



## Welcome to the Pandas Classroom



Your child is ready to begin the transition process from the Penguins or Polar Bears class to the Pandas' class. The Penguins or Polar Bears Teachers and the Director have observed positive developmental changes in your child and we are confident that he or she will be successful in the next classroom.. There is no tuition change from the Penguins or Polar Bears classes to the Pandas classroom. However for your information, you may find tuition fees on our website.

To reach the Pandas classroom directly, please call (703) 461-0457. We do not have the ability to transfer calls from the main building.

### **How will the transition process work?**

The transition process typically lasts for one week with the goal of having your child adjusted to his or her new teachers, setting, routines, schedule, and the ways things are done in the new class by the full time start date in their new class. This goal is achieved by having your child spend a portion of his or her day in the new setting. The children are usually dropped off in their classroom and have breakfast there. Typically, the Pandas' teachers transition their new preschoolers into their classroom between 9:30 am and 12:30 pm. The transitioning times are very flexible depending upon the needs of the children and the center. The main idea is that the children spend time each day in their new classroom to become acclimated to all aspects of the new environment. They will spend the latter part of the day with their new class towards the end of the week, as they are comfortable. This is done so that your child can gradually adapt to their new classroom's daily routines and schedule for both times of the day.

**A Brief Introduction to the Pandas classroom** The goal of Bright Start Preschool is to have the children learn to try, experience success, develop confidence within themselves and others, and an intrinsic motivation to learn. Our preschool program is highly focused, offering an ever-growing child-centered learning environment with multiple opportunities for children to experience new and familiar activities. The children are encouraged to make choices, experiment with ideas, problem solve, and develop other important skills. The Penguins class introduces the children to a more formal class setting and starts to set the stage for kindergarten readiness. The Pandas classroom is staffed a minimum of one teacher for every ten children. Since we understand that play is such an important process for these young learners, we offer numerous activities for the Pandas to do just that. Each day, the children are given opportunities to build, pretend, and use a variety of supplies to create their own artistic masterpieces for their parent's enjoyment. They are also asked to follow established routines such as bathroom, wash up, clean up, nap, and circle times for stories, songs,

and to introduce table time activities. Our table time activities might include such things as learning letters, numbers, colors, and solving puzzles. Although Circle Time is similar to our other classes, Pandas enjoy a longer period than in earlier classrooms. Circle Time also includes a larger range of activities that are more appropriate for this age group. The children not only sing songs and listen to stories, but they also are given the opportunity to speak in front of the group to share ideas and experiences and to make connections. This type of activity will aid in their development of confidence and comfort with using language to effectively communicate with others. Small Groups & Centers Learning centers are available to small groups of children (no more than five) in the Pandas Class to facilitate basic preschool skills. These learning centers also provide students with the building blocks of social interaction and interpersonal communication. Some of the learning centers of study are:

- ✓ Literacy- A time for children to begin to facilitate pre-phonics and letter recognition skills.
- ✓ Math- Developing an understanding of counting, patterning, one-to-one correspondence, beginning sequencing, and shape comparison and identification.
- ✓ Science- Exposure to various items in the preschool environment on a sensory level; as well as gaining an understanding of the surrounding world with a focus on needs and characteristics of items in nature.
- ✓ Art- Students are given a variety of art media, as well as many different styles of art to work with and develop confidence and pride in their own works of art.
- ✓ Fine Motor Development- Using items such as play-dough, scissors, and puzzles; students develop muscles essential to writing skills and fine motor enhancement.
- ✓ Gross Motor Development- Developing coordination within the classroom setting in the areas like basic balance, running, catch, etc. in a safe and nurturing environment.

Computers are available for the children to use during the “school year.” They are allowed no more than 10 minutes during Center times and are introduced to the use of the computers by the teachers. At Bright Start Learning Center we partner with the future by teaching children the basic skills they’ll need to succeed in the age of technology. Pandas participate in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Computers (during the fall, winter, and spring) and Spanish enrichment activities. Each Friday morning, they participate in Music for Life class. Children in this classroom also enjoy Soccer classes in the Spring and Fall. The Pandas Lead teacher is fluent in Spanish and will be using Spanish throughout the day in the classroom, teaching the children many Spanish words and songs. The teachers will introduce colors, counting, shapes and basic words in Spanish.

Celebrations: We love to have parties in the Pandas Class! Parties provide a wide variety of things for everyone involved. They give the children a break from their day-to-day routine and expose the children to different cultures and ways of celebrating. Parties also give parents the chance to be involved in the classroom whether that be providing something for the party or attending the party! We believe that these events offer a chance to get everyone together and build a closer bond!

## **What All Parents Need to Know**

Licensing requires that:

- We maintain one teacher for every ten children (10:1) for children in our preschool.
- Children must be fully potty trained to be enrolled in our preschool.
- All food/drinks must be labeled with the child's name and date. Please help us by labeling your child's food/drinks before you place it in the cubby.

### **We also need your help with the following:**

- If your child plans to eat the school lunch, please notify us by 11:30 am if your child is going to be late so that we can reserve a portion for your child. If we are not informed by 11:30 am, then we cannot guarantee that your child will be eating the same thing that is listed on the school menu.
- If you check your child out from the center and plan to return later, please notify us as you leave so that we can make appropriate staffing arrangements and/or lunch/snack preparation arrangements.
- Please keep us updated with any changes to your child's allergies or other medical conditions that might affect him/her while in our care.
- Please keep sippy cups at home.
- Please help us by providing a change of clothes to be kept in your child's cubby.
- Please do not place any sunscreen (topical creams), or medications in child's cubby. Give these items to your child's teachers.
- We are not responsible for personal items such as, rings, hair clips, silly bands, bracelets, etc.
- Have child bring only 1 item for "Show and Share" related to either our "Letter of the Week" or the theme for the week.

### **What to Bring on the First Day**

- ✓ At least two changes of clothing, including socks
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ A small photo of your child (for his/her cubby)
- ✓ A family photo
- ✓ A special toy or stuffed animal (to help your child feel comfortable), which will be allowed for his/her first few weeks
- ✓ A nap mat and lovey with which to sleep

# PANDAS GENERAL SCHEDULE

7:00 – 8:30 Drop offs/ Free play

8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast

9:30 – 10:15 Circle Time/ Circle Time: large group activity; Story Time

10:15 Morning Activities/Centers

10:15-10:40 Music Class (Friday)

11:00 – 12:00 Outside Play/Walk

12:00 Restrooms/Wash Hands

12:00 – 12:40 Lunch

12:45 – 1:00 Wash Hands/Potty

1:00 – 3:00 Nap Time

3:00- 3:15 Restrooms

3:15- 3:30 Snack

3:30 – 3:45 Afternoon Circle Time

3:45- 4:00 Afternoon Activity

4:00-4:45 Outside Play/Walk

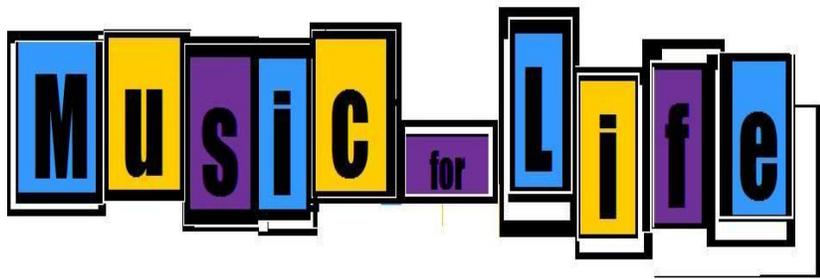
5:00 –4:30 Handwashing/Restrooms/Snack

5:30 – 6:30 Free Play/End of School





At Bright Start, we are focused on providing your child with not only high quality child care, but with valuable learning experiences that will positively impact your child's future performance in school. As part of our efforts to establishing a great rapport with our parents and ensuring your child's success in our center, we hold two parent teacher conferences a year, fall and spring. In the parent teacher conference, teachers will inform parents about their child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The purpose of the conference is for teachers to share information about the child's strengths and core areas the child is excelling in. Of course, if a teacher has a concern it will be communicated and the two together, parent and teacher, will discuss the steps that have been taken or will be taken to help the child in the specific developmental domain or skill area. This is also an opportunity for parents to raise concerns or ask whatever questions they may have.



Music for Life enhances a child's inherent ability to create, express and problem solve through music.

Music for Life was founded in 2004 to address the importance of music education in the development of children from Infants - School age. Study after study shows the undeniable correlation between music and higher brain function in mathematics, self-esteem, spatial and temporal reasoning, etc.. Our curriculum specifically targets all aspects of these developmental keystones while teaching students all about music in a fun and age appropriate manner. We make it easy to get the developmental benefits of music by bringing Music for Life to you.

Music for Life comes to Bright Start every Friday!



## **Bright Start Policy Reminders**

It is important that our parents are always mindful of some key policies and therefore ask that you review the ones below at this time.

### **Food Allergy Safe Policy:**

To protect all of the children at the Center, we do not allow homemade food to be served to children other than your own. In addition, all food brought to the center must comply with our food allergy policy, even if it will only be eaten by your own child. In accordance with our policy, food must be labeled "school-safe" or it must be on our approved list of snacks and treats. Specifically,

- **Food labels that say "May contain peanuts or tree nuts" are NOT OK.**
- **Food labels that say "Made on equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts" are NOT OK.**
- **Food labels that say "Made in a facility that also processes peanuts or tree nuts" are NOT OK.**

Our safe snack list is available on our website. Please print it and have it as a ready resource. If you are sending food in of any kind, you **MUST** give it to the lead teacher and she will check it. **DO NOT** put food in your child's cubby or leave in his or her backpack. **DO NOT** allow your child to come into school with partially-eaten food in his or her hand.

Also, it is very important that your child wash his or her hands immediately upon arrival. Not only is this a good step to help prevent the spread of germs, it helps to minimize the risk of cross contamination if your child has been in contact with foods that may be allergens for other children.

**Illness Notifications** If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, you must notify the office by phone call or email as soon as possible. It is not enough to notify the classroom via Brightwheel. We are required by our licensing regulations to post notices of such illnesses so that other parents are aware. In order to do this, we must have accurate and timely information from you. Also, please be mindful that your child must be fever free for at least 24 hours (without medication) before he or she can return to school. This helps to minimize spreading contagious illnesses.

### **Late Pick Ups**

Bright Start closes at 6:30 pm. An on-time pick-up means that you have exited the building with your child by 6:30 not running in the door at 6:30 or lingering in the classrooms or Center beyond 6:30. Late pick-ups cause hardships for the staff that are not able to leave on time, and for the children, who have had a long day at school. While many parents believe that an occasional late pick-up is acceptable, one must remember that we have over 100 families enrolled. Late pick-ups are not acceptable, and Bright Start must enforce a strict policy to discourage such behavior. Accordingly, in addition to a late fee, if you (i) pick your child up more than 15 minutes late or (ii) if you have picked your child up late more than one time in a calendar year (even if late by less than 15 minutes), you will lose care for the day immediately following the respective late pick-up. Continuing issues with on time pickups will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Solutions will include adjusting the family's required pickup time to no later than 6:00 permanently or disenrollment.



**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions about your child. Your answers will help us get to know you and your family a little better.

1. What would you most like us to know about your child? Please include any special concerns we should know about as we care for your child.
  
2. How is your child comforted best?
  
3. Please provide any information that you can with regard to your child's eating and sleeping habits. (i.e. How does your child like to be put to sleep? Does your child have any special dietary needs?)
  
4. What do you most want your child to learn in our class?
  
5. What does your child enjoy doing at home?
  
6. Are there any special traditions, celebrations, stories or songs that are especially important to your family and your child?
  
7. If there is anything else you would like us to know?