



Bright Start Nursery and Preschool

Affordable Child Care In a Loving Environment

NJ State Licensed Center
801 North Main Street
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

Parent Handbook

Registration and Admission

- \$70.00 registration fee for school enrollment.
- \$70.00 registration fee for the summer program enrollment.
- All documents must be completed completely and contain honest and truthful information. All requested records (universal and immunizations) will be submitted promptly. (Within two weeks of enrollment).

Tuition and Fees

In trying to keep tuition rates reasonable, remember that we are basing your tuition on a full-time school year and that you are paying for a “space” for the entire school year. Your child’s reserved “space” has been incorporated into staffing and operating expenses.

Tuition is to be paid weekly and due on the Monday of each week. Tuition can be paid through ACH, tuition express, check, and/or cash. There will be a late penalty fee of \$25.00 if payment is not received by the Monday of each week. A payment return fee of \$40.00 will be administered for a bounced back or returned payment. Tuition is based on 9 hours of childcare. **There will be a late fee of \$7.00 per hour if extra care is provided after the 9 hours daily.** Please honor your commitment and submit tuition/childcare payments when they are due.

The center does not offer tuition refunds for absence or sick days. Each family is entitled to two weeks’ vacation per year at no charge.

Should you decide to withdraw your child from the program for any reason, you are required to give a 2-week written notice and you are still responsible to pay your tuition for this time.

Hours of Operation

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool is open from 6:30am-6:00pm Monday through Friday. **There is a \$20.00 late fee per child for care after 6:00pm closing.**

Non-Payment

Due to the extensive cost of operation expenses and in order to make space available for other children, you may/will be requested to withdraw your child if any tuition is not paid by Monday of each week. If there is more than 3 late payments of tuition in one consecutive year, your child may be discharged from the program.

School Calendar

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool follow the Lacey Township School Calendar. Our center will remain open all year and full time with the exception of the following holidays and Teacher In-Service Days (which may vary):

Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

Day After Christmas

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Please check the monthly calendar given out each month for any changes by Bright Start Nursery and Preschool or The Lacey Township School District.

Emergency School Closings

There are times when we are forced to close early, open late or close entirely because of inclement weather or other unusual events. Please do not call the center. There will be a message on the ProCare App about news of delayed openings, school closings, or school closures.

The center cannot provide tuition reimbursements for snow closings or other natural occurrences beyond our control.

Transitions

It is a collaborative effort between our families and staff for a child to have a positive transition from home to school. Each child reacts differently to the separation from their parents

when coming to school each day, and we will work together to support each child with this transition. If this is a child's first time in a group setting, we encourage parents/guardians to come in a few days prior to the start of enrollment to get familiar with the classroom, staff, and environment. Young children have little experience with change and often need extra time to adjust to a new caregiver and a new environment.

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool ask that the parent/guardian take the time to come into the classroom with their child daily. A child will feel more secure while at school knowing that their parent/guardian values their teacher, friends, and learning environment.

When a child is ready to move to a new classroom, the center will do all we can to make this transition a smooth, successful one. The center will contact the parent/guardian and discuss the transition plan, which will include visits to the new classroom that increase overtime. The child's portfolio folder will be shared with the new teacher, including developmental screening results, assessments, conference documentation, portfolio items and behavior support plans or IEP's if applicable. Classroom folders are reviewed by the teachers in order to support each child's individual needs and development.

Parent Involvement Policy

1. Any and all parents/guardians may volunteer to visit or assist at any time. If a parent has a special hobby, trait or job that may be of interest to the children, they can arrange to visit the school to share it with us.
2. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool will hold a "Back to School Night" in the fall at which time any and all parents are invited to view and learn about our program.
3. An enrollment conference will be held with all new parents to discuss Bright Start Nursery and Preschool policies and special needs of the child and/or any suggestions that the parent may have.
4. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool will offer families, at least 3 times a year, health and safety workshops and/or resources in topics that include: preventative health care, mental/behavioral health issues, nutrition and obesity, medication administration policies and procedures, oral health practices, and communicable disease prevention.

Parent Resource Binder

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool has put together a Parent Resource Binder full of helpful information, including how to access community resources that are available to you and your family. This binder is located in the Main Office. If you do not see the information that you may need, please speak to the director or one of the lead teachers and we will be happy to get it for you. If you are interested in family education resources specific to the needs of your children or family, please let us know. We have a family lending library that you may find helpful.

Strengthening Families and Protective Factors Survey

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey is sent home yearly, and we ask families to complete it and send it back as soon as possible. The information we gather is designed to help us learn how to better support you and your family. The center uses the information to plan family group events, choose parent workshop topics, and guide monthly newsletter information. These surveys help us identify the needs within our school and allows us

to tailor our family support activities to best meet your needs.

Discipline Policy

Our focus at Bright Start Nursery and Preschool is on the **positive**. We strive to reward and reinforce proper behavior in a positive way. Positive attention sets a good example for those who are tempted to behave in an undesirable way. The center also feels it is important for the children to have clear guidelines and limits for acceptable behavior. Consistency is important. It may be necessary to explain logically why certain behaviors are not acceptable.

A child who misbehaves may be dealt with in the following manner:

- Redirect to a new activity to re-focus the child's attention.
- Provide individual attention to help guide the child's behavior.
- Repeated reminders of rules/appropriate behavior.
- Positive reinforcement/praise of appropriate behavior.

Expulsion Policy

A child may be expelled from Bright Start Nursery and Preschool if, after many attempts, he or she does not fit into our program because of behavior (biting, scratching, kicking, hitting) and this behavior puts others at risk.

A child may be expelled if a parent exhibits potentially dangerous behavior (threatening a staff member or student, aggressive language, or conduct).

Parent/Guardian will be notified of concerns that could lead to expulsion, through a parent/teacher/director conference.

Time will be given to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at the center.

Parent/Guardian will be given time to find an alternative childcare arrangement.

The center shall not expel a child based solely on the child's parent making a complaint to the Bureau of Licensing regarding alleged violations or questioning a center directly regarding policies and procedures. (see attached policy)

Home Visits

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool believes Home Visits can be very beneficial to meet with parents outside of the school setting. This practice is an easy and successful way of increasing family engagement. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool offers home visits upon request.

Communication Policy

At Bright Start Nursery and Preschool, we will believe communication is vital to the success of the center, parent involvement, and developmental growth of the children. The center uses the following forms of communication to you and your child:

- ProCare App- daily activity log, incident reports, parent/teacher messages
- Text message through ProCare and cell phone
- Bulletin Boards in main foyer and individual classrooms
- Monthly Calendars and Newsletters
- Website: brightstartchildcarenj.com

- Email: brightstartpreschoolnj@gmail.com
- Phone: 609-693-7099

Illness

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool will provide care and safety of a child who becomes ill while at the center and will exclude a child from the center, who exhibits sign and symptoms of illness while entering and will ensure that the care of the other children in the group are not compromised by additional needs of ill children.

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool encourages that you have a primary care physician for your child. This enables the physician to get to know your child and make any recommendations they feel your child may need. The center also asks that you please **do not send your child to school if any of the following conditions exist:**

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Fever of over 100.4 degrees (**within the past 24 hours**)
- Yellow or green mucus discharge from the eyes or nose
- Sore throat or severe coughing
- Diarrhea or vomiting (**within the past 24 hours**)
- Skin eruptions including poison ivy, oak, or sumac
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult rapid breathing
- Skin rashes, excluding diaper rash, lasting more than one day
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a physician
- Swollen joints
- Visibly enlarge lymph nodes
- Stiff neck
- Blood in urine
- Mouth, hands, and feet sores

If any of the above conditions or illness symptoms emerges while your child is in our care, you or the responsible party listed on the enrollment paper, will be notified immediately to remove him/her at once. This is for your child's comfort and also for the protection of the other children and staff. Your child may be isolated in a supervised area until you arrive.

In case of illness, your child **will not be allowed to return to school until he/she is symptom free for 24 hours** and if a serious, contagious illness the center will need a letter from your physician stating that your child may return.

If your child must be given medicine while he/she attends school, the following policy must be followed:

- MEDICINE MUST BE IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTAINER IN ORDER TO BE ADMINISTERED!
- THE CENTER WILL ADMINISTER ,MEDICATION ONLY AS PRESCRIBED BY THE PHYSICIAN AND AFTER COMPLETION OF THE MEDICAL FORM BY YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDED AND PARENT SIGNATURE. (Please see office for this form.)
- Children with epi-pens or asthma or needing the use of a nebulizer, the center needs an action plan from the physician. (Please see office for this form.)

Attendance

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the office that your child will not be in attendance that day. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly

if it is contagious.

If your child is absent 2 or more days, the center will make every effort, including messaging on ProCare and a phone call home, to contact the family to find out why the child has been absent and to find out what assistance is needed in getting the child back to school.

Child Assessments

Assessment is the process of observing, recording, and documenting what children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions. Assessments help us:

- Monitor children's development and learning over time to identify strengths and needs.
- Guide lesson planning and decision making about children's interests, needs, and abilities.
- Share information with families about their child(ren).

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool participates in ongoing, systematic assessment that provides information on your child's experiences, learning and development related to our curriculum goals and objectives. The researched based assessment system that we use is Cor Advantage. These assessments are aligned with our curriculum and sensitive to each child's cultural background.

The teacher will create a portfolio that contains documentation of your child's progress. Information is collected throughout the year such as photos, artwork, as well as anecdotal notes regarding their progress towards curriculum objectives. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to jot down brief descriptions of what they observe their child doing as he or she plays and interacts at home to add to the portfolio at any time, including a detailed all about your child form that is included in the enrollment packet.

This information is used to help teachers identify individual areas of strength and areas for growth, and to adjust lesson plans to support each child's unique needs. Conferences will be scheduled three times a year to allow teachers and families to discuss each child's progress and to create action plans for the next step.

Classroom assessment data will also be evaluated as a whole, so teachers can determine general trends and make adjustments to curriculum and lesson plans as appropriate.

Developmental Screening

A developmental screening tool helps provide information about the unique development of each child. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool has chosen to use the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE, which consists of a questionnaire about the child's development. The specific version used will depend on the child's exact age. A screening provides a quick look at how children are doing in important areas such as communication, physical ability, social skills, and problem-solving skills. As a parent or caregiver, you are the best source of information about your child, and that's why the ASQ questionnaires are designed to be filled out by you. The information supplied will help reveal your child's strengths, uncover any areas of concern, and determine if there are community resources or services that may be useful for your child or your family.

Within two months of each school year (or within two months of enrollment) you will be asked to complete the ASQ questionnaire about your child. Your child's teacher will review them and provide feedback to you, including tips for activities you can do with your child to support their development. If there are any concerns, your child's teacher will discuss a follow up and rescreening process with you and provide referral information for further assessment and support if needed.

Program Assessment

We continually assess all aspects of our program in a variety of ways in order to maintain a high-quality program and center. Throughout the year the center utilizes research-based assessment tools such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), Infant/ Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS). These may be conducted at any time, with or without prior notice to the classroom staff.

The ECERS will be utilized in the Preschool and Pre-K classes to objectively look at a variety of factors such as room arrangement, teacher/child interactions, learning materials, and health and safety procedures. It may be administered by the Director or Head Teacher, by staff from partner agencies such as Grow NJ Kids. Results are then discussed by the Director and teachers, and an action plan is created to ensure we provide the best possible high-quality environment for each child.

The ITERS will be utilized in infants and toddlers to objectively look at a variety of factors such as room arrangement, teacher/child interactions, learning materials, and health and safety procedures. It may be administered by the Director or Head Teacher, by staff from partner agencies such as Grow NJ Kids. Results are then discussed by the Director and teachers, and an action plan is created to ensure we provide the best possible high-quality environment for each child.

The CLASS will be utilized in all classrooms to help us look at language usage and interactions between the teachers and the children. It may be administered by the Director or Head Teacher, by staff from partner agencies such as Grow NJ Kids. Results are then discussed by the Director and teachers, and an action plan is created to ensure we provide the best possible high-quality environment for each child. Professional development opportunities may be provided based on the results.

The center also evaluates the implementation of our curriculum with the Preschool Quality Assessment (PQA), an assessment created by the publishers of the High Scope Curriculum. This tool is designed to help ensure the curriculum is being fully implemented and will be administered by the director or head teacher. Results are then discussed by the director or head teacher and may be used to guide future staff development opportunities.

Special Attire

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool encourages outside play as often as possible. The center follows guidelines from the National Weather Service and Childcare Weather Watch. Please send your child in with appropriate clothing for various weather conditions, including rain, snow, and heat. **Closed-toed and rubber bottomed shoes are required at all times. No open-toed shoes.**

Toys from Home

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool strongly encourages you to leave toys at home. There is an overabundance of toys at Bright Start Nursery and Preschool, and we cannot be responsible for any lost or broken toys sent to school. Show and Tell items may go into cubbies and stay there until the appropriate time. **NO ELECTRONICS ARE TO BE SENT IN FROM HOME!** (No tablets or cellphones.)

Labeling

Children and parents become upset when their possessions are not readily accessible. Valuable time is lost when clothing and other items cannot be identified. Please help us by labeling **everything**. We cannot be responsible for lost items, which are not clearly labeled. This

includes everything you send your child to school with:

Lunch Boxes	Mittens/Hats	Diaper Bags	Jackets/Sweaters
Brown Bags	Bedding	Backpacks	Water Bottles
Coats	Show and Tell Items	Bottles	Thermos

Sunscreen Policy

Our sunscreen policy will be implemented throughout the year, But particularly from March-October. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to apply sunscreen to their child before they arrive at school each morning. Also, please send in a bottle labeled with your child's name that we will reapply as needed. (You must fill in a permission form on our enrollment form).

Nap/Rest Time

All children are required, under the age of 4, to lie down and rest during naptime. Cots will be provided for each child. You will be **required to supply a crib size sheet and a small blanket that is labelled with your child's name on each.** Bedding will be stored in small containers so please be aware of your blanket size. All bedding will be sent home on your child's last day of the week and needs to be washed and sent in the following week.

Breast Feeding

At Bright Start Nursery and Preschool, we encourage and support breastfeeding mothers.

- Breast Feeding mothers will have a clean welcoming place to breastfeed or express their milk.
- A refrigerator will be available for the storage of expressed milk.
- No infant will be fed the expressed milk of another human. A mother's milk will only be fed to her child.
- Cow's milk will not be fed to children under 1 year of age.
- Formula fed infants, under 1 year of age, drink the formula recommended for them by their health care professional.
- Formula bottles are to be pre-made before coming to the center. The center cannot mix the formula bottles.
- Infants are not permitted to have bottles in the crib and will not be allowed to carry a bottle while walking, standing, or running around.
- Infants should always be held for bottle feeding.
- A plan to introduce age-appropriate solid foods (complementary foods) to infants will be made in consultation with the child's parent/guardian and primary provider.

Lunches/Snacks

At Bright Start Nursery and Preschool, we recognize that nutritious food is an important part of healthy development. The center will be following the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for lunch and snacks. Healthy snacks will be encouraged and recommended. Only water will be served for snacks per the guidance of CACFP. Their recommendation is that children should only drink 4 ounces of juice per day. The center will not give your child juice at school so that you may give it to them at home.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for supplying am/pm snacks and lunch for your child. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool may supplement as needed to make sure children are eating a healthy, portioned lunch. The center encourages sending your child a lunch from the 5 food groups: protein, dairy, grain, fruit, and vegetable in portion sizes. We will not give children any cookies, candy, fruit roll ups, or fruit snacks for lunch or snacks, we encourage healthy snacks instead. Snacks should be a two-part component, meaning portioned size servings of 2 of the 5

food groups.

In our infant room, lunch may be heated in a crock pot. In our older children classes we have no accessibility to a microwave, please do not send in anything to be heated. We suggest sending in a thermos for warm meals. Make sure all items are labeled.

All lunches should be packed with an ice pack in their lunch bag. For lunches that may not have an icepack that day, they may be stored in your child's refrigerator, but space is limited. Please try to always pack an ice pack.

Nutrition

One of the core responsibilities of every early education center is to support healthy development of children. Good nutrition is a key component of healthy development. Bright Start Nursery and Preschool is committed to serving nourishing food which has been provided by our families, that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children.

Meals:

- Bright Start Nursery and Preschool asks that all provided meals and snacks meet the USDA guidelines (Child and Adult Care Food Plan Requirements). Lunch should include one serving of fruit, a vegetable, grain (bread, crackers, pasta), and protein (meat, beans, peanut butter, eggs). In addition, a serving of liquid milk is required. For snacks, 2 foods from any two categories are sufficient.
- Children will be allowed to eat their food peacefully and not be rushed during meals.
- Food is not offered as a reward or denied as a punishment.

Beverages:

- **DO NOT SEND IN JUICE.** We will not give it to your child.
- Children younger than 12 months should be provided with milk or formula.
- Children between 12 and 24 months of age should be provided with **whole milk**, unless they are consuming breast milk, or a prescribed formula.
- Children 2 years and older should be provided **nonfat (skim)** or **low fat (1%) milk**.
- Drinking water is available throughout the day indoors and outdoors. **Please provide a refillable water bottle for your child every day.**

Special Occasions and Holiday Parties

Special occasions and holidays will be celebrated with activities, non-food items, or if foods are provided, we ask that they meet these same healthy standards. We can provide you with a copy of some suggestions upon request.

Choose My Plate

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, indulging your stage of life, family situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time.

My plate is a great resource to help support healthy eating styles and build on them throughout your lifetime. Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help everyone be healthier now and in the future. This means:

- Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- Support healthy eating for everyone in the family and it will become a habit for you and your child.
- Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars.

All your food and beverages choices count. My plate offers ideas and tips to help you create a healthier eating style that meets your individual needs and improve health. For

more information please ask. The website for my plate is www.myplate.gov.

Potty Training Readiness

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool believes potty training should begin at home with the child's parent/guardian and will continue with the child's teacher(s). We believe there are 2 stages of training:

1. Toilet Training-capable of using the toilet but it is the adult who is trained to get the child to the bathroom on time by assisting the child in the toilet.
2. Toilet Trained- the child is not capable of using the toilet but has the developmental ability to express the need to use the toilet. We will assist the child until fully trained.

Medication Policy

Bright Start Nursery and Preschool will administer medications to children in the center only after the following guidelines are followed:

1. Medication will be given after the receipt of written approval from the child's Health Care Provider and after the completion of the proper forms. (see office for copies).
2. All medications must be kept in a secure area that is inaccessible to the children.
3. Any prescription medication for a child must be prescribed for the child to be given to. Prescription medication must be stored in its **original container**, labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, and directions for administration. No medications will be given in a baby's bottle.
4. The prescription date must be current. All unused medication will be returned to the parent when no longer administering.
5. Non-prescription, over-the-counter medication may only be given if prescribed by the Health Care Provider and proper forms filled out. Expiration date must be current and check the dosage for the age and weight of the child.
6. Diaper rash cream and sunblock may be applied with written permission from the parent/guardian.
7. Use a medicine spoon with marked amounts, not an ordinary teaspoon, for giving liquid medication. Do not give food, juice, soda, or anything except water with the medication unless the directions call for it.
8. The child will be watched to make sure the medication is swallowed. A form will be maintained with the following information:
 - The child's name and parental authorization.
 - The name of the medication.
 - The instructions for administering the medication, including dosage and frequency.
 - The time and by whom the medication was administered to the child.
 - List any adverse effects the medication may have on a child.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) believes that every child should have a "medical home", a specific long term primary care provider, where families can be supported at all stages of their child's development. Rather than a walk-in clinic or emergency room, a primary care provider can get to know your child and family and track long term trends of growth and development. They should be your partner in decisions about your child's health.

The center encourages you to choose a primary care provider for your child, and to share their contact information with us. When there are questions about health issues, medication, or allergies, we can contact your provider directly for clarification and possibly save you a trip to the doctor.

If you have any questions or need information about local medical practitioners or options for health insurance, please let us know and we will be glad to help you.

Use of Technology and Social Media

Each classroom has a designated tablet for their use. The tablet is for the teachers to use for our curriculum's (High Scope) evaluation (COR). The teachers will be writing anecdotal notes about each child to help with their evaluations. The tablets are also used for the ProCare App to update parents and to document daily activity with the children (potty log, eating, incidents, pictures, etc.). The ProCare App also enables the teacher to notify all or one parent/guardian of any information concerning their child and the school. Also, to make sure parent/guardian is aware of an incident that may occur to the child that requires us to notify them. If an emergency occurred with their child, the center would contact the parent/guardian by phone.

The tablets are for the teacher's use not the children.