



Rising Stars Day School

**School Handbook
2026-2027 Year**

3005 Dower House Drive, Herndon, VA 20171
703-264-9078

Welcome to Rising Stars Day School!

We are pleased that you are considering us to provide an exceptional educational experience for your child. Parents are an important part of our program, and we hope to develop a great partnership between home and school. This handbook was written to outline our philosophy, policies, and all the details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. We ask that you carefully review it, but we will be glad to answer any further questions you may have at any time, and once again, welcome!

Our Philosophy

Our priority is for children to feel and be safe. Before they become independent, it is important that they have a predictable environment and can rely on adults for protection, encouragement, and reassurance. We recognize that every child has a different interest, pace, and learning style, so at Rising Stars Day School they are respected as individuals.

Our school provides a Reggio Emilia-inspired environment and values the child as central to their own learning. Our open and free-flowing classrooms enable uninterrupted exploration, play and learning, and our outdoor space and time are valued just as highly as formal classrooms. We encourage children to explore, and most of the educational experiences take the form of projects, where they can actively participate and question things.



Table of Contents

Contents

Welcome to Rising Stars Day School!	2
Our Philosophy	2
School Operating Information and Calendar.....	5
Programs and Hours of Operation	5
Enrollment and Financial Agreement.....	8
Enrollment	8
Tuition and Billing.....	8
Rising Stars Day School 2026 - 2027 Price Sheet.....	9
Withdrawal and Dismissal.....	10
General Policies and Information	11
Drop-off and Absences	11
Pick-Up Procedure.....	11
Inclement Weather Policy.....	12
Facility Rules	12
Curriculum	12
Developmental Monitoring.....	12
Class Placement Policy and Classroom Transitions.....	13
Illness Exclusion Policy.....	13
Meals, Snacks, and Food Allergies	15
Additional Supplies	15
Birthdays.....	16
Quiet Time	17
Personal Belongings	17
Clothing	17
Diapers & Toilet Training	17
Parent-Staff Communication	19
Who to contact?	19
Maintain Respectful and Open Communication	19

Confidentiality	19
Time to Respond to Communications	20
Medication	21
Discipline/Guidance	21
Incident Report	22
Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.....	22
Child Abuse Reporting	22
Daily Activities	23
2026-2027 Parent Handbook Acknowledgement.....	24

School Operating Information

Programs and Hours of Operation

Program	Ages	Hours of Operation
Infant Classroom	0-16 months	7:30 am – 5:30 pm
Toddler Classroom 1	16 months -24 months	7:30 am – 5:30 pm
Toddler Classroom 2	2-3 years	7:30 am – 5:30 pm
Preschool	3-4 years	8:30 am – 4:00 pm* Before care: 7:30 am – 8:30 am Aftercare: 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Pre-Kindergarten	4-5 years	8:30 am – 4:00 pm* Before care: 7:30 am – 8:30 am Aftercare: 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

* Matching Fairfax County Public Schools core hours

- **Infant and Toddler Programs** operate year-round and remain **open during spring break**.
- **Preschool and Pre-K Programs** follow the Fairfax County Public Schools calendar, beginning in mid-August and ending in mid-June and are **closed during Fairfax County Spring Break**.
- **Summer Camp** is offered for approximately **8 weeks (mid-June through mid-August)** and is available for children enrolled in our Preschool and Pre-K programs and their siblings.
- **Annual School Closures** include:
 - One week in August (the week immediately before Fairfax County's first day of school). Please see our calendar for the exact date.
 - Winter Break (from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day)
 - All federal holidays.
- **Brightwheel** is our primary communication platform and is used for:
 - Daily messages and announcements
 - Photos and classroom updates
 - Check-in and check-out notifications
 - Tuition payments and billing



2026-2027 School Calendar

August 24th, Monday	1st day of School
September 2 nd , Wednesday	Back to School Night – 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm
September 7th, Monday	Labor Day - Closed
September 21st, Monday	Cox Farms Field Trip - <u>Chaperones needed</u>
October 8th, Thursday	Picture Day at RSDS - Students and Teachers
October 12th, Monday	Indigenous People's Day/Staff Development Day - Closed
October 16th, Thursday	Frying Pan Farm - Preschool
October 30th, Friday	Halloween - Trick or Treat at RSDS School
November 11th, Wednesday	Veteran's Day - Closed
November 24th, Tuesday	Students' Thanksgiving Celebration – School hours – Exact time TBD
November 25th - 27th, Wed-Fri	Thanksgiving Break - Closed
December 7th - 11th, Monday-Friday	Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences
December 18th, Friday	Students' Christmas Party - School hours – Exact time TBD

December 23rd - January 1st, Wed-Fri	Winter Break - Closed
January 18th, Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day- Closed
February 15th, Monday	President's Day - Closed
March 19th, Friday	RSDS Easter Egg Hunt
March 22nd – 26th Mon - Fri	Spring Break for Preschool and Pre-K - CLOSED
March 22nd – 25th , Mon–Th	Normal hours for Infants and Toddlers
March 26th, Friday	Staff Development Day - Closed
April 16th, Friday	International Night at RSDS - Exact Time TBD
May 3rd - 7th, Monday - Friday	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 7th, Friday	Mother's Day Breakfast Celebration
May 24th - 28th, Monday - Friday	Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 31st, Monday	Memorial Day - Closed
June 11th, Friday	Pre-K Graduation - 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
June 17th, Thursday	Father's Day Breakfast Celebration - 10:30 - 11:30 am
June 17th, Thursday	Last day of School – kids' early release at 12:00 pm.
June 18th, Friday	Juneteenth, Observed - Closed

June 21 st , Monday	First Day of Summer Camp – Pre-k and Preschool
July 5 th , Friday	Independence Day, Observed - Closed
August 16th – 20th , Mon – Fri	In-service week for teachers (prep for the new school year) - CLOSED
August 23rd, Monday	1st day of School - 2027-28

Enrollment and Financial Agreement

Enrollment

Children between the ages of 12 weeks and 5 years are eligible for enrollment.

- Babies **MUST** be able to drink from a bottle before their start date.
- Children 3 and up who want to enroll in Preschool **must be FULLY potty trained**.

The following paperwork is required of everyone by the first day:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Child Record Form | • Allergy Care Plan (if applicable) |
| • School Entrance Health Form – signed and dated by parents and pediatrician | • Copy of child’s birth certificate |
| • Media Agreement | • \$600.00 registration fee |
| • Walking Permission Slip | • All children who attend Rising Stars Day School MUST have up-to-date immunization records. |
| • Field Trip Permission | |
| • Non-prescription over-the-counter skin products | |

All information will be kept confidential and is for our records only. All forms can be found on our website

Please be sure to keep your work, home, cellphone, and emergency contact numbers updated at the office in case of an emergency. Should any information change throughout the year, please notify us immediately.

Tuition and Billing

- If two or more children are attending full time, a 10% siblings discount will apply to their tuition.
- **The registration fee is strictly non-refundable and is an annual fee.** Every year before the beginning of the school year, all schools open their enrollment and every family must enroll their child (or children) again in the next “grade”, so your initial enrollment will guarantee a spot in the classroom and on the anniversary of your initial enrollment a new fee will be due as your child enrolls in the next classroom up. The enrollment does NOT go towards tuition, as this fee helps us cover administrative costs and helps us maintain and enhance the quality of education and services we provide to our students. It supports various aspects of our program including things such as technology upgrades, facility maintenance, extracurricular activities (such as our music program), and staff development initiatives. The enrollment fee also covers materials and supplies needed for your child’s classroom.
- Rising Stars Day School’s program is designed and implemented as an **academic program with a childcare component**. We have staff members who have committed to the entire school year, so we ask that families who want to join our program do their best to honor the same commitment to the school. Tuition is expected for 10 months (August to June) for Pre-K and Preschool students, and year-round for anyone enrolled in our Infant and Toddler program.
- No refunds will be given for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vaccinations, snow days, holidays, or any other reason. Tuition is still expected in case of an emergency closing due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., power outage, damage due to a storm, flooding, etc.). No refunds will be given for partially attended months, enrollment, application, or material fees.
- Tuition is expected on the 1st of every month and a late fee of \$30.00 will be charged to the account if payment is not received by the 5th of each month.
- A service fee of \$25.00 will be added to the account if a check is returned.

Rising Stars Day School 2026 - 2027 Price Sheet

Preschool & Pre-K 10-month Program	
Full Day 8:30 am-4:00 pm Half Day 8:30 am-12:45 pm	
PROGRAM	MONTHLY PAYMENT
Full Day – 5 days (Preschool and Pre-K)	\$1,650.00
Full Day – 3 days (Preschool only)	\$1,450.00

Infant & Toddler Year-Round Program	
Full Day 7:30 am-5:30 pm Half Day 7:30 am-12:30 pm	
PROGRAM	MONTHLY PAYMENT
Infants (3 months - 16 months) 5 Full Days	\$2,095.00
Toddler Room - (16 months - 3y) 5 Full Days	\$1,900.00
Toddler Room - (16 months - 3y) 3 Full Days	\$1,450.00
Toddler Room - (16 months - 3y) 5 Half Days	\$1,550.00

Extended Day Program	Mornings 7:30 am-8:30 am	Afternoons 4:00 pm-5:30 pm	AM & PM 7:30 am - 5:30pm
5 days a week (monthly)	\$145.00	\$210.00	\$300.00

* Enrollment fee \$600

To secure your child's spot the school must receive both the enrollment fee and enrollment form. The fee can be paid via Zelle to info@risingstarsdayschool.com and the form can be sent to that email as well. All forms needed can be found on our website under the "enrollment" tab.

Withdrawal and Dismissal

Rising Stars Day School reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at our discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the daycare as outlined in the parent handbook agreement.
- The administration has determined that the school can no longer meet the educational needs of the student.
- Physical or verbal abuse or disrespect of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired or non-immunization and/or physical.
- Habitual tardiness to pick up your child.

As we partner with your family, it is important to understand that enrollment at Rising Stars Day School is a commitment for the entire school year and the entire tuition amount. Occasionally, it becomes necessary for an enrolled student to withdraw from the school. By providing your signature on the yearly contract, parents acknowledge and agree to the terms of the withdrawal policy and rates. **Parents who wish to withdraw their child from school must first notify the director, Ms. Val Zelna, in writing, 60 days in advance to initiate the withdrawal. The last month's tuition will be at the full rate and no prorations will be granted.**

In the event we ever find it necessary to end our agreement we will also give the parents a written 60-day notice. All personal items must be removed from the school upon the termination of services. Any personal belongings not picked up after 60 days from said termination date will be disposed of or considered the daycare's property.

General Policies and Information

Drop-off and Absences

To ensure the safety of the kids, the front door will remain locked during school hours. Parents will be required to park and bring their child(ren) to the front door. Use the Ring doorbell to let us know you have arrived, then a staff member will check them in and take them to the classroom for the day. At pick-up, children will be brought to you in the lobby.

It is not uncommon for children to have separation anxiety and even cry when dropped off, especially during the first weeks of attendance. Please help prepare your child for your departure; do not prolong it as this only makes things worse; do not sneak out either, give them a big hug and a goodbye kiss, and reassure them that you will be back by the end of the day. If your child is upset when you leave, please know that children often are calm and engaged in play and activities as soon as the parents are gone. Parents are welcome to call or send the teacher a Brightwheel message to check on their children anytime.

When dropping children off, parents must relay any relevant information that might affect their behavior during the day and please keep the following in mind:

- **ALL STUDENTS must be dropped off by 9:15 am. Instructional time starts at 9:30 am.**
- Unless the school is notified beforehand, if a child is not in class by the cut-off time (9:15 am for all), they will be considered absent for the day.
- If they need to be picked up earlier than their usual pick-up time, let us know in advance so we can have them ready when you arrive.
- **If the child will not be attending school or will be late, let us know as soon as possible.**

Pick-Up Procedure

Children will only be released to the authorized parties on the pickup list. In the event of an emergency, we will need a phone call, email, or text authorizing someone else to pick up a child. We will request to see ID when the designated person arrives.

If there is a reason to suspect that anyone picking the child up is in an impaired condition (under the influence of alcohol or drugs) we will suggest alternate transportation. We cannot legally hold a child from a legal guardian; however, we will not hesitate to call the other parent and/or the police if we feel the child is at risk.

When picking children up, please keep the following in mind:

- The latest pick-up time is 5:30 pm – **SHARP**.

- If you are running late, you must call or message us on Brightwheel to let us know, and for every event of a late pick-up, **a \$1.00 fee will be added for every 1 min that the parent is late.**

Inclement Weather Policy

The safety of our students and staff is our number one priority any time a decision must be made regarding school closures and delays during a weather situation. The decision to close schools for an entire day or to delay school openings (usually by 2 hours), will be made as early as possible prior to scheduled starting times. Our goal is to inform all the parents of the school's decision, by **9:00 pm the night before**. We will do so through the **Brightwheel app**, and no individual questions will be answered at that time. We will continue to update parents every night prior to any closures until it is safe to open again. Please do not message any staff member individually about closures or delays.

Facility Rules

At Rising Stars Day School, we believe rules help develop a child's own sense of self-control. They are in place for the health and safety of the children. We teach respect for other people and respect for property. Please take the time and review the following rules with your children and when possible, uphold them at home so we can work as a team:

- No running inside.
- Keep our hands and feet to ourselves!
- Use inside voices.
- No climbing on the furniture.
- Always clean up after yourself.
- No mistreating the toys.
- No roughhousing or wrestling.
- Children must sit at the table to eat/drink
- Always tell the truth.
- Listen to your teacher.

Curriculum

Rising Stars Day School uses a curriculum approved by the Department of Education called Early Learning Matters. The Early Learning Matters (ELM) Curriculum is a comprehensive, evidence-informed program to support the optimal learning and development of children from birth to five years of age. It promotes skills linked to school readiness and life success with developmentally appropriate teaching strategies and a coordinated mix of staff-guided and child-initiated learning experiences. Additional information about the curriculum is available here: [ELM Curriculum \(purdue.edu\)](https://www.purdue.edu/elm)

Developmental Monitoring

As part of the Rising Stars Day School program, our trained educators will be closely monitoring your child's progress during their time at our preschool. Developmental monitoring involves regularly observing and assessing children's growth and milestones across various domains, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. While the vast majority of children follow a typical developmental trajectory, we understand that every child is unique and may require additional

support in certain areas from time to time, and through careful observation and evaluation, we aim to ensure that each child receives the support and resources they need to reach their full potential.

If, during our routine monitoring, we notice any areas of potential concern or areas where your child may benefit from additional support or intervention, we may reach out to you to discuss our observations further. Please rest assured that any communication regarding your child's development will be handled with the utmost sensitivity, confidentiality, and professionalism.

Class Placement Policy and Classroom Transitions



At Rising Stars Day School, we take classroom placement seriously and aim to create a positive, balanced environment where every child can thrive. Placement decisions are based on teacher recommendations and factors like behavior, development, class size, and ratios. While parent input is welcome, final decisions are made by our staff.

Children typically transition between Infant and Toddler classrooms around their birthdays. For Preschool, those with birthdays between October and January may move up in January; those born February through May will transition the following school year. We do not move children mid-year from Preschool to Pre-K.

Our age requirement is 16 months for Toddler 1, 24 months for Toddler 2, 3 years old and fully potty trained for Preschool, and 4 years old for Pre-K. For preschool and pre-k, we follow Fairfax County's September 30th cutoff.

Illness Exclusion Policy

You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust you will not bring a sick child to school; however, if while under our care your child falls ill, the parent or an alternate emergency person is expected to come within **ONE HOUR** of being called. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Child has an axillary temperature higher than 100.4 F
- Child is tired, lethargic, and cannot participate in play or group activities.

- Child exhibits signs of highly contagious conditions including but not limited to Hand Foot and Mouth disease, chicken pox, head lice, strep throat, pink eye, impetigo, ring worm, stomach flu, slapped cheek, pneumonia, COVID-19, RSV, Norovirus, bronchitis, etc.

- Vomiting (once), or Diarrhea (2 or more loose, watery stools)
- Rash, hives, and bumps on skin with or without fever
- Persistent cough, with or without a runny nose.

Your child may return to daycare after:

- Child is fever, vomit and/or diarrhea free for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol or other medications.
- In the case of persistent cough, the child is cough free for 24 hours without any cough suppressant.
- In case of chicken pox, all the lesions are scabbed over.
- In case of Hand, Foot and Mouth, all mouth sores and open blisters have healed (dried up)
- In case of head lice, all the eggs are gone.
- In case of contagious illness, the child took antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

Not all rashes mean the child must stay home, but if we notice rashes, hives, redness, or bumps in a child's skin, the parent will be required to pick them up and they can only come back after they have been cleared by a doctor. The doctor's note will be required and will be kept in their file.

As we strive to maintain a clean and hygienic environment for all our students, we kindly request your assistance and ask that before sending your child to school, they are bathed, their hair is brushed, their nails are trimmed, their face and hands are clean, and they are dressed in clean clothes.

PARENTS MUST INFORM THE SCHOOL IF ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS/DISEASES OCCUR AT HOME AND NOT BRING THE CHILD TO SCHOOL.

Meals, Snacks, and Food Allergies



Please send your child with lunch every day. We will provide AM and PM snacks. Parents of infants are required to supply breastmilk, formula, and/or baby food.

Please let us know if your child has any dietary needs (i.e., vegetarian, allergies, religious beliefs, etc.) and we will do our best to accommodate them. A list of kids with allergies will be kept in the classroom, kitchen area, and First Aid cabinet. **Please remember that we are a 100% nut-free school.** A great alternative to peanut butter is sun butter. **Every single item sent to school for lunch or snack, including water bottles, needs to be labeled and dated every day.**

Additional Supplies

In addition to meals, we require parents to provide certain supplies for the child's daily needs.

- For preschool and pre-K, we need spare clothes (including underwear and socks), rain boots, rain jackets, sunscreen, and bug spray (for spring and summer time).
- For toddlers we need diapers/pull-ups, wipes, a nap mat, spare clothes (including underwear and socks), rain boots, rain jackets, sunscreen, and bug spray (for spring and summer time).
- For infants we need diapers, wipes, spare clothes (including socks), pacifiers, and an extra empty bottle to be left at school.

Teachers will let the parents know when supplies need to be replenished.



Birthdays

Parents are welcome to send little bags or treats to share with the class on their child's birthday or special occasions, but for everyone's safety please let your child's teacher know in advance what you plan on bringing so we can make sure no child is allergic to it. We suggest picking a treat with a 'school-safe' logo, which can often be found at Wegmans, Safeway, and Giant. We will not distribute birthday invitations or favors unless all children in the class are included.

Due to the quick nature of our birthday celebrations during school hours, unfortunately, parents cannot attend it, but the teachers will post pictures and videos of the celebration on Brightwheel.



Quiet Time

Our rest/quiet time is from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. for our young children (toddlers), and 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm for our older kids in preschool and pre-k, so to avoid disturbing the children who are napping, please do your best to not schedule pick-ups during this time. We will provide cots for toddlers and cribs for infants. Your child can bring a special stuffed animal or blanket to sleep with. If your baby uses a sleep sack for naps, parents are welcome to send those as well. Please note we will not put any blankets in cribs per our sleep-safe policy. Children who wake up early or do not fall asleep will be directed to quiet activities that will not disturb other sleeping children. Parents are required to provide a cot-sized sheet plus a blanket or nap mat (pillow + blanket 2-1 combination).

Personal Belongings

We ask that children **do not** bring random toys, money, gum, candy, cosmetics, jewelry, or toy weapons of any kind. If your child has a favorite **sleep toy**, they are welcome to bring it and take it out of their backpacks only during designated nap times. We will inform parents of our “Show and Share” days and this will be the only day personal belongings are allowed.

Due to Covid, a lot of children carry hand sanitizer in their backpacks, and while we appreciate the parents’ efforts, unfortunately, they *cannot* have it in the classroom. Hand sanitizers contain alcohol, and therefore should not be accessible to children. Teachers will have it available in the classroom for their use.

Clothing

Because of the wide range of activities, it is recommended that children be dressed in comfortable clothing. **All children need to have at least 2 changes of clothing at school.** Extra clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirts and an extra sweater for sudden changes in temperatures. We also **require sunscreen lotion**, and a hat for the hot summer days we play outside. Children will play outside every day, and they should be dressed accordingly. “Crocs”, sandals, flip-flops, and such hinder their ability to participate in activities and are also a safety hazard, so we ask that children wear rubber-soled **closed-toed shoes** for outdoor play.

Diapers & Toilet Training

Parents need to supply all necessary diapers and wipes. We will notify you when your child’s supply is running low. Unless you want to use something of your own preference, we will provide “Aquaphor” or “Desitin” to prevent and heal diaper rashes. When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home. We encourage all parents to use the 3-Day Potty Training Method before we can start at school. Once they have sat and peed on the potty multiple times at home, we can start the process at school as well. We will follow through and encourage your child while they are in our care and daily communication between the parent and daycare provider is very important at this stage. Here are the main things to keep in mind.

- Parents must bring a **potty chair** for their child on the first day.
- The child must be sent to daycare in **pull-ups every day** until they remain dry for two weeks throughout the day.
- Parents must send their child to daycare with **loose-fitting clothing that their child can manage independently**. Please avoid tight clothing, belts, pants with snaps or buttons, overalls, and tight leggings.
- Staff cannot wash out soiled clothing. They are required to put soiled clothing in a plastic bag for parents to take home and wash.
- Parents must bring extra clothing (including socks) along with pull-ups.
- The child will be encouraged to use the potty every 30 - 45 minutes in the beginning and then every 1 hour – 1.5 hours as they progress into the process.
- The child must arrive with a dry pull-up every morning and the parent must communicate (via Brightwheel or in person), when was the last time the child used the potty.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT POTTY TRAINING: In our Preschool and Pre-K classrooms, children are expected to be fully potty trained. If a child begins to have regular accidents (e.g., on a weekly basis), we will ask families to keep the child home on Fridays to reattempt a focused 3-day potty training method at home. This break is intended to support consistency and help the child build confidence and independence. Once the child is able to return without accidents, they may resume their full weekly schedule.

Parent-Staff Communication

Brightwheel messages and email are the most common form of communication between parents and teachers. Parents should read all emails sent by the school and provide any requested responses. In order to ensure a successful exchange of information, it is important that all parties follow a few key principles.

Who to contact?

For daily communication during school hours, please message teachers and support staff on our Brightwheel app. Contact your child's teacher either on Brightwheel or through email with questions about academic or social development, classroom events, or to schedule a meeting. Please also use Brightwheel to report short-term or extended absences.

Contact info@risingstarsdayschool.com for questions about tuition, payments, school events, policies, and procedures, or other general questions.

Parents are also welcome to email Ms. Val Zelna at any point about anything they would like to discuss directly. If there is a problem that needs to be addressed right away, please contact Ms. Val at val@risingstarsdayschool.com or via phone.

As a licensed facility, you can find our info at www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/search. There is a search option where you can type our school's name and you will see our info, current permit, and any relevant inspection information.

Maintain Respectful and Open Communication

- Always use a respectful and polite tone
- Please request, do not demand.
- Be ready not just to provide information, but to listen to teacher/staff observations and perspectives.
- Enter the exchange with an open mind and assume a shared best interest for your child.
- Be prepared to work collaboratively to solve problems.

Confidentiality

- Recognize that confidentiality may limit the information that can be shared from school to parents, including consequences for other students' behaviors.

Time to Respond to Communications

- Teachers will make every effort to respond as soon as possible to parent communications, with the understanding that the teaching day sometimes precludes immediate responses.
- Brightwheel messages sent after 5:30 PM, before 7:30 AM, and on the weekends will be answered during our regular hours of 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Please remember that teachers and staff may need some time to collect needed information before responding, so we appreciate your patience.



Medication

Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with your child's name. You must administer the first dosage under your supervision; never the school staff. Anytime your child needs to take medication while attending school, we will require written consent with specific instructions on how to administer the medicine. (A form will be given to you). The form can also be found on our website and must be completed and brought along with the medicine.

No medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, will be administered to your child without written parental consent.

Discipline/Guidance

We adhere to the standards for developmentally suitable practices outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). These standards acknowledge that every child is an individual with their own unique pace and pattern of development, personality, learning approach, and family context. Although certain behaviors may be typical for particular ages, we understand that children acquire social skills at varying speeds. With this understanding, we monitor behaviors and create individualized behavior plans when needed.

Our approach centers on "positive guidance," which emphasizes encouraging constructive behavior rather than punishing undesirable actions. We may gently redirect children and engage them in conversations about suitable behavior. When appropriate, we use a firm yet nurturing tone. Occasionally, it may be necessary to temporarily separate a child from the group. If a behavior continues, we will schedule a meeting with the child's family.

The following strategies are applied based on the child's age and personal needs:

- **Distraction and Redirection:** We suggest acceptable alternatives (we do not use time-outs).
- **Private Conversation:** We respectfully connect with the child by crouching to their level, making eye contact, and offering full attention.
- **Direct Praise:** We recognize and affirm positive behavior by acknowledging good choices.
- **Indirect Praise:** We compliment children nearby to model expected behavior for others.
- **Modeling:** We demonstrate behaviors, such as speaking in a soft voice when encouraging calm communication.
- **Conditional Statements:** For instance, "If you finish cleaning up the blocks, then we can..."
- **Redirecting to a New Area:** This is done constructively. Educators give a clear warning before stepping in. If the child continues with inappropriate behavior, they may be gently redirected to a

different space in the classroom or playground. If the behavior persists, the teacher may stay nearby to support the child until they are ready to rejoin group play. The teacher will then explain why the redirection occurred and guide the child in making better choices moving forward.

- **Social Skills Coaching:** Staff support children in developing behavior that aligns with their personal growth and social development.
- **Transition Cues:** Children receive a five-minute notice before moving from one activity to another.
- **Guided Questions:** Educators may ask, “What kind of voice do we use indoors?” or “How should we treat our friends?” rather than issuing direct instructions.

Incident Report

If your child is involved in a mishap that requires any type of attention or first aid, and we do not believe that parents need to be called, you will be notified through an incident report. You will be advised of what, when, and how it happened and what actions were taken. We will keep a daily record of your child’s activities and behavior during the day and a copy will be left in your child’s file.

Should an accident require emergency medical treatment, the parents will be contacted immediately, and if necessary 911 will be called. If neither parent can be reached, we will call the designated emergency contact person. When you sign your child’s information sheet you are authorizing us to implement the plan described above.

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

Should an emergency occur while the kids are at Rising Stars Day School, our Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan will be activated. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will either evacuate immediately to a safe area outside the school building, take cover inside, or relocate the children to a different location. Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans are posted in every classroom and are available in the front office upon request.

Child Abuse Reporting

At Rising Stars Day School, we are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children under our care and this includes the time that the child is in their own home. We will not knowingly allow any form of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of any child in our care at any time. If we notice a sign of abuse, we will alert both parents both verbally and in writing, along with a full description of the symptoms (bruising, sores, sudden extreme behavioral changes, etc.). Teachers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse, so we will document the same information for ourselves and if necessary, as a last resort, alert the proper authorities. At first, this might seem like an invasion of privacy, but we cannot in good conscience turn a blind eye to abuse.

Daily Activities

Age-appropriate activities will be scheduled to address the needs and interests of each individual child. Below are some examples of the areas we will focus on.

Cognitive Development:

- Recognize objects and people
- Imitate actions of others
- Develop decision-making capabilities and problem-solving skills
- Develop language skills
- Develop skills such as matching, pairing and classification and understand concepts such size, shape and color.
- Enhance creativity

Social Development:

- Acquire social skills
- Respect and cooperate with others
- Respect materials
- Appreciate and value differences



Emotional Development:

- Be able to express feelings
- Develop a concept of self
- Develop self-control
- Develop positive self-image

Physical development:

- Refine sensory abilities
- Develop muscle abilities
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Refine listening skills
- Establish reading readiness skills



Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and care for your little one. We look forward to establishing a great partnership and becoming an important part of your child's early years.

2026-2027 Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

Please initial and sign the following acknowledgement:

_____ I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Rising Stars Day School.

_____ I have read and agree to comply with the policies contained in the Handbook governing the terms of the childcare contract and have been given an opportunity to ask questions about the content of the Handbook.

_____ I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook. In addition, I understand that the contents of the Parent Handbook are subject to change.

_____ I acknowledge that the Parent Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, best practices for childcare service providers, or at the discretion of the school owner. Such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Parent Handbook and I understand that I will always be notified of any changes and will have 2 weeks of notice on anything that affects my child's routine.

_____ I acknowledge that anytime a change in policy is deemed necessary, I will be given two weeks' notice and a signature acknowledging the changes will be required.

Student Name

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date