



Family & Program Handbook



Brillante Early Learning Center

Family & Program Handbook

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at Explora

Program Information Name: Brillante Early Learning Center

Location: Explora Science Center & Children's Museum
1701 Mountain Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104

Phone: 505-600-6072 Email:

Brillante@explora.us Website:
<https://brillante.explora.us/>

Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:30 pm
Saturday, 9:30 am to 12:00 pm

Hours of Operation:

Director: Sarah McKinney
505-600-6159
smckinney@explora.us

Lab A Classroom

Phone: 505-600-1118
Email: LabA@explora.us

Program Description and Services:

Phone: 505-600-1126 Email:
LabB@explora.us

Lab B Classroom

Brillante Early Learning Center at Explora provides childcare and educational experiences to children ages 2- to 5-years-old. Our program offers part-day and full-day, Monday through Friday schedules. We are currently offering priority enrollment to CNM-student families and Explora staff. Brillante is located in Explora Science Center & Children's Museum and provides a play- and exploration-based, STEAM-rich learning environment for children and families. Our program provides opportunities for family support with a focus on engaging with their children in science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) learning. We have a partnership with CNM to mentor and serve as a practicum placement for students in their Early Childhood Multicultural Education program and as a mentorship site for the Early Childhood Mentors Network. We also offer a Saturday drop-in study hours program for CNM student families.

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The Brillante classrooms at Explora are a pilot program for the bigger Brillante Early Learning Center, currently under development. As a pilot program, many of our policies and procedures are also under development. We look forward to learning with the children and families in our program to develop a curriculum and policies that meet our needs as a community.

Licensing & Accreditation Brillante Early Learning Center is licensed by the state of New Mexico's Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD). Our license number is: 25746759. We are a 5-Star accredited center through ECECD's FOCUS system.

Mission Statement The mission of Brillante Early Learning Center is to support our community by increasing the local capacity for accessible high-quality early learning and care for student and working families, building the early childhood workforce, and serving as a hub for family and community resources.

Core Values

Brillante Early Learning Center is committed to being a relevant, thriving program that supports our children, families, educators, and our community. We are guided by five core values:

Children

Brillante Early Learning Center is inclusive to all learners and respects children as competent, valued community members.

Community

We are committed to co-creating a community-centered program.

Professionalism

We advocate for early learning as a professional practice through strategic partnerships.

Care

We value care and wellness for children, families, teachers, and the wider community.

Experiential Inquiry

We believe that learning occurs through hands-on, experiential inquiry.

Philosophy & Curriculum Statement At Brillante Early Learning Center, we recognize the interdisciplinary and social nature of learning and development in early childhood and believe in the potential of STEAM learning to empower children and families. Our curriculum is emergent, meaning that rather than following a set of themes, units, or manuals, we develop our curriculum based on the interests, joys, and needs of our students.

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We are influenced by the early childhood schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, research in the field of neuroscience, and constructivist practice. Our curriculum is guided by the following shared understandings and practices:

1. Children come to school full of wisdom and experience, ready to use their creativity, curiosity, and imaginations to make meaning of their lives and the world around them.
2. Children, families, educators, and community members bring strength and local wisdom that contribute to rich environments and meaningful learning experiences.
3. Learning is made visible in many ways, and children use words, drawing, numbers, painting, sculpture, music, and more to express what they know, understand, wonder, and feel. Educators value documentation to explore, demonstrate, and understand children's learning experiences, processes, and outcomes.
4. Children learn through their curiosity and open-ended exploration with a materials-rich curriculum, focused on STEAM, literacy, and the natural world. Children develop through interaction and relationships with other people, ideas, objects, and symbols.
5. Educators engage in collaborative reflection, discussion, and dialogue, based on observation of children at play and exploration. Ongoing professional development for teachers and pre-service teachers is embedded into the school ecosystem, in partnership with higher education institutions.
6. Children and adults collaborate as researchers and co-creators of learning.
7. Family participation in the life of the school is essential and takes many forms. Families bring vitality and richness by contributing diverse life experiences and wisdom.

For more information about the Reggio Emilia Approach, visit:

- A video about Reggio Emilia-inspired education:
<https://youtu.be/7n2hCebmT4c?si=azBaNb2VlmoKg3ER>

- Values and Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach:
<https://learningmaterialswork.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ValuesAndPrinciples.pdf>
- The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance: <https://www.reggioalliance.org/>

School Calendar Our current school calendar is shared with families upon enrollment and is always available upon request. The calendar is also available on our website and posted in the classrooms.

Daily Classroom Schedule

Classroom schedules are posted in the classroom and will be shared with families by the classroom teachers. Breakfast is served from 8:00-9:00; lunch at 11:45; and snack at 2:30. Nap time begins around 12:45-1:00. Our school day also includes time to play and explore in the classroom and museum, work in small groups, outside play, reading, and a whole-class meeting.

An example classroom schedule is:

7:30 - 8:30 Families drop-off

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast

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9:00 - 10:30 Choice time, museum exploration, and small group work 10:30 -

10:45 Meeting

10:45 - 11:45 Play outside in Nature's Notes

11:45 - 12:30 Lunch

12:30 - 1:00 Story time and transition to rest

1:00 - 2:30 Rest time, quiet play

2:30 - 3:00 Afternoon snack

3:00-5:30 Choice time, museum exploration, and small group work

3:00/4:00-5:30 Families pick-up

Communication with the Classrooms & Brillante Staff

The teaching team communicates with families through the Playground app. This is where you will find photos and info on what's going on in the classroom, the monthly program newsletter, and other important news, updates, and resources. We also use the Playground app for sign-in and sign-out. Upon enrollment, families will receive information and access to Playground.

You can also reach the teaching staff by calling your child's classroom directly (see page 2). If you need to contact your child's teachers urgently and are unable to reach them on the classroom phone, please call Explora's main line at 505-600-6072 and ask to get a message to the Brillante teachers. Our staff will deliver a message in-person or via walkie.

To contact Sarah McKinney, the Director of Brillante Early Learning Center, directly, email smckinney@explora.us or call 505-600-6159.

Attendance & Tardiness Policy Regular attendance and arriving at school on time supports

children's social connections, sense of routine and security, and engagement with their classroom community and the curriculum. We encourage all families to bring their children to school regularly and on time to join their classmates for breakfast and play at the beginning of the day. Please communicate with your child's teachers when they can expect your child to be dropped off and picked up, so that we can have students ready and plan staffing accordingly. Excessive, unexcused absences may be cause for disenrollment from Brillante.

For families in our Lab A PreK classroom, the core part of our school day is from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. As a NMPreK-funded program, we are required to "demonstrate support of families to ensure their child attends regularly (at least 85% of the time)." We expect families to do their best to get their children to school by 8:30. Attendance during the early care (7:30-8:30) and after-care (4:00-5:30) parts of the day for Lab A students is more flexible based on the needs of your family.

Our program and facilities close at 5:30. Out of respect for our staff, please pick-up your child in time to transition out of the building by 5:30. If there is a pattern of late pickups, families are expected to meet with the director and educators to establish a plan going forward.

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Notification of Absences If a child will be absent from school for a period of time, please notify their teacher prior to their absence. To report an absence, email the classroom teacher(s) directly. You will receive a contact from Brillante staff when your child is not attending regularly, and we have not heard from you.

Make up days for absences are not offered.

Pick-Up & Drop-Off

Primary guardians will be issued a key fob that will give you access to the green door at the Nature's Notes playground for drop-off and pick-up in the classrooms. To receive a key fob, one must complete and comply with a use agreement for key fob entrance, which details what to do in the event of a lost fob, hours of entrance, and a commitment to not share your fob. Primary guardians may request a key fob for other adults who regularly pick-up their child.

If you, or another authorized adult, are picking-up or dropping-off during Explora's open hours (10:00-5:00), you may also come to the classroom through Explora's main entrance. When you arrive, please let the front desk staff know that you are a Brillante family there for drop off/pickup. If a person without a key fob is picking-up or dropping off outside of Explora's open hours, please call the classroom directly for entrance.

It is helpful if you can communicate plans to drop-off or pick-up outside of the regular hours with the teaching staff. Classroom staff will only release children to parents/guardians and individuals indicated as an authorized pick-up on your child's enrollment paperwork, with photo ID verification.

Weather-Related Closures We follow the weather-related school closings, delays, and early dismissals of Albuquerque Public Schools. When Albuquerque Public Schools are closed, delayed, or scheduled for early dismissal due to weather, Brillante will be as well, and we will let you know via the Playground app and email. We do not provide refunds or make-up days based on weather-related closures.

General Health & Illness Policies Children must be kept at home if they are not well enough to participate in school activities, including outdoor play. Families will be called to pick up their child if he/she shows any of these listed symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.3° or higher
- Skin rash
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Signs of any communicable disease
- Discomfort that impedes a child's participation
- Evidence of lice

If your child has any of these symptoms, please let us know right away, as it helps us prevent the spread of illness in the classroom. If a child becomes ill at school, the staff will make an effort to give them a restful space away from other children until they can be picked up by a parent or authorized pick-up person.

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Children must be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school. A note from a physician may be required before children with some illnesses are permitted to return, based upon the discretion of the director. If children have been exposed to a communicable disease (e.g., flu, pertussis, chickenpox), a health alert notice will be shared with families. Families will be notified of any evidence of lice or bed bugs, and our staff will work to create a plan to address the problem.

Brillante will comply with state and local COVID-19 and communicable disease guidance, including policies set by ECECD for child care licensing. If any individual in our community has a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will follow local regulations to prevent the spread of the virus and support the health and safety of other community members.

All children enrolled at Brillante Early Learning Center must have on file an up-to-date immunization record, or a public health division approved exemption from this requirement.

Brillante staff are required by licensing to perform a daily health check/screening of all children in their care by observing and documenting any visible concerns. We will contact parents and document any concerns we notice and are happy to put families in touch with health, dental, vision, and other support services.

Administration of Medication, Vitamins, or Special Diets For a Brillante staff member to administer a medication, vitamin, or special diet, the parent/guardian must complete an Administration of Medication Form, signed by a licensed medical provider. Exceptions will be made for vegetarian or vegan diets. The "Administration of Medication Form" must be completed every twelve months, or whenever changes take place. All medications will be kept

in a locked box with documentation in the classroom.

In addition to the “Administration of Medication Form” on file, all medications must be labeled with:

- Child’s name
- Date
- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Time to be given
- Routes of administration

COVID-19 Precautions

All Brillante staff complete state-required training on COVID-safe practices and general health and safety precautions. Masks are currently optional, but always welcome for those who choose to wear them.

Brillante Early Learning Center complies with the guidance issued by the Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD), New Mexico Department of Health (DOH), and the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC). The current required practices, issued on April 3, 2023, are as follows:

- Licensed providers may operate at group sizes and ratios according to their licensed Star level.

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- Training on health and safety practices is required for all staff, including cooks and transportation staff.
- Good hygiene practices are required, including frequent handwashing/sanitizing
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned often throughout the day and disinfected at the end of each day.

The state has also issued the following guidance for best practice.

For anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status: ● Stay home and isolate for 5 days. Day 0 is the day of symptom onset, or the day the positive test was taken (for asymptomatic persons).

- You DO NOT need to get an additional PCR test if you have had a positive at-home rapid test. Any positive test is considered positive.
- Children under two are the exception to masking guidance and should not mask.
- If you have a fever, or other persistent symptoms, continue to stay home in isolation until your fever is gone for 24 hours and other symptoms are resolving. ● To prevent the spread of COVID, tell anyone you have recently had close contact with and encourage them to get tested, monitor for symptoms, and reduce exposure to other people.

For anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 regardless of your vaccination status: ● Get either an at-home rapid test or PCR test if possible and stay at home until you know your test result.

- If you test positive, follow the guidelines for a positive test result.
- If you test negative on a rapid test but still have symptoms, continue to stay at

home and get a PCR test OR a second at-home rapid test in 1-2 days.

- If you test positive on the PCR or second at-home rapid test, follow guidelines for a COVID-positive test.

Antigen Test Guidance

- If test is positive, follow CDC guidance for people with COVID-19 (isolation) ● If you have COVID symptoms and test is negative, test again in 48 hours. If still negative, test again after another 48 hours or get a lab-based tests.
- If you do not have COVID symptoms but believe you have been exposed and test is negative, test again in 48 hours, and then again 48 hours after the second test for a total of 3 tests.
- If test is positive on any repeat test, follow CDC guidance for people with COVID.

For more information, resources, and updated guidance visit:

<https://www.nmcccd.org/covid-19/>

Accidents & Emergency Preparedness

All Brillante staff members complete First-Aid and CPR training and maintain up-to-date knowledge of our accident and emergency preparedness procedures.

If a child has a *minor accident* such as falling and scraping a knee or elbow, Brillante staff will administer the first aid treatment as needed. For incidents that come to our attention that

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involve cuts, bruises, head bumps, or injury that cause more than momentary upset, we will write an Incident Report, which you will receive via the Playground app with a request for a caregiver signature. We notify parents immediately if there has been a head injury and the teachers will monitor the child for further symptoms or concerns, including abnormal behavior, dizziness, inability to walk straight, vomiting, or severe crying.

If a child has a *serious accident or becomes seriously ill* while attending our program, we would stabilize the child, assess the situation, call 911 if necessary, and then notify the parents/guardians and Explora administration. If the primary guardian(s) cannot be reached, we will try to reach the child's emergency contact(s). A designated staff member will remain with the child until emergency personnel arrive. A second staff person will be sent to the front desk to await and direct emergency medical personnel. If a child must be transported to the hospital, they will be taken to the hospital that is designated in their enrollment paperwork. If parents have not arrived and medical emergency personnel determine that the child must be transported immediately to the hospital, a designated staff member will be assigned to travel with your child and wait until a parent/guardian arrives. Brillante staff members have mobile access to children's medical and personal information via the Playground app and will communicate necessary information to transport and hospital responders as needed.

In the case of a *dental accident*, we would notify the parents/guardians if a child's permanent tooth is chipped, fractured, or knocked out. In case of a chip or fracture, Brillante staff will rinse the child's mouth with water and apply a cold compress. We will make every effort to

locate the broken tooth fragment. For a tooth completely removed from the socket, Brillante staff will attempt to find and rinse the tooth in clean, cool water and place the tooth in a clean container with cold milk or water. Staff will not endeavor to replace the tooth in the socket.

In the event that a *child is found missing* from our program, staff will first immediately notify the on-site teaching team and director. We will then follow the Explora procedure for lost or missing children and visitors, which is initiated by contacting Visitor Experience managers on Channel 12 or the front desk by calling (505)600-6072 and alerting them that a Brillante child is missing and following instructions. We will complete an incident report and communicate an incident of a child found missing with the child's family.

In the case of a *fire or emergency that requires evacuation from the building*, the fire alarm will sound. The teaching staff would turn their walkies to Channel 15 and guide the children to evacuate to designated waiting areas indicated by Explora's emergency evacuation procedures, "Explora Emergency Evacuation Procedures" (available upon request). From the Brillante classroom or the Nature's Notes playground, they would evacuate to the fence along the south side of the play area outside of the classroom, where the children would sit along the fence and stay clear of the building. During any evacuation, teachers would take the emergency backpack, which contains supplies and contact information for students, and the sign-in binder as long as it is safe to grab them. The teachers would conduct a head count to ensure that all children are present and communicate the number of children and adults present directly to the director or administrator on-site via text message. Teachers and children wait for clearance on walkie Channel 15 before they return to the building.

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In the case of an *emergency that requires evacuation from the Explora property to an off-site space*, staff will safely direct students to the NM Museum of Natural History and Science across 18th Street or the Albuquerque Museum at 2000 Mountain Road NW. Staff members would take the emergency backpack and sign-in binder with student contact info and would stay in direct contact with the director, and once in a safe location, contact families via phone.

In the case of an *emergency that requires the children and teachers to lockdown inside of the Explora building*, staff members would shelter-in-place with students in the classroom bathroom, which is stocked with a lockdown kit and door stopper. Staff members would lock the classroom doors, pull curtains, and secure the bathroom door. They would turn off walkies and communicate via text with the director and on Explora's emergency Google Space messaging chat to maintain a silent, out-of-sight lockdown space. These procedures are also detailed in "Explora's Active Shooter Procedures" (also available upon request).

Fire drills are conducted once a month per state licensing regulations and are unannounced. Lockdown drills are conducted once quarterly. They can happen anytime during the day.

Confidentiality Policy Family, student, and staff information is confidential. Any information derived by working with the program regarding students, families, or other staff members should not be discussed or transferred outside of the program without express written

consent.

Locked files are maintained on each child to include such items as enrollment paperwork, contact information, assessment and screening results, and educational records. Parents/legal guardians may have access to these reports by contacting the director. A release form must be signed by the parent/guardian to release information from a child's file to another school, agency, or individual.

Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Procedure Brillante Early Learning Center staff are required by law to immediately report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect to the New Mexico Child Youth and Family Department. New Mexico law states that any individual who suspects that child abuse or neglect has occurred is responsible for taking action. To report child abuse or neglect call 1-855-333-SAFE.

Enrollment Policies

Our waitlist is open and available upon request, however at this time we are offering priority enrollment to regularly scheduled Brillante and Explora staff members, CNM student families, siblings of Brillante students/alumni, and referrals from the UNM-Hospital Focus Program of families receiving services through that program. Enrollment offers are made via lottery based on these priority criteria. This enrollment priority applies to primary caretakers of the child to be enrolled at Brillante. The enrollment process is detailed in the "Enrollment Process" document that is shared with families when they accept a spot offered by Brillante Early Learning Center.

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Disenrollment Procedures & Expulsion Policy

For families disenrolling from Brillante Early Learning Center, we request at least a 2 week, written notice. This is so that we may help your child prepare for their transition and welcome new families on board.

While we work hard to serve all students and families who come to our program, under rare circumstances, we may disenroll a student or ask a family member to leave our program. Circumstances that may warrant this kind of disenrollment include excessive absences or late pick-ups, failure pay tuition or comply with the policies set forth in this handbook, our inability to safely accommodate a student's needs, or behavior by a parent, guardian, or family member that compromises the well-being of students, staff, or the school environment. To the best of our ability, we will support families to seek other programs for care if they are disenrolled from Brillante.

Concerns & Complaints We always encourage communication between our classroom teaching staff and families. If a family has a concern that cannot be addressed at the classroom level, please contact the director, Sarah McKinney at (505)600-6159 or smckinney@explora.us, and she will follow up with you promptly. We are committed to addressing and learning from feedback and concerns.

Schedules & Tuition The following policy reflects new schedules and tuition for the

2025-2026 operating year (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026).

Currently, the NM Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) has waived all co-pays for child care assistance contracts, making care covered by child care assistance free to families. If this changes, families will be responsible for paying co-pays directly to Brillante as determined by their contract with ECECD.

Lab A Classroom

Lab A enrollment is supported by the NMPreK grant, which provides free preschool for children regardless of income eligibility. This grant covers the 8:30-4:00 part of our day. Children who are at least 3-years old by September 1 of the upcoming/current school year are eligible for the NMPreK program.

	Private Pay	Child Care Assistance Contract
Full-Time 7:30-5:30, M-F	\$450/month	Family responsible for co-pays as determined by ECECD.
NMPreK Program-Only 8:30-4:00, M-F	Family responsible for co-pays as determined by ECECD.	Family responsible for co-pays as determined by ECECD.

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Lab B Classroom

We enroll children who are 2- through 3-years old in our Lab B classroom. This classroom does not participate in the NMPreK grant.

	Private Pay	Child Care Assistance Contract
Full-Time 7:30-5:30, M-F	\$1225/month	Family responsible for co-pays as determined by ECECD.
Part-Time 8:30-3:30, M-F	\$700/month	Family responsible for co-pays as determined by ECECD.

For families who will pay privately, on the 5th of the month, you will receive an invoice for the amount indicated on your enrollment contract. Tuition is due by the 15th of the month. No credit given for planned/unplanned absences. All payments are final.

We strive to provide high-quality, accessible care and early learning, especially for those who have traditionally not had access to it. Families who are unable to afford tuition are encouraged

to apply for child care assistance through the Early Childhood Education and Care Department and remain in communication with the director. Families with unforeseen financial circumstances are encouraged to meet with the director to discuss payment options.

Late or no payment in addition to no communication will result in the loss of your child's spot at Brillante Early Learning Center.

Guidance Policy The ultimate goal of guidance and supervision is self-control and social connection, making it possible for a child to direct their own behavior appropriately and be in relationship with others. The role of the teachers is to help children take steps toward responsible self-direction, as they are ready. Fundamental to this process are the child's feelings about themselves. Our teachers seek to enhance a child's self image, and never use threats or shame or label a child "bad." We want every child to feel accepted and successful.

Expectations for behavior and rules in our classroom will be reasonable and clear, established for your child's safety and to protect the rights of others. When ground rules are broken, they are clearly and firmly restated. When a child infringes on the rights of another, the other child is encouraged to talk about how that makes him or her feel. Teachers support these interactions by ensuring that children participate in the conversation, and, when necessary, explaining or interpreting how others feel when something happens. Teachers will work together with children to create a plan to repair relationships and understand the impact of their choices going forward.

We do not use physical or emotional punishment.

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At Brillante Early Learning Center, many other positive guidance techniques are used, such as:

- Structuring the environment to support appropriate behavior;
- Modeling appropriate behavior;
- Redirection;
- Carefully timed teacher intervention;
- Logical, natural consequences; and
- Encouraging problem solving to resolve conflicts.

To support children's development of self-esteem, we:

- Actively listen,
- Refrain from judgmental statements,
- Respond to ideas,
- Recognize effort,
- Use proper names and verbally interact with each child,
- Engage in interactions that are supportive, and
- Interact with children at their eye level.

To encourage children's autonomy, we:

- Provide children with opportunities to make choices;
- Allow children to complete tasks independently;

- Create opportunities for decision-making, problem-solving, and working together; and
- Teach children strategies for self-regulating and/or self-monitoring.

To promote children's emotional regulation and executive functioning, we:

- Help children identify appropriate choices and
- Support children's efforts to solve problems.

This guidance policy was developed by Pando Little School and adapted for use at Brillante.

Equal Access & Inclusivity Brillante Early Learning Center promotes equal access of services for all children and families. In accordance with federal civil rights law, regulations, and policies, Brillante does not discriminate 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.

At Brillante Early Learning Center, we believe diversity strengthens our children, families, educators, and community. We value inclusion and the full participation of those with varied abilities and identities, while honoring cultural and linguistic diversity. We are committed to creating opportunities for equity and eliminating barriers to prosperity and access for people from historically-excluded and marginalized populations and acknowledge the power of starting young to create opportunity for all children. We aim to ensure everyone within our community feels proud of their identities, has opportunities to share and nurture their culture with our school community, and engages meaningfully with cultures and languages that differ from their own.

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Upon request, we are happy to pursue translation services.

Inclusive Practices for Children with Disabilities & Developmental Delays Brillante Early Learning Center is an inclusive program, meaning that we serve the educational needs of each student in classrooms with their peers with a mix of learners and developmental stages, regardless of background or dis/ability. We do not have enrollment criteria based on ability/disability and are committed to serving all children who enroll with us to the best of our capacity. This is more than just a classroom placement philosophy. Feeling confident and connected with peers and educators is key to learning for all people, and we work hard to make sure that each student is an engaged, thriving, and happy member of our classroom community.

Our program has staff with expertise in early childhood special education, and we are committed to working with families and support and service providers to make appropriate accommodations and modifications to ensure the full participation of all of our students. With written consent, families can request a Brillante staff member to participate in their child's IEP or IFSP process, and we will incorporate children's individual plans and goals into our curriculum to the best of our ability. We are happy to work with families and service providers to incorporate services such as Speech/Language, Occupational, or Physical Therapy into children's school day.

Referrals for Early Intervention & Support Services

We work with New Mexico's Child Find program and other community partners and resources to ensure that children and families are connected to the early intervention and support services to best meet their needs. As a NMPreK program, we document that every family has been offered health, vision, and hearing screenings. If you need resources to access these services, we can arrange them with you.

School Clothes & Bare Feet Families are encouraged to send their child to school in comfortable clothing that can handle a little dirt, paint, or project splatter. We ask that families send 1 to 3 extra changes of seasonally appropriate clothes and shoes to be kept at school in case their child needs to change. Families are expected to check their child's belongings at least once a week to ensure their child has everything they need.

We encourage children to fully engage in outdoor play in whatever ways feel comfortable to them. This means that children are sometimes barefoot on our playground. The benefits of this type of exploration include building critical thinking and risk assessment skills as well as greater confidence navigating the natural world and sensory development. Children will always have access to their shoes and be supported to wear them as appropriate based on weather conditions and activity.

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Rest Time Young children benefit from a period of quiet rest everyday. For our students who need to sleep, we provide a peaceful, darkened, well-supervised napping time. Children transition to rest time following lunch and are supported by teachers to relax and fall asleep. Children generally nap from 1:15pm to 2:30pm. Teachers gently support children to adopt this sleep schedule and allow them to wake naturally and transition back to wakeful activities after resting. If your child needs a longer or shorter nap than this schedule permits, please talk to your teacher.

Children may bring to school one small stuffed animal and/or a blanket for rest time. These items must fit in the child's cubby, and families must take them home to wash weekly on Fridays. Each child will be provided with their own rest mat that will be labeled with their name and cleaned regularly.

For children who have outgrown their nap, we provide a period of afternoon time when children enjoy some much needed quiet time. Children are given comfortable, individual resting spots. The lights are dimmed and children listen to relaxing music or an audiobook, or do quiet table-top activities or outdoor play in a small group.

Meals & Snacks Brillante Early Learning Center contracts with Rhubarb & Elliot

(<https://www.rhubarbandelliott.com/>) to provide free, healthy breakfasts and lunches for all

students. Our program will also offer an afternoon snack that will be planned and prepared by our teachers in-house. Menus for meals and snacks will be posted in the classroom. Families are welcome to send healthy meals or snacks from home that children may eat during class meal or snack times. Please label all lunch boxes and containers with the child's name.

Sometimes children within our program have severe allergies. We will make accommodations to the best of our ability in collaboration with the child's family and our meal vendor.

We serve breakfast from 8:00-9:00 every day. If your child arrives after 9:00, please make sure they eat breakfast before getting to school. At 9:00, we turn our focus to exploration and curriculum until lunch is served around 11:30. We serve snack as children wake up from nap time from 2:30 to 3:00. Unless there is a special circumstance, children will be asked to place food they bring to school in their cubby to eat at our next meal or snack time.

Holidays & Birthday Celebrations As a teaching team, we strive to plan classroom and program celebrations where all of our students have the option to participate and that honor the authentic values and experiences of our families. We would love to learn about your family's traditions and celebrations and invite you to come to the classroom and share with us—just let your child's teachers know and you can make a plan together! In the past, we have had family members come in to read a book, cook with us, or bring an activity to share.

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Often, holiday and birthday celebrations involve food. In consideration of student's allergies and dietary needs and family requests to not serve extra-sugary foods, our celebration plans may involve a "treat snack". Popular treat snacks are smoothies, waffles with whipped honey, and fruit with dipping options. We are happy for families to help plan or cook a treat snack with us, but prefer to coordinate the arrangements as a program so that all children are included. Please do not send in extra foods for birthdays or celebrations. If families send in cupcakes, candy, treat bags, etc., we will send them home with families at pick-up rather than serve them at school.

For birthdays, we will help your child pick out a treat-snack to prepare together and share with classmates. The teachers also celebrate birthdays at meeting time and with different activities throughout the day. This ensures that all children have a celebration of their special day.

Family Engagement We have many opportunities for your family to engage with our classroom community throughout the year. At the start of each school year, we look forward to visiting with you at family orientation, open classroom, and home visits in August. We have family-teacher conferences scheduled twice a year, with a third optional conference date. Please refer to the current school calendar for specific dates. Families are welcome to request additional conferences at any time.

All Brillante families will receive a Family Membership to Explora. We hope you use it to visit the museum often and take advantage of all Explora has to offer. To learn more about your

membership benefits, visit: <https://www.explora.us/become-a-member/>

Brillante also hosts the Coalition for Science Learning in Early Childhood, which is a state-funded coalition to connect families and communities to early childhood resources and advocacy opportunities. The Coalition hosts events, workshops, and trainings; shares information; and facilitates a Families Working Group as well as the Brillante Planning Team. To learn more or get involved, email cslec@explora.us.

We would love your input about what other kinds of activities, gatherings, and opportunities you would like to see!

Family Volunteering in the Classroom

Brillante Early Learning Center has an open door policy. Family members are welcome at any time. Please make arrangements to spend time in your child's classroom with their teacher. This allows us to think about how to best incorporate your visit into the classroom's curriculum. Example volunteer opportunities include facilitating a special cooking project, reading a book, singing a song, organizing a unique art activity, or sharing a unique interest or passion that may inspire children.

Field Trips

The decision to take the class on community walks and field trips will be made by teachers based upon student interest, curriculum, and weather. All children going on field trips must

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have written permission from their parent/guardian. All field trips adhere to New Mexico state licensing ratio requirements.

One of our greatest learning resources is our surrounding community. We are within walking distance to museums, Tiguex Park, the Sawmill District, and Old Town Plaza. Upon enrollment, all families will be asked to sign a walking field trip consent, which covers visits to Explora outside of our licensed classroom and playground spaces, with the understanding that we will often visit Explora exhibits and spaces outside of our classroom. Families will be notified when a field trip is planned outside of the Explora premises.

