



The Seedlings (School Year) Program

Primarily for Children Ages Birth-Age 3

September – May According to the BGCS School Year Calendar

Community Service Calendar June - August

Updated 10.10.2025

www.birchgroveschool.com/Saplings-Program

9 Goodneighbor Hill Road, Tofte, MN 55615

Post Office Box 2383 Tofte, MN 55615

birchgrove@boreal.org

218-663-0170

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Program Description

All of Birch Grove Community Service programs are held at Birch Grove Community School located at the Birch Grove Community Center in Tofte, Minnesota. The building is handicap accessible and smoke free. Birch Grove Community School carries liability insurance for its programs. Participants of each program will have access to the playground, tennis court, ice skating rink, warming hut, pavilion, and nature trails located at the Birch Grove Community Center. Times of use are staggered to ensure programs do not overlap in the use of shared facilities.

Finding childcare in Cook and Lake counties continues to be a struggle for families. The Seedlings Program hopes to address this by serving the needs of the youngest members of the community. The Seedlings is a licensed family child care that could serve up to 10 children ages 6 weeks to 10 years of age. To meet the needs of the community, we are prioritizing enrollment for those 6 weeks to 3 years of age with other spots open for older students based on availability.

Hours/Days:

Seedlings will run Monday through Thursday through the year. We also follow the school calendar. Hours are from 7:45 am to 4:15 pm. Enrollment may change these times or days. We will always send out a survey and give several weeks' notice before making changes to operating hours.

Forms

All enrollment forms are required by the state. Please fill them out completely and return them in a timely manner, including Immunization Forms. We must have a copy of your child's immunization record on file. Please be sure that we have an up-to-date record prior to your child's attendance.

Nondiscrimination

Birch Grove Community Service is happy to serve all children and will not discriminate based on religion, sex, race, national origin, creed, or color. Everyone, including each staff member, is here to learn and have fun!

Staff

Only qualified, experienced, and caring staff work in our programs! Our staff work hard to ensure that your child has a positive, productive and fun experience. Staff members will have CPR/First Aid certification and our primary provider will have at least 16 hours of in-service training annually (depending on the program) with a focus on child growth, development, and behavioral guidance.

Many of our school staff are trained as adult caregivers for the Seedlings program. Besides the primary teacher in the room, we may use our other trained staff for lunch breaks, days off, or emergencies.

Staff are not allowed to smoke in the building during the hours children are in care.

Attendance

If your child will be absent on a scheduled day, please call and let staff know as soon as possible. If your child is scheduled to attend but is absent due to any reason, you will still be charged. If you

choose to leave the programs at Birch Grove (terminate care), please let us know as soon as possible so that we can prevent future bills from acquiring. If for some reason we feel that we need to change or cancel scheduled care days, the family will not be charged.

Participation Fees

All Birch Grove Community Service programs are pre-pay only, two weeks in advance. There will be no exceptions. The Brightwheel payment system allows you to pay your bill on-line with either a debit/credit card, or your bank account with paperless invoices and email receipts. Payments can automatically be withdrawn, or you can choose when to make your transaction.

In addition, parents will be charged the full day rate for any day that the child is absent and for any reason, including a pre-planned vacation. Please be aware of this.

The daily infant rate is \$48, and toddler rate is \$40. After age two, the daily rate is \$38. Half day rates are available for care less than 4 hours and will be \$24, \$20 and \$19.

Financial Assistance

Some families may need financial assistance. For families living in Cook and Lake Counties, options for assistance are listed below:

Cook County - Cook County Social Services: Childcare Assistance Program 218-387-3620

Lake County - Lake County Social Services: Childcare Assistance Program 218-834-8400

Early Learning Scholarships are available through Minnesota Department of Education. Applications are available on the Birch Grove website under the Community Services tab, www.birchgroveschool.com. These scholarships are available for children birth to 5 years of age.

Additionally - Birch Grove Community Services may have a limited number of scholarships available each year. To apply, please talk with a Community Service Coordinator. Preference for scholarships goes to children that are enrolled at Birch Grove School or a child that will be starting Kindergarten the following year. You will be asked to apply for the Childcare Assistance Program in your county prior to applying for a Birch Grove scholarship.

Drop off/Pick up policy

If someone other than a parent is picking up your child, please let staff know in writing. The non-parent will be asked to show photo identification prior to picking up a child. We have the safety of our children in mind!

Please do not bring your child to the program prior to the program opening time, and we strongly urge you to pick up your child in a timely manner. There will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute.

Field Trips/Transportation

Parents are in charge of arranging pick up and drop off for their child. For children over the age of 3, transportation on the school bus route may be possible. Please contact the office to see if this is a possibility.

With so many things to offer right on the Birch Grove campus, field trips off site will not be common for the Seedlings Program. The exception would be walking or stroller rides on the bike trail that is connected to the campus.

Health Matters

Please notify Birch Grove Community Services staff at 663-0170 if your child is ill and will not be attending the program.

Please do not send your child when sick — even if it is a special occasion that he/she doesn't want to miss. Your child probably won't enjoy themselves, and he/she may infect other children. Please assure your child that there will be plenty of other special occasions for him/her to experience another day when they feel better.

Parents must notify staff of any contagious condition. The staff will then determine the conditions by which the child may re-enter the program dependent upon state health policy and the individual circumstances of the case. Failure to report a diagnosed condition to the staff poses a risk to the children and adults in the program.

Every effort is made to reduce the communication of germs. High use areas such as tables and faucets are cleaned daily. While it is inevitable that children will experience some illness, we appreciate your assistance in keeping the spread of illness to a minimum! Staff will perform a visual check of your child each morning upon arrival.

Students who present with a fever of 101 F, diarrhea, or vomiting while at school will be sent home. Parents will be notified to pick up the child and the child will be able to rest in a quiet part of the room until parents/designated adult arrive.

Medications

We can only administer medication that is in the original container. A "Permission to Administer Medication" form must be filled out. Please see the staff if you need a form.

Emergencies

Birch Grove staff are practice and prepare for a variety of emergencies. If there is an emergency on site, parents will be notified as soon as possible. In the event of a storm, fire, or other building emergency, our backup pick up location is the Tofte Ranger Station next door. Our Fire and Storm Drill Log is available upon request.

Bad Weather Closure

If Birch Grove Community School is closed due to the weather, the Seedlings program will be closed as well. If Birch Grove is closing early, the Seedlings program will close early. School closings due to bad weather are posted on Facebook, the school website, and calls are made through Bright Arrow - Auto Calls (home and cell phone numbers listed on your child's enrollment paperwork). This is a

recorded message that will reach you at home or work to notify you of any closings/late starts/early releases. Telephone calls will be made to both the home and work place of parents to notify them of the early closing. You may also call the Birch Grove Community School office at 663-0170 to check on the status of the program if the weather looks questionable.

Drills

We practice drills regularly. Seedling children go out with the primary provider and meet near the rest of the BGCS children on the grass across from the front of the school.

Behavior

We are committed to promoting learning within an environment of care and concern for one another! We celebrate and appreciate our individual differences and expect the following behavior:

- *Treat yourself, others, and property with respect!*

Positive behavior will be reinforced on a daily basis. Children will be recognized for positive behavior! If a serious behavior issue or repeated issues do arise, however, the staff, parents, and child will work together to resolve the issue. We want to work with you for the benefit of your child.

Items from Home

We do not encourage bringing toys or unnecessary items from home. The programs have everything that your child will need! We do, however, allow a comfort item from home for rest/quiet time. If a child brings a toy to play with, they will be expected to share it with everyone.

Seedlings should have an extra pair of clothes or two if potty training at school. Any diapering items, baby food, or milk for bottles will also be provided by the parents and labeled with the child's name. It may be easier to bring these items in a supply to leave at school.

Food:

Parents should provide a lunch and snacks each day. During the school year, hot lunch is available on most days. A schedule is sent out the month before. Infant-related meal items such as baby food, milk, or cereal, will be provided by the family. All food from home needs to be labeled with the child's name. Food in a child's labeled lunch box does not need to be individually labeled.

Resting:

Infants and toddlers will sleep when they are tired while we assist the family in setting a sleeping routine. Everyone in the program will rest for a quiet time of at least one hour after lunch. Each child should bring their own blanket that will be sent home at the end of each week to be washed.

Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep with nothing in the crib as required by the Department of Health.

Presence of Pets:

We do have a therapy dog on the premises. The dog is not able to walk into the room as the room has a gate over the door at all times.

Termination

If for some reason your child will be leaving mid-program, please give us as much notice as possible. This allows us to give children time to say good-bye and to talk with any families that may be on the waiting list.

We have qualified staff that are ready to meet any challenges that come up with students. If after every effort has been made, and we feel that we are not able to meet your child's needs, you will be given at least a two-week notice to find other programming that may be more suitable for your child.

Referrals

Please refer these programs to other families. The more each program is used, the more likely it is that the program will continue to serve children and families in the community for years to come.

As with any of our programs, if you have any questions, feedback, or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

A full list of the Family Child Care Rules and Regulations that the Seedlings adhere to can be found at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/9502/>