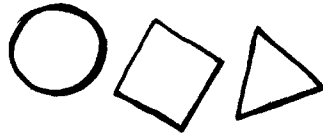
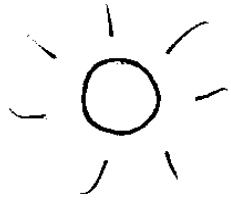


# BURLINGTON CHILDREN'S SPACE PARENT HANDBOOK



Updated April 2021





## **HOW IT ALL STARTED** **History and Background**

The Burlington Children's Space, Inc. (BCS) is a private, nonprofit early education and child care center governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. BCS originated with a citizens' group that was concerned about child care opportunities in the Burlington community. With the closing of the Ethan Allen Child Care Center, many families were left scrambling for care. Child care options were limited, especially for families of moderate to low income levels.

Through the Mayor's Youth Office, a grant was received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grant covered the construction costs of converting part of the basement of Memorial Auditorium into a child care facility. Architect Rolf Kielman designed the unique village setting; construction was completed in June of 1984. BCS opened that same month with for 15 children and their families.

BCS was accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for the first time in 1992 and we apply for reaccreditation every five years.

In 1995, BCS received funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development through the City of Burlington's Enterprise Community grant. With these funds, the Extended Hours program was created.

With the new program, BCS began to outgrow its space in Memorial Auditorium. A decision was made by the Board of Directors to explore the possibility of moving to a new space that we would own. The Champlain Senior Center was also experiencing similar growth and a need to expand into a building of its own. Through a suggestion from the City Economic Development Office (CEDO), we began to pursue building the McClure Multi-Generational Center together. With the help of the Burlington Community Land Trust, this dream was realized in the spring of 1999.

The agreement between Champlain Housing Trust, BCS and the Champlain Senior Center (CSC) included a clause that would allow BCS and the CSC to purchase the building after 20 years as "renters". In 2019, after a long strategic planning process and the departure of the Champlain Senior Center, BCS purchased the McClure Multi-Gen Center. This move was possible due to careful financial planning and a grant from the City of Burlington's Early Learning Initiative, which helped pay off the remainder of BCS's original construction loan and debt related to capitol improvements. In 2021, after creating two condo units, BCS sold the space originally occupied by the Champlain Senior Center to its long time tenants/neighbors, Outright Vermont. BCS and OVT will work as partners to steward the McClure Multi-Gen Center and live up to its mission as an essential hub for citizens of many ages.

As an agency committed to meeting the needs of children, families and community,

BCS has worked hard to support the increase of high quality child care slots in the Burlington area. We are licensed to care for up to 60 children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. Historically, BCS offered a school age and after hours program for families working second shift. In 2001 the program was closed in order to refocus attention on the need for full time care for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children. We strive to educate members of our community about early education issues, the need for high quality child care and the impact child care has in the community.

In support of these commitments, BCS works collaboratively with many area agencies to offer a range of supports children and families need to thrive.

BCS has worked closely with the Child Development Division to ensure access for children who are eligible for a child care subsidy. Over the years this has included an agreement to hold spots for low income families as well as a number of grants to enhance quality. BCS is also receives funding from CDD to implement the Strengthening Families framework and ensure staff receive training to support families using this model.

In the fall of 2002, BCS joined forces with the then brand new public school-private early education center initiative, Early Learning Partnership. This partnership eventually became ACT 166 Universal Pre-K. This collaboration supports the educational goals of all our children by reducing parent tuition costs and enhancing the relationship with public school partners. Act 166 funding allows BCS to discount preschool tuition while maintaining licensed teachers and high quality programming. It also ensures BCS staff can work closely with school district staff when special education services are needed and ensures a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten.

BCS also provides enrichment opportunities through the teaming efforts of the Vermont Arts Council, Shelburne Farms, ECHO Museum, the Fletcher Free Library, Audubon Vermont, Burlington Community Gardens, and the Intervale Center.

The Burlington Children's Space remains committed to providing affordable, high-quality early education and child care to all families, regardless of income. Parent tuition accounts for 27 percent of BCS income; the remaining 73 percent must come from outside sources. Grants, contracts and foundations are a major focus of our fundraising efforts. We have received financial support from the City of Burlington, the Department of Education, United Way, Community Development Block Grant, the Turrell Fund, the Edwards Foundation, the Agnes Lindsay Foundation, The Vermont Children's Trust Fund, the Kelsey Foundation, the Henderson Foundation, the Hoehl Family Foundation, Amy Tarrant, Richard Tarrant, Redducs, the "Friends of BCS" campaign and many individual donors.

We welcome and encourage anyone interested in our programs and services to become involved with our dynamic center.

The Burlington Children's Space is an equal opportunity employer and affords equal opportunity and equal treatment to all persons in all employment matters without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, or any other protected category.

BCS is also committed to providing services to all persons without any regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, veteran status, national origin, pregnancy, ancestry, or any other category protected by law.

# Burlington Children's Space

## **Mission:**

The Burlington Children's Space embraces, enriches, empowers and educates young children and families in our community.

## **Vision:**

Our vision is to be a nurturing, educational haven for children and an indispensable early education and child care resource to families and our community.

## **Values:**

- A. BCS values high quality early education and childcare for all children: and believes that BCS experiences contribute to this goal.
- B. BCS values community: and prioritizes effective partnerships with various community entities. We believe these partnerships result in a synergy that both enhances children's experiences and opportunities and improves our community.
- C. BCS values diversity: and believes success depends on BCS' ability to be inclusive and assure the availability of comprehensive programs and services to all populations.
- D. BCS values staff: the provision of a well-qualified, motivated staff is imperative for ensuring that the Center fulfills its mission.
- E. BCS values fiscal soundness: by becoming a self-sustaining non-profit endeavor.
- F. BCS values excellence: by being the educator and caretaker of choice for young children and families.

## **Our Philosophy:**

At Burlington Children's Space, we believe that young children thrive when their learning is cultivated within a stimulating and nurturing environment that takes into consideration the "whole" child.

Family, culture, socioeconomic background and developmental stage are all integral parts of each child and should be welcomed as integrated parts of a rich environment. We strive to create a sense of community for our children within the Center and help them feel a part of the larger community they live in as well.

Children are competent learners. We respect and value their curiosity, their social nature, their purposeful inquiries and their incredible perseverance. We believe that children will demonstrate their own complex and meaningful agendas for learning as they all possess a natural desire to challenge themselves and embrace new experiences.

We believe in positive language, active problem solving, appropriate limits and

positive consequences for desired behavior and we strive to model these ideas within empathetic and caring classrooms.

Finally, we believe in the power of love and acceptance and that we have as much to learn from young children as they have to learn from us.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Burlington Children's Space is an equal opportunity employer and affords equal opportunity and equal treatment to all persons in all employment matters without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, or any other protected category.

BCS is also committed to providing services to all persons without any regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, veteran status, national origin, pregnancy, ancestry, or any other category protected by law.

### **Mandatory Reporters**

Staff at the Burlington Children's Space are obligated by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the State of Vermont's Department for Children and Families (DCF). Staff receive specific training in how to recognize abuse and neglect and the reporting process. These reports are confidential and may not be disclosed to the family based on the recommendation of DCF.

## Admission Procedures

### Waiting List

Locating high quality, affordable child care that is conveniently located near the business district of Burlington can be difficult. We receive many requests for placement and maintain a waiting list for available openings at our Center.

Parents must complete a waiting list application and return it to BCS with the appropriate fee, which can be waived upon request. Enrollment is based on a priority system. First priority goes to Burlington Children's Space employees. Second priority goes to siblings of families currently enrolled at BCS. All remaining slots are filled with families from the community at large based on the date the application and fee was received and in accordance with all contracts which BCS engages in with community partners. BCS administrative team may also consider developmental needs and age when enrolling children in order to achieve an appropriate balance in each class.

Enrollment at the Burlington Children's Space occurs in August/September of each year, but the enrollment process begins in January, with a poll of families on the wait list and enrollment siblings and staff babies. In March spots are offered to wait list families. BCS will contact individuals on the waiting list when enrollment is occurring and there is a slot available for your child. In the event that an opening occurs and parents are not ready to start their child at that time, parents may choose from the following options:

- A) pay for the slot even though the child does not begin attending BCS until a later date
- B) not accept the offered space at that time but remain on the waiting list
- C) not accept the offered space and remove themselves from the waiting list.

Parents are required to pay half a month's tuition to hold a slot. This deposit is non-refundable but can be used toward the first month's tuition payment upon enrollment. Enrollment at other times of the year may occur if individual slots become available due to extenuating circumstances.

Part time care is an option at our Center in the form of 2 full day or 3 full day spots. We accept children on a part time basis if a match can be arranged with another child to fill an entire slot. Part time at the Burlington Children's Space is defined as two or three full time days per week. BCS does not offer partial year contracts- admission is from the start of the school year until the end of August. Families of children moving to kindergarten may give a minimum 30 days' notice and withdraw before August. Families who withdraw for the summer without administrative permission will forfeit their space(s) at BCS. Families who enroll in other programs during the summer (enrichment camps, Champ Camp, or sports programs, for example) must pay full tuition while away or forfeit their space(s) at BCS. This policy also applies to families receiving a subsidy- parents will be responsible for tuition if their subsidy is used for other programs or forfeit their space(s) at BCS.

## **Preadmission Visit**

We require all families to visit BCS prior to making a decision regarding child care here. This is an opportunity for parents to talk with the administration about philosophies, general practices and particular daily routines.

Making the decision regarding early education is difficult. We want to insure that the decision is comfortable for you, your child and BCS. A strong partnership is an important factor in providing a positive and cooperative experience for your child.



## **Tuition Information and Payment Policies**

### **Income Verification**

Child care tuition is determined based on family income. We require verification of income for any family that is not paying tuition at the top of our fee scale. We do not want the verification system to be a barrier to families using the scale. We ask for verification only to insure that the sliding fee scale system is used fairly by all. We request yearly, in April, the following items for income verification:

- a copy of your most recent income tax return
- a copy of your two most recent pay stubs

If these forms of verification do not accurately reflect your income, the administrative staff will work with you to make an accurate assessment of your income. Without verification we will ask families to pay at the top of the scale, which is the actual cost of care.

### **Tuition Payment**

We need your cooperation in making tuition payments on time. Our single largest expense in any given month is our payroll, which is paid to the staff on the 1st and 15th of each month and we rely heavily on tuition payments to cover the payroll. It is very important that all families follow the tuition payment procedures:

- Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. (Note: tuition may also be paid in full on the 1st and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month with prior approval from the Business Manager.)
- If the 1st falls on a day when you're not scheduled to be here, tuition may be paid the next day that BCS is open.
- Families who are having difficulty making tuition payments on time should speak with the Director or Business Manager about payment plans.

### **State Assistance for Child Care**

Prior to enrollment, we must receive verification from the Department of Children and Families, Child Development Division (CDD) that your child qualifies for child care assistance and that the Children's Space will receive payment for services. If we receive a notice of closure or denial, we will terminate services on the date payment for services will end. This also applies to lapsed subsidy due to paperwork. We will support families in getting the necessary paperwork to Child Care Resources, but will require payment or terminate enrollment if we are notified that a child's subsidy has expired.

Parents receiving state assistance are allowed two weeks of vacation per year. CDD will not pay for tuition beyond those two weeks. We require an explanation from parents regarding absences from BCS for more than 2 days. We submit this attendance information with our billing to CDD to insure payment for children's absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. Absences longer than two weeks may result in termination.

BCS does not charge a co-pay for families receiving a full subsidy. Co-pays for parents receiving a partial subsidy will be charged based on the subsidy certificate. Co-payments are due at the same times as tuition and the same late fee policies apply.

## **Penalty for Late Tuition Payments**

A \$20 late fee will be assessed for all tuition payments received more than 15 calendar days after the due date. Tuition bills which lapse more than 15 days will need to be paid in full and brought to a zero balance immediately upon arrival for your next drop off. Any family making 3 or more late payments (Late payments are payments received more than 15 calendar days after the due date) will be considered a financial risk to BCS and therefore will be required to prepay any future tuition (No late payments will be allowed). These families must make payments on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> **before** the child is admitted to their class for these sessions. Failure to comply with this schedule results in the forfeiture of your child's slot and childcare services will be terminated. If you are having difficulties with your payments, please contact an administrative staff member immediately.

## Enrollment Procedures

Congratulations on deciding to take a child care slot at BCS! We're glad to have you as part of our community family. So what's next?

### Enrollment Application and Paperwork

Before your child's first day at BCS, the following information must be on file:

- Verification of a child care subsidy if applicable
- Completed application form and Head Start application if applicable
- Completed Pre-k application with the local school district for preschoolers
- Custody Agreement if applicable
- Signed letter of agreement
- Immunization record (or waiver form)
- Emergency contact information
- Medical and Dental insurance information
- List of individuals who may pick your child up
- All permission authorization forms including but not limited to:
  - Field trips
  - Sunscreen
  - Water play
  - Parent Directory
  - Permission for your child to be photographed

### Transitioning into BCS

We feel it is important that children feel as comfortable and secure as possible in their new environment prior to their first day at BCS. Before enrolling at BCS, we ask parents to visit with their child to determine a good fit for both the family and BCS. Once enrolled, parents will spend several days transitioning their child into BCS. We know that each child is an individual with different needs so we use this schedule as a guideline for transitions. We strive to individualize transitions for each child based on their prior experiences and current needs. All transition schedules must be discussed with the Director or Program Director before transitioning begins.

### The Typical Transition Schedule:

- Day One – a morning visit of approximately two hours with both the child and parent to see program before enrollment
- Day Two – a morning visit of approximately half an hour with the child and parent and then the parent leaves for 1-2 hours. The parent should remain available if the child becomes distressed
- Day Three – child visits for morning and lunch
- Day Four – child visits for full day, including nap

### What to bring on the first day:

#### Your infant will need:

- a blanket
- extra clothing\*
- formula, breast milk, infant food, bottles \*\*
- pacifiers, if used by the child
- diapers and wipes \*\*

appropriate outer wear for the time of year

**Your toddler will need:**

optional home lunch if school lunch is not selected  
a blanket and crib sheet  
a stuffed animal or other transitional toy  
extra clothing\*  
diapers and wipes\*\*  
appropriate outer wear for the time of year

**Your preschooler will need:**

optional home lunch if school lunch is not selected  
a blanket and sheet (crib sheets still fit the preschool mats)  
a stuffed animal or other transitional toy  
extra clothing\*  
appropriate outer wear for the time of year

\* Child care licensing requires that all children have an extra complete change of clothing at BCS. Parents should label all clothing and make sure that there is a complete change of clothes for their child at BCS daily. During spring and fall we also suggest that families bring in both warm and cold weather clothing since temperatures can change dramatically throughout the day.

\*\*Head Start provides these items for Early Head Start enrollees

**Some Important Reminders**

- BCS follows NAEYC policy on SIDS and will not put infants to sleep on their stomach without a doctor's note.
- Regulations state that children should not wear teething necklaces to BCS.
- We are a Peanut/Nut and Sesame free Center! Please read labels!!! Nuts hide everywhere.
- Do NOT send in coins with the children. This is a choking hazard and they are likely to get lost.
- DO NOT send in candy or gum. For children under 3- no nuts, uncut grapes, popcorn or other foods that might cause choking.
- We reserve the right to ask that parents not send certain foods in lunches if there is a child with a serious food allergy in BCS.
- Because of allergies, we are no longer able to share foods prepared at home.
- Label everything!!! (laundry markers work great!) We have markers you can use.
- Bring coats, hats, mittens, snow pants, boots for comfortable outdoor play in cold weather
- We will send nap items home at the end of the week to be laundered
- Bring plenty of extra clothing if your child is in the process of toilet training
- Children's clothes tend to get well worn during a day at BCS, so save special clothes for special occasions
- Please refrain from sending toys from home in to BCS. It is difficult for children to share these toys, and they often cause problems in the classroom!

## Arrival Procedures

**It is important that parents sign children in when they arrive.** Each child has a cubby for his or her personal belongings. Children in diapers also have diaper cubbies in their room for diapers, etc. Lunches should be placed in the refrigerator. **(Again, please make sure everything is labeled!)**

Remember to give your child's caregiver information about your child (i.e. medication, health, appetite, how was their evening/morning, etc.) Parents may sign a waiver to have staff apply ointment or over the counter diaper cream. Any other medication requires the parent to complete a medication form and have a doctor's note. Doctor's offices can also fax medication forms to us at 802 658-6974, (see Guidelines for Health and Safety).

COVID-19 has affect drop and pick up procedures, which now take place at the classroom door or main door (depending on weather). This was a health/safety regulation that works well for students and parents and leads to far fewer stressful separations. We will continue to look for ways for families to be involved in the classroom, especially as students are transitioning into the school.

## Departure Procedures

Pick up time can be anxiety producing for many children as they watch other parents come and go and teacher become distracted talking to parents. It is difficult for some children to relax if they are always watching the door, anticipating their parent's arrival. For that reason, pick up time is now from 3:30- 4 so teachers can be ready to greet parents and check in about the day. We will never prevent a parent from picking up, but we ask that you call ahead if you are coming early so we are prepared to meet you at one of the doors.

Only those people listed on your enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up your child from BCS. We must be informed **in writing** each time your child is to be picked up by someone other than someone named on that list. If another person is coming to pick up the child, we must have prior authorization. They should be prepared to provide photo identification.

Due to licensing regulation, BCS is unable to release any child to anyone under the age of 16.

If there is a custody agreement for the child, please provide a copy to the office. **We cannot prevent a parent from picking up unless there is a court order directing us to do so.**

## Late Pick Up Fees

Parents are responsible for picking up their children by 4:00 pm and vacating the building by 4:05. Failure to do so will result in a late pick-up fee, even if you have called to say you would be late. Parents arriving late to pick up their child will be assessed **\$1 per minute for every minute past 4:00**. Late pick-up fee time will be assessed by using BCS classroom clocks only. Payments for late pick-ups will be combined with tuition payments and will follow all tuition payment schedules and policies.

**If children are not picked up within 40 minutes and arrangements have not been made with a parent or authorized pick up person, the police will be called.**

### **Termination of Enrollment**

We require a minimum of **four weeks** notice before a child's last day. Please notify us **in writing** of your intent to withdraw and include the date of the child's last day. It is the parent's responsibility to satisfy all financial obligations prior to termination.

In the event that child care is not working for a particular child, a parent conference will be scheduled. At that conference, challenges will be discussed and strategies will be developed to meet the areas of need. These strategies will be implemented for up to two weeks after which a follow-up conference may be held. If the situation is still not satisfactory, BCS will seek outside resources for assistance. With the support of outside resources, new strategies will be implemented for up to four weeks after which another parent conference may be held to discuss the success of the strategies and whether or not BCS is able to meet the needs of the child and family moving forward. If for any reason it is decided that child care at BCS should be terminated, a four week notice will be given to either the family and/or BCS. BCS is committed to working with families to find child care that works for their child and enlist necessary supports.

### **BCS Calendar**

BCS operates Monday through Friday from 8:00-4:00. Pick up is from 3:30-4:00.p.m. BCS prepares a calendar of closing and staff meetings each year and distributes it widely. The calendar can also be found on the school website. Dates are subject to change, but we do our very best to adhere to the schedule.

## Food Program

Homemade lunch is made in our BCS kitchen each day by our chef. Any child is able to purchase or receive free or reduced lunch based on income eligibility. This paperwork is updated annually and included in enrollment packet. The cost for "hot" lunch for families not income eligible for free or reduced lunch is \$3.00 per meal. Tickets are sold for \$30 (ten lunches). Checks for \$30.00 can be made out and given to our Business Manager. Everyone receives breakfast and snack for free.

Lunch is a time to socialize and practice our skills, to try new foods and enjoy old favorites and learn appropriate behaviors. We encourage all staff to sit with children, encourage independence and provide support for the many challenges and learning that can take place at the table. For that reason, we will not prepare lunches for children by cutting foods or heating items in the microwave. Food should come ready to eat in portions appropriate to children's development and appetite.

### **What we will do:**

- Sit with children
- Help children open containers
- Help children master fine motor skills for eating
- Encourage children to try everything
- Set appropriate limits
- Set a positive tone for meal times
- Model healthy eating habits and enjoyment of food
- Send uneaten food home (except for single serving items that cannot be sealed)
- Send home food we cannot serve at school with a note and an explanation
- Give ideas to parents about foods children enjoy

### **What we will not do:**

- Heat food
- Cut food
- Open cans (except individual portions with pop tops)
- Require children to eat (this includes the order items are eaten)
- Prohibit children from eating
- Serve sugary snacks, candy, soda, popcorn or foods containing nuts.

### **Here are a few ideas to get you started:**

Yogurt, cottage cheese, granola, cereal, fresh veggies/fruit with or without dip or dressing, waffles, crackers and cheese, pancakes, leftovers ( cold or in a small thermos) cold cuts, cream cheese on celery, applesauce, left over pizza, veggie bootie, tuna or chicken salad, black beans or chick peas, dried fruit, cheese, string cheese, pasta salad, pasta with butter or cheese, pasta with sauce, granola bars, fruit leather, baby carrots, tofu with soy sauce.

## Quality Early Care and Education

### Child Care Licensing Regulations and NAEYC

BCS is licensed through the Child Care Licensing Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. Copies of current licensing regulations are available to all staff. All staff members are responsible for maintaining compliance with all relevant licensing regulations.

Our highly qualified staff is responsible for developing and implementing our curriculum which provides a positive, safe and stimulating environment for the children in our care. The background, abilities and development of the children vary and the integrated program model was designed to provide experiences relative to individual differences. We maintain a strong commitment to integrating children with special needs into our program, offering all children an opportunity to grow and learn while interacting with their peers. Children can develop self-esteem, patience, tolerance and understanding through positive interactions with their peers, environment and teachers.

#### **Some of our other goals are to**

- enable parents of young children to pursue their careers or training programs
- offer parents an opportunity to gain knowledge about young children
- encourage families to build a network of supports that meets their needs
- foster respect for others and the environment
- stretch the imagination
- broaden perspectives
- enjoy each other
- have fun while growing
- support professional growth and development for our staff and other child care providers
- offer career development opportunities for students in early childhood education

### Reggio Inspiration

In the town of Reggio Emilia, Italy, educators, parents and citizens have worked together for over 30 years to create a system for preschool education. The founding teacher was visionary scholar Loris Malaguzzi. He combined the theories and practices of Bruno Ciari, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, Howard Gardner and others including practices of the Progressive Education Movement from the United States. Malaguzzi developed an extraordinary way for children to reach unexpected levels of learning and cooperation with others. People from all over the world have traveled to Reggio Emilia to discover how they might adapt this wonderful system to their own early education environments.

Following World War II, the town of Reggio Emilia was virtually destroyed. There were no physical facilities for the care and education of young children. Because increasing numbers of mothers entered the work force at this time, the community developed a program for infants through preschool. The town began rebuilding and parents constructed a school for their children. Parents naturally became active in developing the education program, having built it from the ground up. The resulting program was supported by the city in several schools and infant care centers, and emphasized the strength of communication and interaction between parents, teachers and children.



## **Key Elements of the Approach:**

The child is strong, rich and powerful.

The child is social and able to express interests and ideas, research for further information, reflect on the experience and form conclusions.

Learning is an adventure. The curriculum is negotiated between teachers, students and parents.

Education is based on relationships, exchange and communication.

Environments teach beauty and richness.

The adult (teacher or parent/guardian) is a guide, provocateur, researcher, facilitator and memory.

Emergent curriculum is an in-depth way to study a particular topic of interest. This "thread" or interest area can provide experiences in math, art, science, language, social studies and music based on the developmental needs and abilities of the children, as teachers and children reflect together as co-collaborators.

Documentation is a way to display children's thoughts, ideas, reflections or actual growth as they construct knowledge or study a thread over time.

## **Assessment**

Parent/Teacher conferences happen two times per year with your child's primary teachers. You may request additional conferences or meetings at any time. We are using an on-line version of the Teaching Strategies Assessment for all children at BCS. This system uses observations and artifacts (drawings, writing samples etc.) which are entered into different categories of learning like Social Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development & Language Development. This assessment system is reviewed three times a year in the Fall, Winter and Spring. This system for assessment was recommended by the Burlington School District and the State of Vermont. We like it because it is strengths based, meaning that it talks about what your child can do and the progress they have made over time.

For Preschoolers participating in ACT 166, part of the agreement with the State and the participating public schools is that we share this data with them. The assessments help show that the State's investment in early childhood education are improving outcomes for incoming kindergarteners and some school districts use the information to prepare for incoming 5 year olds.

BCS also uses the Ages and Stages questionnaire for developmental screening. You may be familiar with this tool as it is used in doctor's offices and by Head Start and the HowardCenter. It is used to get parent and teacher input on whether there are any areas of a child's development that may need attention. It is also a very helpful way to learn about all the milestones of development you may see your child meet. BCS

staff will ask you if you would like to do the questionnaire (ASQ) at home and compare results to a teacher's questionnaire, do it with a teacher here at BCS, or do it as part of a Head Start home visit (where applicable).

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum at BCS is developed through a process of negotiation between teacher and child and collaboration between adults. Teachers observe and document the interests of children. They provide opportunities for children to question, explore and create in ways that encourage development in a number of areas.

Curriculum often develops in the form of exploration of a topic of interest that may take place in a few minutes or over the course of several months. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning by listening, documenting and revisiting children's learning. Teachers can also offer provocations that might expand a child's thinking.

Teachers meet weekly to discuss curriculum development with the Program Director. They often share documentation in order to understand the concepts that children are exploring and receive feedback from peers. Additional meeting time is provided to reflect on the work and discuss current issues in education and meet with partner staff. Time is set aside to communicate with parents and involve them in this process as well. Teachers are encouraged to consider themselves as researchers or learners along with the children and families.

## **Field Trips**

As part of our curriculum, field trips are scheduled periodically. Parents are asked to sign a permission form for their child to participate in field trips. We try not to use parent drivers, relying instead on the City Bus, our feet, and the King Street Bus instead. All of the information for non walking field trips will be included on the Field Trip Permission Form.

## **Environments**

Through participation in NAEYC accreditation as well as our study of the schools in Reggio Emilia, we have established guidelines for classroom set up and use of the environments. Each classroom will have differences based on the styles and interest of the teachers, the age of the children, and the needs of the group. However, all teachers should think of the environments as a powerful teaching tool and set it up as such. Each classroom should consider the following elements:

- Area for wet and messy sensory activities
- Children will have the opportunity to explore and represent with art media including paint, pencil, markers, clay and collage
- Quiet areas should be available to children when they feel the need to get away from the group.
- Spaces that encourage gathering together as a community
- Space to use small manipulative at tables or on the floor
- Dramatic play props and mirrors, with clip boards to document the story that is being told
- Science and math inquiry activities should provoke exploration, observation, measuring and predicting
- Writing areas that are specific to the age group to explore or represent

- Each child has a space inside and outside of the room for their own belongings
- There are spaces for parent and teacher communication-linking home to school
- A space is also available to teachers for documentation because this is an essential part of our daily reflection, planning and collaboration.

### **Visitors at the Burlington Children's Space**

For the safety and security of the children and staff, all visitors must sign in and out in the Visitor Sign-In Book. This policy is in place so that we have a record of everyone who enters BCS. COVID-19 protocols require us to limit visitors to those providing essential services.

### **Communication with Families**

Families play a crucial role in our program planning at BCS. We rely on and encourage parents and families to be involved on a number of levels, in what ways feel most comfortable to them. The biggest role, of course, is to be involved and excited about their child's learning process and to consistently communicate with teachers. Parents can be involved in the classroom through weekly updates, documentation, email and conversations with teachers. Parents can volunteer for a Board of Directors position or be involved in a variety of work days or volunteer efforts throughout the school year. Fundraising is a very important part of BCS work in which families are welcome support.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Teachers are responsible for scheduling parent conferences with each parent at least two times per year. Teachers also share documentation about daily events following specific projects. Parents and teachers may request additional conferences as needed. Teachers may not be available for long conversations at drop off or pick up time, but can set a time for a phone call or meeting when they are not in the classroom. We encourage staff to work cooperatively with parents to find times that work best when joining the classroom.

### **Special Needs**

The Burlington Children's Space makes every effort to design curriculum, classroom environments, and expectations around the developmental levels of the children in each group. However there are times when children need additional supports to be successful in the setting we offer. The accommodations we are able to make are based on staffing, available resources in the community, and above all, a collaborative relationship between the school and family. BCS makes every effort to keep children enrolled and offer supports in place, but there may be instances where the team reaches an agreement that the supports offered in another setting better meet the needs of the child. If this is the case, BCS will work with all team members to assist with the transition. Any transitions of children 3-5 years old are reported to the State of Vermont as part of the Act 166 expulsion agreement.

BCS can provide suggestions of agencies who can provide additional supports or evaluations.

BCS can provide specific feedback on a child's behavior in the classroom ( in addition to regular assessments , which

are completed twice a year). We may need to schedule time to talk without interruption

BCS can meet with specialists (such as EEE, Howard Center, or private providers) to incorporate suggestions into the classroom

BCS cannot make diagnoses or complete formal evaluations

BCS can welcome additional specialists into the classroom for evaluations or support services

BCS can provide regular feedback about a child's day and/or call the parents when concerns develop

BCS cannot always provide detailed feedback **at pick up or drop off times** because of scheduling or other responsibilities in the classroom.

BCS cannot design a specialized care plan on our own or participate in designing such a plan without input from the parent.

BCS cannot provide ongoing one on one support for a child who cannot meet the expectations of the group

BCS cannot keep children enrolled if they are unsafe and unresponsive to intervention

**In turn, it is the responsibility of the parent do the following:**

Pursue additional evaluations in order to provide information about why a child might be experiencing difficulties.

- Meet regularly to discuss the child's progress and our plan for care
- Meet with additional specialists on a schedule determined by their home agency
- Work with us to adapt a child's schedule , with the goal of ensuring the child can be successful

## **Community Partners**

### **CIS EI and EEE at the Burlington Children's Space**

The Burlington Children's Space, Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention (CIS EI) and Essential Early Education (EEE) collaborate to provide services to children with learning delays, disabilities or challenges. These collaborative efforts support our philosophy which recognizes and values differences in how children develop and the rate at which growth occurs.

CIS EI and EEE assist our program by providing observation and evaluation services, classroom consultation, support through specialists such as speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and others and by overseeing case management. Together with families this collaborative process creates an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for children and we work collectively to achieve the desired goals.

Within the classroom environment, teachers work with our partners at EI or EEE, HowardCenter, Head Start, and any other community partners on a child's team to set and meet goals and adapt teaching strategies to meet the needs of the child. Children participate in their regular classroom activities with accommodations and support. Teachers recognize and allow for differences in development and personality when planning activities so that there is sufficient variety to meet the needs and interests of each child. BCS can host or attend team meetings and BCS staff are happy to give feedback during assessments with parental permission.

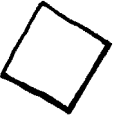
### **ACT 166 Universal Pre-K**

The Burlington Children's Space collaborates with area Public School Districts to enhance our early education services to our children and to support the quality of our program.

Vermont's education funding law, ACT166, supports equal access to education for all children, including preschool age children. The law supports funding early education provided in an accredited program with a licensed teacher (present 10 hours per week), which provides a curriculum that conforms to public school standards. BCS has all of these components in place. This collaboration also supports a relationship between the schools and our program, which will facilitate the transition between early education and public school education for our children.

Because BCS already gives all families some sort of discount on tuition, the funding that comes from the school district is used to keep tuition at its already discounted rates. The published tuition rates have already accounted for the Pre-K funding from the school districts. All families are required to submit an application and necessary paperwork to their local school district before the start of the school year. Before the start of each school year, BCS publishes an account of the full cost of care, the school district funding, and actual tuition rates.

## Head Start



Head Start is a national program that provides comprehensive, family-centered services for families with children between the ages birth to 5 who are deemed to be at risk. These intensive services help families support their children's development. Head Start provides families with resources and referrals in the areas of health, nutrition, and other social services as needed. BCS maintains an enrollment of 10 Early Head Start infant and toddlers each year.

This partnership brings a number of opportunities to our children and families as well as our program and staff:

A Family Advocate, hired by Head Start works remotely, assisting families with enrollment, needs such as housing and employment, and parent education. The Family Advocate is a great resource for parents in Head Start.

A Teacher, hired by Head Start, but working full time at BCS, divides their time between the three infant and toddler classrooms. They also contribute to curriculum, assessment, and parent communication.

Head Start supports BCS food program by overseeing our participation in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and providing some financial support that helps fill the gap between reimbursements and actual costs.

Head Start helps promote family involvement by offering opportunities for families to engage in curriculum discussions, program assessment, home visits and by connecting our families to resources for parent education.

BCS and Head Start provide mutually accessible professional development opportunities for both staffs. Head Start also provides regulatory guidance and offers individualized trainings based on our center's needs.

## **The HowardCenter for Early Childhood Mental Health**

The partnership between BCS and the HowardCenter, now serves as a model for other programs in Chittenden County as Therapeutic Child Care. Through this partnership the HowardCenter is able to provide support to families who are experiencing high levels of stress related to parenting or family trauma, providing ongoing support for the child, family, and staff as we work together. The Howard Center can work with a family on an ongoing basis (an open case) or for 1-3 visits (consultation).

The partnership supports the following:

An Interventionist, hired by the HowardCenter, works directly with children in the classroom to support their success and work toward their goals.

A Clinician, who is usually a licensed therapist, works with the child and the parents at home or school to set goals and offer support in meeting those goals outside of school.

Howard Center, Head Start, and BCS staff meet weekly to review open cases and consult about how to best support the child and family's success in the program.

Howard Center staff provide staff training and parent workshops throughout the year. These services are available to all families at BCS and are often offered in conjunction with Head Start. The Howard Center provides a minimum of 6 hours of specialized care training for BCS staff during in-service and staff meetings and is developing a workshop on Introductory Therapeutic Care for new employees.

## **Health and Safety Guidelines**

Children may not return within 24 hours when they are sent home or kept home with the following symptoms.

### **Fevers**

A child will be sent home if they have a fever of 101 or more.  
The child may not return until they have been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications.

### **Diarrhea**

A child will be sent home if they experience two or more episodes of diarrhea during one school day or have diarrhea that can not be contained by diapers or underwear. The child may not return until 24 hours AFTER the last episode of diarrhea.

### **Vomiting**

A child will be sent home if they vomit.  
The child may not return until 24 hours after the last vomiting episode.

### **Head lice**

A child will be sent home if lice or nits are detected.  
The child may not return until they are nit free.

### **Red, goopy eyes**

Licensing regulations do not require children to be treated unless multiple cases occur. In this case children may return after receiving treatment or confirmation from a doctor that they are not contagious. If the child seems uncomfortable or cannot stop rubbing their eyes, we will recommend they visit the doctor or stay at home.

### **Rash**

Children may return until the rash clears, receiving treatment or confirmation from a doctor that they are not contagious.

### **Suspected Communicable Disease**

If a communicable disease is confirmed by a physician a note will be posted without mention of the child's name. The information signs and symptoms of the communicable disease can be obtained from the director.

### **Allergies**

A list of children's specific allergies will be posted in each classroom. All children with allergies should have a care plan from their doctor on file and necessary medication to remain at school at all times.

### **Sun Screen**



Please send a sun hat and apply sun screen before dropping off, this will provide coverage for morning outside time. Teachers will reapply if the class is going outside in the afternoon based on the waiver signed by parents.

### **Bug Repellent**

BCS staff do not apply bug repellent, but you are welcome to apply it to your child at home and/or bring a hat or long sleeved shirt that you have sprayed that they can wear outside. Our Head Start Health Consultant has said that areas like our playground or walks on sidewalks do not pose a tick hazard. If we are going to be in tall grass ( like a trip to Shelburne Farms) we recommend long pants.

### **First Aid Procedures**

All regular staff at BCS are CPR and First Aid certified within one year of hire.

### **Cuts, Skin Rashes, Scrapes, Bites and splinters**

Teachers will use a latex glove prior to administering First Aid

The area will be washed with soap and water

Covered with a Band-Aid

State law prohibits any further treatment

### **Parents will be informed if the following occur at school**

**Head Injuries**

**Objects to the eye**

**Bee sting**

**Any minor injuries leaving a mark will be documented with a written accident report to be shared with a parent at the end of the day.**

### **Medication Procedures**

Parents must complete the appropriate medication authorization sheets in order for any employee to administer medication at BCS. A doctor must also authorize the medication through a note or signing off on the medication authorization form. The exception to this rule is over the counter ointment or lotion. A one time form can be completed by a parent for over the counter ointment or lotion. Emergency use medications, such as an epi-pen or inhaler, can be kept at school, but must include a treatment plan from the doctor.

We will not give nonprescription medication for illness that may be contagious (such as fevers) unless authorized by a doctor. Only Administrative Staff or a temporary designee can administer medication.

**Medication must come in its original childproof container with the pharmacy label on it. The label must provide the child's name, the prescribing physician's name, the medication name, dosage instructions including frequency to be given, appropriate dates for administering medications and any special handling instructions.**

## Emergency Procedures

### **FIRE EVACUATIONS:**

Fire drills are held monthly and documented by the Executive Director or Program Director. During a fire or evacuation drill all children and staff evacuate to the sidewalk or parking lot until an all clear is given. If an evacuation is needed we will use the North End Studios at 294 North Winooski Avenue. If you arrive during a fire drill, please practice with us and follow our emergency procedures-- you will be modeling important skills. If you arrive during a lock down or lock down drill, you will not be able to enter the building until the all clear is given.

### **CODE GREEN:**

We will **evacuate** the building as we would in a fire, gathering in front of the building unless alternate directions are given.

In the event that an alternative site is needed, everyone from the site will walk to the North End Studios at 294 North Winooski Avenue.

### **CODE ORANGE:**

This is a **modified lockdown**. Children should be in the classrooms with the doors closed. Children on the playground should be taken directly to the classroom. Playground doors will be locked and attendance taken. If you come into the classroom during a code orange, you will be asked to remain in the class until the code has been lifted by an administrator.

### **CODE RED:**

This is a **full lockdown**. Children should be in safe spaces (potty paths- away from windows). Lights are off, doors are locked. Attendance should be taken. No one should be taken and no one should leave this position until an all clear is given by a police officer or administrator. Parents will not be allowed into the building until the code is lifted.

### **Snow Days**

The Burlington Children's Space closes in the event of snow when the Burlington Schools close due to weather conditions. If the public schools close, we will notify the radio stations to announce our closing. Listen to local tv and radio if in any doubt. If Burlington schools have a planned closure BCS will make an independent determination and notify the news outlets.

In the event of an emergency closing (no water, heat or a flood, etc.), parents will be called to pick up their child.

## **Parent Involvement**

The key to a successful child care program is the relationship between the home and BCS. Parent involvement is a high priority and is essential at the Children's Space. To institutionalize this, the Board of Directors set a policy regarding this in 1994. Parents of children enrolled at the Burlington Children's Space must provide eight hours of volunteer service each year for BCS.

We recognize that working parents have many demands on their time and that time with their children is a priority. Understanding that parents have limitations on their available time, we have a number of options for parents to get involved with BCS.

### **Board of Directors and Committee Membership**

BCS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors with representatives from parents, staff, and the community. Members of the Board are elected at our annual meeting, which is held in November. The Board employs an active committee system to oversee the operations of BCS. Current standing committees include: Executive, Board Renewal, Development, Personnel, and Program. There are also a number of ad-hoc committees within these five standing such as the Parent Involvement Committee under the umbrella of the Program Committee. Interested parents may participate on a committee without being a member of the Board of the Directors.

### **Fundraising**

BCS must raise over 30 percent of the operating budget through fundraising. Our fundraising efforts involve grant writing, research and solicitation from private foundations, solicitation from the community and special events. A major fundraising effort is our "Friends of BCS" campaign. Parents are asked to provide names and addresses of people they know who may be interested in donating to BCS. Additionally, some special events require help planning the event and staffing it when it occurs. If you are interested in working on any fundraising activities, please see the Director.

### **Volunteering**

We can always use extra help with projects and field trips. If you are interested in helping in your child's classroom or another classroom here, please see the Program Director. Times that meet your needs can be arranged at any time of the year. Additionally, we need help with specific projects, including sorting books in the student library, website and blog upkeep, gardening, helping cook or set up for family dinner, establishing relationships with local resources, translating materials, or reminding other families about upcoming events.

You may also have an interest or talent to share with the children or staff, such as arts and crafts, movement and music, cooking or woodworking. If you would like to share your interest in one of the classrooms, please talk to your child's teacher.

We also occasionally need assistance with an office project, such as stuffing envelopes or data input. Many of these tasks could be done at home. If interested in this type of work, please see the Executive Director.

### **Parent Work Days**

Occasionally we organize parent work days and we ask that parents participate in as many as you are able. Work day chores include cleaning, painting, fixing and organizing.

**Thank you for joining BCS, we're happy to have you!**