



**Bright
Path**
The best start in life

Parent Handbook

2023

Part of the
**Busy
Bees.**
family

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1. Our Values

Care

We take care of the children entrusted to us and our dedicated staff. All are appreciated, and diversity is valued.

Service

We provide exceptional service and are integral to supporting families raising children.

Quality

We maintain the highest standards in care and safety and provide exceptional early years education.

Value

We provide outstanding value for our families.

2. Welcome Letter

Dear Family,

Welcome to BrightPath! Choosing a childcare center for your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions that you will make. We are pleased that you have chosen us and will work very hard to provide the highest quality program for you and your child.

As you've already read, our mission is simple, and we will assert 100% of our efforts each day to accomplish it. The following material and information will hopefully provide you with a better perspective about our program, commitment, and philosophies.

We look forward to working with you to provide the best program for your child.

3. Program Philosophy

We believe that young children learn through direct experience. Our objective is to provide an enriching environment in which children can gain these experiences while feeling safe and secure.

One of the hallmarks of high-quality childcare is communication between faculty and families. We place great emphasis on integrating the family into the educational process. You will be provided with a detailed overview of our curriculum, daily updates, and monthly newsletters. In addition to extensive informal interaction, formal Family-Teacher conferences are conducted three times each year. Families are always welcome in our classrooms to read a story, share a special interest, or just to visit.

Play is the work of children, for it is through play that the children develop concepts about themselves and the world around them. At BrightPath, we provide a joyful, nurturing, and secure environment that supports the work of children.

3.1 Staff Philosophy

One of the most critical components to accomplishing our mission and successfully implementing our philosophy is maintaining the highest quality staff possible and providing them with the resources and support to be successful. A child's first school experience is very special and very important. For many, it will dictate how they view learning for many years to come. The faculty and staff at BrightPath understand how crucial the first years of life and learning are. Our faculty is made up of dedicated and

caring professionals who welcome the opportunity and challenge of educating your children. We are confident that our faculty and staff will provide your child with superior nurturing and guidance while they are under our care. Many of our preschool and toddler/infant teachers hold four-year degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Of those that don't, many are actively engaged in Early Childhood Education classes through our tuition reimbursement program. In addition to formal education, all our staff have a genuine love for young children and a commitment to high quality education. All our staff participate in continuing education and are certified in First Aid & CPR.

Our teachers are always available to meet with families regarding questions and concerns. Please arrange a mutually convenient time with your child's teacher. (Teachers can frequently arrange telephone conferences during the middle of the day—drop off and pick-up times are not good for lengthy conversations.)

4. Accreditation

We strongly support and endorse the values and philosophy underlying The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families. While the accreditation process examines the total program, the greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions between staff and children, and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. Health and safety, staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration are all reviewed during accreditation; but primary consideration is given to the nature of the child's experience.

As an accredited center, BrightPath has been recognized as an early care and education program that exemplifies excellence in the care of young children. NAEYC accreditation benefits everyone involved. Families can be assured that BrightPath has met standards that exceed the minimum necessary for licensing. The staff of BrightPath has benefited from professional development and the children enrolled at BrightPath have an environment that is conducive to their individual growth and development.

The accreditation process includes self-study, observation by an early childhood professional, and evaluation by national commissioners.

5. Curriculum

Our curriculum is based upon The Creative Curriculum, developed by Teaching Strategies Inc. It is based upon the most recent educational research and is generally recognized as the state-of-the-art approach to educating young children.

The core of the Creative Curriculum is to balance both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. All of this is done through well-planned learning and activity centers including: Library (language), Blocks (construction), Music and Movement, Art, Sand & Water (Sensory), Outdoor Learning, Cooking, Science, and Math.

Each group has a defined, age-appropriate curriculum (even infants). Weekly summaries are posted on the boards located just outside of each classroom.

Each day brings new learning opportunities as children are provided a framework within which they will make both self-directed and guided choices.

6. Enrollment

Enrollment at BrightPath is open to children from ages 6 weeks to 12 years. Enrollment is granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or special needs, and without regard to a family or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or special needs.

Families can apply for enrollment of their child in BrightPath by completing the Enrollment Application and paying the \$100 registration fee and the deposit. The registration fee and deposit are non-refundable.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, deposit, and signed Family Handbook receipt. In addition, all children must have a health form prepared by the child's physician on record that documents a physical examination within the previous 12 months, as well as up-to-date immunizations.

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. BrightPath reserves the right to dismiss any family or child at any time with or without cause.

There must be at least two emergency numbers on file that we may call if your child becomes ill and you are unreachable. Emergency contacts must have the ability to transport the children if necessary.

Families are required to notify BrightPath immediately should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

Physical Examination - The Connecticut State Department of Health requires that each child admitted to the Center be examined by a licensed physician and have a signed certificate indicating the date of the exam. Yearly updates on exams are needed for all children, as well as documentation of updated immunizations.

Prior to starting, families are welcome to attend the center with their children to facilitate a smoother transition.

7. Financial Policies

All custodial families and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child. Families are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

7.1 Payments

A non-refundable deposit is required to reserve space. This deposit will be applied to your final two weeks of care. The first month's tuition is due by the first day of attendance. If the child does not attend, for any reason, the deposit is forfeited.

Tuition must be paid via EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer), ACH (Automated Clearing House) or recurring credit or debit card payments. Payments made by EFT or ACH will receive the discounted rate. The normal rate will be applied to payments made by debit and credit cards.

Tuition is collected monthly in advance and must be paid by the 25th of the month prior to the month of care.

Tuition may be paid weekly if pre-approved by the Center Director. In these cases, a \$10 processing fee will be added to each payment.

If payment by check has been authorized, there will be a \$40 NSF fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank. Families are responsible for issuing a second check in the case that the first one bounces. If at any future time the bank returns a family's check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check, or money order.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips and extracurricular activities such as swimming, dance lessons, etc. (where applicable.)

We do not automatically issue receipts. If you'd like a receipt, please ask your Center Director.

There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations or inclement weather.

Our tuition rates are evaluated and adjusted occasionally, considering operational costs and market analysis. Adjustments are communicated to all families at least 30 days before they take effect.

7.2 Late Payments

Late fees will apply for each day payment is late. This includes Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays. If a family leaves BrightPath owing money, the late fee charge will continue to accumulate.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at BrightPath, however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

7.3 Subsidized Care

BrightPath does accept Care-4-Kids childcare subsidies. Families of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time. Families of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies or their subsidy is modified. Families are responsible for the difference between our tuition and the amount paid by Care-4-Kids.

7.4 Multiple Child Discounts

BrightPath offers tuition discounts to families with more than one child enrolled. To qualify, all children must reside in the same household.

- Families with 2 children enrolled will receive 10% off each child's tuition.^{1, 2,3}
- Families with 3 or more children enrolled, where any child is enrolled part time, will receive 10% off each child's tuition.^{1,2,3}
- Families with 3 or more children enrolled, where all children are kindergarten-age or younger and all are enrolled full time⁴ will receive 15% off each child's tuition.⁵

¹ School age children must be enrolled in before and after school care 5 days per week to qualify.

² Corporate discounts may be combined with a 10% multi-child discount for a maximum discount of 15%.

³ Summer campers must be enrolled for all the offered weeks of our summer camp program to qualify. The discount is only applicable to the weeks that the summer camper and the sibling(s) are in attendance.

⁴ Kindergarteners must be enrolled in before and after school care 5 days per week to qualify.

⁵ Corporate discounts cannot be combined with the 15% multi-child discount.

7.5 Injuries

Families are responsible for any medical expenses incurred because of an injury sustained while under our care.

8. Confidentiality

Within BrightPath, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of BrightPath who have a “need to know” to care for your child appropriately and safely. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other families and/or children will not be shared with families, as BrightPath strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, special needs information, or health related information of anyone associated with BrightPath. Regulatory authorities with legal rights may review children’s files upon request.

Additionally, BrightPath uses both audio and video surveillance for the purposes of observation and security. Access to families is restricted due to confidentiality except where required by legal authorities.

Outside of BrightPath, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the family of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Families will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of BrightPath, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

You may observe children at our center who have special needs or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e., biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of BrightPath are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

9. Families Right to Immediate Access

Families of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at BrightPath, as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) BrightPath must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial family(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both families are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both families must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with BrightPath, both families shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. BrightPath cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one family

by request of the other family, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one family does not want the other family to have access to their child, BrightPath suggests that the family keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other family's right to immediate access. BrightPath staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of BrightPath will always accompany visitors throughout the center.

10. Dismissal

BrightPath reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Families will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. A BrightPath check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal.

11. Withdrawal

30 days' written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, families will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

12. Schedules

When you enroll your child, you will establish a full or part time schedule. We have many different options available that you can discuss with the director. Families who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at BrightPath must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are subject to a change fee.

13. Arrival Procedures

Children are required to be escorted by their family or the adult dropping them off to their designated classroom. The teacher for the classroom will sign the child into care on the i-Pad located in their classroom. Families must make sure that a teacher is aware of their child's presence before leaving. Families are responsible for helping their children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

BrightPath reserves the right to refuse care for your child(ren) if we are unable to staff classrooms to maintain ratio.

Families are required to notify the child's teacher or Center Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The family must present the special instructions in writing and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Center Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to early pick up, alternative pick-up person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the childcare providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

All children, (including infants) should be provided with a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving at BrightPath, however, children arriving before 8:00 will be offered an early morning snack of cereal and milk.

13.1 Notification of Absence

Families should inform the center by 9am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day more effectively.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable illness, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the families of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable illness is present. Once again, only communicable illness information will be shared. BrightPath will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality.

Families who know in advance that a child will be late are requested to notify the center as soon as possible so that we can maintain proper staffing when the child arrives at school.

14. Pickup Procedures

When a family or otherwise authorized adult picks up their child, the lead teacher must be notified and check the child out of the classroom i-Pad. Once a child is signed out, the family is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on BrightPath premises. The family may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Families should handle all business issues prior to signing out their child.

Nobody under the age of 18 can be authorized to escort a child off the premises.

Please note that our closing time of 6:00 is not the time you must arrive to pick up your child, but the time by which you must have exited the premises.

Families should take home all papers in the child’s cubby or school bag each day. Cubbies should be thoroughly cleaned out each Friday so that we can clean more thoroughly over the weekend.

14.1 Late Pick-Up

There will be a late pick-up charge (per child) if your child is not picked up by 6:00 pm. family. This charge is based upon the scheduled hours per the financial agreement. Late fees must be paid within 5 days of the date they are assessed.

Please understand that our staff is only scheduled until closing time. Like you, they have family and other obligations when their day is done. Your courtesy in considering this will be greatly appreciated.

14.2 Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up Cards

At enrollment, families will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Families are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, during events, may at one time be asked to

pick-up their child from BrightPath. In an emergency the child's families will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the people listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a family, and the family is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the family to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide a photo ID prior to the BrightPath releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial families have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

Please understand that we will be absolute in this rule. It's the law.

15. School Calendar

The center is closed on the following national holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday (Spring in-service training)
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Fall in-service training)
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Day

For specific closing dates, please see our calendar in the Family's Corner of our website.

If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Thursday, the center will also be closed the Friday after. If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Tuesday, the center will be closed all day on Monday and Tuesday. If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Wednesday or a Friday, we will close at 12:30pm on Christmas Eve and 3:00pm on New Year's Eve.

If Christmas, New Year's, or the 4th of July falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before. If these holidays fall on a Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday.

Our "West Hartford on Fennway" location is also closed on the following Jewish holidays and closes at 4:00pm on the night preceding the holiday, except where the holiday falls on a Saturday or a Sunday.

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur

16. Emergency and Inclement Weather Closing Procedures

In consideration of the needs of our working families, we make great efforts to remain open in almost all situations. However, on occasion, like everybody else, we must give in to the weather or some other emergency.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's families first to arrange to pick them up. Should the staff be unable to reach the families, the people listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the families or emergency contact person at the time of the call of the pickup location should the children need to be evacuated from the childcare center. Families or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

17. Daily Schedule of Activities

A sample daily schedule for your child's group was enclosed in your enrollment packet. You can also find this on the bulletin board outside of your child's classroom.

18. Class Assignments

At BrightPath we do not assign children to classrooms based strictly upon their age but subscribe to developmentally appropriate placement. However, the approximate ages of children in each classroom are indicated.

- Infants
- Toddlers
- Preschool
- School Age

19. Nap/Rest Time

Infants and younger toddlers nap each day according to their own schedules. Older toddlers and preschoolers take naps during the early afternoon.

We provide cribs/cots for all the children to rest on. Children may bring a small blanket and stuffed animal to rest with.

Please speak with your child's teacher if you have special requests regarding naptime.

20. Outdoor Play

BrightPath recognizes the importance of regular outdoor gross-motor opportunities. With this in mind, we attempt to provide children with daily experiences of outdoor play. The following policies regarding physical activity for children are not only endorsed by BrightPath but are based on national standards from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. All children are provided outdoor time at least twice daily, weather and air quality permitting.

- Toddlers (ages 1 to 2) are provided with at least 30 minutes of structured outdoor activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured outdoor activity daily.
- Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) are provided with at least 60 minutes of structured outdoor activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured outdoor activity daily.

- The daily recommended amount of structured physical activity does not need to be provided all at once. Children can participate in shorter periods of activity throughout the day to accumulate the recommended amount.
- All children can go outside when the temperatures are above 15 degrees Fahrenheit (including wind chill factor) and below 90 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Outdoor time is limited to 20 to 30 minutes when temperatures are between 16 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Outdoor time is restricted when temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Outdoor time only takes place in safe settings and is always supervised by adults.
- Teachers lead and participate in active play (e.g., games and activities) during outdoor time and other times devoted to physical activity.
- Adequate drinking water is provided during outdoor time when temperatures exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Children with disabilities have appropriate physical development opportunities and participate with nondisabled peers.
- Teachers are prohibited from restricting active play time as a consequence for misbehavior (except when a child's behavior is dangerous to himself or others.)

Regular physical activity is important to children's health and development. It increases muscle and bone strength, helps maintain a healthy weight, enhances psychological well-being, and provides numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis.

In addition, children who are physically active learn better. Daily classroom physical activity breaks improve children's on-task behavior. Also, children's fitness levels have been found to correlate with academic achievement, including improved math, reading, and writing scores.

Health and wellness are at the core of BrightPath's beliefs regarding best practices for early childhood education. Providing ample outdoor experiences are an important factor in providing an exceptional childcare experience.

21. Things to Bring

Notes:

- All items must be labeled and seasonally appropriate.
- All children must wear comfortable play clothes to BRIGHTPATH. Keep in mind that many of our activities are messy.

Infants

- Large Box of Diapers*
- Diapering Wipes*
- 1-2 sleep sacks (no pillows or blankets)
- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- 10 bibs
- Prepared bottles of formula or breast milk (breast milk bottles must include the date on which the milk was expressed)

- Diaper cream, if needed (signed authorization required)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- Pacifier (if used) - must have no attachments.
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a sunhat and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat and a coat or sweatshirt.

*BRIGHTPATH provides diapers and wipes at no additional charge to infants under the age of one.

Young Toddlers

- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)
- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, sunhat, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- 1 pair of slippers or shoes exclusively for indoor use
- In the winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants.
- Large box of diapers or plenty of underwear
- Diapering wipes
- Diaper cream, if needed (signed authorization required)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- 4 empty sippy cups each day

Older Toddlers

- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- 1 pair of slippers or shoes exclusively for indoor use
- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants.
- 2 complete changes of clothes
- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)

Preschoolers

- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants.

Kindergarteners & School Aged

- 2 complete changes of clothes

- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required.)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants.

22. Birthday Celebrations

Due to the severity of food-related allergies, we do not allow families to provide food for children to share with their classmates. Instead, we take the work out of planning your child's in-school birthday celebration by providing them with a birthday crown and special snack to share with their friends!

All treats provided by BRIGHTPATH are free of nuts, milk, gluten, and eggs so that all of our students can participate and anyone with a severe food allergy will be safe during these fun celebrations.

Please feel free to come and join us for your child's special afternoon celebration.

If you are having a birthday party for your child at home, invitations passed out at BrightPath must include all the children in your child's group. If you plan to invite only a few children from BrightPath, the invitations need to be mailed.

23. Family/Teacher Conferences

Family conferences are held three times each year. A written notice indicating the exact dates and times that are available will be sent home when the conferences are approaching. The conferences are a time when teachers can discuss your child's developmental progress with you at length. Families are always welcome to request a conference at any time during the year if they feel it is warranted.

24. Celebration/Acknowledgement of Holidays

BrightPath does not celebrate, discuss, or otherwise acknowledge any holidays that are religious in nature. The following is a list of holidays that we generally do celebrate or acknowledge:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Valentine's Day
- Presidents' Day
- St. Patrick's Day
- First Day of Spring
- May Day
- Summer Solstice
- 4th of July
- First Day of Fall
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving
- Winter Solstice

25. Specialized Consultants

If a family has concerns about their child, they should first consult with the lead teacher in their child's room. There are many resources available in such situations, including the state birth to three program, public school screening, and our social worker consultant amongst others. Families are responsible for

initiating these services; however, BrightPath staff will work collaboratively with families and outside parties to achieve desired goals.

26. Family Communications

BrightPath will use electronic media to communicate daily summaries of each child's activities. The same media will also be used for sending pictures and videos as well as classroom announcements. General documents (e.g., family meal menus, lunch menus, curriculum summaries, etc.) will also be communicated via electronic media.

In the event a family does not have access to email, or otherwise wishes to receive printed copies of communications, you will need to communicate this to your Center Director.

At minimum, annual family questionnaires will be solicited via online surveys. These are a very important source for us to maintain the quality of our programs and we urge you to participate when requested. However, we seek your input at any time and urge you to communicate any concerns or problems to your Center Director or Assistant Director immediately. Should you feel this leaves your concerns or problems unresolved, please do not hesitate to email your Area Director.

27. Discipline

The goal of discipline is to help children to develop self-control; therefore, it is necessary for children to understand rules and the reasons for them, and to understand the consequences of their own actions. Preventing problems is essential to good discipline. The following techniques are used to establish discipline at BrightPath:

- Distracting children from potential problems
- Reminding children of the rules
- Helping children to solve problems and to make choices
- Allowing children to take time away from the group to regain control
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior
- Noticing and reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Helping children to articulate their feelings
- Helping children to understand the consequences of their actions.

At BrightPath, we do not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Children are not physically restrained in any manner unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others.

We may remove a child from a situation and redirect them to more appropriate behavior, however we do not practice "time out" as we believe isolation of a child is inappropriate and harsh at any time.

28. Toys and Electronic Devices from Home

Due to issues regarding sharing and distraction, and the risk of damage or loss, toys, and electronic devices, (unless medically required), are not allowed to be brought into the school unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Families are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child and are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher if their child is

having difficulty with this policy. Electronic devices include but are not limited to walkie-talkies, cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming devices, and music players.

Under no circumstances may children bring items that depict weapons, or violent or aggressive characters. This includes pictures on clothing and backpacks.

Although we appreciate the thought, we do not accept any toy or furniture donations due to the risk of unknown recalls.

29. Dress Code

We have a shoeless policy in the infant rooms. Children in this age group spend most of their time on the floor, therefore we require that all children and families take their shoes off when entering these rooms.

Children are engaged in various activities during the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children should be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing.

Families are requested not to dress children who are toilet training in overalls, onesies, or clothing with difficult closures.

Coats, hats, gloves, snow pants, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. No sandals, please. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children ages 3 through 5 should always have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center. Children under 3 years of age should always have two seasonably and size appropriate complete changes of clothing at the center. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. We will post reminders for families to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. BrightPath is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Children are discouraged from wearing jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, BrightPath will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables.

Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. are also discouraged. These accessories are safety hazards...i.e., choking. When choosing accessories for your children be mindful of the potential safety issues they present not only for your child, but also for other children attending BrightPath.

30. Field Trips

BrightPath frequently supplements the in-class curriculum with off premise field trips. Families are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will

include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance for your child to attend.

If families wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher. BrightPath provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes families to attend.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your child's teacher at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the class. If this is not the case, the child can still attend if the family accompanies him/her. An additional day fee will apply in addition to the cost of the trip. Your Center Director can tell you the amount of the fee.

31. Family Participation/Volunteers

Families are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which families can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Families may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available.

Throughout the year, we have special visitors come to educate the children. In the past we have had animal trainers, police officers, dentists, doctors, musicians, etc. The children are always excited to meet new people with special talents. We encourage families to come in and share any unique talents that they have with the children. Please feel free to come and share any ideas, stories, songs, projects, games, etc. with the children.

If you are interested in participating at any time, please see your child's teacher.

32. Health, Hygiene & Safety

BrightPath employs a nurse who visits the center weekly. She is available for consultations if families feel the need. She also maintains the health records for both children and staff.

32.1 Pre-Enrollment Requirements

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete and up to date immunization record on file at BrightPath.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional to attend BrightPath. The Physical Examination Form indicating the child's fitness to attend BrightPath must be completed and returned to the Center Director prior to enrollment. Forms need to be updated annually and with each new inoculation.

32.2 Handwashing

Hand washing is one of the most important steps in controlling illness. Our staff and children wash hands before eating, before handling food, after wiping noses, after using the bathroom or diapering, and following any messy activities.

Please encourage this practice with your child at home. All staff and children must thoroughly wash their hands when arriving at the center.

32.3 Diapering Procedures

When changing diapers, we follow these procedures:

1. Wash hands
2. Wear plastic gloves
3. Place paper barrier on the changing table
4. Change diaper
5. Wash hands
6. Remove paper barrier
7. Disinfect changing table

32.4 Toilet Training

The teacher works on toilet training with the children while they are in the Flamingo (older toddler) Group. The teacher and the child's families will decide when the child is ready to be toilet trained. When the child shows an interest and is not afraid to sit on the toilet, we invite the child to use the toilet. When a child begins the process of toilet training, we require that the child stays in his/her diaper and uses the bathroom during the scheduled diapering time. When the child starts to have success on the toilet, we will encourage families to put their child in training pants at home. Once the child begins having success at home, we invite the child to wear training pants to school. When children are being potty trained, please send them in appropriate clothing.

Children who are wearing training pants must wear clothing that they can take on and off by themselves. (i.e., pants with elastic waistbands, and a T-shirt or jersey. Please no onesies, snap T-shirts, overalls, etc.) We do not separate the children by gender when they use the bathroom.

32.5 Medication

The staff and nurse at BrightPath are not authorized to administer medication to the children. By medication we mean both prescribed medication and over the counter drugs such as Tylenol, cough syrup, cough drops, antacids, etc. If a child requires medication such as antibiotics, the family should inform the physician of the Center's policy. He or she may be able to prescribe a medication that can be given twice a day. If midday dosage is necessary, a family may come to the Center to administer it.

BrightPath will administer "emergency medications" when needed, including epi-pens, inhalers, and nebulizer treatments.

32.6 Sanitation

Families must provide their child with a set of crib/cot linens. These are required to be sent home to be laundered on a weekly basis and whenever soiled.

We sanitize the cots after each use and children use the same assigned cot each day.

All infant/toddler toys that have been in a child's mouth are removed from play and disinfected before they are put back on

the shelf for all to use. Toys are sanitized with bleach solution daily.

All surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids are disinfected immediately. All surfaces that are touched frequently such as door jams, tabletops, doorknobs, are sanitized daily.

All toys, stuffed animals and cots are put in the Zono machine for sanitizing on a weekly basis.

32.7 First Aid

BrightPath's staff is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for children. Our nurse consultant regularly inspects our interior and exterior play spaces for cleanliness and safety. All our staff are certified in First Aid and CPR for both children and infants.

In the event of an accident, we are authorized to cleanse with soap, bandage a wound, apply ice, and provide warmth and rest. Families will be notified by a note or phone call of a minor incident. In the event of a serious accident, BRIGHTPATH will use the CT Children's Hospital or the nearest medical facility while on a field trip. Upon enrollment, families sign an authorization form for emergency treatment by hospital staff.

The Center staff will handle the emergency first, and then notify the child's family(s). If a family cannot be reached, we will phone the emergency contacts indicated on your enrollment form. Someone will need to meet the child at the hospital and assume responsibility for the child.

Please keep us informed of any changes in the phone numbers of the individuals you have listed as emergency contacts.

32.8 Children with Severe Allergies

BrightPath staff are certified to administer Epi-pens. Families must also complete a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases BrightPath from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, provided BrightPath exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

32.9 Communicable Illnesses

BrightPath follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the Center Director and is available upon request for review.

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain at BrightPath:

- Temperature of 100.4 or higher
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- Strep throat
- Head lice
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rashes of unknown origin
- The presence of a contagious disease

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during the day. It is expected that if a child leaves BrightPath after 12 noon, he/she will remain home the full next day to assure complete recovery. The center is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during the day and families cannot be reached.

Once a family has been notified, the child should be off the premises within one hour. If a family is reached, but cannot pick up their child up within one hour, it becomes the family's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a family is reached. If a family cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occurs 3 or more times in a 24-hour period. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

A child will be allowed to return to school if she/he has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours or is fever free. Fever free means NO Tylenol or any other antipyretic for 4 to 6 hours prior to checking in.

If a child is well enough to attend childcare, he/she is well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable illness, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the families of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable illness is present. Once again, only communicable illness information will be shared.

32.10 Biting

BrightPath recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Families with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten or will bite another child. The staff understands that families are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish or harshly discipline children for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Families are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Families are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior.

Families will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss with either family the identity or medical history of the other child involved in the

incident. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed. Children may be sent home for biting at the discretion of the Center Director.

32.11 Fire/Emergency Drills

BrightPath conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Families, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire or emergency drill, and during a real fire or emergency, families may not sign children into or out of the program. Families must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Families may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire or emergency, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any families waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other families or emergency contact people will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within one hour of the telephone call.

32.12 Alternate Safe Location

Each BrightPath school has a unique emergency evacuation plan which includes an alternate safe location to be used if the administration or emergency services personnel determine that one of our buildings is too dangerous to be occupied. Once the children are assembled there, all families and emergency contact persons will be notified.

32.13 Incident/Accident Reports

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be placed in the child's mailbox. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later time because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the family(s) is unable to meet at the center during the day.

32.14 Concerns Regarding Abuse and Neglect

In the event of any concern regarding abuse or neglect of a child in our care, it is our policy to follow the self-reporting protocol established by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If either entity believes an investigation is warranted, it is their usual procedure to interview a wide range of individuals associated with the child as well as both the child's home and school.

32.15 Firearms and Other Weapons

No firearm, weapon, or facsimile of a firearm or weapon is permitted on any BrightPath premise at any time, except when carried by a peace officer as defined by state law.

33. Foods

We provide lunch for all children (except infants) who attend the morning session. Snacks are served in the morning and the afternoon. Lunch menus are sent home at the beginning of the month and are posted on the family's bulletin board. Snack menus are also posted on the board. All lunches include vegetables and fruit. Milk or water is served with all lunches and snacks.

33.1 All Age Groups

Families are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e., lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets.)

Families are responsible for providing food substitutions for their children on days that the Center is serving foods their children are allergic to. The food provided must not require additional preparation, including heating.

33.2 Infants

Bottles of breast milk or formula must be prepared at home in plastic bottles and be labeled with the child's first and last name and the date on which they were prepared. Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child won't run out. Prepared bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be microwaved. All bottles must be taken home (used or unused) by the child's family each night to be washed.

Extra formula (which does not require refrigeration) can be provided for use during emergencies. Formula must be provided in its original packaging.

All containers of food must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Food prepared at home must also be dated, as it will only be given that day, and all unused food must go home at the end of each day.

Children will not be fed directly from baby food jars, nor will the staff use previously opened baby food. Staff will mix baby cereal just prior to feeding. All unused food remaining after feeding will be discarded.

Families are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a weekly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the family what the child ate, when, and how much.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child at their convenience. Non-Infants

BrightPath offers children a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Lunch menus are provided to each family, and both menus are available at the front desk and on our website.

All children, (including infants) are to be provided with a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving at BrightPath, however, at their family's request, children will be served an early morning snack of cereal and milk at 7:30. This is cleaned up and put away by 7:45. Children arriving after 7:30 are not eligible for this snack, however our regular morning snack is served to all children around 9:00.

All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. BrightPath curriculum focuses on developing healthy, well-balanced eating habits.

33.3 Peanut Free Center

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to peanuts and products containing peanuts in some children, BrightPath does not serve any products that contain peanuts. We also require that when an alternative food choice is provided for your child, that it complies with this requirement. Peanut allergies can be so severe that exposure to peanuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling peanuts on someone's breath, or touching peanut oil residue left on a countertop, not only from consuming peanuts or peanut products. For this reason, families bringing in homemade lunches for their child are asked to be extremely careful in their preparation.

34. Phone Calls

Our teachers are always happy to discuss your child's day and answer any questions that you may have; however, it is difficult to leave the children to take phone calls from families. Whenever possible, it is much better if you can request a phone call from a staff member and they can call you during the day. This way, the teacher can find a quiet time during the day when they can devote their full attention to the conversation without taking time away from the children.

If you have concerns on a given day or would simply like a phone call during the day, please let the teacher know in the morning or make a notation on the sign-in sheet. If you have questions/messages during the day, we will be happy to pass them along to the teacher. If it is not a message that can be passed along to the teacher, please let whoever answers the phone know and we will make every effort to get the teacher on the phone.

Teachers cannot take personal phone calls during the day. This includes calls regarding babysitting. Please contact them outside of their work hours to make arrangements.

35. Our Customer Experience Team

As part of our goal to achieve 100% customer satisfaction, we have a Customer Experience hotline and email address through which you can ask questions or share your comments or concerns if your Center Director has been unable to resolve them to your satisfaction. Our Customer Experience Coordinators will work with you to ensure that you are heard and understood, and if necessary, they will engage with our leadership team to make sure that your feedback is addressed and resolved. We also recognize how important it is to you that our teachers and administrators receive compliments, so we encourage you to share those as well so that we can personally acknowledge when they are doing a great job.

Our Customer Experience Coordinators are available during business hours, Monday-Friday. Give them a call at 1-800-423-8088 or email them at USCustomerExperience@BrightPathKids.com.

36. Family Code of Conduct

BrightPath recognizes the important role that families play in helping us to maintain a safe, nurturing, and community-focused environment in which all children can learn, play, and thrive. All families, caregivers, and visitors of BrightPath collectively agree to act in a manner that emphasizes mutual respect, fairness, and equality. Individual needs and differences are recognized as being part of this

collective process, and all individuals are required to work out all concerns and differences in a clear and reasonable manner. BrightPath will not tolerate incidents of expressed bias, discrimination, prejudice, or harassment.

All families, caregivers, and visitors must agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct.

Communication and Addressing Concerns: Open and clear lines of communication between Directors, Supervisors, staff, and families are essential to creating the type of environment we value at BrightPath. As such, we require families to communicate with staff in an open, non-confrontational manner when expressing concerns about their child or the program. We expect that families will voice their concerns in a professional and polite manner as soon as they arise. We also expect that families will not get involved in other families' concerns unless they directly involve them or their child.

Our **Family Issues and Concerns Policy** clearly outlines the steps to be taken in bringing concerns forward.

Terms:

Family members and visitors agree to:

- Support a friendly and nurturing environment.
- Maintain positive communication during interactions.
- Follow the recommended procedures of addressing concerns.
- Refrain from gossip and public criticism of BrightPath's employees, the children in BrightPath's care, and BrightPath families. Discussion of concerns and issues will be with management and staff and not with other families in the center or via social media channels.

If any family member or visitor fails to abide by the Code of Conduct, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The concern and any inappropriate behaviour will be documented and communicated to the Director.
2. The Director will set up a meeting with all parties involved to gather more information and determine if the Code of Conduct was violated.
3. The information will be used to reach a decision, and should it be determined that there was a violation of the Code of Conduct, the Director will consult with the Area Director.
4. If a breach of the Code of Conduct is verified, the Director and/or Area Director have the right to terminate care immediately.

Threats and Threatening Behaviour: We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our personnel, the children we serve, and other adults. Therefore, we have a zero-tolerance policy regarding threats or threatening behaviour in our centers, whether the threat comes from a child or an adult, and regardless of who is the target of the threat. This includes, but is not limited to, threats to do physical

harm to someone or threats to retaliate in any way. Violation of this policy may result in immediate withdrawal from the center.

Physical and Verbal Punishment of Children on Centre Property: We do not allow parents/guardians to use any type of corporal punishment on any child, whether enrolled in our program or not, while on center property. This includes parking lots, playgrounds, and within the center. Further, while verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for a family member to verbally abuse their child while on our premises. Doing so can cause undue embarrassment and emotional distress to a child. Violations of this policy may result in immediate withdrawal from our program. Families are also prohibited from addressing or disciplining a child that is not their own. If you have a concern about the behavior of another child at our center, please bring your concern to the Centre Director who will address your concern and resolve it.