Brite Beginnings
CHILDCARE CENTER
Where Little Learners Shine

PARENT HANDBOOK

2026

2027 N. M-43 Hwy. • Hastings, MI 49058
269-331-6152 or 269-331-6156 • Fax 269-331-6157
brite.beginnings@yahoo.com

Voted Best Childcare in Barry County — 2024 & 2025

Welcome to the Brite Beginnings Family

Dear Families,

Welcome to Brite Beginnings Childcare Center & Preschool.

Thank you for considering us to be part of your child's early learning journey. We understand that choosing childcare is one of the most important decisions a family can make, and we are honored that you have placed your trust in us.

At Brite Beginnings, we strive to create a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children feel loved, supported, and encouraged to explore the world around them. Our goal is to provide meaningful experiences that help children grow socially, emotionally, physically, and academically while building confidence and independence.

As a locally owned and operated childcare center, we value strong relationships with our families. We believe the best outcomes happen when parents and teachers work together as partners in a child's development.

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of caring for your child.

With appreciation,

Jenn Rathbun, Director & Co-Owner

Connie Wellman, Assistant Director & Co-Owner

Courtney VanVonderen, Office Manager

Welcome to Brite Beginnings!

Our Mission

At Brite Beginnings Childcare Center & Preschool, our mission is to provide a safe, loving, and enriching environment where children feel valued, families feel supported, and learning happens through meaningful experiences every day.

We are committed to nurturing the whole child — encouraging curiosity, creativity, confidence, kindness, and a lifelong love of learning — while building strong partnerships with families and our community.

Our Philosophy

We believe childhood should be filled with discovery, growth, friendship, and joy.

Children learn best when they feel safe, loved, respected, and encouraged to explore the world around them. Through meaningful relationships, hands-on experiences, and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities, children build confidence, independence, and a strong foundation for future success.

Why Families Choose Us

- **Family-Focused Care —** we believe strong relationships between families and teachers create the best environment for children to thrive.
- **Locally Owned & Operated Since 2019 —** proudly serving families throughout Barry County as a locally owned, women-owned childcare center.
- **Voted Best Childcare in Barry County —** honored to receive this recognition in both 2024 and 2025.
- **Year-Round Programs**
- **Play-Based Learning**
- **Experienced & Caring Staff**

Quick Facts

Hours	Monday – Friday, 6:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Ages Served	Infants, Wobblers, Toddlers, Preschool, School Age
Programs	Full-Time & Part-Time Childcare • Preschool • Before/After School Care • School-Age Summer Program
Curriculum	Creative Curriculum & Zoo-Phonics
Meals	Breakfast, snacks, milk, and water provided. Families provide lunch.
Communication	Email, Office Phone, Remind App, Parent Facebook Group

Quick Reference Guide

Keep this page handy for fast answers to the questions that come up most!

Office Phone	269-331-6152 or 269-331-6156
Fax	269-331-6157
Email	brite.beginnings@yahoo.com
Hours	Monday – Friday, 6:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Tuition Due	By 5:30 PM every Monday, regardless of attendance
Late Pick-Up Fee	$5/minute per child after 5:30 PM ($10/minute after 3 late pick-ups in a year)
Late Payment Fee	$25 if paid more than 5 days past due
Fever Threshold	100.5°F or higher — child must be picked up
Return After Illness	24 hours fever-, vomiting-, and diarrhea-free without medication
Withdrawal Notice	2 weeks written notice required; account paid in full
Stay Connected	Email • Remind App • Parent Facebook Page

Enrollment, Tuition & Billing

Children between 6 weeks and twelve years old are eligible for enrollment. Before your child's first day, please complete and return the following:

- Child Enrollment Form
- Immunization Records
- Health Appraisal from doctor

- Enrollment Contract
- Topical/Non-Prescription Release
- Photo Release
- Auto Pay authorization for tuition payment
- Food Program form
- Written Information Packet documentation
- Biting Policy
- Behavior Management Plan
- All About Me form (infants only)

Registration Fee

$75 for one child, or $100 per family — due once the director assigns a start date.
If a child is withdrawn and later re-enrolls, a second registration fee applies.

Weekly Tuition Rates

Tuition is due by 5:30 PM on Mondays at the start of the week.

Age Group	4–5 days / week (up to 10 hrs/day)	3 days or fewer / week (up to 10 hrs/day)
Birth to 3 years	$330 / week	$250 / week
3 years until school starts	$265 / week	$225 / week
Kindergarten – 5th grade	$225 / week	$190 / week

A minimum of 3 days per week is required, and it must be the same 3 days every week.

School-Age Care (During the School Year)

Care Type	Weekly	Daily
Before & After School	$135	$40
Before School Only	$80	$25
After School Only	$80	$25

If there is no school on a scheduled day, an extra $40 will be added to your child's tuition for that day.

Additional Fees

- More than 10 hours of care in a day: an extra $10/day added to your weekly cost (billed the following week).
- Drop-off or pick-up outside contracted hours: $5 fee per child.
- Late payments (more than 5 days past due): $25 late fee. Special payment arrangements must be made in advance with the Director.
- Returned checks: $25 service fee.
- Late pick-up after 5:30 PM: $5 per minute per child. If this happens more than 3 times in a year, the rate increases to $10 per minute per child. This fee applies even if you call ahead and is added to the following week's bill.

Tuition can be paid by check, cash, or auto-withdrawal explained below. (a signed form is required on file for all families).

Automatic Payment Processing Fee

Brite Beginnings Childcare Center uses Tuition Express to process automatic tuition payments.

Families who choose to pay tuition through ACH (automatic bank account withdrawal) will be charged a processing fee equal to **1% of their total tuition payment**. This fee covers the cost charged by Tuition Express for processing the transaction.

The processing fee will be applied to each automatic ACH payment and is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

For example, a weekly tuition payment of $330 will have a processing fee of $3.30, bringing the total payment to $333.30.

A Note on Tuition & Attendance

Tuition is due regardless of attendance — including illness, family emergencies, medical appointments, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Rates do not change for weeks that include holidays.

This policy keeps our staffing, licensing, and facility costs consistent year-round, and is standard across childcare centers. We're unable to offer credits or refunds for missed days.

DHS Child Care Assistance

Families receiving DHS assistance are responsible for the full regular tuition rate until authorization paperwork is received and approved. Once DHS payments arrive, any applicable credit is applied to the following month's tuition. Parents pay their DHS co-pay directly to the center each month; rates may vary based on DHS disbursement. If authorization lapses, families are responsible for full tuition until DHS notifies us otherwise.

Hours, Holidays & Closures

Hours of Operation

Open year-round, Monday – Friday, 6:00 AM – 5:30 PM.

Closed Days — 2026

Date(s)	Holiday	Paid?
1/1/2026 – 1/2/2026	New Year's Day	Only Jan. 1 paid
1/19/2026	MLK Day (staff training)	Paid
2/16/2026	Presidents Day (staff training)	Paid
5/25/2026	Memorial Day	Paid
7/6/2026 – 7/10/2026	4th of July Holiday	Only July 6 paid
9/7/2026	Labor Day	Paid
9/18/2026	Staff Training Day	Paid
11/26/2026 – 11/27/2026	Thanksgiving Break	Paid
12/21/2026 – 1/1/2027	Christmas Break	Only Christmas Eve/Day & New Year's Eve/Day paid

Closed Days — 2027

Date	Holiday
1/1/2027	New Year's Day
1/18/2027	MLK Day (staff training)
2/15/2027	Presidents Day (staff training)

If we decide to close at any other time, we will give at least two weeks' notice.

Staff Babysitting for Families

Employees may babysit for families after hours and on weekends. If a staff member provides childcare during this time, the center assumes no liability or responsibility for these private arrangements. Employees must sign an agreement with the center for each instance of care provided during center breaks.

Communication

The best ways to reach Jenn and Connie are by email at brite.beginnings@yahoo.com or by calling the office. We also share updates and photos on our Brite Beginnings Parent Facebook Page. Please avoid contacting us outside business hours unless it's to report an illness, attendance change, or emergency.

Communication With Your Child's Teacher

Teachers do not use cell phones while working. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please do so at drop-off or pick-up, or ask about scheduling a time outside of busy periods. We appreciate your respect for their time outside the center.

Ongoing Updates

Infant and toddler parents receive daily reports (feel free to snap a photo — we keep the paper copy on file for licensing). You're always welcome to call and arrange a meeting with your child's teacher, even just to get better acquainted! Share any concerns with the center director. We also send updates via email and the Remind App.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

- Enter through the keypad door using your personal 4-digit code (programmed by the director). Please sign your child in and out each day at the sign-in computer just inside the entrance, then take your child to their classroom.

- Only individuals listed on the Child Information Record — or named in a written note from a parent — may pick up a child. Staff will request photo ID from anyone unfamiliar, including grandparents, and may decline pick-up if there's any concern. Please notify the office of any changes to pick-up plans.
- Your child's teacher may be available for brief questions at pick-up; for longer conversations, please schedule an appointment.
- Parents take full responsibility for their child once they enter the classroom. Please put your phone away at pick-up and give your child your full attention!
- Late pick-up after 5:30 PM: $5/minute per child ($10/minute after 3 late pick-ups in a year). This applies even if you call ahead, and repeated late pick-ups may be cause for dismissal from the program.
- Please arrive no later than 5:20 PM so you can be out of the building by 5:30 PM.
- Repeated late pick-ups place a strain on staff, who may need to stay beyond their scheduled shifts even though our official closing time is 5:30 PM.
- Our staffing is carefully planned around each child's enrolled hours to maintain proper ratios and licensing compliance. If you need an earlier drop-off or later pick-up than scheduled, please request approval in advance.
- Not sure of your child's scheduled hours? Just ask the office staff.
- Children arriving before 8:00 AM or staying after 4:00–4:30 PM will be combined with other groups until ratios allow separation; groups are also combined near closing time.
- Infant room families: please drop off your oldest child first and pick them up last — older children moving through younger rooms can be a safety risk for little ones.

Withdrawal & Dismissal Policy

A two-week written notice is required before withdrawing a child. Your account must be paid in full — including tuition for the two-week notice period — before withdrawal is complete.

The director reserves the right to cancel a child's enrollment at any time, for reasons that may include:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees
- Not observing the center's rules as outlined in the parent agreement
- Special needs that cannot be adequately met with current staffing patterns
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by a parent or child
- Behavior Management Plan dismissal
- Expired or missing immunizations and/or physical exam

Custody Orders

Until custody is established by court action, one parent may not limit the other's ability to pick up a child in our care. Please notify the center immediately of any changes to custody arrangements and provide the director with certified copies of custody orders.

Public School Vacations / In-Service Days

On days when public school is not in session, parents should check with the director to confirm there's room for their school-age child.

Staff Training Days

We include 3 paid in-service days each year so staff can prepare lessons, gather resources, and attend training. The center is closed to children on these days (see the Closed Days section above).

Unexpected Closings

We remain open on public-school snow days (though we may open late if needed). In rare situations — an ice storm, power outage, or water service disruption — we may need to close. We'll do everything we can to notify families promptly.

- The center will close for a blizzard watch or warning.
- The center will close for an ice storm watch or warning.
- Stay in touch through our email (brite.beginnings@yahoo.com), our Facebook page (Brite Beginnings Childcare Parent Page Hastings — for current families only), and the Remind App.

Tornado & Disaster Procedure

In the event of a tornado or disaster warning, children are moved to their designated safe room and remain sheltered until the all-clear signal is given.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect and complete regular training on recognizing and reporting it.

Daily Life at Brite Beginnings

Rest Time

All children have some rest time each day; the length depends on age and individual needs. Please bring a small blanket for naptime — blankets are laundered weekly at the center (or sooner if needed).

Special Possessions

Occasionally a special toy or treasure can help bridge home and school, and we're happy to help make that a positive experience. That said, personal toys often lead to distractions or conflicts in the classroom, so we encourage keeping belongings at home unless a teacher has scheduled a Show-and-Share day.

Brite Beginnings is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misplaced personal items brought from home.

Please Keep These Items at Home

Toy weapons (including toy guns), gum, money, and candy — these can pose safety or management concerns, especially for school-age children.

Clothing

We recommend washable, comfortable clothing — water play, sand play, and the occasional accident make for a messy (and fun!) day.

- Keep a labeled, bagged set of extra clothing at the center (underwear, socks, pants, shirt).
- If wet or dirty clothes come home, please send a fresh extra set the next morning.
- Children go outdoors daily when it's 20°F or warmer, so dress accordingly — light jacket, cap, and rain boots in fall/spring; heavy coat, mittens, scarf, hat, and snow boots in winter.
- An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school helps with sudden temperature changes.
- Please label all clothing, coats, and boots with your child's name.
- Bring shoes and a jacket daily (or keep a set at the center) — shoes are a must for emergencies.

Diapers & Toilet Training

Parents provide labeled diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream until a child is fully toilet trained; a notice goes home when supplies run low (we try to give at least 2 days' notice).

Our teachers are experienced in toilet training and will partner closely with you. "User-friendly" clothing (no tricky overalls, zippers, or snaps) makes training easier — please provide plenty of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing during this stage.

Teething Necklaces or Bracelets

These are not permitted at daycare due to licensing rules.

Photos, Publicity & Security

Photographs & Publicity

We love capturing everyday moments! Photos are shared on our private Facebook parent page (accessible only to current families and staff — access is removed once a family or staff member leaves the program). We also occasionally post to our public Facebook and Instagram pages. If you'd prefer your child not appear on our public pages, please note that on your permission form.

Camera Use Policy

For everyone's safety, we use a closed-circuit video system in designated areas. Only center directors and authorized administrative staff can access footage — families and staff do not have direct access. Cameras help us:

- Monitor daily operations and safety
- Review incidents involving children or staff
- Assist with concerns raised by families or staff
- Support licensing or legal investigations when required

- Cameras are located in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds — never in bathrooms or private staff areas.
- All footage is confidential and used only for center-related purposes.
- Requests to review footage will be considered case-by-case, only for incidents involving your own child, and only when it doesn't compromise others' privacy.
- Staff are notified at hire that surveillance is in place and may be used in performance reviews.
- Footage is automatically deleted unless flagged for investigation.
- Unauthorized sharing or access is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary or legal action.

Meals, Snacks & Food Allergies

- We provide breakfast, milk, water, and two snacks daily for children eating table food (unless allergies apply). We participate in the CACFP food program.
- Whole vitamin D milk is served to children 12–24 months; 1% milk is served from 25 months through age 12.
- Please notify both the director and your child's teacher of any dietary needs or allergies, and supply any special foods required.

- Parents send lunch daily. If lunch is forgotten, we'll provide one for $5/day (added to your weekly bill); frequent occurrences may be grounds for dismissal.
- Lunches should be easy to self-serve and clearly labeled. A microwave is available, but we ask families to limit use to once or twice a week. Preschool lunch boxes should include a frozen ice pack, as refrigerator space is limited.

See the Nutrition Policy at the end of this handbook for more details.

Infant Bottles & Food

- Parents provide formula or breast milk for infants up to 12 months, along with all infant food. If not provided, we'll supply it for $5/meal (frequent need may be grounds for dismissal). We do not keep formula or infant food in stock.
- Bottles must be premade at home — staff cannot prepare formula or breast milk.
- Label every bottle with your child's full name, the date, time prepared, contents (formula or breast milk), and ounce amount.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is welcome any time. Infant rooms have two chairs available for nursing moms, and our staff room with a couch offers extra privacy on request — just ask a staff member.

Birthday Celebrations

Families are welcome to send a store-bought treat to share on birthdays or special occasions (some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines, so please check with your child's teacher in advance). Parents are always welcome to attend their child's celebration. If a celebration held elsewhere doesn't include the whole class, please mail invitations directly — we're unable to share class mailing lists or phone numbers.

Health, Immunizations & Safety

Immunizations & Physicals

Michigan law requires all children in child care to be fully vaccinated. Families needing a delay must obtain a certified Nonmedical Waiver Form from their local health department.

A Health Appraisal form (including immunization records and date of last physical) is required before enrollment and must be updated yearly at your child's well-check. Keeping immunizations and physicals current is the parent's responsibility — please report updates to the director in writing.

Michigan Department of Health Immunization Schedule

Age	Required Doses
2–3 months	1 dose each: DTaP, polio, Hib, hepatitis B, PCV
4–5 months	2 doses each: DTaP, polio, Hib, hepatitis B, PCV
6–18 months	3 doses DTaP; 2 doses each polio, Hib, hepatitis B; 3 doses PCV
19 months – 4 years	4 doses DTaP; 3 doses polio; 4 doses PCV; 3 doses hepatitis B; complete Hib series (or 1 dose); 1 dose MMR; 1 dose Varicella

Physical Exam Requirements

- Under 2½ years: physical within 3 months before enrollment, repeated yearly.
- 2½ years to kindergarten: physical within the previous year before enrollment, repeated every 2 years.
- Kindergarten and older: parents sign the Physical Health/Immunizations Parental Acknowledgement for School-Age Programs letter yearly, plus submit a copy of immunization records.

Health & Wellness Policy

You know your child best, and we trust you won't bring a sick child to the center. If your child becomes ill, develops an unknown rash, or seems out of character while in our care, the teacher will consult the director and may call you to pick up your child.

- Please arrive within 1 hour of being notified. Your child will be made comfortable until you arrive — if too ill for the classroom, they'll wait in the office with the director.
- Please always call the center to report an absence (for any reason) so staff can plan the day and talk with classmates about their friend's absence. Please don't contact the teacher directly for absences.
- Tuition rates remain the same regardless of absence.

Your child will be sent home for:

- An unknown rash
- A fever of 100.5°F or higher (Tylenol from home may be given for mild fever, aches, or headache)

- A highly contagious condition — head lice, chicken pox, strep throat, pinworms, mumps, impetigo, pink eye, hand-foot-mouth, etc. Siblings will be required to stay home even if they are not showing signs or symptoms.
- Diarrhea or vomiting (more than three loose, watery stools) — with consideration for known allergies or medications
- A persistent cough (cough suppressants/allergy meds not recommended unless prescribed)
- Any illness that keeps your child from playing outside or joining regular classroom activities

Your child may return after:

- Written verification from a doctor
- 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication
- 24 hours free of vomiting and diarrhea
- Chicken pox: all lesions scabbed over
- Head lice: treatment completed and all nits gone
- Hand-foot-mouth: all bumps scabbed and no longer oozing
- Contagious illness: 24 hours of antibiotics completed
- Persistent cough: 24 hours without cough suppressant or allergy medication
- Emergency medical treatment: your child will be taken to the hospital listed on their emergency card. If an ambulance is needed, parents are responsible for the cost.
- Superficial injuries are cleaned, bandaged, or iced as needed, and you'll be told about them at pick-up.
- Serious injuries (including head injuries) are reported to parents immediately.
- We report all communicable diseases, when required, to the local health department and to families.

A Friendly Reminder

We know it's hard to take off work for a sick child — but keeping sick children home helps our whole center stay healthy and within state guidelines. Thank you for your understanding!

Medication

Only management administers over-the-counter medication such as Tylenol, Motrin, or cold/cough medicine (drop off in the office) — per our licensing consultant, a child too sick to attend without it should stay home.

All staff are trained to administer prescribed medication such as antibiotics, inhalers, breathing treatments, and EpiPens.

- Bring all medication to the office — never send it in your child's backpack.
- Medication is stored up high and out of reach.

Prescription medication requires:

- A signed and dated medication authorization form on file
- The medication in its original, pharmacy-labeled box or bottle with your child's name
- A teacher overseeing and logging each dose (time, date, amount, and initials)
- Special health care needs posted discreetly in the classroom and shared with staff who work with that child

Employee & Volunteer Illness

Staff and volunteers follow the same illness guidelines as children, staying home when too ill to perform their duties or when contagious.

Injuries & Accidents

We take every precaution to keep your child safe. If an injury or incident occurs (biting, a child left unattended, inappropriate touching between children, etc.), the teacher completes an Accident Report; a copy can be sent home on request, with the original kept in your child's file.

- You'll be notified of any serious injury right away.
- For a major medical emergency, we call 911 first, then notify you immediately. Your child is transported to the hospital listed on their Child Information Record (or the nearest hospital).
- For non-emergency injuries (pinched fingers, small bumps) that might warrant a doctor's visit, we'll let you know and leave that decision to your family.

Guidance & Behavior Support

We encourage good behavior through positive verbal support, helping children pause, reflect, and build self-control.

- Redirection helps a child who is struggling calm down and remember expected behavior — it's not a punishment, and the child is praised and welcomed back once ready.
- Redirection is used only after other approaches haven't worked, to keep a child from hurting themselves or others.
- Our teachers use consistent, positive techniques. Anything aversive, cruel, or humiliating — including spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, or any corporal

punishment — is strictly prohibited, even with a parent's permission. Children are never punished for toilet-training lapses, and food is never withheld or forced.

- Center rules are explained to children in ways that build self-esteem, self-control, and respect for others.

Our teachers focus on:

- Setting clear limits to keep children safe
- Keeping a consistent daily routine
- Giving each child a sense of love and safety
- Planning the environment to reduce conflict
- Modeling appropriate behavior
- Building self-control, self-esteem, and respect for others

When challenges arise, we:

- Problem-solve together
- State positively what a child can do (e.g., "walking feet" instead of "no running") • Redirect to another activity

Our goal is always to prevent suspension or expulsion. If a behavior persists, we'll talk with you about how to support your child together. Remember — children are children, not adults, and we don't expect perfection!

Ways you can help:

- Talk with your child's teacher about the best way to respond to challenging behaviors, both at home and at daycare
- Check in with the teacher daily
- Share your child's needs, interests, and routine preferences (sleeping, eating, etc.)
- Discuss any challenging behaviors you notice at home
- Follow through on any recommended screening or assessment

Behavior Management Plan

Our goal is to partner with families to support each child's developmental, social, and emotional needs. When challenging behaviors occur, we follow a structured process before considering suspension or dismissal:

- **Step 1 – Initial Concerns (Week 1):** Teachers document incidents and communicate concerns with the family, suggesting strategies for home and school.
- **Step 2 – Observation & Support Plan (Weeks 1–2):** Staff observe and document patterns. The director may create a Behavior Support Plan with goals and strategies, and may ask to meet with parents.
- **Step 3 – Progress Monitoring (Weeks 2–3):** Teachers and administration track progress using agreed-upon strategies, with weekly updates to the family.
- **Step 4 – Family Conference (Week 3):** If concerns continue, a formal meeting is scheduled with the director, teaching staff, and family to discuss next steps.
- **Step 5 – Final Review (Week 4):** If progress hasn't been made or safety concerns persist, the director determines whether the child may remain enrolled — dismissal is possible at this stage.

Immediate Dismissal: if a child's behavior results in serious injury, extreme disruption, or repeated unsafe incidents, dismissal may occur sooner at the director's discretion.

Classrooms & Daily Routines

Classroom Transitions

Children move to the next classroom based on age, availability, and social-emotional readiness:

- Infant Room: 6 weeks – 12/18 months
- Wobbler Room: 12/18 months – 2 years
- Toddler Room: 2 years – 2 years 9 months / 3 years
- Preschool: 2 years 9 months / 3 years – 4 years, then Young 5's or Kindergarten
- School Age: Kindergarten – 5th grade

Younger rooms have more flexibility, as placement is based on maintaining a 1:4 teacher-to-student ratio rather than strict age cutoffs. Before any move to the next classroom, we talk with parents and staff to make sure everyone agrees the child is ready.

Sample Daily Schedule

Every classroom posts its own daily routine. Infants don't follow a fixed schedule — their care is based on individual needs.

Time	Activity
6:00 – 8:00 AM	Arrival, free play, diaper changes as needed

8:00 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Brushing teeth / free play
9:00 – 9:30 AM	Circle time / group play
9:30 – 9:45 AM	Diapers
9:45 – 10:00 AM	Art / science
10:00 – 10:15 AM	Snack
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Math, puzzles, manipulatives
10:30 – 11:15 AM	Outside time / gross motor play
11:15 AM	Handwashing
11:30 AM	Lunch
12:00 – 12:15 PM	Reading or music while preparing for nap
12:15 – 2:15 PM	Nap / quiet time
2:15 – 2:30 PM	Diapers
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Free time
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Snack time
3:30 – 4:30 PM	Outside time / gross motor play
4:30 PM	Diapers
4:45 – 5:30 PM	Free play and pick-up time

Curriculum

We use the Creative Curriculum, which centers learning on children's everyday lives through play. It covers four key areas of development — social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language — through five components:

- Knowing children — understanding each child's development across all domains
- Creating a responsive environment — setting up spaces that match children's abilities and interests
- What children are learning — building learning through relationships, interactions, and hands-on materials

- Caring and teaching — the varied roles teachers play in supporting children
- Building partnerships with families — working together as partners in each child's care

Zoo-Phonics

Zoo-Phonics is a fun, multi-sensory phonics program that teaches letter sounds through movement, music, and play. Each letter is represented by an animal that makes its matching sound (Allie Alligator says /a/, for example).

Children see the letter shape, hear the sound, say the sound, and move their bodies to reinforce memory — engaging multiple learning styles and building a strong foundation for reading and writing.

Cleanliness & Hand Washing

Children wash hands with soap and warm water before meals and snacks, and after toileting or diapering; hands and faces are washed after meals. Staff wash hands before handling food, after toileting assistance, after wiping bodily secretions, and before/after diaper changes. Anyone exposed to blood or bodily fluids washes their hands; gloves are worn for such contact and discarded properly. Staff clean and disinfect surfaces after any spill.

- Toys are sanitized daily.
- Play equipment is cleaned at least every other day, or as needed.
- Large equipment is cleaned weekly.
- Carpets are vacuumed and floors mopped daily; carpets are deep-cleaned as needed.

Teeth Brushing

Teeth brushing is part of our daily routine after breakfast. Please provide a toothbrush and toothpaste — your child's teacher will let you know when more toothpaste is needed, and a new toothbrush is required if your child becomes ill.

Licensing Notebook

We don't keep a physical licensing notebook on-site, but internet access is available. You can review licensing rules anytime at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Changes in Policies

Fees, procedures, and policies in this handbook may be updated at the discretion of the Program Director.

This handbook was last revised: January 2026.

Nutrition Policy

Policy Statement

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and well-being. To provide the best possible nutrition environment, Brite Beginnings has developed the following policies to encourage healthy eating habits that last a lifetime.

Child Care Nutrition

We follow USDA CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines for all foods served, providing a healthy, balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, while limiting foods and beverages high in sugar.

- Fruit offered at least once a day
- A vegetable offered at least once a day
- Whole grain foods served at least once a day
- Juice limited to once a day, in an age-appropriate serving size — always 100% fruit juice
- No sugar-sweetened beverages served
- Whole milk served to children up to 2 years
- Skim or 1% milk served to children 2 years and older

Role of Staff in Nutrition Education

- Staff provide nutrition learning opportunities at least once a week •

Staff model healthy eating habits in front of children

Meals and snacks are scheduled so no child goes more than 3 hours without being offered food, and we provide a variety of nutritionally balanced, high-quality foods every day.

Professional Development

All staff complete annual nutrition training to reinforce the important role nutrition plays in children's overall well-being.

Office Hours

Office hours may vary and are subject to change at our discretion.

Staff Member	Schedule
Jenn	Off Mondays. Tue/Wed/Thu 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
Connie	Mon – Thu 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Off Fridays.
Courtney	Off Mondays. Tue/Wed/Thu 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Off Fridays.

Frequently Asked Questions

Enrollment & Tuition

Q: What ages do you accept?

A: Children from 6 weeks to twelve years old are eligible for enrollment.

Q: How much is tuition and when is it due?

A: Weekly rates depend on your child's age and schedule (see the Enrollment, Tuition & Billing section). Tuition is due by 5:30 PM every Monday and does not change for absences or holiday weeks.

Q: Do I still pay if my child is absent?

A: Yes. Tuition is due regardless of attendance, including illness, vacations, or emergencies, since our staffing and operating costs remain the same year-round.

Q: How do I withdraw my child?

A: We require two weeks' written notice, and your account must be paid in full — including tuition for that two-week period — before withdrawal is complete.

Daily Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Q: Who is allowed to pick up my child?

A: Only people listed on your Child Information Record, or named in a written note from a parent. Staff will always ask unfamiliar adults (even grandparents) for photo ID.

Q: What happens if I'm running late for pick-up?

A: A fee of $5/minute per child applies after 5:30 PM ($10/minute after 3 late pick-ups in a year). This applies even if you call ahead, so please plan to arrive by 5:20 PM to be out the door on time.

Q: What do I need to bring daily?

A: Shoes and a jacket every day (or keep a set at the center), a labeled extra set of clothing, and — for infants and toddlers — labeled diapers, wipes, and premade bottles.

Health & Safety

Q: When does my child need to stay home?

A: For a fever of 100.5°F or higher, an unknown rash, vomiting/diarrhea, a highly contagious illness, or a persistent cough. See the Health & Wellness Policy for the full list.

Q: When can my child return after being sick?

A: Generally 24 hours after being fever-, vomiting-, and diarrhea-free without medication, or sooner with written doctor verification. Specific illnesses (lice, chicken pox, hand-foot-mouth) have their own return criteria — see the Health & Wellness Policy.

Q: Can staff give my child medication?

A: Only management administers over-the-counter medication (dropped off at the office). Staff are trained to give prescribed medication with a signed authorization form and the medication in its original, pharmacy-labeled container.

Communication & Policies

Q: How will I hear about closures or important updates?

A: Through email (brite.beginnings@yahoo.com), the Remind App, and our private Parent Facebook Page.

Q: Who do I talk to if I have a concern?

A: Start with your child's teacher at drop-off or pick-up or reach out to Jenn, Connie, or Courtney by email or phone. For anything more involved, we're happy to schedule a time to talk.

Q: What if there's no school for my school-age child?

A: Check with the office in advance to confirm there's room that day — an extra $40 is added to tuition for non-school days when your child attends.

Q: How is challenging behavior handled?

A: We use positive guidance and redirection first. If concerns continue, our Behavior Management Plan walks through a structured, collaborative process with families before any suspension or dismissal is considered.

Thank you for being part of the Brite Beginnings family!