



# PARENT HANDBOOK

School year 2018-19

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## About Morningstar

### **Mission Statement**

Morningstar Learning Center's mission is to provide quality care by promoting a child's development in a loving, learning, safe and stimulating environment.

Teachers will provide a rich learning environment in which children can explore their world, and be exposed to a variety of experiences to help deepen their understanding. We believe children learn best through a combination of teacher-directed and child-initiated methods, through both guided play and open-ended activities. We believe play is how a child accesses the complexities of the world, and is the primary way they learn about the world around them. It is our belief that through play, children will learn cooperation and problem solving, develop language, mathematics and social skills, and gain independence, self-direction and self-esteem.

### **Our Program**

Our staff consists of an Executive Director, an Assistant Executive Director, Lead Teachers, and Teacher Aides. In planning our learning blocks, we use the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines and benchmarks. Our classroom will be busy, fun, age appropriate, and focused.

### **Chain of Command**

The Executive Director (ED), Stephanie Byam, is under direct guidance of the Morningstar Learning Center Board of Directors. All issues pertaining to licensing, curriculum and program development should be directed to the ED. All issues pertaining to enrollment, billing, payments, etc. may be directed to the ED or AED. If you have questions specifically relating to your child, please contact your child's lead teacher. If you feel your concern has not been taken care of, please contact the ED.

## Policies

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents are welcome in the classroom to assist in crafts, reading aloud to the children, joining in or leading an activity, having lunch, or assist in other appropriate ways. We encourage parents to inquire about their child's day and participate in it when possible. However, if your child becomes upset about your coming and going or if your visits become a distraction, we will reassess the situation on a case by case basis. Please remember our teachers need to be attentive to the children at all times and we ask that socializing with teachers be kept to a minimum during parent visits.

### **Discipline Philosophy**

Discipline shall include positive guidance, modeling, redirection, positive reinforcement, offering of alternative choices, and the setting of clear limits that foster the child's ability to become self-disciplined. All teachers will use these appropriate forms of discipline. Physical punishment, including spanking or other forms of corporal punishment, is ***strictly prohibited*** in all child care facilities in the State of Montana. Any punishment or discipline which is humiliating, shaming, frightening, or otherwise damaging is strictly prohibited. This type of behavior will not be permitted in the facility by parents or teachers and could be cause for dismissal from the school.

### **Dismissal from Morningstar Learning Center**

Morningstar Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss a child from our care for non-payment of tuition, inappropriate parent behavior at the Center, parent's unwillingness to cooperate with the teachers when dealing with Child Behavior Problem Solving tactics, non-communication about important changes in the child's life, etc. Communication and cooperation is vital to the success of your child's experience!

### **Emergency Medical Procedures**

In case of a serious injury, Morningstar staff members will immediately call 911. Two stocked first aid kits are kept on site and at least one will be taken on all off-site trips. Simple injuries will be handled by staff who all hold current certification in Adult and Child CPR and First Aid. Staff will follow procedures of the American Red Cross or American Heart Association Training.

In case of ingestion or suspicion of ingestion of a poisonous or toxic substance Morningstar staff members will call the Poison Control Center. A list of medical emergency numbers is posted by the phone at all times. Reminder posters of First Aid and CPR are also posted. All injuries will be recorded and reported to parents. Some injuries may require a parent to come to the preschool to check the injury. In some cases, an injury may require an ambulance ride to the hospital or a visit to the doctor. A parent may be called on other minor injuries or informed when they pick up their child.

## **Illness Policy**

To prevent the spread of illness and provide a healthy environment for all, a staff member will assess each child's health upon arrival at preschool. Any child showing symptoms of illness will be excluded from Morningstar based on the following state guidelines:

- Children must not have a fever of 101 degrees F or greater without the aid of medication for 24 hours before they return to the preschool. This does not apply to children with immunization related fevers, who need not be excluded if they are able to participate in normal school activities.
- Children must be free of vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before they return to Morningstar. Vomiting includes two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools, increased water in the stool and or decreased form to the stool that cannot be contained by clothing.
- Children with any of the bacterial infections below must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to Morningstar.

1-Strep throat

2-Scarlet fever

3-Impetigo

4-Bacterial conjunctivitis

5-Skin infections such as draining burns, infected wounds or hangnails

- Generalized rashes, including those covering multiple parts of the body must be evaluated by a health care provider to determine their cause before the child can return to Morningstar.
- Children with Head lice, Hand, Foot and Mouth disease, or any other infestation until resolved, or a doctor's note, may not attend Morningstar.
- Children with chickenpox may not be admitted to Morningstar until their sores dry up, which usually takes five to seven days.
- Children who are jaundiced must be excluded pending health care provider evaluation of the cause and authorization to return to Morningstar.
- Children with symptoms of severe illness, such as uncontrolled coughing, breathing difficulty or wheezing, stiff neck, irritability, poor food or fluid intake or a seizure must be evaluated by a health care provider before they may return to Morningstar.
- A child may not be excluded for a discharge from the nose which is not accompanied by a fever.
- If a child develops symptoms of illness while at Morningstar and after the parent has left, the staff must do the following:
  1. Isolate the child from the other children.
  2. Contact and inform the parents as soon as possible to request that they pick up the child.
  3. Report communicable diseases to Gallatin Co. Health Dept.
- Morningstar may readmit a child excluded for illness whenever, in its discretion:
  1. the child either shows no symptoms of illness;

2. the child has been free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours; or
3. the child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours for bacterial infections

The parent or guardian may also provide the preschool with a signed certification of health from a licensed physician, except the following restrictions must be followed:

- If a child is excluded for shigellosis or salmonella, the child may not be readmitted until the child has no diarrhea or fever, the child's parent or guardian produces documentation that two stools, taken at least 24 hours apart, are negative approval for the child to be readmitted to Morningstar.
- If a child is excluded for Hepatitis A virus infection, the child shall remain excluded until either one week after onset of illness or jaundice, if the symptoms are mild, or until immune globulin has been administered to appropriate children and staff in Morningstar as directed by the local health authority.

The parents or guardian must pick up their child or send an emergency contact within 2 hours of being notified of an illness.

Please refer to the Enrollment section to learn about Morningstar's Sick Day refund policy.

### **Immunizations**

The Montana State Health Department requires that all preschool children be up to date on required immunizations before enrollment.

A child seeking to attend Morningstar is not required to have any immunizations, which are medically contraindicated. A written and signed statement from a physician that an immunization is medically contraindicated will exempt a child from the applicable immunization requirements for this rule.

### **Medication Policy**

Morningstar staff may administer medication, prescription or non-prescription, to a child at preschool if they have completed the Medication Administration in Childcare course and have written authorization of the parents including the child's name, date or dates for which the authorization is applicable, dosage instructions, and the signature of the child's parent or guardian. The State of Montana Medication Authorization Form must be completed prior to a teacher administering any medications. The medication must be kept in the original container labeled by a pharmacist or, for nonprescription medication, kept in the original container labeled with the date, child's first and last name, specific legible instructions for administration and storage, and the name of the health care provider, parent, or guardian who made the recommendation.

### **Safe Infant Sleep**

Morningstar Learning Center follows the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment for infants and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Our protocol addresses infant sleep position, sleep environment, supervision during sleep, and staff training. Please see appendix 3 to review our entire policy.

### **School Closures**

In the event of inclement weather forcing Big Sky School District to close schools, our daycare will also be closed. If we have an unforeseen incident affecting our ability to run our programs, we will close school. Families will be notified as soon as possible.

### **Abuse and Neglect**

As a Montana State Licensed Childcare Provider it is mandatory for our staff to report child abuse and or neglect.

### **Fire Drills**

Morningstar Learning Center will conduct monthly fire drills. A fire drill procedure is posted throughout the building by the escape route and our evacuation plan will be followed each time until no danger exists.

## Program

### Hours of Operation

Morningstar is open weekdays.

- Early Arrival: 7:30am-8:30am
- Daily Program: 8:30am-5:30pm

### Adjusting to Daycare

Your child's transition to Morningstar Learning Center is going to be a big event in his or her life and it should be handled with consideration and care. Please schedule a time with the Executive Teacher to come in and show your child their new classroom and cubby before their first day. It is not unusual for a child to become emotional when separating from a family member or loved one, especially in a new environment with new faces. Be encouraging as you drop your child off as your body language, eyes, and smile communicate a lot. We recommend creating and sticking to a routine each day you drop off your child. Each classroom has a set routine for check-in each day; please check with your child's Lead Teacher if you are unsure of the routine for his or her classroom.

### Classroom Placement

The general age for classroom placement is as follows:

Infants: 6 months-23 months

Toddler Two's: 24 months-3 years

Toddler Three's: 3 years - 4 years

Preschool: 4 years - 5 years

Morningstar Learning Center understands that age is not a reliable factor in determining a child's readiness to move to the next classroom. We have identified a few developmental milestones to consider when determining a child's placement.

Infants - toddlers: When children are at the cusp between these classrooms, teachers consider the following:

- gross motor skills (walking, running, throwing),
- fine motor skills (holding a writing utensil), and
- language acquisition (includes receptive and expressive language. For example: can speak more than 50 words, can sometimes follow 2-step directions).

Toddlers - Preschool: When children are at the cusp between these classrooms, teachers consider the following:

- can sit at attention for 3-4 minutes (for example: during group projects),
- potty trained
- fine motor skills (can trace), and
- language acquisition (can verbalize wants and needs, can consistently follow 2-step directions).

If a child shows some signs of readiness, the staff has created times during the day for students to experience the next classroom. Your child will stay in the next classroom until the activity has been completed and then return to his/her current classroom. Students may stay in this transition between class time for a few weeks or a few months until teachers feel they are able to transition fully. If you have questions/comments or concerns about your child's placement, please contact your child's Lead Teacher and the Executive Teacher.

### **Daily Routines**

- Drop off/Sign in – Please sign your child in and out using ProCare electronic check in.
- Clothing – **Please label all clothing, backpacks, and other items with your child's name.** Send your child each day dressed for outside, active play. Sandals, dress-up shoes, and flip flops are inappropriate for these types of activities. Children's clothing should be uncomplicated so that they can easily use the bathroom. Teachers will always encourage a child to dress themselves. If a child requires assistance, the teacher will describe how the teacher is helping the child. This will give the child the opportunity to learn these skills so that he/she will eventually be able to perform this task(s) independently.
- Meals – Teachers will encourage children before, during, & after meals to:
  - Wash hands (before and after meal).
  - Engage in appropriate conversation.
  - Learn appropriate table manners.
  - Clean up after themselves.
  - Use the bathroom after each meal.
- Hand washing – Teachers will assist children in washing their hands before and after meals, after using the bathroom and after playing outside.
- Nap and Rest time – Morningstar does have a scheduled nap time for the younger children and a scheduled rest time for the older children. If a child needs to sleep at a non-scheduled time, our teachers, at their discretion, will provide an appropriate place in which a child can get some needed rest.
- Cleaning of facility/ sanitation – A clean environment is essential. Teachers clean and sanitize the center on a daily basis.
- Pick up – This is a good time to speak with a teacher about your child's day. **If a teacher does not recognize the parent, under no circumstance will they allow a child to leave with this person. The teacher will check the person's identification and check the child's registration form to be sure the person is on the approved pick up list provided by the parent. If someone who is not on the approved list will be picking up your child, we do require written notice and instructions. The staff will also check their identification when picking up your child.**
- Please refer to Appendix 1 for examples of daily classroom schedules.



## **Nutrition**

Morningstar Learning Center has always been a strong supporter of proper nutrition in the classroom and healthy eating behaviors. Each day, all students are required to bring a morning snack, a lunch and an afternoon snack that accords with the following state guidelines:

- Snacks must include two of the following food components: fruit, vegetable or 100% fruit or vegetable juice; bread or bread alternative; milk or dairy; or meat/meat alternative.
- Lunch must include one serving of meat or meat alternative, two vegetables or fruits, one serving of bread or bread alternative and one serving of milk or dairy.

Please follow these guidelines when packing your child's lunch and snacks.

Failure to provide your child with adequate food will result in discussions regarding the nutrition of your child.

As teachers, we will make sure your child is getting the adequate servings in each snack and lunch. If Morningstar staff members have to provide your child with proper food to meet these state mandated rules, **a charge will be applied to the monthly statement in order to cover costs of providing such servings for your child.**

We also require each child to provide their own water bottle with their name on it. Each student is given a spot to keep their water bottles and are encouraged to refill their water bottle as the day progresses.

## **Communication**

Morningstar has always operated with a "green" mindset. In an effort to continue to teach our students and community members about living green, we are trying to eliminate paper use in the school. We will have a weekly Newsletter that will be available at the school but will also be emailed to you. The phone is a great way to contact us and please feel free to call any time. If a teacher is busy, a message will be taken and they will get back to you at their earliest convenience. Last but not least, email will be a constant way in which we will communicate. A non-Internet form of communication will be posted on the bulletin board in the classroom. Please take the time to look around and read notices and announcements at pick up and drop off. Please notify Morningstar as soon as you can when your child is not going to be at school or you are going to be late.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are special to children. We encourage you to bring healthy special birthday snacks to celebrate the big day. Please check with the Lead Teacher prior to bringing snacks in.

## **Potty Training**

All preschool students are required to be potty trained. If a child has a potty accident, we will change them into dry clothes. Please provide your child with spare clothing. If a child does not have appropriate spare clothing, we will provide additional clothing. We

ask that you please wash and return any clothing that belongs to Morningstar Learning Center.

Many families will decide to potty train their child while they are enrolled at Morningstar Learning Center. Our staff is prepared to assist in this training. Please contact your child's Lead Teacher if you are ready to start this process.

### **Transportation and Trips**

Morningstar Learning Center does not directly provide transportation. Transportation options may include charter services and/or parent volunteers. You will be notified in advance if we plan to do any special field trips. You will be provided with a permission slip explaining the event, which is to be completed and returned prior to the date of the trip.

## **Enrollment**

### **Tuition and Fees**

Upon enrollment, a \$100.00 non-refundable fee is charged. A \$50.00 materials fee is charged upon enrollment and/or at the beginning of each quarter. Morningstar will bill on the last day of the month for the upcoming month. All enrollment paperwork including: records of immunization, signed contracts, and the emergency contact form must be turned in prior to your child starting at Morningstar. Morningstar will refund half of the daily tuition rate for absences relating to illness for a maximum of two days every quarter.

Tuition is due by last business day of the month and is considered late if paid after the 10th. A \$25 late fee will be assessed after the 10th of the month. If payment still has not been received by the 15th, services will be terminated and will not resume until tuition and late fees have been paid in full. Any days missed as a result of this termination will not be discounted.

See Appendix 2 for current rates.

### **Schedule**

There are four quarters in each year: Spring Quarter (March-May), Summer Quarter (June-August), Fall Quarter (September-November), and Winter Quarter (December-February). Families will enroll their child for the entire quarter.

There are three enrollment deadlines: Priority Enrollment is due the 10th of the month prior to a new quarter. Priority Enrollment is for families who have their child(ren) regularly enrolled on a weekly basis. Sibling Enrollment is open from the 10th to the 15th of the month prior to a new quarter. Sibling Enrollment is for families who have a child(ren) attending another preschool or in kindergarten but also a child regularly enrolled at Morningstar. Open Enrollment is open from the 15th to the 20th and is open to the public and kindergarten students.

### **Wait List**

Priorities for Morningstar's enrollment wait list are as follows:

1. children of employees
2. children with siblings currently enrolled
3. open to the public on a first-come first-serve basis

## Miscellaneous

### **Phone Use / Social Visits**

Teachers are instructed to turn off cell phones during work hours. If you need to speak with a teacher about something that is unrelated to the Center, a message will be taken.

### **Parent / Teacher Relationships**

While at Morningstar, parent/teacher relationships must remain professional.

### **Babysitting**

Morningstar Learning Center is an academic environment. It is NOT a babysitting service. Teachers are NOT permitted to make babysitting arrangements during business hours. Their focus needs to be on the children and their job at hand, not on another job.

### **Substitute Teachers**

Substitutes will get paid \$14 per hour and must work a minimum of 8 hours to receive 50% off childcare for that day. If a substitute can only work a few hours at a time, the substitute can accumulate hours on a monthly basis to receive 50% off childcare.

# Appendix 1

## **Morningstar Infant Daily Schedule**

8:30-9:30am	Sign in/Arrival/Free play
9:30-9:45am	Music & Movement / Tummy Time
9:45-10:30am	Morning snack / Diaper Change / Potty Breaks
10:30-10:50 am	Morning Circle Time
10:50-11:50am	Outside Play / Centers
11:50-12:50pm	Lunch / Diaper Changes
12:50-1:10pm	Sensory / Tummy Time
1:10-3:00pm	Nap Time
3:00-3:40pm	Afternoon Snack / Diaper Change / Potty Breaks
3:40-4:10pm	Art
4:10-5:30pm	Group play / Pick Ups

## **Morningstar Toddler Two's Daily Schedule**

8:30am- 9:40am	Sign In & Arrival (Free Play in Centers)
9:40am- 10:00am	Clean Up/ Music and Movement
10:00am- 10:30am	Wash Hands/Morning Snack
10:30am- 10:45am	Clean-up & Wash Hands
10:45am- 11:30am	Outside Play
11:30am-12:00pm	Calendar Time/Centers
12:00pm- 1:00pm	Clean-Up / Wash Hands/ Lunch
1:00pm-3:00pm	Rest Time
3:00pm- 3:35pm	Afternoon Snack/ Clean-up/ Wash Hands
3:35pm- 4:30pm	Group Play/ Games
4:30pm- 5:30pm	Free Play/ Pick ups

## **Morningstar Toddler Three's Daily Schedule**

8:30 am- 9:45 am	Free Play
9:45 am - 10:00 am	Calendar / Circle Time
10:00 am - 10:15 am	Morning Snack
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Outside Play
11:30 am- 11:50 am	Story Time
11:50 am - 12:15 pm	Small Groups /Centers
12:15 pm - 12:30 pm	Music and Movement / Potty Breaks
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Rest Time
3:30 pm - 4:00 pm	Afternoon Snack / Potty Breaks
4:15 pm - 4:45 pm	Small Groups / Centers / Games
5:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Free Play / Pick ups



## **Morningstar Preschool Daily Schedule**

8:30am- 9:30am	Sign In & Arrival (Free Play in Centers)
9:30am- 10:00am	Circle Time
10:00am- 10:30am	Morning Snack
10:30am- 10:45am	Clean-up & Wash Hands
10:45am- 11:30am	Table Time/ Centers
11:30am-12:30pm	Outside Play/ Music Movement/ Physical Education
12:30pm- 1:15pm	Clean Up/ Wash Hands/ Lunch Time
1:15pm-1:30pm	Clean Up/ Story Time
1:30pm-2:30pm	Quiet Time/ Nap Time
2:30pm- 3:00pm	Circle Time
3:00pm- 3:35pm	Afternoon Snack/ Clean-up/ Wash Hands
3:35pm- 4:30pm	Afternoon Activity & Centers
4:30pm- 5:30pm	Free Play/ Pick ups

# Appendix 2



# Morningstar Learning Center

## Rate Sheet

	<b>Option 1:</b> Full Day 8:30-5:30pm	<b>Option 2:</b> Half Day 8:30-1:00pm OR 1:00-5:30 pm	<b>Option 3:</b> Drop-in Full Day 8:30-5:30pm	<b>Option 4:</b> Drop-in Half Day 8:30-1:00pm OR 1:00-5:30pm	<b>Early-Open Option</b> 7:30-8:30am
<b>Toddlers/Preschool</b> (Ages 2-6)	\$55.00	\$44.00	\$66.00	\$55.00	+\$10.00
<b>Infants</b> (Ages 6m-24m)	\$66.00	\$55.00	\$77.00*	\$66.00*	Not Available

Options 1 & 2 are for students who have submitted enrollment schedules by the 15th of the month prior to the start of a new quarter.

### \*Notes/Discounts:

- Discounts do not apply on Early Open Option.
- Drop-in options for Infants are only available to enrolled students.
- Early drop offs/ late pickups will accrue charges of \$1 per minute early or late.
- 10% sibling discount offered to enrolled students.
- Morningstar Learning Center has requested a \$10/day discount from the Big Sky Resort Tax District. This will be applied to half/full day enrollment. The discount will not be applied to drop-in days.
- With submitting enrollment for the quarter, it must be received by the 15th of the month prior to the start of a new quarter.