form of punishment. Teachers will never use physical punishment or engage in any form of psychological abuse of children.

Conscious Discipline is proven to increase academic achievement, decrease problem behaviors, improve the quality of relationships, and increase teaching time.

Anti-Violence Philosophy

At CBLC we define violence as any verbal, physical, or emotional behavior that indicates intent to hurt another person or property. We define such behaviors as hurtful behaviors rather than violent behaviors. We believe that most hurtful behaviors are a young child's inexperienced attempts to meet his or her immediate needs. Our role is to create environments and supportive interactions, even in infancy, which empower our children to peacefully satisfy their needs.

Daily Communication

Daily contact between family and teachers is an essential component of any high-quality early care and education program. By sharing information concerning a child's activities and welfare, we can work together toward meeting his/her developmental needs.

Teachers in the infant/toddler suite will provide the family with daily written notes about the child's food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, moods, and general behavior.

Families will have an opportunity to communicate with their child's caregiver regarding the child's progress every day. Caregivers will inform the family of any issues or concerns they may have regarding a child. This is also an opportunity for the family to voice comments and suggestions regarding the child's classroom and the school. An integral part of CBLC's program is that teachers send ongoing emails to communicate with families about the learning experiences taking place in the classroom. Additionally, each student has an individual journal. The journal is used

as a method for parents/guardians to write to their children and communicate with their child's teacher.

Screenings

All children will be screened using valid and reliable screening tools that are developmentally appropriate. Screening will be completed within the first 45 days of any child's enrollment. The purpose of this process is to identify if any special needs are present and implement the necessary approaches to ensure the child's development. The program uses a wide range of tools for assessment: oral language, vocabulary and math skills development, social/emotional development, family progress and outcome, and age-appropriate developmental screenings. The results of these screenings are used for the individualized planning for children. Should the results of any screening point to an area of concern, a referral will be made to inappropriate professional/discipline.

Assessments

Assessments are used as a tool to monitor students' overall development. Assessments can be done through observation, documentation, and recordkeeping of what the child does and how he/she learns. Areas for growth are identified. Assessments are beneficial for the overall program: the data collected allows opportunities for the teacher to plan individualized experiences for the child. In turn, the data is also shared with families to work collaboratively toward achieving goals for the child.

Media and Promotional Policy

Because of the exposure we receive due to the quality of services we provide, our school is frequently visited by outside guests as well as the media. These visits are often documented through interviews, photographs and/or videotapes of our programs, staff, and children. In addition, we have private and public partners, including the United Way and the Early Learning Coalition. Throughout the course of the school year, we as well as our funding and program partners, visitors and the media may use your child's image, voice or schoolwork for promotional and/or educational purposes including but not limited to posters, brochures, newsletters, and our website.

By law, administrators protect the privacy of all children and are prohibited from releasing a child's personal information. As it pertains to a child's image or voice, as a matter of CBLC's practice and policy,

parents/guardians are required to provide written permission before we permit a child's image or voice to be photographed, filmed, and or recorded by the media or the Center. All parents or guardians must sign a "Voluntary Consent Form" at the start of the school year stating that CBLC along with its funding and program congress, visitors, and the media have permission to use a child's photograph, student work, or voice for promotional or educational purposes.

Accreditation and Licensing

CBLC is licensed by the Department of Children and Families. A copy of the licensing rules is available for your review in the CBLC's Director's office, and a copy of our license is posted at the main entrance. On October 14, 2010, CBLC was accredited by APPLE (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment), a national early learning accreditation program with over 900 accredited members. APPLE engages in an ongoing effort to improve early childhood education through evolving standards of quality in areas such as curriculum, assessments of a child's progress, teacher education, family participation, community relationships, physical environments, leadership and management. Because of our APPLE accreditation, CBLC is a State of Florida Gold Seal Quality program. Our Gold Seal designation enhances our ability to obtain grants and/or funding from private, public, and quasi-public entities.

CBLC Hours of Operation

CBLC's hours of operation are from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; aftercare will be provided at an additional cost from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

CBLC School Closings. Please see CBLC's website: www.cherryblossommiami.com. (For Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten [VPK], please refer to the Miami-Dade Public School calendar: <http://www.dadeschools.net/calendars/>.) Note that CBLC will be closed for teacher planning days in accordance with the Miami-Dade Public School calendar.)

Application Process and Enrollment

Eligibility

CBLC serves approximately 161 children, ages 3 months to 5 years old, at two locations.

The school promotes diversity in its curriculum and in its admissions process. The school is committed to maintaining a rich and stimulating environment for all children, one that best prepares each child for the challenges and opportunities of school and life. It is the school's philosophy that diversity enriches the lives of all students and, ultimately, society as a whole.

Application

To apply for enrollment, parents/guardians must submit all of the following documents for verification purposes, along with the application form itself:

A copy of the child's birth certificate

A copy of a legal ID, i.e. Florida Driver's License (for all parents/guardians)

A copy of any Court Order affecting the child setting forth the parental rights of each parent with respect to decision-making and time-sharing

Once Your Child Is Accepted

Upon acceptance, parents/guardians must complete and submit all of the following:

- 🍏 Registration Information
- 🍏 Tuition Express Form
- 🍏 Department of Health Certificate of Immunization Form (DH 680–blue form) and Physical Examination Form (yellow form) provided by your child's healthcare provider
- 🍏 Photo/Video/Media Permission Release
- 🍏 Emergency Contact Form
- 🍏 Food and Allergy documentation

- 🍏 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Certificate (if applicable)
- 🍏 Handbook Acknowledgement
- 🍏 Pick-Up Authorization Form
- 🍏 Photo ID of Parents and/or person authorized to pick up your child

Immunizations

All families must provide a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunizations form (DH 680) for each child who attends (appropriate for the child's age) before they're allowed to enroll.

If, for religious reasons, a child has not received immunization shots, the parent/guardian must provide the original Religious Exemption Immunization form (DH 681).

Transition Between Home and School

Every effort is made to ensure a smooth transition as a child enters the classroom, whether they are new to the program or currently enrolled. Repeated visits to the new room, written and verbal communication with the parents, and intake interviews with the teaching team and family support staff are all designed to take away some of the unknown elements in this change and help the child and his/her family become familiar with the new environment.

An open-house orientation session is conducted at the beginning of the school year. Transition tips are also discussed at parent/guardian meetings and during home visits.

Payment Process and Fees

CBLC is a private, nonprofit program relying on revenues from parent/guardian fees for most of its operating expenses. Therefore, it is essential that all fees be paid promptly and regularly. Each family were received a billing statement in their family mailbox, in advance, for child care services. For more information please refer to our fee schedule document. You may also choose to pay the full amount for the year when you first register. CBLC requires a one-time, non-refundable registration fee per school year, which is used for materials and supplies, special occasion treats, and for language, music, gym/PE classes which are

provided by third parties and included in Cherry Blossom's curriculum. If you withdraw your child or if your child is terminated, CBLC will not refund any portion of this fee, because the space has been reserved for your child.

Changes in Enrollment

Withdrawal from School

We require that CBLC be notified in writing at least one month prior to withdrawing the child from the school. This is important for the staff, child, and his/her peers in order for them to prepare for the child's absence. All fees must be paid on or before the child's last official enrollment day. Teachers will make every effort to make your child's last day at CBLC very special.

Re-enrollment

A child may be reinstated to the program as long as all of the paperwork is up-to-date and space is available. Otherwise, the child will be placed on the waiting list until an open slot becomes available. CBLC cannot guarantee that the child will be placed in the same classroom unless there is space. However, we will make every effort to permit a returning child to join his/her former classmates.

Suspension/Termination of Care

CBLC adheres to the following policies with regard to suspension and termination of care:

A child may be suspended or terminated from CBLC for the following reasons:

- The health and safety of the child or the other children cannot be accommodated by the school.

- CBLC cannot meet the child's developmental needs. In this instance, a parent/guardian meeting will be held (either in person or by telephone). The Director will provide to the parent/guardian a written statement including the reason for termination of care, referral for additional services, a brief summary of CBLC school observation(s) related to the referral, and any efforts CBLC has made to accommodate the child's needs.
- Frequency of inappropriate or disruptive behavior of the child.
- Unexcused absences in excess of one week.
- Chronic lateness in picking up the child at the end of the day.
- Failure to pick up an injured or ill child within one hour of being notified, for the third time in a calendar year.
- Outdated, incomplete, or incorrect numbers on the emergency card resulting in no one being able to be reached within one hour of trying, for the third time within a calendar year.
- Failure to comply with the school's policies and procedures, including lack of parental participation.
- Lack of cooperation from parents/guardians to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/guardian staff meetings, conferences, or use of outside services.
- Inappropriate behavior by a parent/guardian, which includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate language, intoxication, theft or destruction of school property, verbal or physical threats of harm, or harassment of a staff member, child, or other parents/guardians/visitors to the school.
- Failure to provide the required health, immunization, and/or emergency information.
- Non-payment of tuition fees.
- Willful misrepresentation of declared gross family income (if applicable).

CBLC will send a written notice to the family immediately following the occurrence of any of the foregoing events.

Policy on Private Child Care

Parents/guardians may not request and/or employ full or part-time staff from CBLC to independently provide child care services outside of their

paid scheduled work time or during regular hours either on the CBLC school premises or otherwise.

Nutrition

CBLC's menu will be reviewed and approved by a consulting dietitian and comply with or exceed the minimum USDA Child Care Food Program requirements for meal composition and serving size. In consultation with the family and a nutrition specialist, caregivers will offer children familiar foods that are typical of the child's culture and religion and also introduce a variety of foods that may not be familiar, but meet a child's nutritional needs. CBLC's nutrition staff is responsible for providing infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with a nutritious and balanced breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. We provide infants 4 months of age and older with commercial baby food, infant cereal and formula containing no added sugar or salt. One milk-based formula and one soy-based formula are provided at CBLC. If you prefer a different formula, you must provide it.

CBLC will develop and provide families with written menus on a monthly basis. Each classroom posts the daily schedule of activities including the time when breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided. Breakfast is served only between the hours of 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Pre-School Mealtime Procedures

Pre-School Mealtime staff will ensure that all children are comfortably seated. All eating utensils are specifically designed for use by young children and allow them to eat at their best skill level.

Caregivers will sit at the table and eat meals or snacks with the children. Family-style meal service is encouraged, except for infants who must be fed by an adult. Social interaction and conversation are encouraged at all times. Extra assistance and time is provided for slow eaters.

Both older children and staff will assist in mealtime activities such as setting and cleaning the table. Staff members will help children with their hand-washing before and after each meal.

Special Diets

To avoid problems of food sensitivity, families need to provide the school with a written history of any special nutritional or feeding needs the child has, as well as any foods that have caused any kind of adverse reaction.

*For infants it is important that prior to the school's introduction of new foods, caregivers will discuss these foods with parents. Families must provide the food at home for two days before it can be served at CBLC. When an infant reaches his or her first birthday, a note from the child's pediatrician is required to introduce solid foods and cow's milk.

*If a child has an intolerance or allergy to a USDA Child Care Food Program required food (such as milk), a special diet statement form, available upon request, must be completed, signed by the child's healthcare provider, and submitted to the teacher and cook before the child can be served a menu substitution.

*Religious/Cultural substitution is accommodated to a practical degree within government and program guidelines. Families need to provide a letter stating the religious/cultural substitution to the teacher, nutritionist, and cook before menu substitutions are made.

*Family requests for vegetarian meals and snacks can be made. However, parents/guardians must speak with the caregiver and nutritional consultant in order for the substitution to be made. A note from the pediatrician and acknowledging that the child's diet will be vegetarian and what exactly needs to be omitted from this diet shall also be provided.

Breastfeeding

CBLC encourages and supports breast-feeding. We will offer solid foods and fruit juices to an infant six months of age and younger only upon parent/guardian request and approval by the child's physician.

On-Site Breastfeeding

We have a designated area for mothers who wish to breast feed her child at our facility. If you were planning on using a pump at CBLC, wash

hands, breast, and breast pump. Express milk into a clean bottle/breast milk storage bag. Label the bottle/bag with your child's name, date and time of bottle/breast milk storage preparation, and freeze until ready for use.

Bringing Breast Milk and Bottles From Home

Breast milk may be brought and stored to be served to infants.

*Breast milk must be frozen in a bottle/breast milk storage bag labeled with the child's name, date and time of bottle/breast milk storage preparation until ready for use.

*Bring clean bottles to CBLC in an insulated bag.

*Be sure bottle/breast milk storage bag are refrigerated/frozen as soon as you deliver it to CBLC.

*Take bottles home at the end of the day. Bottles will have been rinsed, but you must wash them at home. To clean a breast milk bottle, use hot, soapy water, a bottlebrush, and a brush that goes into the bottle nipple. Wash the bottle and the ring at the same time. Squirt water through the nipple to clean holes. Rinse well with hot water. Cap bottle when dried to avoid exposure to dust and germs in the air.

Children's Clothing and Jewelry

Children should always wear clothing that is clean, dry, and appropriate for the day's weather. On warm days, they should be protected from the sun and wear light-colored, lightweight clothing. We ask you to apply sunscreen of SPF-15 or higher and mosquito repellent before dropping your child off. For cold days, dress your child in layered clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and pants. Children should also wear closed-toed shoes at all times; no sandals are permitted.

Most jewelry is not permitted. Bracelets, necklaces, anklet rings and earrings that dangle below the earlobe are prohibited. Only posy/stud earrings with nothing hanging below the earlobe are acceptable. Children tend to get tangled in their jewelry as well as other's jewelry. CBLC will not be responsible for any jewelry that is lost or damaged.

Families must provide two extra sets of clothing (including socks and underwear) for their child. These sets of clothing will be stored at the

school. Outdoor activities, arts, crafts, and/or food can cause clothing to become soiled. For child who is toilet learning, the parent/guardian will need to provide at least for extra sets of clothing (including socks and underwear). In the event a child soils his clothing, the soiled items will be placed in a plastic bag, closed tightly, and labeled with the child's name. In addition, all clothing and napping accessories must be clearly marked with the child's name. The teacher will provide a list of other items that are needed (diapers, blankets, etc.)

Diapering

Diapering worn by children should be disposable and able to contain urine and stool to minimize fecal contamination of children, caregivers, and school property. All diapers and wipes need to be provided by the family. If a child cannot wear disposable diapers for a medical reason, it must be documented by the child's healthcare provider.

If the cloth diapers are to be used, the diaper should have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. If using cloth diapers, please provide plastic bags or containers to store the used diapers.

Toilet Learning

Before the toilet learning experience begins, parents/guardians need to schedule a meeting with the caregiver/teacher to discuss the child's role and ability. As part of the learning process, we consider the child's family background, including its preferences and customs.

Toddlers

Our caregivers will allow children to take an active role using the toilet when they are physically able to do so. For children who have not yet learned how to use the toilet, we will wait until the child has the physical ability to remain dry for up to two hours. It is important that the child demonstrate an ability to communicate and that the family is ready to support this learning.

Proper hand-washing after using the toilet is always emphasized. Children with special needs may require specific instructions or precautions. Please inform your child's caregiver of any special needs or requirements your child has involving toilet learning or use.

Preschool

Children are encouraged to use the toilet whenever they feel the need to do so. Some children are not socially or emotionally ready to use the toilet. Children may not respond when their bodies signal the need to use their bodily functions because they may be embarrassed about needing to use the toilet. Our caregivers will allow children to take an active part in controlling their bodily functions in a manner that gives them a sense of pride and confidence.

Naps

Infants

Whenever infants are tired, they will be placed in cribs for sleep. Unless the child has a note from his or her physician specifying otherwise, infants will be placed on their backs when sleeping to avoid Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Soft surfaces and gas trapping objects such as pillows, quilts, sheepskin, soft bumpers, or waterbeds will not be placed under or with an infant when sleeping. When infants can easily turn over by themselves onto their sides or stomachs, they will be placed on their backs, but allowed to sleep in whatever position they prefer.

Toddler/Preschool

Children are provided with an opportunity to sleep or rest at scheduled times. If the child is unable to sleep after 30 minutes of resting quietly, CBLC provides space for quiet play. Each child is provided with a marked individual crib or cot. The blanket needs to be taken home by the parent/guardian every Friday and laundered. Children will not be permitted to sleep on a bare, uncovered surface and they may not share their bed or bedding with another child.

Medical Issues

All staff members have training in pediatric first aid and CPR. Caregivers must be notified of any conditions or restrictions affecting child.

Sick Children

Young children attending a child care facility tend to experience a frequent level of illness (upper respiratory tract infections, fever, diarrhea, asthma, hepatitis A infections, etc.) These conditions may not allow them to participate in school activities. State regulations now require that a child with these conditions be excluded from school. If there is a suspicion that a child is suffering from a communicable disease, the parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to remove the child from school until he/she is no longer contagious. All family members responsible to pick up are required to pick up their child within one hour of being contacted.

Infectious Diseases

Parents/guardians will be notified if their child has been exposed to communicable diseases or conditions such as meningitis, measles, chickenpox, tuberculosis, pertussis, head lice, scabies, ringworm, diarrhea, or hepatitis A.

Early identification and treatment of infectious diseases is critical in minimizing the effects of the associated illness and its transmission. Parents/guardians should consult with their child's healthcare provider to discuss the implications of the exposure and determine the best form of treatment.

CBLC Will notify the parents/guardians of exposed children on the same day or within 24 hours by:

- Calling each parent/guardian;
- Sending an e-mail message to the e-mail listed on the child's contact form;
- Posting information on the parent/guardian boards; and
- Giving written notice of the communicable disease.

Parents/guardians are required by state law and CBLC policies to inform school staff within 24 hours (exclusive of weekends and holidays) when their child has been diagnosed as having any contagious disease.

When child is out due to a surgical procedure is important for parents to obtain from the pediatrician in charge of the surgery, a written statement that addresses the child's release to participate in the regular activities at CBLC. This statement should also address any other restrictions or

special indications. Children will not be allowed to return after surgery without the statement.

Biting

CBLC has a Zero Tolerance policy regarding biting.

Even with this policy in place, CBLC recognizes the biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant to Toddler 2 classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children will be bitten or will bite another child. Staff understands parents/guardians' concern and their reaction when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember that it is developmentally appropriate behavior, and that staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented. Staff will not punish or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the child to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. If biting continues to be excessive after counseling and warning, the biting child will be terminated from school. CBLC's responsibility is for the safety and well-being of the entire class.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. In these cases, staff will use the discipline strategies as presented by the Conscious Discipline model, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or even elicits this behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child. Uncooperative parents will have their child services terminated. Furthermore, children in the older age groups who bite 3 times in the school year will have their services terminated because the safety of all of the children in the program is of the up most importance and concern to CBLC.

Parents will be notified by an incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. Staff may not discuss with either parent/guardian the identity of the other child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in the biting incidents be seen by the family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the incident.

Medication Policy

CBLC does not allow the administration of any type of medication per the Rules and Regulations of the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Emergency Care Procedures

To ensure the health and safety of all children, a staff member who is qualified to respond to life threatening emergencies is in attendance at all times. Trained in pediatric first aid and CPR, this staff member can recognize and respond to many types of emergency medical situations.

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will contact CBLC to complete an incident report. In addition, the teacher will contact the parent/guardian and inform them of the incident. Depending on the injury and its seriousness a decision will be made to take care of the emergency at CBLC or the child will be transported to the nearest hospital. **However, the parents/guardians must be contacted first, and therefore, it is of utmost importance that your emergency contact information be current and up-to-date.** The incident/accident report will be kept by the child's teacher until the responsible person picking up the child signs the document. The copy of the document will be given to the parent/guardian and the original will be placed in the child's file.

Parents/guardians or persons designed to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports on the day of pick up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick up. However should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, this meeting will be scheduled at a later time because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for a later date if the parent/guardian is unable to meet at the school during the course of the day. Failure to sign and return an incident/accident report at the designated time will result in your child's exclusion from school until such time as the report is signed and returned.

Emergency procedures addressed, at a minimum, include:

- The caregiver will remain with the child until the parent or legal guardian arrives.
- CBLC will provide a backup caregiver for the remaining class.
- Staff has knowledge of a nearby urgent care facility.

- Staff will have first aid kits readily available.
- The school will conduct periodic reviews of the school staff's ability to perform first aid and CPR.
- The parent/guardian will receive a copy of the injury report.

Emergency Contact

No matter how careful and safety conscious we are, injuries may occur. Parent/guardian shall be notified immediately of any illness or injury to their child. They will also be provided specific instructions regarding action to be taken. It is crucial that the contact information (home, work, cellular phone numbers) in the child's enrollment packets be accurate and up-to-date. In the case of emergency, if the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the CBLC Director or staff in charge will contact the individual designated in the child's enrollment packet.

All individuals listed in a child's enrollment packet will need to be photographed and have their handprints scanned. This is necessary in order to pick up and drop off the child. Everyone on the contact list needs to go through this procedure; if not, they will not be allowed to drop off or pick up the child.

Under no circumstances may a minor (a person less than 18 years old) pick up a child from school.

General Policies

Arrival and Departure

Parents/guardians are the primary escorts for a child. Other relatives or friends on the contact list should only drop off or pick up a child in emergency situations. For a child's safety, please escort him or her into CBLC's building and into the classroom. The series of steps are in place to ensure the safety of your children. We encourage parents to bring their children to school early so they can benefit from the full program.

At the time of arrival, parents/guardians shall:

- Sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet located near the entrance door; and

- Notify the child's teacher or director of any special instructions or needs for the day. Special instructions must be presented in the form of a letter and verbally discussed with the teacher or director. The special instructions include, but are not limited to: early pick up, alternative pick up person, and/or health issues.

At the time of departure, parents/guardians shall:

- Sign the child out of care on the sign out sheet located near the entrance door.

Once a child signed out, the parent is then responsible for supervising his/her child while on the premises. Children are not allowed at this time to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or the playground.

Sign In/Out Policy

Anyone picking up or dropping off the child must sign a roster with the name of the child, noting arrival and departure times. All names, addresses and phone numbers will be kept on hand at the school and will be maintained by our staff. Only persons whose names are on the emergency contact card may pick up a child with the proper identification. Children left late will be charged a late fee. Legal authorities may be notified if children are left at the school for one hour or longer after closing time.

Daily Attendance

Regular attendance is important. Through consistent attendance, children learn the importance of being in school, which helps them to develop a sense of responsibility early in life. Children are expected to attend school every day.

Notification of Absence

Parents need to notify CBLC if a child will not be in attendance on a scheduled day. This will enable the school to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teachers effectively plan for the day.

If a child is ill, we request that you notify the school director both of the absence, and the nature of the information will only be shared with a staff

on a need-to-know basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that other parents maybe notified that a communicable disease has been reported. Once again, only communicable disease information will be shared.

If your child will miss school for any reason, you must contact his/her caregiver no later than one hour after the school day begins.

Parking

Families most park when dropping off or picking up a child. No curbside pick up/drop off or parking is allowed. Children should never be left unattended in the car. Because children may dart away from a parent during drop off or pick up, please enter the parking area slowly and drive with extreme caution when parking your car.

Mobile Device Usage While On Our Premises

CBLC expects all employees and parents to observe sensible rules of safety regarding mobile devices while in an automobile in order to ensure the protection of children and their families, employees, and other drivers on the road.

We discourage families and visitors from using a mobile device to make phone calls, send text messages or email while operating any vehicle in our parking area or on any road or highway.

Visitors

Parent/Guardian Visitors

Parents and family members may visit their child's classroom under normal circumstances.

Families with a child on the school's waiting list must schedule a visit in advance.

Security Cameras

CBLC has installed video cameras in the classrooms and hallways. The video cameras record the conduct of staff, children, and visitors. By

enrolling your child at CBLC, you acknowledge and agree that video images of you, your child, and any visitors to the school will be captured on video. The video feed protects both children and staff, and it is monitored in the event an accident or incident occurs in order to capture an accurate portrayal of the incident. As a parent, it is your obligation to inform all persons on your child's drop off and pick up list of our use of the video cameras.

Smoking Policy

CBLC has established a policy, in accordance with the Florida Clean Air Act to provide and promote a healthy work environment. Smoking is prohibited anywhere in the facility, and at the front and back of the building.

Field Trip/Transportation Procedures

Field trips are an important way to enrich children's learning experiences and a fun opportunity for families to participate in CBLC activities. We consider field trips to be an extension of the classroom and they are planned accordingly. Families are invited to join and often assist in these fun and educational adventures.

Parents/guardians need to fill out individual permission forms for each field trip their child will attend. If a child does not participate in the field trip, your child will be in the care of another teacher at CBLC. If a child arrives at school after the class has departed for the field trip, the parent/guardian may sign the child in for the day and then drive the child to the site of the field trip or must take the child home. Parents will not be permitted to transport any child other than their own on a CBLC sponsored field trip.

Faculty members are carefully trained to conduct safe and interesting field trips with detailed procedures for the transition to and from CBLC to the bus or van. CBLC has contracted with an independent provider to transport our students to and from field trips. For information about the transportation provider, please contact the Director.

We have established specific guidelines for seatbelt usage, communication with the driver, modeling appropriate behavior, etc. to assure maximum and security of the children. Parents who decide not join the field trip but to visit the same location on the same day of the field trip will not be allowed to join the group for security reasons.

Typical field trip destinations include the zoo, botanical gardens or other wildlife or nature preserves, swimming pools, museums, parks, plays, musical events, banks, stores, train trips, etc.

Religious Practices

CBLC will display respect for all religions and faiths.

Confidentiality

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with CBLC staff who have a “need-to-know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other family members, and/or children will not be shared with parents/guardians. CBLC strives to protect everyone’s right to privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: name, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health-related information about anyone associated with CBLC.

Outside of CBLC, confidential and sensitive information about the child will only be shared after the parent/guardian of the child is given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents/guardians will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside CBLC, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reasons for sharing information.

Children’s Records

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Staff may not distribute or release information contained in a child’s record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child, without the written consent of the parent/guardian.

Access to the Record:

Parents/guardians will have access to their child's records. The school will provide access within two business days, unless the period of time is extended in writing by the parents/guardians. For divorced parents, we encourage both parents to register their child together, because only the parent who is present at registration will have access to records. However, if the absent parent provides CBLC with a certified copy of a Court document stating that each parent shall have equal access to their

child's school records, CBLC will provide that parent with complete access to records.

Amending the Record:

Parents/guardians have the right to add information, comments, dates, or any other relevant materials to a child's record. Parents/guardians also have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in a child's record unless such deletion is prohibited by law.

Transfer of the Record:

Once a child's no longer in the school's care, and upon a written request, the school will provide parent/guardian with his/her child's record, or transfer them to another person identified by the parent/guardian in writing.

Emergency and Disaster Procedures

Unexpected School Closings

If CBLC is closed for any reason, all parents or guardians will be notified immediately to pick up their child. In every instance we will attempt to provide as much advance notice as possible.

Emergency Evacuation

Evacuation plans are posted in all rooms. In designing the plan for each room, all available exits are taken into consideration in order to determine the quickest route to safety. All doors and windows will be closed.

In case of fire, staff members and children will be removed at least 50 feet away from the building. A headcount will be taken to ensure that everyone is safely out of the building. After everyone has been evacuated, the fire or police department will be notified. If the children cannot return to the school, suitable shelter will be made available for they can safely remain until their parents/guardians arrived.

In the event of a tornado, staff will move children away from all windows and doors, and place them in a secure location.

Staff members have been trained to remain calm and will reassure the children by explaining what is happening. Caregivers will comfort the children and redirect their attention to a game or quiet activity.

In some emergency situations, it may be necessary to take children to an alternate shelter until families arrive. An emergency supply of food, water, clothing, blankets, diapers and flashlights is kept on hand should such situations arise.

Specific Plans Include:

Tropical Storm Watch:

CBLC will be open during regular operating hours; staff will monitor the weather as reported by the National Hurricane Center.

Tropical Storm Warning:

CBLC will close until a Tropical Storm Warning is lifted. Staff will call parents/guardians to pick up their children when the warning is issued.

Hurricane Watch:

CBLC will be open during regular operating hours; staff will monitor the weather as reported by the National Hurricane Center.

Hurricane Warning:

CBLC will close until a Hurricane Warning is lifted. Staff will call parents/guardians to pick up their children when the warning is issued.

Fire Drills

Fire drills occur monthly. These drills teach children what to do in the event of a real fire. Staff directs the children to the proper exit to ensure safety for everyone. If a fire drill is in progress at the same time a child is being dropped off, parents/guardians must remain with their child until the drill is complete. Once it is complete, the parent/guardian and the child may enter the building and resume the routine drop-off procedure.

Loss or Missing Children

In the unlikely event that a child is lost or missing, the CBLC Director will be notified immediately. An initial search of the facility (including closets, cabinets, etc., and the immediate surrounding area) will be made, as will rapid attempts to confirm whether or not a family member may have picked up the child.

If the child is not found, the school will:

- Immediately notify law enforcement authorities;
- Continue searching while waiting for law enforcement to arise.

The Director will be the point person at CBLC, gathering information and providing a description and photograph of the child to the authorities.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on CBLC property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At no time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Parent/Guardian Behavior at CBLC

Parents or guardians dropping off or picking up children should be mindful of the children, staff, and environment, and conduct themselves accordingly. Children who are napping or participating in quiet activities easily frightened by unexpected sounds and loud conversation. Therefore, parents/guardians are asked to refrain from creating any loud and unnecessary noise.

Threats to Staff, Children or Other Parents/Guardians

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated and, if made, they will be reported to the appropriate authorities and offenders will be prosecuted

to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the school will not assume the risk that a threat may be carried out. Parents/guardians are responsible for and must control their behavior at all times.

Parent/Guardian Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs

Children will not be released to a parent/guardian who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise incapable of taking the child home safely. Our caregivers have been instructed not to allow a parent/guardian to enter CBLC if his/her behavior could pose a risk to the safety of the children. Caregivers will consult with law enforcement authorities or child protection agencies on how best to address an unsafe situation.

Violation of Safety Policy

Parents/guardians are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed to protect the welfare and best interests of the children, staff, and other parents/guardians associated with CBLC. Please be particularly mindful of the entrance procedures. Holding the door open for the person following a parent/guardian in may be polite; however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches or suspicious activity to the Director.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

CBLC is a mandatory reporter within the meaning of child protective laws of the State of Florida. Mandatory Reporters are required by law to report any suspicion or reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Staff are not required to discuss suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or conditions prior to making a report. Under the law, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at CBLC take our reporting responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes, The Child Protection Act, is designed to protect the welfare and best interests of all children.

As mandatory reporters, CBLC staff members cannot be held liable for reports made to the Department of Children and Families which are

determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made “in good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks or cuts on the child’s body;
- Severe, loud, and derogatory verbal reprimands likely to result in mental or emotional injury;
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (i.e. car seats, seat belts, etc.);
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol;
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time;
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child;
- Sending an overmedicated child to school with the intention of hiding illness symptoms which would typically require the child to be kept home until symptoms subside;
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with having been exposed to abuse.

Parent/Guardian Immediate Access

Parents of children in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, whenever they are on the premises of CBLC.

In the event a child is the subject of a court order (i.e. custody/time-sharing order, restraining order/injunction for protection, or a similar order for protection), CBLC must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and any amendments to the order as they are entered by the court. The court orders will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with CBLC, both parents/guardians shall be afforded equal access to their child. CBLC will not, without a court order, limit the access of a parent/guardian by request of the other parent/guardian, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent/guardian does not want the other parent/guardian to have access to their child, we suggest that the parent/guardian keep the child with him/her until a court order is entered, because our right to retain your child is secondary to the other parent/guardian’s right to

immediate access. Staff will contact law enforcement authorities should conflict arise.

Grievances

Parent/Guardian Concerns/Complaints

In the event that parents/guardians have a problem or complaint, a formal or informal meeting can be arranged by immediately contacting the school's administrative staff. All meetings will be documented and may take place outside of regular school hours. Constructive input from parents can lead to improvement of school operations and benefit the CBLC experience in a positive manner.

Grievance Procedure Regarding Program/Staff/Other

In the event that a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with a child's treatment or participation in CBLC's program, a grievance procedure may lead to a resolution of the problem.

A grievance may be a complaint relating to another parent/guardian who is causing a problem, a staff member who is not performing to his or her expectations, conditions of the school, etc.

The objectives of the grievance procedure are to:

- 🍏 Promote harmony in the working relationships of parents/guardians and staff;
- 🍏 Provide an orderly process for the handling of the parent/guardian grievances;
- 🍏 Resolve grievances as quickly as possible before they become unduly exaggerated and disruptive to the program;
- 🍏 Resolve grievances at the parent/guardian and staff level, if possible;
- 🍏 Correct the cause of the grievance; and
- 🍏 Provide free expression of views and open dialogue between parents/guardians and staff.

Grievances will first be addressed by the child's caregivers. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be found at that level, the parent/guardian will then have an opportunity to voice concerns in the following order:

- First – child’s primary caregiver
- Second – CBLC Lead Teacher
- Third – CBLC Program Coordinator
- Fourth – CBLC Director

Grievance Procedure Regarding Termination from School

A grievance may also arise when a child is terminated by CBLC.

Grievances arising out of terminations shall be initiated by a written notice delivered by the parent/guardian within 2 days after the parent/guardian receives a notice of termination and request for a meeting. A meeting with the Director shall be convened 2 days after the request is received.

The decision concerning whether or not to reinstate a child after termination shall be in the sole discretion of the Director.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian Conferences

Along with the short, informal daily conversations that take place between a parent/guardian and a child’s caregiver, planned communications (parent/guardian conferences) will be scheduled. The purpose of the conferences are to:

- Review the child’s development and adjustment to care;
- Discuss and agree on a home and school positive disciplinary action;
- Discuss the child’s strengths, specific health issues, and concerns such as persistent behavior problems, developmental delays, special needs, and sleeping problems; and
- Discuss any questions or concerns the parents/guardians may have about their child’s CBLC experience.

At these planned conferences, the caregiver will review the child’s health and identify any medical and developmental issues that require follow-up.

These conferences take place every 6 months or whenever new information is added to a child's health record. Additional conferences should be scheduled if the parent/guardian or caregiver has a concern about a child. Any concern about a child's health or development will be addressed in a timely manner and not delayed until a scheduled conference date.

Parent/Guardian Participation

New parent/guardian meetings are scheduled periodically for new families to meet with the Director and Program Coordinator.

A written parent/guardian evaluation of CBLC is conducted annually. Informal questionnaires may be distributed throughout the year to solicit parent/guardian input on various issues/topics.

Some parent/guardian education and focused discussion groups may be planned with the Program Coordinator and/or Teacher.

Parents/guardians can volunteer:

- As a monthly reader
- To organize and participate in a special art activity
- To share a talent or hobby
- To become involved in fundraising events
- As members of parents' committees
- As the designated Classroom Parent

School staff and parents/guardians will work together to design a schedule for volunteering that works for both the parent/guardian and the school. Parents/guardians who volunteer directly with the children must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be at least 18 years of age;
- Must be able to carry out assigned tasks competently under the supervision of a staff member;
- Must be able to respond appropriately to children's needs;
- Must exhibit sound judgment and emotional maturity; and
- Must submit to and pass a criminal background check.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

Making the Adjust from Home to Child Care/Preschool

To make a successful transition and adjustment from home to school, children need comprehensive support from their school and family. Our caregivers drive to develop positive attitudes with children toward learning, school, caregivers, and peers. At the same time, the family needs to take an active role in participating in their child's school and learning process. It is important that families consistently express positive attitudes toward learning and its rewards.

Children enrolled at CBLC will share an environment that positively values cultural diversity and individual differences. CBLC's program was created with the goal of adapting early learning to each child's individual development and cultural/linguistic diversity.

We suggest the following guidelines to assist your child in making a successful transition from home to child care:

- 🍏 Talk with your child about going to a new setting.
- 🍏 Take your child to meet the new program staff and see the new classroom.
- 🍏 Read stories and look at books together.
- 🍏 Encourage your child to play alone for short periods of time.
- 🍏 Teach your child self-care skills and how to follow simple directions.
- 🍏 Teach your child how to use toys and art materials correctly (i.e. scissors are only for cutting paper and nothing else).
- 🍏 Allow your child to experience being around other young children.
- 🍏 Teach your child to care for his or her own belongings (i.e. how to put toys away, hang coat, etc.).
- 🍏 Encourage your child to communicate with others and ask for help when they need it.
- 🍏 Encourage your child to make simple choices (i.e. ask your child if he/she wants to wear black or white socks).

- 🍏 Practice short separations from your child by leaving him/her in the care of a responsible adult.

In the event your child has difficulty with these steps, we will observe and assess your child in a classroom environment in order to suggest a transitional process tailored to meet the needs of your child and his/her classroom.

Transitioning From a Familiar Classroom to a New One

Children tend to become accustomed to similar surroundings. They feel comfortable in and an environment they easily recognized. Thus, moving from one classroom to another can be a difficult step. Parents/guardians should schedule an appointment with the child's caregiver each time the classroom switch is made to help the child become comfortable with his/her new surroundings.

Transitioning From CBLC to Elementary School

During a transition that represents a major step in a child's life, children often need a little extra time, attention, and support from their parents. School transitions also signal a new stage of family life for everyone.

Here are some ways families can make their child's transition to elementary school a successful one:

- 🍏 Attend the school's open house, orientation, or welcome day with your child and get acquainted with the new teachers.
- 🍏 Take the time to talk with your child about the new school. Write down their questions and find out the answers.
- 🍏 Schedule time for a self-guided tour of the new school with your child.
- 🍏 Practice walking to school or the bus stop with your child.
- 🍏 Discuss a typical day by going through the schedule with your child. Help him/her anticipate possible trouble spots and discuss what to do if a problem occurs.
- 🍏 Let your child know that it is normal to feel apprehensive. Families should share their own childhood memories when they were worried or apprehensive about a new situation that worked out well.

Donations (Equipment, Books, Toys, etc.)

Families who wish to donate appropriate equipment, books, toys or other items to CBLC should contact the school Director for approval.

Newsletter

CBLC will send out a monthly newsletter about classroom activities, upcoming events, and other useful information (favorite recipes, current news on child care practices, etc.)

Conclusion

Your child's social and emotional development is our first priority. The guidelines contained in this handbook will help you and your child benefit from the unique experience of a learning environment committed to the highest standards of excellence.

On behalf of the professionals at Cherry Blossom Learning Center, we welcome you. Together we will embark on a wonderful journey of educating our young children.