



My Bright Beginnings

Parent Handbook

Welcome to My Bright Beginnings in Philadelphia, PA. We are so happy you have chosen us for your child care needs. We hope this handbook will answer many of your questions. Please share any additional questions and/or concerns you may have.

We are here for you and your child!

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INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement:

The mission of My Bright Beginnings is to provide safe, affordable, high-quality child care for families in the city of Philadelphia. We strive to provide each unique child with a nurturing environment and learning that is both developmentally appropriate and that stirs a sense of excitement about the world around them. Our goal is to create life-long learners by providing support and encouragement and by working collaboratively with families.

Philosophy:

At My Bright Beginnings, we believe that each child grows and progresses at his or her own unique pace. It is our job to support and encourage these changes and to provide an appropriate environment and diverse experiences to help them strive.

During early education, children develop their feelings about school. My Bright Beginnings stands to make learning fun and, in turn, encourage life-long learning. Through visits to local businesses, charity events and school trips, children will take advantage of the rich learning resources available in the surrounding community.

We strive to maintain a strong connection between school and home. You will find that our teachers openly communicate about your child's progress and we encourage you to share your thoughts and concerns as well. Families are invited to attend a variety of events throughout the year to share in your child's experience here at My Bright Beginnings.

Curriculum Statement:

MBB's curriculum is based upon our philosophy that each child grows and progresses at his or her own unique pace. One goal of the curriculum is to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment that supports their social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. This is fostered through the use of the Creative Curriculum, as well as teachers reflecting on the interests of the children and happenings in the surrounding community to bring learning to life for children. Parents can also be a great source of information and ideas regarding our learning program and their involvement and participation are welcome.

Our Classes:

Our Cozy Caterpillars are typically ages 6 weeks to 12 months. Infants learn about their world through their senses. They like to look at contrasting colors, listen to soothing sounds and need comforting touches. Our infant teachers provide stimulating activities to encourage development and growth. In a clean and loving environment, teachers provide the individual care your infant needs. (Ratio 1 staff: 4 children)

Our Busy Butterflies are typically ages 12 months to 24 months. Young toddlers are exploring on the go. They are taking steps to explore the wider world around them. They are introduced to new materials to stir their creativity and interest in the senses. Our young toddler teachers provide an environment that encourages your little one to take explore new things and take safe risks as they navigate the world through movement and experiencing new materials. (Ratio 1 staff: 5 children)

Our Cuddly Cubs are typically ages 24 months to 3 years old. Our older toddlers are running, jumping, laughing and exploring. Teachers use children's natural curiosity to engage them in learning about their world. Play becomes a natural environment for developing appropriate and effective communication skills. Potty training becomes another area of exploration during this age. (Ratio 1 staff: 6 children)

Our Big Bears are typically ages 3 years to 3.5/4 years. During their daily circle time and multi-sensory activities, young preschoolers explore the alphabet, music and art. They will begin using writing instruments and explore the sounds of the letters of the alphabet. Independence in self-care routines, such as using the toilet, washing hands or dressing themselves, is encouraged. (Ratio 1 staff: 10 children)

Our Happy Horses are typically ages 3.5/4 years to 4.5 years. Older preschoolers learn by experiencing and doing. In our older preschool class, you will observe students exploring play centers, such as, a grocery store, building, computers, writing or puzzles. Teachers probe to find out what draws children's interest and create an environment around these interests. Preschoolers are prepared, both socially and academically, for their transition to our Kindergarten Readiness Program. (Ratio 1 staff: 10 children)

Our Kindergarten Readiness Program is offered to those children that turn 4 by September 1. It is a sequential program that begins in September and ends in August with a graduation celebration. In the KR program, our 4-5 year olds are taught the foundations they will need to be successful in Kindergarten, including early reading/writing skills, age-appropriate math competence, introduction to Spanish and social/emotional readiness. (Ratio 1 teacher: 10 children)

*Currently, the Kindergarten Readiness Program is being offered at our Graduate Hospital center only. Therefore, in regards to our children there, please note that age once children are 3, their time in each of the classes (Big Bears and Happy Horses) will depend on their birthdate and when they're eligible for Kindergarten Readiness. This is to eliminate children remaining in a Preschool classroom for more than one year if their birthdate causes them to just slightly miss the public school cut off for Kindergarten (must be 5 years old before September 1).

Primary Care Groups:

At MBB, we have adopted the "Primary Care Groups" policy as part of our focus on the significance of relationships in the early childhood period. Children in each group are assigned a primary caregiver, which is made aware to the director, parent and caregivers. This caregiver is principally responsible for that child. Primary caregiving does not mean that one person cares for a child exclusively, all of the time- there has to be

teaming. Primary caregiving does mean that the child has someone special with whom to build an intimate relationship.

Our Teachers:

The teaching team at My Bright Beginnings is instrumental in providing your child with an early childhood learning experience that is both unique and memorable. Our teachers take the time to create an interesting, diverse, child-centered environment and to address the needs and interests of each child within their daily curriculum. They encourage students to take an active role in their learning, providing the means and guidance along the way.

We support our teachers by providing training, both initially and throughout their My Bright Beginnings career. Teachers are trained in fire safety, CPR, developmentally appropriate practices, early literacy skills and social/emotional development, among a variety of other areas. We believe in creating environments for each teacher to succeed in their important role as teacher.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation:

Our centers are open from 7:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Holidays and Closings:

We are closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas. The center will also be closed on Good Friday and Columbus Day for required Staff Development. The center will be closed for one week during Independence Day ("Summer Break"). Tuition is not due on this week (see pg. 22). The center is closed for one day (typically in June) for our annual trip to Sesame Place (see pg. 18).

We reserve the right to close or have early closings on other days with written notice to parents a minimum of two weeks in advance. We also reserve the right to close at any time due to poor weather conditions or other emergencies due to safety. You will receive email notification of emergency closing information.

Gross Motor Play:

Gross motor play is a vital element of children's physical and emotional well-being. At My Bright Beginnings, we provide opportunities for our children to run, jump and explore every day.

In Graduate Hospital, nearby Marian Anderson Recreation Center (740 South 17th Street) and Rittenhouse Square (18th and Walnut Streets) provide ideal spaces for outdoor fun on fair weather days. In Fishtown, both Palmer Park (Palmer and Sepviva Streets) and Shissler Recreation Center (1800 Blair Street) are wonderful outdoor play areas for our children.

Our older children will go on walks throughout the week to explore their community and interact with their environment. Our younger children will get outside for fresh air with their teachers in our six passenger

stroller and/or wagons. For poor weather days, we offer indoor gross motor play spaces for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, equipped with slides, ladders and push toys for children to jump, climb and explore.

We follow the "Weather Permitting Conditions" set by PA Keys. This standard requires that children are taken outdoors as long as the temperature is above 25 degrees, below 90 degrees (taking into account wind chill and heat index as well), there are no air quality alerts and no active precipitation.

Sample Daily Schedules:

Below is a SAMPLE daily schedule for toddlers and preschoolers. Additional activities may be included that are not listed, such as outdoor play, walks, trips, visitors, etc. Infant schedules are individual and vary day to day depending upon their needs. Their day will include time for social play, tummy time, story time, music fun, exercise/stimulation, etc., in addition to feeding, diapering and napping.

7:00am	Center Opens
7:00am-9:00am	Free Play and Breakfast Served (optional- must be brought from home)
9:00am	Play Centers
9:30am	Circle Time (name recognition, numbers, letters, shapes, days of the week, months of the year, songs) and Story Time
10:00am	Bathroom Time (diaper changes or potty)
10:15am	Morning Snack
10:30am	Table Activity (i.e. finger painting, playdough) or Learning Centers (i.e. letter recognition, counting bears, stamping shapes)
11:00am	Gross Motor Play/Outdoor Time
11:30am	Lunch Served (must be brought from home)
12:00pm	Bathroom Time (diaper changes or potty) and Nap Prep
1:00pm-3:00pm	Nap Time
3:00pm	Bathroom Time (diaper changes or potty)
3:15pm	Afternoon Snack
3:30pm	Pretend Play (i.e. puppet theater, grocery store, dress up)
4:00pm	Gross Motor Play/Outdoor Time
4:30pm	Play Centers
5:00pm	Story Time, Free Play or Group Games
6:00pm	Center Closes

Meals and Snacks:

Breakfast: Parents are welcome to send in a breakfast from home. It can be served to your child anytime between 7:00am and 9:00am. We do ask that it be healthy and requires 60 seconds or less of heating in the microwave.

Snacks: We provide two snacks each day- one morning and one afternoon snack. Snacks may include, but are not limited to, dry cereal, fruit, crackers, popcorn or pretzels. Along with a snack, children will be served water or milk. Our philosophy is to encourage good eating habits; therefore we do our best not to serve sugary snacks. We do enjoy celebrating and will occasionally have special treats, such as cupcakes, cookies or chips for birthdays, holidays or accomplishments.

Lunch: Please provide a healthy lunch for your child each day. Teachers will heat up your child's lunch if necessary (no more than 60 seconds please) and will provide the necessary disposable utensils, plates and bowls. We may be serving a number of children during the lunch period, so please consider simple packaging. No caffeinated drinks or candy please. Any containers or utensils brought from home will be sent home to be sanitized. We provide a refrigerator to store items on a daily basis only. Frozen foods are not permitted.

Infant Feeding: Parents of infants will be asked to provide an appropriate number of bottles for their child along with a written schedule of typical or preferred feeding times. All bottles should be labeled with your child's name. Breast milk bottles should also include the date. Bottles cannot be sanitized at the center, therefore will be sent home each day to be sanitized.

****It is your responsibility to inform and keep us updated on any changes in your child's feeding in writing.****

Special Diets: We respect and keep to any special diet needs your child may have, religious, health or other. Although we will make every attempt to provide reasonable accommodations for special needs, we may require that special snacks be brought from home. Please note, all special diet requirements will be visibly posted within your child's classroom. Please let us know if for any reason there is a concern about this.

We will inform you of any allergies other children may have within the center if it requires you to limit what you can bring in for your child. We kindly ask for your cooperation and understanding in these cases.

****It is your responsibility to inform and keep us updated on any special needs, including allergies or aversions in writing.****

Special Needs Documents:

If applicable to your child, we request copies of any IEP or IFSP written plans and/or special needs assessments completed by professionals to inform classroom practice. MBB proposes open and honest communication regarding any matters affecting the growth and development of your child. We provide reasonable accommodations and strive to work cooperatively with families and any other professionals involved to provide an appropriate learning environment for your child.

Transitions within MBB:

At My Bright Beginnings, transitions occur twice per year in February and September. Children are transitioned based on their age and we strive to have children transition in groups after remaining with the same caregiver(s) for approximately one year. Children may remain with a younger group after discussing with the parent if developmental readiness is a concern. As children are at varying developmental levels, teachers work to provide varied activities and opportunities to address the needs of all children.

Note the following typical signals we look for when deciding if a child is ready to transition:

Cozy Caterpillars to Busy Butterflies- Child is pulling up and/or beginning to take steps. The child has begun eating some finger foods.

Busy Butterflies to Cuddly Cubs- Child is saying a number of words and can sit through a story or other learning activity for about five to ten minutes. Child is showing some independence during mealtimes.

Cuddly Cubs to Big Bears- Child can communicate their needs with words and has begun the potty training process (uses a pull up only during long walk and/or naptime).

Big Bears to Happy Horses- Child is able to use a pencil with a firm grip, recognizes most letters of the alphabet and is fully potty trained.

Happy Horses to Kindergarten Readiness- Child has turned 4 by September 1, uses the restroom independently and has basic competency in preschool skills.

A graduation ceremony is held every August for those children who will be entering Kindergarten in September. There are many options in Philadelphia for Kindergarten. It is best to begin research and visits at least one year in advance. Your Center Director will pass along any information about Kindergarten programs that is available, but cannot endorse any particular program.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Two opportunities for parents to meet with their child's teacher about their development and progress are offered each year, typically once in February and once in July. During this brief meeting, teachers will provide a child service report, which indicates areas of growth, areas of continued development and ideas for working with your child at home. Any concerns should be addressed with your child's teacher or the director immediately, rather than waiting for conferences.

Appropriate Dress for School:

While at daycare, it's important for children to be able to play and explore and even get messy! Children should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for all activities throughout the day. In colder climates, please provide appropriate warmer attire, such as coats, mittens, gloves and hats, as children will engage in outdoor activities. Please do not dress your child in items that may pose a choking hazard, such as sweatshirts with drawstrings, necklaces, etc. Girls should wear shorts underneath their skirts. Please label ALL items with your child's name or initials.

Shoes:

At MBB, we strive for a healthy and clean environment. In order to provide a safe, healthy place for your child to play and learn, we ask that all children and visitors remove their outside shoes before entering our classrooms. Children that are walking should bring in a pair of “indoor shoes” (shoes that have not been worn outdoors previously) to change into when they arrive in their classroom each day. Children’s shoes are to be closed-toed with a back (no slip-ons), tennis shoes are highly recommended. Teachers will help children change into their outdoor shoes for outdoor excursions. Parents, teachers and other visitors are asked to remove their shoes also before entering classrooms.

Sunscreen:

During the summer, we ask that parents apply a full layer of sunscreen on their child prior to drop-off in the morning. Please send in a labeled bottle of sunscreen for your child (the handbook sign-off page asks your permission to apply the provided sunscreen). Teachers will re-apply sunscreen to the exposed extremities (face, arms, and legs) before going outdoors.

Strollers:

At our Graduate Hospital location, due to space and safety restrictions, parents have the option of leaving ONLY a folded “umbrella” style stroller at the center for the duration of their child’s attendance at the center. It is the parent’s responsibility to fold and place the stroller in the designated area. Due to space and fire safety reasons, any other type of stroller cannot be kept at the center. My Bright Beginnings is not responsible for strollers left overnight.

At our Fishtown location, parents are able to leave any type of stroller in the vestibule during the duration of their child’s attendance at the center at their own risk. We ask that parents “park” strollers in an organized manner and be considerate of other families who also need to “park” their strollers. My Bright Beginnings is not responsible for strollers left in the vestibule during the day or left overnight.

Naptime:Infants:

Infants’ napping schedules will be based on their individual needs. Typical or preferred napping times for your child will be discussed during the enrollment meeting. Each child will be designated his or her own individual pack ‘n play for rest times. You must provide 2 pack n play sheets, which will be sent home at minimum weekly to be washed.

****Safe Sleeping Position:** Pursuant to the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we place infants on their backs to sleep. If you request your child be placed in a different position, a written note from your child’s physician is required.

****2015 Safe Sleep Update (ECELS- Healthy Child Care PA):** Infants should be placed on their back to sleep. Remove all items, including blankets and other loose bedding from infant cribs and sleeping places. A pacifier

can be used in the sleep space. Providing a bare sleep space for infants reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, wearable blankets or other clothing designed for sleep can be used instead of blankets as long as the clothing allows for unrestrained movement of the infants' arms and legs.

Toddlers and Preschoolers:

All children require a sufficient amount of rest each day in order to grow and learn. We realize that some children will sleep for the duration of naptime and others will only rest for a short period of time. Our toddler and preschool classes have very consistent routines during naptime.

* Our toddler and preschool classes have a designated nap time between approximately 1:00pm and 3:00pm.

* Your child will be designated either a cot or a mat, which will be labeled with his or her name and will only be used by your child.

*You must provide a sleeping bag or napper for your child to place over his or her mat/cot during naptime. This is as per state regulations. A blanket is NOT permitted for children who sleep on cots or mats for cleanliness and safety. Sleeping bags or nappers will be sent home every Friday and MUST be washed and returned on the next day of care.

*Children will rest for at least twenty minutes. For those that do not fall asleep, after the first twenty minutes, they may be provided with a quiet activity on their cot/mat while their classmates continue to nap. Alternate, reasonable accommodations will be discussed with the parent if a child is disrupting classmates during naptime.

Diapering:

Diapers are checked/changed for all children every two hours unless they are too wet or have made a bowel movement at any time. Diapering is recorded by teachers on daily report for infants. Parents are encouraged to send in enough diapers and wipes for approximately 3 weeks. On average, a child goes through 4 diapers while at the center for a full day. Teachers will let you know either verbally or on your child's daily note if more diapers or wipes are needed. It is the parents' responsibility to provide diapers and wipes as needed and the center cannot be responsible for providing either at any time. Please note that we do not accept cloth diapers for sanitary reasons at the center. Also note that pull-ups do not hold as much liquid as a regular diaper, so should not be used unless the child is formally potty training (see "Potty Training" below).

Potty Training:

Before children begin potty training, we request at least one initial face-to-face potty training meeting, so we can discuss a mutual plan. Teachers will inform you if they notice signs of potty training readiness in your child. We ask that you let us know if you notice at home that your child is showing signs. We have found this process typically begins when the child is about 2 ½ years old. We work cooperatively and reasonably with families through the process. Potty training must be consistent at school and home, so we encourage continued dialogue with parents throughout the process.

For children who are potty training, we request five full changes of clothing, including two pairs of socks and one pair of shoes, labeled with the child's name. All children will be supervised and offered assistance as needed. For health and safety reasons, all soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and sent home with the child at the end of the day- staff members cannot rinse or wash items.

Pull-ups are acceptable during potty training, although "Easy-ups" (similar to pull-ups, but without the sticky tabs on the side) will only be accepted for those children who can dress and undress with minimal assistance.

The toilets at our center are standard sized toilets, so you may opt to send in a toilet ring. If so, please label with your child's name. We have eliminated potty chairs, because we have found them to be difficult to keep sanitary and also require additional transition for the child onto a regular size toilet.

Health and Medical:

We maintain a clean and healthy environment to help prevent the spread of germs and communicable diseases. We teach cleanliness and proper hygiene with your child, including frequent hand washing.

Immunization Requirements

All children must comply with state immunization requirements to be admitted to our program and those requirements must be kept current during enrollment. All children **MUST** be immunized.

Illness

We cannot care for children who are ill. If your child becomes ill at the center, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child within one hour of notification. If you are unable to pick up your child within one hour, someone listed on your child's emergency contact list should pick up your child.

Sick Policy

To maintain the health of all children at the center, your child may not be allowed to attend the center if he/she has the following symptoms. Unless otherwise noted, your child should be free of these symptoms for 24 hours without medication before returning to school:

-A fever of 100 degrees or above

-Vomiting

-Diarrhea (2 or more loose stools)

-Signs of possible severe illness include unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, behavior changes, loss of appetite or unusual signs

-Mouth sores with drooling

-Rashes

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Persistent itching of body or scalp
- Dark (tea colored) urine
- Persistent abdominal pain for more than two hours

Child must be kept home if he/she shows signs of the following and must have a physician's note indicating the child is no longer contagious and can be admitted back into group care:

- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Strep throat
- Measles
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Chicken Pox
- Mumps
- Rubella (may not return until six days after onset of rash)
- E Coli
- Salmonella
- Campylobacteriosis
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Haemophilus Influenzae
- Hepatitis A
- Thrush
- Hand-food and mouth disease
- Meningitis
- Tuberculosis (may not return until cleared by local health department)
- Scabies (may not return until treatment is complete)
- Impetigo
- Shigella

-Any other illness requiring exclusion from group care in accordance with state child care or health department regulations.

Children cannot be in the center if they have symptoms of any communicable disease and may not return until they are no longer contagious. The Center Director can exclude any child who he/she believes is too ill to be at the center.

We may notify you if we become aware that an employee or a child in our care has contracted a communicable disease that the law requires us to report.

Please tell us about any issue that may affect other children in our care. We will keep the information confidential and will only share the information with those that need to know or required by law.

Children with Allergies

Please inform the Center Director about any allergies your child may have. If your child requires medication for life threatening conditions you must complete and sign the Medication Log Form. Please provide written instructions from your child's physician as to the nature of the allergy, what precautions are to be taken to avoid a reaction and what steps to follow should a reaction occur. For children with food allergies, an alternative daily snack may be requested from home.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication will only be administered for life threatening or medically necessary circumstances. Examples are, but not limited to, breathing treatments, epi-pens, inhalers and antihistamines for severe allergic reactions. We strongly prefer that you come to the center to administer the medication or obtain a dosage that would allow you to administer the medication at home.

If medications must be given, a signed Medication Log Form must be completed by the parent. Verbal (over the phone or in person) consent is NOT acceptable. All medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's first and last name, name of the medication, prescription number, expiration date, reason for medication, dosage, frequency and method of administration. Medications are to be given to the Center Director for proper storage. Please do not send any medication with your child in diaper bags, personal belongings or leave medication in your child's cubby. Medications will be administered by the Center Director or other authorized, trained administrative staff ONLY.

Medications will only be administered as stated on label directions and as directed by the physician. All medications are stored in a locked area inaccessible to children and refrigerated if required. Medication is not typically administered on field trips unless it is a life threatening circumstance (such as allergic reactions to bee stings) or a drug that has dosage duration shorter than the anticipated time for the field trip.

We will return the medication to you when the treatment period expires, the medication expires, or you disenroll.

Non-Prescription Medication

For the administration of non-prescription medications, a signed Medication Log Form must be completed and signed by the parent. Verbal (over the phone or in person) consent is NOT acceptable. All over-the-counter medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's first and last name and expiration date. Over-the-counter medications will only be administered as stated on label directions unless a written note is provided by your child's physician.

My Bright Beginnings reserves the right to discontinue administration of any medication at any time if: severe reaction occurs, medication expires, child is injured or ill, required forms are incomplete, or if at any time My Bright Beginnings feels it is in the best interest of the child.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency, we will take appropriate emergency action, call 911 if appropriate and notify you immediately. It is imperative that all enrollment forms contain current contact information, emergency medical information and authorization for medical treatment.

As indicated in your enrollment information, you authorize us to contact emergency personnel, to transport your child to an emergency facility and authorize any doctor or hospital to render emergency and medical care to your child.

Drop-off/Pick-up:

Drop-off

Children may be dropped off for care anytime between 7:00am and 9:30am. It is important that we provide all of our students with a consistent routine each day, which is why we require ALL children to arrive by 9:30am unless a doctor's note is provided. Toddlers and Preschoolers will begin their circle time promptly at 9:30am, a fundamental part of their day. Parents are asked to sign-in when they arrive to document drop-off time and initials of the person dropping off. Please inform the Center Director in advance if there is a need to drop-off after 9:30am. We ask that parents do not drop-off their child during naptime between 12:30pm and 3pm.

Pick-up

We ask that parents do not come to pick-up their child during naptime between 12:30pm and 3pm. Parents are asked to sign-out before leaving with their child to document pick-up time and initials of the person who is picking up. Please inform the Center Director in advance if there is a need to pick-up between 1pm and 3pm.

Please Note:

****List all possible adults who may pick-up your child at any point on the Emergency Contact Form. If an emergency arises and you need to have someone not listed pick-up your child, we require WRITTEN documentation and the adult will be required to show proper identification prior.**

****When a person listed on the Emergency Contact Form comes for the first time to pick up your child, they will be asked to provide proper identification. Please respect that this is for your child's safety and we will not waiver on this regulation at ANY time.**

Changes in Typical Schedule

The Center Director will also ask for typical drop-off and pick-up times during registration. If at any time, either permanently or for just one day, these times change, please give reasonable notice to the Center Director for staffing purposes. Please note that regular tuition rates listed are for any nine hours of care each day. If extended hours are required, please make arrangements in advance with the Center Director. The rate for additional hours is \$10 per hour.

Reporting Absences:

As a courtesy, please notify the Center Director if your child is going to be absent. If you are enrolled with CCIS, we must inform your area office if your child is absent for three or more continuous days without notice.

Late Pick-up Policy:

It is important that you pick up your child prior to the center's closing time, 6pm. If a child is left at the center after closing, staff will do the following:

-Try to contact you by phone

-Try to contact the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Contact-Parental Consent form

-If the above listed attempts are unsuccessful and the child has not been picked up one hour past closing time, police or local authorities may be contacted

A late fee of **\$1 per minute** after 6pm will be assessed if you are late picking up your child. This fee is to be paid to the staff member who releases your child to you. Further care cannot be provided until this fee is paid. We understand that emergencies can occur that may cause you to be late, although we also ask that you respect that our staff have their own families and matters to attend to.

*Staff members are not permitted to take children home with them unless prior written permission is provided.

Open Door Policy:

My Bright Beginnings has an open door policy. We seek your involvement in your child's program and encourage you to participate in school activities. We do, however, ask that you respect our desire to provide all children with a calm, secure program, particularly in regards to drop-off and pick-up specifications.

Teacher Babysitting Policy:

At MBB, we do not discourage teacher's caring for children outside of the center, but we do NOT take any responsibility for care that is arranged either outside of MBB operating hours or at a location away from MBB. Children are not permitted to be released at the end of the day to a teacher unless written permission is provided.

Teachers who are caring for children enrolled at MBB outside of the center are not permitted to do so during our hours of operation- Monday through Friday between 7am and 6pm or on days on which they are compensated with paid time off, such as sick days, holidays or snow closings.

Once a teacher has accepted a position with MBB, he or she is not permitted to care for a child that is or was enrolled at some point in time or work in any formal or informal capacity for the family of this child for 12 months after his or her employment with MBB.

Behavior Policy:

We believe that we should encourage good behavior by:

- Praising and encouraging the right things
- Using clear and positive statements of behavior
- Redirecting behavior where appropriate

We also monitor that the classroom is developmentally appropriate, there are sufficient toys to stimulate children, that staff model and encourage the right behaviors, that the curriculum is stimulating for the children and staff appropriately supervise and interact with the children.

If a child is not behaving appropriately; we will use the following positive guidance techniques:

Ignoring: Sometimes ignoring a child who is trying to gain attention by acting out is an appropriate response. Of course, we will not ignore behaviors that are unsafe.

Redirection/Distraction: Another effective technique is to offer an alternative to a child such as suggesting a new activity, offering a different toy, encouraging independent play, or interacting with the child in a different way.

Discussion: Often the staff can discuss with the child how the behavior is inappropriate and suggest more appropriate behavior. Alternatively, the teacher can ask the child if they can suggest what would have been a better way to handle the situation.

Reasonable Consequences: The staff may implement reasonable consequences such as taking away a toy if the child used the toy to hit another child.

Take a Break: Here the child is separated from the group to calm down and will have access to something else to do. While the child will remain supervised, they will not be immediately influenced by their classmates. This is different from the concept of “time out”, which is often seen as more punitive as the child is isolated and does nothing. In “take a break” the child will have access to other activities while they settle down. Once the negative behavior is under control the child can be returned to the group. We do not use “take a break” with children under the age of one.

If these positive guidance techniques are not effective, we may involve you with the following progressive guidance techniques:

First, we may inform you in writing what behaviors have been observed and what the staff has done to try to modify the behavior.

Second, if the inappropriate behavior continues, the Center Director and teacher will meet with you to develop an action plan to correct the behavior. We will seek your input and agree on steps to attempt to modify the behavior. We may suggest involving outside resources to assist with the situation.

Third, if the inappropriate behavior persists, we may ask you to keep the child home for a day or two.

Finally, if the child continues to act inappropriately, we may disenroll the child.

We reserve the right to use or not to use these progressive guidance techniques. We may immediately disenroll a child if his or her behavior creates a health or safety risk.

We do not allow the following forms of discipline from our staff or from parents on our premises: corporal punishment; emotional punishment including ridicule, embarrassment or humiliation; punishing a child for toilet training lapses; withholding food, light, warmth, clothing or medical care; and physical restraint, other than the restraint necessary to protect a child or others from harm.

Biting

Experts in the field of child development agree that biting is within a range of expected behaviors among young children, especially toddlers. If a bite occurs, the teacher will first attend to the bitten child by comforting the child and gently cleaning the bitten area with soap and water. The biter will be removed from the immediate area and staff will explain that the behavior is not acceptable. We will complete incident reports for both children.

Daily Items from Home:

ALL ITEMS SHOULD BE LABELED

The following items are to be provided daily for **Infant children**:

- Package of disposable diapers
- A box of baby wipes (*in a plastic container to avoid wipes drying out)
- 3 changes of clothing, including socks (replace when seasons change)
- 2 pack n play sheets (will be sent home every Friday for washing)
- Bibs or burp clothes (will be sent home as used for washing)
- Diapering ointment when needed (no powders or sprays)
- Enough prepared bottles for one day labeled with child's first/last name (on bottle and lid), contents (breast milk or formula) and date
- Jar food and cereal (if appropriate)

The following items are to be provided for **Toddlers**:

- Package of disposable diapers (or pull ups if appropriate)
- A box of baby wipes (*in a plastic container to avoid wipes drying out)
- Diapering ointment when needed (no powders or sprays)
- A bag lunch in reusable lunch bag (see "Meals and Snacks" for detailed information)
- Napper for naptime (will be sent home every Friday for washing)
- 3 complete changes of clothing, including socks (replace when seasons change)
- 1 pair of indoor shoes and 1 pair of extra shoes (if potty training)
- Sweaters and/or jackets to accommodate indoor/outdoor temperature changes

The following items are to be provided daily for **Preschoolers**:

- A bag lunch in a reusable lunch bag (see "Meals and Snacks" for detailed information)
- Napper for naptime (will be sent home every Friday for washing)
- At least 1 complete change of clothing, including socks and underwear (replace when seasons change)

-1 pair of indoor shoes and 1 pair of extra shoes

-Sweaters and/or jackets to accommodate indoor/outdoor temperature changes

Please note:

*It is the parents' responsibility to replenish any of the listed items as they become expended

*Do not send in toys or other small items with your child, as they can become a distraction and/or choking hazard. There will be exceptions for children who bring a specific item to comfort them during transition to the center. We cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items brought from home.

Field Trips:

Firsthand experience can provide children with information and a level of understanding that adds elements to their play, enriches vocabulary and enhances their overall learning. Field trips are scheduled approximately every 2 months throughout the year. Field trips are for children in the toddler and preschool classrooms. If you choose not to send your child on a trip, there will be no care for your child on that day as all staff is required to assist on the trip and the child may not be dropped off after the group returns from the trip. Children under the age of 2.5 years are required to have a parent or guardian accompany them on all trips. We will have one trip per year (typically in June) to Sesame Place, for which the entire center will be closed for the day, including our infant classrooms.

Trip details will be provided in advance by the Center Director. A signed field trip authorization form to include the date, time, location, any fees, special instructions or items to bring, and the anticipated time of arrival back to the center will be required for each child. All field trips start and end at the center, children may not be dropped off or picked up at the field trip location.

Multiculturalism Policy:

My Bright Beginnings recognizes that Philadelphia is a multicultural city composed of people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Our program will promote cultural awareness to encourage children to appreciate diversity and foster their individual sense of identity and worth. This cultural awareness will not be tokenistic, rather integrated into the program. Families and staff members will be welcome and encouraged to share their language, holidays and other aspects of their culture. We also ask that families respect the cultural awareness that is promoted at the center.

ENROLLMENT

Registration Requirements:

In order to guarantee a spot for your child, a registration fee of \$100, a deposit equal to one week's tuition and complete and accurate registration forms are required. These fees are non-refundable. The deposit will be applied toward your child's final week of care with My Bright Beginnings. Please contact the Center

Director immediately if your desired start-date changes. We cannot always guarantee an earlier or later start-date.

At time of registration, the Center Director will provide all required forms to be completed prior to start of care and an orientation meeting will be scheduled. During the Orientation Meeting, we will review all required paperwork, your child's specific needs and schedule, review this handbook and answer any questions you have regarding your child's care at My Bright Beginnings. The required forms are listed below in "Documentation Requirements".

Whenever possible, we ask that two "Visit Days" are scheduled during the week before a child begins full-time care (unless there is a holiday or special event that week). "Visit Days" consist of the child being dropped off from 9am-11am, so both the teachers and the child can begin to become familiar with one another. We find this is helpful for parents as well, so they begin to get to know the program prior to going back to work full-time. All documentation is required and all necessary items for home should be provided prior to a "Visit Day".

Documentation Requirements:

Maintaining up-to-date documentation is pertinent to providing your child with the best care possible. Please be sure to provide written notification of any changes to any documentation in a timely manner. My Bright Beginnings cannot provide care without receipt of the all necessary documentation.

Every child must maintain up-to-date copies of the following documentation:

- Emergency Contact-Parental Consent Form (must be updated/reviewed every 6 months)
- Tuition Agreement Form (must be updated/reviewed every 6 months)
- Pick up Authorization Form

- Child Health Report (must be updated every 6 months for infants and once per year for toddlers and preschoolers, any updated information related to health must be provided as it occurs)
- Signed Receipt of Handbook Form (will be updated whenever there are revisions to this handbook)
- Child Social Resume Form (for infants, a written explanation of feeding and napping schedule is required)

45 Post-Enrollment Meeting:

Within 45 days of your child's enrollment a developmental screening (Ages and Stages) should be completed. Your child's teacher will ask you to complete the questionnaire, the teacher will also complete the questionnaire and then you will meet at a mutually agreed upon time to review the tool (within 45 days of enrollment). Your child's transition to the center and any questions/concerns you may have regarding your child's care or center policies will also be discussed.

Continued Enrollment:

My Bright Beginnings may decide to terminate enrollment for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Behavior issues by child or parent
- Failure to comply with center policies
- The inability to meet the child's needs
- The inability to meet the parent's expectations

Notice of Withdrawal:

My Bright Beginnings requires a minimum one month written notice of withdrawal (email is acceptable). If proper notice is not given, tuition will still be due regardless of your child's attendance. Your deposit will be applied towards this due amount. Re-enrollment will be based on availability.

If your child is transitioning to another education setting, please discuss any concerns with your child's teacher(s) or the center director. If you require a copy of your child's records, please provide a written request at least two weeks in advance. Child records can only be released to a legal parent or guardian.

Sibling Preference Policy:

At MBB we strive to create a strong sense of community. Therefore, we offer a sibling preference policy. When there are available spots for registration in any class, we offer them to siblings of children who are currently enrolled full time. Registration procedures must be completed in order to guarantee a spot. The director will be able to provide details about when a spot is available. There will be times when a spot is not available either on your ideal date, because the class is at full enrollment until children transition or other families have already completed registration and are scheduled to start in the class in the future. If your start date changes for any reason, we may not be able to provide care.

TUITION**Rates:**Graduate Hospital

As of January 2016 the following are our weekly tuition rates. These rates are based upon which class your child is enrolled in, not necessarily his or her age.

Cozy Caterpillars and Busy Butterflies: \$250 per week for any 9 hours

Cuddly Cubs and Big Bears: \$220 per week for any 9 hours

Happy Horses: \$200 per week for any 9 hours

Kindergarten Readiness: \$220 per week for any 9 hours

**Additional care over 9 hours will be at a rate of \$10 per hour and must be pre-arranged with the Center Director for staffing purposes.

Fishtown

Infants: \$220 per week for any 9 hours

Toddlers: \$200 per week for any 9 hours

Preschoolers: \$180 per week for any 9 hours

**Additional care over 9 hours will be at a rate of \$10 per hour and must be pre-arranged with the Center Director for staffing purposes.

Tuition is paid weekly and is due each Friday for the upcoming week. A late fee of \$10 per day will be assessed Monday morning for any unpaid account. If tuition is delinquent for two weeks, your child may be withdrawn from the program until the account is paid in full. My Bright Beginnings cannot guarantee a child's spot should this situation occur. If there are circumstances that would prevent you from paying tuition in a timely manner, please discuss this confidentially with the Center Director.

We accept cash or check. If more than two personal checks are returned in a calendar year, tuition must be paid by cash. If a check is returned for any reason, a returned check processing fee of \$30 must be paid along with any charges a financial institution may charge. Once a check has been processed electronically, the check is no longer negotiable and will not be returned. Any account left unpaid may be sent to a third-party collection agency and you will be responsible for payment of the unpaid balance, all reasonable collection and attorney fees.

Tuition Payment Options:

At Graduate Hospital we will be offer the EFT payment option only through December 2015. Starting January 2016, we will be accepting check or cash for tuition payments. We encourage families to set up check payments using their bank's online bill pay. Checks should be written out to "My Bright Beginnings" and should be mailed to 1740 South Street, Suite LL100, Philadelphia, PA 19146 or 1714 Memphis Street, Suite C-1, Philadelphia, PA 19125 as appropriate.

Child Care Information Services (CCIS):

We accept payments through CCIS. These parents are still responsible for the \$100 registration fee, deposit equal to one week's tuition and all registration forms. The deposit will be returned to you once all CCIS

payments are received and we are given the appropriate 2 week written notice of withdrawal. It is the parents' responsibility to keep up with all paperwork and other correspondence with CCIS.

If there is a discrepancy between the CCIS "weekly cost of care" and the current My Bright Beginnings tuition rate, parents are responsible to pay the difference. For example, if the CCIS "weekly cost of care" for a toddler is listed as \$180 and your center's toddler rate is \$210, the parent would be responsible for the remaining \$30 per week in addition to their co-pay. If you require additional care over 9 hours, you are also responsible for the additional care fee of \$10 per hour.

All copayments are due by Friday the week prior to care and no later than Monday. Copayments that exceed two weeks of nonpayment must be reported to CCIS and could result in suspension or termination of your CCIS services. CCIS allows 25 calendar days of absence per fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Once a child has reached the maximum days of absences parents are responsible for payment. Whenever there are 5 consecutive days of absence, we are required to report to CCIS.

Vacation and Absences:

My Bright Beginnings will be closed for one week during Independence Day ("Summer Break"). Tuition is not due during this week. For 2016, the dates for Summer Break will be July 4-July 8. For 2017, the dates for Summer Break will be July 3-July 7. For 2018, the dates for Summer Break will be July 2-July 6.

We ask that you provide a courtesy two weeks advance notice for any other scheduled vacations or absences. All regularly scheduled tuition payments are due; no allowances, credits, refunds or make up days will be made for vacations or absences (except for the week of "Summer Break").

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan:

My Bright Beginnings conducts monthly fire, emergency evacuation and shelter-in-place drills. No advanced notice will be given of drill dates or times. If you are in the building during a fire, emergency or shelter-in-place drill, we ask that you follow our procedures and evacuate the building along with the children.

In the event of an actual fire and/or emergency situation, the Center Director will inform parents as soon as possible. If the duration of the situation is expected to continue for an extended amount of time, you will be contacted by the Center Director to pick up your child.

Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather Information:

While we strive to remain open, there are times where inclement weather, natural/national disasters, threats, or a major building issue may force us to close. Please check your email if you have any concerns that the center may close.

If the school must close after you have dropped off your child, we will call you to arrange for pick up. If we cannot reach you, we will contact your emergency contacts. If the center is evacuated, we will inform the person we reach of the new pick up location.

At times when it is possible, we will email families the night before a possible closing to inform them of what we are anticipating. While we do not strictly adhere to the school district closing decisions, we may use their interpretation for guidance in determining our decision. Note the following possible scenarios for unplanned closings:

- A. The center will close for the day in its entirety.
- B. The center will open late.
- C. The center will close early.

*Please note that we put the safety of our teachers first when we must make decisions about weather or other reasons for closing. The scenarios listed above are offered based on how teachers can safely travel both to and from work, as well as, the safety of children given the specific circumstances.

LICENSING AND LEGAL

Policy Change:

You agree to comply with all of My Bright Beginnings' existing policies and procedures, including the My Bright Beginnings Parent Handbook. We reserve the right, in our sole discretion, to modify or change policies, procedures or programs, in whole or in part, at any time. Administration will make every effort to provide any policy change in writing with a minimum of two weeks' notice, unless the policy change is in direct response to a State or City requirement or directly affects the safety of our children.

State Licensing:

My Bright Beginnings meets applicable licensing regulations and standards. Our center is subject to inspection by city and state health, fire and licensing officials. A copy of state Licensing Regulations and our latest inspection report is available at the Center. To the extent a state licensing provision is different than a provision in this Handbook, we will follow the state provision.

Public, Social, and Community Services:

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children (a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of providing PA's young children with access to quality early learning opportunities)

<http://paprom.convio.net>

Keystone Stars (an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in PA)

www.pakeys.org

Child Care Information Services (provides families with information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on your specific needs or preferences and administers the Child Care Works subsidized child care program)

<http://philadelphiachildcare.org/>

Child Link (provides Service Coordinators who help children, from birth to age three who have developmental delays or disabilities, and their families living in Philadelphia obtain supports and services)

www.phmc.org

Early Intervention (provides support and services to families with children birth to age 5 with developmental delays and disabilities)

http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_intervention/8710

Stakeholders:

My Bright Beginnings is committed to providing quality care for all children not only through programming, but also through creating partnerships with various community stakeholders. Our community stakeholders are person or organizations that have a vested interest in the safety and welfare of children that reside in the community in which they are located. Below is a list of our stakeholders for each of our locations. If you decide to add a stakeholder, please email your director.

Graduate Hospital

1. Center City Pediatrics, 1740 South Street #301, 215-735-5600
2. Free Library of Philadelphia, 1905 Locust Street, 215-685-6621
3. Independence Charter School, 1600 Lombard Street, 215-238-8000
4. Chester Arthur School- 2000 Catherine Street, 215-875-5774
5. Greenfield School- 2200 Chestnut Street, 215-299-3567
6. Marian Anderson Recreation Center, 740 S. 17th Street, 215-685-6594
7. Alex's Lemonade Stand, 333 E. Lancaster Avenue #414 Wynnewood, PA, 610-649-3034

Fishtown

1. Schissler Recreation Center, 1800 Blair Street, 215-685-9888
2. Free Library of Philadelphia, 1217 E. Montgomery Avenue, 215-685-9990
3. Alexander Adaire School, 1300 E. Palmer Street, 215-291-4712
4. Fishtown Recreation Center, 1202-32 E. Montgomery Street, 215-685-9885

Non-Discrimination Policy:

My Bright Beginnings does not discriminate on the basis of a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, military family status or any other factors protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of the center's operations.

Child Abuse and Neglect:

Child care providers are mandated reporters and have an obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate state agencies when there is "reasonable cause to report". Failure to report can result in staff being charged with criminal penalties. It is also improper to interfere with anyone's attempt to report child abuse or neglect. Suspected abuse or neglect of a child may be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to DHS at 215-683-6100 (also TTY) or to CHILDLINE at 800-932-0313.

Interviewing Children and Inspecting Records:

Licensing, Child Protective Services and local police authorities have the authority to interview children or staff, look at child or facility records, observe the children at the center or conduct a medical examination by a licensed physician of any child where appropriate.

Custody and Visitation Issues:

My Bright Beginnings complies with valid court orders and parenting agreements regarding custody and parenting time. We wish to remain a neutral party when divorced/unmarried parents share parenting time. We require a valid subpoena before providing copies of any records for use in any court proceedings.

Photographs/Digital Image Release:

You give permission for your child to be photographed or have digital images taken for the Center's use.

Child's Name _____



My Bright Beginnings Parent Handbook (v. January 2016)

Acknowledgement and Receipt Form

By signing this form, I agree that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook. I further agree that I have read and understand all policies and procedures set forth in the My Bright Beginnings Parents Handbook.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Center Director/ Signature

Date

Please circle next to each item for permission to apply when item is sent from home:

Permission to apply sunscreen: Yes No

Permission to apply lotion: Yes No

Permission to apply diaper cream (infants and toddlers): Yes No

Permission to apply chapstick (preschool and KR): Yes No