



Start Smart LEARNING CENTER

Program Handbook

Start Smart Learning Center
865 Church Street Gallitzin, PA 16641
(814) 884-0119

Start Smart Learning Center- Sankertown
421 Maple Ave
Cresson PA 16630

www.startsmartlearningcenter.com
startsmartgallitzin@outlook.com

A Message From The Owner

A little about me: I am from Rochester, PA, a small town just north of Pittsburgh. After college, I moved to Gallitzin, where I have been ever since. I graduated from Mount Aloysius College in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood/Elementary Education and English. Since then, I have worked in a field with children and adults with Developmental Disabilities.

As a mother of four children, as well as an educator, I am acutely aware of parents needs and wants, including a caring, loving, nurturing environment for their children, especially when it comes to a daycare facility. Children have been a part of my entire life. I have had the opportunity to work professionally and through volunteer missions with different ethnicities of children, children with multiple types of disabilities and professionals in the field of education and outreach.

I am eagerly anticipating the challenge of being an intricate part of your children's future. I love to see the look on children's faces as they learn something new and accomplish goals in which they have set for themselves. I am also looking forward to working collaboratively with you, to meet each one of your children's needs and developing a close-knit relationship in helping to meet goals and outcomes together.

I look forward to working with you and your family and developing a positive relationship. I know and understand that trust is of the utmost importance and I have full conviction that we will develop a relationship which develops an open door to communication.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time, at the contact information provided below. I thank you for entrusting me, and Start Smart Learning Center, with your children and look forward to a successful start in your child's development.

Respectfully Yours,

Elizabeth Hogue

Owner of Start Smart Learning Center

Email: elizabethhogue@outlook.com or startsmartgallitzin@outlook.com

Phone: 814-884-0119

Philosophy

At Start Smart Learning Center we believe that each child is unique and holds the future in his or her hands. Start Smart Learning Center offers a high-quality childcare program for children ages 6 weeks through 6 years old as well as school aged children, which facilitates and nurtures the individual needs and abilities of each child.

Start Smart Learning Center is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance or qualifications as determined by Start Smart policy or state and federal authorities.

Mission

To provide a stable and secure learning environment which nurtures and educates infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children to develop positive social skills and values and learn about their world through age-appropriate play, projects, and activities while fostering lifelong success.

Vision

To be the recognized leader in providing the best care for infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age children. Known for our exceptional educational programs, talented teams, and community relationships, while creating a unique blend of fun and learning in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our Values

- Provide developmentally age-appropriate early childhood curriculum that sets standards for later learning.
- Recognizing and accommodating all children's individual characteristics, abilities, cultures, languages, and communities.
- Provide Developmentally-age and individual group standards that promote social, emotional, verbal, physical, and cognitive development for all children.
- Supporting families by respecting diversity and family support.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Admissions, the provisions of services and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex. Program Services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods. Any individual/client/patient/student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Start Smart Learning Center
Elizabeth Hogue
865 Church Street
Gallitzin, PA 16641

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421 Maple Ave
Cresson, PA 16630

PA Human Relations Commission
Harrisburg Regional Office
333 Market Street, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services Bureau
of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

LICENSING & KEYSTONE STARS

Start Smart Learning Center policies uphold the state mandated requirements as set by The Department of Human Services. All the policies are set forth to ensure the best possible care and protection for your child. If you feel that Start Smart Learning Center is not compliant with any of the regulations, you have the right to contact the Department of Human Services to file a complaint at 800-222-2149. DHS regulations are available onsite upon request or can be accessed online at the Department's website.

This handbook was created in collaboration with representatives from the Keystone Stars Program while utilizing *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-Of-Home Child Care*.

Caring for Our Children (CFOC) is a collection of national standards that represent the best practices, based on evidence, expertise, and experience for quality health and safety policies and practices for today's early care and education settings

Start Smart Learning Center is a new Keystone Star participant and strive for continuous quality improvement and believe in early learning! you are not familiar with the STARS program visit their website at www.pakeys.org to learn more.

Enrollment

Start Smart Learning Center is licensed to accommodate children ages 6 weeks through school age. Enrollment is open to all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex or age. All enrollments are based on a first come first serve basis. A deposit is required to hold your child's spot, which is non-refundable if you decide to not enroll.

The child must have the provided registration form completed and the health assessment completed before the first day of care. Health Assessment forms need to be updated at every well visit. Children ages 6 weeks to 2 years old need to have an updated Health Assessment form completed every 6 months. Older toddlers (age 2-3), Preschool and School Age need to be updated annually. The health assessment form can be obtained at the center.

Child Health Assessments: Child Health Assessment are to be dated no earlier than **four months** prior to enrollment. Each child will need to have a physical and have the form completed by a doctor. The form must be completed in its entirety and must have a doctor signature and a date. All shots need to be updated on the form and immunizations must be listed on the form or attached to the health assessment form. The Health Assessment form must be returned, as the form needs to be in your child's record, or your child(ren) will be unable to attend daycare until the forms are completed returned.

Annual Registration Fee: There is an annual registration fee of \$30 for all new and current enrollments. The registration fee will be invoiced the first week of care and will be invoiced on an annual basis in August.

The following forms, at minimum, will be collected prior to enrollment:

- Child Health Assessment
- Parental Agreement
- Emergency Contact/Parental Consent
- Annual Registration fee of \$30

- 1st and last weeks payment
- Handbook Acknowledgement Forms

Please note that some forms need to be updated every 6 months. At the time the forms are due, you will receive the forms at the center. They must be completed and returned no later than the due date listed, or your child may not be able to attend the center.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Start Smart Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30AM to 5:30PM. Pick up after our normal close of business will result in a late pick up fee-\$1 per minute from 5:31PM to 5:40PM then \$25 per hour beginning at 5:40PM.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Preschool Program is offered Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM. Children must attend a minimum of three days. We will run the program based off the schedule of Penn Cambria School District. If Penn Cambria does not have school, has a scheduled day off, etc. there will be no preschool that day. This schedule will be provided to preschool only parents on an annual basis. Childcare services will be available on these days for those currently enrolled in this service. During Penn Cambria's scheduled Christmas Break there will be no preschool only program, payment is waived during this time, this exception applies only to families enrolled in preschool only program.

CLOSED HOLIDAYS

Start Smart Learning Center observes the following holidays and will be closed on:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Black Friday
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve the Center will close early at 3:00PM

NOTE: If a holiday falls on a Saturday the daycare will be closed the Friday before; if a holiday falls on a Sunday the facility will be closed the following Monday. Start Smart Learning Center reserves the right to change or amend these guidelines at any time and if a change occurs all families will be given a minimum two week notice to the change.

Each holiday/closed day is included in the weekly rate, and full payment is still required for the week of the holiday.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

During inclement weather, the facility will remain open unless a State of Emergency has been declared. Please use extreme caution when traveling to and from the facility if you will utilize childcare services during inclement weather, as well as when entering and exiting the building. Payment is due at regular time regardless of whether or not child attends. Payment is still due if the center is closed due to State of Emergency or weather related closure. Start Smart Learning Center will not be responsible for slips and falls which may occur due to inclement weather.

RATES

Effective Date: February 5, 2023

The daily rate applies when child is enrolled 1-4 days per week. 5 Days is considered a weekly rate. Full time rates are based off of less than 9 hours per day. Part time rates are less than 5 hours per day.

Age	Weekly Rate 5-9 Hours/Day	Daily Rate Enrolled less than 5 days/week
Infants (0-1)	\$165	\$38
Young Toddler (1-2)	\$160	\$38
Older Toddler (2-3)	\$155	\$38
Preschool Age (3-5)	\$150	\$38
School Age	\$145/ Part Time \$110	\$38- FULL TIME \$22 PART TIME
Before <u>OR</u> After School ONLY. School year only enrollment.		\$6 Per Hour * additional fees will apply for delays, cancellations, holidays, early dismissals, etc. and are based off of availability.
Preschool Only M-F 8:30AM-12PM Age 4-5 <i>3 Day Minimum</i>		\$22 Per Day

Additional hour is \$4 per hour for each hour over 9 hours. This will start on the minute for over 9 hours per day. This does not negate late pick up fees and is based off of SCHEDULED over 9 hours days only. Late pick up fees (picking up past your scheduled pick up time) are \$10 per hour starting at 15 minutes.

****Luke Progressive Solutions LLC, DBA Start Smart Learning Center reserves the right to change or amend these guidelines and fees. These rates are subject to change without notice.****

CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS

Age	Children: Staff Ratio
Infants (6 Weeks to 12 Months)	4:1
Young Toddler (12 months to 24 months)	5:1
Older Toddler (24 Months to 36 months)	6:1
Preschool (3 years to 5 years)	10:1
School Age (5 Years (Kindergarten) to 12 years)	12:1

There is a monthly fee for the Brightwheel app. This app allows us to be able to effectively communicate with parents on a daily basis, as well as have all information in one place for your child. It also has billing and invoicing options which may or may not be utilized by parents. The fee may be paid weekly with invoicing or once per month. The fee is \$2.50 per child per month.

PANDEMIC TUITION POLICY

Should the center need to close for Pandemic reasons and/or children need to be quarantined as per direction from the Department of Health or policies set forth by the Department of Human Services, full tuition will be due for the first two weeks of closure. If the center is closed longer than two weeks, 50% of tuition will be due.

If a child is required to quarantine based off of an exposure outside of the facility, they must pay full tuition during their quarantine period.

If a child is exposed within the facility, full tuition is due for the first two weeks then 50% of tuition is due thereafter.

This schedule of 100% vs. 50% tuition for each scenario outlined will reset on an annual basis dependent on direction to close by the Department of Health and/or Department of Human Services.

Parents may give a 2-week notice to withdraw from the program if they feel it is in the best interest of their family. 50% of the tuition will be due during the 2-week notice period. A full registration fee will be required to reenroll in the program after the pandemic/quarantine period.

ABSENT CREDIT

If your child is absent due to illness exclusion for three consecutive days, you may request an absent credit equal to one half tuition for the days absent. Parents must request an absent credit in writing by email to

elizabethhogue@outlook.com within 3 days of the last absent day. Absent credits are not automatically given when the child is absent and are not guaranteed in any situation.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

At Start Smart Learning Center, we understand the importance of consistency in a child's life, therefore here at we strive to maintain continuity of care. We do so by:

1. Assigning children of similar age groups to each room, which allows for easier transitions to a new classroom when familiar faces are transitioning together.
2. Creating a family like environment which fosters growth and learning for children of all ages.
3. Assigning the same staff in each classroom, which will allow each child to see a familiar face each day and allow for positive relationships between all children, their caregivers and family members, and the staff at Start Smart Learning Center.
4. Reducing Staff Retention. We strive to provide quality employment practices so that staff want to stay at Start Smart Learning Center. One of our goals is to attain long term staff and increase staff retention.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are permitted free access, without prior notice, throughout the facility whenever your child is in our care.

PAYMENT

All payments are due on Friday, by 5:30PM, no exceptions. These payments are made based on the following weeks service. Payments can be made by cash or check made out to Start Smart Learning Center and placed in the payment lock box located on the preschool side of the building near the office or payments can be made on the Brightwheel App. This app allows you to complete manual payments or automatic payments. If you are paying with cash, please place your payment in an envelope with your name and amount on the envelope prior to placing it in the lock box. Staff will not take any payments; they must be placed directly into the lock box.

There will be a \$50 fee for each returned check. Once a check is returned due to insufficient funds, payment must be made immediately in cash. Three returned checks will result in the option to only pay for childcare in cash for 90 days.

Payments not made by Friday at 5:30PM the week prior to service will result in child(ren) not being able to attend the center until full payment is received. Late payments will result in a \$10 late fee per day applied, which is due with the regular payment, once made. During any suspension of care due to

nonpayment, you will still be required to pay for those days of care, as your spot will still be maintained. Any late payment not paid within 2 weeks of original due date will result in termination of care and the child(ren)s spot could be filled. If you decide that you will not return, please follow the policy on Discontinuing Services, as the same rules apply.

Director can require automatic weekly payments via Brightwheel if a family is not paying as required. Families will be notified by 5PM on Sunday if payment has not been received, resulting in their child being removed from the schedule until payment is made in full.

Any questions, concerns, or changes in payments must be addressed immediately with the director only.

SUBSIDY/CO-PAYMENT

If you are eligible to receive subsidy through the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), please ensure you are up to date on all policies and regulations related to your accepting this benefit. You can obtain a copy of regulations from your ELRC County Caseworker. As a part of Start Smart Learning Center's agreement with ELRC, we must enforce all regulations strictly, and no exceptions will be made.

- Co-payment:
 - A parent/caretaker is required to pay the full copayment for the week, regardless if the first attendance day is in the middle or end of the week.
 - The co-payment is considered delinquent if not paid by the end of the service week.
 - Delinquent copayment will be reported to the ELRC the following Monday, and an adverse action will be issued to the parent for the delinquent amount.
- Consecutive Absences o Requirement for reporting consecutive absences is 5 days, Start Smart Learning Center must report consecutive absences on the 6th day. The ELRC will generate an Adverse Action to the parent on the 6th day of absence.
- Absence Cap
 - The CCIS will only pay for a maximum of 40 absences in the fiscal year (July 1-June 30)
 - The parent will continue to be eligible for the subsidy program, but the parent MUST pay our published daily rate for each absence beginning with the 41st absence. The absence count resets at the beginning of each fiscal year.
 - When a child reaches 35 days of absence, an alert will go the caseworker. The caseworker will generate an Absence Warning Letter to go out to the parent and the provider.

- When the child reaches 40 days of absences, a 2nd alert will go to the caseworker. The caseworker will generate a Confirmation Notice for the parent and provider. The parent is required to pay for each day of absence following that date
- If a child misses 40 days of absence in one fiscal year, the parent will be responsible for paying the facility's daily rate by the end of the service week for the absent days. This is on top of the copay that was made at the beginning of the service week. If payment is not made at the end of the service week for the absent days, there will be a \$10 late fee applied for each day it is not paid. The late fee will begin on the Friday (end of service week for absent days) and will accrue for each day the absent day(s) is not paid.

DISCONTINUING SERVICES

If for any reason or at any time you find it necessary to terminate services with Start Smart Learning Center, you must give a written and dated notice of cancellation to the facility Director two weeks prior to your planned last day of services. If for whatever reason you are unable to provide a two-week notice, payment will still be due until a notice is given, whether your child attends or does not attend. Once a 2-week notice is given, payment will still be due in full up until the end of the two-week notice, whether your child attends or does not attend.

Luke Progressive Solutions DBA Start Smart Learning Center reserves the right to bypass this policy and terminate agreements for reasons as determined by the owner. Appropriate notice will be given at a minimum of two weeks as long as the situation in which termination is sought is not due to egregious disregard for the policies/procedures set forth, as determined by the owner. Once termination occurs, payment is due for a minimum of two weeks, regardless of whether your child attends or not.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS

Parents have the right to and are encouraged to request their child's records when the child is being transferred to another educational facility. If you would like to request a copy of your child's record upon leaving our program a completed request form is required along with a \$5.00 fee for ink and paper that must be paid prior to delivery of the record. Request forms can be provided by the Director. Please allow at least 10 business days to receive the records. The Request form must be completed in its entirety to be valid. A signature and current date must also be on the form for validity. Please note that the release of information is only valid for 90 days from the date on the written request form. Please also note that Child Records are only kept for 1 year after the child's last day of care.

CHILD/PARENT SCHEDULES

All schedule changes must be made one week in advance, and all schedules are due by Tuesday at 12PM for the following week. This assures continued placement for your child, as well as provides staff with their weekly schedules. If your child will be absent for any reason, payment is still due. Please be courteous to staff and make them aware if your child will not be attending that day, as this is very important for the child-staff ratio. A \$10 charge will be assessed if your child is a no call, no show.

In the event of an unexpected surgery or illness, for you or your child, you must give a two week notice if you plan on your child not returning to childcare. If for any reason your child will be absent for an extended period but will return to care after the absence, you are responsible to continue to make payments, in full, to hold your child's spot.

Your childcare agreement provides a space for you to enter your child's drop off and pick up time. This information is used for scheduling purposes and it is imperative that you follow the time that you list on the form. We understand that sometimes things happen that are out of our control, however being licensed through the Department of Human Services we have a ratio which must be maintained to ensure compliance. Therefore, the drop off and pick up times listed on your forms need to remain consistent each day to maintain ratio. Any changes are welcome but must be done ahead of time by contacting the director to create a new agreement. If a parent needs to drop off earlier or later than the form states for just a day due to a schedule change, approval can be attained through the director.

Unless alternate arrangements have been approved the latest drop off time is 9AM. No child should be dropped off after 9AM without prior approval.

Start Smart Learning Center reserves the right to refuse drop off if the drop off is attempted prior to the agreement drop off time. There is a 15 minute window for drop off times. If you are outside the 15 minute window, you will be charged \$10 for every 15 minutes that you are late dropping the child off. For example, if you are to drop off at 7:30AM, you have between 7:30AM and 7:45AM to drop off before the \$10 fee is assessed. Additionally, if picked up after 15 minutes of the listed pick up time a \$10 late pick up fee will be applied to your account for every 15 minutes that the child remains in our care, unless prior approval is given.

Childcare rate is for a 9 Hour Day. The fee for extended day rates will be \$4 per hour over the 9-hour day maximum. This is on a pre scheduled basis only, if you do not schedule in advance parents will be charged as outlined above in regard to late pick up fee.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Start Smart Learning Center requires the parents of enrolled children to behave at all times in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect.

One of the goals of *Start Smart Learning Center* is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the practitioners and teachers of *Start Smart Learning Center* but also the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment.

We expect our parents to treat our administration, teaching staff, and the children in our care with respect and decency at all times.

The following is a list of actions that will not be tolerated and are grounds for immediate dismissal from participation in our program:

- Smoking on facility grounds
- Physically punishing or verbally demeaning a child at *Start Smart Learning Center*
- Swearing/Cursing
- Threatening practitioners/teachers, children, other parents, or adults associated with *Start Smart Learning Center*
- Confrontational interactions with practitioners/teachers, other parents, or associates of *Start Smart Learning Center*
- Using or dealing illicit drugs or appearing intoxicated or impaired
- Negligently sharing untruthful information about a coworker, superior, or subordinate with a third-party that does irreparable harm to the *Start Smart Learning Center* or its practitioners or family's character, reputation, or career.

Start Smart Learning Center will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering agency property. Due to the parents' right-to-immediate-access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, *Start Smart Learning Center* cannot have a child at our agency when the child's parent is prohibited access.

Start Smart Learning Center will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment, even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

Parents who violate the "Parent Code of Conduct" will not be permitted on agency property thereafter and could cause termination of services for a child/family.

We expect our parents to treat our practitioners/teachers and the children in our care

with respect. The following is a list of actions that will not be tolerated:

- Smoking on facility grounds
- Physically punishing or verbally demeaning your child at the facility
- Swearing/cursing
- Threatening practitioners, children, other parents, or adults associated with *Start Smart Learning Center*
- Confrontational interactions with practitioners, other parents, or associates of *Start Smart Learning Center*
- Using or dealing illicit drugs.

HEALTH

For the safety of each child, the state requires parents to keep their child home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms.

- Fever
- Diarrhea and/or Vomiting
- Heavy, thick, colored nasal discharge for more than 2 days, which could indicate infection and a doctor's visit, is recommended by the state.
- Strep throat
- Unidentified rash
- Any drainage from the eye area.
- Head Lice
- Any illness that prevents your child from comfortable participating in our daily schedule or Results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Hands Foot & Mouth Disease

If you send your child with any of the above symptoms or the child develops any of the symptoms listed above, we will be calling you to come pick them up. If your child becomes ill while he or she is in our care, he or she will be isolated from the other children, and the parent will be notified to pick up the child within one hour. If the parent cannot be reached, we will utilize the Emergency Contacts that you provided on electronic form. This is one reason it is so important to keep paperwork up to date as circumstances change. If a child is sent home for any of the symptoms listed above, they are not permitted to return to childcare until they have gone 24 hours with no symptoms and without medication to control temp or pain.

If your child contracts any communicable diseases, please inform staff at Start Smart Learning Center as soon as possible. Children with such illnesses may

not return to childcare unless they have a signed note from their physician indicating that the child is able to return to childcare and is no longer contagious. If your child is exposed to a communicable disease while in our care, we will post a notice.

Please Note: Confidentiality is imperative; names of the children will not be released, except to the parents of the sick child.

QUARANTINE POLICY

If a child is in contact with someone with COVID-19, whether at the facility or outside the child will be required to quarantine for up to 14 days.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as alignment from Pennsylvania Department of Health will be utilized to determine quarantine/isolation time on a case by case basis.

If a parent/child is choosing to request a shortening of quarantine period the parent/guardian of the child must request these specific parameters from the DOH in which quarantine can be shortened. Before approval will be given by the director, parent/guardian must provide documentation from both the Department of Health as well as the child's physician which states they are able to return to care, the date they may return to care and any results of testing that was completed to support shortening of a 14-day recommended quarantine time.

If a child has not previously demonstrated proper masking techniques and the ability to physical distance, the shortened quarantine should not be approved. No shortened quarantine will be approved for a child under three years of age.

Start Smart Learning Center will not mandate testing in any scenario unless the parent/guardian is requesting to shorten 14-day quarantine. Start Smart Learning Center administration has the final determination as to when a child may return if they are exposed to COVID-19.

SANITATION PRACTICES

The facility is sanitized and disinfected utilizing a solution mixture of Bleach and water. The ratio of bleach to water is determined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on the Bleach bottle.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Within Start Smart Learning Center, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with practitioners/teachers of Start Smart Learning Center who

have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. The only information conveyed to the practitioners/teachers is that which helps them plan activities and better understand your child.

Confidential and sensitive information about practitioners/teachers, other parents, and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Start Smart Learning Center strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, assessment and screening results, disability information, HIV/AIDS status, or other health related information of anyone associated with Start Smart Learning Center.

Outside of Start Smart Learning Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given expressed written consent, except where otherwise provided by law. Parents will be provided with a “Release of Information” document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Start Smart Learning Center, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information. All papers are kept in a locked file cabinet.

Start Smart Learning Center has a shared service agreement with The Learning Lamp. Services such as Behavioral Consultations are provided to individual children as well as for entire classrooms. Staff from The Learning Lamp have all of their clearances and trainings just as our staff do.

In order to protect the privacy of all of our students, Start Smart Learning Center requests that photographs of children other than your own, not be taken without the consent of said parents. Photographs of children other than your own may never be posted on any website or social network.

Any parent who violates the “Confidentiality” policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding “Release of Children” for additional information regarding dismissal of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing our property.

You may observe a child at our center who is disabled or who exhibits a behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, or spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our “Confidentiality” policy protects every child’s privacy. Practitioners/teachers of Start Smart Learning Center are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

When you register your child at Start Smart Learning Center, your contact information could be provided to the department of Welfare (DPW), the

Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), legal counsel of Start Smart Learning Center, Office of Children and Youth Services (CYS) as appropriate and necessary.

MEDICATION

All decision making regarding the children are guided by the regulations set forth by DHS, as well as the standards outlined by the PA KEYS. Start Smart Learning Center does not allow medications to be given while your child is in our care. We can only give medications that are prescribed by a doctor and are in the ORIGINAL container.

Non-prescription medications, such as Tylenol, can be given if the required dosage for your child's age/weight group is indicated on the container. If the container reads "CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN" we must have a written doctor's order to dispense the medication, and the order must include the appropriate dosage. Parents must fill out a medication log for medications to be given, the log can be obtained at the Center. The medication form must be completed BEFORE we can administer the medication.

All medications and logs must be given directly to staff, not left in bookbags or diaper bags, so that it can be stored properly. Please ensure that if you need the medication in the evening/weekends you are requesting it from staff upon picking up your child.

SPECIAL CARE PLANS

Some medications require a special care plan, such as Epinephrine Injectors, inhaler, nebulizer, insulin, etc. When a child is enrolled and has special medicine, they need to be available daily or as needed a Special Care Plan will be required. You can obtain a Special Care Plan from the center if one is not provided before enrollment. The Special Care Plan will need to be completed before the child attends.

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

In the event of minor injuries, first aid will be given. When parents sign the registration forms, your signature gives authorization to staff at Start Smart Learning Center permission to administer first aid. There will always be one staff minimum, at the center, who has received formal training on First Aid/CPR techniques. All children are watched with close eyes, however minor injuries, such as bruises, scrapes, or scratches, commonly occur, especially when playing outside. Any accident is reported to the parent through an incident report. The Incident report explains the injury, what lead up to the incident, and what treatment was applied. If your child accidentally or even purposefully injured another child, you will also be notified through an incident report. If emergency

medical care is necessary, staff will immediately call 911 and then the parent or guardian.

The child's family is responsible for any medical expenses incurred for injuries. We are not responsible for anything that may happen as to false or incomplete information given at the time of enrollment. Every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of your child.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE POLICY

To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors, as well as the security of our daycare facility, Some areas within Start Smart Learning Center are equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. We may conduct video surveillance of any portion of our premises at any time, the only exception being private areas of restrooms, showers, and dressing rooms. Our video/security cameras have been positioned in appropriate places within and around our preschool and/or daycare center facility and are used in order to help promote the safety and security of people and property.

The following are just some of the many benefits of having security cameras installed in daycare centers

- Security cameras keep children and childcare staff safe. They are a very effective deterrent of any crime.
- People tend to behave/perform better when there are security cameras around.
- Owners/Executive Directors can better monitor the entire facility and supervise/observe staff's interactions with children and with other staff members effectively.
- Our daycare cameras help provide peace of mind to our parents and our staff members.

Because we respect the privacy of all children, parents, and staff in our daycare center, our 24-hour video surveillance system/ security cameras are for internal purposes only. ONLY the Director and Assistant Director are allowed to view our security cameras/ video footage either at the Center's office at the site OR live video footage may be viewed remotely by director or assistant director at a different location when not on campus. Video surveillance/recording consent forms are signed prior to your child (ren) enrolling at our daycare center and are a condition of enrollment.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Purpose: To provide a written procedure to follow if emergency medical care is required by a child using the Start Smart Learning Center.

Responsibility: The director or acting Director will determine if emergency medical care is needed.

Procedure: Upon determining that medical care is needed the necessary First Aid will be given and the following procedure will be put into effect.

- I. CONTACT
 - A. Parent or guardian will be notified if possible
 - B. If parent or guardian cannot be contacted
 - a. All attempts will be documented
 - b. Emergency person(s) will be notified
 - c. Provider of emergency care will be contacted
- II. TRANSPORTATION
 - A. If it is determined to be necessary, an ambulance will be summoned
 - a. The Director or acting Director will accompany the child
 - B. If not, the following will take the child for necessary care
 - a. Director (to be notified if not on the premises)
 - b. Acting Director
 - C. The following items will be taken with the child
 - a. The necessary consent and emergency contact information
 - b. The Emergency Services Information
 - c. Necessary First Aid equipment
 - d. The child's Health Appraisal
- III. THE PERSON ACCOMPANYING THE CHILD WILL REMAIN WITH HIM UNTIL:
 - A. The parent or designee arrives
 - B. The child is released to return to the Day Care Center
- IV. THE PERSON LEFT INCHARGE AT THE DAY CARE WILL:
 - A. Continue to attempt to contact parents or emergency person
 - B. Call in help to cover at the Day Care Center using Emergency Call Out List

SAFETY

Fire Drills: At Start Smart Learning Center fire drills are performed every 60 days, as a minimum requirement. The drills are held at different times of the day and at different exits. The fire drill log is posted.

Evacuations: Plans for emergency situations are reviewed annually. The specific type of emergency will guide where and what special care will be provided. Local Emergency Service personnel have been notified of the evacuation location(s).

Evacuation to another site

- o This plan will go into effect in any event in which it is not safe for the children to remain at Start Smart Learning Center. We have arranged for the children and staff to report to the Gallitzin Fire Company, located at [210 Saint Thomas St, Gallitzin, PA 16641](https://www.google.com/maps/place/210+Saint+Thomas+St,+Gallitzin,+PA+16641).

Method to contact parents

- In case of an emergency, parents will be called. If we need to evacuate to another site, a note will be placed on the door stating where you are able to pick your child up. Depending on the emergency and the severity of it, the children will either be transported by staff from the center or walk.

Emergency cleared/reuniting with your child:

- Parents will be notified immediately when the emergency has been cleared. It is very important to keep the Electronic forms up to date in the event an emergency occurs. The purpose of sharing this Emergency Evacuation Plan with you is not to cause you worry, but to reassure you that Start Smart Learning Center is prepared to handle all types of emergencies in a way that will ensure the safety of your child. In the event of an actual emergency, Staff will call the parents as soon as it is safe to do so and will be informed at that time what steps will be taken. Please do not call the facility during an Emergency Situation as the phone lines need to remain open to make emergency calls. If you have any questions regarding this evacuation plan, please contact Start Smart Learning Center.

To the Parent/Guardian of Child Attending Start Smart Learning Center:

This letter is to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending **Start Smart Learning Center**. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate evacuation:* Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may then proceed indoors at a neighbor's.
- *In-place sheltering:* Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility. We currently have 2 available, they are:
 - Emergency Relocation Facility A at
Gallitzin Area Fire Company
210 St. Thomas St.
Gallitzin, PA 16641
Telephone: 814-886-8010
 - Emergency Relocation Facility A at
St. Demetrius Church
811 Church St.
Gallitzin, PA 16641
Telephone: 814-408-2371

If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating which facility we've gone to (A or B).

If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.

- *Modified Operation:* May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to **WTAJ or WJAC** announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above.

We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information.

The facility director may provide an alternate phone number (i.e. cell phone number, etc.) to call in an emergency event.

The form designating persons to pick up your child is included with this letter for you to complete and have returned to the Child care facility prior to enrollment for your child or ASAP for regular updates to said form. This form will be used every time your child is released. Please ensure that only those persons you list on the form attempt to pick up your child.

I realize that emergency circumstances may require changes to your plans, but I urge you to not attempt to make different arrangements if at all possible. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures, contact **Elizabeth Hogue at 814-932-4500.**

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hogue
Owner/Director
Start Smart Learning Center

HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLISTS

Health & Safety Checklists are completed every day by staff who open the facility. A comprehensive evaluation/checklist is completed every quarter by the director and a safety plan will be written for any areas of non-compliance. Staff will be diligent in monitoring the safety in their classrooms and be alert to anything that could cause a potential danger. If you see anything in our center which you feel could cause harm, please alert staff to this immediately.

NUTRITION

Parents are responsible for supplying breakfast, snacks (AM & PM), as well as lunch for their children. Breakfast will not be served after 8:30AM, this allowed for a structured morning for children at the center.

Start Smart Learning Center is a Peanut and Tree Nut Free Facility. 1 in 7 children have food allergies and we are acutely aware of the barriers that this causes for children in life. Although you may see this as a burden to your child or family who is non-allergic, we feel it necessary to provide a safe place for children with these types of allergies. If a child has a different type of allergy in the center we may request additional accommodations at our discretion. If your child has an allergy we would love to meet with you to discuss any accommodations that are needed to keep them safe.

Please ensure that all food provided is healthy and well balanced.

FIELD TRIPS AND OUTINGS

We get the children outside as much as possible, weather and staff permitting. All ages of children will take walks to the local park, and around the neighborhood. If transportation is required for a field trip (pertains to preschool program only), we have the option of renting a small bus from Wilkinson's Bus Lines.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS

All your child(ren)s items must be labeled with their name (snack containers, bags, clothing, pacifiers, etc.). Your child will be required to have an extra set of clothing. Please be sure to send in an extra set (pants, shirt, underwear, socks) in a big zip lock bag with your child's name on it. Please send your child in clothing that is comfortable and able to get dirty. Children should wear comfortable shoes (tennis shoes), as we do go outside for walks, and utilize the outdoor center space on a regular basis. No sandals, dress shoes, or open toed shoes should be worn as these types of shoes do not allow for safe play. If you choose you are permitted to send a pair of tennis shoes to keep at the facility.

BREASTFED CHILDREN

Start Smart Learning Center is committed to providing a breastfeeding friendly environment for our enrolled children and staff. Start Smart Learning Center subscribes to the following policy:

Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk. Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area has an electric outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water. Mothers are also welcomed to breastfeed in front of others if they wish.

A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the center refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The center is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby in the morning and evening, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Infant formula and solid foods will not be provided unless requested by the mother. Babies will be held closely when feeding.

Staff will be trained in handling breast milk. All center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of breast milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food borne illness.

Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed. The center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

REST PERIOD

A rest period is part of the daily schedule for infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children. Children in the older toddler classroom and preschool room will need to bring a blanket from home that can be kept here during the week but will be sent home at least weekly to be washed. Please be sure that their blanket is not extremely big, as it will not fit in their bins. Children are permitted to bring a special blanket to use during nap time only. However, will remain in his or her book bag or cubby the remainder of the day. All children are encouraged to rest; however, we cannot force them to sleep. We will rock them and or rub backs to help them settle to sleep. Some preschool children do

not sleep, in which case we do request that they stay on their blankets and remain quiet for at least 1 hour. After that quiet activities are available to keep them content

For infants (age 0-12 months) we follow the ABC's of infant safe sleep:

Alone on their **B**ack in a **C**rib.

We care about the safety of your child and it is best practice for your baby to sleep on his or her back. If you would like to send in a sleep sac, we are permitted to use a sleep sac in place of a blanket for infants. However, parents will need to provide the sleep sac. Infants will NOT be covered up with a blanket and a blanket may not be placed in their crib or pack and play.

DIAPER CHANGING

Parents are responsible for supplying diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream. We try to let you know as soon as possible when your supply is running low. When your child is running low, we will log it on your child's daily report and/or send a group or individual notification through the app. Diapers are checked frequently and changed every 2 to 2.5 hours or more often if needed. If a child has a BM, the diaper is changed immediately. Please note all children are checked and/or changed if need be 5-10 minutes prior to pick-up time. Diaper changing areas are cleaned and disinfected after each diaper change. Staff also wash their hands, as well as the child's, after each diaper change.

TOILET TRAINING

We are more than willing to work with you and your child during toilet training when your child is ready. Parents are responsible for supplying pull-ups and wipes. Communication is very important between you and staff to meet the needs of your child. Please be sure to have open communication with staff to ensure they are aware of any techniques you are using at home so that we may create consistency through this process, if possible. Open communication is imperative to have a successful toilet training experience.

INCLUSION

We welcome all children and are committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each child. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential. Early childhood educators use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children.

Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities.

Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child. Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers and others. We welcome those professionals and work with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. We support the staff/teacher's participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

Start Smart Learning Center is committed to creating and attending any and all professional development opportunities and additional guidance related to creating an inclusive environment for all children as well as knowledgeable staff and teachers who are able to implement any and all necessary accommodations for all children receiving care. This could include but is not limited to policy updates and professional development opportunities.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEP) & INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLANS (IFSP) REQUESTS

Your child's growth and development are measured with developmental assessments and screenings. If your child currently has an IEP or IFSP, it would be greatly beneficial to share a copy of this plan with us, so we can work together to ensure that the guidelines are put into practice. You do not have to provide this information if you do not wish to do so. However, a signature will be required on release or refusal to release your child's IEP or IFSP to the facility.

HOME LANGUAGE & ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The Start Smart Learning Center incorporates family's home languages whenever possible in our program. Opportunities for sharing languages include, but are not limited to songs/music, books or items from home countries, utilization of everyday words in the different languages represented in the program and sharing these opportunities with everyone. Additionally, we shall make every effort to communicate effectively with all families in a language that they understand. We shall use community resources for translation and interpretation when we do not have enough resources. Sometimes children, families, and staff may have a first language other than English. We encourage open communication in the child's home language and will support the learning

and development of the English language. Research shows that there is a consistent developmental sequence for young children learning a new language:

1. Home language use: There may be a period when a child continues to use his/her home language; this may be more evident in younger children.
2. Observational and listening period: When the child discovers that their home language may not be understood in the new setting they begin to observe and listen to gather information about the new language. They may experiment with the new sounds during this time. Some children may stop speaking, but do not stop communicating (non-verbal communication). Younger children (toddlers) may be in the observational/listening period for longer than preschoolers.
3. Telegraphic and formulaic speech: The child will begin to use individual words and short phrases in the new language. They may use a single word in place of a full sentence and use words/short phrases in situations that they've observed others using them.
4. Productive Language use: Children begin to productively use the new language. Your classroom teachers will encourage you to share books or music in your home language, family photos, special interests, and lists of common words your child uses in your home language to communicate needs. We want to make every effort to communicate with children and families whose primary language is not English, and teachers will attempt to label some of the classroom materials in the Home Language of the students. Non-English-speaking parents are encouraged to bring with them someone who can help interpret and translate questions, concerns, and documents. This information will help the teachers create a welcoming and comfortable environment for your child.

GUIDANCE and DISCIPLINE

At Start Smart Learning Center we respect and build positive relationships and the development of friendships between practitioners/teachers and children. We play with and learn from each other. Practitioners/Teachers model and foster children's emotional well being by demonstrating respect for children, by listening to and responding to them and by creating a positive emotional environment as reflected in behaviors such as frequent social conversations, joint laughter and affection. We express warmth through behaviors such as physical affection, eye contact, tone of voice and smiles. We are consistent and predictable in our physical and emotional care of all children. We support and recognize children's work, accomplishments, and contributions to the group. Practitioners/ teachers function as security for the children by creating a predictable, consistent and harmonious classroom and they build relations with every child in the program.

We believe in a positive approach to discipline. Re-direction to another activity is used the majority of the time. Emphasis is placed on positive reinforcement

to lead the child to make choices toward their own self-discipline. The child's expression of feelings (e.g. crying, laughing, angry storming, sadness, etc.) is not only tolerated but also encouraged by a respectful, listening attitude on the part of the practitioners/teachers, who will attempt to help children to clarify these emotions through reflection. We encourage children to "say their words", identify their feelings and describe the problem to resolve conflict instead of hitting, biting, or pushing.

Children are encouraged to listen to one another and to provide comfort to each other when a friend is sad or distressed. We promptly respond in developmentally appropriate ways to emotions and feelings of a child by providing comfort, support and assistance. Practitioners/teachers may change their responses based upon individual needs, such as different abilities, temperaments, activity levels, and the cognitive and social development of the child. Limits and rules are necessary to protect the safety of each child. They are enforced in a firm, but positive manner. Practitioners/Teachers try to avoid conflicts between children by listening, watching and assessing situations carefully so they can step in early to avoid bullying, teasing, rejecting or hurting another child. We also use praise and attention wisely to encourage cooperation, negotiation of shared materials, care of their classroom and helpfulness. We engage in meaningful and extended conversations with each child to clarify acceptable behaviors.

EXPULSION/SUSPENSION

What is suspension?

Suspension is an action that a child's developmentally inappropriate behavior requires that the child not be present in the classroom for a specified period.

In School Suspension- Practice that involves removing or excluding the child from the classroom. Example would be the child being sent to the directors' office.

Out of School Suspension- Practice that involves temporarily removing the child from the program. Ex. Asking that a child be picked up early due to behavioral concerns.

The following steps will be taken before a decision is made to suspend/expel a child:

1. Correspondence about the child's behavior, will be sent home daily via written and/or verbal reports during pick up. This will occur as often as the behavior occurs.
2. Director/Staff will determine if additional professional development is needed for staff/teachers.
3. Environmental Considerations-Document and share with parents.
4. Developmental Screenings

5. Implementation of evidence-based practices to support emotional development- documentation shared with parents.
6. If the behavior continues and/or worsens, a conference will be called with the parents indicating what the problem is, and every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem. We will work as a team to develop a plan of action, which could include all or some of following:
 - a. Environmental Considerations/Changes
 - b. Behavior Chart, ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence)
 - c. Contacting a Mental Health Consultant from the PA keys or other professional service as determined by Start Smart Learning Center to conduct observations and provide feedback and support.
 - d. Referrals to outside agencies including Mental Health, Early Intervention will be made, and the parent will be provided contact numbers to have the child evaluated by a professional.
 - e. Director will contact OCDEL to ensure all resources have been exhausted.

We will do what we can to prevent any child from being suspended or expelled, however, suspension or expulsion will be our last resort if:

- a. the risk to other children's welfare or safety
- b. behavior does not improve
- c. the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, and/or the parent does not follow through with making efforts to have their child evaluated

Please note: In the event of suspension or expulsion the parent may or may not be given a minimum of one week's notice to find another center to provide care for the child, however depending on the severity of the situation, no notice by the center may be given.

DAILY REPORTING

IN our preschool and toddler rooms, we have deployed a mobile application - Brightwheel which will immensely benefit you by providing you with access to your child's daily activity on your smart phones and tablets. By a simple click on your smart phone, tablet or by going to the Brightwheel website, you will be able to access the latest status updates of the various activities of your child. This application allows staff to record activities like naps, meals, bathroom breaks, mood, medication, notes, incident reports and much more right from the app. Infant and toddler parents will be provided with information on how to get access once your child is enrolled.

TOYS AND PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

At Start Smart Learning Center we offer age appropriate toys for the children to play with while in our care. We do not permit toys from home to be brought into the center. This will prevent personal items from being broken or lost. If your child decides to bring in his or her toys from home the toy will be placed in the child's backpack or cubby until they leave at the end of the day.

To allow children opportunity to share their toys with others, we will have show and tell monthly (preschool side). Children will be asked to share what their toy is, why they chose it and anything else they wish to with their peers. Please note that we are not responsible for lost or damaged toys that are brought from home.

ARRIVING & DEPARTING SIGNING IN & OUT RELEASE OF CHILDREN

When arriving and departing the in-charge adult must come into the building for drop off and pick up. Please ensure your child is signed in and out every day, staff or parents may do this. Please let staff know as soon as possible if your child will be absent or late. You are permitted to leave a voicemail or send a notification in the app if applicable.

Children will not be released to any family member or friend who is not authorized by the parent on the "Emergency Contact Form." We require a written, dated, signed authorization for any changes. The authorized person must show proper photo identification, i.e. a driver's license or any other government-issued photo ID, and must be over the age of eighteen (18).

Custody Situations:

Parents are permitted free access, without prior notice, throughout the center whenever their child is in care, unless a court of competent jurisdiction has limited the parental right of access to the child and a copy of the order is on file at the center. The court order must be *certified* with the judge's signature. If a court order is not on file in the office, both biological parents have equal rights to the child. However, if a question arises, we always refer to the requests of the enrolling parent.

The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order. If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed. In the absence of a court order on file with *Start Smart Learning Center*, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.

Start Smart Learning Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, *Start Smart Learning Center* suggests that the parent keep the child with him or her until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. *Start Smart Learning Center* practitioners/teachers will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Director and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Director. A practitioner of *Start Smart Learning Center* will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

INEBRIATED/INTOXICATED PERSONS

The practitioners/teachers at *Start Smart Learning Center* will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the practitioners/teachers of *Start Smart Learning Center* to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit us to deny a child's custodial parent access to the child, even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, *Start Smart Learning Center* practitioners/teachers will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child and appears to the practitioner/teacher at *Start Smart Learning Center* to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The practitioner/teacher of *Start Smart Learning Center* will contact the child's parents, local police, and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

PROCEDURES DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Arrival Procedures Upon arrival, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care via the Brightwheel App. A health check will be completed on the child. If the child presents with a temperature above normal or signs of a possible illness, the child will be excluded from care. Children will be dropped off at the front door and escorted to class by a member of management or designated staff. Parents are encouraged to drop off at the front door and remain outside.

ILLNESS EXCLUSION

Children will not be admitted into care if they have the following symptoms:

- Cough Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills Repeated shaking with chills

- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees

When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for 72 hours and must have a doctors excuse, re admittance will be at the discretion of the director or designee.

SAFETY DURING DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP OF CHILDREN

(D.H.S. Day Care Regulations 3270.171(b)(c) 3280.171(b)(c)

Parents shall enter and exit the parking area via the paved parking lot off Church Street, driving slowly and watching for children being accompanied to and from the day care and outdoor play areas.

The ignition of all cars must be turned OFF and the keys removed from the ignition. NO CHILD MAY BE LEFT UNATTENDED IN A VEHICLE. All children must be accompanied by a parent or designated adult into the child's care area at the facility. While children are in the hallways, or walking to and from their cars, their care and safety are the responsibility of the parent.

The child(ren) will be released only to their parents unless written instructions are received permitting pick-up by another adult. In an emergency, Staff at Start Smart may be telephoned and will document pertinent information regarding an alternate adult picking-up a child. Day care staff will verify this information by a return call to the parent. Identification is required of the specified person picking-up the child before the child will be released from the day care. In the event the day care staff on duty are not familiar with a parent they may require them to also produce identification.

SPECIAL EVENTS

If a special event is planned for the children there will be an email sent, it will be posted on announcement boards and in the app if applicable. Special events could include pizza party days, holiday happenings, or just because events.

BIRTHDAY AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday, please feel free to notify us and we will be happy to provide a special time to celebrate his or her birthday. You are welcome to bring treats, however, please be sure to bring enough for all of the children attending daycare that day.

If you are bringing treats in to celebrate your child's birthday, please make sure that the treats are store bought and there is an ingredient list labeled on the outside of the package. Remember, we are a Peanut/Tree Nut free environment. Any staff can provide a list of treats that are safe for all of the kids in our care!

We celebrate holidays and special days at the center on a regular basis. We may ask parents to bring in specific items to contribute to this. This is voluntary. Please check with a staff member before sending in items to celebrate these days!

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All staff members employed at Start Smart Learning Center are considered mandated reporters. All staff are mandated to report all suspected child abuse directly to The Department of Social Services and/or Law Enforcement.

EMPLOYEES

Employees of Start Smart Learning Center are expected to demonstrate excellence and quality of service and care. This includes instructional as well as non instructional staff (volunteers, maintenance, cleaning staff, etc) They will do this by following the policy and procedures discussed in our Employee handbook. Their handbook is just a broad tool for conduct. They are oriented on more specific policy and procedures through on-going professional development to help guide decision-making and best practices. All decision making regarding the children and their actions are guided by the regulations set forth by the Department of Human Services (DHS), as well as standards that are outlined by the PA KEYS, and in the Caring for Our Children 5th edition. All staff at Start Smart possess all clearances required by law to be employed in childcare. All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. All staff are required to meet training hours each year. Individuals who apply for employment are screened prior to employment.

CFOC was published in 1992 by the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), working with the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health at Georgetown University. In 1995 the NRC was established at the University of Colorado, College of Nursing under the direction of Dr. Marilyn J. Krajicek, who has since led *CFOC* revisions. *CFOC*, 2nd Edition was published in 2002, and *CFOC*, 3rd Edition in 2011, with our publishing partners AAP, APHA, and MCHB. NRC subsequently created numerous standards-based resources to promote health and safety in child care and early education. In 2012, the NRC created a searchable *CFOC3* standards database for the Early Care and Education (ECE) community to access the most up to date content.

Electronic Signatures

In order to streamline communication and acknowledgement Start Smart Learning Center allows the use of Electronic Acknowledgements and Signatures. These can be done via Brightwheel, Start Smart Learning Center website, Google Forms platform and more. Parents can request hard copies of any forms via the director or owner.

Infant Schedule

6:30AM-7:30am- Arrival/Quiet Activities (swings, bouncers)

7:30AM-8:45AM- Free Time/Breakfast (Provided by Parents)

8:45AM-9:00AM- Clean Up/Bathroom/Wash Hands

9:00AM-9:45AM- Quiet Time (bottles if ready, morning nap)

9:45AM-10:15AM- Tummy Time/Floor Play

10:00AM-10:45AM- Large/Gross Motor and/or Outdoor Time (walks, sitting outside)

10:45AM-11:00AM- Bathroom/Wash Hands

11:00AM-11:30AM- Lunch

11:30AM-11:45AM- Bathroom/Wash Hands

11:45AM-12PM- Story Time/Soothing Music

12:00PM-2:30PM- Rest Time

2:30PM-2:45PM- Bathroom/Wash Hands

2:45PM-3:00PM- Snack

3:00PM-3:30PM- Bouncers/Swings/Tummy Time

3:30PM-5:30PM- Clean Up/Diaper Changes & Dismissal

**infant schedules are determined based on individual infant development, need and temperment. Diapering and feeding is done as needed/based on schedules parents provide. Children sleep as needed.*

Toddler Schedule

- 6:30AM-7:30am**- Arrival/Quiet Activities
- 7:30AM-8:45AM**- Free Time/Breakfast (Provided by Parents)
- 8:45AM-9:00AM**- Clean Up/Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 9:00AM-9:45AM**- Developmental Learning Centers/Craft
- 9:45AM-10:00AM**- Circle Time
- 10:00AM-10:45AM**- Large & Gross Motor/Outdoor Time
- 10:45AM-11:00AM**- Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 11:00AM-11:30AM**- Lunch
- 11:30AM-12:00PM**- Quiet Time/Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 12:00PM-2:30PM**- Rest Time
- 2:30PM-2:45PM**- Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 2:45PM-3:00PM**- Snack
- 3:00PM-3:30PM**- Story Time/Puzzles
- 3:30PM-5:30PM**- Free Time/Small Groups & Dismissal

Preschool Schedule

- 6:30AM-7:30am**- Arrival/Quiet Activities
- 7:30AM-8:45AM**- Free Time/Breakfast (Provided by Parents)
- 8:45AM-9:00AM**- Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 9:00AM-9:30AM**- Circle Time
- 9:30AM-10:15AM**- Developmental Learning Centers
- 10:15AM-11:15AM**- Large & Gross Motor/Outdoor Time
- 11:15AM-11:30AM**- Quiet Time/Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 11:30AM-12:00PM**- Lunch (Provided by Parents)
- 12:00PM-12:45PM**- Free Time
- 12:45PM-1:00PM**- Clean Up/Bathroom
- 1:00PM-1:15PM**- Story Time
- 1:15PM-3:15PM**- Rest Time
- 3:15PM-3:30PM**- Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 3:30PM-3:45PM**- Snack Time
- 3:45PM-5:30PM**- Play Time/Small Groups (Quiet Activities) & Dismissal

TRANSITION

Transitioning into childcare and into different rooms can be very challenging for some children and the parent. We will try to make the transition as smooth as possible. Transition from room to room depends on a variety of factors, which include, developmental readiness of the child, age of the child, and spot availability. All our staff get to know all the children in all the rooms. Of course, a child will be more comfortable with the staff that they see daily, however all staff faces become familiar over time. When your child is ready to transition to the next room you will be made aware through verbal communication from your child's teacher, as well as through the app.

We use a gradually approach with all transitions. Your child will not just arrive one day and be placed in a new room. We will prepare your child by talking to them about the transition, as well as letting them spend some time in the new room before they will be in the new room full time. We will observe the child in their new environment and work through the anxieties, if any. If the child becomes too overwhelmed, we will place them back in the original environment in which they are most comfortable and try again the next day. We will continue to increase the time spent in the new room more and more each day until the child is ready to be in that new room full time. For more information on transitioning please visit the following websites:

<https://www.4-c.org/resource-referral/transitioning-to-child-care.html>

https://www.centersite.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=6077&cn=187

<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/moving-up-to-toddlers-in-child-care>

Transition into childcare: What you can expect

- New environment.... new caregivers.....new routine
- Tears from you and/or your child (Separation Anxiety)--Some kids adjust more quickly than others, but children are resilient and will eventually adjust to childcare.

Toddler Room Transition: What you can expect

- New Staff to care for your child
- Increased structured and learning time
- Potty training
- Increased independence and social skills

Preschool Room Transition: What you can expect

- New teachers (up to 3)
- Increased structure and learning time

- Increased independence and social skills
- Increased accountability

School Age Transition: What you can expect

- Kindergarten registration information will be sent home around March for the upcoming school year.
- Increased independence, social skills, and accountability.

Self-Care Transition: What you can expect

- Reading Material and Checklists will be sent home or emailed to you about self-care transitioning.

CURRICULUM

Our program utilizes a fun educational curriculum provided by Funshine Express. Funshine Express is a nationally recognized preschool curriculum that supports your child's social, emotional and intellectual development. The curriculum provides teachers professionally developed, research-supported lesson plans with engaging hands-on materials to use with your child. Rest assured that with this program, your child is receiving a quality educational experience that results in a foundation to lifelong learning. Funshine Express correlates with the PA Learning Standards. We use a curriculum for the Preschool Program (Fireflies), as well as for the Toddler & Infant Program (Buttercups).

SCREENINGS/ASSESSMENTS/PARENT CONFERENCES

Each child will be screened within 45 days of enrollment and then every 6 months (twice per year). After the screening is complete, we will offer a parent meeting, within 60 days of enrollment, at your discretion, to discuss the scoring of the screening. The screenings will flag any developmental delays, in which we can work as a team to develop an action plan.... early detection is the best intervention.

Start Smart Learning Center utilizes Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ). 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—paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring.

Start Smart Learning Center utilizes Cognitive Toybox, a valid and reliable observation-based assessment*of children's development. Assessments are done on a regular basis or at least twice per year and information is shared with parents.

Progress reports are completed throughout the year, and formal conferences will be scheduled at least twice per year or as requested by practitioners of Start Smart Learning Center or parents/family members. We encourage all parents to attend the formal conferences, as they are a great way to share important information and establish new goals for your child.

If you or your child's teacher has concerns about your child's development, a meeting will be suggested, or the director may contact you. The parent, director and your child's teacher will meet to discuss concerns and possible referrals will be made at this time for appropriate services. The director will provide the parent with a list of resources and contact information for the parent to seek services. Start Smart Learning Center also can refer the family to the Keystone Stars Mental Health Consultant, which will provide a consultant to come to the facility to observe the child and make referrals if necessary.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

We at Start Smart Learning Center believe that families are a key element in our program, and it is important for us to build a positive relationship with the family of each child in our care. Research shows that parents who are involved in their child's program can:

- Help to strengthen and build relationships with the professionals who care for the child in relaxed, informal situations.
- Increase parents understanding of how the center operates and what happens each day.
- Help parents to get to know other families and children at the center.
- Give parents opportunities to see their child in the childcare setting.
- Increase opportunities to contribute to the service's activities and projects.

Start Smart Learning Center communicates with parents in a variety of ways, such as, personal and group phone calls, texts, emails, or notifications in the app. We also utilize announcement boards and post important information there, as well as send home handwritten notes or reminders. Finally, we also send home a monthly calendar from the curriculum, so parents can see what their child will be learning that month, and the newsletter offers some activities for the parent to do with their children. Parents will also have the opportunity to give feedback regarding the program via an annual survey.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Our program is committed to supporting access to outside resources that may be of benefit to families. If you have any questions or need assistance to access

these resources please contact: Elizabeth Hogue, Director, 814-884-0119 or elizabethhogue@outlook.com.

- Department of Human Services: Daycare Center regulations
<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/provider/earlylearning/childcareregulations/>
- Compass: DHS site for parents to access all childcare providers and view contact information, Star ranking, capacity, as well as violations during announced and unannounced visits.
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/Compass.Web/Public/CMPHome>
- Career Link: This agency can help you develop a resume and match your skills and background with job openings in your area.
<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/>
- Beginnings, Inc: Early Intervention: Services provided to families, infants, and toddlers with disabilities, and at-risk children to maximize the child's developmental potential.
111 Market Street Johnstown, PA 15901 814-539-1919
- Cambria County Children and Youth Services
Central Park Complex
110 Franklin Street Suite
400 Johnstown, PA 15901
814-539-7454
- Cambria County Mental Health and Mental Retardation: Offers quality behavioral health services.
Central Park Complex
110 Franklin Street 400 Suite
Johnstown, PA 15901
814-535-8531
- Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs) are the hub of childcare information in your local area. ELRCs provide you and your family with information on quality childcare and personalized childcare referrals to childcare providers based on your specific needs or preferences. ELRCs also administer the [Child Care Works](#) subsidized child care program. For all your childcare questions and needs, contact the ELRC for your local area or call the Child Care Works Helpline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS.
- United Way
422 Main Street Suite 203,
Johnstown, PA
814-535-2563
- Community Action Program
512 Main Street Johnstown, PA 15901
814-536-9031
- Cambria County Assistance Office (CAO): Cash Assistance, Medical Assistance (MA), which is also called Medicaid), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (the new name for the Food Stamp

Program) and home heating assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are all public assistance programs available to eligible low-income individuals and families.

625 Main Street

Johnstown, PA 15901-1678

814-533-2491

- CHIP: CHIP is short for the Children's Health Insurance Program-PA's program to provide health insurance to all uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance. Regardless of the reasons your child might not have health insurance, CHIP may be able to help you.
800-986-KIDS
- Domestic Violence Hotline: Hotlines can provide a variety of services and supports to individuals who are experiencing abuse.
1-800-799-7233
- Housing Assistance: Programs that help regarding housing can help you to locate housing, provide information on resources for first time home buyers and help answer questions if you are fearful of losing your home.
 - Johnstown Housing Authority
501 Chestnut St
Johnstown, PA 15906
814-535-7771
 - Altoona Housing Authority
2700 Pleasant Valley Boulevard
Altoona, PA 16602
814-949-2000
- Society of Saint Vincent DePaul: Aids families in need.
- Parent to Parent of PA: Parent to parent of Pa matches parents and family members of individuals with disabilities and special needs on a one to one basis for the purpose of support and to share information and resources.
888-727-2706
- Penn Cambria School District (Kindergarten Registration):
205 6th Street Cresson, PA 16630
814-886-8166
- All Saints Catholic School
220 Powell Ave
Cresson, PA 16630
814-886-7942
- Women, Infant, and Children Program (WIC):
3133 New Germany Rd, Suite 65
Ebensburg, PA 15931
(814) 472-7321

- Access to free vaccines: www.cdc.gov/features.vfcprogram
- Cribs: www.cribsforkids.org

National Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics: Parent Corner
<https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx>
- The Center for Early Literacy Learning
<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/>
- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>
- Let's Move
<https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>
- Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome:
- www.dontshake.org
- www.purplecrying.info
- www.healthychildren.org
- www.keepkidssafe.org

The full recommendation from the CDC including schedules and catch up can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-child-combined-schedule.pdf>