



3724 Cardiff Ave . Los Angeles, CA 90034

310 204 6180 gisa@butterflygardenpreschool.com

www.butterflygardenpreschool.com

Parent Handbook

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Philosophy

Butterfly Garden is an eclectic preschool whose mission is to allow all children to grow in their independence, develop a strong sense of self, and be able to use their creativity in working and learning as healthy, thinking individuals. The school environment instills a love for learning and is a place where children can explore and learn at their own pace. We provide many opportunities for problem solving both individually and in groups.

The preschool is organized around learning centers in a hands-on, child-directed environment. The curriculum supports our philosophy of a child-directed, respectful, and fun place to learn and grow. Our preschool seeks to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure setting that encourages the development of the “whole child.” It is our belief that children learn best when they are provided with an opportunity to freely explore their environment. Children learn through their direct interactions with the environment and the people within it. A loving, positive environment within a small school “family” creates a sense of belonging.

While children do go through specific stages of development, each child grows and learns at a pace that is individually specific. This is not necessarily indicated by age. Preschool children are in the stage that Piaget described as preoperational. This stage lasts until approximately age eight. Characteristics of this stage include egocentricity, concrete thinking, and the explosion of language. Children in the preoperational stage learn best through their own initiated activities rather than direct instruction by an adult. Butterfly Garden Preschool gives children an opportunity for more structured learning during circle time and group activities however, a large part of the day is dedicated to children actively exploring their environment. Children construct knowledge through the manipulation of concrete materials and the stimulation of their five senses. Some of the concrete materials for children to use and explore with include select Montessori materials, and math, science, social studies, and language arts manipulatives. The learning environment is arranged for children to play while the teacher interacts with children individually or in small groups. The teacher also spends time observing children during their play and can then plan activities that extend the interests of children.

Butterfly Garden offers a wide variety of stimulating activities that invite children to explore, discover, and create. The curriculum includes language experiences, creative artwork, structured and unstructured play, sand and water play, cooking projects, creative movement, and in-depth science exploration. Meaningful experiences are provided for children to learn

more about themselves, their families, other cultures, and their communities. A theme-based approach incorporates all areas of the curriculum from circle time to music and movement, language arts, math, science, and dramatic play. Themes extend from the interest of the children.

Communication is highly valued at Butterfly Garden Preschool. Please feel free to openly share any concerns or questions that may arise. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the child(ren). In order to maintain attention on the child(ren) and keep them safe, issues will be discussed outside of regular school hours either by telephone or conference. Conversation between adults should be kept at a minimum once circle time has started in the morning and in the afternoon sessions.

Multi-Age Classrooms

We believe that children benefit from being in a mixed-age classroom for several reasons. Mixed-age groups resemble families. Just like families, children support and take care of one another. Mixed age groups of two and a half, three, four, and five year olds spend their time caring, sharing, helping, working, and playing cooperatively.

In addition, multi-age classrooms have the purpose of grouping children that are in similar stages of development rather than grouping them by age to stimulate learning. This way the class encompasses a wide range of developmental stages, which lets each child find his/her own way along the continuum. The curriculum is designed to support the wide range of developmental abilities. Each child has the opportunity to go at his/her own pace. Children end up where they are supposed to be, prepared for kindergarten, with less pressure to develop skills at the same rate. The environment plays an important part in the curriculum. It is set up to engage children in planning and working by making materials available to children in learning centers. Children are active learners. They choose and work with the materials according to their own interests and abilities.

Another important part of the multi-age classroom is the accessibility of the teachers. The teachers are always actively involved with the children throughout the day not only in the teacher-initiated activities, but also in those activities the children initiate and carry out themselves. The teachers help with problem solving and asking questions to extend thinking during center time. We see each child as an individual. Each child is compared to himself/herself and his/her individual progress along a developmental continuum. Continuity from year to year saves valuable time. Children who know the routine and expectations share their knowledge with new friends.

There are also many social/emotional benefits to multi-age classrooms. Children do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way. All children progress through the same developmental stages, but not at the same rate. Some older children may take the lead in

playing with other older children, which builds self-confidence. This is also a wonderful opportunity for older children who are shy to develop leadership skills as they relate to their younger friends. Therefore, a child who would not normally emerge as a leader or teacher in a group of same age peers has an opportunity to do so in a mixed-age group. This also works for the younger child who has older siblings/cousins and can easily play with older friends. S/he has the opportunity to participate in play and learning that is more complex.

Another benefit of the multi-age classroom is that it encourages positive interactions. Older children are seldom aggressive toward younger children because older children have a natural confidence in their own abilities. When a younger child is aggressive toward an older child, the older child is more capable of handling the situation in a positive manner. Conflicts are resolved with words because the older child has been taught how to resolve conflicts and reach a solution. The older students model this process for the younger ones.

In mixed age classrooms, children look to each other, not just the teachers for assistance. It is not unusual for one child to help another open his lunch box, reach for a toy, or do a puzzle. Assessing what is needed in a situation and responding in a helpful manner takes thinking, skill, and confidence. Interaction and cooperation is important and encouraged. There tends to be more cooperation and less competition in a multi-age learning environment. Children learn to mentor and seek mentors. They learn the important life skill of communicating. Showing empathy, giving help, learning to ask for help, and accepting limitations are nurtured. Mixed-age groups give each child a place to be equal, a leader, and a teacher.

According to the Association for Childhood Education International, "research indicates that academic achievement in multi-age classrooms is the same as, or better than, in same-grade classrooms. Multi-age classrooms do not negatively affect student achievement. Students in multi-age classrooms do have significantly more positive attitudes toward school themselves, and others."

Multicultural Policy

Butterfly Garden Preschool is committed to multicultural education. This means we share in a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual, and social justice. We strive to create a program that truly reflects the lives of our children, families, staff, and community. By recognizing the impact culture has on families, we will make every effort to provide culturally responsive education by affirming human differences and the right of people to make choices about their own lifestyle. We seek to recognize, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child. We make the commitment to multicultural education by:

- *recognizing the beauty, value, and contribution of each child.
- *fostering high self-esteem and positive self-concept in all children.

- *teaching children about their own culture and facilitating appreciation for that culture.
- *introducing children to other cultures.
- *providing children with a positive experience by exploring similarities and differences.
- *encouraging children to respect other cultures.
- *increasing children's ability to talk and play with people who are different from themselves.
- *helping children to be a group member.
- *helping children live happily and cooperatively in a diverse world.
- *helping children recognize unfair behavior and giving them the knowledge to do something about it.
- *teacher/staff treating children of all races, religions, family backgrounds/lifestyles, and cultures with equal respect.
- *providing children of both sexes with equal opportunity to take part in all activities.

Celebrations & Holidays

We view holidays as a valuable part of our multicultural curriculum. Holidays provide an opportunity to encourage positive values about other cultures. They give our children the knowledge of how other children celebrate special events. We strive to give all holidays (that families enrolled celebrate) equal importance. A holiday survey will be sent home for you to fill out so that we know what holidays/traditions you celebrate.

Curriculum

Outside Play—Children need time each day to exercise and use their large muscles. They enhance their large motor and social skills during outside playtime. Children engage in throwing, kicking, and rolling balls, imaginative play, climbing, sliding, and swinging. This is an opportunity for children to socially interact and engage in dramatic play with their friends. Exploration of the wide variety of equipment available for the children promotes a healthy, physical body by developing flexibility, endurance, and strength.

Circle Time—Includes a variety of activities: songs, discussions, sharing, music & movement, puppetry, games, poems, finger plays, and concepts (colors, letters, numbers, calendar, shapes, etc.). Children learn to participate in discussions, increase their attention span, wait their turn, and develop listening skills. Music and movement are also experienced outside playtime. Children explore sound and experience enjoyment through singing, listening and moving to music.

Learning Centers—Offer hands-on experiences that allow children to expand and develop cognitive, social, and fine and gross motor skills. Our centers include practical life, language arts, sensory, math, science/social studies, library, art/music, dramatic play, and block play (see Curriculum Areas handout for descriptions about Learning Centers). Children are

given the opportunity to choose activities, materials, and play areas independently and to work in small groups or by themselves. The classroom is set up to stimulate and invite children to explore, discover, and experiment with a wide variety of activities and materials. All of the learning centers are fun creative age appropriate ways of learning through play.

Clean Up/Snack-Children learn to wash hands and get ready for snack. They learn table manners such as please, thank you, and your welcome. This is a social time where children visit with each other and the teachers.

Hours and Days

Butterfly Garden is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The morning session is from 8:30 to 12:30 and the afternoon session is from 12:30 to 4:00. Parents can choose from either a MWF am, MWF pm, TTH am, TTH pm, or every half day M-F schedule. The school is closed for all federal holidays, two weeks during the holidays, and one week in the spring. We are also closed for two staff training days per year. The school year runs from September through June. See the preschool calendar for detailed holiday schedule. We are not in session during the months of July and August.

Admission & Enrollment

Applications for enrollment are accepted at any time. A special enrollment period is held each December/January for all current enrolled families. Current enrollees and their siblings are given first priority choosing their class sessions. Butterfly Garden Preschool serves and welcomes families regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, color, or special need that can be reasonably accommodated. We seek a diverse student population. **Admission decisions are sometimes influenced by a need to assure a balanced group of children.** For example, there are a limited number of spaces for two year olds due to class size (age, gender, etc.). Please understand that we receive many applicants. Applicants will be notified in early spring regarding their child's admission status. Children who are not accepted will be put on a waiting list until offered a space or no longer eligible due to age.

Before a child is enrolled, a parent tour will be scheduled. We give tours on Saturdays every six to eight weeks. Visiting the program allows parents become familiar with our environment and schedule. It will also give the teacher the opportunity to present parents with a description of the program, set forth program policies, and establish a connection with the parents before attendance begins.

The following is a list of the steps prior to your child's enrollment.

- 1) Parents must attend a parent tour
- 2) Director will email enrollment form and questionnaire to you

- 3) Families fill out both the enrollment form and questionnaire forms and send them back to BGP (your paperwork is filed in the order that it is received....once we receive your paperwork, your child is officially on the waiting list)
- 4) You will receive a call if there is a spot available
- 5) Contract needs to be read and signed and a non-refundable deposit and activity fee needs to be paid in order to officially enroll

Admission Priority Guidelines

These guidelines are used in determining the order in which qualified student applicants are offered admission (for new students) and preferred schedules (for returning students) to Butterfly Garden Preschool in the event the number of of applicants exceeds the number of available openings. It should be noted that the following guidelines are not inviolable rules. BGP reserves the right to consider other factors or criteria (gender, age, etc.) and to deviate from these guidelines as it deems appropriate under the circumstances. Please note that the guidelines are to be used for qualified applicants (those that have followed the steps above, turned in applicable paperwork, paid fees, etc.). Applicants, including current enrollees, who have not timely and fully satisfied all of the requirements, will not be accorded any priority in admission.

- 1) children who attended BGP the prior academic year(s)-by seniority
- 2) children whose siblings are currently attending BGP-by seniority
- 3) children whose siblings attended BGP the prior academic year(s)-by seniority
- 4) children whose siblings attended BGP in past years-by seniority (based on # of years attended in the past)
- 5) children who do not qualify for priority under any of the foregoing

Anyone who did not get a slot in our program will need to let us know whether or not s/he would like application to remain on the waiting list for future availability.

Tuition

The preschool is an organization that operates on the tuition fees from each child. Therefore, it is essential that your fees be paid promptly. All tuition fees must be paid for the days and hours your child is registered to attend. We prefer automatic bill pay. Payment should be made to Butterfly Garden Preschool. All payments are due in advance no later than the 3rd of each month. If tuition is not paid by the 3th of each month, a late charge of \$5.00 per day shall apply. Checks returned by the bank for insufficient funds will incur a \$30.00 fee. If more than two non-sufficient funds checks are returned, you will be required to pay in cash.

Butterfly Garden Preschool runs from September through June. There is no reduction in payment for days missed due to vacations, illnesses, or other closures that are beyond our control at BGP (eg. Earthquake, inclement weather, acts of God). Monthly tuition is required whether your child is in attendance or not. If your child is absent or on vacation, the fees are still due in full. We cannot refund or credit tuition. There are no make up days. We require one month advanced written notice should you decide to discontinue enrollment for any reason (last month deposit is not refundable during May and June-see contract and below for more details about refunds during the summer months). We require the first and last months tuition at the time of enrollment. The last month's tuition will be credited to your last month fee when you decide to depart from Butterfly Garden Preschool. If you are leaving before the end of the school year, you must give 30 days written notice in order to apply the last month tuition to your child's last month. Please note that tuition/fees may be more per month at time of departure. The school reserves the right to terminate enrollment for non-payment of tuition/fees. If less than 30 days notice is given, your tuition deposit is non-refundable. No exceptions.

There is a yearly, non-refundable activities/supply fee of \$200 per child. This fee covers the cost of supplies and administrative processes. It is paid at the time your child begins school. Tuition fees increase each year based on cost of living.

Cancellation Policy

Should you care to terminate your child's enrollment for any reason, 30 days advance, written notice will be required (except as provided in Section 5a of contract). Your prepaid last month tuition will be applied at the beginning of the next month after 30 days written notice is given. Failure to provide 30 day written notice will result in forfeiture of deposit (example: if January is the last month your child will be attending BGP, you will let us know by December 1st that January is your child's last month. We will apply the last month tuition deposit for January. In other words, you do not pay for January tuition because we use the last month deposit).

If you withdraw your child from Butterfly Garden Preschool during the summer months of May and June (even with 30 days written notice), you are still responsible for tuition for those month(s) remaining in the school year even though your child is not attending school as it is too late in the term to fill that spot.

If you are "holding a spot" for your child for the next school year, the deposit is non-refundable. You are essentially paying for September. Once you have signed the contract and paid the deposit, it is non-refundable because we are saving that spot for your child.

Once school has started, then you can give us 30 days written notice and we will apply your last month tuition deposit at the beginning of the next month. (example: if you sign the contract and put down September tuition deposit and activity fee to hold a spot for your child starting in September and then over the summer you decide not to have your child attend BGP, you are not eligible for any refund...even if you have given 30 days notice).

However, if you decide that November is going to be your child's last month at BGP, then you would let us know in writing on October 1st that you would like to use your last month tuition deposit because November is going to be the last month your child attends our school. Then, the last month of tuition (last month tuition deposit) that you paid when you started will be applied to November tuition. The deposit is applied to the beginning of your child's last month at school. Notice must be given the first day of the month.

Cancellation/Termination of Enrollment

We reserve the right to cancel enrollment based on the following conditions.

- *consistent failure to pay tuition on time on more than three occasions
- *tuition is not paid for one month
- *child's behavior is a threat or danger to other children enrolled in the program
- *an individual demanding excessive amounts of staff energy and time at the expense of other children or placing another child at risk from inappropriate or uncontrolled behavior (excessive violence, biting, hitting, intimidating, bullying, yelling, screaming, kicking, spitting, pushing, destroying school or others property, etc.)
- *refusal to seek a professional evaluation or follow through on behavioral instruction when recommended by the teacher
- *failure to pick up your child on time on more than three occasions

Arrival, Departure, and First Days

Each family must return a completed emergency form before your child's first day of school. On this form you will list the names of persons authorized to pick up your child. Your child will only be released to those people whom you have specified. Those persons must show proper identification (driver's license or a state I.D.) before we will release your child to their care. If you need someone to pick up your child who is not on the list, please notify us in advance.

Pick up times for the morning sessions are from 12:15-12:30 pm. Afternoon sessions pick up between 3:45-4:00 pm. There will be a charge of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes or part thereof for every child not picked up on time. **Please be prompt in picking up your child after**

school. The teachers start work early in the morning and are with the kiddos all day. Please respect their time after school for their families and appointments.

The first days/weeks at school are a time of adjustment. We recognize that each child's adjustment period will vary depending on his or her age, temperament and prior experience. Even children who usually say goodbye cheerfully can sometimes feel anxious. Please discuss your child's needs with us before they start so that we may work together to ease this transition. We will also schedule a visit for both you and your child before he or she begins attending the program. This will give your child an opportunity to get acquainted with us and gain trust for open communication.

A routine of helping your child put away his/her things in the cubby or doing a countdown before you kiss and hug goodbye may give your child a feeling of confidence and helps begin his or her day. Ensure that you communicate that you feel that school is a good place to be and that you have confidence that your child will be safe and have fun. It is normal for a child to take a few weeks to fully adjust to a new routine.

Signing In and Out

It is a licensing requirement by the Department of Social Services that all parents (or whomever is dropping or picking your child up) sign his/her child in and out each day that they come to school. The time as well as your signature is required each and every time.

Absences

Please call the school the night before or in the morning if your child will not be coming that day or will be arriving later than 9:00am (for morning sessions) and 1:00pm (for afternoon sessions). We typically lock the gate at 9am and 1pm. Please let us know if you are going to be late so we can leave it open for you. If your child is not feeling well, let us know the details of your child's illness so we can make other families aware of possible exposure. Children are often contagious before they exhibit any symptoms. Please give at least one week notice prior to a child's absence due to vacation. Full tuition is still required regardless of illness or vacation. No refunds or make up days are provided for children who are absent.

Parent Involvement

Butterfly Garden Preschool values communication. Parents and the teacher are partners in the children's education. Parents may share their talents and hobbies, read, sing, cook, or do a special project with the class. Parents are also encouraged to use their time and talents to benefit the school in any other ways (e.g. contribute to newsletter, garden, sew, fundraise, etc.)

Special programs provided for parents include: back to school workshop, back to school potluck, parent conferences (in February or March), Halloween party, graduation in June, field trips and classroom volunteer opportunities. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled on the school calendar and parents are informed of these dates the summer preceding their child's attendance in the program. Families will be notified two in advance with a number of options for the time of the conference. Parents and/or the teacher may request additional conferences at any time during the school year. A written assessment report of each student's progress will be given to parents in the areas of social, cognitive, physical, and emotional development.

We welcome comments and suggestions. When areas of concern arise, the problem should be brought to the attention of the teacher who will listen to your suggestion and/or grievance and attempt to work through the problem. A parent questionnaire will be sent home each year. Parents are strongly encouraged to communicate any suggestions, comments, or concerns any time throughout the year.

Communication

- *Weekly curriculum and daily snacks are written on a large board that is displayed at the entrance of the preschool.
- *Yearly calendars are provided for each family.
- *Newsletters (every two months), curriculum index, and song lists emailed to families. CD's with children's music are given to each family every other month.
- *Parent workshops/round table discussions to discuss topics of interest to families are organized when there is parent interest.
- *Research articles and other early education information are emailed to provide families up to date information on early education topics.

Open Door Policy

The door is always open to parents. Please feel free to drop in and check on your child, however, keep in mind, a child adjusting to a new surrounding will want to leave with you if you pop in for a visit. Also keep in mind that other children may become upset if they see you and not their own parent. If this happens, please keep your visit brief and respect the other children's feelings. It is hard to see other parents at school and not your own.

Keep in mind there may be times when it is not convenient for us to run to the phone (ex. diaper changing, playing outside and not able to hear phone). If the phone goes unanswered, please do not become alarmed, simply leave a voice mail and we will call you as soon as we are able to.

Health and Safety

The health of the children, families, and staff is very important to us. Part of our responsibility to the children in care is to protect them from illness whenever possible. Should your child arrive or become ill at school, we will notify you immediately so that you may pick him/her up, or make arrangements for someone else to care for your child. If neither parent can be reached, we will call the next person on the emergency list. This form must be completed and returned before your child's first day of school. Please update this list immediately when there are changes, so that we may contact you in the event of an emergency. If your child will not be attending school or there are any communicable diseases in your home, please inform us so that we may be alert to any symptoms that may arise at school. Also, please share information that will help us better care for your child (ex. Child complaining of tummy ache, child threw up over the weekend, etc.)

Due to our concern for all of the children enrolled at the school there are certain guidelines that we require all parents to observe. In some cases, if your child needs to be seen by a doctor, you will be required to submit a signed report from your doctor before your child can return to the preschool. This is to insure that a child does not return when s/he may be in danger of exposing another child to an illness. Some contagious illnesses are no longer contagious after the child has been on medication for 24 hours. Even with all our precautions, children do get sick. We wash our hands regularly and disinfect toys and surfaces in order to minimize the spread of germs. Every attempt is made to keep toys and play areas sanitized. There are times a child needs to be with the parent for both physical and emotional comfort. There are also some illnesses that by law exclude children from attending school. Some of these **illnesses** are:

- *Infectious conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- *Impetigo
- *Chicken pox
- *Hepatitis
- *Scarlet fever
- *Scabies
- *Lice
- *Ringworm
- *Strep throat

The following is a list to guide you in deciding if your child should attend school. Many of the symptoms such as vomiting, mucous, and diarrhea spread germs and easily expose other children. Please keep in mind how you would feel if another parent brought their sick child to

school and exposed your healthy child. Be considerate if your child shows any signs of oncoming illness. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Your child should **not** attend if they exhibit an of the following **symptoms**:

- * heavy nasal discharge/mucous-any color (the first three days of mucous are highly contagious)
 - *sore throat
 - *a temperature over 100 degrees orally (lack of fever does not necessarily mean the child is well enough to attend)
 - *any undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
 - *diarrhea-runny, watery, or bloody stools
 - *vomiting
 - *sore throat with fever and swollen glands
 - *constant cough and/or severe coughing whooping sound after coughing
 - *muscle aches
 - *pink eye and or eye discharge-thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
 - *yellowish skin or eyes
 - *unusual irritability or lethargy
 - *difficulty breathing
 - *mouth sores
 - *lice and/or nits
- *The mildly ill child should be excluded if s/he is unable to participate in normal activities, of if child needs more care than can be provided by teacher***

For any of the above symptoms, children will be allowed to return to school after 24 hours of being symptom-free. Children sent home from school with vomiting, diarrhea, or fever must be free of symptoms for a full 24 hours before returning to school. Please keep your child at home for at least 48 to 72 hours (2 to 3 days) after the onset of cold symptoms. This gives the child a rest period to recover and limits the spread of illness to other children. Children taking prescription medication such as antibiotics for contagious illnesses or conditions must have taken them for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is well enough to be at school, she or he is well enough to participate in all class activities, including outdoor, sand and water play. Daily outdoor activity is very important for young children. It is our policy that children who are well enough to come to school are well enough to go outdoors. The fresh air

and movement is something that each child needs daily for their well-being and healthy development. I will not take children outdoors during inclement weather.

If your child contracts lice, please be sure to follow treatment protocol. ALL nits and lice must be removed from head before child is able to return to school.

If your child is to have prescribed medicine during the day, the state requires parents to complete a "Medical Release Form." The form includes the prescription name, dosage, time of dosage, and physician's name. Parents must sign the medical release form before any medication will be administered. The medicine must be in the original container. Some nonprescription topical medicines may be administered with a parental verbal permission. These include sunscreen and insect repellent.

The children will be spending time outdoors every day. Please be sure to apply sunscreen before arriving at school and leave a bottle of sunscreen labeled with your child's name. We will reapply additional sunscreen as needed.

Policy for Sick Staff

In the event that a teacher becomes sick or has another emergency, parents will be notified as soon as possible. The teacher/director will make every effort possible to secure a substitute teacher to care for children enrolled in the program. On these days, parents must pay normal tuition. The substitute teacher will have been fingerprinted, had a background check, and have experience in working with children. This substitute teacher will lead the class until the teacher is able to return to work.

Emergency Plan

We have on hand supplies for 48 hours should a disaster occur. In a Ziploc bag with your child's extra clothes, please include a personal note and a family photo that will comfort your child in the event of an emergency. Please keep your emergency cards updated. In case we need to evacuate, a note will be posted indicating our relocation site and parents will be contacted as soon as possible. All families will receive a written emergency plan and procedures the first week of school.

Discipline

The word discipline means to teach. We use modeling to help teach children how to resolve conflict. Young children are in the beginning stages of learning how to express their feelings. We practice making requests, helpfulness, patience/taking turns, and negotiations.

All behavior is a form of communication. We try to understand what the behavior means so as to respectfully listen to what the children are trying to communicate. Consistency and love are used to teach communication. We stress respect for ourselves, others, and property. We support and encourage positive behavior through reinforcement such as verbal praise, smiles, and pleasant attention for appropriate behavior and positively stated alternatives when a conflict situation occurs.

We individualize responses to the children's behavior in relation to the particular child and situation. We try to identify the cause of the behavior and recognize that repeated inappropriate behavior may be the child's way of signaling that s/he needs help in dealing with a certain task or situation. We can then modify the learning environment and/or activities to help resolve the situation. We help children learn problem solving skills by assisting them in identifying their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives, and choices. In cases of conflict between two or more children, we help the children verbally solve the conflict by role modeling, helping with words, etc.

When the teacher sees a conflict situation arising, she will try to identify causes, and then respond by stating an alternative for the child. For example, "you can put the block here", instead of "don't throw the block." If the inappropriate behavior continues, the teacher tells the child the rule, and the consequences of the behavior if it continues. For example, "throwing blocks may hurt someone, so we don't throw blocks at school. If you throw blocks, you will need to make another choice." We are careful to emphasize that it is the behavior that is unacceptable, not the child. When a child is being destructive to materials or harmful to another person, the child will be given a choice in order to redirect her/his behavior to an acceptable alternative. Rarely, in special instances when a child is likely to hurt him/herself or another child, the teacher will restrain the child by holding him/her.

If there is a chronic behavior issue that needs attention, we will let you know so that we are handling it in the same way and your child has continuity in discipline between our homes. These types of behaviors might include such things as biting, use of bad words, chronic hitting, etc. We will work cooperatively in developing strategies to meet the child's needs.

Touch Policy

There is NO physical punishment at Butterfly Garden Preschool. Children need nurturing, adult physical contact for their care and healthy development. This kind of contact can be described in three ways:

1. *Nurturing*: This includes hugs, non-intimate kisses, hand holding, gently tickling, caring and cuddling. (This type of contact is never made against the expressed wishes of children).

2. *Safety and Guidance:* This includes restraining children from harmful situations, separating physically conflicting children, directing children gently by leading or guiding them, and administering first aid to injuries.
3. *Hygienic:* This includes face and hand washing, assisting with bathroom duties (as appropriate to the age of the child), diaper changes, examining rashes or unusual marks, nose blowing, and assisting with clothes.

It is normal and healthy for children to express affection with their peers. This includes hugs, non-intimate kisses, and hand holding. This type of contact is never made against the expressed wishes of the children.

Toilet Training

Children do not need to be potty trained in order to enroll in the preschool. We believe that children will start using the potty when they are ready. We do not force children to be potty trained before they are ready. Please do not dress your child in clothes that are difficult to remove. This will be frustrating for your child.

We use anatomically correct labels for all our body parts, including our private areas. It is important to teach your child the proper names for body parts. Making up names for body parts may give the idea that there is something bad about the proper name. We also teach your child which parts are private (parts covered by a bathing suit) and that they are not aloud to touch other peoples' private areas and nobody is allowed to touch them in their private areas (we go over exceptions like parents when washing, doctors when examining, etc.).

If your child is still using diapers/pull ups, please send in diapers and wipes (with child's name on them) that we can keep in the bathroom. We will let you know when the items need to be replenished. Also, send a re-usable bag so we can put wet clothes into to send home. Send the bag back to us the next time your child comes to school.

Field Trips

Parents will be informed of all field trips by emails, newsletters, and white board messages (located at the sign in table). Families will be required to drive their own kiddos to each destination. Parents can join us on most field trips. From time to time, establishments will not allow younger siblings and all parents to attend (some have specific adult/child ratios). You will be notified about details of each field trip in advance. Since all staff is needed on field trips, no one can be assigned to stay at school. If you do not wish your child to go on a scheduled outing, please make alternate child care arrangements.

Lunches

Children attending the morning session need to bring a lunch from home (optional for afternoon group). Afternoon groups usually bring snacks. Foods need to be able to be kept in a lunchbox for half the day. Please send healthy lunches and snacks in lunch boxes and easy to open containers. You can pack the food in insulated lunch boxes or include re-freezable ice packs to keep the food cold (if necessary). We encourage children to eat their own lunches because of parental concerns, allergies and some children's special diets. Please do not send candy, gum, cookies, soda or highly sweetened foods/drinks. Because we expect parents to provide children with healthy options in their lunches, the children are responsible for what and how much they eat. They may choose the order in which they eat their foods. For example if you do not want your child to only eat chips, then we suggest that you do not send them or send a very small amount, so that they will be hungry for the rest of their lunch. We will not force children to eat or use food as a reward or punishment. Because cooking is part of the curriculum, please inform us of any allergies or specific dietary needs your child may have. We have several children in attendance who have severe nut allergies therefore we are a nut free school. Please do not pack nuts or nut butters or food with nuts in it. A great alternative is sunflower seed butter.

Clothing

The children at Butterfly Garden are active and creative. This requires clothing that allows for freedom of movement and freedom from worry about getting dirty. Please help children dress themselves in comfortable clothing that will enable uninhibited play with paint, clay, sand, water, and mud. Your child will be painting, playing in the dirt and leaves, in the sand and water table, with chalk, and other various activities. Do not expect your child to keep his/her clothes clean and free from stains. The children will participate in all activities regardless of their dress. Please make sure there is a complete extra set of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) in a Ziploc bag or shoe box for when your child needs changing. When these items are used, they should be replenished the following day with clean items. It is also important that your child's name is clearly marked inside each item. Also, bring in a pack of wipes with your child's name on the package. Teacher is not responsible for soiled or lost clothing. Overalls and belts are difficult for young children to manage and could lead to toileting accidents. Please do not send children in flip flops. Shoes need to have a strap in the back or be closed in the back so children are safe when climbing and running. Due to many accidents while wearing crocs, we are no longer allowing crocs at school. We have nothing against crocs, but several students have tripped, fallen, and gotten hurt playing in crocs. Thanks for understanding. Safety is always our top concern.

Please send a pair of rain boots (or other shoes specifically for the rain) **on rainy days**. Rain shoes are important so that children can keep their socks and feet dry during the rainy season. Children will also be taking off wet shoes on rainy days so that the floor they play on does not get wet. Children will have the option of wearing slippers inside the classroom **throughout the school year** if they choose. Please keep a pair of slippers along with the extra clothes/underwear inside your child's box so s/he can have access to them when they are indoors. Please leave a re-usable bag in your child's cubby in case we need to send wet/dirty clothes home. Plastic bags have been outlawed in LA so we're trying to be more environmentally conscious.

Also, if you choose to have your child wear sunscreen, please put sunscreen on before child gets to school (or right when they get to school). Teachers will reapply sunscreen as necessary. Send in extra sunscreen for us to reapply throughout the day. Be sure to write your child's name on the sunscreen bottle and to fill out the sunscreen authorization form.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a special day. We enjoy being part of your child's birthday celebrations. You are welcome to bring a non-sugary treat to share. The teachers appreciate knowing ahead of time if you plan on bringing a special snack so that we can coordinate the details with you. Send enough snack for the children in the class. Please check with the teacher concerning children's allergies. We have children with a variety of allergies (wheat, eggs, peanuts, dairy, etc.) and for this reason we are not allowing cupcakes, cookies, etc. We have listed a few alternative ideas of things to bring. Again, please discuss with us if you want to bring something other than what is listed below. A roster will be available if you are planning a party away from home so that you may mail invitations to the children's homes.

Here are a list of suggested snacks and treats that you can bring for birthdays:

fresh fruit (with or w/o dip), fruit kabobs, fruit salad, frozen fruit juice pops, smoothies, popcorn, veggies and hummus (or other approved dips).

No candy, cupcakes, or other baked goods (unless they are made without wheat, eggs, sugar, and nuts-this is dependent on the children in your child's class).

Some families like to give goodies or treats during the holidays. This is not necessary, but if you want to send children home with goodie bags, please be sure to leave the candy, chocolate, treats out of the bag. Thank you for your cooperation.

Whether you bring a snack or not, we will celebrate your child's birthday by signing to him/her and doing a special birthday craft.

Toys from Home

Please do not bring toys, jewelry, money, or anything of personal value to school. Toys from home may create problems with sharing, as well as broken hearts if the toys get lost or

broken. Please do not bring blankies or other lovie's to school. We are not responsible for any lost, broken, or left items. Once school is out at 4pm, we cannot guarantee that we will still be here to give you the blankie or lovie. Having a lost or left blankie at school may cause unnecessary distress for child/parent. Action figures, toy guns, and other objects, which encourage violence in play, are strictly prohibited. We cannot assume responsibility for materials brought from home. Children may bring books from home to share.

Data Privacy Statement

The only persons permitted to see your child's records (enrollment forms, health info., emergency info., etc) will be the parents or legal guardian, teachers employed at BGP, the California State Licensing Department, and the validators from the NAFCC accreditation committee. Information will not be given to others without written consent from the parents or legal guardian. We will not notify your child's enrollment to anyone via telephone, without your consent.