



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Parent Handbook

Mrs. La'Kisha Shelley

Director/Owner

81 Thornbush Ct Ne

Ludowici Ga 31316

912-545-9067

BRIGHTMINDSEARLYLEARNINGCENTER@GMAIL.COM

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WELCOME

Hello parents! Thank you for choosing Bright Minds Early Learning Center.

We are looking forward to getting to know you and your family.

Please take the time to read the following policies.

This booklet is meant to create a mutual understanding
of the way our center operates.

Feel free to contact the Director with any questions or comments.

Mrs. La’Kisha Shelley

Owner/Director

Bright Minds Early Learning Center

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MISSION STATEMENT

Fostering the unique creative abilities of every child is a fundamental goal in education, one that empowers them to harness their full potential. It involves cultivating an environment where each young mind can flourish, enabling them to explore their creative instincts and talents. By nurturing creativity within the educational journey, we strive to guide students on a path towards realizing their highest capabilities. This process not only encourages innovation but also fosters a sense of individually, ultimately preparing each other to thrive and excel in their own distinctive way.

Bright Minds Early Learning Center

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination in Service

TO: Parents

FROM: Mrs. Lakisha Shelley

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients should be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Bright Minds Early Learning Center
81 Thornbush Ct Ne
Ludowici GA 31316

Department of Human Services
2 Peachtree St NW
Atlanta GA 30303

ABOUT OUR DIRECTOR

Owner/Director Mrs. Lakisha Shelley is an Army Veteran she holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education Concentration in Teaching & Diversity and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Mrs. Lakisha Shelley is also CPR, First Aid, and Fire Safety certified.

OUR STAFF

All prospective employees are screened on a broad range of background information. The personnel selection process includes a thorough comprehensive background check and a state criminal history check. Ongoing training in Early Childhood Education is required. All staff are CPR/First Aid Certified.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1. Call the Center to schedule a tour of the facility and receive registration instructions. If you fill out the online registration form on the Bright Minds Early Learning Center website, the Director will automatically receive electronic notification of your request and will contact you within 24 hours regarding your inquiry.
2. You must complete an enrollment packet prior to your child starting school.
3. You will receive an email confirming your child's start date. By the start date, a two-week security deposit and a signed Fee Agreement form must be received.
4. If enrollment space is not available, you will be placed on a waiting list (no payment required). In the event that you find another center that has enrollment space for your child, please contact us to have your child removed from the waiting list.

Enrollment at Bright Minds Early Learning Center is open to children from 6wk-12 years of age. Continued enrollment is contingent upon the parents' emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

A current immunization is required within the first days of enrollment. Please make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible.

Parents are required to notify Bright Minds Early Learning Center immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Bright Minds Early Learning Center reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as [Bright Minds Early Learning Center] strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health related information.

Outside of Bright Minds Early Learning Center, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of the program, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

RATES/PAYMENT POLICY

Registration Fee: \$65

Effective Jan 2023/All payment are subject to change.

Infants \$155.00

Toddlers \$150.00

Preschool \$145.00

Summer Rates \$150.00 includes Fieldtrips

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child at Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. A two-week security deposit is required to secure enrollment space and first week's tuition. The security deposit must be received prior to your child's start date.

Cash, Money order, or Credit Card are all acceptable forms of payment. **Credit card payments are to be made through our Procure account.** Receipts will be given for all tuition payments.

All payments are due in advance of provided service. Families are not permitted to carry balances on tuition accounts. Weekly payments are due on or before Monday of that week. Late payments will result in an additional fee of \$20 per week. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment. However, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the Center Director.

Tuition is charged based on enrollment, not based on attendance. No refunds or credits will be issued for absenteeism, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare does accept child care subsidies. Subsidized children must have the proper documentation before starting care and we follow our contractual obligation with DFAC and require parents to pay their copay by Monday the beginning of the week or we will have to report non-payments to our DFAC office.

Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies.

WITHDRAWAL/TERMINATION PROCEDURE

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter the Center without prior permission of the Director. Termination can happen as follows: Excessive late pick-ups (3 late pickups within 3 weeks), Discipline problems, Non-Payment or past due tuition, or Director's discretions. A withdrawn child and their parents/guardians are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to the Center following the last day of enrollment. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

PROGRAM HOURS

Bright Minds Early Learning Center is open from 5:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. We will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Black Friday (Day After Thanksgiving)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day

If any of the above holidays falls on a weekend, we will be closed on that Monday following to observance. Closures dates are subject to change without further notice.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum at Bright Minds includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Bright Minds uses Learning beyond Paper for Infants, Toddlers, Preschool and the guides for planning the curriculum in each of its program rooms. Each classroom has weekly lessons, posted in the classroom. These plans contain several activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group as a whole. Lesson plans may change in order to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set-up in centers, which include block, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selections or "free play" is a daily part of curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activities he/she participate in. This promotes creative expressions and development of important social skills.

We value your child's experiences. When your child starts at Bright Minds Early Learning Center observations will occur throughout their time here. This will help us provide the best care academically and socially for your child. We respect each child as an individual and set up their goals accordingly.

DAILY ROUTINE

The daily routine is subject to change based upon the age and needs of each group. There is a potty time/diaper check before each transition. Hands are washed after toileting, before and after meals, and after messy activities and outdoor play. Outdoor play occurs daily if weather permits. On inclement weather days, large motor activities are offered inside the classroom. After lunch children will have a nap/rest period from 12:30pm to 2:30pm. Our staff will post the daily schedule and the learning objectives for that day in the classroom. In addition, children will bring home a daily report outlining the events of that day.

MEALTIME

Children are permitted to eat at designated meal times. (Breakfast, lunch, or snack).

8:00-8:45 Breakfast / 11:00-11:45 Lunch / Snack 2:00-2:45

CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

Parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergies.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form.

WHAT TO BRING

Children will need one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes: shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Bright Minds Early Learning Center is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

For children who are not potty trained, please bring at least five clean diapers or pull-ups, and wipes.

Please remember to check your child's cubby on a daily basis to make sure they have seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing, and an adequate amount of clean diapers or pull-ups, and wipe.

For nap time, cots are provided by Bright Minds Early Learning Center. Children should bring a blanket that can be folded neatly and stored with the bedding supplies. Blankets must have the child's first and last name on them. We strongly suggest taking the blankets home on Fridays, or as often as needed, to wash them.

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum.

DRESS CODE

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day. Some of these activities can be messy and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing.

Please do not dress children in clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children and/or staff in relation to toileting.

Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the fall and winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, Bright Minds Early Learning Center will not to be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents' responsibility to enforce this policy with their children.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE OR LATENESS

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late or absent are required to notify the center by 8:15am so that we can best prepare for the school day.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

If you would like your child to eat breakfast at school, please arrive by 8:00 am for breakfast. We strongly encourage parents to arrive by 9:00 am at the latest, so that children are included in greeting activities and have time to calmly set their minds for the day ahead. Drop-off after 10:00 am is not permitted unless parents notify the Director in advance (please see notification requirements above).

Upon arrival at Bright Minds Early Learning Center, the parent or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet and help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or the Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. Please present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick-Up, Alternative Pick-Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

Parents or other authorized adult are required to sign their child out of care on the sign-out sheet. No cell phone usage is permitted at this time. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child, and should directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents who drive must park in an available parking space and may not leave a vehicle idling in the middle of the road. Please be aware that it is against the law to leave an infant or child in a car unattended.

Parents will receive written daily reports at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom.

EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

At enrollment, parents will complete Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up information. Parents are encouraged to include any and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Bright Minds Early Learning Center. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide photo identification. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

LATE PICK-UP

Our program ends at 5:30 pm. Parents who pick-up children after that time will be charged \$2.00 per minute, to be paid in cash at the time of pick-up (total late fee will be calculated based on the clock on the wall in the classroom). All late pick-up fees go directly to the staff members who stay past their regularly scheduled shift. If payment in cash is not possible, it is to be paid at drop-off the following program day. If balance is not paid, payment will be combined with tuition payment.

DISCIPLINE

Staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn responsibility for their actions. We will use the following techniques in doing so:

- Planning ahead to prevent problems
- Consistent clear rules
- Encouragement of appropriate behavior
- Positive guidance
- Redirection
- Involving children in problem-solving.

Bright Minds Early Learning Center recognizes that young children go through various stages of development. Certain behaviors are indicative of age. However, no child will remain enrolled if he or she:

- Causes continual, deliberate physical or emotional harm to other children.
- Requires more care than the staff can adequately provide without compromise to the other children.
- Continually disrupts the class to the extent that activities cannot be completed.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year, and include an overview of the observations of the child while at the program. Topics will include the child's strengths, achievement of developmental milestones, and social-emotional growth in a classroom environment. Parents are welcome to schedule a conference at any time, and are encouraged to communicate freely with staff and the Director.

During program time, staff members are usually not available to have long conversations. Parents are welcome to write notes, call or send e-mails to the Director. If you leave a message on the answering machine, the Director will return your call as soon as possible.

PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Bright Minds Early Learning Center, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order), Bright Minds Early Learning Center must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Bright Minds Early Learning Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, it is suggested that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Director, and are allowed in the child care facility only at her discretion. An employee will accompany visitors at all times throughout the center.

AGENCY'S RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION

Bright Minds Early Learning Center reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with licensing regulations.
2. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
3. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children if the child were to be present at the center.
4. Parents' failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
5. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY CLIENTS

The staff of Bright Minds Early Learning Center is prohibited from being employed by any client (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment. Such relationships include but are not limited to, baby-sitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of The Bright Minds Early Learning Center are considered mandated reporters, under this law, and are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Bright Minds Early Learning Center take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. As mandated reporters, staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES/COVID-19

Please do not send your child to school if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above (within the past 24 hours).
- Needs fever-reducing medication to maintain a normal body temperature.
- Vomiting for any reason.
- Chills
- Diarrhea.
- Chronic cough.
- Excessive mucus coming from nasal passages, mouth or eyes.
- Needs cold medicine to suppress sneezing, coughing, or runny nose.
- Has an unexplained rash which has not been treated by a doctor.
- Any other symptoms of communicable disease.

When a child is prescribed antibiotics by a doctor, parents must wait 24 hours after the first dose of medication before sending the child to school.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. Bright Minds Early Learning Center reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if staff believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. We will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident Report. The Incident Report will be placed in a sealed envelope and put in the child's cubby. Parents are required to sign the report at pick-up time and return it to staff. Should a person other than the parent pick-up the child, a parent must sign the report and return it to the Director within 24 hours.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted every 60 days. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into or out of the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the Director will inform staff that the school will be closing early. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION

Should the Director or any emergency services personnel determine that the facility is too dangerous to be occupied, the staff will walk across the street with the children to 79 Thornbush Ct Ne Once children are assembled to designated area the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contacts for pick-up.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the Long County Schools is closed or declares a delayed opening due to inclement weather, Bright Minds Early Learning Center will also be closed or delayed. Closing information is available on the WTOC local news and our Bright Minds Early Learning Center website.

If you are unsure, please call the Director directly at (912) 545-9067

If Bright Minds Early Learning Center must close during the day, staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify

the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call, of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is given. Should the center need to close for an emergency, tuition will not be refunded.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____ the parent/guardian of _____, have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare. I understand that I must read, understand and agree to abide by the policies set forth in the Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare Parent Handbook.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Bright Minds Early Learning Center Daycare. While I understand that the Parent Handbook is neither a contract nor a legal document, I recognize that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Parent Handbook are subject to change. I acknowledge that the Parent Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, best practices for child care service providers, or at the discretion of the Director. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Parent Handbook.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Director for any questions I may have about the contents of the Parent Handbook now and in the future.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____