



AT FRIENDSWOOD METHODIST

**Parent Handbook,
Policies,
and Procedures**

2024-2025



Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program
at Friendswood Methodist Church

110 N. Friendswood Dr.
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<https://friendswoodmethodist.org/brightbeginnings/>

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program at Friendswood Methodist Church. We are excited and blessed that you have chosen to partner with us for your child's early education. Bright Beginnings is a ministry and part of the Christian Education Division of Friendswood Methodist Church. Our church's mission is "Sharing the life-changing power of Jesus Christ everywhere and every day." As a ministry of Friendswood Methodist, we want to share Jesus' love with each child and family so that they can experience His "life-changing power."

Bright Beginnings is licensed by the **Texas Department of Health and Human Services, Child-Care Licensing Division**. This handbook has been prepared for you to become familiar with our program's policies and procedures. Please read this handbook carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask. We have done our best to answer as many of your questions in this handbook as possible, but we are always happy to help you in any way we can.

We are looking forward to a great year at Bright Beginnings!

Dee Ann Emberton

Director



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General Information

Board of Directors

Bright Beginnings Board of Directors oversees the operation of the program, under the sponsorship and direction of the church. The chairman of the board can be reached through the church office or program director. Parents will be notified of changes in policies and procedures in writing. Any questions and/or concerns by parents should be made directly to the Bright Beginnings Director. Any event or occurrence not addressed in the handbook will be resolved by the Bright Beginnings Board of Directors. The Board meets regularly throughout the year to support and assist the Bright Beginnings program.

Philosophy of the Early Learning Program

Bright Beginnings is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and spiritual Christian environment that responds to the individual needs of children and families. Using a developmentally appropriate curriculum, we enhance children's development while creating a love for learning and an awareness of God's love.

Educational Goals

This program encourages exploration and discovery through learning centers. Research shows that children learn best through an interactive play environment. Children will be given opportunities to enhance their understanding and learning through play. We will:

- Promote Christian values through faith-based learning.
- Develop the whole child spiritually, physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.
- Provide an assortment of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that will stimulate curiosity and creativity.
- Enhance discovery and learning from the environment.
- Implement a learning environment in which children learn skills to prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.
- Give children the skills needed to self-regulate.

Christian Education/Chapel

In accordance with the Early Learning Program's philosophy and mission, Bright Beginnings embraces, encourages, and provides experiences so that Christian values and teachings are honored and incorporated in the classroom daily. Our Christian beliefs and values are implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner through stories, art, songs, and props for dramatic play in classrooms and chapel. Participation in this portion of the program is required.

School Schedule

One Year Olds	2 Days
Two Year Olds	2 Day
Three Year Olds and Pre-K (4 Year Olds)	3- and 4-Day Options
Bridge (5 Year Olds)	4 Days Only



School Days

- Two Day Classes – Monday and Wednesday **OR** Tuesday and Thursday
- Three Day Classes – Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- Four Day Classes – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

School Hours

- 9:00 - 1:30 – All Classes except Bridge
- 8:30 - 1:30 - Bridge

In all our classes, we find that your child benefits most from the program if arrival and departure adhere closely to our hours. Tardiness results in your child missing an important part of the day's instruction. Please be on time. If you would like to conference with your child's teacher, please schedule an appointment.

School Calendar

The 2024-2025 school year begins on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, and will go through Thursday, May 15, 2025. We use the Friendswood ISD school calendar to determine our school calendar and holidays.

Admission Information

Nondiscrimination Policy

Bright Beginnings program admits students of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Enrollment Information

Classes will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Current Bright Beginnings students, younger siblings, and Friendswood Methodist families have priority in pre-registration. The remaining availability of classes will be open to the public.

Age Requirements

Children who have reached the age of 15 months by September 1st of the year of enrollment are eligible to begin (**enroll in**) our program. They may continue in the program until they begin kindergarten.

Required Enrollment Paperwork

The following items are required to be on file with Bright Beginnings before your child is allowed to attend school:

- Student Information Card
- Student Enrollment Information
- Emergency/Medical Information



- Tuition Agreement & Payment Options
- Photo, Class Roster, and Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Health Statement Signed by Doctor (Hearing and Vision if applicable)
- Updated Immunizations - **Based on recommendations from the CDC and Childcare Licensing, Bright Beginnings will not allow immunization exemptions.**
- Safe Sleep Agreement for children under 18 months
- Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)
- Court Documents (if applicable)

These records must be kept current as children receive additional immunizations and remain current for the remainder of the entire school year. Please submit copies of immunization records that reflect all updates and changes.

If the program makes a change to the operational policies at any time, you will be notified in writing of the policy changes, and a signature will be required to show that you have reviewed these changes.

File Updates

It is important to update your child's records in writing with the Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program office should there be a change in address, telephone numbers, immunizations, etc.

Tuition and Fees

In addition to the registration and supply fee, a tuition deposit will be collected at the time of registration. This will then be applied to September tuition.

The Registration & Supply fee and tuition deposit are paid at the time of registration and are NON-REFUNDABLE.

The Registration and Supply fee for 2024-2025:

Registration and Supply Fees	
Two Day Classes	\$255
Three Day Classes	\$295
Four Day Classes	\$325
Bridge/Transition	\$325



Tuition for 2024– 2025:

Age	2 Day Class Mon/Wed	2 Day Class Tues/Thurs	3 Day Class (monthly)	4 Day Class (monthly)
1 year old	\$255	\$270	NA	NA
2 year old	\$245	\$260	NA	NA
3 year old	NA	NA	\$350	\$410
4 year old (Pre-K)	NA	NA	\$350	\$410
Bridge/Transition	NA	NA	NA	\$430

School is in session from September through May with the first tuition payment due on the first day of school for that school year. Tuition is due on or before the first class day of each month and is considered late after the 10th of the month. A late charge of \$20.00 will be assessed after the deadline on any unpaid balance unless prior arrangements have been made with Bright Beginnings office. Full payment is due each month regardless of the number of days your child is expected to be in attendance. No adjustments are made for illness, vacation, or board and church mandated closings. Monthly tuition will be paid via ACH through Friendswood Methodist Church or via credit card and ACH through the Procure autopay system (3% service charge added to Procure payments).

Non-payment

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

There will be a \$10.00 service fee on all returned checks and returned bank drafts.

Family Discount

Families with more than one child in the program receive a \$10.00 monthly discount on tuition with each additional child.

Withdrawal

If for any reason you decide to withdraw your child, you must give one month's written notice to the Director or you will be responsible for the next month's tuition. Please notify the Bright Beginnings office as soon as possible. If your child's name remains on the roll, you will be billed by mail for the tuition.

Refunds

In enrolling a child into Bright Beginnings, expenses are assumed that do not change by the child's absence; therefore, we cannot refund, or credit for days missed due to illness, vacations, or inclement weather days. Tuition pays teachers' salaries which is based on the number of children enrolled and not the number of children present daily. It is not possible to make up days missed as it causes overcrowding in classes. **There will be no reimbursement for emergency closures or severe weather days.** Registration/Supply fees



and tuition deposits are non-refundable. Exceptions to this must be submitted in writing to the Bright Beginnings board for consideration.

Photographs/Videos

Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program staff takes photos of the children during their daily preschool activities. These photos are used for student portfolios and in displays in the classroom, or other areas within our facility. No outside publication or display of these photos is permitted without the written consent of the parents. If you do not wish your child to be photographed, please inform the director on the photograph permission form.

Student Information

Arrival Procedures

- Upon arrival, the parents or adult dropping off the child are required to sign children in utilizing the Procure Connect app.
- Parents need to let teachers know of any special instructions via the Procure Connection app. such as: 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 teachers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.
- A health check will be completed on the child upon arrival.
 - Administrative staff reserves the right to exclude a child from care if they are showing any signs of illness, but do not present with an above normal temperature.
- Children will be dropped off in a car rider line at a designated location outside of the child's building and will be escorted from that location by a designated staff member.

School's Right to Refuse Admission

Bright Beginnings reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. The director deems the child too ill to attend.
3. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, employees, or other children enrolled at Bright Beginnings if the child were to be present at the center.
4. Parents failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
5. Parents failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

Pick-Up/Release of Children

When picking up children, sign them out through the Procure app. It is very important that responsible adults accompany each child from his/her classroom every class day. Once a parent signs their child out and the child is handed over to the parent, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on school premises.



- Bright Beginnings Staff will release students only to authorized persons listed on the registration form and student information card. They will ask individuals for proof of proper identification (i.e., driver's license). A copy of the driver's license will be made by the front office staff to keep record of the individual picking up the child (if different from the typical pick-up person).
- If someone different is picking up, please text the child's full name, class name, and the full name of the person that will be picking up to the Alternate Pick-Up Text Number 281-607-7180.
- If a person arrives to pick-up your child and we were not expecting her/him, we will not release your child until we have spoken with a parent to verify.
- Bright Beginnings will not accept children from or release children to underage siblings, relatives, or friends not listed on the registration form and student information card.
- Please remember to keep children with you in the hallways at pick up times. The halls are very busy at this time of day and children can become confused if they are separated from their parents. Do not allow your child to leave the building without you. The parking lot is also very busy. Keeping your children with you will ensure their safety.
- Please do not leave valuables in your car during pick up.

Late Pick- Up

If your child is not picked up by 1:40 he/she will be taken to the office or front desk of their building for you to pick up and sign out. Consistent late pick up (3 or more times per semester) will result in a late pick up fee of \$25 for the first minute per child plus \$1 for each additional minute per child. The child will not be allowed to return to care until all late pick-up fees are paid in full. The clock in the office is the standard time in such cases. **Please call the Director if you are delayed so that your child can be assured that you have contacted the office and will pick him/her up shortly.** Call 281-482-7535 ext. 501.

Late Arrivals or Early Pick-Ups

All doors will be locked from 9:15 am – 1:15 pm. If you arrive after doors are locked or before the doors are unlocked to drop off or pick up your child, please ring the bell either by the Nursery door or by the Education building door, and someone will let you into the school.

Separation Anxiety

Anxiety about separation is a natural part of life. We are committed to working together with families to manage this important transition for young children. It is essential that parents and teachers work together to ease children into the program and to minimize stress. Trust and good communication between teachers and parents will build a partnership that can support children. How we help children through these first goodbyes creates a framework for their lifetimes, and we acknowledge the significance of the event. In keeping with developmentally appropriate practices, we will respond to each child and family's needs around separation on an individual basis. The teachers and administrative staff are available to discuss your family's needs.

Clothing

Dress your child in comfortable, washable, play clothes in which they can move easily and freely. Indoor art activities and outside play activities which may involve dirt, water, paint, etc., provide children with creative avenues in which they may experience social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Therefore, dressy outfits are



not encouraged as they may be difficult to clean and may dissuade children from participating in the many activities offered inside and outside. When dressing your “potty trained” child, please remember that they need to be able to quickly remove the clothing for bathroom needs; overalls and rompers slow down the process. Boots, sandals, jellies, flip flops and crocs are hazardous on the playground equipment. **Appropriately sized TENNIS SHOES are the best choice for school!!!**

Every child should have two changes of clothing available in their backpack or diaper bag. Please be sure each item is labeled with your child’s name. As the weather changes, check the clothes in the backpack to ensure that they are weather appropriate and still fit. Always remember to replace the clothes if your child uses them while at the Early Learning Program. **We play outside each day, unless there is severe weather. Make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, including mittens, coats, sweaters, or a hat on cold days.**

What to Bring

Backpacks or diaper bags should be large enough to fit a change of clothes, lunch box, and a folder without being bent.

Items to pack in their bag: **Label all items** with the child’s first name and last initial.

- Complete change of clothing, including socks and shoes (**all children**)
- Folder or notebook (given by the teacher at the beginning of the year)
- Lunch kit with nutritious lunch with water, juice, or milk (should include items the child can eat independently)
- Water bottle or no-spill cup for toddlers
- Napping Rooms (Bunnies and Cubs)
 - Special toy (lovey) and blanket (**No Nap Mat Needed**)
- Disposable diapers or Pull-ups for 2s being potty-trained.
- Light jacket or sweater

Prohibited Items

For the safety of our children, the following items are not permitted:

- Weapons, including toy weapons
- Latex Balloons
- Live animals
- Personal electronic devices, including smart watches

Safe Sleep Policy

All parents of children enrolled in our one-year-old program must read and sign the provided “Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep”.

Nap Time

The one-year-old classes will take a nap from approximately 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In the toddler class, the children are allowed to fall asleep for a nap if needed. There is no scheduled nap time for threes or fours.



Toilet Training

We understand that children often start the toilet training process during their two-year-old year, and we want to do everything we can to support your efforts. However, we do ask that you wait to send your child to school in regular underwear until they are fully trained (successfully using the toilet with minimal accidents for three or more consecutive days) and are able to communicate with the teacher that they need to use the “potty”.

We **strongly** recommend that all children entering the 3-year-old classes are toilet trained. We understand that this is a developmental skill, and some children may not be ready to be fully trained. However, in those cases we do ask that your child is working on this skill at home. We require that your child wear a pull up (not diapers) so that they may be more easily assisted when an accident occurs.

All children in the Pre-K and Bridge program must be fully toilet trained. This includes being able to perform self - hygiene.

Toys and Personal Belongings

We ask that children bring only items that can be shared with the entire group. Toys brought from home often create problems between children or get misplaced. We try to provide all items your child needs for a happy day. “Lovies” are accepted. Please place these in the diaper bag or backpack to be used as needed.

The toy recall list can be found on the following website: www.cpsc.gov/Recalls. Our school gets toy recall updates via email, and the director checks for recalls every week and will notify families of preschool-related recalls via email.

Water Activities

Bright Beginnings has one water activity during May. Children under two years of age will have sprinklers and small splashing pads with less than one foot of water. Children two and older will have sprinklers and splashing pools with less than one foot of water.

Animals

Bright Beginnings will not allow animals in the buildings at any time.

Field Trips

Field trips are only for our Pre-K and Bridge students. In the event a field trip is scheduled, you will be notified in writing of the location, time, and date of the field trip at least four days in advance. A permission slip must be signed from the parent in order for the child to attend. All field trips are within walking distance of the school.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In



addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

All children will participate a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- At least one occasion of active play outdoors when weather permits.
- One or more structured or teacher-led activity or game that promote movement during the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom, in the gym, or on the playground, when weather permits.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for "rainy days".

Staff Information

Teacher Training and Requirements

All Bright Beginnings classrooms have a minimum of two teachers. Teacher to student ratios are intentionally lower than state mandates. All staff must complete a minimum of 24-hours of training each year on state licensing requirements and curriculum training. All teachers are certified in infant and child CPR, First Aid, and in the recognition and prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Each teacher must complete a criminal history background check for the state of Texas as well as an FBI background check.

Information on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases for Staff

All staff are recommended to stay up to date on their tetanus vaccine, get yearly Flu, and COVID vaccines.

Parent Information

Parent Expectations

We acknowledge that the home is the first place of learning for the child and encourage parent/teacher interaction. We would like to build a partnership with Bright Beginnings families to meet our children's needs.

A parent should:

- Be sure your child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Keep a child who is ill at home.



- Stay informed of school rules and encourage your child to obey the rules.
- Dress your child appropriately for school and school-related activities.
- Cooperate with teachers and administrators as we work together in the best interest of your child.
- In resolving situations, go to the person most closely associated with the case and move to resolve the situation with them.
- Be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

Parent's Rights

A parent or guardian of a child enrolled at Bright Beginnings has the right to:

- Enter and examine the childcare center during its hours of operation and without advance notice.
- File a complaint against the childcare center
- Review the childcare center's publicly accessible records.
- Review the childcare center's written records concerning their child.
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the childcare center's online compliance history.
- Have the center comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child.
- Be given the contact information for the childcare center's local Child Care Regulation office.
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged child incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that: video recordings of the alleged incident are available; the parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and the parent or guardian of any other child in the video receive prior notice from the center.
- Obtain a copy of the childcare center's policies and procedures handbook.
- Review the childcare center's staff training record and any in-house training curriculum.
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the childcare center.

Parent's Right to Immediate Access

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Bright Beginnings, 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) Bright Beginnings 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 parent(s) request a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/join custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Bright Beginnings, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Bright Beginnings cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Bright Beginnings suggests that the parent keep the



child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once present with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, Bright Beginnings is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of Bright Beginnings cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. Bright Beginnings will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Bright Beginnings employees will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Parent/Teacher Conference

Parent/Teacher conferences are available at the parent's request. PreK classes will have a mid-year conference, and the Bridge class will have an end of year conference.

Parent Communication

Monthly school wide newsletters are provided with important information for each age group as well as the calendar of events. Each class will also send out weekly information via the Procure application. If you have a question or concern regarding your child, policies, or procedures please contact the program director. Call 281-482-7535 ext. 501.

Parents are invited to join our Facebook group and Instagram page where we will also post information about upcoming events. Facebook: Bright Beginnings @bbfriendswood. Instagram: bbpreschool

Parent Visitation

All parents are welcome to visit the program at any time during our hours of operation. For security reasons, please check in with the office upon arrival. For the comfort and safety of all of our children we do not allow lunch visitors. If you would like to bring lunch to your child, please drop it off at the office and we will get it to them. In the event of special custody arrangements, we require the primary guardian to give written permission for any visitors. This is for the safety of the children and staff.

Orientation Meeting and Meet and Greet

A Parent/Student Orientation and Meet and Greet will be held in the fall. The purpose of the Meet and Greet is to provide you and your child the opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers and become acquainted with your child's classmates and their parents. The Orientation Meeting will discuss school and classroom policies, procedures, curriculum plans, and schedules.

Parent Teacher Organization

The purpose of the PTO is to enhance and support the educational experience at Bright Beginnings by developing a closer connection between school and home. Through your involvement we will be able to better serve each of your children. A membership drive will be held each year and information regarding events will be sent home through notes and newsletters.



Birthday Treats

At Bright Beginnings, we know how important and special your child's birthday is! We love to celebrate your child's birthday in school and do allow birthday treats to be brought into the classroom to share. The following are guidelines that we ask you to follow when choosing your child's birthday treat:

- Due to the number of allergies, we ask that your child's birthday treat be free of any noted allergen in the classroom. This includes products manufactured in facilities where the allergen is present.
- If you are in a classroom where there is a severe allergy, please only send in store bought items where the ingredients are clearly labeled. (Check with the classroom teacher to get a list of student allergies in the class and plan your treat accordingly.)
- Please do NOT send in cake or cupcakes. This type of snack is very often wasted and is enormously messy to clean up.
- Please do not send in any type of treat or candy which may be a choking hazard to our students.
- If your treat requires utensils, please provide those for the class.
- To keep our birthday celebrations as equal as possible for everyone, we ask that balloons, favors or goodie bags be reserved for "home" parties.
- If your child wishes to pass out invitations for their home party, please be sure all children in the class are invited. Otherwise, please deliver the invitations outside of school.
- Some great birthday treat suggestions are fruit salad, apple slices, cookies, brownies, chocolate pretzels or Rice Krispie treats. The treat should be something that your child will enjoy. Teachers will determine the best time during the day to serve birthday treats.
- We do encourage nutritious snacks. Your questions or suggestions can be directed to your child's teacher or administration.

Parental Notifications

A written notice will be given to each family if any changes occur that are not included in the Monthly Newsletter. If changes occur in policies or procedures, a notice will be given to each family with a request to sign and return as proof of receipt (this may be done electronically).

Questions or Concerns

The Director will be available before school, after school and via phone calls or emails to assist any parent with questions concerning the policies and procedures at Bright Beginnings. Please allow 24 hours for a response for non-emergencies.

Conflict Resolution

Occasionally misunderstandings occur. We ask that all adhere to biblical principles found in Matthew 18:15-17 and request that the following procedures are followed.

- All questions, concerns, or complaints should be brought promptly to the teacher, staff or parent involved. Please be confidential and not take it to others outside the situation.
- If the situation cannot be resolved, please contact the Director to help resolve the situation.
- If there is still no resolution, the Bright Beginnings Board will help resolve the matter.



Discipline Management

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline is handled using positive guidance techniques including redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of appropriate behavior.

Discipline will be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control

Within the Early Learning Program's philosophy of positive guidance, children are given the opportunity to develop self-control, self-esteem, and self-direction. Our goal is to provide clear, simple, and consistent limits for children designed to maintain their physical and emotional safety, and to create an atmosphere of respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. We recognize that conflict is an ongoing part of functioning as social beings. When difficult situations present themselves, they will be looked upon as opportunities to grow and learn. Problematic situations will be regarded as opportunities to develop conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

- Children will be treated with respect and care.
- Children will be encouraged to participate in solving problems.
- Children will be guided to make pro-social choices.
- Appropriate behavior will be modeled, acknowledged, encouraged, and reinforced.

If you have a specific question or concern regarding discipline, please schedule a conference with your child's teacher.

Biting Policy

We all understand and accept that when toddlers are in groups; biting is unfortunately not unexpected. We know and accept that toddlers bite for many different reasons, however, we believe that biting is never the right thing to do. Our goals are to help children who are bitten feel better by giving them care, support, and advice on handling themselves in a threatening situation, as well as teach the children who bite more appropriate behaviors. The safety of the children at Bright Beginnings is our primary concern. We understand that our caregiving environment and practices can influence biting, and we take responsibility for ensuring they are appropriate for toddlers. Our biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs and the consequences if the issue is not resolved.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm, "No...we don't bite people!"
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound will be assessed by the teacher and cleansed with soap and water.
- The child who bit will be spoken to on their level in a loving, but firm manner. We will explain that, "You cannot bite your friends because it hurts them. We do not hurt our friends."



- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report).

When your child has bitten another:

Classroom staff will work together with parents and try to reach the cause as to deter future biting – charting location, who was involved, time, other behaviors, staff present, and circumstances. Staff will “shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite, to head off biting situations and reinforce appropriate behavior.

1. You will be notified of the biting incident and will be expected to begin your own research and assist us in training your child to use appropriate behavior.

When biting continues:

1. If a child inflicts two bites in a one-week period, in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child’s behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts two bites in a one-week period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be asked to take a one week break from the school.
3. If the child again inflicts two bites in a one-week period in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements.

If a child, who has been through step 1 and 2 and then goes 3 weeks without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

If a child bites twice in a 1-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from preschool for the remainder of the day.

Dismissal from Program

This program will make every effort and use any available resources to ensure that your child has a successful experience. If a concern arises with your child, the program director will meet with you to put a plan of action into place. Both parties will need to work together on this plan of action to ensure the best possible experience for your child. If a child becomes a consistent physical danger to themselves or others, a temporary or permanent removal from the program may be deemed necessary. Suspension or expulsion from the program is possible after all other avenues have been exhausted.

We work hard to build strong relationships with our families. However, in the event that a family’s dynamics or behavior creates an unsafe or disruptive school environment we reserve the right to suspend or expel the family from the program.



Medical Information

Administering Medication

Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program will not administer medication including sunscreen and bug spray. The only exceptions are in emergency situations where the use of Epi Pens, Benadryl, or inhalers are required due to allergies or asthma. If these medications are required, the appropriate Medication Authorization Forms must be on file before the medication can be accepted and dispensed.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Please apply sunscreen and insect repellent before the child enters the classroom. Neither the teachers nor staff can apply sunscreen or insect repellent to any child.

Allergy Emergency Plan

If your child has an identified and diagnosed food allergy, we must have a food allergy emergency plan on file prepared by the child's health care professional. This plan must include:

- A list of each food the child is allergic to
- Possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list
- The steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction
- Signature and date of both the parent and health care professional

Hearing and Vision Screening

All children **4 years old by September 1st** of the current school year are required by the State Minimum Standards to have Vision and Hearing Screening. Your doctor can complete this screening and then report the results on the Physician's Statement.

Illness/Exclusion

Bright Beginnings is designed to care for well children. Your cooperation is needed to maintain a healthy and safe environment for our school. Please keep your child home if, within the last 24 hours, he or she has:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities, including outdoor play.
- An oral temperature above 101 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of symptoms of illness.
- A tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Tympanic thermometers are not recommended for children under six months old.
- An axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Loss of taste or smell



- Demonstrated a general sense of not feeling well
- Been too ill to play outside
- Head Lice – If your child is found to have head lice at school, they will be sent home. They will be allowed to return to school after one medicated treatment has been given or they bring a note from the physician saying they are cleared to return to school. We also require that your child is free from all nits before they are allowed to return to the classroom.

If a child becomes ill while in the facility, the following plan is in place:

- The child will be isolated from the other children in a designated, supervised isolation room.
- The child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately to pick up the child.
- All CDC disinfection protocols and guidelines will be followed in all affected areas.

When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for 24 hours.

Food Information

Allergen Friendly Classrooms

Due to the severity of some children's allergies, it may be necessary for some classrooms to be designated free of one or more allergens. In the event that your child is in such a classroom, we respectfully ask that you adhere to this request. If your child brings an item in their lunch that contains the named allergen, they will not be allowed to eat it and it will be sent back home. For classroom parties, special events, birthday treats, etc. please send only store-bought items where the ingredients are clearly listed.

Snacks and Lunch

A variety of simple nutritional snacks are provided for your child each day. Please be sure to notify staff of any food allergies. (Please see allergy guidelines below)

Your child is to bring a nutritious, balanced lunch from home each day. Pack lunches with items that do not require refrigeration/heating or which can be kept cool/warm with a thermos or ice pack brought from home. Use containers in your child's lunch box that can be easily opened by your child. This fosters independence and pride. For example, thermoses with flip-top lids and sandwich bags for finger foods are usually easy for a child to handle. Lunch boxes, thermoses, and containers must be labeled.

Please be sure to feed your child a nutritious breakfast at home before coming to the Early Learning Program.

Nursing Mothers

You have a right to nurse your child or provide breast milk while they are in our care. We have adult sized chairs available in the nursery wing for breastfeeding mothers.



Emergency Procedures

Inclement Weather

In the event that the FISD schools are cancelled because of weather related conditions or other emergencies affecting the community, we will not be open. Please listen for local radio, television or FISD social media announcements. In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary for Bright Beginnings to close when FISD does not. If this case, we will use the Procure texting app to contact parents quickly.

Fire or Natural Disaster

In case of fire or a call for an evacuation, all proper authorities will be contacted. The children will exit the classroom following the posted emergency map's directions. The children will remain in the designated safe area until the all-clear signal is received. Then the children will return to their respective classrooms. If the emergency results in closing the school, parents will be contacted by the Director and /or teachers and informed about the location of their child. Practice drills are held throughout the year, with a minimum of one fire drill every month and three tornado drills annually. In case of a tornado warning, children will be sheltered inside until the all-clear call is received. In the case of a chemical release, children will "shelter in place" indoors with a/c units off and doors sealed. Parents will not be able to pick up children until the all-clear signal is given. Parents will be notified through the texting program first and then through a teacher's phone call.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In case of fire or a call for an evacuation, all proper authorities will be contacted. The children will exit the classroom following the posted emergency map's directions. The teacher will take the clipboard with the children's names and phone numbers in her care with her when exiting the building. The children will quickly, and orderly proceed to the designated safe areas. The music and creation station teachers will assist the toddlers in leaving the building. The teachers will take attendance once they are at the designated safe place. The teachers and children will remain in the designated secure areas until the all-clear signal is received. Then the children will return to their respective classrooms. If the emergency results in closing the school, parents will be contacted by the Director and/or teachers and informed about the location of their child. In the case of a tornado warning, children will be sheltered inside until the all-clear call is received. In the case of a chemical release, children will "shelter in place" indoors with a/c units off and doors sealed.

Practice drills are held throughout the year, with a minimum of one fire drill every month and three tornado drills annually.

Evacuation- Relocation

In the event of an emergency that requires Bright Beginnings to evacuate and relocate to a different location, the children will be moved to New Hope Church located at 108 West Edgewood Drive, Friendswood Tx. The caregivers will walk the children to the location. The caregiver will take

attendance once they have arrived. One teacher will then contact parents to come and pick up the children while the second teacher sings songs or tells stories to the children to keep them calm until parents arrive.



Intruder

In case of an intruder in the building, teachers are to close and barricade doors, put children in a safe place as far away from the door as possible and turn out the lights. They are to wait for an all-clear signal from the Director. Teachers are trained to handle this type of situation, and the training will be reviewed with the teachers before school begins.

Medical Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, 911 will be called immediately, and the parent will be contacted next.

Parents will be contacted immediately if your child:

- Is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a health care professional.
- Has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the Early Learning Program as specified above.
- Has been involved in any situation that might place the child at risk.
- Has been involved in any situation that renders the Early Learning Program unsafe, such as but not limited to a fire, flood, or damage to the facility as a result of severe weather.
- Has been evacuated from the building due to an emergency. In this type of event New Hope Church has been designated our emergency relocation site.
- Emergency Drills are conducted frequently throughout the school year.
- The complete Emergency Preparedness Plan can be found at the end of the handbook.

Parents will be notified of less serious injuries when the parent picks the child up from the Early Learning Program.

- Less serious injuries include, but are not limited to minor cuts, scratches, and bites from other children requiring first-aid treatment by Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program staff. An incident report form will be completed for the parent to acknowledge being told of the incident.

If a child requires immediate medical attention the following procedure will be followed:

- Bright Beginnings staff will call 911 immediately. (Director or designee will ensure that all other children in the group are properly supervised).
- Give the child first aid treatment or CPR if needed.
- Office staff will contact the parent.
- Office staff will contact the physician identified in the child's record.
- If the parent has not arrived at the school, two staff persons will accompany the child to the hospital.

It is extremely important that parents provide accurate and complete information as to how or where they can be reached by phone each day. The information given to us on the attendance record is used to locate you in case of an emergency. In addition, the Bright Beginnings Early Learning Program maintains an informational card on each child and the numbers listed on that record will be used to contact you in an emergency.



Resources for Parents.

Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Texas Department of Health and Human Services

Bright Beginnings is a state licensed facility. Your child is of great importance to us. We adhere to strict guidelines to provide your child with the best environment possible. A copy of the minimum standards and licensing inspection report is available in the Bright Beginnings office for review.

You may also access the minimum standards online at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/

You may contact the local licensing office at 713-287-3238 (1330 E 40th St. Houston, TX 77022).

Child Abuse and Neglect

All employees are trained each year on awareness and warning signs of children who might be a victim of child abuse or neglect and are **required** by law under the Child Protective Services Act to report any suspected cases of abuse. Employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behaviors, or conditions prior to making a report. Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. Bright Beginnings takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the employees of Bright Beginnings cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, boosters, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

Below is the contact information if you would like to talk to someone or report child abuse or neglect.

DFPS Contact Information: The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

1330 E. 40th St

Houston TX 77022

713-287-3238

Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline

1-800-252-5400 www.txabusehotline.org

Call our Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



The ABC Center (for the Medical Evaluation of Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect)

Division of General Pediatrics
University of Texas Medical Branch
301 University Boulevard
Galveston, TX 77555-1119
(409) 747-9298

Children's Assessment Center

2500 Bolsover
Houston, Texas 77005
(713) 986-3369
Medical Director: Michelle Lyn, MD, FAAP

Community Organization Training Resources

Collaborative for Children [<http://collabforchildren.org/>]

Texas Association of Parent Education (TAPE) [www.coe.unt.edu/cpe/tape/]

ESCAPE Family Resource Center [www.learntoparent.org/]