

Bright Start Learning Center

Serving Lake County since 2005

Family Handbook

2024

Bright Start Learning Center Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate, high-quality care and educational environment for children 1-7 years of age in all domains of learning. By using a whole child approach, our experienced and trained educators will work collaboratively with families to build a bridge between community, home, and school, and will use evidence-based strategies and curriculum to prepare children for a successful Kindergarten experience.

This Handbook Revision was last updated December 22, 2023 and supersedes all previous versions.

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Our Philosophy	3
Facility Contact Information	3
Ages of Children	3
Hours of Operation	3
In-service Days	3
Parent Teacher Conferences	4
Holidays	4
Unexpected & Emergency Closures	4
Registration Information	4
Attendance Policy	5
Communicating Absences	6
Children with Special Needs	6
Tuition and Enrollment	6
Drop-Ins	7
CCCAP	8
Universal Preschool (UPK) Policy	8
Withdrawal	9
Moving Up & Transitioning Toddler to Preschoolers	9
Family Engagement	10
Visitors in BSLC	10
Updated and Accurate Contact Information	10
Child Release Policy	11
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies	11
Late Pick-Up	11
Identifying Where Children Are at All Times	11
Supporting Positive Behavior & Social Emotional Needs	12
Challenging Behavior	12
Early Childhood Intervention	13

Mental Health	13
Child Abuse and Neglect	13
Filing a Concern or Complaint	14
State Licensing Violation	14
Illnesses	14
Illnesses While at Bright Start	15
Injuries, Accidents, & Emergency Reports	16
Ingesting non-toxic art supplies	16
Emergency Operation Action Plan	16
Storing and Administering Children’s Medicines	16
Immunizations and Physicals	17
Outside Time	18
Inclement Excessively Hot and Cold Weather	18
Diapering and Toileting	18
Bottles, Blankets, Pacifiers, Other Personal Belongings, and Money	18
Dental Health	19
Field Trips, Television or Video Viewing, and Special Activities	19
Classroom/Birthday Celebration	19
Activity Fees	20
Photographs and Publicity	20
Transportation, Seating, Supervision and Emergency Procedures on the Road	20
Changes in Policies	21
What to Bring	21
Meals	21

Welcome

Welcome to Bright Start Learning Center! We are very excited to have your family join our early childhood community. It is a privilege to work with you and we look forward to getting to know your child and family. Please take a little time to familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures. We welcome any questions or feedback you might have. Please carefully read this handbook and keep it for future reference.

Our Philosophy

We believe...

- Children are unique and must receive care from adults who are educated, experienced and caring and whose values enable them to be excellent educators.
- Children should experience numerous positive learning experiences in a safe, age-appropriate environment. This will help children reach their full potential by providing activities that touch on all domains of learning.
- Children learn through play.
- Family partnerships are important to our work and to the overall development of each child.

Facility Contact Information

Bright Start Learning Center

Physical address: 315 W 6th Street

Leadville, CO 80461

Phone: (719) 839-0662

E-mail: brightstartlcdirector@gmail.com

Mailing address: 328 W 5th Street

Ages of Children

Bright Start Learning Center currently serves and accepts children 1 through 7 years old. We have designed our program into two rooms. We can accommodate older children through age 7 years of age based on staff to child ratio.

Room 1 Caterpillars

Ages 12 months – 3 years

Room 2 Butterflies

Ages 2 ½ – 7 years

Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday from 7:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. The playground is not open after 5:30 PM on weekdays, weekends, and holidays.

In-service Days

Bright Start Learning Center closes three times a year for professional development and

required trainings. Tuition for these days is included in your overall agreement. We strive to post these days at least one month in advance so families can make proper childcare arrangements.

Friday March 8, 2024

Friday May 10, 2024

Friday October 11, 2024

Parent-Teacher Conferences - 2024

Wednesday March 20, and Thursday March 21

October TBD

Holidays - 2024

Bright Start Learning Center will be closed for the following holidays. All holidays are included in the tuition formula:

New Year's Day (Monday, January 1, 2024)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Monday, January 15)

President's Day (Monday, February 19)

Memorial Day (Monday, May 27)

4th of July / Independence Day (Thursday, July 4)

Labor Day (Monday, September 2)

Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday, November 28 and 29)

Christmas (Tuesday, December 24, Wednesday Dec. 25, and Thursday Dec. 26)

Unexpected & Emergency Closures

In the event of an emergency, power outages, snow day, or a severe illness outbreak among staff or children, Bright Start may have to close for the day. Every effort will be made to give you as much notice as possible. Please tune in to radio and television stations, Facebook, or Twitter (Lake County School District or Lake County Office of Emergency Operation) that broadcast school closures in the event of a weather or other emergency that might require us to be closed. Families will not receive tuition credit for days when Bright Start is closed for emergencies.

Registration Information

- Enrollment at Bright Start Learning Center shall be granted without discrimination in regards to sex, sexual identity, race, color, creed or national origin.
- In the event that BSLC is full, a waitlist will be created for each classroom. New enrollment will be determined based on the order of each classroom's waitlist.
 - Enrollment is prioritized in the order of:
 - Children of staff
 - Previously enrolled children
 - Number of days enrolled (5 days being prioritized, 4, 3, 2,... 1 day)
 - Siblings

- BSLC operates year-round. New enrollments are accepted throughout the year in a rolling admissions-style format on a space-available basis.
- Children may attend all or certain days depending on scheduling Monday through Friday.
- **A registration fee of \$30** is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time, non-refundable charge. If for any reason we cannot assign your child to a room, a refund will be honored.
- Please refer to our **Enrollment Checklist** to ensure you have read and completed the necessary forms:
 - Bright Start Learning Center Family Handbook
 - Enrollment Agreement
 - General Health Appraisal Form (Please submit to your family doctor to complete and return to BSLC. **Form MUST be signed by a doctor or primary care physician prior to enrollment**)
 - Copy of Immunizations (**Obtain from your primary care physician**)
 - Medical/Non-medical Exemption Form certificate. (**Contact director for link to complete this online course**)
 - Colorado Child Care Assistance Program Policies for Families (**if applicable**)

Attendance Policy

Please consider the best days for your child to attend BSLC. Regular and consistent attendance is important in learning and building skills. Predictable routines are helpful and we strongly suggest **for all children to be here by 9:30 when learning activities begin**. We understand family problems, serious illness, financial concerns, and other issues can cause absences; however, a predictable routine for your child can also provide support during these times. Please contact the director for information on local resources to assist. We will make every attempt to communicate with you if we see attendance a concern using the following interventions:

- 1) Child has a routine of missing sporadically with no notification. We will speak with the family to rectify the attendance.
- 2) Following the 4th day of consecutive absence with no contact, the director will try to contact the family or other persons listed on the enrollment forms to determine the reason for the absence.
- 3) If there is no improvement in attendance following a contact, the family will be asked if they would like to drop their child from BSLC and make the opening available to a child from the waiting list.
- 4) If we are not able to reach someone within 7 business days, we will disenroll your child as an understanding that lack of communication is reasonably understood as part of the family.
- 5) After the decision, the director will drop your child from enrollment and your child can be put on a waiting list based on your family needs.
- 6) If you choose to re-enroll, a signed *Attendance Improvement Plan* may be required.

Communicating Absences

If your child will be absent due to illness, vacation, or scheduling purposes, or if he or she will be late or leaving early, we ask that you **please contact the center no later than 9:00 A.M. at (719)839-0662 or through the Brightwheel app**. Communication is key for planning our daily activities with the children. This communication allows us to know who will be in our care and to plan accordingly. In addition, communication will allow us to know if there will be openings for drop-ins. If you are going on vacation, please write down your child/children's names on the vacation calendar that will be displayed outside to the right of our *Parent Board*.

Children with Special Needs

The *American Disabilities Act* mandates that children with disabilities be given equal access to childcare programs. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the state, regional and local agencies to make sure to access any supports that are available and our teachers will work tirelessly to obtain all training opportunities to continue to increase their skills so that all children receive the highest quality care and educational experiences.

Bright Start Learning Center complies with Title III of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) (www.ada.gov). Please set-up an appointment with the director if you believe your child should receive disability accommodations under the ADA. They will establish reasonable modifications to integrate your enrolled child into our programming and work with you as these modifications are implemented. It will be communicated to you, the guardian, if Bright Start cannot accommodate due to state licensing rules and regulations for overall care of children or a substantial risk of serious harm to the health and safety of others.

Tuition and Enrollment

Tuition is based on monthly rates; we are holding a spot for your child based on the days for which you have signed up. If you do not pay for the month, then it will be considered as a notice that you are unenrolling your child. Days cannot be traded unless if you speak with the director or assistant director to see if you can have a makeup day. Tuition will not be refunded due to illness, doctor visits, vacation, unexpected closures due to emergencies, illness outbreak, etc. Two weeks of vacation are calculated into your tuition agreement.

Monthly tuition payment is based on the following formulas:

Caterpillars = [rate (\$48.51) x number of days/week x 50 weeks] / 12 months

Butterflies = [rate (\$46.30) x number of days/week x 50 weeks] / 12 months

# of days for the whole month	Caterpillars (Toddlers)	Butterflies (Preschoolers)
1 day a week per month	\$202.12	\$192.94
2 days a week per month	\$404.25	\$385.87
3 days a week per month	\$606.37	\$578.81

4 days a week per month	\$808.50	\$771.75
5 days a week per month	\$1,010.62	\$964.69
Drop-in fee	\$57.75	\$55.12

- If a family has a tuition agreement and their child is in need of an additional day during the week on an “on/off” basis *and* there is space, the additional day may be added for an additional drop-in tuition rate. An advanced notice of at least 48 hours is recommended for accommodating.
- **Monthly payment is due the 1st day of each month** on which BSLC is open by check, cash, or online through the Brightwheel app/website. A \$10 fee **per week** will be added for **late tuition payments after the 6th of the month**. *This late fee will be applied for every week thereafter until the tuition is paid in full.*
- If payment has not been received after director has communicated with the family, the child cannot be accepted until tuition is paid.
- Other payment options (**bi-monthly or weekly payments**) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If needed, please arrange this with the director to avoid late fees.
- Tuition must be paid in full prior to the beginning of the following month to in order to create a payment plan.
- We offer a 7% discount for the oldest child if multiple children are attending.
- All returned checks will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. Two or more incidents will result in the account being placed on money order or cash-only status.

Drop-Ins

We are happy to invite children to Bright Start Learning Center on a drop-in basis when staffing and space allows. Here are our guidelines for drop-in services:

- A one-time, non-refundable \$30 Enrollment Fee is due for each child prior to drop-in service who are not currently enrolled at Bright Start Learning Center. Enrollment Fee is good for 3 years.
- All enrollment documents are required upon drop-in; enrollment agreement, general health appraisal, immunization record, Family Handbook agreement, Food Guidelines.
- We offer a 7% discount for the oldest child if multiple children are attending.
- The daily drop-in rate is **\$57.75 for Caterpillars** or **\$55.12 for Butterflies** regardless of full or half day care.
- Drop-in payment is due the day of service
- Refunds will be honored if there is a 72-hour notice. Enrollment fee is non-refundable.
- All returned checks will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. Two or more incidents will result in the account being placed on money order or cash-only status.

- Drop-in care will depend on space and staff availability. An advanced notice of at least 48 hours is recommended.

CCCAP

Parents/legal guardians who receive Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) have two options:

- 1) Children can start attending BSLC before the CCCAP process is officially completed, but families will have to pay applicable tuition until approval is received by the Department of Human Services. Payment will be the full regular tuition rate (by cash, check, or money order, or through the Brightwheel app). Once families are approved, they may be reimbursed whatever they have paid up to 30 calendar days, with the exception of the enrollment fee, if the Department of Human Services has approved participation in the program.
- 2) Attendance can begin once approval is given by DHS. **IT IS IMPORTANT to maintain COMMUNICATION with DHS for AUTHORIZATION.**
- 3) **IMPORTANT: Please read and sign the “Policies for Colorado Child Care Assistance Program for Families” for Bright Start Learning Center.**

CCCAP Tuition Information

- Families are responsible to pay any applicable Parent/Guardian Fees directly to BSLC on the first day of each month. Payments will be considered late after the 6th of the month. Rates may vary according to State disbursement.
- A \$10 fee **per week** will be added for late tuition payments after the 6th *This late fee will be applied for every week thereafter until the tuition is paid in full.* If late fees are not paid, then Bright Start Learning Center may refuse to accept your child back in the center until all fees are paid in full.
- Other payment options (bi-monthly or weekly payments) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If needed, please arrange this with the director to avoid late fees.

Universal Preschool (UPK) Policy

Adopted: 12/13/2023

It is BSLC’s policy that any student who qualifies for Universal Pre-K funding through the state of Colorado must apply for that funding and enroll in BSLC via the UPK Portal in order to be enrolled in Bright Start. If a student who qualifies for UPK is enrolled in BSLC, and does not maintain their UPK status, they may lose their enrollment spot to another UPK-enrolled child. This policy exists because BSLC receives significantly more enrollment money through UPK than the amount of tuition we charge to families. If a family needs support in navigating the UPK process, they should reach out to Bright Start’s Director.

Withdrawal

A two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from our center. Your account must be paid in full before withdrawing—including your child's tuition for that two-week period. Your monthly tuition can be prorated for the month if a two-week notice is given.

All tuition must be paid for the current month or the child will be dis-enrolled the first day of the next month. A 35% handling charge will be added if the account is sent to a *Collection Agency*.

Bright Start's director reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion after reasonable effort to resolve. A parent/legal guardian will be given proper notice if BSLC elects to withdraw a child. Here are the following possible reasons yet limited and based on circumstances:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Lack of communication and/or cooperation.
- Child/children not showing up to Bright Start for 2 weeks without parent(s)/legal guardian(s) communication.
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the Family Handbook.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent(s)/legal guardian(s), children (whether enrolled or not) or authorized person.
- Expired immunizations and/or physical.
 - Parents/guardians are given a 14 days period to schedule doctor visits, immunizations, or renew or submit medical/non-medical exemption certificates
- Consistently picking-up or dropping off a child outside of BSLC hours.
- There are times when a child is not adjusting well to our program. In the event that our care is not a good fit for your child and your family, we may request that you withdraw your child from our program; however, we will give you a 2-week notice to find alternative care.
- Challenging Behaviors: We work hard to identify the social, emotional and developmental needs of each child. However, there are times when children may need additional care that our staff are not able to provide. Please see more information under "Challenging Behavior."

Moving Up & Transitioning from Toddler to Preschooler

The ages in each classroom are not based on birthdates alone, but rather serve for licensing purposes. Moving up is based off on where your child is developmentally, as well as taking into consideration if the move is necessary and appropriate for your child. The process in which we move-up a child depends on these questions:

1. Is there availability in the next room?
2. Do teachers believe the child is "ready" to move? (Ready means; physically, emotionally, socially, verbally, cognitively, and age wise). Teachers will slowly practice transitioning once or twice a week until the child is old enough or ready to move up.

3. Are parents/legal guardians flexible on schedule if their current days are not available?
4. Finally, we wait for more spaces to become available.

Bright Start staff will not move-up or transition a child until we believe that they are ready for the next big step. We understand that the change in tuition is something that may want families to transition and to move their child up as soon as possible, but we do not make any changes that may not benefit your child.

Family Engagement

We have an open-door policy and families always welcome. We also encourage parents/legal guardians to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher any time--even just to become better acquainted as long as it is during business hours and if there is enough coverage in the center.

Parents/legal guardians are recommended to volunteer or spare some of their time from their busy schedules for our center in order for us to receive funding for the future as a non-profit organization. You can participate in parent/guardian teacher conferences, donate snacks or materials for the children, read books, help clean up after an event or meals, help prepare snack, shovel snow, help with an activity/craft, or buying an item from our Amazon Wish List. We understand that families have a busy schedule and may not always have time to participate. Please do not hesitate to speak to your child's teacher or other center staff if you would like to come volunteer so that we can document hours our volunteer log.

Visitors in BSLC

All visitors, planned or unplanned, must sign-in upon entering the building in our *Visitor Log* binder. All visitors will be accompanied by staff at all times and have to wear a *Bright Start Learning Center Visitor* bage that hangs on top of our *Visitor log*.

Updated and Accurate Contact Information

Please talk to the director about any changes in your child's schedule, contact information, immunization or health updates, employment, insurance coverage, etc. We must be informed, in writing or email, and in peson regarding any changes to the people authorized to pick up your child.

Child Release Policy

In accordance to child care regulations, children will only be released to the parent/legal guardians, or authorized persons over the age of 18 listed on the child's enrollment agreement. You are responsible for communicating any information if another person will be picking up your child so that staff are prepared. If a parent/legal guardian has authorized a person who is unknown to the staff to pick up their child, they will be required to show photo identification that shows their name and picture such as a state issued ID, driver's license, passport, or employee

ID. Staff must be informed during drop-off times if parent/legal guardian will not be picking up their child verbally and via email.

If staff suspect a child may be at risk, the following procedures will be followed:

- Call child's parents/legal guardians
- And if staff cannot reach the parents/legal guardian staff will call 911
 - Call the Child Protective Services of Lake County

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies

For your child's safety and following health regulations, parents/legal guardians are required to fill out an online health screen check through Brightwheel before dropping off. Children might be signed in/out each day by a parent/legal guardian, or a person over the age of 18 who is permitted on the enrollment packet to pick up or drop-off your child. Anyone younger than 18 years will not be allowed to take the child(ren) home.

If a child has symptoms of COVID-19 or you were in contact with someone who tested positive, the child and family need to be quarantined for 5 days and a physician's note stating all is clear must be given if tested positive to return.

Each child will have to take home the following items daily: water bottles, lunch boxes, and any clothes that have been placed in a plastic bag to be laundered. **These items will have to be taken home at the end of the week:** sleeping items, extra clothes, winter gear, and the bag in which items were brought in. All items need to be labeled with your child's name or initials.

If you need someone on the authorized list to pick up your child or if you need to add someone to your drop-off/pick-up list, let staff know during drop-off time or through a phone call prior to your child being picked up. For your child's safety, text messages or emails are not acceptable. Authorized persons have to be documented in your child's file. The person added or persons unfamiliar to staff will need to be verified through identification of a valid state driver's license or any other form of identification card to ensure they are an authorized person.

Late Pick-Up

BSLC closes at 5:30 P.M. Staff will double check each classroom as well as outdoor play areas to ensure that there are no children unaccounted for. If a child has not been picked up by closing time, that child will continue to be cared for by one or more of our qualified staff and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be called to ensure pick-up. If a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts listed. A fee of **\$1.00 per minute** will be charged for each minute after BSLC closes at 5:30pm for each child in our care. **This payment is due the next day to the staff member who cared for your child.** This fee is subject to change. If a child remains in our care for more than 45 minutes after BSLC has closed and we have been unable to reach a parent/legal guardian, the director or qualified staff will contact the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement.

Identifying Where Children Are at All Times

Each classroom will have at least one qualified staff member that will verify attendance on a half hour basis within their classroom to identify where children are at all times. Children will have a name-to-face head count taken after each transition. The classroom teachers will ensure that each parent/legal guardian signs in their child upon arrival and signs out upon leaving the classroom daily through the Brightwheel application. The center director or assistant director will also make periodic head counts throughout the day.

Supporting Positive Behavior & Social Emotional Needs

Each teacher or aide at Bright Start Learning Center has received training on positive teaching practices that ensure that children's behavior is guided in a positive manner. We continuously update our families through daily communications regarding their child(ren) and encourage family involvement to ensure that their child(ren) are being guided in a positive direction.

1. All of our staff encourage positive interactions with each child through demonstration and teachings that allow children to learn and be capable of respecting others socially and emotionally.
2. Through training, each staff member is able to effectively and positively reinforce children's positive behavior and redirect any behavior that is harmful to a desired behavior. They continuously demonstrate positive interactions with each child, which helps them learn how to treat others in a positive way and allows them to be more socially and emotionally aware of the feelings of their peers.
3. Bright Start Learning Center believes in working as a team to identify the specific social and emotional needs of each child. Our staff are trained in methods that enable them to understand children's behavior and develop positive behavior support plans for each child. This reduces challenging behaviors and may prevent suspensions and expulsions.
4. At BSLC, we continuously strive to strengthen our relationships with our children and their family. Through our continuous specialized trainings, our teachers are able to identify the individual needs of our children. While working with our families, we are able to provide each child with the specialized care that he/she may need within our classrooms. When a situation occurs that makes a child's needs difficult for staff and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to adequately address, the family will be given information on how to access an early childhood behavioral health specialist to support their child in all environments. We will work alongside to support the needs of the child and family to the best of our abilities.

Challenging Behavior

We will make every effort to work with the parent/legal guardian to ensure a cooperative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We are here to serve and protect all of

our children. A parent/legal guardian may be called at work or home at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the center's staff. The parent/legal guardian may be asked to take the child home immediately. The following steps may be taken regarding children who display *chronic* disruptive behavior that is upsetting to the emotional or physical well-being of another child or an adult.

Children who display destructive or harmful behavior to themselves or other children and/or who disregard the authority of the teachers and director will be sent home immediately. A parent/legal guardian will be called and asked to come get his/her child for the remainder of the day. After three occasions of being sent home, we may choose to suspend the child for a certain period of time that will be discussed with the parent/legal guardian. Please refer to our detailed discipline policy for more information regarding the steps that are taken by our staff to work with children who are displaying challenging behaviors. Once the child returns to our program, if the child is still a danger, we will discuss if we are the best environment in which to care for the child. The parent/legal guardian will be given two weeks to find alternate child care and the child will be unenrolled from our program.

Early Childhood Intervention

Bright Start will soon start an assessment programs called *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* where staff and families will fill out. This assessment ensures that we, the center, and families are seeing the same actions, behaviors, and we are all on the same page. Once scored, if we see that your child falls under the "referral" zone, we will set up a meeting with families.

If families and/or staff see that a child under the age of 3 years is in need of developmental support or there are any concerns in the child's development compared to other children, a referral can be made by anyone through the following contact options:

Call: 833-733-3734

Email: GetStartedwithEI@state.co.us

Mental Health Consultation Services

If your child or family are in need of mental health services, you are more than welcome to send Sarah Marie Covington (mental health consultant) an **email** at sarah.covington@solvistahealth.org, **call** (719)420-1293, or **make a referral online**. Please ask director for online links.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Bright Start recognizes that families have their own parenting styles and beliefs. By law, we are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect. The procedures are as follows:

1. Any suspected abuse or neglect will be documented by the person observing the situation.
2. That person will contact his or her director to relate relevant information and they will report the incident to the Department of Human Services.
3. After reporting the incident to DHS, their office will investigate and let the center know what, if anything, needs to happen and the outcome.

If you suspect child abuse within our program, please contact the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437). The report will be filed with our local Child Protective Services agency.

Filing a Concern or Complaint

The following steps outline a procedure to receive and address complaints:

If the complaint is in regards to something **happening in a classroom**:

- 1) Speak to the teacher(s) about the issue
- 2) If this issue is not resolved, speak to the director
- 3) If resolution still cannot be reached, the parent/legal guardian may ask to speak with a member of the Board of Directors

If the complaint is about something not directly related to the classroom, it should be reported to the Director. The matter can be taken from there to the Board of Directors as described above.

State Licensing Violation

If there are any concerns or if you would like to file a complaint regarding our child care program, please contact:

Office of Early Childhood, Division of Early Care and Learning Licensing
1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-5948

Illnesses

It is both your responsibility and Bright Start's to maintain children's health. Our trained staff follow policies for preventing the spread of diseases and infections. Young children get sick more often since their immune systems do not fight illness like adults, nor have they been exposed to many of the germs that cause infection. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he or she should be kept home for at least 24 hours. If the symptoms develop at Bright Start, you or your emergency contact will be called to take your child home. Please refer to the *How Sick Is Too Sick?* guidance policy shared upon enrollment or on our Parent Board.

COVID-19 related illness

Bright Start Learning Center will be in close communication with our nurse consultant and public health specialist if we were to have a positive COVID-19 case in our building within staff and/or family and children. According to CDPHE and CDC (updated on January 27, 2022), you have to quarantine **as per public health official's recommendation, or as long as you are symptom-free**. Information will be kept confidential.

Children with these symptoms should not attend or will be sent home:

- Unknown rash on any body part
- Fever of 100.4° or higher
- Unusual behaviors (lethargy, crying, won't eat, extremely tired)
- Severe red or sore throat, or body aches (headache, earache)
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting/throwing up
- Head lice
- Scabies
- Severe coughing (not chronic)
- Pink eye (if it prevents the child from participating in activities, or comes with a fever)
- Impetigo (bacterial skin infection)
- Hepatitis A
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) after a minimum of 72 hours
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat
- COVID-19 exposure
- Flu/flu-like symptoms
- Croup

Children may return to the center after:

- Obtaining written verification from a doctor.
- Taking an antibiotic for a contagious illness for 24-hours
- Fever-free and non-contagious for 24-hours without the help of OTC medications.
- In the case of head lice, 24 hours after administering the first treatment

Exclusion Policy:

Children will be excluded from attendance at Bright Start if:

- The child's illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities.
- The illness requires more care than childcare staff is able to provide.
- Keeping the child in childcare poses an increased risk of illness to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child comes into contact.
- The child exhibits any of the following symptoms, fever, more than one diarrhea, vomiting, lice, COVID-19 like-symptoms

If questions arise when a child may return to the center, the final decision will be made by the director.

Illness While at Bright Start

If your child arrives, shows, or develops any of the symptoms falling under the *Exclusion Policy* or *How Sick Is Too Sick?* guidance while at Bright Start, staff will call and ask to take your child home until they are free symptom free. While we wait for your arrival, your child will be separated from classmates and cared for in the office (room 3) until he or she can be taken home. **Parents/legal guardians, or emergency contacts are expected to pick up the child within one hour of the time they are contacted.** Please keep all contact information current so we are able to reach someone to take your child in case of illness.

Injuries, Accidents, & Emergency Reports

If a child has an accident or is injured while at Bright Start, an accident report will be completed and presented to the person picking up the child. The person picking up the child will sign the report and receive a copy.

In the event of a major medical emergency or an accident, staff or the director will call 911 first. The child will be transported by ambulance to St. Vincent's Hospital. If staffing permits, an early childhood teacher or director will accompany the child. The parent/legal guardian and family physician will be called immediately. Serious injuries will be reported to the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care within 48 hours.

In the case of head injuries, an online head injury report will be filed within 48 hours of injury to the Early Care and Learning website.

A first aid kit is available in each classroom. First aid supplies will be taken on any field trip (including walking trips). Emergency phone numbers are posted in each classroom. Child Enrollment forms and health/medical information have been copied for each classroom teacher and will also accompany the class on any field trip. Teachers will keep an accurate daily attendance list.

In the very unlikely event a child should be found missing, the following steps will be taken immediately:

1. Director and/or assistant director will be notified.
2. Available staff members will assist in a search inside and outside the facility.
3. If the child is still not located, the local police will be called to assist in the search.
4. Parents/legal guardians will be notified.
5. The director/assistant director will conduct a thorough investigation after the incident and a report will be given to parents/legal guardians and staff.

Ingesting Non-Toxic Art Supplies

Bright Start Learning Center provides non-toxic art supplies for the children in our care. If your child has ingested any type of art supplies, staff will get in contact with you to report the incident, as well as getting in contact with our Public Health Agency for next steps, or Poison Control if a child ingested something toxic. Parents/legal guardians are more than welcome to come and pick-up their child if they feel like they prefer for their child to be examined by their primary care physician.

Emergency Operation (Action) Plan (EOP/EAP)

Bright Start Learning Center has developed an Emergency Action Plan. The Plan will provide information intended to ensure a safe environment during a variety of specific emergency situations. For emergencies such as fires, tornadoes, lost children, and any other emergencies, please see Bright Start Learning Center's full Emergency Action Plan. The Plan is available upon request to families.

Monthly drills are held alongside the Lake County School District office and Cloud City High School for staff and children for fire, evacuation and lock-down procedures. We conduct practice drills to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with the drill procedures in case of a real emergency. All families will receive basic instructions of procedures for lockdown, lockout, evacuation, shelter and reunification and a week's notice in advance to prepare children. If we encounter a real emergency, parents/legal guardians will be notified by phone call and Bright Start will follow protocol.

Storing and Administering Children's Medicines

All medications given to the center to administer to children will need to have annual parental/guardian permission and doctor's orders for each medication prescribed. For children under age two years old, the orders will need to be renewed according to the AAP well child exam schedule. All medication will be administered by trained and delegated staff and in accordance with the prescribed directions and will be documented in our medication log book. All medication will be stored in areas inaccessible to children at all times. Each room has a white/gray cabinet where medicines, first aid kits, sunscreen, and lotions are stored. If a medication is expired or left over, those medications will be given back to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s). If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are not able to be reached, the leftover medication will be properly disposed of following Public Health and/or Nurse Consultant directions. Emergency medications will be stored in an area that is easily accessed by staff, but inaccessible to children.

Immunizations and Physicals

All children who attend child care programs in Colorado are required by law to be vaccinated. Medical Exempt and Nonmedical Exemption training are available online at <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions> under *Online Immunization Education Module* and must be completed prior to enrolling your child at Bright Start Learning Center. These

certifications must be submitted at 2, 4, 6, 12, and 18 months of age. The exemption expires and must be renewed when the child enrolls in Kindergarten.

Physical or Wellness Checks are required to be done according to AAP guidelines at the ages of 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24, 30 months and annually after 3 years of age. As stated in the Code of Colorado Regulation, Bright Start Learning Center follow this policy when sending out a health appraisal or required documentation of vaccination or medical/non-medical forms:

“Within fourteen days after receiving direct personal notification that the certificate of immunization is not up-to-date according to the requirements of the state board of health, the parent or emancipated student submits documentation that the next required immunization has been given and a signed written plan for obtaining the remaining required immunizations. The scheduling of immunizations in the written plan shall follow medically recommended minimum intervals consistent with the ACIP. If the student does not fulfill the plan, the student shall be suspended or expelled from school for noncompliance as noted in Section 25-4-907, C.R.S. If the next dose is not medically indicated within fourteen days, then the medically approved minimum intervals would apply.”

Outside Time

Our outdoor environment is considered to be an extension of our classroom and we have planned activities that connect to our lesson plans. In addition, licensing regulations require children be taken outdoors each day. Children will play outdoors if the temperature is 15°F (34°F) or warmer with calm winds. Children should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, rain boots in fall and spring; heavy winter jacket, snow pants, mittens, hat, and snow boots in winter. An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature. **All clothing must be labeled clearly with your child's name or initials.** We will be participating in outside time for at least an hour a day, per state licensing guidelines, and to allow fresh air in and air out any virus particles when there are illnesses occurring.

Inclement Excessively Hot and Cold Weather

To ensure the safety of the children, during excessively hot and cold days, outside time will be limited. While the children are outside they will have access to drinking water and shade. If the “feels like” temperature is below 15°F or exceeds 89° F, we will not take children outside. We will continue with indoor large gross motor activities or gym time on Mondays and Fridays. In an instant where we experience power outages, we will wait for at least half an hour (in winter time) or one hour (during warmer temperatures) before making a decision to close down for the day or until power is restored. Winter time can be a tough call due to the colder conditions, but we are prioritizing children’s safety to stay warm and comfortable. This decision will be made by the director and assistant director. Enough time will be given to parents/legal guardians to plan on picking up their children if needed.

Diapering and Toileting

Staff are trained in proper diapering procedures. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for providing diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream for their child. A note will be sent through Brightwheel when more items are needed. **Please label packages with your child's name.**

When your child begins to show an interest in toilet learning and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are also ready to assist with the begin the process, a plan will be developed that is developmentally appropriate for your child. You will be responsible for bringing several extra changes of clothing during this time period.

For safety reasons, one staff member always monitors children during trips to the bathroom.

Bottles, Blankets, Pacifiers, Money, and Other Personal Belongings

You may send a small security blanket, other needed items for your child. Staff will make every effort to keep track of these items but will not be held responsible if they lost, broken, damaged, or stolen items; our priority is the children's safety and well-being. We encourage children to keep valuable personal items at home. We do not allow children to bring money, personal items, toy weapons, or masks to BSLC. If there is money that is required for a field trip or special activity, all funds will be collected by a teacher or director from the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) prior to the field trip and/or special activity.

PLEASE LABEL ALL BELONGINGS. Items to consider are cups, lunchboxes, lunch containers, clothing and bedding.

Due to space limitations, please bring only one blanket, one sheet and one lovey/stuffed animal. Individual items can touch other children's items so do not overfill your child's cubby area to avoid overlapping.

Following Colorado's Child Care Facility Licensing rules, children who are still using or need a bottle "...[are] not be allowed to hold their own bottles or sippie cups when lying flat to prevent choking, ear infections, bottle mouth or tooth decay" but can be offered prior to naptime, during morning snack, lunch, or afternoon snack.

Dental Health

Bright Start is introducing healthy habits and routines for children while in our care. We are starting a toothbrushing program for our Toddler and Preschool classrooms. We are encouraging children to brush their teeth after lunch time, but before naptime for 2 minutes each day. Toddlers are provided with fluoride-free, safe to swallow training toothpaste, and our Preschoolers are provided safe to swallow, fluoride toothpaste. Each child will have their own center provided labeled toothbrush and each toothbrush will be replaced every three months.

Field Trips, Television or Video Viewing, and Special Activities

Bright Start plans for occasional walking field trips, television/video viewing and special activities. Field trips require parental permission with emergency numbers for the day in order

for your child to participate. Walking field trips and nature walks will be taken during warmer months. The center will ensure that each group of children has a qualified early childhood teacher accompanying them for these excursions and other events. We will ensure that proper staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times. Attendance will be verified every 30-minutes to account for all children. Parent/legal guardian volunteers are welcome to assist with field trips.

BSLC will occasionally show educational G-rated videos for children that will require permission from the parent(s)/legal guardian(s). Videos are limited to 30 minutes per week.

If a child arrives late and the class has already left on a walking field trip, the child may be asked to participate in another classroom, or the parent/legal guardian can take their child to meet their class.

Please communicate by calling the director by 10:00 A.M. at (719)839-0662 to make arrangements. Director may be out on the excursion with the children.

Classroom/Birthday Celebrations

Parents/legal guardians are welcome to send birthday treats to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions; we encourage you to bring pre-packaged treats. We will dedicate time in the afternoon during snack time to celebrate the special occasion. Please let your child's teacher know in advance (at least 2 days) if you will bring a treat. A short message or letter will be sent home before the celebration, as well as a verbal reminder between the staff and families. Parents/legal guardians are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration. **Please do not bring balloons.** If your family does not celebrate birthdays or other holidays, please discuss this with your child's teacher. Bright Start is respectful of your religion, culture, and personal preferences. A plan can be developed to meet your child's needs during any classroom celebrations. ***We will advise you of any allergies or special diets as needed to ensure the safety of all children at BSLC.***

Activity Fees

Activity fees are a yearly amount determined by activity opportunities in our community. Examples: swimming, train ride, parade participation or walking field trips to local businesses. Director will notify families of the upcoming yearly fee and it will be added to tuition.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear on our Facebook page, newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Permission for photographs of your child was included in the Enrollment Agreement material. You will not receive compensation for use of your child's photograph.

We know we love to take photos of the children with their friends. However, we ask that you check to ensure that all children whose photo you want to share have given permission.

Transportation, Seating, Supervision and Emergency Procedures on the Road

****Please Note: Currently, we are NOT transporting children in vehicles.***

In the case that Bright Start Learning Center has a vehicle and is transporting children on field trips, we ensure that Colorado State Laws are followed at all times. A qualified driver will be present in each center vehicle with each group of children. All center vehicles are equipped with first aid supplies and will have an individual currently certified in First Aid and CPR. Each driver will also be instructed in emergency roadside procedures. Children are required to remain seated, with their seatbelt fastened appropriately and children are never left unattended in a vehicle.

Transportation could include drop off, pick up and field trips. In order for our program to provide transportation, we require that each child has written permission from the parent(s)/legal guardian(s). It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to return the permission slip to Bright Start. We will not transport any children on field trips, drop off or pick up if we do not have a copy of the permission slip.

Bright Start will follow the Emergency Action Plan procedures if Emergency Transportation is needed for out-of-town or other emergencies requiring transportation.

Changes in Policies

The fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to be changed at the discretion of the center director along with the Board of Directors. This *Bright Start Family Handbook* was last revised February 2024.

What to bring

Please label all items with your child's name or last name

- **Nap Bag-** A blanket, fitted sheet, and one stuffed animal.
- **Extra Change of Clothes-** At least 3 changes including shirts, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. These items should be placed in a zip lock bag and kept in your child's cubby.
- **Lunch-** Please read the food guidelines below. You must provide a cold lunch for your child every day. Lunches will be stored in the fridge.
- **Snacks-** If you do not wish for your child to eat any of the snacks we provide daily, please pack a substitute and let us know. We will share a snack menu at the end of the month.
- **Diapers-** You will need to provide diapers, wipes, and diaper cream for your child. You will be notified when diapering supplies run low. If diapers and wipes must be supplied by Bright Start, a \$1 per item used fee will incur.
- **Appropriate Clothing for Outside Play-** We go outside every day as long as weather permits. Please provide sunscreen for your child if you do not wish to use the one provided by BSLC.
 - During fall/winter—boots, coat, mittens, hat, snow pants/snowsuit.
 - During spring/summer—hat, sunglasses, and a light jacket must be provided.

Meals

BSLC will provide whole milk for our Caterpillars, and 1% low fat milk for our Butterflies, water and two snacks: morning and afternoon, daily. We will provide food items that meet the Colorado's nutritional requirements. **BSLC does not provide lunch.** We appreciate you sending a healthy lunch for your child that does not need to be heated or cooked. To accommodate children with food allergies, there may be some food items that are restricted from being served or brought into the center. If any allergies arise in the classroom, families will be notified immediately.

Food Guidelines

As Bright Start does not provide lunch, there are a few items we ask that you remember as you pack your child's food every day. We want your child to have a nutritious meal that is safe from choking hazards and provides them with the fuel they need to play and learn. Please review the

following guidelines and consider posting this page of the handbook where you will see it when packing your child's lunch.

What To Pack For Lunch

Below are the guidelines published by the USDA for lunch and supper meal patterns. On the following page are some other tips for feeding preschool children. When packing your child's lunch, please use these resources as a guide on what to pack. If you include an item such as a dessert IN ADDITION TO a meal that follows these guidelines, we will encourage your child to eat the meal first. Keep in mind that we will continue to provide milk:

Lunch and Supper Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz	1 oz	1 ½ oz	1 ½ oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
Vegetables	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	1 cup	½ cup
Fruits		¼ cup		¼ cup				
Grains	½ serving	½ oz eq	½ serving	½ oz eq	1 serving	1 oz eq	2 servings	2 oz eq

*A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults
Oz eq = ounce equivalents

For more info, please visit: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_MealBP.pdf

What to avoid

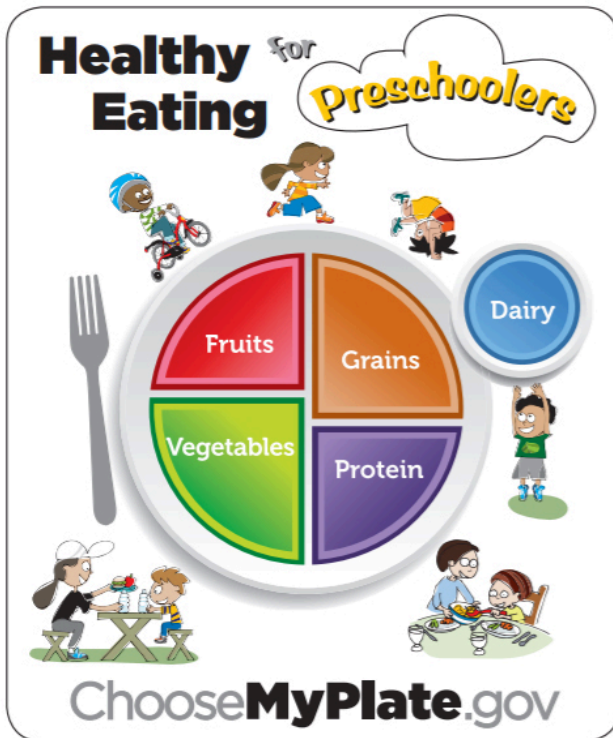
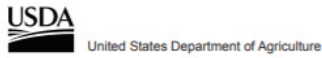
We are a tree nut free classroom. Tree nuts include: brazil nuts, pine nuts (pesto sauce), chestnuts, macadamia nuts, hazel nuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, and pecans. We ask that you avoid sending the following foods due to choking hazards, high sugar/salt/fat content, and to follow USDA guidelines:

- Cereals with candies
- Marshmallows
- Jell-O/gelatin
- Soda or caffeinated drinks
- Juice
- Whipped cream/frosting
- Candies
- Fruit snacks
- Pudding snacks
- Popcorn
- Whole grapes or tomatoes (cut in half lengthwise)
- High fat or salty foods: chips, fried foods
- Meat with bones
- Fruits with pits (please remove)
- Gum / chewy candies

Storage and heating

Food brought from home will be stored in our refrigerators and will be eaten cold. **We do not** have the ability to heat food, as licensing does not allow this. Hot foods may be heated at home and stored in a thermos. All foods will be taken out of their containers by a staff member and

given to your child. If staff notice that your child's lunch does not reflect these guidelines, they may send home an additional copy of these guidelines or have a conversation with you about your child's lunch. Thank you for taking the time and energy to provide a nutritious and safe meal for your child. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please notify the director at (719)839-0662 or through brighstartlcdirector@gmail.com



Get your child on the path to healthy eating.



Offer a variety of healthy foods.
Choose foods from each MyPlate food group. Pay attention to dairy foods, whole grains, and vegetables to build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Be mindful of sweet drinks and other foods.
Offer water instead of sugary drinks like regular soda and fruit drinks. Other foods like hot dogs, burgers, pizza, cookies, cakes, and candy are only occasional treats.

Focus on the meal and each other.
Your child learns by watching you. Let your child choose how much to eat of foods you provide. Children copy your likes, dislikes, and your interest in trying new foods.

Be patient with your child.
Children enjoy food when eating it is their own choice. Some new foods take time. Give a taste at first and wait a bit. Let children serve themselves by taking small amounts. Offer new foods many times.

Cook together.
Eat together.
Talk together.
Make meal time family time.



Food and Nutrition Service
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

FNS-451
Revised December 2016