



# PARENT HANDBOOK



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## **Handbook Revision**

Bright Beginnings NYC LLC (“Bright Beginnings NYC”) reserves the right to revise, delete or supplement any provisions of this parent handbook (the “Handbook”) as necessary. Policy changes will be posted in the office for 30 days. Any reproduction in whole or in part of this handbook is prohibited without prior written approval.

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## **Parent Handbook Table of Contents**

A Welcome Message .....	4
Introduction to Bright Beginnings NYC Preschool.....	5
Our Goals and Objectives.....	5
Programs Offered .....	5
Curriculum.....	6
Our Team.....	6
FAMILIES.....	7
Parent Involvement.....	7
Communication .....	7
Family Information.....	7
Parent and Child Identification.....	7
Release of Child.....	8
Custody, Court Orders and Changes of Family Status.....	8
Parent Code of Conduct.....	9
Dropping Your Child Off At School.....	9
Picking Your Child Up From School .....	10
Grievance Procedure.....	10
HEALTH, SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE.....	11
Licensing and Health Rules.....	11
Health Assessments .....	11
Allergies.....	11
No Smoking.....	11
Administration of Medicine: .....	11
Sunscreen.....	12
Developmental Needs and Special Services .....	12
Basic First Aid.....	12
Emergency Medical Care .....	12
Illnesses and Accidents.....	13
Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.....	14
Emergency Procedures: .....	14
Discipline: .....	14
Biting.....	15
Aggressive Behavior in Children .....	16
ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AGREEMENT .....	17
Initial Registration .....	17
Waiting List.....	17
Financial Agreement.....	18
Absentee Policy.....	18
Withdrawal Policy.....	18
Schedule Change Policy: .....	18
School-Initiated Withdrawal Policy: .....	19
Late Pick-Ups .....	19

Emergency Care Option for Part Time Students .....	19
Returned Payment Policy .....	19
Sibling Policy .....	20
School Closures .....	20
GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION .....	20
Security .....	20
Playground Activities and Safety: .....	20
Formal Assessments .....	21
Transition to a New Program or Classroom .....	21
Toilet-Training.....	21
Dress .....	21
Fundraisers.....	22
Meals and Snacks .....	22
Children’s Belongings .....	22
Baby-Sitting and Outside Child Care .....	22
Naptime .....	22
Language .....	23
Electronic Communication .....	23
Cell Phones .....	23
Child Birthdays.....	23
Photography .....	24
Anti-Bias/Multicultural Policy .....	24

## **WELCOME TO BRIGHT BEGINNINGS NYC!!!**

Bright Beginnings NYC is the first pre-school in the Financial District that is operated jointly by parents and teachers. Our goal is to provide the highest quality of early childhood education and care for your children at affordable rates. Through our committed parent-teacher partnership, we have designed a fun, creative and enriching environment that will prepare and guide your children into their academic and social careers. We started Bright Beginnings NYC because we passionately believe that every child deserves the opportunity to a get off to a good start and to build a bright future – and we are honored that you’ve chosen us to be the first stepping stone in your child’s journey.

Welcome to Bright Beginnings NYC!

*The Bright Beginnings NYC Staff*

## **INTRODUCTION TO BRIGHT BEGINNINGS NYC PRESCHOOL:**

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS NYC is a private pre-school that is jointly owned and operated through a parent-teacher partnership. We follow a play-based, creative learning curriculum for children of age two (2) through (4) that focuses on the five primary developmental domains that must be addressed in early childhood, and that shape nearly every aspect of a child's life. Specifically, our program addresses the cognitive, emotional, social, adaptive and physical development of our students through carefully selected activities and tasks that foster academics and physical skills, as well as social and emotional growth.

We appreciate the diversity of our families and celebrate each child's unique qualities. As such, we are committed to working with each child's parents to provide our students with the necessary foundation to transition into, and excel in, kindergarten, grade school and beyond.

## **OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**

- ✓ To provide a warm, supportive environment for children where they receive the nurturing and positive reinforcement they need to develop to their full potential;
- ✓ To provide opportunities for being with other children in a setting conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships;
- ✓ To provide appropriate and meaningful play experiences that contribute to the developmental needs, interests and abilities of the child;
- ✓ To build important foundations for future academic skills such as reading, math and languages, recognizing that each child comes to learning with distinct interests and abilities.

## **PROGRAMS OFFERED:**

The Bright Beginnings NYC school year is split into three (3) trimesters and one summer session, as follows:

- Fall trimester: September, October, November
- Winter trimester: December, January, February
- Spring trimester: March, April, May
- Summer Session: June, July, August

Each trimester, as well as during the summer session, we offer a full time program, and a part-time morning or afternoon program, based on availability and state imposed student-teacher ratios, as follows:

- Full Time (M, T, W, Th, F, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm)
- Part Time (M, T, W, Th, F)

- Morning session (8:30 am – 12:00 pm)
- Afternoon session (1:30 pm – 5:30 pm)

### **CURRICULUM:**

Our curriculum is designed to give children the opportunity to explore a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities within a warm and supportive environment. Through a creative play-based program, children are provided with a variety of materials and activities that promote independent learning and group interactive learning, and foster:

- Language development
- Creative art development
- Math, science and reading foundations
- Sensory awareness through music and movement
- Manipulative exploration and coordination skills
- Fine and gross motor skills development
- Outdoor experiences and team playing

In order to maintain children’s natural curiosity and hone their learning ability, teachers provide alternating activities, including arts and crafts, role-based play, language stimulation, and movement activities that use different materials and involve progressively challenging scenarios, on a daily basis. By working independently, as well as within a group, children develop self-confidence, self-esteem, respect, independence, curiosity, critical thinking and an appreciation for others.

### **OUR TEAM:**

Our Administrative Team consists of a dedicated Administrative Director (Daniela Levarda), a Managing Director (Joseph Ben-Moshe), a Teacher Director and Curriculum Coordinator (Karen Hui), an Assistant Teacher Director (Maria Espinal), and our assistant teaching staff.

We take great pride in the special qualities, experience and talents of our teachers. They have a rich and extensive educational background and work experience in the field of Early Childhood Education, and are known for their personal qualities of warmth, empathy and the ability to relate positively to others. For each of our teachers, we have obtained proof of NYS accreditation and certification, have meticulously checked references, and have performed thorough background checks. Our teachers are also required to complete yearly training courses, have passed the required New York City Department of Health (“DOH”) food handling courses, receive yearly training in Child Abuse/Maltreatment Identification and Prevention, and are CPR and First Aid certified. All of our staff has been fingerprinted and vetted by the State Central Registry.

## **FAMILIES:**

### **Parent Involvement:**

We welcome and encourage parental involvement in a variety of ways. Parents are invited and encouraged to call the school anytime with any questions or concerns they may have. While we also invite parents to plan a visit to the school anytime, we ask that parents are mindful of the children's schedules and conduct their visits at appropriately scheduled times, so as not to interfere with the children's learning process, nap time, or other curricular activities.

Families are encouraged to participate in the learning process by discussing and expanding on their children's preschool experience at home. Parent involvement can also extend to volunteering to collect materials for children's projects, donating books or instructional toys, and assisting with special projects.

### **Communication:**

We pride ourselves on open communication, and also recognize that your input, as parents, is vital to our ability to provide a learning environment that addresses the children's specific needs. We ask that you share information with us that may be affecting your child's experience in school, so that we can understand and address any exigent circumstances. Examples include health issues or a change at home, such as the passing of a family member, a family visit or a new sibling. The information you choose to share with us about your family is kept confidential.

Since drop-off and pick-up times are necessarily brief and busy times for children, parents and teachers alike, we encourage you to set up a personal conference time with the classroom teachers, and to help us keep the communication channels open.

### **Family Information:**

Occasionally, parents request contact information of other families to use for invitations or play dates. Your name, address, phone number or e-mail may be given to another parent. You are given the option to decline the sharing of this information in your Admission Agreement.

### **Parent and Child Identification:**

Upon enrollment, verification of identity is required for at least one parent and the child. For identity of a parent or court-appointed legal guardian, one of the following items is required:

- a. Driver's License (or government ID card)
- b. Current Passport or Permanent Resident Card

For identity of a child, one of the following items is required:

- a. Official or Certified Copy of Birth Certificate



b. Current Passport or Permanent Resident Card

A child may not start without verification of identification from at least one parent. If none of the child's documents are available by the start date, the child may start and enrollment will be considered "provisional" for a period of 90 days. If after 90 days we have not received verification of the child's identity, the child will be immediately withdrawn. Please note that a hospital "Record of Birth" is not an acceptable means of identification for the child.

**Release of a Child:**

We maintain a strict policy regarding the individuals to whom we will release a child. Enrollment forms require a parent to specify individuals to whom the child may be released. Advance authorization is required for a child to be released to an individual other than those already listed. It is recommended that parents name everyone who might pick-up their child when enrolling, and update this information regularly. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should a change be made over the telephone. When notified by telephone, we may request that certain family information be confirmed for verification. The person picking up the child will be required to present identification when arriving at school.

Should a person other than the child's parent(s) or those indicated on the application arrive to pick-up the child, a parent and/or the first available person on the emergency contact list will be notified and the child will not be released until proper authorization is received. Should an unauthorized person become confrontational or uncooperative with our staff, we will immediately notify the police. We will not release a child to any parent, relative or other authorized adult who appears to our staff to be impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol. In the event this situation occurs, a telephone call will be made to the parent, emergency contact person and/or police.

**Custody, Court Orders and Changes of Family Status:**

Bright Beginnings NYC encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's care and education. In providing care for a child, continuing and meaningful contact with both parents is required. Therefore, the school will not prohibit parents from accessing records, attending activities or participating in conferences pertaining to their child unless otherwise required by court order or law. The school denies a parent access to their child only if there is a legal document which addresses that denial. In these circumstances, we require (1) a certified copy of the current court order which mandates the rights or restraints, (2) a letter from the custodial parent stating that the non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up the child, and (3) a photo of the non-custodial parent to help us with identification. We cannot accept information regarding the validity of orders over the phone; only written information will be accepted.

Visitation schedules and parenting plans are agreements made between parents and are not binding to the school. The school will release a child to either parent in accordance with school policy unless otherwise directed by a valid court order. Visitation with the non-custodial parent will not be permitted to take place at school.

The school discourages parents from involving school staff in disputes over custody, visitation schedules, child support and other related issues. Staff members must stay focused on providing children with the highest level of instruction and care. To do so, they must maintain good relationships with both parents and should not be asked to support one parent over another. Staff will not testify or otherwise participate in a custody dispute in their capacities as school employees unless served with a subpoena. Often, child records can provide the same information as the testimony of a staff member, and parents have access to child records by law. Parents are encouraged to use records rather than staff testimony in resolving these types of disputes.

### **Parent Code of Conduct:**

We expect parents to observe a certain standard of conduct. The following items are not acceptable in the preschool:

- Physical or verbal punishment of their children
- Physical or verbal punishment of other children
- Threatening, harassing or otherwise disrespecting staff, other parents or other children
- Swearing/cursing or threatening/obscene gestures
- Quarreling with other parents or staff
- Making negative or disparaging comments regarding the school to staff, parents or anyone other than Administration (including outside of school)
- Not following policies designated to protect the safety and security of everyone at the School

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate withdrawal of the child from Bright Beginnings NYC.

### **Dropping Your Child Off At School:**

An adult must accompany the children into the welcome area of the preschool, where a member of the teaching staff will greet them and escort the children into the classroom. The person who drops-off the child/children must sign the child/children in every day with a complete (full legal) signature and time of arrival. That person should also share with the teachers information on any changes in daily routine that may affect the child/children's experience in school. If such information requires a lengthy conversation, we encourage you to set up a personal conference with the classroom teachers, so as not to interfere with the teachers' ability to meet and greet other students during drop-off times.

Once your child is greeted by the teachers and escorted into the classroom, we ask that parents take their leave promptly, so as not to interfere with classroom activities. Please be mindful that extended goodbyes may prolong children's separation anxiety, and will impede the children from immersing themselves in classroom activities.

### **Picking Your Child Up From School:**

You are responsible for having your child picked up at the appropriate time at which his/her school program ends. If you are going to be late, please give us a courtesy call. If your child is picked up late, you will be charged \$1/minute following the end of your child's designated program. For instance, for the morning program, if your child remains at school past 12:00 PM, you will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 12:01 PM. For the full time program, if your child remains at school past 5:30 PM, you will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 5:31 PM.

If your child is left at school longer than 30 minutes past the scheduled closing time without contact to the school and the school has exhausted all emergency options from your emergency contact list, then the New York City Police Department will be contacted. At that time your child will be the responsibility of the NYC Police Department. You will still be responsible for late fees incurred.

Children will only be released to adults (18 and older) previously authorized. Picture identification is required for anyone not recognized by our staff. Parents or other authorized adults must pick-up their children by entering the building through the front door and waiting by the front desk while a teacher brings their child out of the classroom and hands him or her off to the person picking up the child. That person must then sign the child out in the classroom sign-in/out binder. A full legal signature and time of departure is required to sign your child out each day.

We take the safety of all children in our classroom very seriously. While children are in the care of our staff, they are carefully supervised according to rigidly enforced safety rules and standards. It is important for parents to follow and enforce the same safety rules when picking up their children. Therefore, we ask that when picking up their children, parents (or other authorized adults) supervise their children once the teacher hands them over to the adult doing the pick-up. Please do not let your children run back and forth to the classroom, as it would interfere with remaining students' activities. While we acknowledge and encourage the fact that our parents might enjoy socializing together, we ask that once a teacher hands off your child, you leave the front area at your earliest opportunity, so that other parents will have sufficient room to pick up their children, and any commotion will not interfere with remaining students' activities.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

If you have any concerns regarding school policies or the care your child is receiving, you are encouraged to speak to the appropriate person. If the concern is regarding a teacher, the classroom or your child, you should first initiate a conversation with that teacher, or the Teacher Director. Many times this direct approach will result in a satisfactory outcome not requiring any further discussion. If you feel that something merits the attention of the Administration, you should ask for a meeting with the Administrative Director or the Managing Director. Any concern with financial issues may be discussed with the Administrative Director or the

Managing Director, as well. Please do not hesitate to express any concern you may have. It is our goal to make sure your child's experience at Bright Beginnings NYC not only meets, but exceeds your expectations.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE**

### **Licensing and Health Rules:**

We are licensed by the DOH, and must abide by all rules and regulations outlined by the DOH. If you have a question or comment regarding these guidelines, please see the Administrative Director.

### **Health Assessments:**

The Application requires that each child have a medical and dental check-up within 30 days prior to admission. The application also requires that a copy of the child's immunization card and health insurance information be furnished. Parents are required to update their child's immunization information regularly by bringing in the documentation filled out by the child's physician. Similarly, all Bright Beginnings NYC students are required to have yearly check-ups, and parents are required to update their child's medical information as the check-ups occur.

### **Allergies:**

If your child has severe allergies that require monitoring and intervention in case of an allergic reaction, please be sure to complete the *Food Allergy Action Plan* forms and training required therein. The allergy information will be attached to all required medication(s) and copies made for your child's teachers and file. If there are additional items your child is allergic to, we will work with you in trying to prevent your child from coming into contact with the item(s). Despite our best efforts, we cannot guarantee that other parents or children will be as conscientious as we are and, therefore, cannot guarantee your child will not come into contact with an item that may affect him or her.

### **No Smoking:**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the school, or in front of the school.

### **Administration of Medicine:**

The Bright Beginnings NYC staff does not administer medicine, except in the case of an emergency.

### **Sunscreen:**

Children will be taken outside for playtime daily, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for applying sunscreen to their child prior to arrival at school.

### **Developmental Needs and Special Services:**

We do our best to work with any families who have a child with special needs. Please consult with the Administrative Director prior to enrollment if your child has physical, mental and/or emotional special needs. We will make every attempt to integrate any child with special needs into our program. Despite all efforts, however, there may be times when participation in our programs will not be in the best interest of your child.

We recognize that some children may require special one-on-one assistance during the day. If you wish to have an occupational, physical or speech therapist and/or behavior coach work with your child, at your own expense, we will work with you to formulate a plan that is in the best interest of your child. We make decisions on whether or not to allow these arrangements on a case-by-case basis. We allow only a limited number of these individuals in our classroom at any one time. They will be required to complete a tuberculosis test each year, and must undergo an SCR background check as required by New York State law.

These situations take up a significant amount of our time to assist with coordination, scheduling, paperwork, etc., and invariably affect the entire classroom. We are dedicated to helping children achieve their full potential. However, if we determine a situation is beyond our capacity to assist, or is detrimental to the classroom, we will unfortunately have to require the parents to make other arrangements and withdraw the child.

### **Basic First Aid:**

In the course of normal supervised play, children occasionally get injured. In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. Any cuts will be cleaned with soap and water; ice will be applied to any bruises, bites or other injuries. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented onto a Child Incident Report and provided to parents when the child is picked-up at the end of the day.

### **Emergency Medical Care:**

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911. Our staff has been trained in Pediatric and Adult First Aid and CPR, and will administer it as appropriate. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency contacts will be notified.

In case of injury or accident in which an ambulance is not needed but immediate professional care is required, the staff will contact the parents. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency contacts will be notified. Our staff cannot transport children to a hospital or doctor's office. Injured children shall be transported for medical aid by parents or by calling 911 for an ambulance.

### **Illnesses and Accidents:**

Parents must make other arrangements for the care of their children when they show symptoms of any deviation from normal health. Children should not be sent to school if they are vomiting, have a fever, diarrhea, eye discharge or pink eye, excessive coughing, oozing sores, head lice, an undiagnosed rash or are obviously not well. If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please contact us.

When a child becomes ill or injured at school, the staff's first priority is to meet the child's physical needs, as well as to protect the other children from contacting what may be a contagious condition. In case of illness, we will take the child's temperature, as well as perform an overall visual health assessment. A phone call to parents will be made when the school deems it necessary. If parents are requested by the school to pick up their sick child, they must do so within one hour and the child may not return to school for 24 hours following the time sent home and until the symptoms subside.

Children will not be permitted at our school with any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher, or if they also have one or more of the following: diarrhea, earache, show signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat or rash.
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea – three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period.
- Draining rash or undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24-hour period.
- Eye discharge or Pink Eye; children can be readmitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection, or 24 hours on an antibiotic treatment.
- Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
- Open oozing sores and scabs, unless properly covered and treated for 24 hours with an antibiotic.
- Head Lice – until treatment is effective and a follow-up evaluation has been made by our staff.

Parents are advised to make alternate plans for child care in the event their child becomes ill and is not able to attend school. If a sick child is not picked up within one hour of being called, we may call your alternate contact to request pick up.

### **Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect:**

Our staff receives yearly training in Child Abuse/Maltreatment Identification and Prevention, designed in aiding them to recognize potential child abuse. All personnel working in a licensed childcare facility are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. There is a criminal penalty for violation of this reporting law.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

We have emergency procedures in-place and practice regular fire drills with staff and children. In case of fire, there is a central fire alarm that may be activated in the classroom. Exit routes are posted with procedures by classroom exit doors. Classroom(s) have two (2) means of egress, and there are fire extinguishers by the exit doors. The classroom is equipped with both smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Children are trained during regularly conducted fire drills to exit the building in a calm, orderly fashion. Depending on the location of the emergency, as well as emergency vehicles or hazardous conditions, the teachers will lead the children to Fulton Street where they will line up while the best immediate course of action is determined.

In case of an emergency, our staff will be acting in the best interests of the children. Children's safety is always our first priority. If our property is deemed unsafe immediately following such an event, you will be contacted at the first opportunity and given information and instructions.

### **Discipline:**

We follow the guidelines for developmentally-appropriate practices set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)<sup>1</sup>. These guidelines recognize that each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style and family background. While some behaviors are typical for a specific “age and stage,” we recognize that children learn appropriate social behaviors at different rates. With that in mind, we observe and make individual behavior plans when necessary.

We believe in “positive discipline”, which focuses on positive behavior, rather than negative. We may need to redirect children and speak with them about appropriate behavior. When necessary,

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<sup>1</sup> The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a large nonprofit association in the United States representing early childhood education teachers, para-educators, center directors, trainers, college educators, families of young children, policy makers, and advocates. NAEYC focuses on improving the well-being of young children, with particular emphasis on the quality of educational and developmental services for children from birth through age 8.

we speak to a child with a firm but caring voice. At times, it may be necessary to remove the child from the rest of the group. If a behavior persists, we will contact the child's parents and ask them to come in for a conference.

The following techniques are used according to age-appropriateness and the individual needs of each child:

- Distraction and redirection: Suggest appropriate behavior (we never use time-outs).
- A quiet, private talk: Showing respect for children's feelings, getting down on the child's level and looking at the child directly in the eye and giving him or her our undivided attention.
- Praise: "Catch the child being good"; praising the child who is behaving appropriately.
- Indirect praise: Praise the child who is next to the child who may be having trouble.
- By using examples: When asking the children to use calm voices, use a whisper voice.
- Arrange contingencies (if/ then statements): For example, we might say, "If you finish putting the blocks away, then we can..."
- Redirection to another area: Redirection is done in a positive manner. Teachers give a forewarning of behavior that needs to be corrected. When the child is not following direction and is demonstrating inappropriate behavior, teachers follow through with redirection to another area in the classroom. If the child persists with inappropriate behavior, the teacher will shadow the child until the child is ready to resume play in an appropriate manner. Once the child is ready to resume play, the teacher will explain to the child why he or she was removed from the area and redirected to another area. The teacher will discuss with the child how to make better choices.
- Staff guide children in learning and expressing socially appropriate behavior that is individual to that child.
- Children are given a 5-minute notice when transitioning from one activity to another, so they will know what to expect.
- Question vs. Telling: Teachers may ask the child a question such as, "What kind of voice should we use inside?" or "How do we treat our classmates?" Thus, children will be able to take initiative in governing their own actions, and their answers will be positively reinforced.

### **Biting:**

Biting can be a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between 13 and 24 months of age.

We take biting seriously. Children bite for a variety of reasons, including: simple sensory exploration, panic, seeking to be noticed, inability to express themselves verbally, special discomfort, teething or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results (the desired toy, excitement, attention, etc). Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child's awareness at these ages, so the "cause/effect" relationship is not



internalized. We work with the parents in discussing how they can assist in altering the behavior. Our teachers plan activities and supervise children carefully in order for biting not to happen. Despite our best efforts, it is sometimes only a matter of seconds for a child to grab a toy and the offended child to lash out in frustration before an adult can intervene. If this behavior develops into a repeated pattern that endangers other children, we must take actions to protect the other children in our care. Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm “No thank-you.” The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water (the bite may be minor, with no apparent mark). If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The biter is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that he or she can understand, and then redirected and shadowed.
- A written Child Incident Report is given to the parents of all children involved when they are picked-up that day. We will not share with parents the name of the other child involved.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families.

After three incidents have been documented or observed, any subsequent incident will require corrective action, and may involve either temporary or permanent withdrawal of the child. If the child has had three incidents, but six months or more have passed without any occurrence, we will consider any further incident as a relapse and will allow one further occurrence before requiring corrective action.

### **Aggressive Behavior in Children:**

We are committed to making our environment as safe and as protective as possible for your child. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others and non-aggressive problem-solving between children. Behaviors such as biting, tantrums, sharing conflicts or physical aggression may occasionally occur in young children. We closely supervise children in our care at all times. Despite our best efforts, undesirable behavior can sometimes occur before an adult can intervene. We take aggressive behavior seriously. This behavior includes, but is not limited to: biting, hitting, pushing, tantrums, sharing conflicts, other physical aggression or in any way provoking an altercation. In older children, this may include verbal abuse or inappropriate language.

Our goal is to teach your child to participate, cooperate and be a responsible member of the group. In the event that a child’s behavior places the child or other children in danger or interferes with the focus of the classroom, our policy includes but is not limited to the following:

- When necessary, we speak to a child with a firm but caring voice. At times, it may be necessary to remove the child from the rest of the group.
- If a child manifests behavioral problems that prevent him or her from remaining in the classroom for the safety of the other children or the child's own welfare, the child must be picked-up within one hour of the phone call notifying the parent of the need to pick up their child.
- We may ask you to pick up your child and keep him or her home for a period of one day to one week.
- Staff will document a record of behavior.
- Staff will inform and discuss with parents any child's behavior which becomes persistently disruptive and is not alleviated by individualized guidance techniques.
- If the behavior persists, the Administrative Director or the Teacher Director will notify the parent that the teacher has requested intervention.
- The Teacher Director will speak with the parents and discuss possible courses of action.

We want your child to grow into a successful and responsible individual and we look forward to working with you, should any problem arise. If parents are unable to provide support, or even with the parent's support, the plan fails to improve the behavior, we reserve the right to withdraw the child.

If at any time we feel the behavior is a danger to other children or that the child needs more dedicated supervision, we will require the immediate withdrawal of the child until he or she is able to manage the aggressive behavior. In the event that one child consistently harasses another, either verbally or physically, we will contact the parents of both children. It is our policy in any written or verbal report about an incident involving more than one child that we will not share the name of the other child involved with parents.

## **ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL AGREEMENT**

### **Initial Registration:**

An Initial Registration Fee is due upon acceptance into the program, which is applied toward the tuition. This fee is listed on the current Admission Agreement and is nonrefundable.

### **Waiting List:**

If your child has fulfilled the criteria for admission into a Bright Beginnings NYC program, but we do not have any available spots, you may fill out and sign a Waiting List Agreement, and submit it to us together with a non-refundable Waiting List Fee for your child to be placed onto our waiting list. The Waiting List Fee will be applied to the Initial Family Registration Fee upon your enrollment.<sup>2</sup> When you place your child on our Waiting List, you will begin to receive our

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<sup>2</sup> The Waiting List Fee is waived for residents of South Bridge Towers upon proof of residency for the child and his/her legal guardian.

monthly newsletter and other emails. Enrollment priority is given to currently enrolled families seeking placement for another child. You may email Bright Beginnings NYC anytime to check the current waiting list status.

### **Financial Agreement:**

Monthly tuition is due, in advance, on or before the first of each month corresponding to your chosen payment program. Please refer to the current Admission Agreement for your child's tuition amount. Tuition rates are subject to revision at any time with a minimum 30 days' notice.

Tuition is due once a start date is confirmed. If the start date is changed, tuition will be charged from the original agreed start date and will not be refunded. If the child does not attend, all monies already paid will be forfeited in full.

Any family account delinquent by more than one week will result in the child's immediate withdrawal. Re-enrollment is subject to availability after the outstanding balance and an Initial Registration Fee are paid.

### **Absentee Policy:**

Full payment of tuition is required every month, whether or not the child attends school the full month. There is no absentee credit when school is missed because of holidays, vacations, illness or for any other reason. Scheduled days may not be switched to non-scheduled days, due to the school's staffing ratios and schedules. Days may be added for an additional fee, subject to availability. When a child is absent for two weeks and the month's tuition has not been paid, the child will automatically be withdrawn from the school. Re-enrollment is subject to availability after the outstanding balance and an Initial Registration Fee are paid.

### **Withdrawal Policy:**

You must give a minimum thirty days' (30 calendar days) written notice if you intend to withdraw your child from school (a Child Withdrawal Notice form is available online and in the office). Once notice of withdrawal is given, any remaining final balance is due and must be paid within three days of submitting the withdrawal notice.

### **Schedule Change Policy:**

Schedule changes are not guaranteed and are subject to availability. If you wish to change your child's schedule, you must give two weeks' written notice to the office (a Child Schedule Change Request form is available online and in the office).

Scheduled days may not be switched to non-scheduled days, due to the school's staffing ratios and schedules. Days may be added for an additional fee, subject to availability.

### **School-Initiated Withdrawal Policy:**

The school reserves the right to have any child removed from the school at any time without previous notice or a corrective program being required.

### **Late Pick-Ups:**

A courtesy call is appreciated if you know you will be late. Late fees will be immediately billed to your account. Exact time is determined by the clock in the office.

**Morning Program:** Program hours are 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM. You may not drop off your child prior to program start hours. If your child remains at school past 12:00 PM, you will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 12:01 PM.

**Afternoon Program:** Program hours are 1:30 PM-5:30 PM. You may not drop off your child prior to program start hours. If your child remains at school past 5:30 PM, you will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 5:31 PM.

**Full Time Program:** Program hours are 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM. You may not drop off your child prior to program start hours. If your child remains at school past 5:30 PM, you will be charged \$1 per minute, starting at 5:31 PM.

Note: If your child is left at school longer than 30 minutes past the scheduled closing time without contact to the school and the school has exhausted all emergency options from your emergency contact list, then the New York City Police Department will be contacted. At that time your child will be the responsibility of the NYC Police Department. You will still be responsible for late fees incurred.

### **Emergency Care Option for Part-Time Students:**

At Bright Beginnings NYC, we recognize that parents have to juggle busy schedules, and that sometimes personal emergencies occur. If your child is enrolled in Bright Beginnings NYC on a part time basis, you will have the option of leaving him/her in the program for a full day in the event of an emergency, provided that you are current on your tuition. You may exercise this option no more than three times a semester, based on availability. You must notify the school as soon as possible that you intend to exercise you emergency care option by submitting a completed Notice of Intent to Exercise Emergency Care Option form, and you must pack a lunch and snack for your child for that day.

### **Returned Payment Policy:**

A \$25 fee will be charged for any returned check. Any time there is a returned payment, a money order or cashier's check will be required as a replacement.

### **Sibling Policy:**

Bright Beginnings NYC offers a 3% sibling discount off the second tuition payable by parents who have more than one child attending the Bright Beginnings NYC program simultaneously. Bright Beginnings NYC also gives preference for admission to students whose sibling(s) attended Bright Beginnings NYC.

### **School Closures:**

The school will observe national holidays, as listed on the current school calendar. The school will also be closed for certain mandatory staff training days, as listed on the current school calendar. Full tuition is due for your child for all months, including those with closures. There is no tuition credit for any program on days when the school is closed.

The school reserves the right to close with or without notice in extreme weather or any other extraordinary circumstances when necessary. Every attempt will be made to notify parents by email and social media as soon as possible when an unexpected closure is required. Should the school, at its sole discretion, determine that, for safety, the school will close earlier than usual, a parent will be contacted and the parent and/or emergency release contact should make every effort to pick up the child as soon as possible.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

### **Security:**

We take security concerns very seriously. We constantly monitor situations that would affect the safety and security of our children and make plans accordingly. We will keep parents up-to-date when specific situations arise. We have evacuation and emergency response plans in place to best protect the children and staff in our program. We conduct regular fire drills.

Our main front entry door is locked to prevent unauthorized access onto the premises. For security reasons we ask that you not hold the door open for other individuals. Visitors must use the intercom, and wait to be admitted by a staff member.

### **Playground Activities and Safety:**

Children learn through active use of their senses, and many great opportunities for learning occur outside. The playground is an educational environment and an extension of the classroom, where children learn about their physical capabilities and the world around them. Social skills are also developed by organized and informal play.

Children will be reminded to use equipment as it is intended to be used, and will never be allowed to engage in hazardous play of any kind. Redirection, distraction, praise and other techniques of positive discipline will be used when necessary to discourage negative behavior.

### **Formal Assessments:**

Formal Assessments are conducted twice per year. These assessments help the parents to understand not only where their child is in his or her development, but also what areas(s) can be strengthened. These assessments guide our teachers in developing our curriculum so that it matches the needs of the children in the class. Teachers' observations of a child reflect the child's growth and needs, both as an individual and as part of a group. This plays an important role in the day-to-day plans of the class.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice per year, immediately following the completion of assessments. These conferences are not mandatory, but highly encouraged. Conferences may be requested at other times by either parents or teachers, as the need arises.

### **Transition to a New Program or Classroom:**

As we maintain an open enrollment policy throughout the year, children may enter the program at any time when space is available. Parents are encouraged to meet the teachers prior to their children's entry into Bright Beginnings NYC and to ask any questions they may have regarding our program(s).

### **Toilet-Training:**

Our teachers work with parents to assist in toilet-training. When parents feel their child is ready for toilet-training, we ask that parents begin this teaching at home. We will follow through and encourage the child while in our care (the child must be showing signs of readiness). Teachers will remain in communication with parents throughout the process to ensure consistency from home to school. The child must be kept in underwear throughout the school day unless the child needs to wear a diaper during naptime. Switching back-and-forth between diapers and underwear can be confusing and may delay the process; therefore, we do not permit pull-ups.

Parents need to supply underwear and multiple changes of clothing each day during toilet training. We ask that the child be dressed in "child friendly" clothing. The best items for children to wear are shorts and pants with elastic waistbands. Please avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, "onesies" and overalls, as these are difficult for children to remove quickly.

### **Dress:**

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and sneakers. Daily activities include active and messy play and the children should enjoy themselves without worry about their clothes. Please

remember to send sweaters, jackets or raincoats when necessary. Rubber-soled shoes such as tennis shoes are the safest for running and climbing and provide the most traction.

The child's name should be placed on all clothes. In addition, an extra set of clothes must be kept in each child's cubby should a change be necessary. When used, the clothing will be placed into a bag and the parents will be reminded to take any soiled clothing home at pick-up that day.

### **Fundraisers:**

Fundraisers may be held during the year that are directed toward the purchase of something on the "wish list" of staff and children, or for a specific improvement or addition. Participation is optional.

### **Meals and Snacks:**

We create a homogeneous atmosphere by serving meals family-style, having teachers sit with the children during meals, and by encouraging conversation and positive mealtime etiquette. Our food service ensures that all children are served nutritious foods in appropriate amounts for their dietary needs. Sample menus for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks are available in the office. Children will be encouraged, but never forced, to try each food item.

We use the following guidelines:

- ✓ Meals are as fresh and are prepared daily just before serving
- ✓ Children receive 1% milk, in accordance with DOH guidelines
- ✓ Children are served a variety of rice (both white and brown) and breads.
- ✓ Fresh fruit is served often for both lunch and snack.
- ✓ Fresh-cut vegetables are served both separately and mixed into foods to enhance their nutritional value.
- ✓ We serve turkey, chicken, fish and red meat products.
- ✓ Snacks are balanced with appropriate amounts of fruits, liquids and starches.
- ✓ We do not serve juice or candy.

### **Children's Belongings:**

Bright Beginnings NYC cannot be responsible for the safekeeping of any personal belongings brought to the classroom, including clothing items. Clothing and any personal possessions should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

### **Naptime:**

It is a licensing requirement that children attending full-day programs be provided with an opportunity to nap or rest without disturbance from other activities. Nap mats are provided by the preschool to be used by every child during naptime. Parents are required to bring in two crib-sized sheets and a blanket every week. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and

other soft items are not allowed. Children attending part time programs are exempt from a nap requirement.

### **Language:**

Please be careful that the language you use while at the preschool is appropriate for children. Also, we ask that you use your “indoor voice” within the school. Remember, children learn by observing others, and we must strive to always set a positive example!

### **Electronic Communication:**

Our website, [www.brightbeginningsnyc.com](http://www.brightbeginningsnyc.com), offers many useful resources. You may download forms and current monthly items such as the newsletter. It also offers the ability browse our photo studio and view upcoming events.

Parents are required to provide their email addresses so that we may send regular news, updates and important messages in the event of an emergency. We also encourage you to follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/Bright Beginnings NYC Preschool](https://facebook.com/BrightBeginningsNYCPreschool)).

### **Cell Phones:**

Please do not use your cell phone while inside the school. Staff and children need your full attention as you arrive at school and when you pick-up your child at the end of the day. Children are not permitted to bring a cell phone to school.

### **Child Birthdays:**

All children’s birthdays are celebrated at school after snack time, so as to occasion minimal interference with the day’s activities and curriculum. We do not make food the focus of the birthday, instead choosing to plan activities such as dancing, games, crafts or singing. We welcome parent involvement in their child’s special day. As such, parents may bring a cake to school after snack time, but any goodie bags must be given to children upon leaving the preschool for the day.

Recognition of the child’s special day usually includes a birthday crown and the singing of “Happy Birthday”. If you wish to donate a book to the class, you may put an inscription in the front of the book and the book will be read during class time on your child’s birthday. Teachers will make sure your child feels special on his or her day.

If you are having an outside party, to prevent hurt feelings, please do not send party invitations to school unless you are inviting the entire class. To invite only a few children, please mail the invitation directly to their home or send direct emails to parents. Our office staff will be happy to provide you with home or email addresses for those families that have authorized us to share this information.



**Photography:**

Throughout the school year, children are occasionally photographed in their classroom or while at the playground. We will often post these candid photos at school. Occasionally, we may use these photographs in our newsletter and our promotional literature. We ask for general permission to use photographs of your child in the Admission Agreement signed by all families: “I hereby grant, without limitation, permission for the use of any photographs of my child in any printed or online material for the school”. You may choose to decline the publication of your child’s photograph.

**Anti-Bias/Multicultural Policy:**

Our programs teach children to challenge discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes while increasing respect and understanding for others. We incorporate culturally diverse/anti-bias philosophy in our physical surroundings through classroom materials. Our diverse families are one of our best resources. Additionally, we encourage our children to participate in culturally relevant activities. We train staff to be culturally sensitive when interacting with children and families within our program. Because we are a non-denominational institution, children will be referred to their parents if they ask a question that involves opinions on personal or religious beliefs.