



BRIGHT HORIZONS

family guide



Dear Family,

Welcome to **Bright Horizons®**. We know that choosing an early education and child care center for your family is one of the most important decisions you will make. We want to assure you that at Bright Horizons, your child will be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment for learning that enables children to grow through fun, intentional, and developmentally-appropriate activities.

Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Centers are designed with families in mind. We seek to form a partnership with you to foster the learning and healthy development of your child. You are welcome in the center at any time during the day to join your child for lunch, to observe your child in the classroom, or to speak with the teachers, center management, or other families. Our aim is to make our center an active community that fosters friendships and creates a supportive network.

Enrolling in a new center is a big change for your child—and for you. We recognize that adjustment periods will vary depending on the age of your child and prior experiences in a classroom setting. We also understand the pace of modern life. Our teachers and center administrators are very experienced in welcoming new families and will work with you to make the process as seamless as possible. The following are some suggestions for easing the transition for you and your child:

- Visit the center with your child before his or her start day. On one of those visits, let your child explore his or her new classroom while you step out for 15 to 20 minutes. This time will allow your child to associate your departure with a return, and it will allow you to observe your child at play with other children.
- Establish a routine of reading a story or playing a game together in the classroom before you leave. The routine will tell your child that you feel the classroom is a good place to be, not a place from which you want to hurry away.
- Bring a family photograph for your child to look at during the day.
- Say goodbye to your child rather than slipping out. Your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will be back.

As we build our partnership together, please feel free to share new ideas and suggestions. We value the need for close communication between families and teachers. We look forward to getting to know you and to offering you and your child a safe, caring, and joyful educational environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Lissy".

David Lissy,
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Ann Tocio".

Mary Ann Tocio,
President and COO

Table of Contents

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- 5 Family-Teacher Partnership
- 6 A Community of Caring
- 6 Primary Caregiving
- 7 Family Communication
- 7 Bright Learner
- 8 Conflict Resolution
- 8 Family Referral Program

PROGRAM STANDARDS

- 11 Transitions
- 12 Program Quality Standards
- 12 Positive Guidance
- 13 Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children's Aggressive Behavior

WE CARE: HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 17 Health and Safety Practices
- 17 Medical Records
- 18 Child Illness
- 19 Infection Control
- 20 Allergy Prevention
- 20 Food Preferences and Intolerances
- 21 Diapering
- 21 Toilet Learning
- 22 Injury Prevention
- 23 Biting
- 23 Children's Injuries
- 24 Infant Sleep Positions and Crib Furnishings
- 24 Reporting Abuse and Neglect

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 27 Registration Procedure
- 27 Enrollment Procedure
- 27 Tuition/Fees
- 28 Schedule Changes
- 28 Drop Off and Pick-Up
- 29 Late Pick-Up
- 29 Emergency and Back-Up Care
- 29 Program Placement
- 29 Absence
- 30 Non-Discrimination/Confidentiality
- 30 Children's Records
- 31 Regulatory Agencies
- 31 Classroom Observation
- 31 Research Conducted in the Center
- 31 Unrelated Activities
- 31 Babysitting by Center Staff
- 32 Child Illness Policy
- 34 Medication Policies
- 38 Infant Feeding: Bottles and Food
- 38 Breastfeeding
- 39 Meals and Snacks
- 40 Rest
- 40 Clothing Suggestions/Items Needed
- 41 Photographs
- 41 Process of Suspending a Child's Enrollment
- 42 Process of Disenrolling a Family
- 42 Family Behavior
- 42 Center Safety

Note: Information contained in this Family Guide may differ according to state licensing regulations and center-specific policies. This information will be shared with you by center management.



Excellent education and care replicates many of the aspects of a good and loving home, where caring adults nurture children and help them to learn and grow.

Our role is to supplement, but not supplant, the primary role of families in providing care for their children. By establishing and maintaining open and ongoing communication with families, we are able to strengthen the ties that connect the home with our center and enhance the individual development of the children in our care. When families entrust their children to us, we are challenged to have a significant and positive influence by providing a program of the highest quality designed to help give children the foundation they need to build self-esteem, develop school readiness, and reach their full potential in learning.

1

Family Involvement

The center partners with you, the family, to ensure your child's success in school and in life.

Family involvement, family satisfaction, and shared decision making about your child's experience are essential to the Bright Horizons program. We believe the center forms a caring and learning community in which families, staff, and children can interact and grow. We actively work to support family life and create ways to involve families in our program.

Family involvement is an all-purpose term that encompasses family partnership groups and committees, volunteering, family education, and special events. We believe the key to family involvement is giving families a variety of ways to be involved, if they are able, in the life of the center.



Family-Teacher Partnership

The family-teacher partnership at Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Centers helps children build a positive attitude toward themselves, toward language, literacy, and all other areas of the curriculum. Together, we can provide a stronger program for your child to foster a lifelong love of learning. The best teacher and family partnerships are based on frequent opportunities to share information. You can strengthen your family's role as your child's first and most important teacher and share in learning by participating in activities at home as well as at the center. Our *Learning at Home* series will provide you with ideas that tie our curriculum to fun-filled experiences for families. Visit www.brighthorizons.com/education and www.brighthorizons.com/growing for ideas.

Ask center management for copies of *Curriculum at Bright Horizons: A Guide for Families*, and other resource materials to support you as you guide your children through their development and become strong and effective advocates for them.

The following are some of the many ways you can be involved:

- The center's open-door policy welcomes and encourages you to call or visit at any time.
- Family resources are available so that you can find books, articles, CDs, DVDs, and other helpful materials on parenting, child development, health and nutrition, and general work/life and family topics.
- You and your child can grow with us by visiting our *Growing at Bright Horizons* website: www.brighthorizons.com/growing; a resource for families rich in information about early literacy, science, and getting your child "READY for SCHOOL."
- A Family Partnership Group provides a forum to discuss center-wide activities and promote collaboration.
- Parenting seminars, curriculum nights, special events, family breakfasts, potluck dinners, and family support group meetings may be held throughout the year.
- An annual survey allows you to rate and comment on all aspects of the program.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly formal and informal communication takes place through vehicles such as morning and afternoon greetings, daily and weekly journals, classroom bulletin boards, center calendars, posted planning forms, documentation of your child's learning, newsletters, and conferences.
- We encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with center management and staff at any time.
- You are invited to come into your child's classroom and may choose to share a special activity or project.
- You are welcome to join your child for lunch any time you wish.
- Subscribe to our free electronic newsletter, *e.family news*. Written by early education experts, *e.family news* provides parenting advice, strategies, tips, and resources.





A Community of Caring

Each Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Center becomes *a community of caring*, with policies and practices that reflect the community ideas and values of the population served, while respecting the diversity of families and individual differences. Bright Horizons provides a strong vision of quality, appropriate educational practice, and the fundamental characteristics of the community. However, each community will be different, and the program will reflect those differences.

The partnership between families and centers consists of the continual exchange of communication. In this process, families learn a lot about child development and curriculum, and the center learns what parents/guardians feel is important for their children to grow up to be the kind of people they expect them to be. We encourage dialogues with parents/guardians about curriculum, caregiving practices, guidance, cultural events, and celebrations of holidays. The goal of full family partnerships is to build a community and recognize and respect the differences of families and children.

Primary Caregiving

At Bright Horizons we believe in the practice of primary caregiving. Each child at a Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Center is assigned a teacher as the primary caregiver who assumes special responsibility for that child and for communication with his or her parents/guardians, especially during conferences.

Primary caregiving strengthens the link between families, children, and teachers. By assigning a primary caregiver to your child, we are encouraging you to establish a relationship with a particular staff member who will be especially focused on your child's needs and development as well as your concerns. At the same time, education is a team responsibility; all teachers on your child's team will interact with and provide learning experiences for every child in that classroom.

Family Communication

We are committed to creating a strong home and center connection by developing a process of open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and experience at the center. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and the center staff and management.

Daily Experience Sheets and Journals

It is important that everyone who cares for your child has a sense of his or her daily experience, both at home and in the center. Staggered scheduling of staff makes the daily experience sheet or journal, both of which provide written information on your child's experience at the center and at home, a critical communications link. The daily notes and journals will give you a sense of your child's day and keep you informed about his or her experiences.

Notice Boards

Bulletin boards may be located throughout the center (in the foyer, hallways, and classroom entrances) to communicate news, daily events, staff notes, holiday closing dates, center visitors, etc.

E-mail

An e-mail, when possible, is also a wonderful tool to provide families with communication about your child's experience at the center, which may also include a picture of your child in action.

Mailboxes

When center management or teachers have information to share with all families, this information could be left in a mailbox for you, e-mailed to you via the center or classroom distribution list, or left on the check-in/out station screen. Check with your center to find out where your mailbox is and please make sure to check it daily.

Partnership Groups

Family Partnership Groups provide an opportunity for you to be part of a forum in your center to discuss center-wide activities, family education, center updates, and much more. Ask center management for more information about the Family Partnership Group and other ways you can become involved.

Bright Learner™

We begin documenting your child's developmental journey at the initial enrollment. This effort continues through daily communication, observations, recording learning experiences, and assessing your child's development.

Bright Learner™ is the Bright Horizons process for understanding and communicating your child's developmental journey.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is the tool used by teachers to create a digital portfolio of your child, which includes a collection of observations, and documentation of experiences and accomplishments in all developmental areas.

By having access to Teaching Strategies GOLD™ you may view, add to, and comment on the digital portfolio anytime. You will also have access to a variety of activity suggestions to support your child's development and learning at home.



Bright Learner consists of:

- Documenting your child's learning experiences
- Planning based on your child's individual needs, interests, and skills
- Tracking your child's developmental progress in all learning areas through the online assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD™
- Communicating your child's learning experiences on an ongoing basis



The Teaching Strategies GOLD™ assessment component of Bright Learner™ will also provide a developmental picture of your child, relative to general norms, and information on how your child is progressing. It is important to remember that development is a journey, not a race. Children benefit from the individual, measured pacing of the journey, not from achieving developmental milestones at the earliest opportunity.

Conferences are scheduled at least twice a year depending on the age of your child and state licensing requirements. Together, parents/guardians and the child's primary caregiver/teacher will review your child's digital portfolio, the Family Conference Report form, and a summary of your child's development, highlighting your child's learning in different areas. Together, you will also develop goals and next steps for your child. Additional conferences with staff are always available at your request.

Conflict Resolution

In any community, and in the routine and regular process of daily living, there are inevitable situations or conflicts that are potentially negative for individuals or for the community. It is critical that long before conflict arises, an environment already exists that fosters mutual respect, tolerance, and clear, honest communication. The emotional health of a center is determined not by the absence of conflict, but by its quick and intelligent resolution.

Bright Horizons is committed to responding to all family grievances within a 24-hour period and to resolving those grievances as quickly as possible.

Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed within the center. If a specific classroom concern arises, you should discuss the issue with the appropriate teacher. We encourage you to discuss more general center concerns with center management, who will involve staff members as needed.

If you feel that your problem is not yet resolved, you may then wish to speak with a regional manager. Your regional manager's name and telephone number are listed in the back of this guide, along with other important information. If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved at this level, the division vice president is available to pursue the matter further.

Family Referral Program

Satisfied Bright Horizons families are always our best ambassadors. We are thankful when a family who is satisfied with their child's experience tells another family. To reward families for their consideration, we have designed the Bright Horizons Family Referral Program. Through the Family Referral Program, you are eligible to earn unlimited tuition credits. When an enrolled family refers a new family to a Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Center, and the new family enrolls, the referring family receives a tuition credit after the new family has been enrolled for 30 days. To learn more, visit www.brighthorizons.com/familyreferral.

The Family Referral Program is not available in all centers. Please see your center management for details and availability.

2

Program Standards

We recognize how important new beginnings are to each child and to each child's family.



Transitions



At Bright Horizons, we recognize how important new beginnings are in each child's development and to each child's family. We call these new beginnings transitions. We take great effort to make transitions as special and as smooth as possible for children and their families. This is done by slowly integrating children into a new program and by customizing care and communication throughout the transition period.

Initial Transition from Home to Center

The first transition families experience is from the home to the center. We realize that this can often be a difficult period for families as everyone adjusts to new routines and new people. During the transition from home to center, you will receive general information on the program and a daily schedule, meet with your child's teachers, tour the classroom, and meet the other children in the classroom. You are encouraged to discuss the communication methods that work best for you with your child's teachers. Please mention any adjustment problems you anticipate, and, together, we will work to foster the best possible transition. We also recommend that you visit the center several times prior to your child's first day, if possible. By gradually increasing the amount of time your child spends at the center and by leaving your child at the center for longer periods of time, your child will adjust to this new situation.

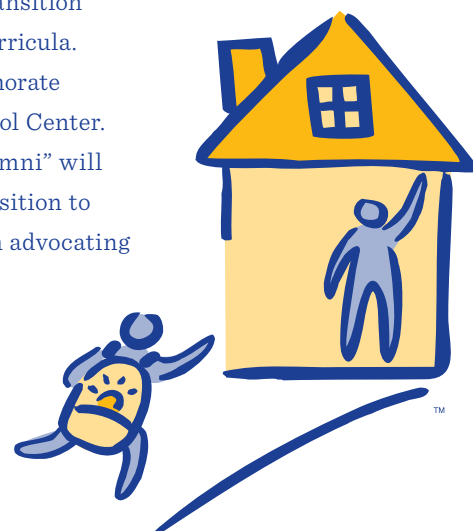
Transitioning to a New Classroom

As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next program based on their age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. There is no set formula. This allows for greater flexibility so that each classroom can change to fit the developmental characteristics of the children enrolled.

During the transition from one program to another, current and future teachers meet with you, and your child is gently integrated into the new environment through a series of visits to the new classroom. We encourage you to visit the new classroom as often as you can so that you too can become accustomed to the environment and bond with your child's new primary caregiver. Special attention is given to your family to support you through these changes. You are encouraged to discuss communication methods that work best for you in order to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout your child's transition.

Taking the Next Big Step: Transitioning to Elementary School

Bright Horizons assists families in the transition from the center to elementary school. Teachers will provide you with information on local schools, help you with ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school, and provide information on what to expect. Transition activities are integrated into the preschool, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten curricula. Children may take a field trip to a local school or create a goodbye book to commemorate special friends and times while at a Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Center. Seminars on "READY for SCHOOL" may be hosted. If possible, some parent "alumni" will be invited to participate and share their experiences regarding their child's transition to elementary school. You may also ask your center management for information on advocating for your children as they enter and transition to elementary school.



Program Quality Standards

We believe that quality is a goal to work toward every day. That is why we have made ongoing self-assessment an integral part of our programs. In addition, many centers participate in a voluntary accreditation process through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or with another external accrediting body and/or a state quality rating and improvement system.

NAEYC has developed standards to define and recognize quality early education programs. To become accredited, a program must go through a rigorous process of self-study involving children, families, and staff. A variety of strict criteria related to providing a developmentally appropriate program must be met. These criteria include having a well-qualified and trained staff, good staff-child ratios and group sizes, and a comprehensive curriculum, as well as meeting stringent health and safety standards. In addition, the program must provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement. At Bright Horizons, our centers strive to meet NAEYC accreditation standards or other state quality standards.

For more information about education at Bright Horizons and for an in-depth look at *The World at Their Fingertips*® curriculum, please refer to your copy of *Curriculum at Bright Horizons: A Guide for Families*, visit www.brighthorizons.com/education, or speak to your center management.

Positive Guidance

Bright Horizons consistently emphasizes basic respect for the individual child. Young children are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting, and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, and appropriate assertiveness. Children learn self-control and how the world works in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the child's struggle toward independence.

Children are accepted as they are — development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways.

In our approach:

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the child, and they are clarified for children so they understand what is expected of them.
- A “yes” environment is created, which enhances and encourages children's positive behavior.
- Teachers model appropriate behavior.
- Teachers encourage children's efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- Children are given alternatives, which enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving are encouraged.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval.
- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a child is a “bad” girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Using bribes, false threats, or false choices.
- Withholding of food or drink, outdoor time, or unrelated activities (e.g., special events) as punishments.
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.





Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children's Aggressive Behavior

In social settings where young children are just beginning to explore and experiment with ways of interacting effectively with their peers, it is not unusual for incidences of aggression to occur. At certain stages in early childhood development, children's desire to communicate their feelings and the need to assert themselves as individuals may often be expressed in non-constructive ways. Children at this stage in their development may sometimes express themselves by hitting another child, grabbing toys, or even biting. As an organization committed to the education and development of young children, Bright Horizons understands the developmental context in which these behaviors may occur, and we provide an environment where children can develop and grow as individuals as they learn more constructive ways of interacting with their peers.

When incidences of aggression do occur, parents/guardians of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (e.g., the time and the place, preceding and subsequent events, the specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt and, more generally, to handle the situation). Plans are developed to teach more appropriate interactions and to prevent the recurrence of the aggressive behavior, and are shared with parents/guardians. However, the identity of the child who engaged in aggressive behavior is not disclosed.

Our policies are designed to promote respect for every child and family we serve. Each child's record is confidential. Consequently, we will not reveal the identity of a child who has engaged in an aggressive act against another, even at the request of the parent/guardian whose child has been the target of that aggressive incident. Knowledge of the aggressor's identity is not necessary to parents'/guardians' understanding of an incident of aggression, or of the actions taken by the center staff to ensure the well-being of their own child. In fact, such knowledge may serve only to stigmatize the other child unnecessarily (and inappropriately, given the developmental context of such behaviors). It may even add to the stress of this child's parents/guardians, who already find themselves in the midst of a difficult situation. The interfamilial conflicts that could also result add nothing constructive to the situation and may hinder its speedy and natural resolution. Therefore, it is in the best interests of all involved parties to maintain a policy of confidentiality in such cases. This policy is consistent with standards for excellence in early childhood education, and it is one practiced consistently by other high-quality child care organizations.

If, in our judgment, any child's behavior places the well-being of others at risk of injury, we will act quickly and decisively to resolve the situation (e.g., through closer supervision, redirection to more appropriate activities, removal from tense situations, firm and consistent limit-setting, and/or provision of alternative outlets for the expression of feelings). If the aggressive behavior continues after exhausting our resources, we may conclude it is in the best interest of the program to suspend a child's enrollment until appropriate outside resources are identified and implemented to both support the child in our program and to reduce the opportunity for injury to others. Our commitment is to provide a quality group-learning environment for every child.



3

WeCare: Health and Safety

3

We Care: The Bright Horizons Program for Health and Safety is an umbrella for our policies and practices that nurture children and keep them healthy and safe.



Health and Safety Practices

Bright Horizons maintains stringent health and safety practices. Our health and safety policies and practices are based on the *Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education; Third Edition*, a joint collaborative project of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. *We Care: The Bright Horizons Program for Health and Safety* is an umbrella for our policies and practices that nurture children and keep them healthy and safe.

Staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including a Bright Horizons background check and state-required background check. Staff members who are certified in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogens (infection control) are present in the center at all times. Bright Horizons employs a corporate risk manager and a health, wellness, and nutrition consultant to advise on all health and safety issues. Comprehensive health and safety checklists are completed and routine fire and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis. In addition, each center has an individual emergency response plan called “Ready to Respond” in place. If an emergency requires the center to evacuate and leave the premises, families can call an emergency hotline number to receive information about the safety and location of their children.

Families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day; however, this “open door” policy may not be used to supplement a custody or visitation schedule. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on the center grounds, Bright Horizons provides its own security keypad system and secured access at most centers, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow others to “piggyback” on your entrance or enter the center upon your departure. Center management will review your center’s security program with you upon enrollment.

Medical Records

In order to protect the health of all children and to satisfy child care regulations, current medical information for each child is required prior to enrollment. The information required varies from state to state. Center management will provide you with the specific information required. These records need to be updated annually, or as required by state licensing if more often, and when new immunizations are given to younger children.



Child Illness

On average, babies experience eight to ten illnesses a year and preschoolers experience almost as many. If a child in care is ill, it may be more difficult for families, staff, and children to balance their respective needs. For example, it may be inconvenient for the family member who has to leave work or school or difficult for staff who are trying to care for a sick child despite other demands of the day. Although everyone shares a concern for the child's well-being, it is easy to get frustrated under the circumstances. We are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these circumstances.

Child's Wellness Check

If your child appears to be ill when brought to the center and he or she cannot be made comfortable, you will be asked to take your child home. If we feel that your child is well enough to attend the center but may be becoming ill, we will monitor your child and update you as necessary.

Reportable Communicable Diseases

When Bright Horizons is notified that a child enrolled in one of our centers or an employee has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures.

Bright Horizons will give serious consideration to all recommendations made by the public health agencies in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventive treatment if available.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza (invasive)
- Hepatitis A
- Measles (including suspected)
- Meningococcal infection (invasive)
- Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspected)
- Tetanus (including suspected)
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

Please refer to your local Public Health Department for the additional requirements in your state, or ask center management for a complete listing.





Infection Control

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, safe food handling, and diapering and toileting procedures (procedures are posted in each classroom). In addition, you may find hand sanitizing stations conveniently located at adult height in the hallways and by classroom doors. Adults are encouraged to sanitize their hands before entering classrooms and other common areas as an additional precaution to prevent the spread of germs; however, this does not replace hand washing with soap and water. Teachers will also engage children in learning activities designed to teach healthy habits.

Bright Horizons will sanitize certain equipment, items, and surfaces using soap and water followed by disinfectant on a regular schedule. The disinfectant can be either a bleach solution or a commercial disinfectant registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The following duties are performed on a regular basis:

- Cribs and infant toys are washed and sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed.
- Crib sheets, crib blankets, and machine-washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis or more often if needed.
- Blankets and washable toys that belong to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.
- Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after each use, including tables and high chair trays.
- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled papers, water tables and water play equipment, play tables, and smooth nonporous floors are cleaned and disinfected daily or whenever there is visible contamination.



Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify the center regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the center with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's physician, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medication (*See Medication Policies on page 34*). A list of children's allergies with their pictures is posted in all the classrooms throughout the center, including the kitchen. Staff members are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Contact with peanuts, or products containing traces of peanuts or peanut oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe peanut allergy. Many Bright Horizons Early Education and Preschool Centers have taken a proactive approach to create a "peanut sensitive" environment or will do so in the event a child in the program develops such an allergy or a child with this allergy is newly enrolled in the program. In these programs, all families and staff are asked to carefully monitor all food ingredients to avoid peanuts and peanut products.

Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of the allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Similarly, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the center by a family member or child, despite our best efforts to educate families and raise awareness. Ultimately, parents/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.

Food Preferences and Intolerances

While we certainly respect all cultures and religions, we are not able to provide and manage food substitutions for the many families we have in our centers, whether that substitution is motivated by religious or cultural reasons, food intolerances, or simply a child's preference. Menus are posted and families are always welcome to bring a meal from home.



Diapering

Children's diapers will be checked at least every two hours and upon awakening and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet.

We understand that as part of the diaper-changing process, you may request that we use baby powder. However, it is Bright Horizons' policy not to use baby powder. While using baby powder, it can get into the baby's lungs, causing swelling and irritation, and could lead to breathing problems. It can also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children when exposed to the broken skin of a diaper rash. A better choice for reducing rubbing and preventing diaper rash is cornstarch, which is coarser and safer than powder. *(See the Medication Policies on page 34 for information regarding the use of diaper cream.)*

Diapers will be changed:

- In accordance with requests of families.
- Consistent with children's physical and emotional abilities.
- In compliance with state regulations.

Toilet Learning

Learning to control one's bodily functions is a childhood rite of passage, and it is of no small concern to all the adults in a child's life — at home and at the center. In our environment, a family-teacher partnership that supports the child is the most important factor in making this experience successful and as low-stress as possible. There are different views on the *when* and *how* of toilet learning, and every culture approaches it differently. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Thus, toilet learning is generally most successful when it is started around that age or later. Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. Bright Horizons' toilet-learning procedures follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and state regulations. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns. Procedures will be posted in each classroom.

The following guidelines will be followed:

- Children will be supervised during toilet learning, and will be encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Toilet learning will not be coerced. The individual developmental abilities of each child will be considered. Children will not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing for their children to change into in the event of a toileting accident. Any extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.
- Families will be kept advised of their child's progress on a regular basis according to family wishes.

Injury Prevention

Teachers for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury. Small toy pieces or other objects that could pose a choking hazard to infants and toddlers will not be allowed in areas designated for children under age three. For the same reason, children's personal items such as barrettes, hair ties, earrings, necklaces, and beaded jewelry are also strongly discouraged in these areas. When visiting your child's classroom, please ensure that purses, briefcases, or backpacks are not left within the reach of children.

Balloons

Broken balloon pieces can be ingested and cause an obstruction of a child's airway. This is possible whether a balloon is inflated or not, as children may bite the balloon or suck it in while attempting to inflate it. As a result, latex balloons are not allowed in Bright Horizons' centers. If you wish to send something special in for your child's birthday or for another celebration, other items could be used such as birthday hats, beach balls, or streamers. Check with center management to find out what is allowed in your center and is appropriate for your child's age group.

Clothing Hazards

Playground safety is a major concern in child care. One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment and creates a hazard that might lead to strangulation or other serious harm. Parents/guardians should be aware of the potential strangulation hazards of drawstrings on clothing.



To prevent injuries from strangulation, children will not be permitted to wear any shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry, or articles that are tied around the neck or waist, including scarves and mittens or gloves secured with a string through the sleeves of a jacket. Please check your child's clothing carefully and remove all drawstrings.

Footwear

Footwear (e.g., sneakers and sandals with backs) that is appropriate for active, outdoor play such as climbing, running, and jumping on various surfaces is strongly recommended. Closed-back shoes are always preferred.

Note: Centers may apply their own center-specific policy regarding footwear during the summer months.

Bibs and Pacifiers

Bibs will not be left on babies when they are placed in cribs or while mobile due to the potential strangulation hazard.

If your child uses a pacifier, you will need to provide staff with at least two pacifiers and instructions for use. Infants will not be forced to take a pacifier for any reason; should the pacifier fall out of the infant's mouth, it does not need to be reinserted.

Pacifiers attached to strings or ribbons cannot be placed around infants' necks or attached to infants' clothing at any time, including activity time and while in their crib, due to the risk of strangulation.

Pacifiers should be labeled using only a non-toxic marker. Tape, adhesive labels, or similar products may become loose over time, becoming a choking hazard.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that almost all young children will try at least once. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families, or teachers. Still, when it happens, it's scary, frustrating, and very stressful for everyone involved.

Brief episodes of biting do not mean that a child is having a social or emotional problem. Nor does it mean the family is to blame. It simply indicates that your child is going through that particular stage in his or her development. As with developmental stages, biting soon ends.

In all cases of biting, our response will be to care for the child who was bitten, to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior, and to examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs. Our focus will not be on punishment but rather on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. We encourage you to talk to your child about this behavior, but we also caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, will not be understood by the child.



Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
- Frustration, anxiety, or stress
- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- Mimicking behavior
- Inexperienced peer interactions
- A way of showing affection
- Exploring cause-and-effect relationships
- Exploring holding on and letting go of relationships
- Making an impact
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement and overstimulation

Children's Injuries

If your child sustains a minor injury while at the center (e.g., scraped knee), you will receive an Occurrence Report outlining the incident and course of action taken by the staff member. Minor wounds, such as cuts, scrapes, or bites, will be washed with liquid soap and cool, running water followed by rinsing. A dry bandage or dressing may be applied as appropriate. You will be contacted immediately if the injury produces any type of swelling, is on the face or head, or needs medical attention.

If a serious medical emergency occurs, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, and a staff member will contact you (or a designated emergency contact if you cannot be reached).