

Blossom Play School information

My name is Elizabeth Gruss and I have been running an in-home daycare for 2.5 years now. I pride myself in offering quality care and staying up to date with development and education. I try to provide the best environment for small children to learn and grow.

All but one of my current families have been with me for about 2 years now, which is a testament to their trust and the community I have created. Per my state license, all children need to have an extensive file, including vaccination and physical exam history, up to date to attend. Additionally, I only take families who want long term care and are respectful of my home and daycare. My daycare families become family and would be completely compliant to any rules I set forth to be a considerate neighbor.

My current hours are M-TH 8:30-5:30. I am assuming I will add Fridays at those same hours once we are in the new space. Once my now 3.5 year old is in school, I am planning on providing a half day program, M-F. This past December I became licensed through the state and bought a house to expand. The house that ended up being the right one, is in Earlysville Forest, where I grew up in and lived for 18 years. Before buying, I was aware of a family friend who, through direct approval of the Earlysville Forest HOA, had a licensed daycare with 8 children attending each day. Due to this, I did not foresee any issues with running my own licensed daycare. Bright Beginnings started in Earlysville Forest, and is actually where I attended preschool. I also know of two other family friends who have provided in-home care in Earlysville Forest. Currently there is none, in a place that obviously needs it.

My goal in trying to expand is to create an even better daycare that is sustainable. Having more children enrolled allows me to expand on our activities, experiments, arts and crafts, books, and toys, along with better indoor and outdoor equipment. It also allows me to hire a full time employee, which will help the general flow of the day drastically. Working alone with 5 children in your care is much harder than having the same ratio but with another adult around. This allows one adult to attend to one child at times of need, including emergencies, while the other adult is monitoring the other children. This also allows one adult to prepare snack, clean up, or do any other day to day duties while the other adult is focused on the children. Having extra help in the budget also allows me to afford to stay open on days I or my child is sick, instead of having to close, something that will help all of my parents drastically, and take immense pressure off of me. This goes for personal vacation time and time where I might need to leave the house for an appointment as well. I can not express how valuable affording full time help will be to myself and my daycare families.

What I have mentioned above is just part of the benefits of having a healthier budget for my daycare. Being able to enroll ten children per day allows me to focus on only my daycare, instead of having to fill in with other jobs to support my child and I. The state allows up to 12 children in a family daycare. I have given immense thought to this, and having 10 children per day will give me the budget I need, while not being too chaotic. I purposefully picked my house due to the layout, which allows a separate space for the daycare, and for the outside, which is extremely private. My house backs up to the neighborhood trail system, but the trail is far enough back we can't see it. Only two neighbors can see us, but each house is separated from us by trees. Noise would be of no issue for any neighbor. Pick up and drop offs

are naturally staggered, which means added traffic will be barely noticeable. With my 4 current families, 2 carpool, and I can assume I will find more families who do the same. I also believe I will have lots of interest from Earlysville Forest families. Because of these reasons, I do not think 10 children attending each day will add a noticeable amount of traffic more than 5 brings.

I am hoping the board sees I am a respectful and considerate resident of Earlysville Forest, who would bring value to the neighborhood. I have put a lot of thought and time into the decision to become licensed and obtain zoning for more than 4 children. I love what I do and want to offer the thoughtful and quality care I have been to more families. It is needed in our area and expanding my daycare will help fill that need.

-Elizabeth Gruss