



"Where Every Child Shines"

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Parent Handbook
Operational Policies and Procedures

Dora Humphrey, Director
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Welcome to Bright Stars Learning Center



Overview

Bright Stars Learning Center provides a warm, nurturing and educationally focused environment for infants (6 weeks) to children 6 years of age. Promoting the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of each child is the priority for the special trained staff at Bright Stars. We recognize that each child is different and that he or she will learn at different paces. Being considerate of the children's developmental needs allows us to focus on them as individuals with unique interests and opinions. Therefore, a developmentally appropriate curriculum is provided for each age specific classroom.

Mission Statement

At Bright Stars Learning Center we are about the children. Every child is a bright star who will shine as an individual. Encouraging them to learn, explore and develop successfully in an educationally supported environment is our goal.

Days and Hours of Operation

Bright Stars Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, January through December with the exception of holidays. Hours of operation are from 6:30am to 6:00pm.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

New Year's Day
Good Friday (Easter)
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Labor Day
Fair Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve
Christmas Day
New Year's Eve
(early dismissal at 12:15pm)

PLEASE NOTE: Exact dates for closures will be provided on a separate addendum each year.

If the recognized holiday falls on a Saturday, then we will be closed on the previous Friday. If the recognized holiday falls on a Sunday, then we will be closed on the following Monday. If there are any changes made to these holidays, we will try our best to notify you at least thirty days prior to the changes.

Inclement Weather and School Cancellations

If there is a need or requirement to close the Center while the children are in our care due to inclement weather, city mandated closure or any other emergency, we will contact each family by telephone. Be sure to maintain valid emergency contact information with us. When closures are in effect, you may call and listen to our voice mail message concerning our schedule and additional information. If both NBISD and CISD school districts are closed, Bright Stars Learning Center will also be closed. We try our best to keep our doors open if possible. **However, in the event we have to close due to reasons beyond our control, all tuition must be paid in full. There are no exceptions.**

Arrival and Dismissal

Bright Stars requires that your child must be at the Center no later than 9:30 am each morning. Daily attendance and lunch count is taken at that time. All children must be picked up no later than 6:00pm. If your child is picked up after 6:00pm you will be charged a fee of \$1.00 a minute due immediately at pick up. If someone is picking up your child (ren), make sure his or her name is on the approved pick-up list and have that person bring a driver's license, or valid form of picture identification. If the person picking up your child is not on the approved list then please send written authorization or confirmation by phone.

We will not release a child to anyone who is not authorized or who does not have proper identification.

Sign In & Out of Children

There is a "Sign In & Out" clipboard in the office with all the children's names listed on it. It is required by the state licensing department that all Parents/Guardians sign their child(ren) in every morning and out every afternoon.

CCDS

When checking your child in/out, please make sure your transaction is approved. If it is done incorrectly, the entry will be denied, all following transactions will also be rejected and payment will not be received from CCDS. You will therefore be responsible to pay Bright Stars the full tuition cost.

Attendance

If your child has been absent for more than two consecutive days, please notify the office. We care about your child and would like to be aware of any illnesses or other situations. Also, we ask that you notify us if you know in advance that your child will be absent for several days. This will help us plan classroom activities and meals.

Parent Involvement

Parents are welcome to share their interests, talents, and occupations with the Center throughout the year. We have an open door policy for Parents who would like to observe their child(ren) in their classroom. However, if your visit tends to upset your child or interferes with the class schedule, you may be asked to leave by the teacher or Director. The visiting Parent will be instructed to limit their visit to their child only. As per state licensing department, anyone who is on the premises regularly or frequently for extended period of time to either visit, volunteer or other, must have a fingerprint background check done prior to visiting.

Tuition and Fees

REGISTRATION

Upon enrollment, an \$85.00 per child registration fee is due. This fee will be due each year your child is registered and is non-refundable.

TUITION

Tuition is due at least two weeks in advance of services and may be paid:

- ★ Monthly: To be paid by the third of the month.
- ★ Bi-weekly: To be paid every two weeks on the Friday prior to services.
- ★ CCDS: Monthly fee must be paid in full on the 3rd of each month.
- ★★ **No cash, please. Money orders, and checks only.** ★★
- ★★ Hot check writers will be prosecuted.

For each payment that is not received on time, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed and is to be paid with that tuition payment. All tuition must be paid in full without deductions for holidays; emergency closures; or absences due to illness, vacation or other. There are no exceptions.

Ultimately, tuition and fees that are left unpaid will result in termination of your child(ren)'s enrollment.

CCDS Program

If the monthly fee is not paid on time, you will be reported to CCDS for late payment. After the second late payment report, you could be terminated from the program. CCDS parents are also responsible for a Co-Pay Differential Payment, which will be due on the 15th of each month. If that payment is not made on time, the standard late fee will apply.

RETURNED CHECKS

A \$25.00 charge will be assessed on all returned checks. If Bright Stars receives more than two returned checks from any individual, then that individual will have to pay by money order until otherwise notified.

FAMILY DISCOUNT

Families enrolling more than two children at Bright Stars will receive a 10% discount on tuition for any additional children. The reduction is applied to the lowest tuition charged.

PICK-UP LATE FEES

Bright Stars Learning Center closes at 6:00pm daily. If a Parent is late picking up their child, a fee of \$1.00 a minute will be charged. The fee is due immediately at pickup. If a child is not picked up by 7:00pm, and we have not been able to contact a Parent or Guardian, then the New Braunfels Police Department will be called.

SUPPLY FEES

All Parents will be given at least a two-day notice when supplies are needed for their child. Such items include diapers, wipes, etc. (See Supplies Needed section of this handbook.) If the Parent has not supplied the requested items and the teacher runs out, the Parent will receive a bill for the needed items. The Parent will be responsible for payment in a timely manner to avoid enrollment termination.

All communication notes will be left next to the sign in/out clipboard in the office. Please take the time to read them, or look for your child's name if individual notes are left.

A school supply list will be given to Parents on August 1st. All supplies must be turned in no later than August 15th. If you wish not to purchase the supplies, a \$35.00 fee must be remitted so that Bright Stars can purchase the supplies for you. Remember, all the children work on wonderful art projects every week throughout the year.

Enrollment

Bright Stars Learning Center offers full-time child care. Our class sizes are small in order to guarantee a low teacher to child ratio. If we do not have an available opening at the time of registration, you will be placed on a waiting list and called when an opening occurs. Openings will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.

All enrollment forms must be completed, signed and filed out before your child's first day of attendance. The package includes an admission form, parent handbook, nutrition enrollment form, and a discipline and guidance form.

It is very important that you maintain current information on all forms. Changes concerning phone numbers, addresses or any other pertinent information must be updated as soon as possible.

All changes to the child(ren)'s information must be initialed by the Center's Director and a Parent/Guardian.

Children who are currently enrolled in the program will be required to re-register annually. Any child that is not re-registered by the deadline will be considered dropped for the upcoming session.

Children are enrolled for one full year, including summers, spring break and holiday breaks. No part time attendance will be allowed. If your child is unable to attend daycare for any reason, you will still be responsible for the tuition payment. If tuition is not paid when due, late fees will apply.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

A Parent/Guardian must give Bright Stars a two-week written notice to terminate their child(ren)'s enrollment. Failure to give proper notice will result in the Parent being responsible for the full two weeks of tuition and any fees that apply.

Bright Stars Learning Center reserves the right at any time to terminate the enrollment of a child(ren) should the Parent/Guardian not pay tuition or fees in a timely, consistent manner. Bright Stars may also terminate enrollment should a Parent/Guardian repeatedly violate the rules set forth in this handbook. Written notice will be provided as a courtesy to the Parent/Guardian to make other day care arrangements.

Child Restrictions

If your child has any restrictions, you must notify us in writing. The "*Child Enrollment Form*" has a section for Parents to fill their child's special conditions such as allergies, existing illness, previous serious illness, injuries and hospitalizations during the past 12 months, any medication prescribed for long-term or continuous use, and any other information of which caregivers should be aware. If your child does not have any restrictions or special needs, you must write "NONE" and initial.

Medical Requirements

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

As required by the Comal County Health Department: At the time of enrollment, all children must have a copy of their current immunization records on file at the Center. **You must update the immunization record as necessary.** If the record is not updated, the child will not be able to attend the Center until it has been updated or a statement from a physician explaining why the child has not received the immunizations has been given to us. If a child does not have a current record on file with us, and child is unable to attend Bright Stars, the Parent will be responsible for tuition until the record or physician statement is provided. Bright Stars does not require your child to receive the TB vaccine.

***Your child will not be able to attend daycare the same day after shots are given. Please schedule appointments accordingly.**

Health checks will be conducted regularly by the center.

VISION AND HEARING EXAM

The Texas Health and Safety Code requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for any child, 4 years of age or older, who is enrolled in a child care center. Please provide the Center with the results of the tests for record keeping purposes.

**At this time we do not require employees to be vaccinated for any communicable diseases, other than the TB shot and screening at time of hire.

MEDICATION

If at any time your child requires the dispensing of either prescription or over-the-counter medication at the Center, you must fill out and sign an “*Authorization for Dispensing Medication*” form. The following guidelines will be followed for medications:

- ★ Medications will only be given after the medication release form has been filled out and signed.
- ★ Please deliver all medication to either the Director or a staff member. Do not leave medication in the child’s bags.
- ★ Medication must be in its original container and clearly labeled with the child’s name, required dosage, expiration date and doctor’s name.
- ★ If there is a discrepancy in the medication chart and the directions on the prescribed medication, the medicine will not be administered, and the Parents will be notified.
- ★ Over-the-counter medication will NOT be given, unless it is prescribed by a physician.
- ★ Any unclaimed medication will be disposed of at the end of each week.
- ★ If a child requires breathing treatments, Bright Stars will administer ONE mid-day treatment as directed and prescribed by a physician. Parents are responsible for providing treatments at home in the morning and evening. Our staff cannot take time away from our other students’ opportunities to learn.

ILLNESSES

When a child becomes ill, a Parent or Guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. The child will be removed from the classroom and will be cared for in the office until a Parent or Guardian arrives to pick him or her up. Also, if child cannot participate in all daily activities, including outside play, they must be kept at home until they are able to do so. It is required by The State Department of Health to provide a safe environment for our children. A child will not be allowed at the Center if there are any signs of an illness or if one or more of the following symptoms exist:

- ★ A temperature of 101 or higher.
- ★ Rashes or open sores on the body or mouth.
- ★ Abnormal breathing.
- ★ Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 3 occurrences.
- ★ Lethargic or behavioral changes.
- ★ Reddened watery eyes.

If your child is sent home with an elevated temperature, vomiting or diarrhea, your child may not return to the Center the following day. He or she must be fever free for 24 hours without medication (Motrin or Tylenol) and have no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours without the assistance of medication.

If a health-care professional has diagnosed a child with a communicable illness (i.e. Flu, Chicken Pox, Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis, Strep Throat, Head Lice, Ringworm, TB, Fifth Disease, RSV, Hepatitis A/B, etc.), then we must have documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious and can safely return to our facility. We ask that you please contact us immediately if your child or anyone in your family develops a communicable illness so we can take the appropriate precautions for the safety of the children and our staff. We try our best to keep all contagious illnesses to a minimum, but we can only do it with the cooperation of the parents.

EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS

All staff members at Bright Stars Learning Center are First Aid and CPR certified. If an accident should occur while your child is in our care, and your child requires immediate medical attention, first aid and/or CPR will be administered. You will be notified and the proper medical personnel will be called if necessary. If the accident or injury is minor, first aid will be administered and you will be notified. The accident/injury will be documented and a report will be filled out by the staff and signed by the Parent/Guardian. A copy of the report will be kept in the child's folder and can be accessed or copied per Parent request. In every enrollment packet there is an "Emergency Medical Release" form that must be filled out.

In the event of a major medical accident/injury and we are unable to reach you, the staff will comply with the advice of an available physician, ambulance technician or emergency room personnel. Any charges resulting from this situation are to be paid by the Parent/Guardian. Bright Stars Learning Center is not to be held liable for any care administered or charges resulting from emergency treatment including but not limited to transportation, physicians, facilities, medication, procedures, etc.

Child Behavioral Problems

Bright Stars expects every child to be respectful and polite to other children and staff. Hitting, biting, spitting, throwing rocks or other objects, kicking, slapping, teasing, scratching, using profanity or vulgar language and fighting will not be tolerated.

If your child demonstrates any of this behavior, you may be called during the day to discuss your child's behavior or notified at the time of pick up. We have been very successful in working with Parents to set up a plan to improve the behavior of their children.

If at any point in time, the staff feels that we are not able to meet the needs of your child, we do reserve the right to terminate the enrollment.

We will not refuse to enroll a child for reason of race, color, religion, national origin, or gender. However, enrollment will be at the discretion of the Director and staff based upon the child's needs and the needs and welfare of the other children and staff.

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline is:

- 1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- 2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- 3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Our caregivers use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction, which includes at least the following:

- ★ Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
- ★ Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily with clear, positive statements.
- ★ Redirecting behavior with positive statements.
- ★ Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group only if appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

We use no harsh, cruel or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- ★ Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- ★ Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training.
- ★ Pinching, shaking or biting a child.
- ★ Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.

- ★ Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
- ★ Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child.
- ★ Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- ★ Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed.
- ★ Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for child's age.

Supplies Needed

CLOTHING

Please dress your child appropriately according to the weather. Children should be dressed in comfortable and washable play clothes free from complicated fasteners. Children will be participating in messy art projects, cooking projects and spending time outside or on the playground. We cannot be responsible for damage to clothing. All children must wear shoes: We recommend your child wear tennis shoes for comfort and safety.

Bright Stars t-shirts are available for sale. We ask our children to wear their Bright Stars shirts on Fridays and for class picture day.

EXTRA ITEMS NEEDED

Each child must bring the following personal items:

- ★ 1 or 2 complete changes of appropriate seasonal clothing including socks and underwear. (Please remember to replace if taken home.)
- ★ Lightweight blanket, small enough to fit in their cubbies. (Must be taken every Friday to wash. Don't forget to bring it back Monday.)

Children not potty trained and infants:

- ★ Sufficient diapers or training pants.
- ★ Wipes.
- ★ Powders, creams, ointments.

Infants not ready for table food (clearly labeled):

- ★ Bottles.
- ★ Formula.
- ★ Food jars.
- ★ Bibs.
- ★ Training cups.
- ★ Pacifiers.

All infant feeding schedules must be filled out by the Parent monthly and documented daily by the caregiver.

All items brought from home must be permanently labeled with the child's name. Food and formula must also be labeled with name and date.

Please do not let your child bring any toys or stuffed animals from home. This causes a distraction to the class and could aid in the spread of communicable illnesses.

Breakfast, Lunch and Snack

Each day your child will be provided with a nutritionally balanced breakfast at 8:00, lunch at 11:00 and afternoon snack at 3:00. Breakfast will not be served after 9:00 am. If you plan on arriving after that time, please be sure your child has eaten breakfast.

On certain days, cooking activities will accompany the curriculum and the children will be able to enjoy what they have created. Weekly menus are posted in the office and copies are available to Parents

upon request. If your child requires a special diet due to food allergies or health/religious reasons, please send a written statement and action plan from your pediatrician to be kept in your child's folder. You will be required to provide substitute foods for your child if a medical statement is not provided. Please be sure to inform your child's teacher if your child will has special needs regarding meals.

For breastfeeding mothers: A comfortable place with a seat in our center or classroom can be provided to enable a mother to breastfeed her child. In addition to breastfeeding, mothers may provide breast milk for their child. Upon request, we can provide additional support by providing a pillow to support infant's head, a foot stool and water.

Birthdays, Celebrations and Special Activities

Birthday celebrations are encouraged and will take place during the afternoon snack time. Store bought cakes or special snacks are welcome so long as there is enough for everyone in your child's class. Please be sure to make arrangements with the child's teacher prior to the birthday.

We also have other celebrations and activities scheduled during holidays. You will be notified ahead of time if items will be needed in order for your child to participate.

★★ ABSOLUTELY NO CANDY FOR ANY OCCASION PLEASE. ★★

Water Activities

During hot weather months, Bright Stars Learning Center does water activities with sprinklers, water toys and water sensory tables. Please remember to give your child permission to participate on the registration form. Water activities are reserved for classes ages 3 and up. You will be given advance notice when to bring the appropriate gear for these days.

Transportation

Bright Stars Learning Center will not provide transportation to and from school at this time.

Parking Lot Safety

We apologize for the inconvenience of our small parking lot, but when you pick up or drop off your child(ren), you must park in a designated parking space. DO NOT park in front of, or half way into the car port. You may park in the car port, but not half way because the entrance/exit becomes blocked, which makes it difficult for other parents to have access and creates a major safety issue. You may also park on the street along the side of the building. Please DO NOT park along the roadside in front of the building as your vehicle blocks the view of oncoming traffic when exiting the parking lot.

Emergency Drills and Evacuation/Relocation

FIRE DRILL

The fire alarm will alert children and staff of a potential fire. We will have monthly fire drills to familiarize the children with the evacuation procedures. Children will be evacuated as far away from the building as possible without crossing the street. The Director will advise the children and staff when it is safe to return to the Center.

BAD WEATHER DRILL

Two sharp whistles will alert staff and children of a drill or bad weather. The staff will take children to the hall where they will sit on the floor and cover their heads with their arms until the drill is over. In the event that the children are taken to an off-site safe location, Parents will be notified immediately.

Emergency Evacuation and Relocation

If at any time, we must evacuate the building, we will meet in front of the daycare under the tree located next to the mailbox. At that point, we make sure all the children are accounted for. Then, in extreme emergencies (i.e. tornado, flood, fire) when we must leave the grounds as well, our designated relocation point is the Blue Bonnet Ford Dealership located at 351 IH35 South. The children will be transported in employees' personal vehicles or the dealership's van transportation system. Although we do not provide regular transportation, the children's safety is our foremost priority and we will relocate them by any means possible. Car seats will be utilized if available.

Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children

All employees are required to have annual training on preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect. Staff will stay up-to-date on methods for increasing employee and parent awareness. Bright Stars makes available brochures and pamphlets with all the required information including recognizing warning signs, prevention techniques, and actions that the parent of a child, who is a victim of abuse or neglect, should take to get assistance and intervention. We also have strategies for coordinating with community organizations, which are knowledgeable in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. Upon request we can assist parents in calling police or the Child Abuse Hotline.

Policy for Protecting Children from Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Bright Stars requires Caregivers to have a TB screening before their first day of employment. We do not require any additional immunizations. A copy of their shot record will be kept in file. If an employee fails to comply with the policy, they will not be considered for employment.

If an employee or child is exempt from having the required immunization, they are to provide an exemption form with reasons, which may include medical conditions or religious beliefs. Exempt employees will follow procedures to protect children from exposure to diseases by using protective medical equipment such as gloves, masks and frequent handwashing. We do not discriminate against any exempt employees other than requiring them to use protective medical equipment.

Gang-Free Zone

A gang-free zone is a designated area (1000 feet) around a specific location, which includes a daycare center, where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas Penal Code: 71.028 and 71.029. The purpose for the gang-free zone is to deter certain types of criminal activity where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties. Parents may contact the city or court house for more information about obtaining a copy of the map outlining the boundaries.

Questions and Concerns

Children are our number one priority and the care they receive at Bright Stars is of utmost importance. Any concerns a parent may have will be addressed immediately.

Dora Humphrey, Director, welcomes you to discuss any concerns or questions you may have regarding your child's care. You may elect to set up a phone or personal conference with the Director at any time. Please feel free to contact the Director as soon as an issue arises, and do not wait for the situation to escalate. It is very important to Bright Stars to keep open lines of communication with parents in order to do what is best for the children.

Parents may review a copy of the "*Minimum Standards Rules for Licensed Child-Care Centers*" and Bright Star's most recent "*Licensing Inspection Report*" in the office during the operational hours.

Local Licensing Office:

Department of Family Regulatory Services: (830) 609-5033

Website: www.dfps.state.us

Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: (800) 252-5400

You will be notified of any changes made to this handbook, and then asked to sign and date the form indicating that you have been notified and are aware of the changes that have been made.



Bright Stars Learning Center

Parent Handbook Agreement

I have received a copy of the *“Bright Stars Learning Center Parent Handbook.”*
I have read, understand and will abide by the polices set forth in this document.

Name of child(ren): _____

Parent/Guardian (Please print clearly): _____

Parent/Guardian (Signature): _____ Date: _____

By my signature above, I acknowledge, accept and agree to comply with the information contained in the Parent Handbook provided to me by Bright Stars Learning Center.