



Caregiver's Handbook 2026-27

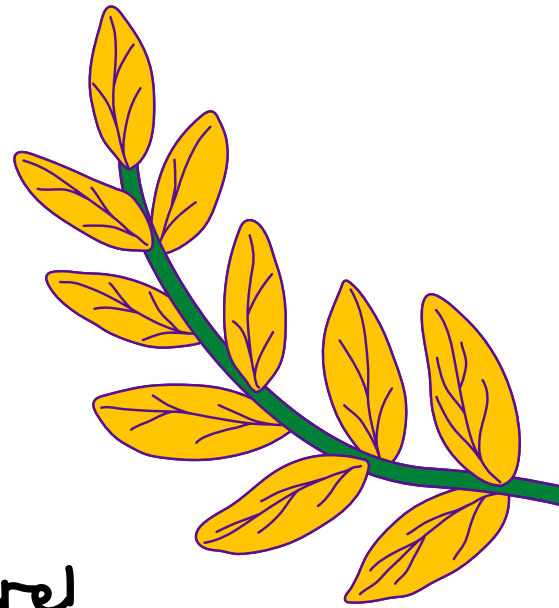
Changing Lives since 1965,
Ballard Center is proud to
offer dynamic, high-quality
affordable care to the
Douglas County community.

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Education Director

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Welcome to **BALLARD**



We are so happy you're here!

We work hard to establish safety, connection, and trust with the families we serve. We take pride in providing a safe educational environment where families and teachers collaborate to provide our children happy and healthy growth, development, and learning experiences.



By taking the time to thoroughly read this parent handbook, you can help us ensure we continue to provide a safe, happy, and educational early childhood journey!

Chelsea Harrington, LMSW

Education Director

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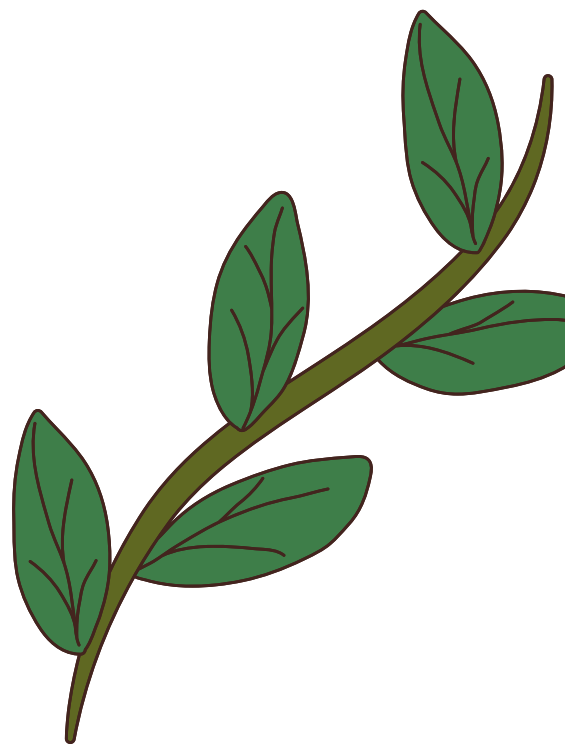
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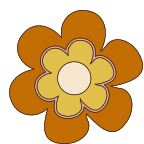


Ballard's Mission & Vision

The Ballard Center partners with individuals and families to help them achieve stability through early childhood education and needs-based services.

At Ballard, we envision a community where every child and family have access to resources and support for stability, safety, health, and overall well-being

Ballard's goal is for families to thrive in our community.



Enrollment



Childcare at our Early Childhood Education Center is open to children from two to five (2-5) years of age. We only offer full-time care. Part-time care is not available.

We reserve the right to disenroll a child if they are not maintaining regular and consistent attendance.

Our center has four classrooms:

Cubs 2-3 year-olds

Lions 3-4 year-olds

Bears 4-5 year-olds

Tigers 4-5 year-olds

Parents can apply for enrollment by completing the Enrollment Packet, touring our facility, and participating in a home visit.

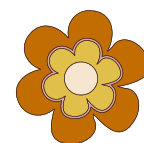
Continued enrollment at the Ballard Center is contingent upon, but not limited to, parent/guardian and the child's adherence to the policies and procedures of the Ballard Center as outlined in this handbook. Ballard reserves the right to dismiss and/or dis-enroll any child at any time, with or without cause.

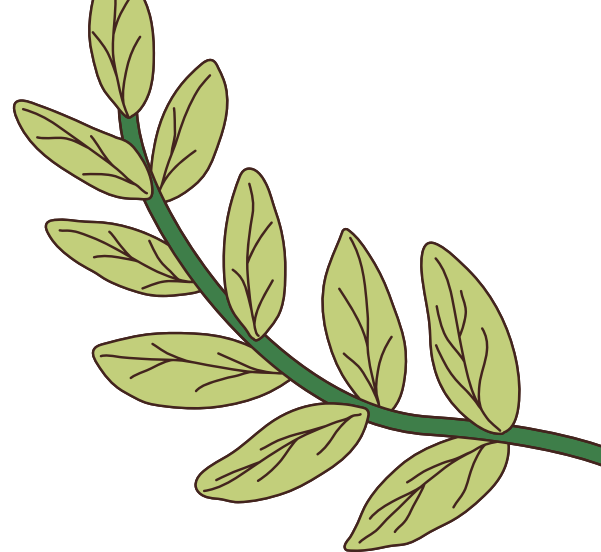
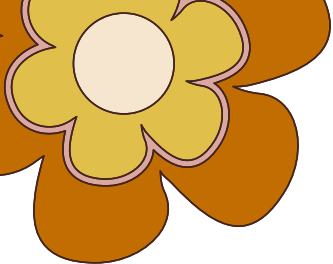
Admission Policy: Ballard Center serves all families in Douglas County. Children of any race, religion, or country of origin are freely admitted to Ballard Center.

Confidentiality: Information concerning the child will not be made available to anyone, by any means, without the express written consent of the parent or legal guardian, unless required by a court of law. Additionally, recording videos or taking photos of anyone on campus without express consent is prohibited.

Brightwheel: Our way of communicating with families is a free app called Brightwheel. All families are expected to use this app, which allows staff and teachers to communicate with Ballard families and keep them up to date. Families will be able to check their child in and out with their own code. When you arrive with your child daily, you will check them in and out of the building with your Brightwheel code on our iPad at the front door.

Family Wrap-Around Services: Ballard Center provides wrap-around services for families as needed. You will receive regular reports regarding assessment of your child's developmental progress and assistance connecting with Lawrence early intervention services, if needed. We strive to foster healthy school-family partnerships to support your child as they grow and learn. The Family Stabilization team can refer and assist you in accessing needed resources including an on-site food and clothing pantry and emergency financial assistance.





Tuition

The 7% Model

Our 7% Tuition Model means no household pays more than 7% of their annual household income for childcare — the percentage recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the federal benchmark for affordable childcare.

By linking tuition to income, Ballard is creating a fair, sustainable, and equitable system that ensures families aren't forced to choose between paying bills and giving their child a strong start.

- Keeps care affordable for families across all income levels
- Ensures teachers earn a living wage
- Builds long-term stability for our community



\$900
Base Tuition



How It Works: The 7% Roadmap

Start Here → \$900/month base tuition

That's the full rate for our early childhood program (ages 2–5). From there, we work downward to ensure your monthly cost never exceeds 7% of your verified income.

Step 1. Check for DCF Child Care Subsidy Eligibility

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) helps eligible families cover a portion of child care costs.

Household Size Maximum Monthly Income for Eligibility (approx. 2025)

If your income is within these limits, apply at:

www.dcf.ks.gov → Services → Child Care Assistance

Once approved, Ballard applies your DCF benefit first — and if a balance remains, your private pay never exceeds 7% of your income.

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Income
2	\$3,644
3	\$4,578
4	\$5,512
5	\$6,446
6	\$7,380



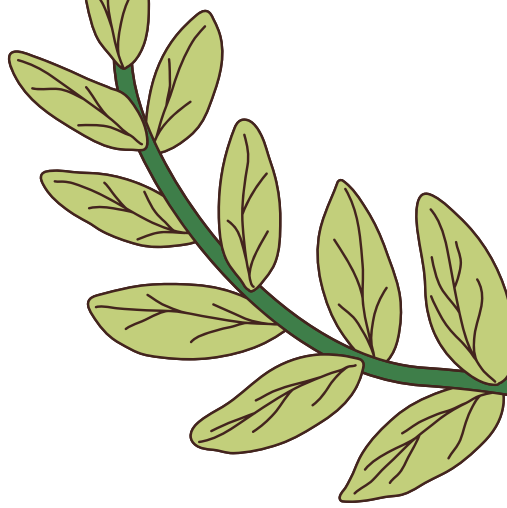
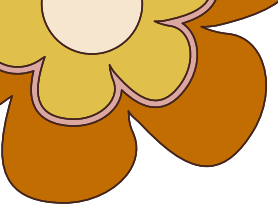
Step 2. For Families Not Eligible for DCF Subsidy

If your income is above the DCF limits, Ballard verifies your annual household income to set your 7% tuition rate, capped at \$900 per month per child.

Annual Household Income	Monthly Tuition
\$40,000	\$233
\$60,000	\$350
\$80,000	\$467
\$120,000	\$583
\$150,000	\$700
\$154,000	\$900

Families above this income level pay the base tuition of \$900/month.





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Step 3. Apply for Additional Scholarships

If you don't qualify for DCF but still need help, apply through Positive Bright Start — a community scholarship program that can further reduce your monthly cost. The scholarship application can be completed here:

<https://www.positivebrightstart.org/financialaid>

DCF
Subsidy +
Ballard's
7% Model =
Affordable
Child Care!!!

At Ballard,
affordability isn't an afterthought
it's part of our mission

Center Operations



Hours of Operation: Ballard is open Monday - Friday, 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM (closed holidays)

Drop Off: Children are to be dropped off no later than 9:30. If students will be late or absent, please send a message on Brightwheel!

Pick Up: All children must be picked up by 5:30 PM. A late pick up fee of \$1/minute per child will instantly go into effect for every minute past 5:30. All late fees are required to be paid in cash or via Venmo to the teacher upon arrival or before drop-off the following day.

Drop Off/Pick Up Safety: The Ballard Center's paramount concern is for the safety and well-being of all children on Ballard property. To help maintain a safe environment, all parents, guardians, and other adults responsible for the drop off or pick up of children at Ballard must follow these safety rules:

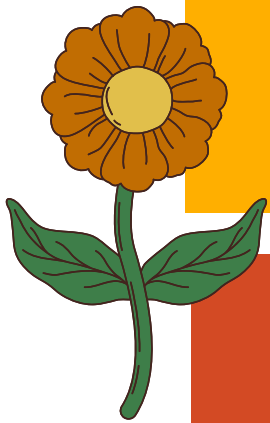
1. The adult responsible for pick up and drop off must park in the Ballard parking lot or in the circular drive by the building's front door. Street parking for drop off and pick up is prohibited.
2. Vehicles may not idle in Ballard's parking areas at any time, including during drop off and pick up.
3. At drop off, the responsible adult must accompany the child into the building and must remain with the child until the child is accepted by the child's teacher or another Ballard staff member.
4. Unaccompanied children may not be present in vehicles parked on Ballard property. If other children are in the care of the adult responsible for drop off or pick up, the adult must bring those children into Ballard during the drop off/pick up process.

Calendar

Our center is closed for Federal Holidays

- **New Year's Day** - January 1
- **Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.** - Third Monday in January
- **Presidents' Day** - Third Monday in February
- **Memorial Day** - Last Monday in May
- **Juneteenth National Independence Day** - June 19
- **Independence Day** - July 4
- **Labor Day** - First Monday in September
- **Indigenous Peoples' Day** - Second Monday in October
- **Veterans Day** - November 11
- **Thanksgiving Day** - Fourth Thursday in November
- **Christmas Day** - December 25

Winter Break (week of Dec 25 through New Year's) and up to 4 days (TBD) for Teacher In-Service - there may be additional closures throughout the year, please check the school calendar on our website!



Emergency & inclement Weather

Our inclement weather policy is as follows: Ballard Center will be closed if it is deemed unsafe for staff to travel to the Center. For updates about Ballard school closings, refer to our social media (Facebook) and check Brightwheel. In the event there is an emergency that affects Ballard Center (no heat, water, etc.) families will be contacted by Brightwheel.

Health & Safety



Your child's health and safety are our top concern at Ballard Center. For the health and safety of all student's at Ballard, please observe the following.

Immunizations: Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunizations record on file at our center.

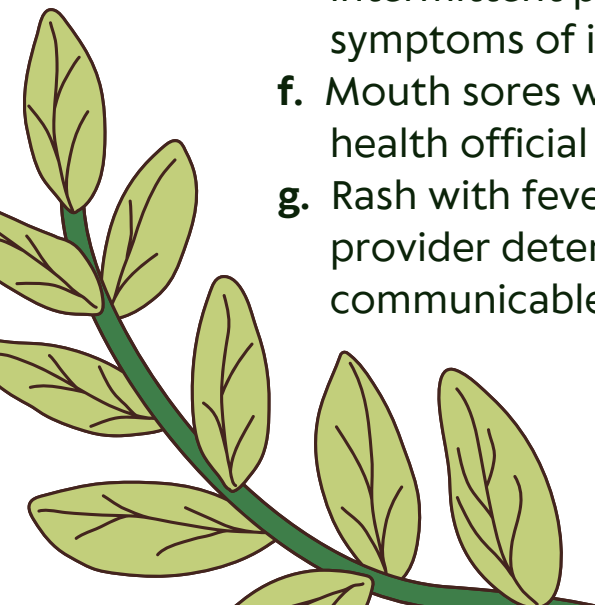
Illness policy: The Ballard Center's illness policy states that any child with a temperature of 101° or above, who has vomited, or who has two or more episodes of diarrhea, will not be allowed back into our care until 24 hours after the last symptom (as stated previously) has occurred. The child must be fever-free without fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.

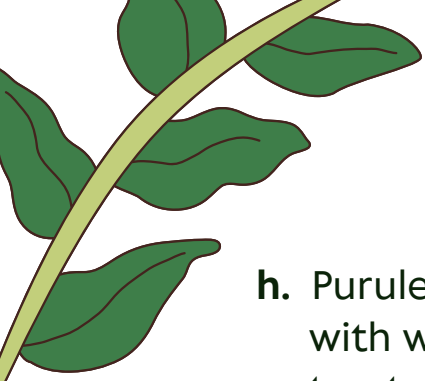
The Kansas Department for Health and Environment issues an exclusion policy, and it is included below:

Children with fever are managed differently in child care. The presence of fever alone has little relevance to the spread of disease and may not preclude a child's participation in child care. A small proportion of childhood illness with fever is caused by life-threatening diseases, such as meningitis. It is unreasonable and inappropriate for child care staff to attempt to determine which illnesses with fevers may be serious. The child's parents or legal guardians, with the help of their child's health care provider, are responsible for these decisions. Parents will be notified anytime a child has a fever.

A facility should not deny admission to or send home a child because of illness unless one or more of the following conditions exists. The parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent should be notified immediately when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the facility, described as follows:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities;
2. The illness results in a greater care need than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children; or the child has any of the following conditions and poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others:
 - a. An acute change in behavior including lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, noticeable (spreading) rash, or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.
 - b. Fever (temperature above 101 degrees Fahrenheit orally, above 102 degrees Fahrenheit rectally, or 100 degrees or higher taken auxiliary (armpit) and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea).
 - c. Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, an increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
 - d. Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
 - e. Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness.
 - f. Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider or health official determines the condition is noninfectious.
 - g. Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.



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- h. Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
 - i. Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation.
 - j. Untreated Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child can attend child care.
 - k. Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stage (chicken pox, streptococcal pharyngitis, rubella, pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis A).

Nutrition and Meals: Ballard Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Kansas Department of Education.

Each Ballard Center meal meets or exceeds the daily requirements set forth by the Department of Education and constitutes more than ½ of each child's daily nutritional needs. Meals are served at the following times:

Breakfast

8:30 am

Lunch

11:30 am

Snack

3:30 pm



Food Allergies: With a doctor's note, allergies will be accommodated; however, our menu is designed to meet CACFP standards so we cannot allow exceptions due to child preferences.

Emergencies: If a child becomes seriously injured or ill while attending Ballard Center, these procedures will be followed:

1. Efforts will be taken to comfort the child and stabilize the child's condition and using appropriate First Aid techniques.
2. Office staff will contact the child's parent/caregiver. When the primary caretaker is not available, other emergency contact will be called.
3. The child may be transported by the primary caretaker or by ambulance to the nearest emergency facility (Lawrence Memorial Hospital) or the child's doctor, whichever is appropriate, upon the advice of a doctor or hospital.
4. Any serious injury requiring hospitalization will be reported by the next working day to the County Health Department.

Child Abuse Policy: All observations or signs of child abuse or neglect will immediately be reported to DCF, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. Please keep your child's teacher informed about the circumstances surrounding any injuries. If child abuse is suspected, Ballard is required to report the circumstances to the DCF for investigation. Child Protective Services will determine how primary caretakers will be notified.

No Babysitting:

Staff members are not permitted to provide babysitting or private childcare for children currently enrolled in our program outside of scheduled program hours. Once a child is no longer enrolled, any private arrangements between families and former staff members are personal decisions. These arrangements are not affiliated with or endorsed by Ballard Center.

Classroom Information



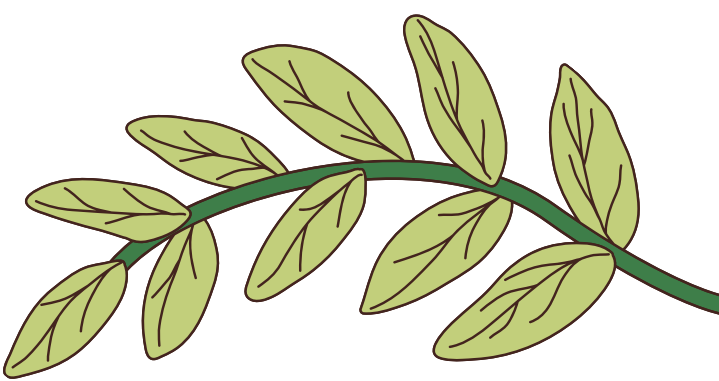
Our building opens for drop off starting at 7:00 AM. Children must be at the center by 8:30 AM if eating breakfast. If not, children must be at the center by 9:30 AM at the latest in order to participate in classroom activities and curriculum.

Curriculum: Our goal at Ballard is to help children grow and thrive. We believe that children will flourish in a loving and structured environment. Our classrooms offer both free play and academics. We currently use Experience for Toddlers, Learning Without Tears curriculum for literacy and numeracy and Second-Step curriculum for social-emotional growth.

Nap Time: All children are encouraged to nap between 1:00 and 3:00 PM daily. If a child does not need a nap, he/she will be asked to quietly do an independent activity, such as read a book or work on other academic related activities.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Conferences are held twice a year, in October and March. We request all caregivers attend both sessions to review ASQ/ASQ-SE assessments, update paperwork, and spend time hearing about your child's growth, development, and goals for the school year.

ASQ/ASQ-SE Assessments are state-wide assessment tools given every six months to each child. To ensure that your child is on track developmentally and socially, your child's teacher will complete these assessments twice a year, and we request that each family complete their own for their child. The documents will be provided to you prior to the conferences.





Discipline Policy: Our goals for social and emotional learning are supported in our daily language, our mission, and our classroom structure. We will focus on such life skills as listening, taking turns, and emotional self-regulation. We use positive and encouraging statements, telling the child what we do want: "Please keep your feet on the floor" vs. "No jumping".

We offer redirects and solutions, and model respectful language and peace-making skills. If there are behavior concerns involving your child, you will be the first to know. We consider you the expert on your child and will seek to keep communication open.

Any incidents will be documented in our records and communicated to you. Ongoing issues will result in a mandatory meeting with Ballard staff and the child's caregivers to determine the next steps for your child.

Behavior Policy and Temporary Exclusion: Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for all children. We understand that young children are still learning to manage their emotions and behaviors, and we work with each child using positive guidance, redirection, and emotional support.

However, there may be times when a child's behavior presents a safety concern or significantly disrupts the classroom environment. In these cases, a child may need to be picked up early for the day. This temporary exclusion is never a punishment—it is a step to ensure safety, allow the child to calm and reset, and give families and staff an opportunity to plan support strategies.

We follow the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) guidance document, CCL-012: Behavior and Guidance, which provides specific strategies for managing children's behavior in a positive and constructive manner.



Some of these strategies include:

- Establishing Clear Rules: Discussing and reminding children about the "rules" of the child care environment. Allowing preschool-aged children to help set these rules can promote understanding and cooperation. (kdhe.ks.gov)
- Offering Choices: Allowing children to make acceptable choices and letting the natural consequences of their decisions occur, as long as these consequences are not dangerous. This approach helps children learn responsibility. (kdhe.ks.gov)
- Encouraging Problem-Solving: Helping children learn to solve problems by offering suggestions when necessary and allowing the child to decide on the best course of action. (kdhe.ks.gov)

These strategies are designed to promote positive behavior, enhance self-regulation, and create a supportive learning environment for all children.

A child may be sent home if:

1. Safety Concerns

- The child's behavior poses a danger to self or others, such as:
- Hitting, biting, kicking, scratching, or throwing objects to cause harm
- Running from staff or leaving supervised areas
- Damaging property in a way that could cause injury

2. Extreme Distress or Loss of Control

- The child becomes inconsolable, extremely upset, or unable to calm down even after staff have tried all appropriate strategies.
- The child's distress lasts for an extended time and prevents participation in normal classroom activities.

3. Repeated Disruptive Behavior

- The child's actions continually interfere with the safety or learning of others despite redirection and support (for example, repeated aggressive acts or refusal to follow directions that impact group safety).



4. Health or Emotional Concerns

- The child's behavior appears related to illness, fatigue, or emotional stress and they are unable to participate comfortably in the day's activities.

Before requesting that a child be picked up, staff will:

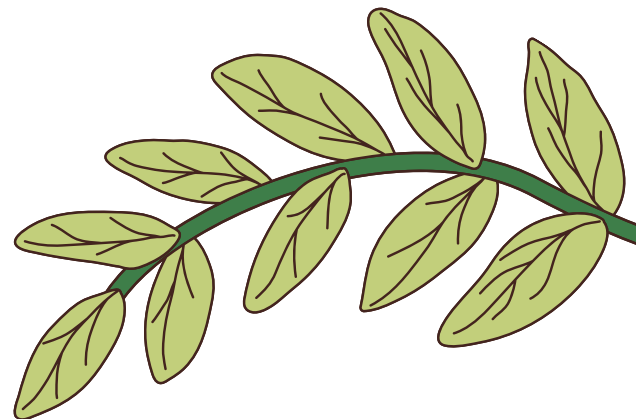
- Observe and document the behaviors and calming strategies attempted.
- Seek assistance from administration to determine next steps.
- Communicate openly with the family about what occurred and what supports may help.

A child may return to school when:

- They can safely participate in classroom routines, and
- Families and staff have discussed strategies to support the child's success.

In some cases, a short-term behavior support plan may be created with the family to provide consistency between home and school. If challenging behaviors persist, the preschool may recommend additional support services or professional evaluation to better meet the child's needs.

No items from Home: This includes no extra food (unless for a birthday celebration or other extenuating circumstances) or toys from home brought into the classroom. *Your child may bring a stuffie or lovey to cuddle!*



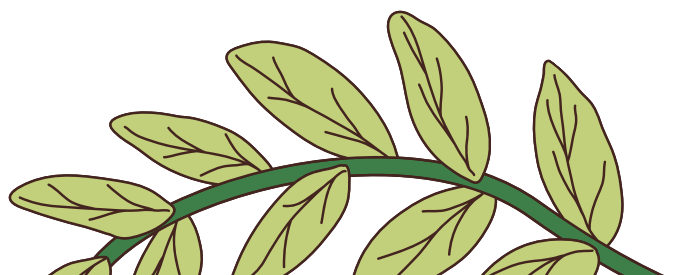
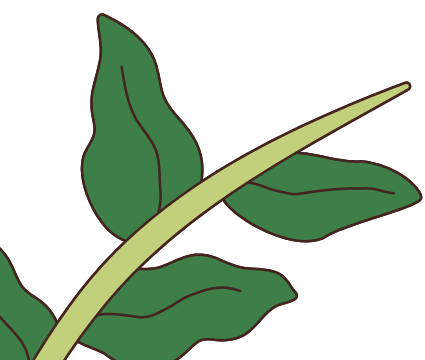
The following items are required on child's start date:

- Three (3) changes of clothing
 - shirts
 - pants
 - socks
 - underwear
- 1 pair of shoes
- 1 lightweight jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt
- 1 winter coat, hat, and pair of mittens (seasonal)
- 1 bathing suit and towel (seasonal)
- 1 sheet (crib size works best)
- 1-2 blankets
- 1 pillow
- 1 bottle of sunscreen
- 1 bottle of bug spray

Additional items if your child is not potty trained:

- 2 full packages: diapers and/or pull ups
- 2 full containers: wipes
- If this creates an issue, please let Ballard staff know - we can help!

Your child's teacher will let you know when items need replenished/replaced.





Thank you for joining the Ballard family

We look forward to learning and growing with you!

questions?

Ballard staff are available in person and by phone any time during business hours. You can also visit our website or our Facebook page for up to date information.

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