



Bright Starz

Learning Center

Welcome to Bright Starz Learning Center!

Your handbook is a collaborative effort between staff, parents, and Board of Directors. Our goal is to provide quality childcare within a developmentally appropriate learning environment, and Christian based. We strive to ensure that everyone has a positive experience and enjoys their time with our childcare family. Parents/Guardians are respected partners in achieving this goal. Your suggestions and contributions are always welcome. This book is always a work in progress. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with the Director.

I. Our Center

Program Philosophy Statement: Bright Starz Learning Center strives to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in a way that encourages children to grow, discover, and learn through a variety of age and developmentally appropriate experiences. Our program is designed to enhance the whole child, as well as meeting the individual needs of the child in a positive atmosphere. Children learn through their daily experiences and routines to make decisions, carry out responsibilities, express themselves creatively and discover new friendships. Children are exposed to music, movement, art, science, reading, dramatic play, life skills, blocks, outdoor play and manipulative experiences.

II. Enrollment & Financial Information

Admission: Admission at Bright Starz Learning Center is an ongoing process and we accept applications year round. Acceptance into our program is only limited by space, availability and completion of all necessary paperwork. Care is provided on a priority basis to meet full-time childcare needs. Waiting lists are routinely updated, checked and revised to assist parents in placement of their child/children.

Admission is complete with the following steps being taken:

1. Interview/ Tour with the Director or designated person in charge.
2. Completed Application packet
3. Completed and current Medical/ Immunization Form from the child's doctor
4. Parent Tuition Contract signed and returned
5. Registration Fee is received (\$ 25.00 per family)
6. First week's tuition payment is received in advance of service

An **on-site orientation visit** is mandatory for both parent/guardian and child prior to enrollment. The length of the visit may vary depending upon the needs of the child and time restraints of the parent/guardian. The Director may be contacted to schedule a time that is best for all parties.

Hours of Operation and Holidays: The Center is open from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm. Monday through Friday. We are also open most snow days and teacher workdays.

The Center will be closed the following days:

New Years Day; Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Easter Good Friday;

Memorial Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving {two days}; Christmas {three days}

The Center will **close at 2:00 pm** the day before the actual holiday. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the Center will be closed on the Friday prior to the holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the Center will be closed on the following Monday.

9 Hour Days: For the well being of your child, we ask that he or she not be in attendance at the center for more than 9 hours a day. If you feel you will be unable to adhere to this guideline please speak with the Director.

Tuition and Fees General Info

Delinquent Accounts: Bright Starz Learning Center's goal is to have an open and positive relationship with each family. We understand that family finances may change or be stretched from time to time making it difficult to pay your child care bill. We ask parents/guardians to discuss these matters with the Director.

Payments: Tuition Statements will formulate on our app "Brightwheel". You may utilize Brightwheel to pay your tuition, call and pay over the phone via debit or credit, or utilize the Tuition Box, which is located at the front office for you to drop your payments into (Cash, Check or Money Order). Please make payments payable to: "Bright Starz Learning Center ". Payments are due by the 5th of each month.

Subsidized parents DSS : Parents are responsible for the co-pay set by DSS which you are required to pay to Bright Starz Learning Center as per our contract, by the 10th of each month.

Field Trips: from time to time parents will be also asked to contribute funds towards an outing, field trip special event, or organized group activity.

Childcare Service Contract Agreement Information & Forms

Contract Agreement: You will be required to sign a service agreement. If it is not attached to your Parent Handbook please ask the Director to provide one.

1. Contract Period Each contract period is from January 1st to December 31st. The Board Of Directors reviews contracts every Fall, and will inform parents in advance of tuition and other relevant changes that may take place at the beginning of each fiscal year.

2. Childcare Schedule You are contracting for a childcare space in our center, Staffing patterns are determined by the schedules contracted by your compliance with The North Carolina Division of Child Development. Therefore, you must adhere to the contracted schedule selected. No variances are permitted unless cleared by the Director in advance. We expect you to call in any delays or absences if your child is normally expected at the center, but will not be attending.

3. Registration Fee Upon admissions to the center registration fee of \$ 25.00 per family will apply upon registration

4. Late Payment Fee late payment fee of \$ 15.00 will be charged if payment is not received by the close of business on the MONDAY following receipt of your Fee statement.

5. NSF Fee you will be charged \$ 25.00 fee for any check returned to us for NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS.

6. Late Pick-up Fee The Center is licensed to open at 6:30 am to 5:00 pm. Please pick up your child/children promptly. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute.

7. **Holding Fee** a \$ 50.00 holding fee is required if you would like to withdraw your child/ren from the program and wish to reserve your spot for a later date (i.e. during summer or winter vacation).

8. **Unpaid Balances** Any special arrangements for payment must be made in advance with the Director. Children of those parents with unpaid balances of MORE THAN TWO WEEKS will be subject to withdrawal from the program until their account is current.

9. **Delinquent Accounts** Delinquent Accounts are subject to a continued late fee of \$15.00 every tuition period. If payment agreements are not fulfilled and delinquency notices go unanswered, the Center will seek legal restitution. A delinquent account will be given to a credit-reporting agency.

10. **DSS Families** Dss or other Subsidized Parents/ Guardians are responsible for payment of their fees every two weeks. A \$ 15.00 late fee will be applied if payment is not received in a timely manner.

11. **DSS Attendance Requirements** If your child is not at the center during the times you have contracted, or at the daycare beyond the times you have contracted, you will be responsible for paying the amount DSS is not obligated to pay.

12. **Sibling Discount** There is a 20% reduction in tuition on the lower paying childcare fee for full fee families who have more than one child enrolled at the Center.

13. **Holidays** We are closed the following holidays: New years Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Easter Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Holiday, Christmas Holiday, Staff Development , as well as scheduled cleaning days. The weekday closest to that holiday will be the day the center is closed to observe the holiday.

14. **Inclement Winter Weather** we will be open if the public schools are closed, if weather permitting. Listen to the following News Stations:

WGHP channel Fox 8

WFMY channel 9

15. **Closures** There are no tuition reductions for the holidays, winter delays or closings observed by the center.

16. **Withdrawal Policy** Two weeks written notice must be given to the Center prior to your child's last day of attendance. Please be aware that you are responsible for payment of services until the withdrawal date. Your courtesy is appreciated not only for billing purposes, but your child's vacant spot may make it possible for another child to attend our program.

17. **Future Contract Changes** Bright Starz Learning Center Board of Directors will review future changes to the State Market Rates as they become available, and increase Tuition Rates as deemed necessary at that time, Parents will be required to sign a contract agreement should the Board of Directors make any changes to current tuition and fee rates.

III. Children's Programs

Transportation: School Age children are taken to school while school is in session. Upon enrollment you must notify the school that your child will be attending our program. In case a child does not arrive at the Center, Staff will call the parents. Please notify the center if your child will not be present, or need transportation.

Field Trips scheduled seasonal or per activities, children under two are not permitted to go on field trips. Prior to the field trip a parent permission form must be completed by the parent or guardian.

Classroom Management: The Teachers provide a warm, nurturing environment for each child and guidance to teaching assistants. All Staff are involved in professional development to enhance quality care and remain sensitive to each child's need. It is our goal to provide positive self-esteem throughout the center in order to encourage children to feel good about themselves, their classmates and their caregivers.

Discipline Policy Discipline is to guide, teach, and help the child develop the internal controls to behave appropriately. Our staff uses positive behavior management techniques to help children understand adult expectations for behavior, to anticipate possible conflict situations, and to intervene in a timely manner to prevent problems from occurring or escalating. Staff does not utilize corporal punishment or frightening methods of control; isolate; humiliate; or withhold food or sleep as a punishment. Emphasis are placed on teaching alternative behaviors and giving each child situations to practice and establish new acceptable habits. Staff may utilize a “cooling off” alternative when a child is in danger of hurting him/herself or others. When necessary a parent-teacher conference will be requested. The center reserves the right to withdraw any child who endangers the welfare of the children, staff or program.

Nap/Rest Time The Infant, toddler and preschool children have a rest time after lunch. If a child does not sleep, he/she needs to rest their body and mind. The children must rest quietly on their cots. If he or she is awake he/she is offered quiet activities until the remaining children are up.

Toileting and Diapering: The bathroom is always open to the children. Special attention is given to toileting during transition times such as: going outside, before and after meals, rest time etc. Children learn to respect each other’s privacy and help model for others who may be learning to use the toilet. Self help skills and proper hygiene is emphasized. Children are encouraged to clean themselves and never made to feel “bad” about accidents. Teachers assist the child in clean-up and employing future strategies to master toileting skills. The bathroom is disinfected several times a day. Proper sanitation and diapering procedures are followed at all times. Teachers will work alongside parents in “potty” training skills.

Reflecting Diversity and Respecting Differences: Our program strives to reflect diversity and respect the differences of all individuals and families. We have families with varying parenting styles, values and beliefs other than those of your family. Our children have daily opportunities to explore diversity through curriculum, book, music, learning area, dramatic play props, etc. Our center employs and staff, children and families of varying needs, mental and physical capabilities. Some children may receive on-site services for their varying abilities through various support agencies.

IV. Health Policies & Emergency Procedures

Health Care Plan

Bright Starz Learning Center has a detailed health & safety policy and procedure that are followed in our day-to-day operations. The Director also consults with our designated Health Care Professional when necessary. If you have questions related to your child's health please do not hesitate to speak to the Director. A copy of our Health Care Plan is also available in each classroom for your review. Some of our Health Care Policies include:

Medical Form: North Carolina State requires that all children entering childcare must have record of current physical. Medical record must be completed by your child's physician (10) days after enrollment, medical form and immunization must be signed by your child's doctor.

If your child shows any of the symptoms below, he/she is required to remain out of the Center until fully recovered. Please remember to be considerate of other families and staff members.

A contagious or communicable disease

A temperature of 100 degrees or higher

Heavy nasal discharge: yellow or greenish in color

A persistent cough

Draining eyes, ears, nose, or any open sore

Diarrhea or vomiting

Lack of proper immunizations

Cannot participate in play both indoors and outdoors

Ringworm

Strep throat : child must be out of daycare for a minimum of 48 hours and must be using prescription medication

Unknown questionable rashes and impetigo, measles, chickenpox, etc. Highly infectious conditions will require a physician's written approval before returning to the center.

Daily Health/Development Check: Upon entering the center, our staff will make a "well child "check of each child. The child must be symptom free and capable of participating in the day's activities to remain within our program that day. It is our policy to take children outdoors on a daily basis (weather permitting).

Ill Child at the Center: If your child becomes ill at the Center, we will call for you, or a designated adult on your Emergency Card to pick up your child as soon as possible. The child will be provided a safe quiet place to rest away from other children until you arrive.

Medications: We do not give medication unless the child takes seizure medication or those with allergies that must use an Epi-pen, or diaper rash ointment.

Exceptions: Sunscreens and topical lotions may be applied as needed under written parental medication form and instructions.

Accidents/Incidents: Children sometimes receive bumps and bruises as part of their daily routine. They may also be involved in various "incidents" worth documenting, such as disruptive or destructive behavior. You will be notified of these events through an **Incident Report Form** that will be attached to your child's sign in/out sheet. Your signature is required and lets us know that you have been notified. The staff will use basic First Aid procedures to care for bumps and bruises. If more care is needed for the injury we will notify the parent, and encourage follow up with your child's health care provider, or we will seek emergency medical care. In the case of incidents, either party may request a conference to discuss further strategies in dealing with future incidents.

Emergency Procedures

Parent/Guardian Emergency Notification: If your child' injury or symptoms of illness require professional attention, we will notify you immediately. The child will be transported to Alamance Regional Hospital. You are expected to go to the hospital to receive your child. The signed application and emergency medical form give us permission to seek the necessary treatment to insure the child's safety until you or your physician arrives.

Emergency Information Updates: Must be kept updated with current phone numbers, addresses, emergency numbers and other pertinent information in case an emergency situation occurs. Parents/Guardians must promptly notify the center of any changes in contact information. In addition, custody and/or restraining orders can only be enforced with the proper legal paperwork on file at the center.

First Aid: A completely stocked first aid kit is located in the Center at all times. If the children leave the Center for a walk or field trip, the teachers are required to carry copies of emergency cards and a first aid kit. All staff attend in-services for Health and Safety issues given by qualified registered persons. Staff members are required to be certified in First Aid and CPR for children and adults.

Fire Drills: Fire drills, both announced and unannounced, are conducted a minimum of once a month.

Emergency Situations, Natural Disasters, Loss of Utilities etc.: Parent will be notified to pick up children immediately when emergency situation arises such as natural disaster, loss of utilities, etc, through the above procedures, This would be implemented when a hazardous condition or situation presents itself and hampers the welfare of the children and staff and hampers the implementation of proper and safety regulations necessary for the correct care of children. All closings are at the discretion of the Director and Board of Directors.

V. Nutrition Program

USDA/CACFP Regulations: All Center meals meet CACFP standards for a healthy and balanced diet. USDA requirements for food/drink portions vary upon the age of the child. Our Kitchen Staff is advised of the requirements and meets all USDA standards. Full menus are posted on each bulletin board and at the kitchen door. If your child has allergies it will be posted in the classrooms and kitchen, if we need to substitute any foods it will be available upon request of the parent

Meal Schedule:

Breakfast 8:00-8:45 Lunch 11:15 Snack 2:30

VI. Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement – Communication

Sign In/Out Responsibilities: Parents/ Guardians or those responsible for drop off and pick up, you must sign the child in and out with the proper time and signature in our parent Sign In/Out book. This is crucial for several reasons- for safety and liability purposes; the Sign In/Out Book gives the staff an accurate attendance at any time throughout the day. For financial purposes, it is utilized to track the number of hours your child is in attendance. Repeated failure to comply with this procedure may result in dismissal from the program.

Parent Bulletin Board: There is a Parent Bulletin Board in each room. It contains required postings such as Day Care License, Day Care Regulations, representatives' name and consultant information, a current Board member list, Menus, each program's weekly curriculum activities, and upcoming events.

Parent Newsletter: The Center Newsletter includes all the latest happenings, want ads for items we are currently looking for, updates, information from Director and Programs News. Lead Teachers also distribute weekly and monthly information pertaining to their individual programs.

Parent Conferences: Conferences with your child's teacher or the Director are available to parents/guardians to discuss their child's needs, staffing issues or any other concerns. Parents are encouraged to set up a conference as needed.

Arrival: Parents are expected to accompany their child into the classroom to sign him or her in for the day, assist their child with removing outer clothing, making sure that the child is comfortably settled into the classroom, and is under the care of a teacher before leaving. Please take time to verbally communicate any pertinent information about the child's well being to the teacher in charge and please remember to say "Goodbye". If your child will not be attending on a scheduled day, please call the Center by 9:00 AM.

Daily Departure: When picking up your child be sure staff are aware he or she is leaving, and signed out for the day. Check their cubby for artwork, dirty clothes etc. Once your child is ready you must monitor and help reinforce our policy that children stay with an adult at all times. Children must never run out of the Center unaccompanied by an adult. Cars are constantly arriving and departing and we do not want your child to be at risk of a serious accident. Please guide children safely to your vehicle.

Emergency Release Form: Please be sure that all individuals authorized to pick up your child are listed on the emergency release form and have current phone numbers. ANY adult not known by the staff will be asked for a photo ID. This policy is in place for the safety of your child. If an emergency situation arises, call the Director or designated staff member with a specific description of the adult picking up the child, and have that person be prepared to show a photo ID before we release the child.

Parent Involvement – the Center

Open Door Policy: Parents/Guardians are always welcomed visitors at our Center.

Parent Volunteers: We welcome parents to come into the classrooms and work with the teaching staff. We encourage parents/guardians to share special skills, knowledge and or hobbies with our programs. Please speak with your child's teacher if you would like to volunteer.

Board Members: If you have any issues or would like to be involved in future growth of the Center, please contact the Director or any Board Member. A current Board member list is posted on each bulletin board available in the office.

VII. Other Items You Should Know

Birthdays and Special Occasions: We encourage you to give your child the gift of yourself, or a special treat that can be shared by all children in his/her program for their special day. Please let your child's teacher know of your plans in advance as some food restrictions apply.

Appropriate Dress: At Bright Starz Learning Center , we believe that children learn best when actively engaged in play. This can get messy. Children need to be dressed appropriately for all activities during the day. Occasionally, clothing can become stained; so send children in clothes they do not need to be concerned about getting dirty. Please make sure your child has the appropriate outdoor clothing for the changing seasons.

Toys From Home: The Center has an abundance of materials for children to use each day. Unless specifically requested by your child's teacher, we ask you to leave all toys at home. Conflicts over toys from home do not contribute to the peaceful atmosphere we try to create. However on Fridays we do have **Show & Tell** and toys from home are allowed at the center. We will not be held responsible for lost or damaged toys. We do not allow toy guns, knives or other weapons in the Center.

Photographs and publicity: Photographs or video-tapes of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time. They may be hung in the center, placed in a photo album and appear in Newsletter . Photograph permission forms are signed during enrollment and shared with staff.

Parent Behavior at the Center: Bright Starz Learning Center , is committed to creating a safe, nurturing and caring environment. We speak with all children respectfully, and never use any form of belittling, corporal punishment, or improper language. The Center is a drug, alcohol and smoke free environment. Smoking is not permitted on the premises. We believe, because you as parents/guardians follow our philosophy when at our Center.

Divorce/Separation: Bright Starz Learning Center , wants to serve all our families in the best possible way, especially during difficult transitions. If shared custody agreements are in place, we would appreciate a written notice of your family's plan to make arrivals and departures for your child an easy event. Unless we have a legal document, the Center can not presume one parent has more or less rights than another.

Child Abuse and Maltreatment: Bright Starz Learning Center , is committed to safe, nurturing environment for children to grow and learn in a positive manner. If you feel your child's needs are not being met, bring your concerns to the Director. We encourage our families to seek consultation with the Director to become aware of the possible programs that can assist your family. Should we recognize any signs of child abuse or neglect coming into our Center, the Alamance County Department of Social Services and The Division of Child Development mandates a report to be filed.