



the  
Bird's  
Nest

# Parent Handbook



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**Welcome:** Welcome to The Bird's Nest! We are excited to have you as part of our family. We believe that every child is important and want to create an atmosphere where they are valued and loved. Our program is educationally and spiritually rich. It is designed to promote your child's growth and development. This handbook lays out our goals and policies. Our guidelines are designed to make sure each child receives the best education possible. Please look over the information given, so you are familiar with our operation and guidelines.

### Mission and Philosophy:

**The Bird's Nest Mission Statement:** "Our mission is to make sure each child is welcomed, loved, and nurtured to reach their God-given potential. We promote social and emotional wellbeing and foster lifelong learners."

The first years of a child's life are the most influential. During this time, a child develops the social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to succeed. The Bird's Nest provides an enriching environment; encouraging students to explore, create, interact, and discover. We provide a positive and encouraging setting for each stage, from birth to Pre-K. Our teachers understand how pivotal their role is in guiding students in purposeful play, prayers and learning about God.

**The Bird's Nest Philosophy:** "Education should involve laughter, mess and sometimes a little chaos."

This philosophy highlights the belief that children learn through play, and play is a vital part of their childhood. Each item in the classroom has been purposefully picked to enrich the child's learning in some way. When you peek into our rooms, we expect that you will see children building, singing, saying grace, praying, reading, STEM activities, art, dramatic play, cooperative play and smiling.

At The Bird's Nest, we have individualized goals for each student. Parents and The Bird's Nest staff will work in partnership to develop and encourage:

- Positive self-esteem
- Emotional well-being
- Teach God's character
- Routines and Transitions
- Independence and Self Direction
- Kindergarten Readiness (Private VPK)

Our teachers are trained to help support and accommodate children as needed. We meet each child where they are and work with them to foster growth and learning every day. We ask our teachers to continue their education to benefit the children in our care. We select training courses based on needs identified in our center.

**Non-discrimination Policy:** In accordance with family childcare licensing regulations, childcare services are available without discrimination based on gender, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, veteran status, national origin, or ancestry.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practices:** Developmentally appropriate practice simply means that educators need to think about what young children need to develop healthy habits, and then create an environment and experiences in tune with those needs. A developmentally appropriate program is age appropriate. Young children learn far better through direct interactive experience. They learn extraordinary amounts through play and exploration. We are eager to learn as much as we can about the children we care for, their family, cultural backgrounds, past experiences, and current circumstances. With this knowledge, we work to create a program that fits the children and families we serve. Therefore, our children learn through play, and our curriculum is arranged to meet the needs of all children regardless of their current developmental stage. Teachers differentiate activities and centers as they get to know your child and the classroom dynamics. As classrooms evolve, schedules may change to better suit the needs identified and personalities in the room.

**Corporal Punishment:** No child will be subject to physical or corporal punishment, humiliated, frightened, verbally abused, denied food, rest, or bathroom facilities as a form of punishment. Children will never be disciplined for toileting accidents, sleep habits or food consumption. Any violation of this policy should be reported to the director immediately.

All teachers at The Bird's Nest manage behaviors in their classroom in a non-punitive, age-appropriate manner. All staff receive on-going training in areas of discipline and behavior management. They are trained in the process of positive discipline, which instructs children as to what they should do instead of focusing on what they should not be doing. For example, "We walk inside of the building," in place of "No running."

**Mandatory Reporting:** Every employee at The Bird's Nest is a mandatory reporter to any suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment. State law requires every employee of a licensed day care or preschool facility, who in the course of employment, reasonably believes a child has suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, or denial of critical care, shall immediately notify the Department of Child Services.

Our policy for volunteers and staff on site:

- a. All staff members shall report suspected or alleged child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services or to local law enforcement as required by state law. This is to be done by any means available within 24 hours of the suspected abuse or incident. Written documentation will be kept in the confidential student file and will be given to investigating agencies as requested. *The Bird's Nest* will maintain written documentation of a child abuse or neglect report on facility premises for the duration of the child's enrollment or at least 12 months.
- b. All staff members shall report suspected or alleged child abuse and neglect by a staff member to Child Protective Services or to local law enforcement as required by state law as well as to the Directors. This is to be done by any means available within 24 hours of the suspected abuse or incident. Written documentation will be kept in the confidential employee and student file and will be given to investigating agencies as requested. *The Bird's Nest* will maintain written documentation of a child abuse or neglect report on facility premises for the duration of the child's enrollment or at least 12 months.

The oral and written reports shall contain the following information, or as much as the person making the report is able to provide:

- a. The name(s) and home address of the child, phone number, date of incident
- b. The child's explanation as to what happened as they are able
- c. The nature and extent of the child's injuries including location, coloring, shape, size of abnormalities observed by staff
- d. The date CPS or law enforcement was called, name of reporter and investigator
- e. Any other information or comments in which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury.

Legal sanctions for failure to report are as follows:

1. Any mandatory reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report a suspected case of child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor.
2. Any mandatory reporter who knowingly fails to report is civilly liable for the damage caused by such failure.

Any mandatory reporter who in good faith makes a report of child abuse or participates in the investigation has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal. Records and/or information pertaining to the abuse may be released to the child abuse investigator. To report child abuse:

Florida Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-962-2873

<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>

At The Bird's Nest we take this duty seriously. The steps we take in reporting are as follows:

- Give a verbal or written account of what we have seen or heard.
- Provide the investigator with any information that they may need or request.
- We do not notify the parents; the investigator will do so.
- Once the family has been notified, we try to answer any questions, within the law of anonymity.

### Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Requirements

- \* Childcare personnel must be alert to the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, other person responsible for the child's welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person.
- \* Failure to perform duties of a mandatory reporter pursuant to s. 39.201, F.S. constitutes a violation of the standards in ss. 402.301-319, F.S. and is a felony of the third degree. Remember, it is each childcare personnel's responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- \* All reports are confidential. However, persons who are mandated reporters (childcare personnel) are required to give their name to DCF when making a report.
- \* It is important to give as much identifying and factual information as possible when making a report.
- \* Any person, when acting in good faith, is immune from liability in accordance with s. 39.203(1)(a), F.S.

**Hours of Operation:** The Bird's Nest is open Monday through Friday 6:45am until 6:00pm. Students not picked up by 6:00 pm will be billed \$1 for every minute after closing. For any children at the school longer than an hour after closing time, the State of Florida mandates the Florida Department of Children and Family Services be contacted.

**Center Closings:** We aim to have our doors open as much as possible. Closing dates may vary due to severe weather (hurricanes) or unforeseen circumstances (COVID), but we will do our best to be closed only on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- The last Friday in July (Teacher Inservice)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day (observed)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Day after Christmas

The Bird's Nest will be closed on the observed date of Veteran's Day. This is usually November 11<sup>th</sup>. Sometimes this is the Friday or Monday around November 11<sup>th</sup>. The Bird's Nest will close at 3pm on New Year's and Christmas Eve. The Bird's Nest will observe the Monday after Christmas as a holiday when Christmas Day is on a weekend.

School closings were considered when tuition prices were developed, therefore no deductions or adjustments will be made to tuition. Prolonged closures due to weather will be determined as they arise. If there are any unscheduled closings or early releases (severe weather) you will be contacted by phone. It is especially important that you keep your contact information up to date. We want to notify you as quickly as possible in emergency situations. If you change phone numbers, please notify us immediately so that we may update our files.

### Vacation/Flex Rate:

The Bird's Nest must be notified at least two weeks in advance of any vacation or flex time being taken. Vacations are considered a week or more. Individual days DO NOT qualify. Year-round, full-time students are allotted two flex weeks per year: one during the school year and one during the summer. Flex week rates are half-rate weeks. These may be used after your child has been enrolled for three (3) months from the initial enrollment date. In place of two flex weeks a family may choose to use one (1) vacation week-free of charge (two half rate weeks combined). This may be utilized after six (6) months of enrollment.



Vacation or Flex Rate weeks reset annually, every August. These weeks cannot be used after you have turned in a last day notice.

## Rates and Fees for the Current Year:

Rates and Fees 2024-2025

### Weekly Rates

Chickadees	\$300
Toucans	\$285
Robins	\$275
Starlings	\$260

### Fees

Registration Fee	\$75
Curriculum Fee (due every August)	\$100
Late Payment	\$35
Returned Check Fee	\$35
Declined credit Card/Debit Fee	\$25

### Special Rates

Teacher/Military/First Responders	5% discount
Sibling Bonus	5% of oldest child

Rates vary by age, as do the needs of students. The Bird's Nest has four (4) classrooms; infants, Chickadees (\$300/wk), 1 and two-year-olds, Toucans (\$285/wk), 2½ to age 3-Robins (\$275) and 3-year-olds and up, Starlings (\$260). There is an annual curriculum fee of \$100 which covers restocking supplies and spending money for the individual classrooms. To help ease the cost of childcare, The Bird's Nest offers two special rates: a sibling discount (5% off oldest enrolled child) and a teachers/military/first responders discount (5% flat discount).

**Billing Cycles/Rates:** Tuition is due on Monday each week and the first of the month for monthly payers. Tuition can be paid by cash, check, credit card or automated payments. Credit card users will be charged a fee of 2.75% per transaction. If the payment in full is not received when due, a late payment of \$35 per week will be applied. The Bird's Nest reserves the right to require an automated payment when payments are not received in a timely manner. A processing fee of \$35 will be charged for all returned checks. If more than two (2) checks are returned within a six (6) month period, we will require an alternate method of payment for all future payments. A processing fee of \$25 will be charged for all declined credit/debit card payments.

Should you need to withdraw your child for any reason, The Bird's Nest requires a two-week written notice and payment for the final two weeks when the notice is given. For new enrollees, the registration fee, supply fee and first week tuition will be collected.

**Building Access:** Each parent/caregiver will have their own individual code to enter the building. *Please do NOT share your code with ANYONE.* Visitors will use the doorbell to enter and be permitted at the director's discretion.

Each parent/caregiver will use their fingerprint to check their child in or out of the facility. Regular contacts for dismissal can be given their own access code and fingerprint for check in/check out.

We love pets, but this is not the place for them. Pets are not allowed inside the building. Please share this information with those who help to care for your child.

**ProCare Kiosk:** Each parent/caregiver is responsible to make sure their child is checked in and checked out each day. You must use your fingerprint at the door to gain access to the classroom hallway. DO NOT follow another student or family in. This is essential to keeping accurate counts for safety protocols. If you need to make two trips, or are visiting your child during the day, please advise someone in the office to gain access. So that all students in attendance remain checked in until they leave the premises.

**Weapons:** We are a weapons-free campus. Per DCF, firearms and weapons (as defined in section 790.001. F.S.) are prohibited within the building or upon any persons

on the premises. All staff have been instructed to call 911 if a weapon is spotted on the premises.

**Emergency Procedures:** The Bird's Nest practices student safety drills regularly. Should you arrive during practice, remain in your car. Students will not be released until the drills have concluded.

In the event there is a true emergency:

- DO NOT drive to the building unless you have been directed by The Bird's Nest that it is safe to do so.
- DO NOT call the school. It is important to keep the phone lines open for emergency communications.

We ask that you use local news and our Parent Communication App to keep updated on true emergency situations.

**Communication:** Open communication is the key to providing the best learning environment for your child. We are here to support your child developmentally, emotionally, and socially. Teachers communicate to parents through daily reports, newsletters, weekly folders, phone calls and communication within the app. All communication about students should stay within the system. No personal cell phone numbers should be used to communicate school information.

We do believe communication goes both ways and ask that if there are incidents/events/happenings at home that may influence your child's behavior, or routine at school, you keep us informed so that we may better support the needs of your child and family.

We value the importance of parent and teacher communication, and we always offer scheduled conferences. Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to request a conference. A director will always be present. You may always schedule a conference with the director.

**Orientations:** We plan for Meet the Teacher nights each year. We are always happy to discuss and share curriculum. Each room will also conduct portfolios on students. This information will be shared with parents. Our directors are available to discuss your child's needs, the center's philosophy, teaching methodologies, curriculum, and

any concerns you may have as a parent. You may reach us at 904-901-6378 or [admin@birdsnestsschool.com](mailto:admin@birdsnestsschool.com).

**Volunteers:** We encourage parents to be involved in the learning environment. For frequent volunteers, a DCF clearance is required (fingerprints) and an application on file. All parents are welcome to join the classrooms for celebrations and lunch visits. We do request notice only because of the size of the classrooms.

Annual Halloween Parade: we invite all parents to be a part of this and help walk their kids through our route. We will have parents wait outside to meet their students and escort from the front drive.

Teachers sometimes have things they need to cut, laminate, or things that need to be prepped. If you are looking to help from home, please ask; the teachers are always grateful for help!

**Classroom Entry:** Due to the safety of students sneaking out, we ask that parents and those caregivers dropping off or picking up students remain in the hallway. Please do not open the door or step into the classroom. Students do try to escape sometimes! Our teachers will greet you at the door. You are welcome to knock.

Our Chickadee room is the exception to this policy. Chickadee parents may remove their shoes and enter the room completely. Parents must check the door before entering, as the babies may be sitting in front. Please also be sure to close the door behind you so babies don't escape.

**Arrival Expectations:** We operate on a full-time schedule. *We do not hold a drop in license.* We are an educational facility. We ask that you communicate if your child is sick or has an interruption to their normal schedule. We begin our learning day at 9am. We ask that all children arrive to be included in morning circle times.

If your child is not able to arrive and be checked in by 9am, it is your responsibility to let the facility know by phone call, email or message as soon as possible. Families consistently tardy will meet with the directors to plan for future drop-offs. Late drop-offs disrupt our learning routines and our students. Students arriving after 9am, may be declined care for the day.

A transition to any new environment can be challenging and cause anxiety for a child. Our staff is trained to be alert to your child's reaction to their new environment and

will be sensitive to their feelings. After enrolling, your child may visit and be introduced to his/her new teacher. This also gives you an opportunity to get to know the teachers and staff involved in the care of your child, prior to their first day.

Separation anxiety is common. Your child may resist being left in the beginning. However, after the first two weeks, drop off usually becomes easier on everyone! We suggest that you sign in, walk your child to class, give your child a hug/kiss and assure them you will return in the afternoon to pick them up – then leave. Prolonging your departure can cause more anxiety.

We know that separation from parents can be difficult, and aim to develop trust, promote a positive classroom experience, and cause the least amount of anxiety. You and your child's teacher(s) are a team and will work together to create the most expedient separation process for your child. Our teachers provide clear expectations and consistent routines, so children know what to expect. Each child is different, unique and has individual needs. Our goal is a successful morning drop off!

**Dismissal Policies:** Children will ONLY be released to people included on their application under approved pick up or emergency contacts. There is no limit to the number of people listed for dismissal purposes (use additional pages as necessary). You may request a one-time pick-up for special pick-ups who are not emergency contacts. This will allow someone not listed on the application to pick up your child for specified date(s) only. Should your child need to be picked up from someone NOT listed on your application, the change must be in written format and include *your name, child's name, guest pick up name, address and phone number, dates allowed and a signature*. A phone call will not be sufficient. Adults will be asked to show a valid photo ID (driver's license) before your child is released to them.

We will DENY release of a student to any adult who seems under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Appropriate authorities will be notified, and an emergency contact for the child will be contacted.

**Photos:** The Bird's Nest does offer photos throughout the year. We offer them through an in-kind donation and send you digital copies through the email we have on file. This allows you to decide how and where you want them printed, but the goal was to utilize a resource offered to keep cost down. This could change, but we will always communicate with parents, should the need for professional photos arise.

**Daily Schedules:** Schedules for each classroom vary and are dependent on age ranges. Schedules are posted in each classroom. You may ask for a copy of your child's class schedule at any time. We are a school, and we ask that you respect our teachers and other students. All students should arrive no later than 9am. Students attending prescheduled appointments, with advanced notice, need to arrive at The Bird's nest no later than 11am. Overall, The Bird's Nest follows a schedule that allows for students to experience outdoor play, indoor centers, imagination, art, music, small group and large group activities, sensory, reading and learning through play in print rich environments.

Classroom schedules may look a little like the outline below:

- 6:30-8:00 Arrival/Free play/Breakfast or snack
- 8:00-9:00 Welcome, Health Checks and discovery play
- 9:00-10:00 Morning Circles (Prayer), Movement and Exercise
- 10:00-11:00 Morning Learning Sessions/Outdoor Play
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch (Grace)/Hand washing/Nap set up
- 12:00-2:00 Nap/Quiet time
- 2:00-3:00 Afternoon Snack/Hand washing
- 3:00-5:30 Afternoon Learning Session (Prayer)/Outdoor Play
- 5:30-6:30 Free play/Clean Up/Dismissal

*Naptime/Quiet Time* will be daily from 12:00-2:30 at the center. It is important that this time be respected. We understand there may be a time you need to collect your child during this time, please give advance warning (even a phone call that you are on the way) to minimize interruptions to the room. Children will not be forced to nap if they no longer take naps. They will be given a choice of quiet activities. We expect them to remain in their space and quiet during the nap time, so that others may have their full rest.

**Termination of Services:** Parents have many reasons that may cause them to pull their child from a center. We do ask for two weeks written notice and payment for the final two weeks. The fees are non-refundable. We do understand that sometimes the reason for leaving is a hardship for the family, (loss of job, death in the family, unexpected move) and we try to be accommodating.

We understand that due to military service, temporary relocations, or custody agreements there may be a break in services. We require upfront payment for the time missed or a card on file to be automatically charged each month the child is absent. This payment secures your child's space in their classroom. Any break in service without payment forfeits your space in the classroom.

Instances where the directors may feel like services need to be terminated include, but are not limited to safety of students, safety of staff, safety of facility, safety of child, and/or being trespassed from Bozard Ford Lincoln Property. Dismissal is at the discretion of the Directors. Accounts are still expected to be current, and fees are non-refundable.

**Daycare Overview:** Each classroom will run according to the individual needs of the students. The Bird's Nest understands kids are unique and need flexibility. This is one of the biggest benefits we have as a private provider of childcare. Our schedules can bend when needed and are flexible to the needs of the classroom. We do have a few general guidelines to help the rooms run smoothly. Each room will have a schedule, so that you know what to expect. Each room will also have a list of needed supplies, so that you know what to what to bring.

### *Toilet Training*

Classroom teachers will help support your efforts to potty train by taking your child to the restroom, encouraging them to use the restroom, working on language/signs for the restroom and hand washing. All children entering the **Robin Room** should be working consistently at home on potty training, utilizing ***pull ups that Velcro*** on the side or training underwear. The Starling room students should be fully toilet trained before their start date. Accommodations will be made for students with special needs.

### *Clothing*

We understand you may want your child to look their best, but we also want you to encourage your child to dress themselves as they grow! We will take all the mismatched clothing for a smiling face. Your child will be painting, drawing, and making a mess, so please utilize play clothing for school. Make sure the clothing is appropriate for the weather and comfortable for outdoor play. All toddling children need to be in closed-toe shoes. Also, children need to have an extra set of clothing at school including shoes, socks, and underwear (if applicable). Please label all your child's belongings with their first and last name.

### *Diapers and Wipes*

For all children not potty trained or training, we ask that parents send in a box of diapers and four (4) packs of wipes at the beginning of each month. Please have them labeled with your child's first and last name. Parents will be asked to replenish as the supplies dwindle. For potty training students, we will let you know as they begin to show signs that they are ready for pull ups/training pants!

### *Bedding*

Clean sheets and blankets are to be brought to school at the beginning of each week. All bedding should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. The Bird's Nest will provide sleeping mats and/or cots for each child. They will be sanitized after each use. All bedding will be sent home with your child on their last attendance day of the week for washing. All bedding will be sent home with sick children to be cleaned before they return to school. A fitted crib sheet fits perfectly on the cots and in our cribs! Students may bring in a stuffed animal/lovie to cuddle with during nap. We will send the stuffed animal/lovie home nightly, unless otherwise communicated.

### *Lunch*

At The Bird's Nest, we feel it is important for parents to decide what they want their children to eat. For that reason, children will need to bring their own breakfast and/or lunch each day. The Bird's Nest will provide morning and afternoon snacks. You are also welcome to pack snack for your child—please label it clearly for our teachers. A snack schedule/list will be provided each week through the messaging app. Lunchtime is an opportunity for your child to develop self-help skills. Please send in reusable water bottles, easy to open containers and foods to encourage your child's independence. Teachers will help them learn to open their containers/foods. All lunch, snack and water bottles should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name.

### *Birthdays/Special Events*

Birthdays are always a special occasion, and we would love to help you celebrate! You are welcome to bring in a treat, or surprise to share (fruit, mini cupcakes, cookies, etc.). Edible treats must be store bought with clear labels for allergy purposes. Party invitations may be passed out by the student, only if the whole class is invited. We understand you may not be able to invite an entire class. If you are only inviting a few close friends, please give the invitations to your child's teacher to distribute for you. We believe this policy will spare any hurt feelings and ensure the invitations go home with the correct friends.

### *Movies*

On occasion, The Bird's Nest may have a designated movie/show viewing time. The selected movie viewings are age-appropriate content and used to help reinforce a classroom topic. This is not a regular occurrence. We will comply with the DCF regulations regarding age group time limits (Robin and Starling Room only, Toucan room for music/movement). Children becoming restless during viewing time will be offered alternate activities.

(Ex. Mickey's Seasonal shows, Blippi, Bluey, Go Noodle)



**Frog Street Curriculum:** In choosing a curriculum for The Bird's Nest, we looked for one that addresses the different ages we offer care to and takes into account their language, literacy, physical, emotional, and cognitive development. This curriculum also incorporates strategies from Conscious Discipline within their social emotional domain. This instruction has specific programs for each of our age ranges.

The Frog Street program focuses on building a language rich environment, provides opportunities to develop strong social and emotional connections, incorporates music and games to help shape children's brain development and has intentional child-centered activities.

*Chickadees (6 weeks-1.5 years):* This program really focuses on developmental milestones for each infant in our care. The focus ages are separated into 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-12 month and 12-18 months. They are working on gross motor skills to hold their heads up, roll over, stabilize their bodies, crawl, stand and eventually walk. They work with activities to support coordination and fine motor skills (pincher grasp).

*Toucans (1.5-2.5 years):* The toddler program is organized around 13 thematic units. Their activities support cause and effect relationships and problem solving for lifelong learning. They continue to hone fine and gross motor skills. The focus on centers (dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives, science, and books) develops and encourages natural curiosity. The inclusion of Conscious Discipline helps students develop trusting relationships and self-regulation.

*Robins (2.5-3.5 years):* The threes curriculum is built around 9 themes focusing on foundational math and language skills. They work on number sense (counting, number recognition, 1 to 1 correspondence), sequencing, matching, and patterns. They cover numbers, letters and shapes. Our Robins focus on fine motor skills through tracing, dotting and coloring between lines. The focus in language is phonemic awareness (recognizing individual sounds in words). The inclusion of Conscious Discipline in this program works on caring, sharing and interactive play.

*Starlings (3-5 years):* The VPK curriculum is built around 9 themes, each lasting for 4 weeks, continuing to build on foundational math and language skills. They work on pre-reading skills and listening comprehension. The lessons are designed to fit visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. The inclusion of conscious discipline in this program works on managing emotions and navigating social interactions. Classroom citizenship is a big part of our Starling Room.

Frog Street includes adaptations for special needs, ELL learners and bridging mixed age rooms. Each room is packed with books that students can interact with to support early reading skills. We have included soft, crinkle, board, and paperback books. Our rooms include labeled materials to support a print-rich environment. Each room participates in their own version of a morning circle time which can include shapes, calendar, read-alouds, songs, weather, letters, and shapes.

**Experience God Curriculum:** In choosing a Christian curriculum for The Bird's Nest, we looked for one that teaches children about God's character, how he cares for them, and how he asks us to live and show his light.

Experience God offers daily activities, art projects and music that all support the following statement of faith:

- We believe the Bible is the authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is only one true God. God is eternal and existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ in his atoning death through his blood and resurrection.
- We believe that we have all sinned and need Jesus for eternal life.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit as our helper to live a life pleasing to God.
- We believe God invites all people, young and old, to know him and have a personal relationship with him.

*Chickadees (6 weeks-1.5 years):* This is our earliest introduction to Christian Bible studies. We will be focusing on bright, colorful board book Bible Stories, worship music, our monthly prayers and blessings. This room is still focused on developmental milestones as the driving force for their academic needs. They love to read, so we are filling their libraries with age-appropriate books. They will also work to include art projects and activities to support the Bible Studies. They will move through the lessons at a different pace than the older classrooms.

*Toucans, Robins, and Starlings (1.5-5 years):* The program in these rooms will follow a similar schedule. All of the classes will use our monthly prayer to open Morning Circle Time, our monthly blessing before lunch, and a prayer during Afternoon Circle Time. A weekly Bible story will be added to each Frog Street theme and read throughout the week. There will also be a weekly activity and art project, to support the story. Kids praise and worship songs will also be added into music and movement.

**Wellness:** Educationally, we know it is best for students to attend on a regular basis. However, the nature of kids is to get sick. While we are eager to have your student in class, we also must keep the health of our students and staff in the forefront of our mind. If your student has a fever, diarrhea, a rash, or is vomiting, please monitor them at home. Our teachers are vigilant, and we will send home students who develop these symptoms at school. Any time we request for your child to be picked up, the return date will include a full school day between the call and the come back to school date. Students must remain symptom free, WITHOUT medicine, while at home for 24 hours to return. Please see the COVID policy for information specific to COVID.

### *Immunizations/Health Forms*

Students are required to have up to date immunization records (DH 680) and a current physical (DH3040) on file at The Bird's Nest. Both records must be documented on the Florida Certification Forms. Immunizations will be needed based on your child's shot schedule. Physicals are due every two years. All immunization forms must be received by The Bird's Nest facility **before** enrollment.

As these records expire, you will be asked to provide an updated form to your child's records. To ensure your records are up to date, ask for school forms at each doctor's appointment. It is imperative that we have current health records in our files. If your child's forms are not current, your child may not attend school until the updated information is received. Reminders are sent home a month before records expire.

If, for any reason, your child's appointment is AFTER their records expire, you must supply us with an appointment card *from the physician* BEFORE the expiration date. This is per DCF regulations and is non-negotiable.

### *Allergies*

Student allergies are as diverse as the students in our care, so we handle each on a case-by-case basis. We do limit food exposure in our Chickadee Room. In the Chickadee Room we ask that there is no peanut butter, fish or honey packed. Students with allergies are identified to all our staff. We place a note in their Bright Wheel profile. We also post allergy information in their classroom. We also have an emergency plan on file for those students, should exposure to the allergen occur.

### *Pets*

We love pets, but our center is not the place for them. They are not allowed on site. Any persons with pets will be denied entrance. Please share this information with those who help to care for your child.

## *Wellness*

We strive to promote a healthy and clean environment. For this reason, it is particularly important to keep sick children at home. Children who are ill cannot be appropriately cared for in the childcare facility setting. Parents are encouraged to have an alternate plan for students not feeling well. Examples of symptoms that require exclusion from school include, but are not limited to:

- Fever (100.4°F)
- Persistent cough
- Colored drainage
- Persistent diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Undiagnosed Rash
- Diaper Rash-while we know diaper rash is normal, severe diaper rash may require a doctor's note to return to school
- Vomiting in the previous 24 hours
- Head lice
- Symptoms of strep throat, chicken pox, hand/foot/mouth, other contagious diseases
- If child acts ill and is unable to participate without compromising the health and safety of others

The child must be symptom free for 24 hours, without medicine, before returning to The Bird's Nest. A doctor's note may be requested. Fees are not prorated for illness.

Daily health checks are performed by teachers each morning to monitor the wellbeing of your child. Teachers look for symptoms of communicable disease and note bumps/bruises/scratches. All employees of The Bird's Nest are mandated by Florida state law to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and/or maltreatment to the Department of Child and Family Services.

You may be called during the day to pick up your child due to health concerns. It is expected that you make a reasonable effort to collect your child within the hour to limit exposure to other kids or teachers.

## *Medication*

Most medications, including inhalers will be kept in the front office. A staff member with proper training, will administer medication. ***All medications may be administered ONLY with a medication form on file (including, but not limited to sunscreen, gas drops, diaper cream, nebulizers, inhalers, Motrin, Tylenol, and bug spray).*** Children may not be sent to school with medication on their person.

***All medications, prescribed or over the counter, must:***

***-be in original packaging (box included) with complete directions***      ***- be within date (not expired)***

***-be labeled with the child's full first and last name***      ***-be approved for the child's age***

Expired medications, or medications missing original packaging, will be sent home.

## *COVID*

As a childcare provider, we must follow DCF and CDC guidelines. As of February 24, 2022, the following guidelines have been given to childcare centers by DCF:

### **COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities and Providers:**

- Children who have a COVID -19 exposure or close contact, but have no symptoms, are not required to quarantine, and can remain in the classroom.
- If a child is COVID-19 symptomatic or COVID-19 positive, they should stay home while symptoms persist. The child will be able to return to the classroom after 5 days have passed since testing positive and are fever free for 24 hours.
- After an exposure, close contact, or positive COVID-19 diagnosis, a negative COVID-19 test is not required for a child to be able to return to school.
- Masking Guidance - Children in a childcare facility are not required to wear a mask or face covering.
- Your child must be fever free for 24 hours (without meds) and symptoms lessening to return to school.

Rates are only prorated for COVID if the center has to close due to a case on site.

## *Accidents/Incidents*

We do our best to protect the precious little one(s) you have entrusted to us. Bumps and bruises will happen. To keep communication open, we use incident and accident reports to make parents aware of things that happen throughout the day. Most incidents/accidents will be reported at dismissal (before you pick up the kids). Parents will be called for severe accidents/incidents. Accident reports will indicate where your child may be hurt. Incident reports will inform you of an undesired behavior exhibited by your child, along with any corrective actions. These forms are completed by your child's teacher(s) to the best of their knowledge. We do try to review video as needed and will always review as requested. We ask for a signature to acknowledge we have discussed the event with you. For serious accidents, The Bird's Nest will secure medical attention as described on the "Authorization of Medical Treatment" form, and parents will be contacted immediately. Copies are available as needed.

## *Smoking*

We are a smoke-free campus. This includes, but is not limited to e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and tobacco chew. Smoking and tobacco products are not permitted near or around the building. This includes the parking lot, the drop off/pick up area and sidewalks. The Bozard Ford Lincoln facility has a designated smoking area. Please see the directors if you need directions to it.

Please also let the directors know if you see someone smoking around the building at drop off/pick up. We will let them know where the designated smoking area is located.

### *Staff Wellness Training*

We require all staff to become certified in Infant, Child and Adult CPR & First Aid. We are required to advise you that we are limited by law in the extent of treatment that may be administered. We can perform lifesaving measures such as: abdominal thrusts, CPR, and the defibrillator, when warranted. For all other ailments, we can only advise you to take your child to their pediatrician.

### ***The Bird's Nest Day School* Discipline Policy:**

We believe a child in an environment of love, trust and respect will gain self-discipline and the desire to learn and succeed in a positive way. We request that parents take a proactive role in their child's school experiences. Parents/guardians and staff must be united and consistent. Any unsafe or disruptive behavior exhibited by children or parents, and/or parents being uncooperative or unsupportive of the decisions made on behalf of The Bird's Nest, may result in immediate dismissal of the child. All discipline will relate to the action and be addressed without prolonged delay to help develop the relationship between actions and the consequences.

#### ***Biting and Hitting***

Biting and hitting can be an expression of communication in young children, especially those with limited verbal skills. These are two powerful ways to exhibit control and express frustration. Studies show that by the age of three (3) these actions mostly disappear. While hitting and biting are considered typical behaviors for young children (6 weeks-2 years) it is detrimental to the safety and wellbeing of children and staff. Each case will be handled on an individual basis and at the discretion of the director. An accident/incident report will be completed for each occurrence.

In general, the biting policy is as follows, in one school day:

- First event: Incident report and conversation with student by teachers
  - Teachers will also position child/self to help prevent any further incidents
- Second event: Incident report and parent phone call
  - Teachers will keep student beside them as often as possible
- Third event: Incident report, parent phone call and the student removed for remainder of day
  - This is due to student safety, your student may return the next day
- Long term consistent occurrence: Parent meeting with the director and a behavioral plan put in place
  - Patterns will be discussed, and we will work together to help the student gain communication skills to deter this behavior
- Continued incidents with no improvement may result in expulsion from The Bird's Nest

Toddlers begin to learn self-control by observing natural consequences of their behavior. Teachers will act preventatively and intervene when a problem occurs. They will use redirection to guide more appropriate behavior/language or change up the location of the child (new center, different spot, different activity). Language (verbal and sign) is cultivated and utilized to help toddlers begin to recognize and identify their emotions and appropriately handle them in a socially acceptable manner. Students of *The Bird's Nest* will be encouraged to learn problem-solving skills and become self-

corrective in their behavior (age appropriately). We will give opportunities to choose alternatives, help in the identification and recognition of logical consequences (positive and negative), and help with creative solutions by probing with questions and answers.

In all instances the goal is to extinguish the negative behaviors and replace them with positive behaviors so that the child and classmates may participate fully with their peers!

### *Expulsion*

The Bird's Nest will focus on the individual needs of the child and implement as many strategies as needed to help your child be in a successful learning environment. There may be instances where The Bird's Nest is just not the best fit to serve your child's needs, or your child could pose a serious threat to the well-being of classmates in our care. We will do everything in our power to avoid expulsion. However, we must ensure the safety of all our students and teachers. When this safety is jeopardized, expulsion is a possibility and will be at the discretion of the director/owner. There will be no refund of tuition if your child is dismissed, and any unpaid balance must be paid in full.

### *General Discipline*

Students and Parents are expected to adhere to the school discipline policy and the consequences for actions.

- Follow direction within a reasonable amount of time
- Be polite and use manners
- Respect the property and rights of other children, staff, and school
- Handle school property and materials with care
- Keep body parts to yourself
- Use age-appropriate problem-solving strategies (adult support as needed)

Consequences at The Bird's Nest will always consider the child's development stage, age, and personality. No child will be removed from a situation, classroom, activity for longer than their age (A 2-year-old will be out of an activity for no more than 2 minutes). Teachers will work with children to rectify the situation, reviewing rules, and merge the child back into their activity/group. These instances are teachable moments in social/emotional education and will be used as such.

- Redirection/Discussion
- Reminder of rules/verbal warning
- Contemplation station away from student or activity
- Break from the classroom with the Director
- Parent notification
- Probationary plan set in place
- Expulsion/suspension



Please review the steps below with your child to reinforce communication between peers as is age appropriate.

- Use words to express emotions (frequently model emotions with your child)
- Ask for help from an adult
- Move to a different area/activity
- For those learning to talk, label feelings as much as possible to help their language acquisition
- Sign Language, focus on communication signs (please, thank you, finished, more)

Role playing situations of sharing, playing together, following directions (kids LOVE to give the directions), waiting patiently, etc. can be greatly beneficial.

**Enrollment Agreement: Signatures on the Enrollment Agreement verify information contained in this document and your understanding of The Bird's Nest policies.**

