



**BRAINY KIDS PLACE**

## **Operational Policies and Procedures**

13307 FM 1764, Santa Fe, TX 77510

409-925-2437

January 25, 2024

### **Mission Statement**

Brainy Kids Place is committed to providing a safe, developmentally appropriate learning environment for children. Our staff will focus on the development of each child and ensure that their physical, social, emotional, and educational needs are met. We will help children grow by using brain-based research to drive our curriculum.

### **Programs Available**

#### **Toddler (12- 18 months)**

Toddlers are learning many exciting and new things, experimenting and meeting new challenges as fast as they come. They are learning new social skills and with that come new levels of emotions. The Brainy Kids Place toddler program is developed to provide hands-on activities which allow children to explore, inquire, and discover solutions first-hand. Daily activity plans focus on building language, creativity, fine and gross motor skills and social interaction.

#### **Preschool (1.5- 3 years old)**

Pre-school children love to learn new information and master new tasks. Our program is designed to facilitate this learning through many self-directed experiences. Throughout the day children have opportunities to explore the learning centers within their classrooms. Children benefit greatly from having clearly defined interest areas that are arranged to promote independence, foster decision-making and encourage hands-on learning. Each learning center enhances the child's core components of development: socio-emotional, language, cognitive, physical, and aesthetic. The curriculum enhances the learning centers through a thematic approach. Children have many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds and word identification. An abundance of these experiences provide children opportunities to develop language and literacy skills.

Physical developmental needs are met daily with opportunities to use large muscles, including running, jumping, and balancing. Small muscle skills will be strengthened through play activities such as puzzles, painting, and cutting.

We have designed our pre-school program to be part of a nurturing and loving environment where your child is our number one priority. When children receive warm, responsive care, they feel safe and secure.

## **Pre- Kindergarten (3 years old- Kindergarten)**

The concept that children learn best through play is reflected in the setup of each classroom with learning centers designed to foster choice and independence. This environment encourages experimentation and provides comfort in freedom of choice. The atmosphere encourages independence and the building of self-esteem. We have developed our Pre-Kindergarten program using the criteria from the Texas Pre-K Guidelines to make sure our students are well prepared for Kindergarten and First Grade. Literacy focuses on a balanced approach between phonics and whole language. Math skills are developed through hands-on experience and experimentation with manipulatives.

## **Before and After School Care**

We provide before and after school care for children who attend public schools in our area. They have an afternoon snack, organized sports, games, art, and other fun activities in the afternoons. Brainy Kids Place was designed to meet the interest of school age children. Homework assistance is given to those who request it. All day care is available for summer and other school holidays including teacher in-service days.

## **Classroom Assignments**

We promote children to the next level three times a year (Fall Session, Spring Session, and Summer Session). For the Preschool and Pre K classrooms, children are assigned by birthdate. We are not able to move a child up to the next age level classroom prior to their birthday due to classroom ratio requirements.

## **General Center Information**

### **Hours of Operation and Late Pick Up**

Brainy Kids Place is open from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday, twelve months a year. We have an academic schedule and ask that you have your child in attendance by 10 am so that they can benefit from the program and we can have lunch prepared for them.

All students must be picked up no later than 6:30 pm each evening. Please make plans to have your child and his/her belongings gathered so that everyone is able to leave on time.

Because we are licensed only for our specific hours of operation, we cannot care for children any earlier than 6:30 am or later than 6:30 pm. If someone is not here to pick your child up by 6:30 pm, each child will be charged a late pickup fee of \$15 and an additional \$15 per child after 30 minutes. Please understand, our staff has their own appointments to keep after closing time. Your being late prevents them from keeping their schedules. You may rationalize that this is the only time I have been late, but if everyone thinks that way, that means our staff are probably staying late every day waiting on a late pick up. Fees incurred for late pick up are to be paid upon arrival.

If a child has not been picked up by 7:00 pm and all attempts to contact parents and emergency contacts have failed, we are obligated by state regulations to call Family and Children's Services and the police.

## **Holidays**

We are closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- George Washington's Birthday (Teacher In-Service)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Teacher In-Service)
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on the weekend, the school will be closed either the Friday before or the Monday after. Check with the front desk for those specific holidays.

## **Bad Weather Policy**

We will make all efforts to stay open during inclement weather. If we are NOT open, you can find out by:

- Checking notifications on the Parent Communication App (ProCare Engage)
- Checking the Santa Fe ISD website. If SFISD is closed for inclement weather, we will be as well. However, we may need to close even if SFISD is open if a sufficient number of staff are unable to safely travel into work and we won't be able to maintain state ratios.

If there are no indications in any of these places that we are closed, then we will be open.

## **Absences**

Tuition must be paid in full without deduction for absences of any duration or any cause. There will be no exceptions made. An unexplained absence of two weeks with no payment may mean that your child will be dis-enrolled and that place given to another child on our waiting list. To re-enroll, we would require the prior balance be paid and the full registration fee be paid again.

## **Registration Paperwork and Procedures**

### **Fees and Tuition**

A registration/supply fee is required upon enrollment. This registration fee and one week worth of tuition is non-refundable and will hold a space for your child. The week or tuition paid will go towards your child's last week of care. There is an annual supply fee that will be charged each March.

Brainy Kids Place requires that tuition be paid in advance each Friday for the following week. Payments may be made by ACH Bank Draft or credit card. Please note that payment made by credit card or debit card will be charged the applicable credit card fees (3%). For security purposes, cash will not be accepted. Monthly payment in advance are accepted.

Once you enroll in a program, your tuition is due continually each week regardless of whether or not your child attends. Tuition is charged for all weeks from the time a child starts until a proper two- week withdrawal notice is given.

Since tuition is due on the Friday before the upcoming week, a late fee of \$10 will be charged on accounts not paid by Monday at closing. An additional \$10 will be charged daily if the tuition is still unpaid. If the tuition is not paid by Thursday at drop off, your child will be denied care until your account has been paid in full. Accounts that are late more than three times will be required to provide the center with payment information that will be kept on file. In this case, the account will automatically be charged when payment is not made. This is also an option to avoid the incurrence of late fees.

For any check or ACH returned unpaid from the bank for any reason, there will be a returned check fee of \$30.00 charged to that account. If there are two or more returned checks, only money orders will be accepted for payment on that account. Any other forms of payment that are on file that are returned or not able to be processed will be subject to a \$30 return fee.

We welcome our school age children to attend additional days and times when needed, such as in- service days and school holidays. We are not able to keep school age children during a school day when they should be in attendance at school. There are additional fees for attendance outside the program time the child is enrolled in. We will also assume enrollment will continue during the summer unless you inform us of withdrawal. Tuition rates are adjusted for summer (all day) care.

Since staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment and because few of these costs are eliminated when the child is temporarily absent, we cannot give tuition refunds or discounts for days your child is absent.

Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. No tuition adjustments will be made due to illness, holidays, or school closings. Days cannot be exchanged or made up for other days. This applies to part time care as well.

Parents will have a minimum of 30 days written notice of any increases in fees or tuition. Brainy Kids Place will do cost of living increases in tuition annually.

In the event that you do not make payments or do not give 2 weeks written notice of withdrawal, you will be given a one-time written notice of charges owed. You will then have 10 days from that notice to pay or resolve any disputes with the management of Brainy Kids Place. You agree to pay any reasonable attorney's fees or collection agency fees with interest and court costs, as well as 2% per month from the date that payment was first due.

### **Forms Required**

Before enrollment, you will need to complete all forms provided by Brainy Kids Place. Please keep us updated on all pertinent information. The following are especially important:

- Current immunization records must be furnished before a child can attend (Please see the "Immunization Requirements" page in this handbook.) Anytime your child is given a new immunization, please bring the updated record to the center and we will make a new copy for our files.
- At the time of enrollment, we must have an updated doctor's health care statement for each child.
- Anytime there is a change of address, phone number, or email address, remember to inform the front desk so records can be updated. It is imperative we are able to reach you in case of an emergency. This includes all work, home, and cell phone numbers for parents and any other emergency contacts.
- Inform us in writing if there is a change in who is authorized to pick your child up from the school.
- If there is a change in medical condition, we must be made aware of it.
- Newly discovered allergies should be reported as soon as they are identified and an a Food Allergy Care Plan must be on file and signed by both the parent and child's physician.

### **Medical Requirements**

Children who are enrolled should be physically, socially, and emotionally capable of being in group care. Upon enrolling your child, a health care statement must be provided for children not enrolled in public school. This may be written statement from a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year, indicating the child is physically able to take part in the child-care program, or may be a signed statement from the parent giving the name and address of a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year stating the same. A signed statement from a health-care professional as specified above must follow the parent's statement within 1 month of the date of admission and must be updated annually. We have a form available in your registration packet for you or your child's physician that will fulfill these requirements.

### **Vision and Hearing Screening**

In compliance with the special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, Brainy Kids Place requires children to have a screening or professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems. Children who are enrolled for the first time (4 years of age or older), must be screened within the first 120 days of

enrollment. All children already enrolled at our school (who are 4 years of age by September 1), will need to provide documentation of screening.

### **Immunizations and Tuberculosis Screening**

Each child enrolled at Brainy Kids Place must meet applicable immunization and tuberculin testing requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health before being enrolled. This applies to children in early care from birth through school age. The documentation must be validated by a physician or other health care professional and include:

- A signature or rubber stamp
- Child's first and last name
- Child's birth date
- The vaccine type and number of doses
- The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination

This documentation may be the original record or a photocopy. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the Center with all updated immunization records.

Any exemptions from the immunization requirements must meet criteria specified by the Texas Department of Health. For more information, check out [www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize).

For school age children, the immunization record may be on file at the child's school. However, parents must fill out and sign the "School Age Immunization Verification" form.

*At this time it is not required by the Galveston County Health District that a child enrolled in a facility located in Galveston County be screened for tuberculosis.* Parents will be notified in the event that this regulation changes.

### **Arrival and Departure**

#### **Security Code**

The front door to the center remains locked during business hours. Families must utilize the key pad to gain access to the center, as doors will not be propped open. Each person will choose a four digit code they will be required to use to enter the building. You will need to press "Start" enter your code followed by "Open". You will then have five seconds to enter the building. Please allow each individual person to enter their own code and do not hold the door open for people behind you, without some sort of identification method. As our buildings do not maintain a reception area, we utilize the codes to determine who has access to the buildings. Allowing other adults to "piggyback" on your front door code compromises the security of our building. This is strictly prohibited.

#### **Signing In and Out**

At Brainy Kids Place, Parents must sign their children in and out each day using the touch screen ProCare computer. If the computer is down or the internet is unavailable, parents will sign their children out in the classroom with the teacher. This is very important, because state regulations require that we know who is in the building at all times. If you forget to check your child in or out, please let the Director know immediately. At Pick-up and Drop-off times

please do not allow your child to wander around the school without you. An authorized adult must escort your child into the center and into their classroom, making sure that you leave them in the direct care of a faculty member so they may mark them present. Do not leave a child in any room, including the gym, alone. Make sure your child is under the supervision of either yourself or a Brainy Kids Place staff member at all times.

Children may experience separation anxiety. This is normal. Experts suggest you hug and comfort your child, let them know you are leaving and will be back to get them later, and then promptly leave the classroom. While leaving a crying child can be difficult, most children stop crying within five minutes, and your lingering in the classroom most often makes matters worse. You are welcome to call to check on your child. At pick-up time, feel free to spend time in the classroom and talk with the teachers and your child about their day. Upon departure, please make sure your child's teacher knows you have picked up your child so they can be marked off the roll sheet.

Please keep in mind that for safety reasons, we are not able to load or buckle a child in the car or their car seat.

### **Authorization of Alternate Pick Up**

No child will be taken from the center by anyone other than the parents, unless we are notified in advance that someone else is to pick up your child. Each person should be listed as an authorized pick up person on the enrollment form. Please notify such persons that photo ID will be required.

If someone other than who is designated on the registration form is to pick up your child from daycare, a note stating who will be doing so must be submitted, and the note must be signed and dated by the parent.

Although telephone notification is discouraged, we understand that unexpected circumstances arise. In the event that you notify us by telephone that someone who is not listed will pick your child up, this information will be documented in your child's file, and, unless we are able to verify through telephone caller I.D., we will issue a call back to verify that the parent did, in fact, place the call informing us of the information.

When someone other than the parent picks up we will make a copy of their Driver's License, date it, and the staff person will initial it and it will be kept in the child's file.

Please do not give those you have authorized to pick up your child your password for the front door or the log in and out system.

### **Custody Issues**

Please let the school know if there are custody orders concerning your children. We do not have the right to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody. In order to deny a parent from picking up their child, there must be a current, signed court order stating that they should not have access to the child and we must have a copy of the order in the child's file. The center cannot become involved in custody disputes. We would be forced to dis-enroll a child if the school has to become involved in such disputes.

## **Parent Communication and Visitation**

### **Daily Reports and Lesson Plans**

Each day in most classrooms, you will receive an electronic daily report through ProCare Engage that has details about your child's day, including how they ate, slept, played, and what they learned. For younger children, the report includes information about diaper changes. Since everything about your child's day cannot be documented, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher if you have any specific questions. Each classroom also has specific weekly lesson plans posted for parent review. These plans detail the classroom activities for the week.

### **Information Postings**

Our latest inspection from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is posted in the main hallway near the entrance. The Information Boards in the classrooms post menus, lesson plans, daily schedules and other resources. Please refer to these weekly. As we learn about resources that would be helpful to your family such as tutoring, counseling, and community resources, we either share these in the ProCare Engage App or will post these on a resource board in the office.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

We schedule parent teacher conferences twice a year. If needed, additional conferences may be scheduled to discuss concerns and children's progress. We are flexible and will work with you to accommodate you at a convenient time during business hours.

### **Parent Surveys**

We will send out a parent survey annually through our ProCare Engage App to receive feedback about our program. Parents are encouraged to complete the survey so that we can improve our program to meet the needs of our children and families.

### **Visiting the Center and Volunteers**

Parents may visit the center at any time during the day to observe their child, our program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval. Brainy Kids Place has an open door policy. We ask that you stop by and check in at the front desk so that we keep our building secure and our children safe. It is not recommended for parents to "hang out" in the program, as it may hinder the independence and growth of the child. In addition, the center is best observed as a place of learning.

We also welcome volunteers. If you would like to volunteer either at the school or on a field trip, please contact our director so that we may schedule a time for you to come and complete a Criminal History check as required by the State. Volunteers are not allowed to be responsible for a group of children and are never left alone with a child. They can be utilized as an extra support to the regular on-goings of the center.

### **Parent Grievance Procedure**

We encourage you to discuss any classroom issue with your child's teacher if needed. We strive to provide the highest quality of care and education to the families we serve. Our



belief is that we can't fix a problem that we don't know about. We welcome parent input and will make every effort to resolve concerns. However, we ask that concerns always be communicated in a professional and courteous manner and that all our staff be treated with the respect they deserve as partners with you in caring for your children. For concerns that require lengthy conversations, please schedule an appointment/conference with the teacher as well as management. If at any time you feel that issues are not being resolved, please feel free to talk to any member of management. If a member of management is not available to address your concerns immediately, an appointment will be made as soon as possible. The relationship between parents and center staff is vital to the success of a child's experience. A partnership must be formed with open communication and understanding that the development and growth of the child is our top priority.

## **Food and Nutrition**

### **Food Program**

A breakfast is provided each morning from 7:00 until 7:45 am. If your child arrives after 7:45 am, please have already served them breakfast at home as eating in the classroom can cause a distraction and food safety risk.

A hot lunch and an afternoon snack are also provided with the tuition. The food served fulfills the Federal Nutrition Guidelines. The menu is a rotating menu and is posted in the lunchroom as well as in each classroom. Any necessary changes will be posted on the Information Board. You may send a packed lunch for your child, but we suggest you encourage your child to try the food served at school. We cannot refrigerate lunches, so if something needs to be kept cold, you should use an ice pack designed for lunch boxes to keep it cold. We are unable to cook individual lunches brought from home so if something needs to be kept warm, please send it in a thermos. All food should be sent in a sealed container or bag. Please do not send donuts, candy, soda, drinks with added sugar or other unhealthy items.

We cannot provide food other than the posted menus; if a child requires a special diet, parents may furnish that child's food and we will serve it at snack or mealtime. In this case, the parent must understand that the lunch they provide may not meet the nutritional value for the child's daily food needs but that the food served at the school is always available for their child to eat. We will provide a soy based milk substitute to children who have food allergies that have been noted by a doctor.

If your child has any food allergies, please be sure to include that information in the enrollment packet or inform us if allergies are later identified.

BKP will not physically segregate nor discriminate in any way against any person receiving a free or reduced-price meal benefit and that it will protect the anonymity of these persons and that there will be no overt identification of persons receiving a free or reduced-price meal; and will serve the same meals or snacks to all Program participants at no separate charge, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and that there will be no discrimination in the course of the food service.

## **Breastfeeding**

Brainy Kids Place encourages nursing mothers to come to the center and nurse if it permits in your work schedule. A comfortable place and adult size seating will be available for you to breastfeed your child in our infant room.

Parents have the right to breastfeed their child or provide breast milk for their child while they are in our care. We recognize human milk is the best source of milk for babies as it supports optimal health and development for babies.

We encourage mothers to nurse or bring the milk they have expressed to be given to their baby. Please send the expressed milk in labeled breast milk storage bags or in prepared bottles. Both should have the child's first and last name visible.

## **Discipline and Guidance**

We believe that most discipline problems can be avoided through a combination of:

- Knowledge of developmental growth patterns and needs of children at different ages and stages
- Environments that facilitate emerging skills without causing frustration and competition
- Activities that encourage and gently stimulate children's natural curiosity
- Routines that are consistent and give children security and stability.

All discipline used must be:

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

To manage behavior in a positive way we use:

Behavior management is an important element in our child care facility. We strive for a classroom setting that provides children with opportunities to explore their environment within consistent, age-appropriate limits. In this atmosphere, most behavioral issues are prevented; however, if behavioral issues occur, we will use the following progressive guidance techniques:

- **Classroom Management:** This technique involves modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior, maintaining consistent supervision, setting reasonable expectations for children's behavior based on their developmental levels and individual differences, and providing interesting, challenging, and age-appropriate things to do.
- **Re-teaching:** Teaching children appropriate behavior expectations for a variety of settings is part of the preschool goals. Daily, our staff members spend time teaching, and re-teaching expectations for behavior. This is done through songs, modeling,

practicing and games. If a child is struggling with behavior, staff members may spend time re-teaching the concept and using praise for compliance.

- Ignoring: Sometimes negative behavior is produced by a child to gain attention. It can be stopped when it does not get the attention desired. We will utilize this technique unless a safety issue is involved.
- Redirection: We will offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by offering a different toy, suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or by suggesting independent play.
- Verbal Intervention: The teacher explains to the child the inappropriate behavior, and shows him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation.
- Logical Consequences: The teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions by removing an object, activity, etc. that is causing the problem or having the child “make up” for the issue the behavior caused (i.e. cleaning up if making a mess or helping a friend that was hurt).
- Time Out: The child is separated from the group, to allow him/her to relax and calm down. At this time the child would be assisted to an area in the room where he/she can be supervised at all times. The child will not have access to activities and materials while in the designated area.
  - o If “time out” occurs two or more times in one day, parents will be notified when the child is picked up at the end of his/her day.
  - o The child may return to the group as soon as the negative behavior stops or is significantly reduced.
  - o “Time out” will not be used for children under the age of 12 months; instead, redirection or distraction techniques will be used.
  - o Time out will not last longer than one minute per year of the child's age. If the behavior has not stopped during that time, other techniques will be utilized.

Discipline techniques that are NEVER used include:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in the child's mouth

- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires a brief supervised separation to allow the child to settle down before resuming cooperative play or activities
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age

If a child's behavior is dangerous to himself/herself or if the child is unable to calm down, the child will be briefly separated from the group until he/she is ready to continue the class activity. While the child is briefly separated, an adult will do calming activities with the child. These may include a walk around the school, reading a book, or cuddling with a stuffed animal or blanket. Time Out is a method used occasionally for discipline at Brainy Kids Place when other methods have failed. Time Out is limited to one minute per year of child's age.

Continual discipline problems will be referred to the Director, who will schedule a conference with the parents.

If we feel that our program is not suitable for a child or that a child requires more attention than we are able to provide, then we reserve the right to dis-enroll a child at any time.

#### Biting Policy:

In even the best preschool settings, periodic biting occurs among infants, toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. When this happens, it can be very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. Understand that this is not an unusual phenomenon among children who are going through the oral stage of development. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers. There are no quick and easy solutions to it.

The primary reason that children bite is because they have no way to communicate verbally or get someone's attention. Brainy Kids Place believes that by teaching children ways to communicate, some biting incidents will be eliminated. Therefore, we practice the following daily in the classroom:

- Attention Getting Skills
- Calming Down Activities
- Sharing Skills
- Teacher Shadowing (teacher has close proximity control to children who are likely to bite)

We try to stop the behavior quickly. We consider the family of the biter as well as the families of the other children. Only after we feel we have exhausted all possibilities of stopping the biting, do we consider asking a family to withdraw their child.

We understand how frustrating this is for all involved and encourage parents to discuss this issue with the Director and learn more details on how biting is handled.

## **Suspension and Termination**

Occasionally, a child will experience some difficulty in adapting to the center's environment or abiding by the center's rules and expectations of behavior. We will keep you informed verbally and with notes home regarding concerns of behavior. Unfortunately, there are times when we have to suspend or expel a child from BKP either on a short term or permanent basis. The decision to dis-enroll a child from Brainy Kids Place is a difficult one for both the Center and the family. In all cases, BKP's goal is to act quickly, thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. The director's decision in these matters is final.

If after following the allowable behavior interventions, the child is still unable to follow the behavioral guidelines, a suspension may be warranted. A parent may be called to pick up their child for the remainder of the day. If there are repeated issues or a behavior warrants a longer suspension, the child may need to be suspended for a short period of time.

If the behavior has not resolved and your child's behavior has become a danger to themselves, others, or the learning environment, and the center finds they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove the child from care immediately. Termination of care can happen immediately without any prior suspensions or warnings in cases where there is potentially dangerous behavior, verbal and/or physical abuse, or intimidating behavior by either the child or parent towards center staff, children, or property at Brainy Kids Place.

## **Illness and Exclusion from Center**

Because the health and welfare of all our children is our primary concern, we are unable to care for children who are ill. We follow the criteria from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services regarding when children should be excluded from childcare.

Our policy is that children with the following signs or symptoms should not attend school. If a child should develop any excludable symptom, parents will be called and must pick their child up within the hour. When a child is sent home with an illness, they may not return to the center sooner than 36 hours from when they are picked up and must be symptom free for 24 hours.

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness results in greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
- Fever accompanied by signs of illness: Ear temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Armpit temperature of 100 degrees or higher. If a child is sent home with a fever, he/she cannot return until he/she has been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medication. Please note Brainy Kids Place obtains a child's temperature by placing the thermometer under the arm or using an ear thermometer. Signs of illness

include, but are not limited to, lethargy, abnormal breathing, rash with fever, mouth sores, and behavior changes.

- Uncontrolled diarrhea: Three or more loose stools in one day.
- Vomiting: Two or more episodes in one day.
- Pinkeye: Conjunctivitis must be excluded from care until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun. Students will also be excluded if there is thick puss or mucus draining from the eye or nose.
- Strep Throat: Excluded from care until 24 hours after treatment has begun. Students may also be excluded for a sore throat, especially if accompanied by swollen glands and/or fever.
- The child has symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- Requiring a child to stay home so treatment may begin for problems such as scabies, ringworm, pinworms, and impetigo.
- A health care professional has diagnosed the child with communicable diseases, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate the child is no longer contagious.
- Children who have had vaccines, major or minor surgeries, or anesthesia will need to be observed by a medical professional for adverse reactions and given a return to school letter before they are permitted to return.

In the event of an occurrence of a communicable disease as defined by the Department of Health, written notification will come through ProCare Engage within 24 hours or the next working day.

#### Returning to the Center:

Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen or other fever-reducing medicines before returning to the center. However, when a child is sent home with an illness, they may not return to the center sooner than 36 hours from when they are picked up. This will allow the child to no longer be contagious, fully recover and return rested and able to participate in all activities. A physician's medical clearance to return to the center, stating the diagnosis, assurances your child is not contagious, symptom free, and able to participate in daily activities, is required if your child will be returning within 36 hours. A medical clearance also is required for all illnesses that are either communicable or contagious, regardless of the time the child is away from the center.

Children returning to school should be prepared to go outside to play. We are not staffed to accommodate requests for certain children to stay inside. If a child is not well and you do not want them to go outside, they are not well enough to be at daycare and need to be kept at home that day.

## **Head Lice Policy**

Brainy Kids Place has a “No Nit” Policy. If nits or lice are detected, parents will be contacted and will need to begin treatment that night. Various treatment options are available. Brainy Kids Place will send home a letter with information for parents. Parents are responsible for treatment. Children are allowed to return to school after treatment has begun and they are nit and lice free. This can be as early as the following day. Please keep in mind that health officials recommend a two week regimen to make sure that nits or lice do not re-appear. The next morning, you will need to bring your child to the office to be checked to ensure that all nits and lice have been removed. Children will only be allowed to return to Brainy Kids Place after they are checked by office staff to be nit and lice free. Children will be checked occasionally over the next two weeks to make sure that another nit or louse does not appear.

Head lice is often met with stress, anxiety, and unnecessary shame. Head lice is common across all socio-economic classes and does not mean a child, home, or school is “dirty.”

Brainy Kids Place has the following preventative measures in place:

- Carpets, rugs, and upholstered items are vacuumed daily. Vacuuming is the most effective way to reduce the spread of head lice.
- Nap bedding is stored in individual plastic containers and not shared amongst children. Nap bedding is sent home weekly to be washed. Nap mats are disinfected.
- Jackets and other personal items are stored in individual children's cubbies or stored on coat hooks to prevent the spread of head lice.

Brainy Kids Place will provide parents with information on early detection, prevention, and treatment methods. Head lice are most common amongst children ages 3-12 due to common behavior and play habits. Keep in mind that the same play habits that transmit lice are also common in homes, neighborhood playgrounds, churches and other places children commonly interact.

Experts suggest the most effective point of control for head lice is the household. Parents are responsible for screening for head lice during routine hygiene and bathing practices. Health officials recommend that parents check weekly with a fine tooth comb.

## **Items from Home**

### **Change of Clothing**

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes that are okay to get dirty. The children do lots of messy, fun activities such as gardening, painting, playing in the sand and water table, and outdoor play. No attire bearing violent or offensive images will be allowed.

Clothing also needs to be easily managed by the child. Please avoid belts, snaps or buttons if your child cannot manage them. Shorts or pants with an elastic waist are best. No clothing may be worn that requires the staff to take off the child's complete attire to use the restroom. Young children are still working on large and small motor skills. Therefore, they need sturdy footwear like closed toe rubber soled shoes that Velcro or zip. Sandals or flip flops

expose children's toes to injury and are hard for children to keep on. They are not appropriate.

Each child should have multiple changes of clothing, labeled with his/her name left at the center in a zip lock bag. Please replace as weather changes.

### **Personal Belongings**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home to school unless it is a specific "show and tell" day. Expensive, easily broken items or family keepsakes should never be brought to school. Brainy Kids Place will not be responsible for any items brought into the school. NO 'weapon type toys' are allowed. That includes guns, knives, swords, sabers, etc. We discourage aggressive behavior. If we feel a toy is dangerous or in some way inappropriate, it will be kept in the office for parents to collect. We will not search the building for any items brought from home that become lost.

Due to health reasons, children are not permitted to bring sippy cups to class or store used sippy cups in their cubbies or refrigerators. Please keep these types of items at home. In the event a child has a special dietary need, the parent must visit with the center director to discuss reasonable accommodations and ensure the accommodations can be met within the center's regular routines.

### **Medication**

Please understand that Brainy Kids Place is NOT required to administer medicine. However, as a convenience to parents, under certain conditions, we will give medications to children while at school. Please understand that these medication policies are in place for the protection and well-being of your child while he/she is in our care.

- All medications must be left at the front desk with the person in charge. No medications can be left in the classroom or in diaper bags.
- Parents must sign-in any needed medications by filling out the Medication Authorization Form at the front desk. This must be filled out completely before medications can be administered.
- All medications must be taken home after they are no longer being administered. If not picked up after a certain amount of time, medication will be thrown away.
- Medications must be in the original container. We cannot give a medication that is not in an original container or is prescribed for someone other than the child. Medications cannot be measured in advance or put into baby's bottles.
- Medications will only be given according to the directions. Any over the counter medication being administered must have the age and weight of the child on the dosage chart listed on the medication bottle. If your child is not covered on the dosage chart, we must have a prescription to administer the medication.
- Prescription medication given to a child in care must be an authorized prescription specifically labeled for that child, from the child's physician. We are only permitted to administer medication according to physician's instructions regarding frequency and amount.



- Medicine must not be expired.
- Medication that is required twice a day will not be given. This can be administered at home in the morning and evening.

Due to budgetary, staffing, and programmatic restrictions, Brainy Kids Place does not maintain a school nurse or other health care professional on staff. Brainy Kids Place staff members are trained in administering medication, First Aid, and CPR.

### **EPI Pens**

Brainy Kids Place does not maintain or administer an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector to use when a child in care has an emergency anaphylaxis reaction. Children with prescribed EPI pens will be stored and administered in accordance with our Medication Administration Policy.

### **Sunscreen and Mosquito Spray**

With your signed permission on the admission form, BKP will gladly apply sunscreen and/or mosquito spray on your child and will be applied according to the instructions on the bottle. You must supply these items and they will need to be labeled with your child's first and last name. BKP will not supply any of these items. No aerosol containers are allowed.

### **Animals**

There may or may not be animals at our school. Any animals present will be healthy and properly vaccinated. If your child has allergies, please see that we are informed of this. When dealing with animals, Brainy Kids Place will follow the state licensing guidelines.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

### **Procedure**

Many precautions are taken to ensure a safe environment including routine staffing that exceeds the minimum state standards. If an incident or injury occurs, first aid is administered and an accident report is filled out. You will sign this report at pick-up. This report will describe the nature of the incident and the follow-up care that was provided. Please understand that in a group-care setting, we do witness most incidents, but occasionally, there may be an incident we do not see. Our teachers simply cannot see everything. If your expectation is that your child will never have any accidents while under our care and that we will see everything, then your expectations of what can be accomplished in a group care setting may be unrealistic. One-on-one care (i.e. a nanny) may be the best for your family. Please see our Director if you have any concerns about this matter.

In the event of a medical emergency while at the center, the parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified.

If it is necessary to seek immediate medical attention for a child, emergency medical technicians will be called to transport an ill or injured child to an emergency medical facility. The child's Emergency Medical Permission Form, as well as any health or medical information on file will accompany the child. A staff member will accompany your child to the hospital until the parent/guardian arrives.

## **Accident Insurance**

Even in the highest quality preschools, accidents can and do happen as children explore the world around them. We do everything possible to minimize accidents. Should an accident occur, we ask your understanding and cooperation in these matters. It will be the parent's responsibility to submit bills and completed insurance forms to the Center Director, who will forward all information to our insurance agency. The parent's insurance policy is usually primary, with the Center coverage being the secondary on a coinsurance basis.

## **Center Activities**

### **Naptime**

A supervised sleep period is provided daily for children after their lunchtime. To prevent disruption to the other children, please do not drop your child off during that time (10 am- 2 pm).

Parents may send a small pillow, such as those used on airplanes, and/or a blanket for their child to use at naptime. Children may bring a small soft animal to sleep with. All items must be labeled with the child's name. Toys are not appropriate as they can cause a distraction. Blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals must fit in the child's assigned tub. We are not able to store full size pillows or comforters. Please take them home each Friday to be laundered. Shoes must be worn during naptime for the safety of each child in the event of an emergency where we should have to move the children during naptime.

### **Infant Safe Sleep Requirements**

To keep our infants as safe as possible and decrease the possibility of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and positional asphyxia Brainy Kids Place follows safe sleep practices and recommends parents do the same at home to keep children safe. Infants will be put to sleep on their backs, in their crib, with only a firm, tight-fitting mattress with a crib sheet on top of it. No other blankets, pillows, toys or positioning devices are permitted. Infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered by blankets, linens, or clothing at any time. Children are not allowed to be swaddled or restricted from movement in any way. This includes sleeping in bouncers, swings, car seats, or other devices. If an infant falls asleep in one of these devices, they will promptly be moved to their crib to a safe sleep position. When a child is able to roll themselves over to sleep on their stomach, they are allowed to do so as they prefer.

We appreciate your help in keeping your child safe. In order to keep the transition from home to school easy, please follow safe sleep practices at home as well. Any request for deviation from the safe sleep practices including sleeping in a restrictive device or sleeping on their stomach before they are able to roll over must be medically necessary and have a physician's approval and signature on the Sleep Exception Form before the request can be considered.

### **Playground**

Daily activities include opportunities for unstructured outdoor play to allow children to use both small and large muscle groups. Physical activity and outdoor play has been shown to

improve motor skills, lower body mass index (BMI), improve overall health, and improve muscle strength. Social development benefits include having increased openness with parents and caregivers, greater self-awareness, appreciation for the environment, improved peer to peer relationships. Other emotional development benefits include using all five senses and developing a sense of independence. Outdoor play also aids in brain development and improves communication skills.

All children birth through 12 years will go outside twice daily on age appropriate playgrounds, weather permitting. Infants all go outside at least 15 minutes twice daily when the temperatures are between 40-100°F. This means that infants will need appropriate attire including winter wear and a hat during the winter. Toddlers and Preschoolers will go outside at least 30 minutes twice daily, weather permitting. PreK and full day School Age children will go outside at least 45 minutes twice daily, weather permitting. During bad weather days, our imaGYMnarium will be utilized for structured and unstructured active play.

Please dress your child appropriately. This includes sending children with a jacket during winter time and having children wear appropriate footwear such as sneakers to allow children to participate freely and safely in physical activities. We are not staffed to accommodate requests for certain children to stay inside. If a child is not well and you do not want them to go outside, they are not well enough to be at school and need to be kept at home that day.

### **Screen Time**

We believe that children learn best through hands on activities and interacting with their peers. We do not allow screen time (tablets or TV) to any children that are not enrolled in our school age program. Screen time is only permitted for our school age children under special circumstances. We do allow school age children to watch a movie in summer camp during the mid-day rest period. Because we cannot monitor the activities on personal devices, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices should not be sent from home and your child will not have access to these devices while under BKP care.

### **Transportation**

Upon enrolling their child, parents must complete the enrollment form granting permission for Brainy Kids Place to transport their child on field trips or to and from school. In the event we will transport your child, you will know ahead of time. In the event your child requires an infant carrier, car seat, or booster seat you will need to provide it.

### **Special Activities**

#### **Field Trips**

You will be notified at least 48 hours in advance of any field trips that are planned for your child's group (must have completed kindergarten). The enrollment form includes a place for special permission for your child to participate in field trips. Children will be required to wear Brainy Kids Place t-shirts on field trips, which are provided at registration. You will be notified if there are any additional fees associated with the field trip. Lunch is provided for your child

on the field trip and due to limited space in the cooler, we will not be able to take lunches from home.

In the event you do not wish for your child to participate in the field trip, you will need to find alternate arrangements for your child that day.

### **Water Activities**

Parents must include on their child's enrollment form whether or not they grant permission for their child to participate in water activities.

A water splash area is available for hot summer play for children who have permission to play on it. Children are required to wear water shoes while playing. A designated time and day will be assigned to each class and will be posted as Splash Day. In order to participate on Splash Day, children will need a swimsuit, towel and water shoes, plus a dry set of clothes to change in to. Sunscreen is recommended, but we ask you apply it at home if possible. A permission form along with the sunscreen will be needed if it is to be applied at school.

### **Birthday Parties**

We would be happy to acknowledge your child's birthday in their classroom. We will allow you to send cookies or cupcakes to celebrate your child's birthday with their classmates, but please let your child's teacher know in advance. Your child's teacher will help you determine the number of items needed to provide for every child in the class. All items must be commercially prepared, packaged and have a label that describes the nutritional content with ingredients listed. This rule must be strictly adhered to so that we may insure that safe foods are always being served to children and those with food allergies will be protected. Cookies or cupcakes for birthdays will be served during afternoon snack. Presents should not be exchanged at school.

Elaborate birthday celebrations should be held outside of school on private time. Please do not bring presents, balloons, gift bags, party favors or costumed characters.

If you are planning a party away from Brainy Kids Place, please keep in mind that invitations will not be distributed to students unless all of the students in the group or classroom are included. Please give the teacher the invitations to send home with all of the students. For the protection of our students, we cannot provide anyone the phone number or address of any child or members of their family. A list of students with first names only will be provided by your child's teacher upon request.

### **Emergency Drills and Preparedness**

Brainy Kids Place's emergency preparedness plan is designed to ensure the safety of children in an emergency by addressing staff responsibility and facility readiness with respect to emergency evacuation and relocation.

The plan addresses the types of emergencies most likely to occur in our area, including, but not limited to natural events (tornados, floods, or hurricanes), health events (medical emergencies, communicable disease outbreak), and human caused events (intruder with weapon, explosion, and chemical spill).

Brainy Kids Place has created a designated safe area outside, as well as inside the facility. The outside safe area is the back corner of the fenced play area on the side of the facility. This will be the meeting place for a head count of each classroom by the teacher.

In the event that an alternate shelter will be needed to protect the children in an emergency situation, the staff will follow these procedures. Aldersgate Methodist Church has been designated as the alternate shelter. It is located at 13217 FM 1764 in Santa Fe, Texas and is within walking distance of the facility. Their phone number is 409-925-2552. This alternate shelter facility is well equipped to take on our students in an emergency situation. This alternate shelter plan has been thoroughly discussed, planned and created between both parties, and this alternate shelter is known to all employees and caregivers. Children will be evacuated from the building and relocated to the designated safe area by walking single file, teacher led, classroom by classroom, according to the fire drill procedures. In the event that the children need to relocate to the alternate shelter, the children will be transported by daycare bus or walk single file across Avenue S and through the field behind the church property until they reach the relocation area. They will be teacher led, classroom by classroom, according to the fire drill procedures. Those children, who are not able to walk, will be pushed in an evacuation crib to the relocation spot. Children under 24 months will be escorted by additional available personnel (cook, director, etc.) to ensure safe transport. If the bus is needed to transport children, available car seats will be used. Any child that has special needs that prohibits him or her from walking safely to the designated safe location will have on file and posted an individual Emergency Plan created and agreed upon by both Brainy Kids Place management and the parents. Local authorities will be contacted by cell phone and notified of the emergency.

An emergency evacuation and relocation diagram is attached. Each classroom has access to two exits leading outdoors if needed during an emergency. There is affront door exit and a rear door exit.

Communication during an emergency is of extreme importance. The emergency telephone number is 254-346-7467. This number will be used to communicate with local authorities, (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department), parents of the children enrolled in our facility, and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

The staff will evacuate the building in an emergency with the essential documentation required: Parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in care, authorization for emergency care for each child in care, and the child tracking system information for each child in care. This information is easily accessible and transportable. All staff members and caregivers have been made aware of its location in the center's office.

This emergency preparedness plan will be discussed with employees during orientation. All parents of the children enrolled in this facility will be informed of the emergency plan, as well. Upon request, the emergency preparedness plan will be available for review by parents, as well as staff members and caregivers.

The director is responsible for implementing the emergency preparedness plan. Additional employees will also be designated to be in charge during an emergency evacuation and/or relocation that may occur when the director is out of the facility.

Certain components of the center's emergency preparedness plan must be practiced. A fire drill conducted monthly and a severe weather drill is conducted once every three months. These drills must be documented accordingly.

### **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

In an emergency, the first responsibility of Brainy Kids Place will be to move the children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all staff and caregivers.

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the premises, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Children will be evacuated from the building in accordance to fire drill procedures.
2. Local authorities will be contacted by cell phone and notified of the emergency.
3. The children will be relocated to Aldersgate Methodist Church located at 13217 FM 1764, Santa Fe, Ph. (409) 925-2552. Children will be transported by daycare bus or will walk across Avenue S through the field behind the church property single file, teacher led, classroom by classroom, according to fire drill procedures.
4. Children will be accounted for before evacuation by checking the roll and the attendance record information for each individual child. This procedure will also take place upon arrival at the church.
5. Parents will be notified immediately, according to the children's emergency records (parent and emergency contact telephone numbers, authorization for emergency care), of the situation and to pick the children up at the relocation area. When parents arrive at the relocation area, they will be briefed on the situation and have any questions about the emergency answered by the director and will be permitted to pick up their child by showing identification and signing out their child(ren) on a paper sign out log that will indicate the child's name, parent/guardian name, and time they were picked up. All children will remain in

the custody of center employees until a parent/guardian or designated authorized emergency pick-up has come to pick up the child.

6. While waiting for parents to pick up their children or the building to be deemed safe to inhabit again, staff members will engage children in age-appropriate games and songs. This will allow children to remain as calm as possible and stay safe. Children will be kept safe and allowed to use the restroom facilities at the church if needed.

Emergency phone numbers:

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Police/Fire/EMS            | 911            |
| Poison Information         | 1-800-222-1222 |
| Sheriff                    | 409-766-2222   |
| Mainland Medical Center    | 409-938-5000   |
| Brainy Kids Place Santa Fe | 409-925-2437   |

### **Specific Emergency Response**

#### Fire

In the event of a fire that would put the children at risk, we would immediately evacuate the building. Children would relocate to Aldersgate Methodist Church located at 13217 FM 1764 in Santa Fe (Ph. 409-925-2552). The children would be transported by bus or would walk single file, teacher led, classroom by classroom, according to fire drill procedures. Upon arrival at the church, a head count will be conducted based on the information in the daily tracking system. Parents would then be notified by cell phone of the emergency situation. The director or staff member in charge will have all children's files with emergency phone numbers and pick-up authorization information.

#### Tornado

In the event of a tornado watch, the children would be relocated to the designated safe area inside the building. The situation would be monitored via cell phone, internet, or local television news source. Should the tornado watch be upgraded to a tornado warning, the children would remain at the facility until the warning is lifted. In the event of damage to the building that would put children at risk, we would evacuate to Aldersgate Methodist Church. Children would be transported by daycare or church bus. Once the children have safely arrived at the church, we would immediately take a head count based on the information in our daily tracking system and notify all parents of the emergency situation. The director or

staff member in charge will have all children's files that contain emergency contact numbers and authorization for pick up.

### Flood

In the event of a flooding situation that would put the children at risk, we would immediately evacuate the building. We would relocate the children to Aldersgate Methodist Church. Upon arrival at the church, a head count will be conducted based on the information in the daily tracking system. Parents would then be notified by cell phone of the emergency situation. The director or staff member in charge will have all children's files with emergency phone numbers and pick-up authorization information.

### Hurricane

In the event of a hurricane situation, we would follow the Santa Fe ISD weather closure plan. Parents will have ample time to pick up their children. The center will have ample time to prepare for a hurricane weather event. We will remain closed until the hurricane situation is over and will reopen for business when the Santa Fe ISD reopens for school attendance. Should there be damage to the building that would put the children at risk, the facility would remain closed until further notice. The insurance company would be contacted immediately, and the director and staff members will keep all parents up to date of the situation.

### Medical Emergencies

In the event of a situation that would require an ambulance to be sent to the center or a child that would need to be taken to the hospital or clinic, the parents of the child would be contacted immediately. If being transported to a hospital or clinic by director or designated staff member, a personal vehicle will be used. The child's file with emergency numbers and pertinent information will be in possession of the director or designated staff member.

### Communicable Disease Outbreak

In the event of communicable disease outbreak emergency, we would immediately notify the Texas Department of Health and adhere to their rules and regulations. TDFPS would also be notified in compliance with Minimum Standards. The child will immediately be removed from the center, and all parents of the children enrolled will be made aware of the situation by a phone call or a letter sent home. We will be watching closely for symptoms, we will enforce good, general hygiene (hand washing, covering when coughing and sneezing, sanitizing toys and equipment) and will remain in constant contact with the health department and keep parents informed with up-to-date information. The infected child will



only be allowed to return to school with clearance from the health department and the child's personal physician.

### Chemical Spill

In the event of a chemical spill that would directly affect the children in our center, we would relocate to the safe area inside the building, turn off all air conditioning units, and get updated information from a local news source and shelter in place until the situation has been resolved. Parents would be notified of the emergency shelter in place until the situation has been resolved. Parents would be notified of the emergency.

### Intruder with Weapon

In the event of a situation that would involve an intruder with a weapon, the police department would be called immediately. All staff members would be diligent in their efforts to keep the children calm, and parents would be notified of the emergency situation as soon as possible.

### Explosion

In the event of an emergency situation that resulted in an explosion that could directly affect the children enrolled in our center, we would shelter in place, turn off all air conditioning units, and get up-to-date information via cell phone, internet, or local television news source.

## **Taxes**

Brainy Kids Place will furnish parents with a printed statement of the year's child care costs no later than January 31 for tax purposes. One statement per family will be provided. Additional copies will be provided at a cost of \$5.00 per copy.

## **Pest Control**

It is required that childcare centers to post the use of pesticides prior to treating. Our school is treated monthly. Extenuating circumstances may require unplanned treatments. To confirm treatment dates or methods, please speak to the front desk.

## **Discontinuing Enrollment and Dismissal Policy**

Parents may withdraw their child(ren) from Brainy Kids Place by giving a 2 week written notice of intent to withdraw . Charges are incurred until the end of the 2 week notice. If you choose to re-enroll at a later time, we cannot guarantee there will be space available in the same program. If space is available, another registration fee will be required for enrollment. If no notice is given, charges are incurred equal to two weeks of your regular tuition. If your child is absent for two weeks and we have not heard from you, we will dis-enroll your child. Tuition for those two weeks is charged to your account.

Forms are available at the front desk for withdrawing your children and must be given to a member of management. Notifying your child's teacher does not satisfy the requirement of this policy. Please keep us informed of their enrollment.

We work hard to fulfill the needs of every child and to provide a positive learning experience for everyone. Special needs will be accommodated whenever possible. If you feel the need to withdraw your child due to a problem, please address the matter with management before doing so to allow us the opportunity to resolve the issue.

We reserve the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to group care.

In the event that behavior becomes disruptive to the program or becomes a problem that poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the class, alternative arrangements will be required.

If you, as a parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms (including immunization and physician statements), fail to pay your tuition on time, repeatedly fail to pick up your child on time, fail to follow any state or county regulation, fail to follow any Brainy Kids Place policy or procedures, knowingly bring your child ill to the center, give false information to staff either verbally or in writing, or if there are consistent child-rearing style differences between the parent and provider, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from care.

Any and all personal belongings must be picked up from the center within one week of the child's last day of enrollment. After that time, all items will be donated or otherwise disposed of.

## **Standards of Care**

We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and meet or exceed all licensing requirements. Our license, as well as the Director's License, is always displayed in the front lobby. A copy of the minimum standards is available at our school for parents to review. A copy of our latest inspection report from licensing is always posted and also available for parents to review. Please ask the front desk staff for location of these items if you would like to review them.

For information about local day care licensing offices and to view the minimum standards online look on the HHS website at: <https://hhs.texas.gov/> or call the local Family and Protective Services at 713-287-3238 or call 1-800-862-5252.

We monitor the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission recall list to ensure there are no unsafe products present in the center. We file those recalls relating to children, in a binder in the lobby for parents to review. You may access these recalls yourself at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

Parents and guardians of a child at a child care facility have the right to: enter and examine the child care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice; file a complaint against the child care facility; review the child care facility's written records concerning the parent or guardian's child; receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history; have the facility comply

with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child; be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office; inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that: video recordings of the alleged incident are available; the parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and the parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility; obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook; review the facility's staff training record and any in-house training curriculum; and exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.

Children will be observed at drop off and throughout the day for signs of illness or injury. During drop off, please inform your child's teacher of injuries from home or illnesses in the household. Health checks will be conducted on children appearing/complaining of discomfort. Appropriate steps taken will include checking the child's temperature and visually observing the child for injuries, rashes or any area of concern.

## **Accreditation**

Brainy Kids Place strives to be a leader of quality education in the community. We are currently in the process of becoming a Texas Rising Star provider. This is a voluntary quality rating and improvement program. Participation in this program means that we are providing a higher level of care to the children in our program than other licensed programs.

## **Right to Privacy**

Brainy Kids Place maintains confidentiality and respects the families right to privacy. All enrollment documents, medical information, assessments, and photos are considered protected and only used by Brainy Kids Place staff unless the parent gives permission for the release of such items to a third party. Video cameras are for internal use only and footage is not able to be released under any circumstances. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we are required to share confidential information with agencies. In the event a parent does not wish for his/her child to be photographed, they may indicate this preference on the enrollment form.

Employees are prohibited from disclosing information to any person about any child that he/she is not legally responsible for. This includes behaviors and/or consequences, family information, enrollment status, etc. Parents who are found to be illegally obtaining information and/ or records of children that are not their own, will be dismissed from the center and reported to the authorities.

In cases where family members are in conflict with one another, we shall work openly, sharing our observations of the child, to help all parties involved make informed decisions. We shall refrain from becoming an advocate for one party.

## **Prevention of Communicable Diseases**

For the safety of our students, all employees are recommended to obtain a Hepatitis A vaccine, Pertussis vaccine, and an annual flu shot in accordance to recommended CDC adult vaccine schedules. Employees are exempt from this recommendation if they have a

medical condition identified as contraindications or precautions by the CDC or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. If an employee believes they are exempt from this provision, they must provide documentation. For medical conditions, acceptable documentation may include a note from the employee's health care professional providing a statement that the required vaccine is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the individual. For reasons of conscience, acceptable documentation may include a signed and dated statement from the employee that states the employee is exempt for reasons of conscience, including a person's religious beliefs. Brainy Kids Place prohibits discrimination of any kind, and will not take retaliatory action against any employee that is exempt from the required vaccines. All documentation will be kept in the employees personnel file and will be kept confidential.

Employees that are exempt from or do not follow the recommended vaccines will follow the following protective procedures, such as

- Wearing gloves when handling or cleaning body fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending sores;
- Employees with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces, must not prepare food or have close contact with children in care;
- Wearing masks when the employee has respiratory symptoms to reduce the spread of droplets to surrounding areas;
- Wearing masks when taking care of children with respiratory symptoms;
- Removing gloves and washing hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children;
- Excluding the employee from direct care when the employee has signs of illness.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Our employees will complete at least one hour of annual training in child/abuse and neglect focusing on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, including (1) factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect; (2) warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect; (3) internal procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and (4) community organizations that have training programs available to child-care center staff members, children, and parents.

We will increase your awareness and the awareness of our employees on issues regarding child abuse and neglect by routinely sharing information on the types of abuse and neglect, causes of abuse and neglect, the warning signs of abuse and neglect and other related information.

Primary methods of prevention will include the general distribution of information related to child abuse, including how to recognize and report abuse and what resources are available for the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse. We will also utilize services and

interventions targeted to high risk families.

We will utilize strategies to coordinate with community organizations who offer services for high risk families. We provide information programs for pregnant women that encourage prenatal care; teach child care techniques, provide home health visits for newborns, and assist parents of children with special needs. We will identify community and faith-based organizations that sponsor food banks and shelter programs. These programs address the lack of resources such as adequate shelter, child care for working parents, appropriate nutrition, health and mental care, transportation, and education. We will also identify organizations that provide aid in prevention through crisis and emergency services, parent education, domestic violence shelters, and health and mental health treatment for victims.

You must take action if you are aware of abuse or neglect. There are two ways it may be reported. Call 1-800-252-5400, the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide or make a report through the secure website, [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org). You will receive a response within 24 hours. If this is a life threatening or emergency situation, call your local law enforcement agency or 911 immediately.

### **Smoke-Free Premises**

In accordance with state licensing guidelines, Brainy Kids Place buildings, grounds, vehicles, and playgrounds are smoke/vape-free environments. Please do not smoke on the property or throw cigarette butts in the parking lot to protect our children from coming in contact with a discarded butt.

### **Parking Lot**

For the safety of students, parents, and staff, we have a set Entrance Only off of FM 1764 and ask that you park in a parking space. Please do not park under the awning since we encourage you to talk to your child's teacher and a car parked there can easily cause a traffic jam. Once you have picked up your child, we ask that you keep the flow of traffic going and pass under the awning and leave on Ave S.

### **Destruction of Property**

Brainy Kids Place strives to create a community of learners. School pride is encouraged in students by having them share in keeping the school nice and neat. Whenever school property or equipment is damaged, destroyed, or defaced, students and parents will be held responsible. Reasonable damage will be assessed based on consideration of the nature and extend of the damage, the cost of repair, and the circumstances surrounding the incident in which it occurred. Information concerning the cost and value of Brainy Kids Place Property involved will be given to the student and his/her parents or guardians. Parents will be responsible for payment of damages immediately.

### **Gang-Free Zone**

Under Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

## **Non-Discrimination Clause**

Privately-run child care centers must comply with title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The center will make an *individualized assessment* about whether it can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally altering its program.

Brainy Kids Place does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

## **Babysitting**

Brainy Kids Place expects parents and employees to avoid activities that create a conflict of interest to the company. We do not encourage off-site babysitting. Brainy Kids Place offers no assurance of the fitness of its staff members for performing these services off-site, and none should be implied or inferred under any circumstances.

Brainy Kids Place employees are prohibited from transporting children to and from the center who do not belong to them.