

**Building Blocks Kindergarten**

**Parent Handbook**

# Program

The Building Blocks Kindergarten program provides a caring, Christian atmosphere and a hands-on learning experience dedicated to the growth and development of the whole child. Building Blocks Preschool and Kindergarten is located in the Family Life Center of the Keller United Methodist Church.

Program activities are planned according to the children’s development level and will offer challenging experiences that:

-Build on each child’s natural curiosity

-Enhance self-esteem

-Encourage large and small motor development

-Broaden cognitive skills

-Enrich language skills

-Provide for spiritual education

-Nurture social and emotional development

-Offer creative opportunities

# Curriculum

The curriculum is developmentally based using general thematic units and learning centers to encourage each child’s physical, social, cognitive and spiritual growth. Each day will offer a balance of vigorous and quiet activities that are appropriate for the Kindergarten child and encourage a positive attitude toward learning and school. Some specific curriculum goals that will be included are:

**Social and Emotional** -to enhance each child’s individual growth and self esteem and to develop responsible students

* Grow in independence and self direction
* Follows directions and class rules
* Develop skills necessary for solving problems and resolving conflict
* Work in a group and participate in group games and activities

**Language Arts** - to build skills in listening, reading, comprehension and writing

* Listen attentively and respond to questions, repeat the story line and describe what happened or will happen in the story.
* Increase and expand vocabulary through enriching language experiences and texts
* Recognize upper and lower case letters; associate sounds with letter; decode simple words
* Write upper and lower case letters; dictate ideas and answers; write own ideas and stories using their knowledge of letters and sounds

**Mathematics** – will introduce a variety of concepts using concrete objects

* Introduce and explore the concepts of counting, sets, fractions, patterns, graphs, addition and subtraction
* Expand the ability to use numbers meaningfully
* Develop and use measurement concepts including length, volume, temperature, time and money
* Develop skills to classify, sort and sequence objects and sets

**Science** – to encourage exploration and observation that will allow the student to organize, predict and problem solve

* Use senses and common tools to make observations and collect information
* Observe growth, changes, patterns and cycles in the natural world
* Identify organisms and their parts; identify the needs of organisms in the natural world
* Learn about our earth and home and how to care for it

**Social Science** - to expand understanding of their school, neighborhood, community, customs and culture

* Learn about people in the community and their jobs
* Learn about special and patriotic holidays and events during the year
* Learn about different cultures and customs and the diversity of our community and country
* Introduce and explore basic geography and maps

**Large and Small Motor Skills** – to provide opportunities to improve and develop coordination and skills using large and small muscles

* Participate in activities to promote balance, ball-handling, running, jumping and hopping
* Develop an understanding of safety practices in physical activities
* Use tools such as scissors, markers, pencils correctly
* Manipulate small blocks, pegs, beads and sewing tools
* Trace and copy simple lines, shapes

**Fine Arts** – to develop and appreciation of art and music by participating in a variety of art and music experiences

* Express own ideas through a variety of art and music activities
* Show an appreciation of their own work and that of their peers
* Participate in music, creative movement and art activities

**Religion** – to acquaint children with God, Jesus and the stories of the Bible

* Learn that God created us and our world and cares for us
* Learn about Jesus as the Son of God, His life and teachings
* Teach stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible

# Staff and Class Structure

The teacher of Building Blocks Kindergarten has a Bachelor’s Degree in elementary education with Kindergarten certification and teaching experience. Our staff is affiliated with the following professional associations:

-National Association for the Education of Young Children -Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

The staff continues to improve their understanding and skills in Kindergarten education through in-service training, continuing education and professional seminars taken throughout the year. The staff is also trained in First Aid and CPR.

Building Blocks staff has been made aware of the Center for Disease Controls’ new recommendation for adult immunization boosters. However, we have decided to allow each teacher to make their own individual choice in the matter.

Class structure offers a ratio of no more than 16:1. Enrollment is based on the child’s age as of September 1.Exceptions may be permitted on an individual basis; however, no one will be enrolled if their birthday is later than September 30.

Children will also have the opportunity to participate in special Chapel times, music classes, computer centers, an organized PE time and Spanish time.

# School Calendar and Hours

Building Blocks will operate for 9 months from mid-September through mid-May, and will follow the Keller Independent School District for most major holidays and vacations. In case of inclement weather, the school will close if KISD schools are closed. If KISD has a delayed start, the school will open at our regular time.

Classes are held Monday through Thursday, from 8:45am until 2:15pm. It is important for your child to arrive on time, since Kindergarten instruction will begin promptly at 8:45am. **However, please do not bring your child earlier than 8:40am because teachers use the time before class to set up and prepare for the day.**  Even though we ask that you not bring your child earlier than 8:40am, we encourage you to make every attempt to have your child in class by 8:45am. Regular and timely attendance helps your child adjust to school routines, and tardiness can be a disruption in teaching time. Your child’s teacher will not be able to repeat activities missed by late arrivals.

Please be on time at dismissal, a late pick-up can be very upsetting to a young child. There will be a late fee of $10 for pick-up after 2:30pm.

# Enrollment, Tuition and Payment Information

The program director shall review and approve or deny all applications for enrollment. Enrollment will be open to any child, provided the school can meet the needs of that child. There will be no discrimination due to race, color or national/ethic origins.

The following forms are required. They can be downloaded from our website at [www.kellerumc.com/building-blocks-forms.](http://www.kellerumc.com/building-blocks-forms) Please fill out completely and turn into your child’s teacher at open house:

-Kindergarten profile

* Health History signed and dated by your child’s doctor
* Immunization Record\* signed and dated by your child’s doctor

(Signed and dated Immunization records can also be supplied by your doctor’s office)

-Authorization and Release Form – notarized

-Directory information sheet

\*Each child enrolled must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Requirements.

There will be a non-refundable $100 registration fee due at the time of enrollment. Supply fees are $250 for the year also due at the time of enrollment. Kindergarten tuition is $3,240 a year. Tuition is paid by the semester. The tuition amount of $1,440 for the fall semester will be due July 1. The tuition amount of $1,800 for the spring semester will be due in January. Tuition fees are non-refundable.

Please make checks payable to **Keller UMC** (Please indicate BB Tuition in the memo line). If you would like to pay with credit card, debit card or ACH, we offer a link on our website at [www.kellerumc.com](http://www.kellerumc.com). Click down on the “ministries” tab and click on “kids and student ministries” page then locate Building Blocks. The payment link is on this page.

No refunds or credit is given for schedule school holidays and vacation periods, or for inclement weather days. Nor will refunds or credits be made for days missed due to family vacations or illness, except under extenuating circumstances which will be reviewed on an individual basis.

There will be a $20 charge on all returned checks.

# Communication

It is a very high priority to keep the lines of communication open. Mass communications will be through one or several of the following avenues: written communication in your child’s cubby, written communication that is posted on our bulletin boards and easel, email and Facebook.

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to operational policies or enrollment procedures. Changes will be posted on our bulletin board or sent home from the office.

# Safety

The designated parking for Building Blocks is located on the north side of the Family Life Building. The parking lot is a busy place. Help us maintain a safe environment for all of our children. **Please do not park in fire zones, handicap spaces or the traffic lane on the west side of the building.**

The entrance for Building Blocks is located on the north side of the Family Life Building. These doors will be the only doors available for drop off and pick-up. The side (west side) doors will be locked during these times and not accessible at drop off or pick-up times.

For security reasons, all the doors in the Family Life Center will be locked from 10am until 2pm. If you should have the need to visit or pick up your child at another time during the day, the church sanctuary doors should be used.

**Parents/guardians are required to sign your child in and out every day. Adults must accompany the child to the classroom and meet the child at the classroom at the end of the day.** Teachers will only release a child to an adult whose name has previously been given to the staff. Proper identification (i.e. driver’s license) will be required before a child is dismissed to anyone other than the parent and unknown to the staff**.**

Once you have signed your child out of the classroom, please keep them with you and do not allow them to run around the school unsupervised. We will remind children that there is no running in the big room after school for the safety of all children present.

The parking lot is a busy place. Help us maintain a safe environment for all of our children. Please do not park in fire zones or handicap spaces.

Emergency procedures are reviewed with the staff frequently. Fire exit routes are posted in each classroom. Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are also provided. There are carbon monoxide detectors on each floor. Your children will practice emergency drills throughout the year.

Building Blocks is subject to an annual inspection by the Tarrant County Health Department.

# Health

Your child’s health is important to all of us. **State licensing guidelines require** **your child not attend school if one or more of the following exist:**

-Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours

-Less than 24 hours since fever free without medication

-Heavy nasal discharge

-Symptoms of a possible communicable disease

(sore throat, headache, rash, or abdominal pain)

-Constant cough

-Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in center activities

Please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease or if the child’s absence will be extended.

No medications will be dispensed by the staff unless it involves a condition such as asthma or severe allergic reactions. These forms must be updated each semester and the medications must have current prescription labels attached. Please see the school office for the required medical authorization forms.

If your child has a severe allergy that requires an Epi Pen, you must have a completed FARE plan (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan) prepared by your child’s physician. An Epi Pen kept at school must be in an original box with prescription label.

If your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you immediately and try to make your child as comfortable as possible.

In case of accidental injury or sudden serious illness, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. Please leave a number where you or your spouse can be reached if you will not be home during school hours. If we can’t reach you, we will call the child’s physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. A signed consent form agreeing to these provisions must be on file with the school.

It is to your child’s benefit to keep up to date phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information on file. If any of this information changes throughout the year, please stop by the office to update your child’s permanent file.

The Texas Health and Safety Code requires a screening or professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. **Parents will be responsible for requesting this screening be completed by your child’s physician.**

## Emergency Preparedness Plan

Our emergency preparedness plan is designed to insure the safety of the children in case of an emergency. Our website, [www.kellerumc.com/building-blocks-forms,](http://www.kellerumc.com/building-blocks-forms) will include information with important phone numbers and evacuation routes in case of any type of emergency. You will receive a card of this information that will fit in your wallet at the time of registration. The plan is available to view in the school office.

# Animal Policy

Child Care licensing has very strict regulation regarding animals in child care facilities. For the safety and well-being of our children, Building Blocks has a “**No Animals**” policy for our facility. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation on this issue.

# Snacks, Lunches and Special Days

A nourishing mid-morning snack such as crackers or cereal will be provided by the school.

Please send a lunch with your child each day. We encourage you to include nutritious foods that are easy for your child to eat, such as fruits and vegetables or cheese. This should include a non-staining drink such as milk, apple juice, orange juice or water. We do not provide refrigeration or heating options.

**\*KUMC, including Building Blocks preschool and kindergarten, makes a concerted effort to be as nut free/peanut free as possible by:**

-Educating students, faculty and staff about the severity of peanut/tree nut allergies.

-Encouraging peanut free/tree nut free food use by students, faculty and staff.

-Checking food brought into Building Blocks classes attended by a child with a peanut or tree nut

allergy and removing items labeled as containing nuts or traces of nuts.

-Providing snacks for Building Blocks and events such as Vacation Bible School that are nut

free/peanut free.

-Requesting that outside groups that use KUMC facilities not bring in products that contain nuts or

traces of nuts in KUMC’s Building and Use Policy.

Peanut free/tree nut free products are defined as products free of peanuts or tree nuts, peanut or tree nut products and traces of peanuts or tree nuts. Products whose labels say “may contain peanuts” or “produced on equipment that also produces peanut or tree nut products” are strongly discouraged.

(\**Taken from KUMC Peanut and Tree Nut Policy)*

Red or purple juices and peanut products will be sent home unopened. If this is the case, your child will be given water. If needed, left over snack or crackers will be added to their lunch. We will also send you a reminder about the colored juice/peanut products in the lunch box. Lunch boxes should be clearly labeled with your child’s name.

Birthdays and other special days may be celebrated with a special treat for snack. Please check with your child’s teacher prior to the special day to coordinate such occasions. Please do not bring party favors or gifts. Party invitations may be passed out at school provided all children in the class will be invited to the party.

There will be parties for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day and Easter holidays. Parents will be invited to help with these special occasions; however, parents will not be responsible for direct supervision of children in the classroom.

**Since this will be a special time for you and your Building Blocks child, other arrangements should be made for siblings.**

## What to Wear and What to Bring

Think of your child’s comfort when getting them dressed each morning. To encourage independence in the restroom, clothes that have simple fasteners and are easy to pull down are very helpful. Their shoes should be ones that are appropriate for the playground. (Tennis shoes are preferred). We will provide smocks for messy activities, however, paint may still get on their clothing. Washable play clothes allow the children to explore without worrying about dirtying their clothes. Please send a change of seasonally appropriate clothes (pants, socks, undies, etc.) each day in case of an accident.

**No toy guns, knives, or other simulated weapons should be brought to school at any time**.

# Field Trips

Field trips will not be scheduled during school hours due to state regulations. We will make efforts to bring in community helpers and schedule other seasonal activities.

# Nursing Moms

Provisions have been made for nursing moms to have a comfortable seat in our facility.

# Guidance

Our program provides a caring environment that encourages the children to use their verbal and social skills to solve problems and conflicts. Our focus is on positive methods of discipline and reinforcement while also providing the opportunity for the child to develop self-control. Occasionally a teacher may use “time-out” or “thinking time” to encourage calming and redirection of behavior.

Discipline must be:

-Individualized and consistent for each child

-Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding

-Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

Teachers use methods of discipline and guidance that are positive and encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. There will be no harsh or unusual treatment of any child.

# Conferences

Open house as well as individual student assessments will be held before the first day of school. This will be your opportunity to meet the teacher and ask any questions you may have about the program. Conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring. Notices and sign-up times will be posted outside the classroom prior to each conference. Special conferences may be scheduled at any time you have a concern or question.

Building Blocks has an open door policy. Parents are welcome to visit at any time, however, please check in at office first before reporting to your child’s classroom.

# Evaluation

The reason for assessment in the Kindergarten program is to plan for educational experiences and inform families of their child’s progress.

In early fall there will be a conference with a portfolio and assessment checklist. Further assessments will be sent home throughout the year.

# How Parents Can Help

Parents and teachers can help each child to grow to his/her full potential. Parents can do this by:

-Preparing him/her for the first day of school, talking about the fun the child will have, telling them the teacher’s name, speaking of school positively.

-Being prepared to say goodbye to the child outside the door of the classroom.

-Completing cell phone call/texts before entering the building. Your child looks forward to greeting you and sharing about their day and you may miss your opportunity to see posted communications.

-Taking time to look over your child’s work on a daily basis and encouraging them to talk about their day at school.

-Driving and chaperoning for field trips outside class time.

-Planning holiday parties and helping with special events.

-Sharing with your child’s teacher any information that will help her know and understand your child better.

Please feel free to bring any concerns or questions about Building Blocks policies or procedures to the attention of either your child’s teacher or the Director.

## Department of Family and Protective Services Information

Child Care Licensing was established by the Department of Family and Protective Services. It monitors the safety and well-being of children attending licensed facilities. Our license, facility inspections and a copy of minimum standard rules for Child Care licensing are available for review in the school office.

Firearms are prohibited (concealed or open carry) unless the individual is a law enforcement official who is trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty.

In compliance with DFPS, the church and school are a gang-free zone. This means that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care facility is a gang free zone where criminal offenses are subject to harsher penalties.

The Building Blocks staff are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Teachers receive training on how to recognize signs of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

You are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the center director to show you the most recent copy of:

* Current snack menu
* Minimum standards for this Licensed Facility
* Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Inspection Report
* Fire Marshal’s Inspection Report
* Health Department’s Sanitation Inspection Report
* Gas Pipe Inspection Report

Contact information for the DFPS, Child Abuse Hotline, and the child care website are listed below and available in the school office.

Child Abuse Hotline……………………………….1- 800- 252- 5400

Local Child Care Licensing Office…………………. (817)- 321- 8604

Child Care Licensing website …………….… [**www.dfps.state.tx.us**](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/)

**Keller United Methodist Church Mission Statement:**

The purpose of Keller United Methodist Church is to connect God’s Family by Knowing, Loving and Serving so that the World might experience Christ’s love.

(Revised for 2019-2020)