



**BROOKLYN
KINDERGARTEN
SOCIETY**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
SINCE 1891**

Family Handbook

2024 – 2025

BKS Central Office

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Brooklyn Kindergarten Society (BKS)
Dedicated to Early Childhood Education since 1891



Brooklyn Kindergarten Society (BKS) is a community-based organization that provides year-round early childhood education, and family support services to children ages 2 to 5.

In 1891, BKS started the first free kindergarten in Brooklyn offering early childhood education to immigrant children. BKS now has seven early childhood centers that provide children and families with a full range of services to support children’s academic success and assist families in reaching their goals. The New York City Department of Health licenses each center.

Our mission is to provide a secure, nurturing, educationally-rich environment to ensure that the children develop the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills they need to succeed in life and in school. We engage parents and caregivers as partners, encouraging them to nurture the development of their children while training them to advocate effectively for their children.

A strong partnership is formed with families to support children’s development at home. Our Family Service staff supports families to ensure they feel connected to their child’s learning and experience at BKS and connected to the larger community. They are also available for any families who may be in crisis. They can provide support through referrals to community resources when different needs arise.

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) provides most of BKS’s funding. The DOE supervises the use of these funds and determines each family’s eligibility on an annual or as-needed basis. Additional funding comes from individual donors and foundations.

Student Eligibility and Enrollment

Admissions Policy

- BKS programs provide safe, educational, and nurturing environments to children ages 2 to 5. Families can qualify for admission through one of three ways, depending on the center's allocated budget and seat availability.
- BKS and the NYC Department of Education (DOE) are committed to welcoming all children and families, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, into our schools and programs. Families do not need to provide proof of citizenship or immigration status to be admitted to our programs through any other type of 3-K, pre-K, or Head Start seat. If your family does not meet the Extended Day and Year seat documentation requirements listed below, BKS and the DOE will help you explore any available alternatives that meet your family's needs.
- Extended Day and Year seats at programs are funded by the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. Because of the requirements of this Federal funding, you must provide proof that your child is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident or refugee to be eligible for these particular programs. Documentation is only needed for the child in need of child care; you will not be asked for the immigration status of anyone else in your household, including your status. Documentation for the child in need of care can be one of the following: a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport, naturalization certificate, alien registration card (including permanent resident or green card), or Form FS-240 (report of birth abroad of a U.S. citizen).

Toddler/3-K/Pre-K Seat Types

- **School Day and Year (SDY) seats** are open to all age-eligible (3 or 4 by the end of the calendar year) NYC children. These seats are free and provide care and learning for 6 hours and 20 minutes a day from September to June.
- **Extended Day and Year (EDY) seats** are free or low cost and provide early care and education for up to 10 hours of care a day, year-round, including the summer. Eligibility for these seats is based on family income and needs.
- **Head Start (HS) seats** are free and provide up to 10 hours of early care and education a day, year-round. Eligibility for Head Start is based on family income and needs.

Seat Type Eligibility

<p>Your family may qualify for Extended Day and Year seats if your family's income falls below a certain amount and you have at least one of the following approved "reasons for care":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You work an average of 10 or more hours per week• You are in an educational or vocational training program• You have been looking for work for up to 6 months• You live in temporary housing• You are attending services for domestic violence• You are receiving treatment for substance abuse	<p>Your family may qualify for Head Start if at least one of these categories applies to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You live in temporary housing• You receive HRA Cash Assistance• You receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits• You receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income)• You are enrolling a child who is in foster care• Your family income falls below a certain amount
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Payments and Recertification for DOE Child Care Subsidies

- For Extended Day and Year families, fees are due no later than Tuesday for the upcoming week's service. Fees must be paid for the entire week even if your child is absent.
- Families can opt to pay their fee on a monthly basis, paying the entire month's fee on the first Tuesday of each month. You are responsible for the entire weekly fee even if your child is absent for one or more days.
- Families' may need to "recertify" their case with the DOE every few months or annually depending on the families' eligibility. At that time, the fee agreement may or may not change.
- Fees must be paid in cash or money order. We will not accept personal checks. Pay to the order of "Brooklyn Kindergarten Society."
- Only the Bookkeeper and Program Director are authorized to collect fees. You will always receive a written receipt for your fee payments.
- For some families, your eligibility to receive subsidized child care services may expire within 3, 6, 2 months, or 2 years. DOE will send you a recertification package by mail. It is very important to keep these documents and copies in your personal records. If you do not fill out the paperwork and mail it to the DOE or hand it in to the Program Director on time, your case may be closed by the NYC Department of Education.

Delinquent Accounts

- Parents/caregivers will receive a written notice when fees are not paid on time within 30 days.
- If you do foresee a financial problem, you may request to develop a payment plan that must be approved by the BKS fiscal office in order to avoid termination.

Hours of Care

- Each child's hours of care are planned in collaboration with the parent/caregiver and the Program Director based on the family's eligibility and work schedule. This is determined upon enrollment. The maximum hours are 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- At enrollment, each family is required to commit to a specific schedule based on their work schedule and/or contracted school hours.
- Each family must keep its agreed-upon admission schedule because adequate teaching staff is planned for based on the number of children in the classroom at any given time.

Arrival and Pick-Up Times

- Children are expected to arrive no later than 9:30 am and to leave by their specified time determined at enrollment. A complete breakfast with fresh fruit is served daily.
- If your schedule changes, please notify the Program Director/Family Worker.

Adjustment Period

- As of May 2023, DOE early childhood programs may not apply truncated schedules for infant, toddler, 3K, and Pre-K children. A truncated schedule is defined as a shortened daily schedule determined by the school or program-based staff that prevents a child from attending the full school day (which includes extended hours for students in EDY seats).
- For School Day and Year programs, the first two days of school must be scheduled as full days of school to support families/caregivers. However, schools can honor these requests if families/caregivers request abbreviated phase-in or transition schedules to help their young child adjust. Any adjusted schedules should only be in place for the first few days of school and can be up to a maximum of 2 weeks if needed.

Attendance

- Families must contact their center whenever their child will be absent or later than 9:30 am. .
- If a child's monthly attendance drops below 85%, the Program Director and Family Service staff will meet with families to develop a plan to best support the family to ensure the child is attending the program regularly.
- Families must alert the program in advance if they will be out for an extended period to avoid jeopardizing your child's spot.
- If a child is absent for 30 consecutive days and BKS has not received notice from the family regarding the reason for absences and/or if BKS is not able to make contact with the family during this time, your child's slot in the program may be jeopardized and could result in discharge.

Program Operations

Holidays

January	New Year's Day and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 's Birthday
February	President's Day
May	Memorial Day
June	Juneteenth
July	Independence Day
September	Labor Day
November	Thanksgiving Day and day after
December	Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve

Professional Development Days

- We are required by the New York City Department of Education to close our centers for professional development of our staff. Professional Development and Clerical Day Closures may not exceed 12 days within a given school year. Children in School Day and Year seats are entitled to 180 days of instruction and have more holidays than children in Head Start and Extended Day and Year (child care) seats based on our budgeted contracts. Whenever possible, the closings will coincide with public school holidays. See below for calendars for each seat type.









BKS has two calendars. One for School Day and Year seats and another for Extended Day and Year (child care)/Head Start seats.

School Day and Year Calendar

July 2024							August 2024							September 2024							October 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024							December 2024							January 2025							February 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4							1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	

March 2025							April 2025							May 2025							June 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
30	31																										

LEGEND	
	Sept 5 – Official first day of school
	BKS Holidays - BKS Closed for Staff & Students
	DOE HOLIDAYS – No School for SDY Students
	Professional Development Days – BKS Closed for all Students
	Clerical Days – BKS Closed for all Students
	Days to schedule Parent/Teacher Conferences
	Possible dates for Stepping Up Ceremonies
	June 26 – Official last day of school

Extended Day and Year/Head Start Calendar

July 2024							August 2024							September 2024							October 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31		

November 2024							December 2024							January 2025							February 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4							1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28		

March 2025							April 2025							May 2025							June 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
30	31																										

LEGEND

	BKS Holidays - BKS Closed for Staff & Students
	Professional Development Days – BKS Closed for Students; staff reports
	Clerical Days – BKS Closed for Students; staff reports
	Days/Weeks to schedule Parent/Teacher Conferences
	Possible dates for Stepping Up Ceremonies
	BKS Weekend Fundraising Events (optional) – staff invited to participate if interested

Emergency Closings And Remote Learning

- BKS centers will close in the event of a citywide emergency (such as a snowstorm) and if New York City public schools are closed. Check in with your local radio or television stations for information. Schools will provide remote learning for our 3K and Pre-K students in accordance with DOE guidance.
- The center may also close for painting, lead abatement, and other facilities repairs as dictated by the City's Housing Authority. Remote learning will not be offered in those instances.

Staff Qualifications and Clearances

- The Executive Director at BKS provides administrative oversight for all staff. Each center is supervised by a Program Director whose qualifications meet the Department of Health and Department of Education requirements. Our teaching teams are composed of highly-qualified, dedicated teachers who meet the New York City and State licensing requirements and have had previous preschool and/or related experience. Our food services staff all hold a "Food Handler's Certification" and are monitored by the New York City Department of Health. All employees are screened through the Department of Investigation and the New York State Central Registry. At least one teacher in each classroom is CPR and First-Aid Certified as well as trained to use the "Epi-Pen."
- When a Program Director is absent, an "Acting Program Director" will be designated as interim supervisor of a center. For any issues or concerns that require immediate administrative input, the Director of Compliance will be contacted.

BKS Special Consultants

- BKS's centers are committed to utilizing the services of special consultants including but not limited to Department of Education Leadership and Instructional Coaches, Department of Education Social Workers, nutritionists, and nurses. This helps the efforts of supporting staff to meet the needs of children and families to participate fully in the program, including children with disabilities, food allergies, or other special needs.
- BKS has procedures in place to address the qualifications of special consultants to the program. Specialized consultants are required to present a degree from an accredited program in the field that they will be employed. Consultants are required to have a signed contract, job description, and must adhere to the policies that all regular staff must abide by.

Accident and Liability Insurance Coverage

- Brooklyn Kindergarten Society maintains liability insurance coverage for children and adults. The certificate is located in the Program Director's office and is available upon request for review.

Educational Programming

How BKS Supports Children's Academic Success in the Classroom

- The Creative Curriculum is a research-based curriculum for early childhood programs serving children from 2 years old to 5 years of age. All NYC DOE funded programs utilize the Creative Curriculum as their instructional backbone.
- It guides teachers on how to set-up their classrooms using interest areas filled with various types of toys, games, and learning materials to enable children to gain academic skills. Such skills include language and reading development, math skills, science skills, social studies knowledge, physical development, and social and emotional competence.

Goals of Curriculum

- BKS uses the research-based Creative Curriculum in all its classrooms to ensure that children are learning the skills they need. The Creative Curriculum is aligned with New York State Prekindergarten Foundation of the Common Core, the NYS Pre-Kindergarten Learning Standards, Early Learning Framework, New York State's Quality Review Rubric, and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework.
- The most important goals of our curriculum are for children to get along well with each other and develop a love of learning! We want children to become independent, self-confident, and curious learners who can work well with others.
- We also want to help children develop excellent language skills because research shows that children who have good language skills, know a lot of words, and can recite nursery rhymes will be more prepared to learn how to read in elementary school.
- Staff supports the needs of children and families whose home language is not English. Program staff greets children and families in the home languages of the children and families.
- Our curriculum has four main areas of development:
 - **Social/Emotional:** to help children develop independence, self-confidence, and self-control; follow rules and routines, make friends, and learn how to be a part of a group.
 - **Physical Development:** to increase children's large muscle skills – balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching – and use the small muscles in their hands to do tasks like buttoning, stringing beads, cutting, drawing and writing.
 - **Cognitive Development:** to acquire thinking skills so they can solve problems, ask questions, and think logically – through activities that encourage sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, making patterns – and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.
 - **Language Development:** to use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin to write for a purpose.

- o Our curriculum has other main areas of learning that it focuses on to prepare children for Kindergarten:
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Studies
 - Arts and Music

Assessment & Screenings

- During infancy and early childhood, your child will gain many experiences and learn numerous skills. Your child’s ability to effectively manage their emotions and positively interact with their peers is also critical for their well-being and school readiness. It is important to ensure that each child’s development proceeds well during this period.
- Because your child’s first 5 years of life are so important, we want to partner with you to ensure their healthy development. As part of this work, we use the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional-2 (ASQ-SE) to help us all monitor your child’s overall development and social emotional growth.
- All parents/caregivers are expected to administer in partnership with your child’s teacher the (1) the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to identify developmental strengths and areas of growth and (2) the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social/Emotional to identify children's social and emotional characteristics, within 45 days of enrollment and annually.
- Caregivers must give written consent for their child’s screening. Results of any child assessments may be shared only with the caregiver or someone for whom the caregiver has given written permission to view assessment results.
- Following the assessment, results will be shared with families at the first Family Conference listed on the program calendar. Program staff will review and relay results to families and provide learning activities to support growth at home and at school.
- All children are assessed three-four times a year by the classroom teachers using the Creative Curriculum’s Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) developmental assessment tool. The type(s) of child data that are collected relate to relevant development and learning areas: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and language development.
- The assessment data is stored on-line on the SmartTeach platform and is accessible by the authorized personnel only (teaching staff, Program Director, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Deputy Director of Education) to keep the child's information confidential.
- Accommodations are made to ensure child screening and assessments are done in a culturally appropriate manner, including in their home language (when possible).

- Assessments are stored in a secure location (Family Service office, curriculum room, etc.) to ensure that only authorized personnel have access to the child's screening and assessment data.
- The results of the observations and assessments are analyzed after each checkpoint (3-4 times a year) and used to guide instruction to support each child in reaching developmental milestones and adapting to special needs.
- If assessments show that there may be some areas that need further observation, parents/caregivers will be contacted and invited to attend a meeting where the information will be discussed to see if further evaluations or interventions are needed.
- If a parent/caregiver agrees to have a child receive a more formalized evaluation, specific forms are signed and the Inclusive Learning Team will assist with overseeing the referral process in partnership with the center's Program Director and Family Service staff.

Occupational Therapy at BKS

- Occupational therapy provides fun, positive opportunities for children to learn new skills. OT sessions use a child-led, play-based approach to help children overcome obstacles and be successful in school (and all) environments. OT sessions help children to reach their fullest potential and be the best version of themselves, as well as supporting the adults around them. **Typical areas addressed:**
 - Self-regulation & sensory processing skills
 - Transitions
 - Fine motor/hand skills
 - Body movement
 - Social skills/play with peers.
- At BKS, we have our own Occupational Therapist (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA). They visit each center at least once every two weeks to work with children on-site. Our sensory gym (located at Weeksville Gardens Children's Center), is open one Saturday each month to children & families who attend other centers.
- OT is provided as both a preventative measure and for children with identified needs. All children at BKS can have access to preventative OT services. Preventative OT services provide activities and strategies to optimize development and support overall well-being.
- To participate in preventative OT services, families must complete the Preventative OT Consent Form. Consent forms will be kept on-site in the child's folder, with electronic copies stored on ChildPlus.

Confidentiality Policy

- All family records are kept in a locked cabinet in the Family Service and Program Director's offices as well as in our electronic Student Information System, ChildPlus. Only authorized staff (Program Director, Family Service Staff, the Deputy Director Education and Social Work/Health Consultants) are allowed to review files.
- Parents/caregivers are allowed to review their children's records. Additionally, parents/caregivers may request copies of file documentation at any time during the

child's enrollment, and may also request copies of documents up to two years after the enrollment period.

- Parents/caregivers must give written consent for their child's assessment. Results of any child assessments may be shared only with the parent/caregiver or someone for whom the caregiver has given written permission to view assessment results.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- BKS is committed to providing children with the least restrictive environments and to work closely with the families and outside providers of children with special needs in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Parents/caregivers are requested to inform the program at the time of enrollment if a child is receiving outside services. The Program Director, teachers, and Family Services staff will work with families to develop a communication plan with the service providers. When itinerant services are provided on-site, the Program Director/Family Services staff will be responsible for communicating with the outside providers and staff so that the child receives any necessary services and that their IFSP/IEP goals are supported in the classroom.
- If a child is in need of special education services, BKS will make the necessary arrangements with CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) for evaluation and support families through the process.
- BKS supports children with different learning needs. Modifications will be made by the program to accommodate children with an IFSP/IEP to ensure that the children are included in the classroom/group as equal participants and receive any necessary services and support.
- In some cases, a full-day general education program may not be well-suited to meet the needs of a particular child; a child may require a smaller and/or therapeutic setting. If it is determined that our program is not meeting the child's individual needs, BKS will work with the family to find the best suitable placement for the child. We have a written policy that details the referral process we will engage in with the parent/caregiver to get the child placed in a more appropriate setting.

Classroom Arrangement

- Each classroom is set up with learning centers. Children learn many skills while engaging in the different centers. They may include:
 - **Block Area:** math, social skills, language skills, problem solving, and creative thinking
 - **Dramatic Play:** creative thinking, social and emotional skills, language skills, social studies
 - **Educational Toys and Games:** problem solving, math skills, language skills, social and emotional skills
 - **Art and Writing:** fine motor skills, reading skills, alphabet, creative thinking, aesthetic development

- o **Library:** listening skills, language skills, reading skills, social skills
- o **Science:** scientific process, evaluate information, math skills, language skills, and problem solving, language development, social skills
- o **Sand and Water:** math and science skills, problem solving, creative thinking, language
- o **Music and Movement:** physical development, math skills, social and emotional development
- o **Cooking:** math and science skills, language skills, and social skills

Water Play

- During the summer months, our children engage in outdoor water play activities in our playgrounds or at neighborhood parks.
- Parents/caregivers are also asked to put waterproof sunscreen on their children before sending them to school. BKS staff cannot apply sunscreen on children.

Enrichment Programs

- We believe that children benefit greatly from engagement in the creative arts because music, visual art, movement, dance, and dramatic arts all support children’s academic and social emotional development.
- We currently offer violin twice a week in the spring and fall, tennis weekly in the spring, summer, and early fall, and yoga weekly, in the spring and fall.

Education Home Visits

- All parents/caregivers are expected to meet with their child’s teacher to give input and information about the child’s interests and strengths, as well as family goals for their child.
- Education Home Visits are conducted twice per year in September and March.
- Teachers use this information provided by the families to help support your child within the classroom and collaborate with families on reaching shared educational goals.

Rest Time

- Quiet time is important for a child’s health and well-being. The children nap or have quiet time each day. You can check with your child’s teacher to learn the exact time.
- Parents/caregivers are required to supply their child with a sheet and a blanket. Sheets and blankets are sent home every Friday to be washed and dried by the family.
- Cots are placed 3 feet apart, head to toe position.

Family/Teacher Conferences and Observations

- Family/Teacher Conferences are conducted in November, March, and May/June. Each child will have a minimum of two Family/Teacher Conferences per school year.
- Parents/caregivers are requested to sign up for a time to meet with teachers to discuss their child’s progress. Information on how to sign up will be provided closer to the date.

- Parents/caregivers do not need to wait until Family/Teacher Conferences to request a meeting with a teacher or the Program Director. Parents/caregivers are welcome to call the center to see how their child is doing, or set up a phone meeting with the teacher during his/her lunch break.

Transitions within BKS

- There are various transitions (including transition into our centers, from classroom to classroom, from our program to Kindergarten, among other transitions) for children throughout their time at BKS.
- The [BKS - Transitions Plan](#) (linked) outlines information about each transition.

Children's Belongings

What to Bring

- Each child has a plastic shoe-box size container to keep a change of seasonally appropriate clothing available in the event their clothing becomes soiled. Children must have the following:
 - shirt
 - pants
 - socks
 - undershirt
 - underwear
 - pull-ups, diapers, and wipes, if needed
- Children who are in the process of toilet-training should have at least two sets of clothing in their cubbies at all times.
- Please purchase a waterproof laundry marker to label each of your child's clothing items.

What to Wear

- We encourage families to send their children to our centers dressed in comfortable play clothes.
- During the day children may be playing or listening to a story on the floor, playing with play dough, sand, water or painting at the easel. While we do use smocks to cover clothing during messy art activities, clothing will, at times, get dirty. Occasionally children may spill juice or food on their clothes, too. We do not want children to feel inhibited from experiencing all of the wonderful activities that we engage them in, therefore, we ask that they do not wear fancy clothing.
- Remember, "play is children's work" and play clothes are their work clothes.
- We also take the children outdoors twice a day, weather permitting. Because we go to the playground, we request that you send your child in sneakers or rubber soled shoes that are safe for climbing and running.
- During the winter time, children need to wear hats, scarves, and gloves so that they will be comfortable when we go outside.
- According to Department of Health regulations, we are able to take the children outside to play as long as the temperature is 35 degrees or higher, with reasonable winds. A sun hat or cap may help to keep the sun out of your child's eyes during the summer months.

Valuable Items and Jewelry

- We request that valuable items, including but not limited to money and jewelry, remain at home. We will not take responsibility for items lost or broken while at school.
- Coins can be a choking hazard for young children, and jewelry should be kept at home and saved for special occasions.
- Toddlers should not wear large earrings or jewelry that could be pulled by other children or catch onto bedding or carpets.

Discipline Policies and Practices

Discipline Policy

- Discipline is a learning experience. Working and playing in a child care setting – sharing, waiting, and listening – can be difficult for children. Teachers view these difficult times as opportunities to teach children self-control, social skills, and appropriate language to deal with conflict or frustrations. BKS always utilizes positive behavior guidance.
- No one on our premises is permitted to engage in any form of corporal punishment or use any form of discipline that is harsh or humiliating to children.
- Children cannot be slapped, spanked, shaken, pulled, yelled at, threatened, or placed in a corner or hallway as a form of punishment.
- Children who have an especially difficult time with class rules may be given a short “quiet time” or a “special time” with a teacher. Sitting quietly in a chair or other special place gives the child a chance to relax. It gives the teachers the opportunity to talk to the child and help him or her discover a better way to deal with the problem. We do not use time out as a form of discipline.
- We make every effort to work with children and families to avoid any interruption in services. BKS’s policy is that we do not suspend or expel children. If a child exhibits ongoing problems that are disruptive to the classroom, the child’s physical safety, or the safety of other children, families will be asked to meet with our administrative staff and Inclusive Learning team to assess the child’s needs.
- Our Inclusive Learning Team will work with families of children who may require an outside evaluation or additional services.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please reach out to your Program Director or Family Services Staff.

Suspension, Expulsion and Termination of Services Policy

- It is the policy of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Society not to allow expulsion, suspension (including sending a child home early) or termination of services for any reason. Our goal is to create positive experiences for children and their families that nurture positive learning and development.
- The beginning years of any child’s life are critical for building the early foundation of learning, health and wellness needed for success in school and later in life. During these years, children’s brains are developing rapidly, influenced by the experiences, both positive and negative, that they share with their families, caregivers, teachers, peers, and in their communities. Therefore, expulsion, suspension and termination of services for any reason at all BKS sites are not allowed.
- This policy is aligned with federal and state civil laws that prohibit discriminatory discipline practices.

Biting Policy

- Biting is not an uncommon occurrence in group child care, especially for two's. Very young children who do not yet have expressive language may bite when becoming frustrated or upset.
- When a child bites we will immediately address the situation with the parents/caregivers and work together to develop a plan to help the child learn other ways to express herself.
- Teachers also work together to be more vigilant with the biting child to "shadow" him or her during the day.
- We immediately comfort the child who has been bitten and wash off the bite with soap and water.
- In the event that the bite breaks the skin we will contact the parent/caregiver, advising them to contact the child's pediatrician.

Family Engagement

Family Orientation/Back-to-School Event

- Our Family Orientation/Back-to-School event is held in September and is a time to meet your child's teachers and center staff, discuss the information in this handbook, and give parents/caregivers a chance to see and understand the many ways that their child will learn while they are in the program. Parents/caregivers also have an opportunity to learn about the services and activities that are provided by our Family Services staff.

Delegate Agency Policy Committee (DAPC) and Delegate Agency Site Parent Committee (DASPC) - (Head Start centers)

- Every year after the Family Orientation/Back-to-School event, Head Start Program Directors will announce the election plans for the program year.
- Delegate Agency Policy Committee (DAPC) and Delegate Agency Site Parent Committee (DASPC)
- These Committees (DAPC and DASPC) are made up of Head Start parent/caregiver leaders who are able and willing to work directly with the Director and staff and serve as liaisons for parents/caregivers who are unable to participate more fully in the program activities.
- Head Start parents/caregivers can run for the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. If Head Start enrollment is at capacity, centers should also work to fill the following positions: By-Laws Chairperson, Personal Committee Chair, and Grievance Chairperson
- DAPC and DASPC meet monthly, review policies, practices, and procedures, are involved in staff hiring processes, and give feedback for the center and all of BKS.
- All parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings. However, only Head Start parents/caregivers can run for an elected position on the DASPC and DAPC.

Family Services at BKS

- BKS has a Family Services team that is dedicated to assisting families with the enrollment process, setting family and personal goals, helping families connect with community services including health, education and immigration services, and offering a variety of family engagement activities and workshops.
- Family Service staff may include one or more of the following: Family Worker, Family Service Coordinator, or Social Worker. Our Family Service staff is also available should a crisis occur during your time at BKS and can help connect you to resources to support you and your family.

Family Workshops

- Parents/caregivers are encouraged to give suggestions for parenting workshops or topics that they would like to learn more about such as health issues, child development and discipline, budgeting and college savings plans, or career and educational growth.

ParentSquare

- ParentSquare is the communication tool we use to communicate with families regarding center wide announcements.
- We send important reminders, updates, notifications, and documents to parents/caregivers through this system. The messages can be received as a text message, email, and/or app notification (families' preference) in the families' preferred language.

Teaching Strategies Family App

- Teaching Strategies Family App is a curriculum-based communication tool that your child's classroom teacher will use to communicate with families.
- We send important reminders, direct messages, at-home learning activities, read aloud books, at-home learning videos, and more! Teachers use this app to partner with and support the home/school connection as the home is an integral part of a child's learning and development.

Health and Nutrition

Health and Safety Code Policies

- BKS has a Safety Plan that is revised and reviewed with staff and families every year. It includes policies pertaining to the signing in/out procedures, cleaning protocols, children's admissions, hand washing procedures, tooth brushing procedures, etc.
- All BKS centers are fully licensed by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- New York City Department of Health requires that each child enrolled in a child care facility must have a medical examination prior to admission and must be re-examined annually thereafter (examination frequency requirements may vary depending upon the child's age). Children cannot be admitted into the program without submitting the required health form completed by a licensed physician. Each child enrolled must have immunizations kept up to date and documented on his/her health record unless you have a medical exemption.
- Families who are in contact with other school-age children should be especially aware of their child's capacity to introduce illness into the center. If it is suspected that your child, or any member of your household, has been exposed to a contagious illness, the center should be made aware as soon as possible. We will also immediately inform all families of any contagious illnesses at the center.
- As a general rule, parents/caregivers should notify the center whenever a child is kept home for the day. If a child becomes ill while in our care, a teacher or administrator will contact the family immediately and ask that someone pick up the child. It is essential that families adhere to our health policies because they benefit the health and safety of all of the children in our care and our staff.

Medical Examinations and Dental Screenings

- A child must have a complete medical exam in order to start the program. A complete medical exam needs to be completed and updated each year that the child remains in the program.
- A complete exam includes: necessary immunizations, blood test, urinalysis, TB test, vision test, hearing test, blood pressure, vision screening and dental screening by a dentist. Parents/caregivers are responsible for providing the center with the results of all tests. We also need the treatment prescribed for any medical problems in writing from a doctor.
- Dental screenings are required for Head Start children annually, and highly encouraged for all children. We provide dental screenings on site twice a year through HealthySmiles.

Immunization Requirements

- The [2024 - 2025 NYC Immunization Requirements](#) (linked) are mandated by law for all students between the ages of 2 months and 18 years. Children must be excluded from school if they do not meet these requirements.
- The child's immunization record should be evaluated according to the grade they are attending this school year.
- New York State no longer allows religious exemptions from required vaccinations for children attending public, private, or religious schools in grades pre-K through 12, as well as child care settings.

Provisional Requirements

- New students may enter school or child care provisionally with documentation of at least the initial series of immunizations.
- Once admitted provisionally, subsequent vaccines must be administered in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) "catch up" schedule for the child to be considered "in process" and remain in school.
- The parent/caregiver must provide a copy of a catch-up schedule. If a child does not receive subsequent doses of vaccine at appropriate intervals and according to the ACIP catch-up schedule, the child is no longer in process and must be excluded from school within 14 days after the minimum interval identified by the ACIP catch-up schedule.
- Alternative schedules are not acceptable. Students must complete the entire series to comply with the law. Students who have not been immunized within the provisional period must be issued exclusion letters and excluded from school or child care until they comply with the requirements.

Special Health Conditions

- Parents/caregivers must inform the staff of any allergies, asthma, and/or any serious illness or condition their child has and submit any necessary documentation (i.e. Allergy Response Plan, Written Medication Consent Form, Asthma Action Plan).
- In addition, all approved DOH emergency medications (albuterol (asthma inhalers), epi-pen, and nebulizer) need to be on site with the medication's original box or container with visible expiration date and dosage.

Illness and Medication

- Children may not come to the center when they are sick or have any contagious conditions. Center staff conduct a health check of each child at arrival and then again at dismissal.
- A note from the doctor is required to admit a child back into the program once he or she is absent because of a communicable or serious illness.
- Colds among young children are highly contagious because children do not have the reflexes to cover coughs and sneezes.

- Parents/caregivers are asked to keep their children home if they have heavy runny noses, a fever, coughs, and sneezes.
- Parents/caregivers are advised to request a note for the center’s file whenever they take the child to a doctor. A note stating the day a child can return to school is more important than one that says that child was seen by the doctor.
- A child who becomes sick in school must be picked up as soon as possible following notification.
- The center staff is prohibited from giving any medication to children except emergency medications (epinephrine auto injectors (EpiPen), asthma inhalers and nebulizers only. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to administer medications (antibiotics, sunscreen, etc.) at home before and/or after the child is in the center.

Emergency Medical Treatment

- Upon enrollment, all families must complete a Medical Treatment Form allowing center staff to seek emergency treatment in the event that your child suffers a medical or dental accident or becomes very ill during program hours.
- In the event emergency medical attention is warranted, we will:
 - Contact 911 immediately and contact the parent/caregiver.
 - If a child can be moved, the teacher in charge of the classroom will bring the child to the office, pick up the medical treatment release and child’s medical file, and along with the Program Director or designated staff member, take the child to the nearest hospital emergency room. Parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately to let them know where to meet their child.
 - Upon return to the center, the teacher and Program Director will complete an occurrence report that will be sent to the New York City Department of Education, New York City Department of Health and the BKS Central Office. A copy will also be kept in the child’s file.

Emergency Information

- Upon a child’s admission, each parent/caregiver completes an emergency contact form that provides accurate and important contact information – including names and telephone numbers of at least two family or friends who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- Parents/caregivers are expected to inform the emergency contacts listed about their potential roles and responsibilities as an emergency contact person.
- Parents/caregivers must update the information on these cards annually and as soon as changes occur. The center’s ability to reach an appropriate person in case of illness, accident or any emergency is essential. Current phone numbers must be on file.

Infectious Control Policy

- Children sent home with illness can return to the center under these conditions:

- o **Cold:** No excessive coughing and sneezing and if their mucus is not yellow or green (not clear mucus may indicate sign of infection).
- o **Vomiting:** 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting.
- o **Diarrhea:** 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Fever (100.0):** 24 hours after fever is gone.
- o **Strep Throat:** 48 hours after medication is administered. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Conjunctivitis:** Eye must be totally cleared up; no ooze. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Chicken Pox:** When sores are totally scabbed over; no ooze. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Impetigo:** 48 hours after medication is started; everything is scabbed over. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Head Lice:** After quell treatment and all eggs are removed; children must be nit free. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Ringworm:** 48 hours after medication has been started. Doctor's note needed.
- o **Cocksackie:** 48 hours after fever and blisters have subsided. Doctor's note needed.
- o COVID-19 related symptoms.

Hand Washing Procedures

- The most effective way to prevent the spread of illness is the frequent washing of hands. All adults should sanitize their hands and children are required to wash their hands upon entering the classroom, between activities and before going home.
- **All adults and children should wash their hands as follows:**
 - o upon entry to the classroom and before going home
 - o before and after serving eating or food,
 - o before and after changing a diaper or toileting a child
 - o after the use of the restroom,
 - o before and after applying any type of first aid,
 - o after wiping a child's or your own nose or mouth,
 - o after sneezing, coughing
 - o before and after sand, water play, and playdough,
 - o after handling garbage.
- The following procedures **must** be followed every time you wash your hands or a child's hands:
 - o Turn on warm water, and wet your hands.
 - o Squirt soap on hands.
 - o Lather soap in hands for a minimum of **30** seconds making sure to rub the back of hands, in between fingers, up to the wrist.
 - o Wash ALL surfaces, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.

- o Rinse well, keeping hands pointed down towards the drain, until the skin surface is clear of soap.
- o Dry hands with a paper towel.
- o Turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands.
- o Dispose of used paper towels in trash receptacles.
- o Children’s hands should be washed frequently, according to the same guidelines listed above for adults.
- o To cut down on the spread of infection, we ensure that children wash their hands upon arriving into the classroom each morning.

Obesity Prevention

- BKS has a contract with New York Enrichment Group to provide monthly nurse and nutritionist visits to support staff with meeting all health needs of our children.
- We also have an Obesity Prevention Program which guides curriculum, staff training, food handling (preparing and serving food) and parent involvement in learning about obesity prevention and the relationship between healthy eating and exercise.

Meals

- Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack are served daily to all children.
- The meals are fully prepared in our center kitchens in compliance with governing federal and state guidelines to ensure nutritional value. Whenever possible, low fat, low salt, and non-additive food is used.
- Menus are posted for parents/caregivers to review.
- Please notify the staff of any dietary restrictions or food allergies. No food from home is allowed at the center. We do not serve food with nuts or any pork.
- Some of the funds for the children’s meals come from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)/United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Each family must complete an Eligibility Form for our Food Program upon admission and each year thereafter.

Safety Protocols and Policies

Reports on Accidents and Incidents

- The accidents that occur in the center are usually minor. The appropriate staff members who are certified in First Aid/CPR always give first aid. Parents/caregivers are informed of the incident.
- Staff members are required to complete an incident report for minor incidents or medical or dental accidents, including scrapes and bruises and illnesses that a child might exhibit during the day (i.e., diarrhea, vomiting, or fever).
- In some cases family members may be requested to take the child to the doctor.

Exterminating Procedures

- Our centers have a visit from a licensed exterminator monthly or more frequently as needed. This is done after hours when no children are present in the building. All pesticides used are not harmful to children.

Fire Drills, Shelter Drills, and Lockdown Drills

- Fire drills are conducted monthly and are done at varying hours of the day so that teachers and children will know how to leave the building safely and quickly in the event of an emergency evacuation. Children leave the facility when there is a fire drill. Fire Drills can be scary for young children, especially new children who are just transitioning into the center. We ask teachers to inform parents/caregivers when a fire drill has been conducted.
- Shelter and Lockdown drills are conducted twice a year. Children and staff do not leave the building but go to a designated safe area of their center. Teachers will also inform you if there was a shelter or lockdown drill.
- Unfortunately, there can be a real reason to leave the building or move all of the children to a safe area inside. Again, when these instances occur you will be informed.

Escort Policy

- Parents/caregivers must complete the Authorized Escort Form that states who is authorized to pick up your child from the program (upon enrollment and each year thereafter).
- All persons escorting children from the center must be 18 years old or older.
- All escorts must both sign the child in at the beginning of the day and sign the child out at the end of the day so that each center has a record of arrival and departure time and the name of the person who leaves with the child.
- Parents/caregivers must give the name of at least two persons authorized to pick-up the child. In an emergency, the parent may call or send a note to the center. We ask that parents/caregivers plan for adult escorts whenever possible. If someone who is not on the list must pick up your child, you must notify the center in advance and that individual must provide some form of picture identification upon arrival.

- If someone other than the authorized person comes for your child, we will not release your child without your written permission and verbal confirmation. This person must be able to show a valid form of ID.
- The parent or escort is expected to inform the teacher of any unusual occurrence at home, particularly if the child has received an injury. Teachers are responsible for reporting similar information to the parent or escort in the afternoon.

Reports on Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment

- Under New York State Social Services Law, any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or maltreated should report this information by calling the Toll-Free Hotline number 1-800-342-3720.
- Our staff is legally required to report or cause a report to be made when they suspect that a child coming before them, in their official capacity, is being abused or maltreated.
- If your child is injured at home, please explain to the teacher how your child received any visible bump, cut, scratch or bruise.
- Maintain frequent and open communication with your child's teacher.
- Staff members are required by New York State laws to report any and all suspicions of child abuse and maltreatment when functioning in their official capacity. Staff members are also immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary actions when reports are made in good faith. However, if a report is found to be made as a result of malicious intent, staff members may be subjected to disciplinary actions, including and up to termination of employment.
- We will host an annual Positive Discipline workshop for families.

Special Events and Photographs

Celebration Policy

- Holidays can be a vehicle for learning about the traditions and values of the families in our programs and exposing children to the traditions of others.
- Your child may want to share the anticipation and excitement they feel about their holiday celebrations. Consult with your Program Director to make arrangements to share with the class.
- We acknowledge:
 - Different families celebrate different holidays
 - Families may celebrate the same holiday in different ways
 - Not everyone celebrates any or every holiday
 - What your family does is valued
- During special events (parent's café, workshops, etc.) we do not allow outside food. To conform to state regulations, only food prepared on site by the kitchen staff will be served. Food allergies and other food related restrictions require careful selection of appropriate items. Please be aware that all our centers are nut-free and pork-free.
- We are happy to celebrate children's birthdays. Birthday celebrations are held once a month. All children with a birthday during a given month will celebrate on the same day. Teachers might provide a birthday crown or hat to help make the birthday child feel extra special.
- To promote wellness and foster healthy eating habits among children we use children's birthdays as an opportunity for children to cook their own healthy snack (see recipes from "Growing Healthy Children- A Nutrition Education Curriculum for NYC Child Care Centers"). This is an effort to implement Obesity Prevention Policy to educate families and staff in providing an environment in which children can grow in a healthy way, reducing the risk of conditions such as childhood obesity.
- Birthday invitations for parties outside of the school are solely the responsibility of the family. Invitations may be distributed at school only if the entire class is invited.

Stepping Up Ceremony

- In June, we hold a "Stepping Up" Ceremony. This ceremony celebrates our children who will be graduating from our programs and transitioning to Kindergarten. Children remaining within the center will also be part of this celebration as they step up into the next class.
- Please note: Children in Head Start and Extended Day and Year seats who "step up" in June are encouraged to stay in the program until the end of August. If your child will be leaving prior to August, please inform the Program Director.

Pictures

- Each spring, a professional photographer is hired to take pictures of the children. The pictures are available for purchase. Communication will be sent at the time of this event.

Photographs and videos

- A child's privacy is very important to us. We periodically take pictures of the children during classroom activities and field trips to share with parents/caregivers through ParentSquare and for use on the official BKS website and social media.
- All parents/caregivers must fill out the BKS Photograph & Video Consent Form and indicate if they wish to allow their child to participate. All forms are kept on file indicating the family's request.
- When parents/caregivers are invited into the classroom, please ensure that any photos or videos taken are only of your own child.
- If consent is not given, we seek to prevent photos or videos from being published or shared online. Internet safety is a very difficult issue for families and educators; following these policies will prevent images from being used carelessly or without families' knowledge. Please be considerate of other students' privacy.

Parent/Caregiver Agreement Form

It is the responsibility of the primary guardian of the enrolled child to:

- Provide and replenish all required clothing items and supplies (wipes, diapers, bottles, water play clothing and towels).
- Take home bedding for washing on a regular basis.
- Clearly label all of your child's belongings with a waterproof/laundry marker.
- Inform the teacher and Program Director immediately if there is any change in address, phone number, emergency contact or release information.
- Have your child in the classroom no later than 9:30 (or call if a special circumstance arises).
- Pick up your child at the agreed time.
- Keep your child home if ill and notify the center if your child contracts a contagious illness.
- Bring your child to the center clean (if a child arrives with a soiled diaper, it is the parent's responsibility to change the child before leaving).
- Notify the center if your child is going to be absent that day or for an extended period of time.
- Read all notices and take children's artwork home.
- Notify staff if your child has incurred any minor injury (bump, bruise, scratch, etc.).
- Notify the center at least two weeks before withdrawing your child from the program for any reason.
- Inform the Program Director if your child is receiving special educational or therapeutic services and has an IEP so that we can support your child's needs.
- Discuss any special circumstances, needs, or requests with the teachers.
- Attend Family Conferences throughout the year.
- Attend workshops.
- Keep your child's medical visits and immunizations up-to-date.
- Pay all fees on time, if required.

I, _____, understand and agree to all of the above.

Parent/Caregiver Signature

****Note:** One copy of the signed Agreement will be given to the Parent/Caregiver. One copy of the signed Agreement will be placed in the child's file.

Parent/Caregiver Agreement Form

All new policies are subject to change as new information is made available.

My signature below certifies that my family and I agree to abide by these new policies, until further notice.

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Parent/Caregiver's Signature: _____ Date: _____