



Bright Start

Early Childhood Center

Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church

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www.brightstartearlychildhoodcenter.org

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2018-2019

Bright Start is a non-sectarian, non-profit child care center which operates under the auspices of the Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church with a separate Board of Directors and budget. It has been located in the church since 2000 with a special wing built in 2003 to accommodate the child care.

Our **Mission** is to provide nurturing child care and a developmentally appropriate early educational environment where children ages 2 ½ through 5 may come to play and learn in a safe, inclusive and non-competitive setting.

The mission of **Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church** is to be in partnership with God to transform ourselves, our communities, and our world. Bright Start is a major mission of the church. Because the church believes in making early childhood care and enrichment an affordable option for all families in the community, the church provides the facilities at no charge to enable us to offer tuition reductions to families who are income eligible. Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church invites our families to participate in any of their programs and activities and to avail themselves of pastoral services if desired.

We use The Creative Curriculum, a research based program, to help us organize our curriculum. We also follow the State of Maine Early Childhood Learning Guidelines to further define our program.

Our **Vision** is to provide a child care program which offers safety and fun in a stimulating environment. The emphasis is on setting up the environment with interest areas and the vital role of the teacher in connecting content, teaching and learning for preschool children.

Our Preschool module introduces group learning and beginning early educational skill-building activities. Daily planned activities include a great mix of stories (read and told), creative art, music, rhythm and movement, dramatic play, beginning math and science concepts, block building, play in the sand/water table, beginning computer skills, familiarity with colors, letters and numbers, games, laughter, fun and a whole lot more. Ours is a very open-ended curriculum, which allows our teachers to expand upon themes and activities enabling us to meet the development and skill levels of a variety of ages. Large muscle and outdoor play on our large well-equipped playground are important parts of our daily program.

K-Ready, our kindergarten readiness module, is offered in the afternoon for children ages 4 – kindergarten and is an added opportunity to practice and further hone the early learning skills introduced in preschool—skills they need for early success in the kindergarten classroom. In K-Ready, pre-reading, pre-writing, and pre-math skills are practiced in a variety of fun and interesting activities. Children learn through literacy activities, sequencing, matching, sorting, patterning, cutting, coloring, etc. We highlight one letter of the alphabet each week throughout the school year and work on letter sounds and sight words. We also practice name recognition and writing.

Music with Miss Anna is an enrichment module that is provided for all children at Bright Start each week. Anna Williams received her music training at Tyumen Arts College in Russia. She has been teaching music to young children for several years. She loves sharing her love of music through songs, puppets, dance activities and stories. We are delighted to have her join us each week for music.

Get Up and Go

Each week we offer a movement and gymnastics program with Nadine Tafel, a licensed aerobic/zumba instructor. The children attend in small groups for some dancing and movement followed by gymnastic training. Nadine works on somersaults, cartwheels and other floor movements. Her enthusiasm and lively music adds a new and exciting dimension to enrich our curriculum.

Music & gymnastics are enrichment modules that are included in our weekly rates – there is no additional fee charged.

Our regular Preschool and K-Ready programs follow the public school calendar—September-June. We then have our Summer Playschool program for nine weeks in the summer. It has many of the same offerings but is a bit less structured and has more outside play time and field trip excursions. We are open year round only closing for 13 major holidays.

Special Services

Bright Start contracts with the local Child Development Services in Cumberland, Kennebec and Androscoggin counties to serve as a site for various therapies for special needs students. This means that while the children are here a therapist comes to our center to provide them with services. This may include speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and developmental therapy. At times we have had children enrolled with a one-on-one aid during their time here. We also make referrals to CDS for evaluations for children we enroll.

Family Involvement

Bright Start believes that family involvement is essential to every child's development. Children need to be treated with respect and warmth in an accepting and positive environment where the needs of the whole child, and also the child's family, are met. Some ways families can be involved are:

- Save recyclables, such as toilet paper rolls, plastic containers, lace, fabric scraps, etc.
- Send in ideas for art activities and our weekly themes
- Share ideas for snacks and a favorite family recipe
- Make snacks for the children
- Share family traditions
- Come in to read to the children as a special guest
- Volunteer in the classroom as work schedules allow.

We encourage family members to visit our center when we're in session, offer their skills for enrichment possibilities, and participate when they are able. We assess each child's progress on a developmental continuum and have parent-teacher conferences twice a year to share that information. Whenever families have questions or concerns, the door is open so we can talk about them. Twice a year we have an evening of refreshments and activities for Board, Staff, Volunteers, and all the Bright Start children and their families. There is a weekly newsletter to keep families informed on what is happening at Bright Start as well as a monthly calendar with themes and activities listed.

Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that every child, regardless of economic circumstances, culture, religion, physical or emotional delay or disability, is deserving of a safe and nurturing space in which to grow and learn. Inclusion is an integral part of Bright Start's dedication to valuing all children. Children and their families of all faiths and cultures are welcomed and respected here. Bright Start is a non-profit, non-sectarian child care center. We encourage children and their families to bring their cultural and faith-based traditions into the classroom to inform and share with us.

Field Trips

Bright Start has a tradition of providing community service and involving our children with intergenerational opportunities. Thus we make visits to various programs in the community. We also have field trips to the library. For these field trips, we contract with Brunswick Taxi to transport the children in their van and we have the children use their own car seats. Once a year, in the summer, we have an all-school field trip and picnic. For that experience we contract with Bath Bus Service to provide a school bus. Unfortunately, the school bus does not have seat belts or the ability to use car seats, but we have not been able to find any other way to transport such a large group. Parents are invited to join us or to follow us in their own vehicles if they wish.

Licensing

We are licensed by the State of Maine to provide child care. **The Rules for the Licensing of Children's Day Care Facilities, a publication prepared by the Child Care Licensing Unit of the Maine Department of Human Services, is available for you to read. Please ask to borrow a copy if you are interested.** If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the director about them. Licensing violations can be reported to DHHS at 1-800-606-0215 or 207-287-9300

We are also at Step 1 on the Quality Rating and Improvement Scale. This is a state wide rating system for child care centers. Our certificate is posted on the office window, as is our license.

Upon enrolling your child at Bright Start, you will need to:

...Fill out a personal history form, emergency form, child dismissal form, transportation permission. These will need to be updated whenever circumstances change.

...Sign an enrollment form, including the information about the required one week deposit.

...Provide proof of up-to-date medical vaccinations—a photocopy of your pediatrician's vaccination record works best (this will need to be updated regularly as your child receives additional inoculations.),

...Bring in a backpack, tote bag or something similar to contain their belongings. **Please be sure to clearly mark the outside of the bag with your child's name as well as the clothes themselves,** There should always be at least one complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks, in the bag.

...A one week supply of diapers or pull-ups and wet wipes, if your child uses them, marked with your child's name and replenished as needed.

Clothing

A word about clothing...

Please give consideration to the clothes you send in for your child as well as those that your child wears each day. Children need a wide variety of experiences to learn about the world. Some learning experiences can get messy. **Children need to know that if they get paint or mud or whatever on their clothes, it will be okay!** Please do not send your child to day care or preschool in clothes that can't get messy. If a child is concerned about such things, they are not fully able to immerse themselves in the learning process and therefore will not learn as much from their experiences.

Lunch

Children enrolled to attend Bright Start through the lunch hour (12-1) must bring a lunch from home. Our kitchen facilities are very limited, so children must have ice packs in their lunch boxes to keep their food fresh and cool. **Please note: We are a nut-free school and keep that in mind when preparing your children's lunches.**

Providing good nutrition for your child is a partnership. We at Bright Start, ask for your support:

*For packed lunches, please include fruits and/or vegetables

*For celebrations and birthdays please provide healthy foods such as whole grain muffins. We have suggestions if you like.

*For snacks we will serve only 1% milk or water for our children aged 2 ½ - 5. Water bottles will be encouraged for each child and water will be available to all children at all times indoors and outdoors. Cups and pitchers of water will be available in the classroom, large motor room and playground.

Toys from Home

For those children who nap here, we encourage you to send a special stuffed animal or doll to cuddle with at quiet time if that provides your child comfort while away from home. Older children may bring items for Show and Tell. They will be asked to keep their treasures in their cubbies for most of the day. We don't want to lose special toys. We appreciate the fact that children like to show and share what they have. This is also an excellent time to strengthen your child's language and social skills.

Transition Times

If your child has some difficulty either letting you go in the morning or leaving the Center at the close of the day, please allow yourself enough time to do an activity with them (5 minutes or so) to help them with this transitioning. Do remember that our preschool program begins at 9:00 and that the Center closes at 5:30, and allow that extra time in your schedule so that you can meet those times.

Celebrating Birthdays

In order to provide the same kind of celebration for each child, we will provide a birthday hat for the birthday child and a candle to put in their snack that day when we will all sing Happy Birthday. If you want to provide muffins or cupcakes for snack that day, it would be appreciated but not required.

Child Illness Policy

When children are sick, they should not be brought to Bright Start. They feel better in their own homes, recuperate faster, and are somewhat less likely to share their illness with the rest of our Bright Start community.

If your child has any of these symptoms: not feeling well enough to participate in regular daily activities here including outside play, fever of 100 degrees or higher, continuing diarrhea, vomiting within the last 12-18 hrs, an excessively runny nose, or a cough of any significance, please keep him/her home until the worst of the symptoms subside. If your child is diagnosed with strep, they must be on an antibiotic medication for 24 hrs. before returning to Bright Start. If your child has chicken pox, they must remain at home until the pox scab over (usually 5-7 days following initial outbreak).

We will not administer medication of any kind without explicit, written directions from home or from the doctor. Forms for this purpose are available from the Bright Start Office.

Discipline and Positive Guidance

Two key words describing our discipline policy are gentle and firm. Rules are established and children are expected and helped to follow them. When a child has difficulty behaving appropriately, we employ positive guidance techniques to help them successfully negotiate for what they want or need. We teach and encourage children to express their feelings using words. We also discuss alternative behaviors to help them achieve the desired goal in a positive way. We occasionally offer a child quiet time along with strategies, i.e., hugs, going for a walk, having some alone time, etc., to help the child calm his/her body. The undesirable behavior is always explained and teachers always discuss options for alternative behaviors that help children develop problem-solving strategies before returning to the group or activity.

Positive guidance techniques and good social skills development go hand-in-hand. Learning to use good manners is an integral part of a child's development and preparation for managing well in the elementary school setting and in the outside world. Good social skills learned early on will help pave the way through many of life's complexities and will result in life-long benefits to the child who uses them. Throughout the day there are a myriad of "teachable moments" to help children with their developing social skills.

Super hero and weapon play are not part of our program. Studies of preschool age children indicate that this is a time when distinctions between fantasy and reality are often fuzzy. This play can transform a child into a power figure who uses violence to settle problems. We encourage children to settle differences through the use of words. We strive to empower them through success in work, play, physical challenges and human interactions. We are committed to peaceful resolutions of all conflicts. Even a tee shirt with these images can alter a child's behavior and self-concept. We ask that super hero costumes and clothing with super hero figures stay at home.

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Drill Procedure:

In case of fire or in the event that the smoke and/or heat sensors trigger the alarm and/or sprinkler system(s), staff will direct children to evacuate the building in an orderly manner using the safest and nearest route. Possibilities include the front door, side door to the courtyard, door to the playground, door facing Main St., and window exit from the Yellow Room. Various escape routes are practiced during our monthly drills, varying from month to month. If children are outside on the playground during an emergency they will exit through the playground gate and proceed to the far end of the parking lot. The Director or staff member in charge will check the bathrooms and hallways for children prior to departure from the building. Staff will take both the sign-in sheets for children and for staff/volunteers. Staff will group their children together and lead them to the far end of the parking lot where they will take attendance. All children and adults will be accounted for. They will wait here until there is an “all clear” signal. Egress is also possible through the window in the Yellow Room and this window is clearly marked.

Emergency drills will be practiced and documented every month to ensure the children understand the evacuation process. Various routes will be used to evacuate and drill will occur during different times in the daily schedule.

Code of Ethics

At Bright Start we follow the guidelines for responsible behavior in early childhood education established by The National Association for the Education of Young Children. This code of ethical conduct outlines our professional responsibilities in our relationships with children, families, colleagues, community and society.

The basic principles are:

- ...Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- ...Base our work with children on knowledge of child development
- ...Appreciate and support the close ties between child and family
- ...Recognize that children are best understood in the context of family, culture and society
- ...Respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, colleague)
- ...Help children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on mutual trust, respect and positive regard
- ...Above all, we shall not harm children or participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitive, intimidating, psychologically damaging or physically harmful to children

OUR HOURS OF OPERATION ARE 6:30 AM – 5:30 PM YEAR ROUND

DAILY SCHEDULE

- 6:30** Open – Choice of Activities
7:30 Breakfast for those who want it
8:45 Three groups formed – Caterpillars, Butterpillars & Butterflies
9:00 Children Welcomed; Circle Time
- 9:20** Choice Time with Choice of Activities in Interest Areas –Butterflies
Outside Play or Large Muscle Activities – Caterpillars & Butterpillars
- 10:30** Morning Snack, Circle, Preparation for Outdoor Play or Caterpillars and Butterpillars coming inside.
- 11:00 -12** Choice Time with Choice of Activities in Interest Areas – Caterpillars & Butterpillars
Outside play or Large Muscle Activities - Butterflies
- 12:00** Lunch (Lunch must be provided from home.)
- 12:30 – 2:30** Quiet Time and Nap Time Younger children nap in the nap room. Older children rest for a half hour on mats in the classroom.
- 1:00 – 2:30** K Ready group for older children
Naptime for Caterpillars & Butterpillars
- 2:30** Afternoon Snack
3:00 Outside play time.
4:00 Choice of Activities
5:30 Close

This schedule is prepared to provide a reasonable representation of the rhythm of our days. From time-to-time some variations in our routine will occur.

Staffing

Director – Eileen Twiddy joined the Bright Start team on March 1, 2008. She has a BA in Elementary Education, a MSED in Education and a Child Development Associate Credential. She has over 30 years experience in Early Childhood Education. Prior to joining Bright Start Eileen worked for 20 years as Director of a Head Start program in upstate New York. She has also done adult education through Empire State College and The State University of New York. She is a Level 6 on the Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) Administrative Registry. The Director is responsible for supervising all staff. She is CPR and First Aid Certified.

Head Teacher – Eve Puay Lee joined our teaching team in February of 2007. She comes to us from Singapore, having moved to Bowdoinham in June of 2006. She has been trained in early childhood education in Singapore and in Australia. She worked in child care centers for 16 years in Singapore. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in education. Eve is a Level 7 Direct Care Provider on the Maine Roads to Quality Registry. She is CPR and First Aid Certified.

Darah DiMare started working with us in September of 2014. She has worked with children on a Carnival Cruise Line as well as at the Brunswick Parks and Recreation Program. Darah has taken several courses in early childhood education and is Level 2 on the Maine Roads to Quality. She is CPR and First Aid Certified.

Jill Arnold – started working with us in October 2016. She has taken courses at Southern Maine Community College in Early Childhood Education. Her work experience includes being a Home School teacher and also teacher at two local preschools. She is level 1 on the Center Based Maine Roads to Quality. She is CPR and First Aid certified.

Kayla Barnes – became a full time employee in Sept. 2017. She had been subbing with us since November of 2016. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from UM at Augusta. She is certified as a Tech 3 under the Dept. of Education. She is a Level 6 Center Based Professional on the Maine Roads to Quality. She is First Aid and CPR certified.

Richelle Niles – joined our permanent staff in Jan. of 2018. She has worked with us previously and returns to offer support to the Butterfly group. She has several work experiences with children and has also worked with the elderly. She is level Novice on the Maine Roads to Quality. She also has expertise in gardening and landscaping and will be assisting us with our Bright Start garden. She is First Aid and CPR certified.

ALL STAFF MEMBERS OF BRIGHT START ARE DESIGNATED BY THE STATE AS MANDATED REPORTERS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WHEN THERE IS REASONABLE CAUSE TO SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 18.

ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER OF BRIGHT START IS REQUIRED TO BRING ANY CONCERNS REGARDING ABUSE OR NEGLECT, OF ANY CHILD ATTENDING THE CENTER, TO THE ATTENTION OF THE DIRECTOR, HEAD TEACHER OR CHAIRPERSON OF THE ADVISORY BOARD.

Volunteers

Shirley Reese volunteered her time in 2000-2004 to Bright Start to develop and teach our K-Ready program and in 2004-2005 as Bright Start Director. Shirley is a “retired” elementary school teacher. She has a Master’s Degree in Education with a concentration in reading. Her experience in the classroom is in early elementary education. She has taught grades 1-3 in both traditional and non-traditional settings. She moved to Maine in 1999 with her husband Dick. She is an Elder of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church.

Marci Clark comes in to help out whenever we need her. She is a former teacher and enjoys working with the children. She is a member of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church.

Judy Diemer comes to us twice a week from the Center for Independent Living. She helps with snack, does baking and helps out with other chores that need to be done.

Linda Pappin is a member of our Board of Directors. She volunteers to read to our children one day a week. She is also a former administrative assistant for the program. She is a member of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church

Debbie Paterson is a member of the Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church. She enjoys coming in to read to the children once a week. She has also volunteered at various times when we needed help.

Pastor Diane Hoppe-Hugo is currently the pastor at Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church and when her schedule allows she loves to come in and read to our children. It is often in the afternoon that she is free to join us. We love having her.

Board of Directors

Bright Start has a Board of Directors selected from within the Church and within the community. The Board of Directors role is to oversee the operation of Bright Start and its Director. Current members are:

Joanne Hardy – Treasurer

Shirley Reese- Advisor

Marci Clark – Advisor

Christine Walker – Community Representative

Jennifer Michaud – Parent Representative

Meghan Aldrich – Parent Representative

Eileen Twiddy – Bright Start Director

Diane Hoppe-Hugo – Pastor Mid-Coast
Presbyterian Church

Linda Pappin - Advisor

Please read and make note of the calendar below. Our calendar closely coincides with the SAD 75 school calendar, but they are not identical. Please also note days we are closed due to Church-related activities.

2018-2019 HOLIDAY AND CLOSURE SCHEDULE

August 24 -Last Day of Summer Program
Aug. 30 & 31 – Staff Development Days *Bright Start closed*
September 3 - Labor Day *Bright Start closed*
September 4 - First Day of Fall Program
October 8 - Columbus Day *Bright Start closed.*
November 21 - *Closing at 3:00 !*
November 22 & 23 - Thanksgiving Holiday *Bright Start closed.*
December 24 & 25 – Christmas Holiday *Bright Start closed.*
December 31 – New Year’s Eve – *Bright Start closing at 3 PM*
January 1 - New Year’s Holiday *Bright Start closed.*
January 21 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day *Bright Start closed.*
February 18 - Presidents’ Day *Bright Start closed.*
April 15 – Patriot’s Day *Bright Start closed*
April 19 - Good Friday – Christian Holy Day *Bright Start closed.*
May 27 - Memorial Day *Bright Start closed.*
June 14 - Final day of Program Year
June 21 - Staff Development Day *Bright Start closed.*
June 24 – First Day of Summer Program
\July 4 – Independence Day *Bright Start closed*

SNOW DAYS: Because of strict licensing regulations that relate to our staff-to-student ratios, and in consideration of the safety of our teachers who live in outlying areas, it is necessary for us to close on “snow days”. **Rule of thumb:** If SAD 75 is closed for inclement weather, Bright Start will be closed as well. In the event of a storm during school vacation or school closure day, when we would normally be open, we will contact local media and post our closing as “Bright Start Child Care – All Programs Closed.” Watch for closing notices on WCSH-TV. Channel 6.

Payment Policy

In order for Bright Start to provide the level of service that is expected, it is necessary that tuition payments be made in a timely manner. **Payment is due weekly regardless of attendance, holiday, sick day, snow day, staff development day, etc—all tuition fees have been calculated with these eventualities in mind.** Payment is due on Monday morning (or first morning of attendance) of each week.

If payments are missed and two late notices have been sent without a response from you, and if Bright Start has not been notified of any extenuating circumstances, a two-week termination notice will be sent. We are more than willing to speak with you and make payment arrangements if necessary.

Enrollment Options & Payment Specifics

Our fee structure has been calculated to provide the highest quality programming for the lowest possible fees. The fees already allow for days missed due to holidays, potential snow days, staff development days, etc. and therefore are due and payable in full on the first day of each week.

A ONE-WEEK TUITION DEPOSIT plus a \$30 registration fee per child is required to reserve your child's enrollment. If the trial period described below has passed and your child remains at Bright Start, the tuition deposit can only be either applied toward the final week of childcare/preschool or forfeited if the child does not attend Bright Start as agreed. A two week written notice of withdrawal is required to be eligible for credit of your tuition deposit. After the completion of the initial two-week trial period, **there will be no cash refunds.**

Trial Period

The first two weeks of enrollment will serve as a trial period in order to ensure an appropriate match between your child and Bright Start. At the end of the trial period if either parents or Bright Start determines that the setting is not appropriate, the child will be withdrawn and the one-week deposit will be refunded.

It is a goal of Bright Start and Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church to make early childhood enrichment an affordable option for all families in the community. **Bright Start offers tuition reductions to families who are income eligible. We encourage you to bring questions regarding financial assistance or any special circumstances about your family to our Director. We would like the opportunity to work with you to make our program accessible to your child.**

RATE SCHEDULE – Effective 09/01/18

OPTIONS	Rate as of 09/1/18
CHILD CARE	
Full Time 9 hrs./day	\$ 180/wk
Extended Day 9 – 11 hr/day	\$ 195/wk.
Modified Day M-F 9 – 3	\$ 160/wk
PRE-SCHOOL OR K-READY PROGRAM	
5 Mornings M-F 9:00 – 11:45 or 1:00 – 3:00	\$ 100/wk.
3 Mornings MWF 9-11:45	\$ 68/wk
3 Mornings of your choice	\$ 74/wk.
2 Mornings T-Th	\$ 57/wk.
2 Mornings of your choice	\$ 62/wk.
Add lunch to half day	\$ 16/wk.
VARIABLE OPTIONS	
Full Time Child Care 2 days of your choice	\$ 54/day
Full Time Child Care 3 days of your choice	\$ 49/day
Full Time Child Care 4 days of your choice	\$ 44/day

The Preschool Music and Get Up and Go Gymnastics program are included in all tuition charges. Music sessions are on Thursdays every week with Get Up and Go on Wednesdays every week.

If there are **two or more children in the same family**, the full rate is charged for the first child, with a 10% discount for any additional children.

Fee For Late Pick-Up

It is important to the smooth operation of our center that children arrive and depart promptly and according to the written agreement made at time of enrollment. Therefore, we have found it necessary to establish a late fee policy. It is always necessary to call Bright Start as soon as possible upon knowing you will be late. Our rates for late pick-up are: \$5 at ten minutes beyond our 5:30 closing time. \$1 per minute for each additional minute late up to 15 minutes, \$2 per minute for each additional minute beyond the first 15 minutes up to 30 minutes. These fees are over and above weekly tuition fees and are due no later than the next tuition payment.

Summer Playschool Program

This nine week program is for the same hours as the preschool program during the school year. Fees are the same as for the preschool program.

Revised 9/1/2018