

SMART START LEARNING CENTER, LLC

Parent Handbook



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Smart Start Learning Center, LLC.

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Parent Handbook

I have received and read the Smart Start Learning Center, LLC. Parent Handbook.

I understand the policies and procedures given to me and agree to adhere to all center policies. Smart Start Learning Center LLC policies and procedures are subject to change to reflect the needs of the program, children, and families we serve.

We may also change or modify our policies if our licensing agencies require them. Smart Start Learning Center LLC will inform parents of changes occurring whenever possible in a timely fashion.

Child's Name Printed

Child's Name Printed

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Printed/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Printed/Guardian Signature

Date

Date

Revised: January 13, 2025

Mission Statement

At Smart Start Learning Center, we are here to serve families and staff in our community by providing a loving, trusting, happy, and respectful program. Our children will receive the highest quality of care.

Welcome

We are honored that you have become a part of the Smart Start Learning Center family. We share a small amount of your child's life and are privileged to be given the opportunity. Our goal is to impact our students' lives educationally, emotionally, and socially so they have a strong foundation for their educational careers. We look forward to working as a family to help each child reach goals set for them throughout their time at Smart Start Learning Center.

We strive to provide each student with a challenging academic program and a secure, personal environment of care. We hope to exceed our families' expectations and want to welcome your family to the Smart Start Learning Center.

Vision

At Smart Start Learning Center, we aim to provide the highest quality education and care to tomorrow's leaders.

Philosophy

Smart Start Learning Center has a unique program that will allow children to develop their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities in a caring and friendly environment. We believe each child is exceptional and intelligent. We provide a developmentally appropriate education program that focuses on learning. Based on the theory, children learn by doing while having fun, active involvement, and meaningful experimentation combined with warm, dedicated experiences and qualified education staff.

We respectfully agree that parents are their child's first teacher and nurturer. We encourage our parents to become involved with center events and strive to provide quality early childhood educational services at the center and in the community.

Goals

As educators, our goal and objective are to motivate and create a strong self-image in each student. Smart Start Learning Center provides quality education through resources necessary to achieve cognitive development, personal interactions, and the motivation to learn. By preparing our qualified educators through ongoing education, we aim to ensure the children of our community achieve success in their education.

Owner/Administrator

The owner/administrator is on-site; parents are welcome to speak with her if availability permits. Scheduled appointments are always welcomed.

Contact Information

350 Milford – Harrington Hwy, Milford, DE 19963

302- 265-2027 (office) or 302-5023-2237 (cell)

email: smartstartlc21@gmail.com

website: smartstartlearningedu.com

Curriculum

Experience Early Learning is the curriculum Smart Start Learning Center selected for its learning guide. Experience Early Learning for Preschool is one of the nation's most widely used Pre-K curricula. It's comprehensive and research-based and features exploration and discovery as a way of learning.

Research shows that a whole-child approach to education, where children have opportunities to develop math and literacy skills and social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills, is developmentally appropriate and better prepares children for a life well beyond their time in a classroom.

Experience Early Learning for Infants and Toddlers was explicitly designed to provide in-depth support for the unique demands of each day in an infant and toddler classroom.

The curriculum is delivered through theme-based curriculum programs, integrating language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, physical, health, and social-emotional domains while attending to children's approaches to learning and individual learning styles.

Experience Early Learning believes children learn best by actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play.

Staff Qualifications and Training

The teaching staff at Smart Start Learning Center comprises professional educators with knowledge and experience teaching young children. All employees meet the licensing requirements to teach in a licensed facility, including background checks and FBI fingerprints. All education staff must receive 18 hours of training yearly, including Child Abuse and Neglect, SIDS, and CPR and First Aid training. The teacher's credentials are a level of achievement and expertise for best practice in early childhood, as recognized by the State of Delaware Department of Education.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Smart Start Learning Center is open to children ages six weeks through five. We will not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, or any other category protected by state and/or federal laws.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION GUIDELINES

Enrollment

Parents can apply for their child's Smart Start Learning Center enrollment by completing the Enrollment Application.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, health records, health insurance, emergency contacts, permission to release, and signed Parent Handbook receipt. The enrollment application is not meant to be a contract guaranteeing service for any duration.

Continued enrollment at Smart Start Learning Center is contingent upon the parent's and child's adherence to Smart Start's policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook and contract, including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees, parent professionalism, child behavior, etc.

Parents must notify Smart Start immediately should any information change after enrollment. Failure to do so may result in the child being disenrolled from the center.

At least one family member must complete an Enrollment Interview with the Administrator. The center's records, authorizations, forms, policies, and procedures are reviewed. The teacher will discuss the child's needs, particular concerns, gradual starts, separation issues, communication methods, and what to bring to the center.

Smart Start Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time, with or without cause.

Tuition – Purchase of Care parents refer to Tuition and Fee Agreement

Payments are due each Friday for the next week of care and at the time of enrollment. Smart Start will process all payments using the ProCare Automated Payment Processing system. There will be a \$35.00 fee charged for cards that are declined. Once you receive a notice of declined payment, you are expected to give permission to rerun the card within two days. If the Administrator has not heard from you within two days, a \$15.00 late fee will be added to your account. No allowances, credits, or refunds shall be made for absences – including vacations, illness, or other holidays; nor is credit given if the center must be closed due to national emergencies, pandemics, or any other events beyond Smart Start Learning Center control. Daily fees will be charged if the governor declares a state of emergency for the state or county. Smart Start Learning Center will offer private pay siblings a 10% discount from the lowest child's tuition.

Payment receipts and invoices will be given upon request. Smart Start will accept over-the-phone credit card payments. In the case of a cash/ check payment, all cash payments must be handed directly to the Administrator or Lead Teacher. Smart Start Learning Center will charge \$35.00 for a check returned by the bank. Returned checks will not be re-deposited. Parents are expected to pick up the check and replace it with cash or alternative payment within two days of being notified. If you have two or more returned checks at any time, all future payments must be made by cash, money order, or credit card.

Tuition will increase with inflation and the cost of living. The center will consider increasing the tuition rate annually.

Smart Start Learning Center acceptance is based on the room your child is eligible for.

All parents or guardians must indicate to whom all billing and tax information correspondence will be addressed. The primary and secondary parent or guardian accounts must be paid in full to receive the tax statement.

Tuition DOES NOT include extra-curricular activities and field trips.

Non-payment is grounds for immediate dismissal from the center. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Smart Start Learning Center; however, please discuss the matter with the Administrator if you anticipate difficulty paying on time.

Note: All accounts with unresolved outstanding balances will be returned to a collection agency and Purchase of Care. The parents or custodial guardians whose signatures are on the Fee Agreement will also be responsible for all additional fees incurred by the collection agency.

Purchase of Care

Smart Start Learning Center accepts Delaware's child care subsidies, Purchase of Care. It also participates in Purchase of Care Plus. Parents are responsible for the authorized weekly Parent Fee and Smart Start Learning Center Plus Fee. Expired POC authorization must be notified immediately to the Administrator/Owner. Parents are responsible for providing Smart Start Learning Center with evidence of DSS Purchase of Care eligibility and will be accountable for total tuition fees until Purchase of Care eligibility is documented.

Financial Statements

Smart Start will issue an end-of-year Tax Financial Statement to parents/guardians. The statement will include the Employer Identification number and address. The statement will only be issued to the parent/guardian. Smart Start Learning Center will NOT give any statement to a parent with an outstanding balance.

Holiday & Sick Day Deductions

Our weekly tuition fees are based on yearly operating costs, with weeks containing holidays averaged into the totals. Therefore, no deductions will be made for days the center is closed for business, except for dates in the Parent Handbook and contract. In addition, no deductions will be made for days when the child is absent due to illness/vacation/suspension since Smart Start must hold open the child's slot. Tuition payment reserves a space for your child.

Withdrawal and Termination - Purchase of Care parents refer to Tuition and Fee Agreement

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. Verbal notification of a student's intended withdrawal is not official notification. If the proper notice is given, unused tuition will be refunded within (30) days of withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks, and payment will be processed through ProCare Autopay.

Parents who want to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Smart Start must submit a request two weeks before the proposed change. Schedule changes may be subject to a change of fees. The center Administrator will notify the parents in writing if the new schedule is available.

Re-enrollment is based on space availability and at the discretion of the Administrator. If the Administrator has determined that a parent withdraws and re-enrolls to avoid payment during center closings or vacation, re-enrollment may not be permitted, or a re-enrollment fee may be assessed.

Termination: In certain circumstances, asking that a child leave Smart Start may be necessary. This decision will only be taken as a last resort after all other efforts of working with the child and their parents have proven unsuccessful. Dismissal of a child may come from his behavior being a danger to himself, other children, the staff, and the center property. Other incidents that may cause a parent to be dismissed could be (but are not limited to):

- Disrespect toward teachers or center employees by child or parent.
- Circumstances and situations are deemed an unhealthy relationship between parents and Smart Start staff.
- Continued violation of center policies.
- Non-payment of tuition.

If a child is absent for more than 14 consecutive days without prior notification to the Administrator, tuition weekly fees will be charged.

Right to Refuse Admission

Smart Start Learning Center reserves the right to refuse a child's admission at any time, with or without cause. Smart Start strives to maintain a list of substitutes in anticipation of staff absences; however, there are times when substitutes are unavailable, and classrooms must be closed to comply with licensing regulations. Refusal will be based on a "first-come, first-served" basis to maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios and/or close classrooms.

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

- Lack of staff to maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios determined by State Licensing Regulations.
- The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
- Staff deems the child to be too ill to attend.
- Domestic situations present a safety risk to the child, staff, or other children enrolled at Smart Start if the child were to be present at the center.
- Parent's failure to maintain accurate and up-to-date health, IFSP, and IFP records.
- Parent's 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 center.

Records: Confidentiality/Distribution

Information contained within a child's record is privileged and confidential. These records will not be released to anyone without written parental consent. Children's records are accessible to parents upon request within two (2) business days. Upon written parent request, records will be transferred to the parent or other identified person when a child is no longer enrolled at the center.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Hours of Operation

Smart Start Learning Center operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. (See Center Closings for when we are closed for holidays or professional development.)

Programs

There are 4 classrooms offered at Smart Start Learning Center. They are:

- Caterpillars: 6 weeks to 12 months, 8 children
- Toddler One: 12 months to 30 months, 6 children
- Toddler Two: 24 months to 48 months, 6 children
- Preschool: 3 years to 5 years, 18 children
- School Age: 5 years old, to 10 years old, 10 children

Visitation

Families are always welcome to visit the classrooms. Parents and guardians are welcome to stop by and visit the center or your child's classroom. No appointments are necessary, but please be aware that visits during a child's naptime are not recommended because it may be disruptive to your child or others.

Absences/Late Arrivals

If your child will be absent, inform the center by 9 a.m. Your child may only be permitted to attend after 9:00 a.m. if you have contacted the center with a valid reason, for example, a doctor or court appointment, along with documentation of the appointment. Receiving advanced notification assists staff in preparing activities and meals. We cannot hold breakfast/ lunch if your child is not at the center when the meal is served. Please make sure they eat before arriving. Breakfast will not be served after 8:30 a.m.

If the absence is due to illness, we must know the diagnosis to determine whether other families in the class or center should be aware of it. Your child's name will be kept confidential.

Late Pick-up Purchase of Care parents refer to Tuition and Fee Agreement

If you arrive to pick up your child after 5:30 p.m., you will be responsible for the \$2.00 per minute late pick-up fee. Parents must notify the center and let them know they will be late; however, this curious call does not excuse the late fee. Late fees are charged consistently regardless of the reason for lateness. Your account will reflect these charges, and your child's services may be terminated for chronic late pick-ups or non-payment of charges. The parent's responsibility is to ensure that someone (either a parent or an Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) can pick up the child on time. If by 6:00 p.m. no one contacts the center and the staff cannot reach anyone, the local police and Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families will be contacted as a last resort.

Center Closings/Holidays – See Contract

These dates will be noted on the Private and Purchase of Care Tuition and Fee Agreement. Modification to the scheduled dates will be updated annually and as needed.

*If the administrator decides that POC PLUS needs to be in effect due to inflation and the cost-of-living increase, parents will be notified a month in advance.

*** Parents will pay a regular co-pay and plus fee if the center must close due to any communicable diseases that pose a risk of being open.

**** If the center is closed due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances (co-pay and plus will be charged for these dates).

*****Additional days of closure are required; the Administrator will give parents proper notice.

Note: On days of inclement weather, please be alert for our ProCare system alerting you of any changes in hours of operation; please also check WBOC for updates.

Publicity Releases

Smart Start would like to post photos of your child during special events or activities. Examples include but are not limited to Smart Start Facebook, newspaper, or internal at the center. An agreement that indicates whether a parent grants permission for his or her child to be filmed or photographed must be signed.

Review of DELAWARE Regulations

Smart Start is licensed by the state of Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing. To be licensed, a licensing specialist conducts an annual unannounced compliance review to verify that we are following DELAWARE: Regulations for Early Care and Education. A licensing specialist will also visit the center if the Office of Child Care Licensing receives a complaint. If you would like to review these regulations or our compliance reviews, please speak with our Administrator.

Positive Guidance

The staff of Smart Start will adhere to the guidelines for child discipline and positive guidance, which will comply with state and federal guidelines. Positive Guidelines demonstrate respect for the child and help the child develop self-control, self-direction, positive self-esteem, and social competence. No child shall be subjected to the following techniques by staff.

Physical Punishment– defined as but not limited to spanking, hitting, slapping, pushing, pulling hair, biting, kicking, rough handling, harsh restraint, tickling for long periods, jerking, shaking, pinching, non-verbal intimidation, etc.

Verbal Punishment– defined as but not limited to screaming, teasing, humiliating, intimidating, insulting, blaming, threatening, frightening, laughing at, or discussing a child's behavior in the presence of the child, other children, staff, or parents, etc.

Isolation– defined as but not limited to confining the child in a small area, retaining the child in the classroom while others play outside, restricting the child from eating with their classmates, enclosing the child in a confined structure, etc.

Staff will not use food as a reward or Punishment, withdraw their affection/love for a child, punish a child for the toileting accidents, or punish a child for not sleeping during rest time. Staff will also not delegate discipline to another adult or child. Appropriate Positive Guidance Techniques will be utilized within the Smart Start Learning Center.

Suspension and Dismissal of a Child

If we encounter a severe problem with a child's behavior, Smart Start works cooperatively with parents and support agencies to meet the children's needs. However, if Smart Start cannot meet the needs of the child/parents, the center reserves the right to terminate enrollment immediately. The termination date will be determined and set by the Administrator. The Administrator will decide on re-enrollment once parents have provided a Behavior Modification Plan from a Mental Health Consultant, school district evaluation, and current IFSP or IEP.

Toys from Home

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their children. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher if their child needs help with this policy.

If the parent repeatedly fails to enforce this policy with their child, the staff will call the parent and require that they come to the center and remove the toy. Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to include, with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies, and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by Smart Start staff for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of Smart Start staff. Smart Start is not responsible for lost or damaged toys.

Dress Code for Children

Children are engaged in various activities during the day, some of which can be messy and/or athletic. Additionally, children are involved in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children must be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. Smart Start will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry. Jewelry is a safety hazard to children, and it is strongly advised to limit jewelry to earrings.

Parents are prohibited from dressing children in clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present challenges for children concerning toileting. Coats, hats, gloves, and scarves must be provided in winter. Children are not permitted to wear open-toed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in center activities is rubber-soled sneakers/tennis shoes or a shoe that fits securely around the foot.

Children age 3 through 5 must always have two seasonably appropriate complete changes of clothes at the center. Children under 3 years of age must have two seasonable and size-appropriate, complete changes of clothing and shoes at the center. A complete change of clothing set includes a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. Teachers will post reminders for parents to

update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's first and last name in a zipped lock bag. Smart Start is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing or jewelry.

CENTER SAFETY

Arrival

Parents must sign their child in daily using the ProCare app. or the QR code in the lobby. Parents are required to escort their children to the classroom. Please allow enough time for a comfortable transition into the center each day. Each parent should assist in removing coats and jackets, greet teachers and children, and inform the teacher about any issues that might affect the child's mood or abilities. With the reassurance that their parent will return at the end of the day, children seem to respond to a clear and decisive goodbye. A parent should not "sneak out" without saying goodbye. Although this may temporarily ease the pain of separation, it is alarming to children when they discover that their parent has "disappeared." If the separation seems extremely difficult, you may phone the center later to see how your child is doing.

Pick-up Procedures

Parents or other authorized adults must sign their child out of care using the ProCare app or QR code posted in the lobby. Every parent or legal guardian will have a "PIN." Please use your "PIN Number" to sign in or out. Please allow enough time to speak briefly with the teachers about your child's day. Please do not do so at pick-up or drop-off time if there are any issues to discuss at length. Instead, plan for a phone conversation or conference with the teacher so they can give you their undivided time and attention.

Everyone must leave the building by 5:30 p.m. to ensure on-time closing for Smart Start staff. Once a parent signs their child out, they are solely responsible for supervising their child while in the center and on-premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, office, classrooms, and/or playground. Parents must handle all business issues before signing out their child and exit the building directly after signing them out of care.

* Anyone picking up a child must be at least (16) years of age. Written authorization for a designated pick-up is required.

THE CHILD CANNOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE IF THEY ARE NOT LISTED ON THE EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM OR THEY CAN NOT PROVIDE A PHOTO ID. If the child is not picked up on time, the center staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up form.

Release of Children

The following statements shall be reviewed with parents at the time of enrollment. Parents will be asked to sign that they have been made aware of and agree to this policy.

1. When an authorized person picks -up the child from the center, all responsibility for my child is released to that authorized person.

2. If an authorized person appears to be showing clear signs of INTOXICATION and is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We will call the next authorized person to pick up the child. The police will be notified if the person departs with the child.
3. Staff will require photo identification from anyone unknown to them attempting to pick up a child from the center. Staff shall only release children to those persons authorized by the parent. The person must sign for the child when picking them up from the classroom and playground.
4. Parents must make changes to emergency contacts or authorized persons for the release of children in person.
5. If any person attempting to pick up the child becomes threatening to staff or others on Smart Start Learning Center property, local law enforcement will be notified immediately, and staff shall use their discretion in releasing the child.
6. When you arrive, please ring the doorbell and look into the camera so the staff can see who they are letting in. If a staff member does not recognize you, they will use the intercom to speak with you and gather information before letting you in. If a staff member does not answer within a few minutes, please call the center so that staff may be alerted that you are present to pick up your child. If an authorized person is picking up, please inform them of this procedure.

Emergency/Alternate Pick-up Forms

At enrollment, parents will complete an Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form all persons who, in the course of events, may at any time be asked to pick up their child from Smart Start. In an emergency, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will contact the persons listed on the emergency form until someone is reached.

If the staff contacts a parent and they are unable to pick up the child, it is the parent's responsibility to arrange for someone on the emergency list to pick up the child. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements may result in dismissal from the center.

The persons listed on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form must provide photo identification, such as a valid Driver's License, Government ID, or an approved identification from the Administrator, before the center releases the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule. All changes and additions to the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form must be made in writing, dated, and signed. Only custodial parents can make changes or additions to this form.

In an emergency, a person who was not previously authorized may be able to pick up your child if you or another parent/guardian calls the Administrator and provides the person's name. Before the release of your child, we will check the person's state-issued identification card and take a picture of the card for our records. Children will only be released to custodial parents unless previous arrangements have been made. Court documents detailing custody arrangements are to be provided. If a non-custodial parent who is not authorized to pick up your child attempts to do so, the custodial parent/guardian and the police will be contacted.

Parking Lot Safety Smart Start Learning Center's entrance and exit door will be the doors in the rear. Parents and children will not access the front door. Smart Start shares the parking lot with other complex businesses. There is NO parking, picking up, or dropping off in the fire lanes. Only vehicles with a handicap designation may park in the handicap-designated parking spots. The parking lot can be busy; follow the driving arrows entering and exiting the parking lot, and hold your child's hands while in the parking lot. Please advise anyone authorized to pick up your child of these policies.

Child Vehicle Safety

Delaware law requires children from birth through age 8 to be properly restrained in a federally approved child safety seat appropriate for the child's age, weight, and height. We strongly suggest you comply with the law to keep your children safe. Leaving a young child unattended in a vehicle is prohibited at Smart Start Learning Center and anywhere in the state of Delaware, and it will result in a report to the administrator.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Smart Start employees are required to report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect to the Division of Family Services. Child abuse is defined as a child experiencing personal injury as a result of non-accidental means. This injury would result in a mental or emotional condition resulting from abuse or neglect, negligent treatment, sexual abuse, maltreatment, exploitation, or abandonment of a child under the age of 18 or an individual who appears mentally retarded. If you suspect a case of child abuse, you can call the Delaware Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-292-9582.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs and or Alcohol at Pick-up

If a parent or other adult enters Smart Start to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs and alcohol, either by the smell of alcohol or their actions, they appear to be impaired. In that case, staff may refuse to release the child to them and call another contact on the emergency contact list to pick up the child. If the intoxicated individual becomes aggressive or unruly, the Administrator may notify the local authorities.

Firearms and Weapons

No person is permitted to possess firearms, ammunition, or other weapons on the center's property or at events sponsored by Smart Start. We respectfully request that you leave any weapons in your vehicle when visiting the center. Violation of this policy may result in immediate disenrollment from the center and criminal prosecution.

Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather Information

Parents will be notified of the closing by ProCare text or email during an Emergency Closing or Inclement Weather event. A message will also be posted on ProCare and WBOC. During inclement weather, the center will close at the discretion of the Administrator. Should the center need to close in the middle of the day, parents will be notified by ProCare text and/or email. The persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made. Staff will inform the parents or the emergency contact person at the time of the call to the

pick-up location if the children have been evacuated from the center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate site if one is indicated.

Note: Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures.

Vandalism

Vandalism is the willful or malicious defacement of public or private property. Children who commit vandalism will receive one or more of the following:

- Parent/guardian notification
- A photo of the damaged property will be given to the parents
- Parents/guardians will be required to either restore or replace damaged property
- The expense to replace the item will be added to the child's tuition invoice
- Possible suspension and/or dismissal for subsequent offenses

Surveillance Video

Cameras are in each classroom, throughout the center, and on the playgrounds. This allows children and teachers to be observed while they are at the center. Should an incident occur, the Administrator will review the footage and provide families with detailed accounts of the footage observed. Smart Start welcomes parents and guardians to view video footage to satisfy their interest in an incident.

Photographs and Videos

We take photographs regularly. These pictures may be posted in the center, displayed on our website, or used to chronicle your child's development or to illustrate the daily curriculum. We require written parent/guardian permission to disseminate photographs or videos of your child or if your child will participate in special events.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Confidentiality

Smart Start Learning Center's confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with SSLC employees who have a "need to know" to care for your child most appropriately and safely. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents, and children will not be shared with parents, as SSLC strives to protect everyone's right to privacy. We require written permission from the parent/guardian before disclosing your child's information. The Office of Child Care Licensing and another official agency with duties related to children's health, safety, and well-being will be given your child's information for official use.

Violation of the Confidentiality Policy

Smart Start Learning Center takes the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the center very seriously. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy applies not only to their child or family but to all children, families, and employees associated with Smart Start. Any parent who shares confidential information or pressures employees or other parents for

information that is unnecessary for them to know will be deemed to violate the Confidentiality Policy and may result in disenrollment.

Outside of Smart Start, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the child's parent has given written consent, except where otherwise provided by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information to be shared outside of Smart Start, with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on Smart Start property after that.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or 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. Smart Start Learning Center employees are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Adult Code of Conduct

Smart Start Learning Center requires the parents of enrolled children to conduct themselves professionally, consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. Smart Start Learning Center will provide the most appropriate environment for a child to grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this model environment is the responsibility of the Smart Start employees and each parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner. Parents who violate the Adult Code of Conduct will not be permitted on Smart Start property afterward.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on the center property, the building, and the parking lot for the health of all Smart Start employees, children, and parents. Parents who smoke in their cars must dispose of the cigarette before entering the parking lot. Do not dispose of cigarettes on the center property.

Cell Phone Use

Talking on a cell phone is prohibited in our center. Your child should have your full attention when dropping off or picking them up at the center. Parents and adults are role models, which includes giving your child, teachers, and staff your full attention.

Swearing/Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use inappropriate language on Smart Start property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward staff members, children, and/ or parents.

Confrontational Interactions

Parents will not always agree with Smart Start employees or the parents of the other children; all disagreements are expected to be handled calmly and respectfully. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means of communicating a point and are strictly prohibited.

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Note: PARENTS AND ADULTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS AND MUST BE IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

Physical/Verbal/Emotional Punishment

Smart Start does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children, and such acts are not permitted at the center. Severe or aggressive verbal reprimands are not acceptable, as they may create undue embarrassment or emotional distress in a child. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing or disciplining a child that is not their own. If a parent should witness another child misbehaving or is concerned about the behavior reported to them by their child. In this case, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher or Administrator. Furthermore, it is prohibited for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. The Administrator will address the issue with the other parent at that point. Our Confidentiality Policy protects all children enrolled at our center.

Custody and Visitation

Our policy is not to interfere with the custody relationship of a child's parents. As such, we assume parents/ guardians have equal rights to pick up/drop off, visit, or request documents about their child. If that is not the case, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to provide court documents and/or legally binding parental agreements to clarify the rights and obligations of the parents and guardians. Without prejudice, we will follow the last-dated court documents to either parent/ guardian. Without such court documents, both parents have equal custody rights.

Without a court order on file with Smart Start, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Smart Start cannot, without a court order, limit one parent's access by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Administrator and are allowed in the center only at the Administrator's discretion. An employee of Smart Start will monitor visitors at all times throughout the center.

The court order will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) request a more liberal variation of the order in writing. We ask that parents/guardians keep the center, our staff, and other children out of any legal entanglements or other custodial issues and resolve these issues in another forum. Please adhere to this request to avoid disenrollment.

Resolution of Disputes/Complaints

Although the center makes every attempt to offer children the highest quality of care possible, there may be occasions when parents/ families have problems and concerns about specific events, situations, and staff members. Please follow protocol by first speaking to the appropriate staff member. Open communication is encouraged as a means of addressing and resolving

situations. By working together, families and staff can ensure the well-being of each child. Please do the following if you have a problem or concern regarding:

Policy/Procedure:

Classroom Teacher: Discuss your problem/concern with the Teacher. If the situation remains unresolved, ask to meet with the Administrator.

Smart Start Learning Center will ensure that your concerns are heard and that a resolution satisfies parents, Smart Start staff, and the Administrator.

Staff Hired by Parents

If a parent agrees with a Smart Start employee to babysit for your family outside the employee's regular work hours and outside the center hours. In that case, it must be done away from the center and with full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private parent employee, not a Smart Start employee. Smart Start cannot be responsible for employees outside the center outside their working hours and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property. In addition, the staff is prohibited from transporting children to or from the center in their vehicles without a signed Release of Liability form from the parent/guardian.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's activities. Parents may read in the classroom or assist teachers during special events. A parent or custodian with felony convictions, sex offender convictions, and open investigations into criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer at the center. Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be allowed to volunteer on days they are awarded custody as per the order.

Family Events

Family involvement is very important to Smart Start. Therefore, opportunities to gather with families and staff are promoted. Several times throughout the year, Smart Start Learning Center sponsors events. Families can be involved in planning and implementing events at the center in many ways. Your input is valued and appreciated. The contributions of time and materials help the center promote the highest quality of care for children. Additional social gatherings may also be held within each classroom.

Some examples of events but not limited to are:

- Ice Cream Social
- Fall Festival
- CPR/First Aid Classes
- Spring Graduation
- Educational Classes
- Special Classroom Activities
- Holiday Party
- Cookout and Picnic
- Family Reading Night/Book Fair
- Costume Parade
- Picture Day

- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Lion Club Eye Sight Checks

Requested Documents

The administrator will request documents that require a signature in a timely manner. Most documents have a designated due date. If the document is not received, the administrator has the right to exclude the child from the center until the request is met.

Additional Copies

Once a form or document has been given to a parent or person picking up the child by receiving it by hand or in the child's cubby, it's their responsibility to keep up with it. Each request for additional copies will cost \$2.00 per page.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Daily Schedule of Activities

Each classroom will post a weekly lesson plan. It will list all the activities and curriculum planned for that week. Teachers plan the curriculum using the Experience Early Learning guidelines. Developmental milestones and portfolios are on file for every child. You can also review activities and special events on our website calendar.

Class Assignments & Transitions

Children are placed in classes according to their age and development. With this in mind, we make transitions as smooth as possible by slowly integrating children into our center from home, another childcare program, or a new classroom.

The success of a child's experience at our center is building trust with them and you, as a parent. We will provide a personal tour with your family and introduce your child to their teacher. We also require a completed "Getting to Know You" form before their first day, so we can learn more about your child. When a child is scheduled to move to the next classroom (age group), you will receive a transition letter with information about that class and who the Teacher is. You can then visit the classroom with your child and meet the Teacher. The child's portfolio will be given to the new Teacher to ensure continuity of care and education.

Continuity of Care

Continuity of care is a system of primary caregiving that establishes an environment in which teachers work to minimize the number of teachers a child interacts with during the day and over time. Our program runs from January to December, so the children only make one classroom/teacher transition. If another child transitions to maintain the ratio, the Administrator will speak with the parent first. A primary teacher ensures consistency of relationships, environment, and communication between parents to strengthen relationships and the child's early learning experiences.

We do this by:

- Children staying in the same class until the time for transition to the next class or until a vacancy becomes available to transition to the next class.
- Teachers are assigned to a class

- Tracking, scanning, and counting children during the day is active supervision.
- Communication with families is through classroom teachers.

Communication/Messages

Parents will receive a daily message through ProCare, which includes information about their child's sleep time, diapering routines, learning experiences, activities, what they ate, well-being, and social and emotional development.

All messages are assumed to be read once sent out. Each classroom has a bulletin board where the weekly curriculum, menu, daily schedule, and upcoming events are posted. You can also check out our Events Calendar on the Smart Start website.

Child Development Screening

Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) provides reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional screening for children between birth and age 6. Drawing on parents' expert knowledge, ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and catch delays in young children. The Ages & Stages (ASQ) development screener is completed yearly to identify children at risk for developmental concerns. The Ages and Stages Comprehensive Assessment Tool will determine if a child needs to be referred for further diagnostic assessment or evaluation. All teaching staff have been trained in using the tool. We share the results with you, and if a referral is needed, we will let you know.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional (ASQ: SE-2) is a highly reliable system focused solely on social-emotional development in young children. ASQ: SE-2 accurately identifies behavior that paves the way for the next steps—further assessment, specialized intervention, or ongoing monitoring. If you do not want your child to participate in these assessments, you must put your request in writing.

Child Assessments

Our teachers use information from observation, screening, assessment, and comprehensive curriculum materials linked to the Delaware Early Learning Foundations to plan for group and individualized learning experiences. We use the Experience Early Learning assessment tool to determine what areas the teacher needs to focus on with the child. Each infant/toddler and preschool child will receive a developmental assessment within 45 days of enrolling. Based on the assessment, a plan will be developed, including developmentally appropriate goals, activities, and experiences.

Portfolios

Each child's portfolio will be kept and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. These portfolios will not be released to anyone outside the Smart Start Learning Center without written permission from the parent/guardian. Portfolios will contain various items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. The Lead Teacher and Teacher ensure that portfolios are periodically and continuously updated. When a child leaves Smart Start, the assessment portfolio should be given to the family.

Conferences

Classroom conferences are conducted with families once a year in December. Teachers will discuss the child's growth and development, progress towards current learning goals, identify new goals, and give an insight into the child's classroom experiences. The parent can share information about life at home, participate in goal setting, and ask questions to help understand the child's learning experiences and activities. While we strongly encourage all families to participate in the parent/teacher conferences, it is not a requirement. If you do not want your child to participate in the parent/teacher conference, you must put your request in writing.

Referral Process

The classroom teacher's concerns about a child's development/behavior are reported to the Administrator. The parents are notified if the Administrator agrees, and observation and documentation are shared. The Administrator may suggest possible referral resources at this time. The Administrator maintains written records of this process, including family meetings and referrals. The family is also given all documentation. If an IEP or IFSP has been documented, parents must share this information with Smart Start to provide the proper recommendations. All documents will be kept in the child's file.

Graduation

Graduation is held each year in June. The time and place will be announced.

Discipline

Smart Start believes in using positive guidance and age-appropriate methods of discipline. All of Smart Start's staff is trained to use Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline is a way of organizing classrooms around the concept of a School Family. Both adults and children learn the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks, such as forming relationships, communicating effectively, being sensitive to others' needs, and getting along with others.

Physical Activity

Smart Start is committed to your child's health. Staff must be positive role models for the children to live healthy lives. Throughout the day, children have various engaging and vigorous physical activities for which they are encouraged to choose. It is recommended that children participate in a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of physical activity each day.

Free Play

"Free play" (child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) must be incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. Teachers are expected to actively participate with the children during free play activities by asking questions about what they are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc.

Outdoor Play

Fresh air promotes good health and does not contribute to catching colds or flu. Please do not send your child to the center if you do not want them to spend time outside. Outdoor play is critical for children's well-being. Please provide children with ample and appropriate clothing for cold, wet, snowy, or hot outdoor weather. A hat or hood is recommended because wind can be uncomfortable for an ear infection. All classes go outside when the wind chill is 32 degrees F or higher. If weather advisories are posted, children will not have outdoor play. Instead, they will have the opportunity to participate in indoor large motor activities.

Water play is added to the children's outdoor experience during the summer months. The outside temperature benchmark is 89 degrees F or lower. With an extreme heat index, we may limit the time the children are outside. Smart Start will monitor the Air Quality Control before outdoor play.

Screen Time T.V./Computer Permission

In compliance with Delaware Childcare regarding viewing time, Smart Start would like all parents to be aware of the television, movies, and computers policy for children in our care.

1. Viewing of television, digital video display (DVD), and video cassettes shall be as follows:
 1. Prohibited for children younger than two (2) years of age;
 2. Not permitted without Parent/Guardian permission;
 3. Limited to age-appropriate programs, educational, listed on the lesson plans, and approved by the Lead Teacher.
 4. Not to exceed 30 minutes daily per child or group of children.

Note: Viewing periods may be extended for specific special events or occasions such as a current event, holiday, or birthday celebration.

2. The use of computers /tablets in the classrooms shall be as follows:
 1. Prohibited for children younger than two (2) years of age;
 2. Not permitted without Parent/Guardian permission;
 3. Limited to programs, games, and websites that are age-appropriate and educational;
 4. Protects from exposure to inappropriate websites, such as those that are sexually explicit, violent, or use inappropriate language;
 5. Supervised by a staff member;
 6. Not to exceed 30 minutes daily per child or group of children.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Infant Room

The Infant Room accommodates children between six (6) weeks and twelve (12) months old. Our teachers follow the infant's schedule. This rhythmic response involves communicating with parents to assess the infant's needs. Children eat and nap according to their schedules. The child's schedule, including when the child should eat, receive bottles, and sleep. Diapers are checked throughout the day and changed every two (2) hours or as needed. The time, as well as the number and nature of changes, are recorded. The classroom environment is arranged to increase the children's growth and development in the following areas: gross and fine motor, emotional,

cognitive, language, and self-help. The curriculum involves stimulation, sand and water play, puzzles, manipulative toys, books, music, and outdoors daily (weather permitting). Children are continually provided with learning activities that encourage and challenge them to develop their potential and increase their confidence.

Infant Supplies Needed:

Ready to mix Formula

Bottles (labeled)

Diapers & Wipes

Crib Sheets are provided and cleaned by Smart Start

Bibs are provided and cleaned by Smart Start

2 sets of change of clothes

If a child runs out of required supplies, Smart Start will charge:

Purchase of Care parents refer to the Tuition and Fee Agreement

\$3.00 per bottle with Infant formula

\$1.50 per diaper & wipe

Diapering Procedures

Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers. Diapers are checked throughout the day and changed at least every two (2) hours or whenever soiled or wet. The time, number, and nature of changes are recorded. During each diaper change, the child is cleaned with disposable wipes provided by the parents. The hands of staff and children, including infants, are washed with soap and running water after each change. Paper towels are used to dry hands. A disposable covering covers the changing table. The surface is disinfected after each use. Soiled disposable diapers are placed in containers with a foot pedal, a tight-fitting cover, and a plastic liner. The container is emptied and sanitized daily.

Safe Sleep Policy

The Safe Sleep Policy is for children under twelve (12) months of age. Each staff member is informed about the policy during orientation. The policy states that while working in the Infant Room, staff will do the following:

- Infants are placed to sleep on their backs.
- If your child requires a different sleeping position, you must provide documentation from your child's doctor stating the new position. If a device is to be used, the child's doctor must note which device will be used and how to use it.
- If your child falls asleep in a car seat, swing, or seat, they will be immediately moved to their assigned crib. The infant will only be permitted to sleep in a certified crib with a mattress set at its lowest position.
- The crib mattress is firm and tight-fitting to the frame and is covered with a tight-fitting sheet.
- Blankets, comforters, quilts, pillows, and stuffed animals will not be used in cribs.
- Sleep sacs or blanket sleepers will be used rather than blankets to ensure your child is cozy.
- If you want your child swaddled, you must provide written permission and a swaddle-blanket sleeper.

Toddler Room

The Toddler room accommodates children between one (1) and thirty-five (35) months old. Toddlers demonstrate endless curiosity, a short attention span, a sense of autonomy, and a need for physical movement and personal will. Nevertheless, they are still developing self-expression and self-control and depend on predictability in their daily routine as a basis for security. Our teachers will provide a nurturing environment with a predictable schedule that includes indoor and outdoor exploration, one-on-one time, and flexibility to accommodate individual physical requirements for food and rest. The weekly planned activities are child and teacher-oriented. Language, social/emotional, cognitive, fine, and gross motor sensory are the domain focus areas on which the curriculum is based. Free play activities include painting, blocks, manipulative toys, puzzles, pegboards, dramatic play, climbing, music, dancing, table toys, and play-dough. Dancing, singing, stories, and musical instruments are components of group activities. Outdoors, children have free play and organized group games.

Children are also encouraged to learn, accept, and appreciate the similarities and differences in others. Children receive individual care that nurtures them based on their needs (i.e., hugs, high fives).

Toddler Supplies Needed:

Diapers & Wipes

Pull-ups

Blanket & sheet for a nap (sheet must fit a toddler cot)

2 sets of change of clothes

Comfortable Shoes & Clothing (no open-toed shoes)

Pacifiers

We allow pacifiers for our children in our infant and one-year-old rooms. Once children enter the Toddler classrooms, we no longer permit pacifiers.

Toileting Procedures

Toilet training begins in our Toddler classroom. Children are not punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet and are supervised during toileting. Children are not coerced but introduced to the bathroom, potty, and toilet during bathroom time. If they choose to use the toilet, we will begin working towards training. After using the toilet, children wash their hands with soap and running water. Staff assisting children with toileting must wash their hands with soap and running water. Clothing soiled by feces, urine, vomit, or blood is placed in sealed plastic bags and stored apart from other items. These articles of clothing are sent home daily. Parents are always asked to have a change of clothing at the center. Clothing should be marked with the child's name. If necessary, clothing will be loaned to a child.

Preschool Room

Preschool Rooms consist of an interactive environment comprised of three- to five-year-olds. Preschool-age children spend most of their time in active play and learning. Therefore, they need an environment that encourages independent choices. Educational materials will be available during center time and child-initiated free indoor and outdoor playtime. Teacher-initiated

activities will set the stage for the day, teach important learning concepts, and emphasize each child's role in the social group. Classroom clean-up, mealtime, small and large group projects, and story time are essential for teaching children various learning skills and responsibilities. Large group activities will provide children with choices. This will keep the activities engaging and fun, catering to their interests and learning material choices. Our goal is to ensure preschool-age children are academically prepared for their early school years while having fun learning. Puzzles, woodworking, books, blocks, games, art, dramatic play, and dancing are examples of activities available to children during free play. Large group time may include finger plays, stories, discussions, calendars, current events, musical instruments, poems, and songs. Gross motor activities occur indoors as well as outdoors.

Preschool Supplies Needed:

Blanket & sheet for a nap (sheet must fit a preschool cot)
2 sets of change of clothes
Comfortable Shoes (no open-toed shoes) & clothing

Nap/Rest Time

Nap Time/Quiet time is a significant part of each child's day. Infants are on their schedule and are provided an assigned crib. Toddlers through preschool-age children have a rest time after lunch. They are provided with their cot and sheet. They may bring a travel-size pillow and a small blanket. The children must rest quietly on their cots for one hour; if they are awake, they are offered quiet activities until the remaining children are awake or nap time is over.

Sample Daily Schedule

7:00-9:30 Arrival, Attendance, & Health Checks
8:15 – 8:30 Handwashing
8:30-9:00 Breakfast
9:00-9:15 Diaper Change, Bathroom, & Handwashing,
9:15-9:45 Outside play
9:45-10:00 Group Time
10:00– 10:45 Free Play /Centers Individualization
10:45-11:00 Story Time
11:00 – 11:15 Diaper Change, Bathroom, & Handwashing
11:15-12:00 Lunch Set-up & Lunch
12:00-12:15 Diaper Check, Bathroom, & Handwashing
12:15-12:30 Nap Set-up
12:30 – 2:45 Nap time
2:45 – 3:00 Diaper Change, Bathroom, & Handwashing
3:00 – 3:30 Snack
3:30 – 4:00 Outside Play
4:00 – 5:30 Free Choice Activity until pick-up & bathroom

HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Health & Safety Pre-Enrollment Requirements

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is completed and returned to the center before the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete, up-to-date immunization record on file. This is per Delaware licensing regulations. If you have not immunized your child, ask the center Administrator for an immunization waiver form. We will discuss whether your child may be enrolled if they are not vaccinated. All children must have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed healthcare professional to attend. A licensed healthcare professional must complete the physical examination form and return it to the center before the child starts.

Accidents and Incidents

- If your child becomes injured or involved in a physical altercation with another child, emergency action will be taken to protect your child from further harm, and you will be notified.
- If your child receives a severe injury, you will be notified immediately. Per licensing regulations, a severe injury includes any impact on a child's head. Therefore, you will be notified immediately if your child falls and bumps their head, mouth, or face.
- An accident/incident report will be completed and provided to you within one business day, and a copy of this report will be kept in your child's file.
- Boo Boo notice will be sent for less serious accidents/incidents before your child is released at the end of the day. Less severe injuries include bumps, scrapes, and scratches.
- If your child has a life-threatening injury or illness or a severe medical incident such as a seizure, allergic reaction, burn, cut, etc., you will be notified immediately after an ambulance is contacted, and you will receive an incident report.
- You must sign the report as proof that you were notified of the accident/injury/serious incident.

In a severe illness, accident, or injury, Smart Start staff will take the necessary emergency action to protect the child from additional harm and notify the family. If the family cannot be reached, individuals listed on the Emergency Contact List (please keep this information current) will be contacted. If both the family and the emergency contacts cannot be reached during a medical emergency, proper medical care (i.e., first aid, ambulance, and other medical emergency services) will be provided to the child. All families are required to sign a medical release for these services.

The child's family shall assume all expenses incurred by the center in securing medical treatment for the child. The staff and Administrator of Smart Start Learning Center are released and discharged from all claims, demands, actions, and judgments that may result after securing medical treatment for a child under Smart Start supervision.

Medication Policy

Some staff members are certified by the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) to administer medication on-site at all times. Before administering any medication, the parent must complete a Medication Administration Record (MAR), including all the information on the form, and sign

the Permission to Administer Medication Form. Medication must be in its original container and labeled. The child's name should be inscribed. Written instructions regarding medication dosage should be clear and legible. A physician's written order and medication label are required. Without a physician's order, parents/guardians may come to the center and administer medication to their child. Any medication past its expiration date will be returned to the parent. The parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring expiration dates on all medicines, especially EpiPens.

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will make reasonable accommodations for children with medical needs. If your child needs accommodations, please speak with our administrator to discuss your request.

Health Care Exclusions/Descriptions

Ensuring children’s health is of primary importance to Smart Start staff. Therefore, if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms or illnesses, he or she will be unable to be in care unless the symptoms are gone, or your child's doctor provides documentation stating the child has been diagnosed, and the illness poses no serious health risk to your child or other children:

| Symptoms of Illness for Exclusion Includes: |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature of 100°F or higher without medication even if there has not been a change in behavior for infants four months old and younger; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperature of 101°F or higher without medication accompanied by behavior changes or symptoms of illness for children older than four months; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms of possible severe illness, such as unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea; two or more times of loose stool during the past 24 hours, or if diarrhea is accompanied by fever, exclude for 48 hours after the symptoms end; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood in stools not due to change in diet, medication, or hard stools; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting; two or more times in the past 24 hours, or one time if accompanied by a fever until 48 hours after the symptoms end or until a health care provider determines the vomiting is not contagious, and the child is not in danger of dehydration; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing stomach pain (more than two hours) or off-and-on pain due to a fever or other symptom; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouth sores with drooling; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rash with fever or behavior change; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purulent conjunctivitis “pink eye” (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scabies, until 24 hours after starting treatment; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pediculosis “head lice” or nits, until 24 hours after starting treatment; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuberculosis, as directed by DPH; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impetigo, until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment and sores are dry; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment; |

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varicella-Zoster "chickenpox," until all sores have crusted and are dry (usually six days); |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shingles, only if sores cannot be covered by clothing or a bandage; if not, exclude until sores have crusted and are dry; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertussis, until completing five days of antibiotic treatment; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mumps, until five days after onset of glandular swelling; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A virus, until one week after onset of jaundice, or as directed by DPH; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measles, until four days after arrival of rash; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubella, until seven days after arrival of rash; |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herpetic gingivostomatitis "cold sores," if the child is too young to have control of saliva; or |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unspecified short-term illness, not a chronic illness, if your child cannot participate in activities or our staff cannot provide care for your child and the other children. |

Fevers

Children requiring acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or other antipyretics to maintain functionality throughout the day are considered too ill to be at the center.

Allergies

For the child's safety, parents must provide details of any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers at the time of enrollment or when an allergy is discovered. Parents must also sign an authorization for any medication required to treat an allergic reaction, which must be provided following the Medication Policy.

Communicable Diseases

The Division of Public Health will be contacted if a child or employee of the center has any of the following diseases. The center will notify families about real or potential exposure to infectious diseases.

Respiratory

- Diphtheria
- German Measles
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- COVID - 19

Gastro-Intestinal

- Giardiasis
- Hepatitis A
- Salmonellosis
- Shigellosis
- Whooping Cough
- Tuberculosis

Children with a reportable communicable disease will not be admitted for care unless your child's doctor provides documentation stating your child has been evaluated and presents no risk to himself/herself or others or the Division of Public Health (DPH) has advised me that your child presents no risk to others. For information regarding reportable communicable diseases, please view DPH's website: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/rptdisease.html>. If your child's doctor states your child may return, but DPH says your child may not, our staff will follow DPH's instructions. If your child is exposed to a communicable/contagious disease or condition while in care, you will be notified and given information on the symptoms.

Safety and Sanitation

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, standard precautions, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, safe food handling, and diapering procedures. Each classroom is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected according to licensing regulations. To prevent the spread of infections and viruses, equipment and toys used by infants and toddlers are to be cleaned and disinfected daily. The other classrooms' non-porous toys and play equipment are cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected weekly or more frequently if needed. Our administrator routinely checks each classroom to ensure staff members use the training they receive.

Safety is very important to our center. Our staff members are thoroughly screened and highly trained, and they have completed a comprehensive criminal background check. Our building has a safety plan to ensure unauthorized people cannot access your children. Our classrooms are set up to be kid-friendly and hazard-free.

Illness During the Day

Smart Start staff are trained to recognize the symptoms of common childhood illnesses. Each child's health is evaluated upon arrival at the center and throughout the day. Staff members will check your child for signs of ill health, communicable disease, physical injury, and signs of child abuse or neglect. If your child exhibits symptoms of illness, requires medical attention, or becomes ill during the day, you will be notified immediately. Your child's emergency contact listed on the information card will be notified if you cannot be reached. Our staff will ensure your child's needs for rest, comfort, food, drink, and appropriate activity are met until they can be picked up. Your child may be isolated and cared for in the designated "Sick Area." ***Families will be called and given one (1) hour to pick up the child.*** The response to this pick-up requirement must be prompt. Delays can seriously impair the day-to-day operations of the center. If a family member cannot be located, contacting individuals on the Emergency Contact List will begin. It is important to update this information as necessary. If we cannot reach a parent or Emergency contact, or the child is not picked up, we may call 911 or Child Protective Services. This will depend on the circumstances. Please do not drop your child off when they are sick.

Return to the Center

Returning to the center after an illness is conditional upon the child's ability to participate in the group and not pose an infectious risk to others. The child must be symptom-free and not taking fever-reducing medication for twenty-four (24) hours before returning to the center.

Smart Start Learning Center reserves the right to decide upon the appropriateness of a child's return to the center. A child will be excluded if their condition poses an increased risk to other children and adults with whom they come in contact. In the event of conflicting opinions between health care providers and the Division of Public Health regarding excluding a child, the center will follow the Division of Public Health recommendations.

If the child has a doctor or dentist appointment and will be attending after 9:00 am, prior notification and approval will be needed.

NUTRITION/MEALS

Meals

Smart Star Learning Center is required to follow the Office of Child Care Licensing and the Department of Education's Child/Adult Food Program nutrition guidelines. Menus are posted weekly in each classroom and on our website.

Children participate in educational themes such as good eating habits, healthy reasons to eat, the importance of food variety when making choices, and why foods prepared in specific ways are not always healthy. Families are encouraged and required to participate in the center's efforts to promote healthy eating habits by not sending high-sugar foods in with children. Your child must be in the classroom before these times to be served. Water is served throughout the day upon the child's request day.

Breakfast is served in the classroom each morning at 8:30 a.m.

Lunch is served in the classroom each day at 11:30 a.m.

Snack is served in the classroom each day at 3:00 p.m.

We are committed to children's health and recognize the importance of the staff as positive role models for the children as they learn to live healthy lives. Therefore, the staff will refrain from drinking soda, sugary beverages, or eating unhealthy foods in front of the children in their care.

Prohibited Foods

- Sodas
- Juice
- Breakfast items such as donuts, pop-tarts, etc. Please do not bring other items for your child's breakfast. The other children do not understand why they will not be offered the same food.
- Chewing gum, hard candies, and lollipops

Modification to Meal Pattern Requirements

If a modification is required due to a child's medical need (i.e., food allergy or intolerance), families must provide the center with written documentation from the child's health care provider. If modification of the basic meal pattern is requested due to a family's cultural or religious beliefs, written documentation specifying which foods are unacceptable and the food group must be provided. No home-cooked meals or unpackaged meals will be accepted. Your child will be encouraged to eat but not forced to eat. If a child requests a second portion of food or milk, we will gladly provide it.

Smart Start kitchen staff will work together with families to substitute foods. If this is impossible, we require families to send necessary food substitutes. These substitutes must meet the CACFP requirements. No other food substitutes are permitted without the above documentation. We do not provide Soy, Rice, or Almond milk. These items will also need to be labeled and sent.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center daily to feed their children. Appropriate, private feeding locations will be available in the Infant room or other private rooms. Please discuss your desire to come to the center with the classroom teacher.

Special Celebrations/Birthdays

Special foods are sometimes included in center celebrations such as birthdays, holidays, or a child's last day at the center. These foods must also align with healthy guidelines and our Peanut Free policy. These restrictions are due to liability issues and regulations established by the Department of Health. Families are prohibited from sending food treats unless they are "store-bought" in the original package and follow healthy guidelines. We encourage families to make healthy choices.

Healthy Suggestions for Celebrations

- Fruit Kabobs
- Mini Muffins
- Whole Grain Fig Bars
- Oatmeal Cookies
- Yogurt Parfait
- Mini Soft Pretzels
- Fruit Tray
- Jell-O Cups
- Fruit Bars
- Fruit Cups
- Raisins (can be individually packed)
- Fruit (such as strawberries, apples, oranges, etc.)
- Granola Bars (no chocolate)
- Graham Crackers or Teddy Grahams
- Vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, celery, etc.)
- Cheese (unopened packages of cubed or block cheese)
- Sun Chips
- Pretzels
- Crackers

Special Note: Smart Start Learning Center reserves the right to change or amend this Parent Handbook at its sole discretion at any time and without notice to comply with government and state requirements or for any other reason necessary. Parents will be notified in writing in the event of a policy change.