

BRIDGEPOINT
EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY

13277 Katy Fwy, Houston, TX 77079

832-883-1503

Rebecca Mueller-Director

PARENT HANDBOOK &
OPERATIONAL POLICIES



BELA | BridgePoint Early
Learning Academy
Providing a safe, nurturing, and focused learning environment

Updated: 5-2-22

Dear Parent,

Thank you for entrusting us with your precious child. As you may have already gathered, we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. A part of this responsibility is establishing and upholding practices and procedures that facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which children can grow and learn.

As someone who will partner with us as parent or guardian, we ask that you read all the pages of this handbook, knowing that we intend to maintain and enforce the practices and procedures listed. Your signature on your online registration form indicates that you agree with and will follow the protocols established in this handbook.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Mueller, Director
BridgePoint Early Learning Academy

BRIDGEPOINT EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY (BELA) PARENT HANDBOOK & OPERATIONAL POLICIES



BELA'S VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

VISION/PHILOSOPHY

BridgePoint Early Learning Academy is an extension of the Children's Ministry of BridgePoint Bible Church. The Academy provides a safe, nurturing, and focused learning environment for children, intentionally laying a firm foundation in social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development. Learning is driven by a recognition of each child's uniqueness, a Christ centered curriculum, and by developing loving relationships with children and parents.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

SCOPE OF PROGRAM

Age Range- Infants- 5 years

Children are divided into classes based on the age range of children enrolled in the program and days registered.

Infants (17 months and younger)

Our large, bright rooms are filled with developmentally appropriate toys. The children enjoy music, Bible stories, outdoor walks, theme-based activities, and lots of opportunities to learn through play. The approximate student/teacher ratio in the classroom is 8:2.

Toddlers (18-35 months)

Toddlers will learn through touch, sight, sound, and experiences. A Bible story and a simple craft that reinforces the lesson will be a part of the learning experience. The children enjoy daily outdoor playground time, lots of playtime with age-appropriate toys, and teacher interaction that is educationally focused. The approximate student/teacher ratio in the classroom is 10:2.

Two Year Olds

The two-year olds will begin to learn in a more structured environment. The schedule for this class includes circle time, games, outdoor playground time, simple crafts, Bible stories, and story time all related to specific themes and teaching objectives. The activities reflect and encourage the older toddler's increased fine motor skills. Group participation and interaction are stressed in the story time, music, and playtime. The children enjoy a Thanksgiving Feast, holiday parties, and birthday celebrations. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classes is 12:2.

Three Year Olds – Preschool Program

The curriculum for the 3-year-old student centers on their eagerness to learn and their increased ability to listen and follow directions. Learning experiences are driven by objectives and become more detailed as the student's fine motor skills and cognitive abilities develop. The teachers begin to encourage responsibility with assigned helper jobs. Letters and numbers, rhymes, music, and story time are a few of the many educational aspects to the child's day. Bible stories and memory verses are taught weekly. Monthly themes are planned with fun dress-up days, rodeo day, wheel's day, and a splash day at end of the school year. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classes is 12:2 for smaller classrooms and 15:3 for larger classrooms. **Children must be potty trained to enter the class in September.**

Four Year Olds – Pre-Kindergarten Program

The 4-year-old class is intentionally designed to prepare children for kindergarten. Learning experiences will be structured and specific to kindergarten readiness skills. Children will learn phonics, number and letter recognition and application, and math concepts. Students will also be exposed to science through hands on experiences. The Bible curriculum expands on the character of God, a Biblical timeline, prayer, and a special focus on Christmas and Easter. Memory verses and songs are reinforced daily. Monthly themes provide enrichment activities for the students. Responsibility in the classroom is taught by assigned jobs, individual centers and activities that require group participation. The approximate student/teacher ratio in these classrooms is 12:2.

Camp Programs

Each summer BELA runs two weeks of camp. Children enrolled in summer camp will enjoy hands-on activities, stories, games, outdoor playground time, art, and music focused on each week's theme.

2022/2023 School Year begins Aug. 24, 2022 and ends May 25, 2023.
See calendar for holiday schedule.

INFANTS	2-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
3-18 Months	19-35 Months	36-47 Months
9:00 AM-2:00 PM	9:00 AM-2:00 PM	9:00 AM-2:00 PM
1, 2, OR 3 DAYS M, W, Th. Extra Tuesday Option	2 OR 3 DAYS M, W, Th. Extra Tuesday Option	2, 3, OR 4 DAYS M, T, W, Th.
1 DAY- \$160/MONTH 2 DAYS- \$310/MONTH 3 DAYS- \$415/MONTH	2 DAYS- \$310/MONTH 3 DAYS- \$415/MONTH	2 DAYS- \$310/MONTH 3 DAYS- \$415/MONTH 4 DAYS- \$520/MONTH
Registration Fee: \$175 NON-REFUNDABLE	Registration Fee: \$175 NON-REFUNDABLE	Registration Fee: \$175 NON-REFUNDABLE
4-YEAR-OLDS		
9:00 AM-2:00 PM		
4 DAYS Monday-Thursday		
\$520/MONTH		
Registration Fee: \$200 Includes supplies, special event fees, vision & hearing screening NON-REFUNDABLE		
ADD-ONS		
Infants Through 3-Year-Olds		
Extra Tuesdays Every other Tuesday	9:00 AM-2:00 PM	\$80/MONTH
Moms Together Every other Tuesday	9:00 AM-12:00 PM	\$90/YEAR
Moms Together Full Day	12:00 PM-2:00 PM	\$180/YEAR
Infants Through 4-Year-Olds		
Extended Care Program M, W, Th.	2:00 PM-4:00 PM	1 DAY- \$55/MONTH 2 DAYS- \$110/MONTH 3 DAYS- \$160/MONTH

Enrollment Process

BELA offers early enrollment for the upcoming school year for current families first in the month of January. Early enrollment opens to new families in February. Early enrollment ends on March 31; anyone enrolling after that pays the late registration fee. Enrollment remains open if space is available in the class associated with your child's age.

To secure your child's spot in the program, registration fees and first month's tuition must be paid at registration. A *Health Statement* form and a copy of child's immunizations must be on file to complete registration. Once fees are paid a link to the registration form will be emailed to the parent. The online form must be complete within 30 days to finalize the registration process.

BRIDGEPOINT EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY POLICIES

PAYMENTS

- The registration fee and first month tuition is due and payable upon registration. Registration fees are used to purchase equipment and supplies and are non-refundable.
- Registering your child in this program is a commitment to remain in the program from August through May.
- Families that must withdraw their child or children from the program should submit a request for withdrawal to the Director explaining the extenuating circumstances.
- All tuition payments are due on or before the 1st of each month. Checks should be made out to BridgePoint Bible Church with "BELA" and your child's name on the bottom of the check. Parents are encouraged to set up an online payment through the church website. A late fee of \$25 will be charged on tuition not received by the 10th of the month.
- The entire month's tuition is required of all children in all classes, regardless of the number of days missed due to illness or other reasons.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- All required forms must be completed and on file in the office prior to each child attending classes.
- Children should be brought to school only on those days for which they are registered. There are no make-up days due to illness or other reasons.
- No child will be accepted on a drop-in basis.
- Please notify the Director by email and your child's teacher through the brightwheel app if your child will be absent from school on any given day or for an extended period.
- Late Fee: \$1.00 per minute paid directly to the teacher after 2:10pm or 4:10pm if using extended care.

CARPOOL SYSTEM

- When the carpool system is in use, parents will be assigned a carpool drop off area for their family.
- Three different locations will be used to create an efficient flow.
- Staggered times will be assigned allowing parents a window of time for drop off.
- Parents should remain in the car while dropping off children.
- Children will be received and screened by a BELA staff member at the drop off location.
- The brightwheel app will be used to record who dropped off and picked up the child.
- A BELA staff member will walk children to their classrooms.

INFANT CARE REQUIREMENTS

CARE/ATTENTION

Individual attention will be given to each infant including playing, talking, cuddling, and holding. Caregivers will hold and comfort an infant who is upset. In addition, prompt attention should be given to physical needs, such as feeding and diapering. Infants must be taken on a daily walk outdoors as weather permits.

EQUIPMENT

Cribs will have a firm, flat mattress that snugly fits the sides of the crib with sheets that fit snugly. Each crib will be labeled with the child's name, and infants must sleep in their assigned crib. Cribs will be sanitized before a different child uses it or when soiled. Baby walkers, doorway jumpers, accordion safety gates and toys that are not large enough to prevent swallowing or choking will not be used with infants.

FEEDING

Caregivers will hold infants through six months while feeding them. They will also hold infants over six months who are unable to sit unassisted in a highchair or other seating equipment while feeding them. They will never prop or support bottles with an object. The infant or the adult must hold the bottle. They will never allow an infant to walk around with or sleep with a bottle or training cup. For an infant who is not yet ready for table food, caregivers will obtain and follow written feeding instructions that are signed and dated by the infant's parent or guardian. The feeding instructions must be reviewed and updated with the parent every 30 days.

SLEEPING

Infants will not be allowed to sleep in a restrictive device. If an infant falls asleep in a restrictive device, the infant will be removed from the device and placed in a crib as soon as possible. Infants not yet able to turn over on their own will always be placed in a face-up sleeping position. Infants will not have their heads, faces or cribs covered by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing at any time. To swaddle an infant for sleep, the caregiver must have approval by the parent in writing on site.

COMMUNICATION

Caregivers will provide a daily report to the infant's parent through the brightwheel communication platform by the end of the day.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES & POLICIES

POSITIVE GUIDANCE

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. A caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. The teachers will focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. Our goal is to help the children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions.

TO PROVIDE POSITIVE GUIDANCE:

Teachers will give positive attention for good behavior and when possible, ignore poor behavior. Specifically, teachers and assistants will:

- Encourage children to use their words when having a disagreement with another child and facilitate children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
- Redirect behavior when this seems potentially effective and appropriate.
- Separate a child from the group (safe time) for a chance to regain self-control and to provide an opportunity to counsel a child about behaviors.
- Make sure children know the rules and teachers are consistent in enforcing the rules.
- Model appropriate behaviors for children.
- Implement structure and procedures that set healthy and consistent boundaries for children.

Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the preschool program and will result in consequences. The following behaviors are considered disruptive:

- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self.
- Disrespects people and materials provided in the program.
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom.
- Verbally threatens other students and/or staff.
- Uses verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES FOR CHRONIC DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:

- If a child is not responsive to the teacher's positive guidance, the child will be removed from the classroom.
- If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child's teacher and Director.
- If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, consistently disruptive, and/or dangerous, it may be necessary for the child to be sent home for a time to be determined or removed from the preschool program altogether.

HEALTH CARE POLICIES

WELLNESS POLICY FOR CHILDREN

- No sick child will be allowed to stay at school. If a child should get sick at school, the child's parents, or another responsible adult, so designated by the parent, will be contacted.
- Any child with a communicable disease will not be permitted back to school without a doctor's written approval. If your child develops a communicable disease, please inform the director so that other parents may be alerted.
- Any child suffering from diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or other illness may not return to school until the symptoms have been absent no less than 24 hours.
- Any child who has or develops an oral temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater (99.4 under the arm) will be excluded from attendance and cannot return to school until fever free for 24 hours.

MEDICATION DISPERSAL POLICY

Employees and volunteers will not administer any medication except in life-threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent or administrator to come to the room and give it. The Director, Assistant Director, or person assuming the role of director will administer medications.

In a situation where a child has a non-communicable condition requiring medication, a Medication Authorization form must be completed and signed by the parent.

At the time a parent drops off a child and his/her medication, clear directions must be written out by the parent outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed. The form is to be given directly to the Director by the parent, so the Director can read the directions and ask for clarification if necessary. If the medication is difficult to administer, the Director may inform the parent that the child will not be able to attend school on that day.

INSECT REPELLANT, SUNSCREEN

Parents must indicate on the registration form what ointments and sprays caregivers have permission to apply to the child. This form is kept on file for the caregiver's reference. Items included on the form are the following: Neosporin, bugspray, anti-itch cream, diaper rash cream, and sunscreen.

WELLNESS POLICY FOR WORKERS

All employees of BridgePoint Early Learning Academy must report when they have any communicable diseases and stay away from the children until they have been cleared by a doctor. Employees and volunteers should not be in the presence of children if they are sick with any of the following illnesses: Head colds and coughs, cold sores on lips for nursery workers, diarrhea and/or vomiting, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox or shingles, skin infections, pulmonary tuberculosis, and/or hepatitis.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- All caregivers are trained to respond to emergency situations. Procedures and protocol are reviewed and practiced for the following types of situations: Fire emergency, major injuries, minor injuries, severe weather, and lock down.
- In the event of a medical emergency, parents will be notified immediately. For minor injuries, a form will be filled out and parents informed at pick up. All injuries will be documented and kept on file.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly.
- In the case of severe weather, parents will be notified if it becomes necessary for children to be picked up immediately.
- If the school ever needs to evacuate the children from the premises, parents should meet at the nearby Fire Station #78, 15100 Memorial Drive Houston, TX 77079 (Memorial and Eldridge) to pick up their children. Phone Number – 832-394-6700

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

All children in the care of BridgePoint Early Learning Academy must have the appropriate immunizations for their age as set forth by the Texas Department of State Health Services or written notarized documentation on the immunization form opposing immunizations. Parents of children with missing or overdue vaccinations have 10 business days to submit an updated copy of their child's immunization record which reflects the child is current with the required immunizations for daycare. Failure to comply within 10 business days will result in your child being excluded from BridgePoint Early Learning Academy until your child is current. A notarized immunization form must be on file if your child is on an alternate or delayed immunization schedule as the Texas Department of State Health Services does not recognize such schedules.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD COVID-19

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

- Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched throughout the facility and specifically within the classroom, especially toys and games, will be regularly disinfected. This may also include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- Toys will be cleaned and sanitized daily. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. They will be cleaned with water and detergent, rinsed, sanitized, rinsed again, and air-dried.
- Bedding (sheets, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags) will be washed daily. Each child's bedding will be kept separate, and stored in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots and mats will be labeled for each child.

HEALTHY HAND HYGIENE BEHAVIOR

- Washing hand protocol will be to wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- In between hand washing, older children may use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.
- Children will be assisted with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone. After assisting children, staff will also wash their hands.
- Posters describing handwashing steps will be posted near sinks.

COVERING COUGHS AND SNEEZES

- Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands are especially important for infection control measures in childcare settings.
- Children and caregivers will be trained to cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- If a tissue is not available, children and caregivers will be trained to cough or sneeze into in elbow, not into hands.

OTHER POLICIES

BABYSITTING POLICY

Employees of BELA may not babysit for children enrolled in the BELA program due to liabilities.

FACILITY CARE & SAFETY

The Director and staff of BELA are committed to maintaining a safe environment for the children we serve. Therefore, our operating procedure will be to maintain the following care of our facility:

- keep floors, counters, and children's bathrooms clean
- ensure that toilet paper, soap, and paper towels are in bathrooms
- place clean sheets in baby beds
- empty diaper pails daily
- put away and properly store all food items
- keep all toxic and cleaning supplies out of children's reach
- keep all trash picked up from facility
- always maintain child/caregiver ratio both indoors and outdoors
- remove, repair, or report broken equipment
- keep all electrical outlets covered
- ensure all indoor and outdoor equipment is maintained in good/safe condition
- keep all storage rooms locked
- keep all hazards removed
- keep all doors and pathways always clear, including during naptime
- ensure a staff member certified in First Aid/CPR is in each room during all hours of operation

TOILET TRAINING

The independence of a “potty trained” child is prerequisite for the 3-year-old classes. Independence means that the child must have the awareness to use the restroom without reminders, be able to manage clothing without help, and be able to clean themselves properly. Teachers work closely with parents who are committed to moving their child from diapers to underwear. When a child shows interest and readiness, we are happy to assist and encourage full independence.

SEPARATION

Sometimes children and parents have difficulty separating. We find it helpful when the parent leaves the child with a reassuring staff member and calmly, but promptly leaves. Generally, the child feels more comfortable within 5 minutes. We invite you to call the school at any time to check on your child.

TOYS

- Children will not be given shared, nonwashable, soft toys that may be contaminated with infectious secretions.
- After each session in the infant rooms, all toys used by the children will be washed and sanitized.
- When a child is seen putting an object into his/her mouth, this object will be cleaned with a disinfectant before being returned to the “clean toy” container or given to another child.
- All surfaces in the rooms will be sprayed after each session with disinfectant.
- Toys will be age appropriate and removed and replaced as needed.
- Children are not allowed to bring toys from home to school.

DRESS CODE

- Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. All children will have outdoor time daily unless the weather does not permit. Please send warm jackets for cold weather and closed toed shoes.
- Little girls should wear shorts under dresses on all occasions.
- Clothing that is easy for young children to manipulate for toileting is preferred.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations will be kept simple and held at 1:30 pm or just before the 2:00 pm pick up time. Parents may send one mini cupcake or small cookie and a juice pack for children in the class. No balloons are allowed.

NAPTIME

- Crib sheets will be changed after each use.
- Each infant will be assigned a portable crib for their individual use.
- Two, three and four-year olds will bring a sleeping mat from home for naptime.

FOOD

Caregivers serving food must wash hands carefully before handling food.

Bottles

- Caregivers will wash hands before feeding an infant.
- Care givers will hold a child when giving a bottle unless the child is old enough to hold his/her own bottle.
- Children will not be allowed to walk around with a bottle.
- Bottles will be labeled with the child's name.

Table Food

Children will bring their own snacks and lunches from home and the teacher/caregiver will serve the food to the child according to the class schedule. Please send food that does not need to be warmed.

- Child must be seated at a table or secured in a highchair.
- Child's hands must be washed before and after eating.
- Children will not walk around with food.
- Surfaces and floors will be cleaned and sanitized after meals are served.

Nut-Free Policy

To provide a safe learning environment for all people in our school, BELA is a nut-free school. Please do not send peanuts, tree nuts, or sesame seeds of any kind in your children's lunch or snacks. This includes peanut butter, hummus, and honey nut cheerios. Other foods that may have been processed in facilities with nuts are okay to send. Thank you for understanding and accommodating this request for the safety of our students.

SCREENING & TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES

We love children at BELA and want to protect them from harm. Therefore, BELA requires all employees to complete a screening process and training program before working with children.

APPLICATION & SCREENING PROCESS

Employees are required to complete BELA's application & screening process, which requires all employees working with children to complete an application form, complete a face-to-face interview, and provide references to be checked.

SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING/AWARENESS

BridgePoint requires that employees and volunteers recognize and prevent abusive behavior of any kind and report any abuse to a supervisor. To equip BridgePoint employees and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, BELA requires all employees and volunteers to

complete sexual abuse awareness training through Ministry Safe. This training is completed online at www.MinistrySafe.com and is renewed every year.

ABUSE POLICY

BridgePoint has a “**zero tolerance for abuse**” policy in respect to its ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at BridgePoint to act in the best interest of all minors in every program. If staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to:

- Rebecca Mueller, BELA Director
- Kelly Smalley, Assistant BELA Director
- Dr. David Gundersen, Lead Pastor

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

BELA requires that all employees must undergo a criminal background check and fingerprint screening.

PRACTICES & PROCEDURES

All employees are trained in the Operational Policies of the center and indicate by signature that they have read, understood, and will comply with them.

TRAINING

Teachers must complete pre-service training that includes learning developmental stages, age-appropriate activities, positive guidance and discipline, fostering self-esteem, safety practices, and the prevention and control of spreading communicable diseases. Caregivers also earn 24 clock hours of professional development each year.

CPR/INFANT/FIRST AID CERTIFICATION

All caregivers are kept current in CPR/Infant/First Aid certification.

SAFETY POLICIES

MONITORING PLAN

Monitoring of BELA staff will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each class to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe employees' interactions with children and implementation of policies and procedures.

- The Director conducts unscheduled observations of each class on a weekly basis.
- The Director conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations with staff to provide and receive feedback on the implementation of practices and procedures.

- The supervising Pastor conducts an unscheduled observation of BELA. The supervising Pastor meets with the Director (Rebecca Mueller) at least once per quarter to provide and receive feedback on the implementation of practices and procedures throughout all levels of the program.
- Every year, the Director with the help of the BELA team will review the practices and procedures and make changes as needed. Pursuant to these changes, the Director will make final adjustments to any practices and procedures so that they are in place and ready for any future training of all BELA workers in their area.

INTOXICANTS & TOBACCO USE

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any BridgePoint facility or while working with or supervising children.

BridgePoint requires employees and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during BridgePoint activities or programs. BridgePoint is a tobacco-free facility.

FIREARMS & WEAPONRY

Firearms, fireworks, and weaponry (including pocketknives) are not allowed at any BridgePoint children's programs by children or adults.

CHILD CARE LICENSING

Parents may review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care Licensing at: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

And report concerns to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at:

1-800-252-5400 or <https://www.txabusehotline.org>
 Local Child Care Licensing Office: 713-293-1800
 1919 W. North Loop
 Houston, TX 77008

A current copy of the center's Child Care License and most recent licensing inspection report may be found and reviewed on the public bulletin board.

BELA PARENT HANDBOOK 2022

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I have received and read a copy of BELA'S Parent Handbook and understand the importance of the material in the handbook. I agree to abide by these guidelines while my child/children are enrolled at BridgePoint Early Learning Academy.

I understand the handbook may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by BridgePoint Early Learning Academy and that I will be notified of these changes. I also understand that I may contact the BELA Director at any time about any concern associated with the handbook and need for changes. I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

Acknowledgement and receipt of this handbook is documented on the BELA online registration form.