



Handbook of Policies and Procedures

65 La Rue Road
973-874-0493
learnatbrightbeginnings@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare! Our school is small and family-oriented. Our curriculum is student-led and play-based, allowing our students to grow at their own pace, mentoring and challenging each other. Our students enter kindergarten prepared and excited for the journey that awaits them!

To facilitate greater understanding between parent(s) and provider, we have created this handbook covering childcare philosophies, business policies, and expectations. Please read this carefully, and feel free to discuss with the Director any questions.

ADMITTANCE POLICY

Our school is small and close-knit and it is imperative that any new family understands and believes in our philosophy and environment. Communication is of the most importance, not only for the betterment of your child's care and education, but for the school environment as well. Educators are on the same team as parents, and if the dynamics of the two groups need to flow effectively for your child to develop to his/her potential.

CHILDCARE PHILOSOPHY

Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare's mission is to provide a loving, quality educational program for our littlest learners to our elementary students. We give extra effort to the basic fundamentals in preparation for formal schooling, while providing a nurturing, safe, and creative environment for children to grow in and explore. By having open communication between parents and caregiver, we will create a more cooperative and hands-on approach to education.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication between parent and provider is essential to any child care program. When a new family joins our school, it is imperative we communicate openly about any concerns or questions that may arise, as well as share a similar child care philosophy. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for your child(ren). Sensitive issues can be discussed by setting up a meeting with the classroom teacher and/or director.

To further facilitate communication between parent and provider, we utilize email and our app to explain some of the activities and happenings within our classroom, upcoming events, closures, or any other pertinent, fun information that may be of interest to our families.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

There are several forms that we must have completed and in our possession before we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child - NO EXCEPTIONS. All forms must be updated every year, sometimes sooner, according to need. The forms are as follows:

- Enrollment Application
- Universal Health Record (filled out by you and your child's pediatrician)
- Medical Conditions
- *For students with health needs only*, Care Plan for Children with Special Health Needs
- *For our elementary aged students only*, Medical Declaration Statement
- *For infants and waddlers only*, Infant/Waddler Feeding Plan
- Media Release
- Lotion Permission
- Policies Agreement

You are required to keep us informed of any change in addresses, telephone numbers, and other pertinent information listed on any/all of the above forms. If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please feel free to ask.

TUITION/PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Your specific rates will be outlined in your Enrollment Application. Statements are sent out the first day of the month and payment is due within 5 days. We do not give refunds or make-up days for illness or vacation. Our preferred method of payment is through the app, however payment may also be in the form of cash or check (payable to: Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare).

Late tuition payments will result in a charge of 5% of the tuition amount outstanding. Repeated late payments may be grounds for termination.

DEPOSIT FEE/LATE PICK-UP FEES

A deposit of half a month's tuition is required when your child registers. If you choose to terminate care with less than proper notice, you will forfeit the entire deposit. Proper notice will consist of written or verbal notice to the provider not less than two weeks prior to the child's last day of care.

If you pick up your child after the closing time, you will be charge \$1.00 for every minute past closing, which will be added to your monthly statement. If a parent or other pre-authorized person cannot be reached after closing and your child remains at our school longer than 1 hour past closing, we are required to call the local county department of Social Services and the local police.

Habitual tardiness at pick-up may result in termination of services.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 6:30a.m. – 6:00p.m. Summer hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00am – 6:00pm and may adjust based on attendance.

Drop-ins or schedule changes may be requested, however approval will be based on class size and staffing and is at the discretion of the director. Schedule changes of this nature create disruption to our normal routine. Please provide as much time in advance as possible (minimum of 24 hours), so that we can accommodate for staffing, sleeping arrangements, and any changes in activities that may need to occur.

ARRIVALS and DEPARTURES

Our morning care is from 6:30am to 9:00am. The school day begins at 9:00am. To maintain a consistent schedule in the classrooms, *all children must be at school no later than 10am*. If you need to drop your child off after this time, you must discuss it with the director in advance.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or cry when dropping off. Please make your drop off brief as the longer you prolong the departure, the harder it gets. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed. In our experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as parents are gone.

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents, or someone else the parents designate. If someone other than the parent is to pick up the child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day, if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we MUST have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child, we will need to ask for identification. We take the safety of our children extremely seriously.

ABSENCES

There are no refunds or adjustments made for closure dates as per the school year calendar or days missed due to illness, holidays, vacations, or emergency closures such as power outages or snow days.

CLOTHING/ATTIRE

Children should arrive dressed for play. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outdoor play and lots of messy activities, so make sure that your child is dressed appropriately. Please do not dress your child in nice clothing and expect them to be spotless when you arrive to pick them up. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor play. Sneakers are the ONLY appropriate footwear for the classroom and playground – *no sandals, Uggs, Crocs, dress-up shoes, etc.* You will be expected to provide an extra change of clothing for your child. Accidents will happen, and it is always helpful that when they do, there is clothing that we can change your child into.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We love when children share things with us, but we limit bringing toys and personal items in for show-and-tell days and special occasions. If they want bring a favorite stuffed animal, special blanket or lovey for naptime, please note that they will only be able to bring it out for naptime. It confuses the purpose of the toy if they play with it and try to sleep with it. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with the child's name.

PACIFIERS

We realize that some of our infants and toddlers rely on pacifiers to soothe and comfort themselves. While we understand that usage at home might be more frequent, we are limited in when children can have access to them during the school day.

Pacifiers are permitted only in the crib for infants and waddlers or on the sleep mat for toddlers at rest/sleep time only. There are no pacifiers used in preschool or PreK classrooms. Pacifiers are not permitted to be attached to the child's clothing in any manner or hung around the child's neck. Pacifiers are not permitted to have attachments such as stuffed animals.

If a pacifier is to be used, parents should provide at least two pacifiers (labeled with their child's name using a waterproof label or non-toxic permanent marker) on a regular basis. The extra pacifier should be available in case a replacement is needed. Staff will inspect each pacifier for tears or cracks before each use and clean each pacifier with soap and water and rinse thoroughly before each use.

SUPPLIES

You are responsible for supplying diapers, a full change of clothing (including socks and underwear) appropriate for the weather, and any other supplies that your child may need. You may bring a whole package of diapers to be stored here and we will let you know when your supply runs low. Good clothing is not recommended. Soiled clothing will be sent home and a clean change of clothes should be brought back the next day. We will request certain items for different times of the year, such as boots or snowsuits. All items need to be labeled with your child's initials.

Please keep in mind that if you do not bring in daily supplies, you will be charged for replacements, which will appear on your next statement. Diapers are a \$1 per diaper, wipes are \$1 a day, meals/snacks are \$1 per meal/snack, and spare clothing usage is \$1 per day.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Young children enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly, allow the children to anticipate coming events, and aids in achieving a variety of goals. Each classroom will adhere to the schedule to the best of its ability, keeping in mind that anything can happen when children are involved!

MEALS

Meals, snacks, and beverages are provided by you. Please remember that we are a nut-free facility – items containing nuts or made in a facility with nuts will be sent home. As an allergy precaution, do not pack your child food they have not yet tried at home first.

We have refrigerators and freezers for storage and microwaves for heating. We will prepare your child's meals as necessary. In an effort to expedite serving and minimize food handling, please be mindful of how you pack your child's food. Any items that require heating must be in separate containers than cold items (i.e., no Bento boxes). Do not send food in glass or metal containers. Pack snacks separately from meals.

Children who arrive after meal times should be fed before they arrive.

CLEANLINESS/HYGIENE

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands are washed upon entering the classroom, before and after meals, after coming in from outside, and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands. Staff washes their hands frequently and also uses hand sanitizer. Washable mats are used for naptime and are disinfected daily. Classroom surfaces and toys are cleaned and disinfected throughout the day when time provides as well as at the end of every day.

Children must use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils. Infants with bottles must have a clean bottle for every feeding. Labeled water bottles are required for your child to drink from throughout the day, whenever they choose. Children will also be provided the use of a cubby or hook, for their personal belongings to be kept. This maintains healthy sanitary conditions, while also providing the benefit of personal space for each child.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. Toilet training cannot begin until the child is old enough to have independent urges. When the time is right for your child, and until he/she is totally successful in his/her toileting, he/she should wear clothes that promote their independence. In addition, your child must have two complete changes of clothes (don't forget socks and sneakers) and many pairs of underwear. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps or zippers, belts, overalls, and onesies. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

We ask that you begin toilet training at home during a weekend or vacation after which, we will follow through and encourage your child here. Your child must be kept in pull-ups with Velcro sides or training pants at all times. Putting a child in diapers part time, and training pants part time, can be confusing and delay the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore, we will continue to use pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom (not just at home, but here, as well) and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

Your child's readiness is something we can discuss because consistency between home and school will be very important. This is a special time for your child, a sign that he/she is growing up. Toilet training should be a good experience.

NAPS/QUIET TIME

Rest time, depending on the classroom, is from 11:30am – 2pm daily. All children under the age of 4 must either nap or rest quietly for a minimum of 30 minutes during this period. Rest time gives everyone a much-needed break after a busy morning to recharge for the afternoon.

CORE KNOWLEDGE CURRICULUM

We know that in most cases, we are your child's first experience away from home. Home is a safe, fun place where mom and dad help and teach. School should just be an extension of this. At Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare, we make learning fun. If your child wants to color, why not color an elephant page for E? When playing tag, why can't we call out letter sounds to unfreeze? Strategically planned curriculum creates easy avenues for your child to learn. We set the foundation for a positive school experience that they will take with them through the rest of their education.

We believe every child has a right to learn at his/her own pace and should not be categorized solely by their age. In our classrooms, we can teach and challenge your child according to his/her abilities. Age does not dictate your child's capabilities.

Our children can learn and acquire so many skills through strategically planned curriculum and repetition. We are a close-knit school with seasoned teachers, so we really get to know your child and his/her best learning method. We make learning fun and you'll be surprised what your child can accomplish and enjoy doing. We are all born innately with a desire to explore and learn.

We encourage you to discuss with your child what things he or she learned during the day. This not only opens communication between you and your child, but will also help your child recall activities, a valuable skill needed in formal schooling. Children learn through repetition and the additional enforcement they get from home, the more beneficial our program will be to them.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are a special time, and we like to really celebrate them! On your child's special day, we can recognize the milestone they have achieved. Please let us know ahead of time what you are planning so we can make sure everyone in the class can enjoy!

INDOOR/OUTDOOR PLAY

Indoor play: We provide a variety of age-appropriate toys for indoor play. Although the toys are categorized in centers, during free play time we believe it is an important part of your child's learning to explore outside the confinements of structured areas. Dolls may ride on trains and Legos built into racetracks need cars to drive on it. Limiting imagination only stifles creativity, and we believe this to be a fundamental part of your child's education. After play time, all toys will return to their designated areas.

Outdoor play: We will play outdoors every day that weather permits. We have a wonderful play area, equipped with a climber, bikes, soccer nets, a kitchen and a house. We also have sidewalk chalk, paintbrushes and other tactile toys making outdoor time an enjoyable event for your child. Other outdoor activities will include walks around the property and water play (during summer). When weather does not permit outdoor play, we will utilize the large, open front room and great lengths will be taken to do more music and movement and physical activities inside.

Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed (see Clothing/Attire section) for outdoor play at all times.

DISCIPLINE

We believe that children behave according to what is expected of them. If children know what rules are in place, they naturally will begin to follow the boundaries set forth. Each classroom uses developmentally appropriate forms of correction for that specific age group.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name-calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld by children as a means of punishment.

BITING

Biting is a typical behavior often seen in infants through two years old. As children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they usually outgrow this behavior. While not uncommon, biting can be an upsetting and potentially harmful behavior. It's best to discourage it from the very first episode.

If a staff member observes a biting incident, the "bitten" child will be attended to and comforted immediately. The area of the bite will be cleaned with soap and water, and ice will be applied. The parent or guardian of the child who was bitten will be called or notified upon pick up (the "biter" will not be identified).

The child who did the biting will be moved to a different area of the room and a staff member will help the child understand that the behavior is not acceptable. The child will be redirected to an appropriate activity.

The incident will be discussed with the parent of the "biter" and we will work with them to identify possible biting causes and discuss strategies to help change the behavior. The child will be monitored closely, making sure he/she is busy with activities and materials during the school day.

If the bite breaks the skin, the parent or guardian of the child bitten will be notified immediately. The parents or guardian of the child that bit will be notified to come and pick up their child.

Chronic biting may require that a child be excluded from enrollment for a period of time (days, weeks, etc.). The child may return to the center when the biting is abated. If the child returns to the center, continues to bite, and is endangering the other children, the child may possibly be terminated from the program.

ILLNESS

Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare is a "well-child" facility. At no time do we provide sick childcare. The following illness policies will be strictly enforced, for the health, well-being, and safety of all concerned.

Sick Child Policy: Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to school. If your child is unable to participate in the normal activities (including being able to play outside), your child MUST stay home. Sick children expose other children, as well as staff, to the spread of their illness and require additional care and attention that we are unable to give. Moreover, sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. Your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices (see Cleanliness and Hygiene).

Children will be visually screened when they arrive in the morning. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to come and pick the child up.

If your child has a virus or other communicable illness, that child AND any siblings in that classroom or other classrooms in the building, will not be able to attend until all symptoms have subsided.

A sick child will not be permitted to return to care until symptoms have been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine. If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to care, please call to discuss it. Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion.

Symptoms requiring removal of child from day care:

- Fever: Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.4°F; (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning - that means the child is fever free without the aid of fever reducing substances)
- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within 4 hours
- Vomiting
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm and pink-eye

MEDICATIONS

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is needed to administer ANY medication, prescription or over-the-counter. All medicines must be in their original container with pharmacist or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered. If your child is too young to meet dosage indications, you must have a note written by your pediatrician stating the medication and dosage indications.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital where you will be asked to meet us.

Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required. Bright Beginnings Learning Center and Daycare is not held liable for any sickness or injury of either parent/guardian or child while on these premises.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency concerning the safety of the children in our care, such as a fire, flood or evacuation of the school for any reason, we will take the children out of the affected area. Parents will be notified by telephone where the children will be taken.

In the case of an intruder or other criminal emergency, we do have a lockdown plan. This type of drill will be done at least twice a year to make sure everyone understands the procedure.

TELEVISION/VIDEO POLICY

We believe that you are bringing your child here for an education and social interaction and that children learn best through active participation, hands-on experiences, interactive conversation, and exploration.

We follow the recommendations established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has found that too much television viewing has been linked to poor performance in school, overweight children, and the establishment of poor dietary habits.

Television screen time is limited to 30 minutes per week and only for preschool and PreK students.

TERMINATION POLICY

We reserve the right to terminate for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Part Time spot needed for a Full Time spot

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating. Parents are required to give two weeks written notice when they decide to terminate childcare.

We reserve the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well being of the staff or other children in attendance.

RECALLS

On a regular basis, www.cpsc.gov/ website will be checked for the list of product recalls that may be found within our preschool. Any toy, equipment or furnishing found to be on this list, will be removed.