Burlington Children's Space

THERAPEUTIC EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Greetings Burlington Children's Space Families!



We are so excited to work with your family this year. Our mission is to embrace, enrich, empower, and educate young children and families in our community. We achieve this by providing high-quality and equitable services. We value the community and prioritize effective partnerships with various community systems. As the family system, you are our most important partners. We believe you are your child's first and most important teacher. We value your input, time, appreciation, and flexibility.

At our high-quality program we value our well-qualified, motivated teachers. It is imperative to support our teachers through a livable wage, prosperous benefits, and a sustainable work-life balance. Retaining our wonderful staff supports our mission and vision to create a nurturing educational haven for children and to be an indispensable early education and child care resource to families and our community. Supporting our mission and vision comes with high costs to maintain these ideals. We are a non-profit school, and all funds go directly to teacher salaries, benefits, and preserving our safe and welcoming environment.

We work hard to create an anti-bias environment and curriculum. We include all children and families and celebrate our differences. We create family books and hang pictures around the room. We include home languages in the classroom to provide a sense of pride and to help create a home-school connection. We always appreciate your input and feedback to grow our anti-bias, diversity, and inclusion practices.

We follow regulations from the state of Vermont. There is some flexibility in the way we implement curriculum and the inclusion of families into our program, but there are many instances where we cannot be flexible with the rules we follow. We try our best to provide you with as much information as possible to prepare you for such instances. This handbook is filled with the policies and practices we follow at Burlington Children's Space.

We look forward to learning, growing, and building relationships with your children and your family this coming year!

Molly Scaife, Executive Director
Burlington Children's Space

What We Believe

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Our Values

High quality early education and child care for all children.

- We believe that BCS experiences contribute to this goal.

Community

- We prioritize effective partnerships with various community entities. We believe these partnerships result in a synergy that both enhances children's experiences and opportunities and improves our community.

Diversity

- We believe that success depends on BCS's ability to be inclusive and assure the availability of comprehensive programs and services to all populations.

Staff

- Well-qualified, motivated staff is imperative for ensuring that the Center fulfills its mission.

Fiscal soundness

- BCS focuses on being a self-sustaining, non-profit endeavor.

Excellence

- We strive to be the educator and caretaker of choice for young children and families.

Our Philosophy

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

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

Children are competent learners. We respect and value their curiosity, their social nature, their purposeful inquiries, and their incredible perseverance. We believe that children will demonstrate their own complex and

meaningful agendas for learning as they all possess a natural desire to challenge themselves and embrace new experiences.

We believe in positive language, active problem solving, appropriate limits and positive consequences for desired behavior, and we strive to model these ideas within empathetic and caring classrooms.

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

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement and Protocol

We expect that every member of the Burlington Children's Space community will maintain, advocate for, and respect our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement and protocol. If you feel like you do not align with these values, Burlington Children's Space likely isn't the place for you. If you'd like to learn more and practice these values, please come grow with us.

At BCS…

- we recognize the power and benefits of diversity and inclusivity.
- we honor Vermont's indigenous people, primarily the Abenaki people, who have cared for and continue to care for the land we sit on.
- we expect all staff, families, and community members to take responsibility for biased actions, even if unintended, and actively work to repair the harm.
- we expect all staff, families, and community members to build awareness and understanding of your culture, personal beliefs, values, and biases.
- we expect all staff, families, and community members to acknowledge and seek to understand structural inequities and their impact over time.
- we expect all staff, families, and community members to view their commitment to cultural responsiveness as an ongoing process.
- we expect all staff, families, and community members to recognize that the professional knowledge base is changing.

GLOSSARY:

- **Bias**: prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.
- **Culture**: the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.
- **Diversity**: the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Equity**: the quality of being fair and impartial.
- **Inclusion**: the practice of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.
- **Marginalized**: treated as insignificant or secondary.
  Examples include:

  People of color, indigenous people, immigrants, LGBTQ+ folks, people living in poverty, disabled people, women, and people suffering with mental illness.

  *This is a list of those most referred to as marginalized, but we recognize there are individuals who do not fit into these categories and suffer the same consequences.

- **Structural Inequities**: disparities in wealth, resources, and other outcomes that result from discriminatory practices of institutions such as legal, educational, business, government, and health care systems.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Protocol Steps:

1. If a comment is made by anyone that does not align with our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement, let the Executive Director and Program Director know immediately.
2. A meeting will be set up with the Executive Director, Program Director, and the person who made the comment to discuss the harm caused.
3. Then a meeting will be scheduled with the Executive Director, Program Director, and the person who was harmed to work on repair and safety, which includes creating a plan to move forward so everyone is safe at BCS.
4. If both parties are willing, we will all meet to acknowledge the harm, review the safety plan, and discuss resources to help move forward. This meeting might include outside organizations to support the discussion.
5. If these steps do not resolve the issue, it will be directed to the Board of Directors. Additional resources will be used to repair harm such as Restorative Circles.

If harm is not acknowledged and taken responsibility for, a change will need to be made within the program. Examples of this would be changing classrooms or leaving BCS.

Non-Discrimination Policy

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

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

Mandatory Reporters

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

Admission Procedures

Waiting List

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

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

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

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

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

Part-time care is an option in the infant room at BCS in the form of either two full-day or three full-day spots. Part-time is very limited in toddler classrooms. We accept children on a part-time basis if a match can be arranged with another child to fill an entire slot. BCS does not offer partial year contracts: Admission is from the start of the school year until the end of August.

Families of children moving to kindergarten may give a minimum 30 days' notice and withdraw before August. Families who withdraw for the summer without administrative permission will forfeit their space(s) at BCS. Families who enroll in other programs during the summer (enrichment camps, Champ Camp, or sports programs, for example) must pay full tuition while away or forfeit their space(s) at BCS.

This policy also applies to families receiving a subsidy. Parents are responsible for tuition if their subsidy is used for other programs or forfeit their space(s) at BCS.

Preadmission Visit

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

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

Enrollment Procedures

Congratulations on deciding to take a child care slot at BCS!

We're glad to have you as part of our community family. So what's next?

Enrollment Application and Paperwork

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

- Completed application form
- Signed letter of agreement
- Immunization record (or waiver form)
- Emergency contact information – two contacts
- Medical and Dental insurance information
- List of individuals who may pick your child up
- All permission authorization forms including but not limited to:
    - Field trips
    - Sunscreen & Insect Repellent
    - Family Directory
    - Permission for your child to be photographed
- Verification of a child care subsidy (if applicable)
- Custody Agreement (if applicable)
- Completed Pre-K application (Act 166) with the local school district for preschoolers

By day 45 of enrollment, we must have documentation of a current well child exam (physical) for your child. This is required by Vermont Child Care Licensing.

Confidentiality

All child files are locked in an office on site at BCS. They are also stored on our administrative Google Drive. These files are confidential and are not shared with anyone, but they are available upon request to:

- BCS administration and the child's teachers
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities such as state licensors, CACFP, and NAEYC.

If your child receives services, and their providers ask to see a child's file, we will get signed permission from the parent or legal guardian.

Termination of Enrollment

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

In the event that child care is not working for a particular child, a family conference will be scheduled. At that conference, challenges will be discussed and strategies will be developed to meet the areas of need. Once all strategies and resources have been utilized, BCS will determine if enrollment can continue and will give the family a minimum of 5 days' notice if termination of enrollment is deemed necessary for the child. BCS is committed to working with families to find child care that works for their child and enlist necessary supports.

BCS Calendar

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

Tuition Information and Payment Policies

Burlington Children's Space has monthly, fixed tuition rates. These rates include breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. Enrolled families agree to pay the full cost of tuition or apply for Child Care Financial Assistance through the State of Vermont. Families will then pay the difference in the fixed tuition rate from what the state pays BCS.

Tuition Payment

We need your cooperation in making tuition payments on time. Our single largest expense in any given month is our payroll, which is paid to the staff on a biweekly basis. We rely heavily on tuition payments to cover the payroll. It is very important that all families follow the tuition payment procedures:

- Tuition is due on the 15th of each month.
- If the 15th falls on a day when your child is not scheduled to be here, tuition may be paid the next day that BCS is open.
- Families who are having difficulty making tuition payments on time should speak with the Executive Director about payment plans.

State Assistance for Child Care

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

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

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

Penalty for Late Tuition Payments

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

Transitioning into BCS

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

The Typical Transition Schedule:

Infant/Toddler transition:

- Infants and toddlers will be picked up at 12:00 pm daily for the first week of school.

Preschool transition:

- Preschoolers will be picked up at 12:30 pm daily for the first week of school.

The pickup times for the different age groups allows them to eat lunch before going home. If your child is still eating lunch when you get here, you may sit with them at the table or wait in the hallway until they are done.

What Children Need to Have at School

Your infant will need:

- a blanket
- extra clothing*
- formula, breast milk, infant food, bottles
- pacifiers, if used by the child
- diapers and wipes
- appropriate outer wear for the time of year

Your toddler will need:

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

Your preschooler will need:

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

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

Some Important Reminders for Everyone

- NAP POLICY: VT Child Care Licensing requires that all children present for more than five hours must have the opportunity for sleep or rest. Quiet play is allowed for children who do not nap.
- SAFE SLEEP: BCS follows the NAEYC policy on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and does not put infants to sleep on their stomach without a doctor's note.
- FOOD ALLERGIES:
    - DO NOT send in any foods with peanuts or tree nuts. We are a peanut-free and tree nut-free facility! Please read labels!!! Tree nuts and peanuts hide everywhere. If you would like additional information about how to find tree nuts and peanuts in food labels, please ask the Executive Director.
    - We reserve the right to ask that parents not send certain other foods in lunches if there is a child or staff person with a serious food allergy at BCS. All foods that are allergens within the BCS community will be posted in the facility.

    - Because of severe food allergies, we are no longer able to share foods prepared at home.
- CHOKING HAZARDS
    - Do NOT send in coins with the children. They are a choking hazard and they are likely to get lost.
    - Do NOT send in popcorn with the children. This is a choking hazard.
    - Regulations state that children should not wear teething necklaces to BCS.
    - For children under 3, DO NOT send in uncut grapes or other foods that might cause choking.
- CLOTHING and LAUNDRY
    - **Label everything!!!** Laundry markers work great! We have markers you can use.
    - Bring coats, hats, mittens, snow pants, and boots for comfortable outdoor play in cold weather.
    - Bring plenty of extra clothing if your child is in the process of toilet training.
    - Children's clothes tend to get well-worn during a day at BCS, so save special clothes for special occasions.
    - We send nap items home with you at the end of the week to be laundered.
- OTHER THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME
    - DO NOT send in candy or gum.
    - Toys: It is difficult for children to share toys from home, and they often cause problems in the classroom.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival Procedures

Each child has a cubby for his or her personal belongings. Children in diapers also have diaper cubbies in their room for diapers, etc. Lunches may be passed to a teacher. Again, please make sure everything is labeled.

Remember to give your child's caregiver information about your child (i.e. medications, appetite, sleep, how was their evening/morning, etc.). Vermont Child Care Licensing also requires that we complete a Daily Health Check before you leave. We may ask you about your child's health that day and any new injuries we may see. If you are leaving any new medication, ointments or diaper cream, families must sign a permission form before they can be administered. Over the counter and prescription medications must have a doctor's note stating the dosage, frequency and duration of medication administration. Doctor's offices can also fax medication forms to us at 802-658-6974, (see Guidelines for Health and Safety).

Drop-off and pick-up take place at the classroom door or main door (depending on weather). This process started during COVID-19, and we have found that it works well for students and families and leads to far fewer stressful separations. We continue to look for ways for families to be involved in the classroom, especially as students are transitioning into the school.

Children should be at school by 9:15 in order to participate in the daily routine. Please call us if your child will be arriving after 9:15. If you arrive after 9:15 and your child's class has left on an outing, you will be asked to meet them or take your child home. We do not have enough staff to accommodate children who arrive after their class has left on a walk or field trip.

Departure Procedures

Pick-up time can be anxiety producing for many children as they watch other families come and go, and teachers also become engaged with the arriving adults. It is difficult for some children to relax if they are always watching the door, anticipating their adult's arrival. For that reason, pick up time is now from 3:30–4:00 so teachers can be ready to greet families and check in about the day. We will never prevent an adult from picking up earlier, however, we ask that you call ahead if you are coming early so we are prepared to meet you at one of the doors.

Only those people listed on your enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up your child from BCS. We must be informed **in writing** each time your child is to be picked up by someone other than someone named on that list. If another person is coming to pick up the child, we must have prior authorization. They should be prepared to provide photo identification. **We cannot prevent a parent from picking up their child unless there is a court order directing us to do so.**

Safety for Arrival and Departure Procedures

Do not leave any child unattended in the parking lot or in your car while dropping off your child. If we see a child left unattended in the car, we will remind you of this policy, and if it happens a second time, we will report it to DCF.

When dropping off your child, please do not leave your car idling in our parking lot. This is to help reduce the pollutants in the air that can contribute to asthma, heart disease, and other serious health problems. Idling can be allowed in **extreme** weather to help keep the interior or engine hot or cold.

The door to enter BCS is locked from 9:15–3:15 (outside of drop-off/pick-up times) to ensure safety of staff and children throughout the day. We have a doorbell located on the wall near the door. If you are coming outside of pick-up and drop-off times, please ring the doorbell to be let in.
Burlington Children's Space has a security system in place at the front and back of the building. Families can use their codes to enter the building, or they can call in and someone will let them into the building.

Late Pick Up Fees

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

Payments for late pick-ups should be made by cash or check. Please make out all checks to Burlington Children's Space. Please give payment to the Executive Director, Program Director or administrative staff with your late fee form.

If children are not picked upby 4:45, and arrangements have not been made with a parent or authorized pick-up person, the police will be called.

Food Program

Homemade lunch is made in our BCS kitchen each day by our chef. Any child is able to purchase or receive free or reduced-price lunch based on income eligibility. This paperwork is updated annually and included in the enrollment packet. The cost for families that are not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is $80 per month. This cost is rolled into your tuition.

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

What BCS Can Do at Mealtime

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

What BCS Can't Do at Mealtime

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

Some Ideas for Food to Pack

- yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, string cheese
- granola, cereal, crackers, waffles, pancakes, veggie bootie
- fresh veggies/fruit with or without dip or dressing, celery with cream cheese, applesauce, dried fruit
- leftovers (cold or in a small thermos), pizza, tuna or chicken salad
- black beans, chick peas, tofu with soy sauce
- cold cuts, pasta salad, pasta with butter or cheese, pasta with sauce,
- granola bars, fruit leather
- Please: no peanuts, tree nuts or other posted facility allergens. Read labels or ask us.

U.S.D.A. Child and Adult Care Food Program

Burlington Children's Space participates in the U.S.D.A. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Eligible children receive free meals and snacks. Below is the required non-discrimination posting from the U.S.D.A.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
   U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
   (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
   Program.Intake@usda.gov

Quality Early Care and Education

Child Care Licensing Regulations, NAEYC, and Best Practices at BCS

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

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

Guidance/Discipline Policy

We believe in positive language, active problem solving, appropriate limits and positive consequences for desired behavior and we strive to model these ideas within empathetic and caring classrooms. Some children need extra support in working on challenging behavior. By this we mean behavior that isn't working for the child, occurs often, and impacts their ability to learn and play.

- Burlington Children's Space does not suspend, expel, reduce hours, or send children home because of challenging behavior.
- We never hurt a child physically or emotionally.
- We never try to teach a child to behave by isolating them, or by using food as a punishment or reward, or by denying them basic needs.
- Finally, we believe in the power of love and acceptance and that we have as much to learn from young children as they can learn from us.

We work with children to help them have better self-control. We use positive methods to do this. We might:

1. Teach skills by using songs, books, games, and reminders.
2. Model how to behave.
3. Redirect them to a better activity or set limits.
4. Let them know what will happen if they keep doing something they should not be doing.
5. Provide the space or time needed to get back in control.

Even with these things in place, children might still exhibit challenging behavior, in which case we will follow these steps to address/support the behavior:

1. Collaborate with the family to talk through the behavior.
2. Complete Behavior Incident Reports to collect data and track behavior.
3. With consent from the family, submit a referral to the Howard Center.
4. Create a plan with the team to continually assess, document, and support the behavior within the classroom and at home.

Active Supervision Policy

- **Set Up the Environment:** Staff set up the environment so that they can supervise children and be always accessible. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Small spaces are kept clutter-free and big spaces are set up so that children have clear play spaces that staff can observe.
- **Position Staff:** Staff carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to protect children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Staff stay close to children who may need additional support. Their location helps them provide support, if necessary.
- **Scan and Count:** Staff are always able to account for the children in their care. They continually scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions when children are moving from one location to another.
- **Listen:** Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify reason for concern. Staff listen closely to children constantly to identify signs of potential danger. Additional strategies are implemented to safeguard children as needed. For example, bells added to doors help alert staff when a child leaves or enters the room.

- **Anticipate Children's Behavior:** Staff use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what he/ she will do. They create challenges that children are ready for and support them in succeeding. But they also recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk. Information from the daily health check (e.g., illness, allergies, lack of sleep or food, etc.) informs staff's observations and helps them anticipate children's behavior. Staff who know what to expect are better able to protect children from harm.
- **Engage and Redirect:** Staff use what they know about each child's individual needs and development to offer support. Staff wait until children are unable to solve problems on their own to get involved. They may offer different levels of assistance or redirection depending on each individual child's needs.

Reggio Inspiration

In the town of Reggio Emilia, Italy, educators, parents and citizens have worked together for over 34 years to create a system for preschool education. The founding teacher was visionary scholar Loris Malaguzzi. He combined the theories and practices of Bruno Ciari, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget, Howard Gardner and others including practices of the Progressive Education Movement from the United States. Malaguzzi developed an extraordinary way for children to reach unexpected levels of learning and cooperation with others. People from all over the world have traveled to Reggio Emilia to discover how they might adapt this wonderful system to their own early education environments.

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

Key Elements of the Approach

- The child is strong, rich and powerful.
- The child is social and able to express interests and ideas, research for further information, reflect on the experience and form conclusions.
- Learning is an adventure. The curriculum is negotiated between teachers, students and parents.
- Education is based on relationships, exchange and communication. Environments teach beauty and richness.
- The adult (teacher or parent/guardian) is a guide, provocateur, researcher, facilitator and memory.
- Emergent curriculum is an in-depth way to study a particular topic of interest. This "thread" or interest area can provide experiences in math, art, science, language, social students and music based on the developmental needs and abilities of the children, as teachers and children reflect together as co-collaborators.
- Documentation is a way to display children's thoughts, ideas, reflections or actual growth as they construct knowledge or study a thread over time.

Assessment

Parent/Teacher conferences happen two times per year with your child's primary teachers. You may request additional conferences or meetings at any time. We are using an on-line version of the Teaching Strategies Assessment for all children at BCS. This system uses observations and artifacts (drawings, writing samples

etc.) which are entered into different categories of learning like Social Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development & Language Development. This assessment system is reviewed three times a year in the Fall, Winter and Spring. This system for assessment was recommended by the Burlington School District and the State of Vermont. We like it because it is strengths based, meaning that it talks about what your child can do and the progress they have made over time.

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

BCS may also use the Ages and Stages questionnaires for developmental screening. You may be familiar with this tool as it is used in doctor's offices. It is used to get parent and teacher input on whether there are any areas of a child's development that may need attention. It is also a very helpful way to learn about all the milestones of development you may be seeing your child meet. BCS staff may ask you to complete the questionnaires (ASQ & ASQ:SE) at home. BCS staff may complete the questionnaires and compare results with yours.

Curriculum

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

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

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

Transitions and Looping

BCS works to provide continuity of care by having teachers loop or follow the group of children as they age up. Ideally, the same teachers move with children from the infant room to the older toddler room, staying with them until they go to preschool. We have seen the success of looping during transitions in the beginning of the year, and how concrete the relationships are between children, teachers, and their families.

Field Trips

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

Environments

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

- area for wet and messy sensory activities
- opportunity to explore and represent with art media including paint, pencil, markers, clay and collage
- quiet areas when children feel the need to get away from the group
- spaces that encourage gathering together as a community
- space to use small manipulatives at tables or on the floor
- dramatic play props and mirrors, with clip boards to document the story that is being told
- science and math inquiry activities to provoke exploration, observation, measuring and predicting
- writing areas that are specific to the age group to explore or represent
- space inside and outside of the room for each child's own belongings
- spaces for parent and teacher communication--linking home to school
- space for teachers for documentation, which is an essential part of our daily reflection, planning and collaboration.

Other BCS Goals

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

Visitors at the Burlington Children's Space

For the safety and security of the children and staff, all visitors must sign in and out in the Visitor Sign-In Book. This policy is in place so that we have a record of everyone who enters BCS. If there is a high incidence of communicable diseases in the facility or region, we may limit visitors to only those providing essential services.

Communication with Families

Families play a crucial role in our program planning at BCS. We rely on and encourage families to be involved on a number of levels, in ways that feel most comfortable to them. The biggest role, of course, is to be involved and excited about their child's learning process and to consistently communicate with teachers. Parents and guardians can be involved in the classroom through weekly updates, documentation, email and conversations with teachers.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

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

Special Needs

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

What BCS Can Do

- BCS can provide suggestions of agencies who can provide additional supports or evaluations.
- BCS can provide specific feedback on a child's behavior in the classroom (in addition to regular assessments, which are completed twice a year). We may need to schedule time to talk without interruption.
- BCS can meet with specialists (such as Early Essential Education, Howard Center, or private providers) to incorporate suggestions into the classroom.
- BCS can welcome additional specialists into the classroom for evaluations or support services.
- BCS can provide regular feedback about a child's day and/or call families when concerns develop.

What BCS Can't Do

- BCS cannot make diagnoses or complete formal evaluations.
- BCS cannot always provide detailed feedback **at pick-up or drop-off times** because of scheduling or other responsibilities in the classroom.
- BCS cannot design a specialized care plan on our own, or participate in designing such a plan without input from the parent.
- BCS cannot provide ongoing one-on-one support for a child who cannot meet the expectations of the group.
- BCS cannot keep children enrolled if they are unsafe and unresponsive to intervention.

Family Responsibilities

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

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

Community Partners

CIS EI and EEE at the Burlington Children's Space

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

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

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

Act 166 Universal Pre-K

The Burlington Children's Space collaborates with area public school districts to enhance our early education services to our children and to support the quality of our program. Vermont's education funding law, Act 166, supports equal access to education for all children, including preschool age children. The law supports funding early education provided in an accredited program with a licensed teacher (present 10 hours per week), which provides a curriculum that conforms to public school standards. BCS has all of these components in place. This collaboration also supports a relationship between the schools and our program, which facilitates the transition between early education and public school education for our children. Because BCS already gives all families some sort of discount on tuition, the funding that comes from the school district is used to keep tuition at its already discounted rates. The published tuition rates have already accounted for the Pre-K funding from the school districts. All families are required to submit an application and necessary paperwork to their local school district before the start of the school year. Before the start of each school year, BCS publishes an account of the full cost of care, the school district funding, and actual tuition rates.

Consistent preschool attendance has been connected to increased learning outcomes. We are required to report your children's attendance to your supervisory union as part of the agreement between school districts and child care centers.

You may be at risk of losing your Universal PreK funding, if your child is absent from PreK for:

- An average of one PreK day per week over the course of two months or
- More than 2 consecutive weeks or
- The equivalent of three weeks

Health and Safety Guidelines

Children's Immunization Records for Compliance

Vermont law requires that all babies and children are vaccinated before entering a center-based, family, or pre-kindergarten child care program. You are required to provide the immunization records upon enrollment of BCS. More information is available here: A Parent's Guide to Immunizations Required for Child Care. Immunization records are reviewed to ensure they meet Vermont law. In Vermont, exemptions from vaccination requirements are allowed for religious or medical reasons and may be requested by completing these forms: Medical Exemption Form and Religious Exemption Form
.
If your child is missing vaccines or you do not provide a record, we will provisionally admit your child and provide you with this notice: Notice of Missing Immunizations. BCS will support you in getting your child's vaccination record or getting an appointment to ensure they get the necessary vaccines to meet requirements. We will set a due date for this, and if it is not met, we will have to exclude your child until they meet requirements. We are following this flow chart from the State of Vermont Department of Health: Flow Chart for Child Care Programs: Meeting Vermont's Immunization Rule

Managing Communicable Diseases Plan

BCS aims to minimize the transmission of communicable diseases for children and staff. Our plan to do this is based on:

- VT Child Care Licensing Regulations (5.3.1 Managing Infectious Diseases) https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Licensing/CC-CenterBased-Regs.pdf
- Internal BCS policies designed to keep children and staff healthy in order to minimize classroom closures due to illnesses and staff shortages.

We follow Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations around notifying parents in a classroom when children may have been exposed to a reportable communicable disease. BCS uses Vermont's "Reportable Diseases" chart, from the Vermont Department of Health, to make this determination.

The Executive Director is notified of illnesses documented in classrooms to determine whether or not further action is required, such as notifying parents in the classroom about the illness. The information about signs and symptoms of communicable disease can be obtained from the Executive Director.

When to Keep Children Home: An Overview

Please keep children home if they are ill. Being at school is hard work, and navigating life with peers can be very challenging if you don't feel well. BCS is a nurturing place, however, we are unable to provide one-on-one care for sick children. If your child's nose is running constantly, or they are

coughing on others, the whole class is being impacted. Children should not come to school if they are not able to fully participate.

BCS follows the *Signs and Symptoms Chart* in Appendix A of Vermont's Child Care Licensing Regulations. This chart is located on the parent bulletin board. Appendix A names and identifies symptoms of illnesses for which a child will be excluded or sent home from the classroom. It also identifies communicable diseases that require a statement from a health care provider for re-admittance.

Common reasons to keep children home, following Appendix A, include:

- Child is acting sick and is unable to participate fully
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- A bright red or purple rash
- Itching caused by chicken pox, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, headlice
- Drooling due to sores in the mouth
- A rash with an oozing or open wound
- Stomach ache with diarrhea, vomiting or fever

In addition to the VT Child Care Licensing exclusion guidelines, families must also keep children home for:

- A fever (defined by the CDC as a temperature of 100.4° or greater). Children may return once they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, and are able to fully participate in the classroom.
- Pink-eye. Children may return after families have consulted with the child's health provider.

Life-Threatening Health Conditions

A list of children's specific life-threatening health conditions (allergies requiring epi-pens, asthma, etc.) will be posted in each classroom with family permission. All children with life-threating health conditions must have a health plan from their health provider on file at school, and necessary medication should remain at school at all times.

Sun Screen

Please send a sun hat and apply sun screen before dropping your child off. This will provide coverage for morning outside time. Teachers will reapply if the class is going outside in the afternoon based on the permission signed by parents. Only non-aerosol sunscreens are allowed based on VT Licensing.

Bug Repellent

Bug repellent is rarely needed or used at BCS. If we are going to be in tall grass (like a trip to Shelburne Farms), with your permission, we will apply bug repellent supplied by you or by us. Only non-aerosol bug repellents are allowed based on VT child care licensing regulations.

First Aid Procedures

All regular staff at BCS are CPR and First Aid certified within 6 months of hire.

Cuts, Skin Rashes, Scrapes, Bites and Splinters

- Teachers will use non-latex gloves prior to administering First Aid.
- The area will be washed with soap and water.
- The area will be covered with a bandage.
- State law prohibits any further treatment.

Parents will be informed if any of the following occurs at school:

- Head injuries
- Objects to the eye
- Bee sting
- Any minor injuries that leave a mark. The injury will be documented with a written accident report and will be shared with your family at the end of the day.

Medication Procedures

Parents must complete the appropriate medication permission forms in order for any employee to administer medication at BCS. A health provider must also authorize all medication through a note from their office, or by signing off on the BCS medication authorization form. The exception to this rule is over-the-counter ointment or lotion, which require an annual permission form signed by the parent/guardian.

Emergency use medications, such as an epi-pen or inhaler, should be kept at school, and must include a treatment plan from the health provider. If your child only has medication for home, your child's health provider can request a 2nd prescription so that medication can also remain at school.

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

All Medications Must Meet the Following Requirements:

- It is in its original, childproof container with the pharmacy label on it (if it is prescription).
- Non-prescription medications are labeled with the child's name.
- Prescription medicines have a label the lists:
    - the child's name
    - the prescribing physician's name
    - the medication's name
    - dosage instructions including frequency and timing
    - dates for administering medications
    - special handling instructions
    - albuterol includes the box that the medication came in

Emergency Procedures

Fire Evacuations

Fire drills are held monthly and documented by the Executive Director or Program Director. During a fire or evacuation drill all children and staff evacuate to the sidewalk or parking lot until an all clear is

given. If an evacuation is needed, we will use a nearby site with which we have an agreement. If you arrive during a fire drill, please practice with us and follow our emergency procedures-- you will be modeling important skills. If you arrive during a lock down or lock down drill, you will not be able to enter the building until the all clear is given.

Other Evacuations

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

In the event that an alternative site is needed, everyone from the site will walk to the approved evacuation site in the neighborhood.

Modified Lockdown

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

Full Lockdown

Children should be in safe spaces (potty paths- away from windows). Lights are off, doors are locked. Attendance should be taken. No one will be allowed in or out of the facility until an all clear is given by a police officer or administrator. Parents will not be allowed into or out of the building until the code is lifted.

Snow Days

The Burlington Children's Space closes when the Burlington Schools close due to weather conditions. If the public schools close, we will notify the radio stations to announce our closing. Listen to local tv and radio if in any doubt.

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

Family Involvement

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

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

Board of Directors and Committee Membership

BCS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors with representatives from families, staff, and the community. Members of the Board are elected at our annual meeting, which is held in August. The Board employs an active committee system to oversee the operations of BCS. Current standing committees include: Executive, Board Renewal, and Financial. There may also be a number of ad-hoc committees in addition to these three standing committees. Interested parents/guardians may participate on a committee without being a member of the Board of the Directors.

Fundraising

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

Volunteering

We can always use extra help with projects and field trips. If you are interested in helping in your child's classroom or another classroom here, please see the Program Director. Times that meet your needs can be arranged at any time of the year. Additionally, we need help with specific projects, including sorting books in the student library, website and blog upkeep, gardening, helping cook or set up for family dinner, establishing relationships with local resources, translating materials, or reminding other families about upcoming events. You may also have an interest or talent to share with the children or staff, such as arts and crafts, movement and music, cooking or woodworking. If you would like to share your interest in one of the classrooms, please talk to your child's teacher.

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

Family Work Days

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

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

HOW IT ALL STARTED: History and Background

1984

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

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

1992

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

1995

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

1999

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

2019

The agreement between Champlain Housing Trust, BCS and the Champlain Senior Center (CSC) included a clause that would allow BCS and the CSC to purchase the building after 20 years as "renters". In 2019, after a long strategic planning process and the departure of the Champlain Senior Center, BCS purchased the McClure Multi-Gen Center. This move was possible due to careful financial planning and a grant from the City of Burlington's Early Learning Initiative, which helped pay off the reminder of BCS's original construction loan and debt related to capital improvements.

2021

In 2021, after creating two condo units, BCS sold the space originally occupied by the Champlain Senior Center to its long-time tenants/neighbors, Outright Vermont (OVT). BCS and OVT will work as

partners to steward the McClure Multi-Gen Center and live up to its mission as an essential hub for citizens of many ages.

Ongoing

As an agency committed to meeting the needs of children, families and community, BCS has worked hard to support the increase of high-quality child-care slots in the Burlington area. We are licensed to care for up to 60 children from 6 weeks to 5 years old. Historically, BCS offered a school age and after-hours program for families working second shift. In 2001 the program was closed in order to refocus attention on the need for full-time care for infants, toddlers and preschool aged children. We strive to educate members of our community about early education issues, the need for high-quality child care and the impact child care has in the community. In support of these commitments, BCS works collaboratively with many area agencies to offer a range of supports that children and families need to thrive. BCS has worked closely with the Child Development Division to ensure access for children who are eligible for a child care subsidy. Over the years this has included an agreement to hold spots for families with low incomes as well as a number of grants to enhance quality. BCS also receives funding from CDD to implement the Strengthening Families framework and ensure staff receive training to support families using this model. We welcome and encourage anyone interested in our programs and services to become involved with our dynamic center.

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

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

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

The Burlington Children’s Space is an equal opportunity employer and affords equal opportunity and equal treatment to all persons in all employment matters without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, ancestry, disability, or any other protected category. BCS is also committed to providing services to all persons without any regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, veteran status, national origin, pregnancy, ancestry, or any other category protected by law.