

MorningStar Preschool

Parent Handbook

WELCOME TO MORNINGSTAR!

We're happy to have you as part of our school family. Our teachers are experienced early childhood educators. They participate in professional programs so they understand the needs of today's families. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher or the Director.

At MorningStar we invite children to master new skills at their own pace, to foster self confidence and independence in a warm and loving atmosphere. We offer a full day program of learning and recreation for children 2 1/2 to 5 years of age, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:45 pm. We can accept up to 15 students.

It is our goal to support children by educating the whole child -- the physical, the social, the emotional, the creative, the intellectual and the intuitional self and to take advantage of every opportunity to enable each child to realize their fullest potential.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect shall immediately report such suspicions to the Director and a report submitted to the Department of Human Resources.

If there is significant evidence that a staff member may have imposed abuse or neglect upon a child after contacting the Department of Human Resources, an internal investigation which including the Director and members of the Governing Board will ensue which may require that the employee be placed in a non-supervisory position until the investigation is completed and a position determined.

In the event of a student who is abusing another student(s), the parents will be notified and attempts will be made to resolve the problem. Notice will be given if termination is required.

ACTIVITIES AND CURRICULUM

Painting, rods, songs, blocks, playdough, puppets, manipulatives, drawing, rhymes, puzzles, drama, outings, cutting & pasting, yoga, dress up, self help exercises are a few of the activities that are generally incorporated into our weekly programs.

We have a collective curriculum and theme study as well as individual curriculum customized for each child. All activities are age appropriate.

ADMISSION

There will be a pre-admission interview with each child's parents or guardians.

The parent/guardian shall submit a statement of the child's current health status within 30 days. A new statement will be submitted annually. This statement needs to include any details requiring special care as well as immunization information.

A visit by the child prior to admission is preferred. At the time of admission, the enrolling family will provide MorningStar with the phone numbers of the child's physician and where the parent(s) and at least one other responsible adult who can normally be reached in the event of an emergency as well as written parental permission for excursions and activities outside the of the center.

A reasonable effort will be made to accommodate children with special needs and to integrate them with other students.

A non-refundable registration fee will be paid in addition to at least one week's tuition at the time of entry.

ANTIBIAS

MorningStar does not discriminate against children or show favoritism based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, disability, ability, status, behavior, culture, or beliefs. To maximize each child's potential, MorningStar may implement adaptations in teaching strategies, environment, curricula, etc. as well as advocate for the child by consulting with the family, specialists, and other community agencies.

ARRIVAL AND PICK UP TIMES

Please bring your child before 9 am (or after 11 am). The children prefer to "warm up" and play prior to Morning Circle Time. Please observe and respect these designated times to minimize class interruptions. Your child is to be picked up BEFORE 5:45 p.m. Parents of children who remain following this time are called to insure their pick up. There is a \$15 late fee if you arrive after 6 p.m. Children who are not picked up are transported to the Crisis Center.

Sign your child in and out of the school each day on the Sign In Sheet. Messages and other communications may be left for you in your family's designated file in this notebook.

If your child is to go home with another adult, be sure to leave a note or telephone us detailing this information. We can only release your child to you or the designated adult(s) on your Admission Form . We cannot release your child to anyone else without your verbal permission.

CLOTHING

Please label your child's name inside jacket, boots, etc. Clothing your child can zip or button and put on him/herself is very helpful! (Most children do not tie shoes until 5 or 6 years old!) Boots, snow pants, hats, waterproof mittens and warm jackets for cold weather and snow play are a must. We go outside every day unless the weather is sub-zero.

Leave one full change of clothing in a plastic bag (including socks and underwear) in your child's cubby at all times as well as a blanket for nap time.

DAYS CLOSED and INCLEMENT WEATHER

We provide full time, year round care. Our holidays include: New Year's, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day (2 days), Christmas (2 days). MorningStar follows the Denver Public School schedule in regards to closing for hazardous snow or ice conditions. When in doubt, call the school or Director concerning closing information.

DISCIPLINE

We have a 3 Step Plan. When a child misbehaves, the teacher will briefly discuss the problem and endeavor to try to enable the child to understand the difficulty of the situation as well as why the action taken was inappropriate. If the behavior occurs a second time, a more firm approach is in order with a warning of impending Time Out if it happens again. On the third time the child is taken to Time Out with no explanations for a brief period of time. We endorse only occasional use of Time Out. Slight changes are made from time to time depending on the student's age. Please speak with the Director if you require more specific details.

EVACUATION

In the event that an emergency should arise concerning MorningStar, i.e., fire, tornado, etc., which requires leaving the building, we will gather at St Johns at 14th and Washington.

FOOD - Snacks and Lunch

We provide mid-morning and afternoon snacks daily. MorningStar is committed to providing nutritional snacks as low in additives, salt and sugar as possible. In accordance with State Guidelines each snack offers a fruit and bread product, supplemented with milk or juice. Please notify us of any special dietary restrictions, preferences or allergies.

Children are required to bring labeled lunches from home. Items in lunch may be heated in microwave. Eating utensils are provided. Lunches must comply with State Regulations regarding nutritional content.

A well balanced lunch needs to consist of the following:

- 1) Protein source: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried beans/peas, cheese or peanut butter;
- 2) 2 Vegetables, 2 fruits, OR 1 fruit and 1 vegetable;
- 3) Grain: cereal, whole grain/enriched bread product, crackers or pastas;
- 4) Dairy product.

If the meal brought from home does not appear to meet 1/3rd of the daily nutritional needs of the child, the center is obliged to supplement the meal. The parent will be billed \$5 for each meal which is so supplemented.

During lunch children are encouraged to eat their "healthy foods" before eating their treats.

GENERAL CARE

All children are under direct teacher supervision at all times. Students are not allowed in any classroom or outside without a teacher present to supervise. Children are dressed appropriately for the weather before going outside. A child's wet or soiled clothing is changed promptly.

GRIEVANCES

In the event that you have a grievance with some aspect of MorningStar which has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may present your complaint to the Governing Board. The Local Chair of this Board is Jeanne Richheimer. She may be reached at 303.460.7168.

ILLNESS

Please keep your child home if s/he has exhibited any of the following symptoms within 24 hours: 100 degree fever, nausea, diarrhea, unknown rash, vomiting, etc. Notify the staff if your child has a contagious sickness.

If your child becomes ill during the day, s/he will rest while parent(s) are contacted. In the event that we are unable to reach you, your alternate adult and/or physician will be contacted.

LOST CHILD

Should a child become lost while in our care, the procedures for recovery are as follows:

- 1) The parents will be immediately informed,
- 2) The local law enforcement agency will be notified, and
- 3) Teachers will organize a search party to locate and retrieve the child.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCIES

The State requires that we maintain on file an updated medical form and immunization record for each child.

Simple injuries and emergencies will be communicated to the parent by verbal communication or written message. If involved in a major accident, first aid shall be provided while parents are contacted. If it is decided that the injury is of an emergency nature, paramedics will be called and an Injury Report submitted to Social Services. The child's physician may be contacted.

Over the counter medications (i.e. pain killers), prescription medications, or supplements can be administered to your child by our staff **ONLY IF** we have **written authorization by your physician**. They are stored in a Tupperware container in the very back of the first shelf of the refrigerator.

In the event of a tornado when Civil Defense alarms are activated, all will exit to the basement in a calm and orderly manner. One staff member will monitor the tornado status on the radio. There is easy evacuation from the building in the event of fire or other emergencies.

NEWSLETTERS

Please read the newsletters carefully! They contain important information regarding activities, times and dates, materials needed, and other items that directly affect you and your child's care!

PARENT PARTICIPATION

MorningStar welcomes visits by parents and family. Provision shall be made for an annual conference with parents so that both the staff and parents may be informed of the child's behavior, progress, social, cognitive, and physical needs. Additional meetings may be scheduled on an as-need

basis.

Parent support is required during field trips, fundraising efforts, Work Days, weekly laundry duty rotation, and other special events. A donation of \$15 is accepted if you are unable to help during Work Days. Donations are also appreciated in lieu of fundraising if desired. Your active participation enables us to keep our tuition rates at a reasonable level!

Mutual respect and communication between teachers and parents is vital in developing a healthy continuity between home and school. It is helpful to know what is happening at home so that we may be more sensitive to your child's needs.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND TOYS

Your child may bring soft toys. We try to protect items brought from home but we cannot be responsible for damages. We suggest you do not bring real valuable or "special" things. Toys that represent media characters, action heroes, or toy weapons are not acceptable at MorningStar! Cubbies should be cleaned out and art work taken home at least once a week. All belongings from home are kept in your child's cubby.

SCHEDULE

We have independent play from opening until 9 a.m. at which time we begin our Morning Class Time. During Circle Time, we share rhymes, games, news, yoga, songs, movement activities, fingerplays, theme discussions, weather/seasonal observations, designate the Helping Children for the Day and close with a quiet exercise.

Following Morning Circle is StoryTime, morning snack, art activity and outside play time. Lunch is "noonish" with everyone bringing their lunches from home.

Nap preparations commence at 1:30 pm and the children generally sleep or rest until 3:30 with afternoon snack served at 4:00 pm. Again there is free play inside or out depending upon the weather until parents arrive prior to 6 pm.

REFUNDS

In the event of an overpayment, the credit balance will be dispersed to the parent who remitted the amount at the earliest convenience. When there is an emergency termination or other unavoidable circumstance, the parent concerned will mediate with the Director the terms of the situation. A refund may or may not be awarded sometimes depending on how soon the position can be filled and other mitigating circumstances.

TERMINATION

In the event of excessive problems with a student that is impacting program effectiveness, the well being of the student and/or staff, or other concerns; a parent conference will be arranged in order that all issues may be discussed, possible alternate strategies formulated and plans for implementation reviewed. All options shall be exhausted prior to consideration of termination. Adequate notice shall be given in the event that all courses of action fail.

TUITION AND FEES

Your tuition is due the first day of each week for the entire week. \$10 is charged for all late tuitions. All checks and money orders may be made payable to MorningStar and placed in the front pocket of the Sign In Notebook. No cash is accepted. Each child's weekly tuition must be paid even if the child is absent due to illness, vacations, or holidays. Discounts are available for households enrolling more than one child. There is a \$10 service charge on all returned checks. An annual registration fee shall be paid each year.

Our current rates are determined on a sliding scale based on parent income.

WITHDRAWALS

If it should be necessary for your child to be withdrawn, we appreciate two weeks notice. Thank you.

ETC.

Cupcakes, cookies or other special snacks are acceptable on your child's birthday. We will be planning some special games or activities for this special day.

We need written permission and instructions from parents regarding application of sunscreen for your child.

If you have a concern about our child care or would like to receive information as to how to report suspected child abuse, check with our Director.

Toilet training is accomplished in collaboration with the parents.

Diapering, field trip procedures, and other inspection reports are available upon request.

All visitors must receive prior approval by the Director.

SPONSOR

MorningStar is a non-profit program sponsored by Ananda Marga of Denver, a local branch of the international yoga and service organization.

Written Acknowledgement and Consent Form

All Parents: Please sign this section and return to the Director within 3 days. Thank!

I/We, _____, have reviewed all policies concerning operations at MorningStar PreSchool contained in the Parent Handbook and agree to comply with all procedures addressed to therein.

Signature

Date

2005