

**BIG SMILES!**



**LEARNING AND CARE**

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**PARENT HANDBOOK**

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**2017-2018 SCHOOL CLOSING CALENDER**

Monday, JANUARY 1, 2018	NEW YEAR'S DAY
Monday, FEBRUARY 19, 2018	PRESIDENT'S DAY
Friday, MARCH 30, 2018	GOOD FRIDAY
Monday, MAY 28, 2018	MEMORIAL DAY
Wednesday, JULY 4, 2018	INDEPENDENCE DAY
Monday, SEPTEMBER 4, 2017	LABOR DAY
Friday, NOVEMBER 10, 2017	VETERAN'S DAY / STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Thursday and Friday, NOVEMBER 23-24, 2017	THANKSGIVING
Monday, DECEMBER 25, 2017	CHRISTMAS DAY (OBSERVED)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of my staff of Big Smiles, we would like to welcome you to Big Smiles Learning and Care. Early education is a vitally important aspect of the mental and physical development for children. Big Smiles Learning and Care's mission is to produce happy, intelligent, well-adjusted children. We provide a nurturing, educational, clean and safe environment that is focused on preparing children for a bright future. Our goal is to promote learning and encourage imagination and exploration.

We implement the Creative Curriculum which is aligned to the New Jersey and NAEYC Teaching and Learning Standards. Each learning stage is essential for each child, from taking the first steps to writing your own name. We provide learning strategies and opportunities that encourage problem solving, exploration and creativity.

Big Smiles asks for your assistance and cooperation for our success. You have the right to expect that we provide you and your child with a safe and clean environment, ready to teach and play with your child. In return, we look forward to completing the family circle, wherein, parents, children and teachers work together to mold our future leaders. We consider it a privilege to be your partner in the care and education of your child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Daviella Fernandez

Owner

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Big Smiles believes in promoting learning through play and creativity in a nurturing and safe environment. We believe children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development begin in early years through exploration and experimentation. Our center is designed under a nurturing, fun-filled learning environment to maximize your child's cognitive, social, emotional, language, fine and gross motor skills.

## **MISSION**

Big Smiles Learning and Care's mission is to produce happy, intelligent, well-adjusted children. We provide a nurturing, educational, clean and safe environment that is focused on preparing children for a bright future. We aim to be a center committed to enhance children's lives by providing services that address diverse educational and social needs to our children and families in our community.

## **GOAL**

For the Child

1. To provide an enriched environment where each child can develop to his/her full capacity, physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally.
2. To provide appropriate play experience that contributes to the developmental needs of each child.
3. To provide opportunities and experiences where children can develop self-help skills.
4. To provide opportunities and experiences where children can express his/her individual needs, interests and abilities.

For the Families:

1. To provide care for the child while the families pursue their own work and interests.
2. To provide opportunities to meet with and work with families and teachers who have as common concern the needs and interest of the child.

For the Community:

1. To contribute to the growth and development of the future citizens of the community.
2. To provide the community with a child care program that enables citizens to become viable community members by pursuing their education and career.

## **CURRICULUM STATEMENT**

Our Monthly curriculum is carefully planned and examined by the Center Director. Our program encourages cognitive, social, emotional, language, fine and gross motor skill development through our structured activities and curriculum. Our approach is creative and flexible according to the needs and experience of each age group. Our main objective is to promote confidence and positive self-image. We also encourage learning through technology.

In addition, we provide a balance of activities that include indoor and outdoor play, special events and field trips.

We offer a large playground area that each child will enjoy. Every parent who wishes for their child to be able to go on walking trips and playground activities must fill-out and sign the permission slip allowing the child to participate in these outdoor activities. You are releasing Big Smiles from any liabilities that may occur. Our outdoor activities are done daily (weather permitting).

## **PROGRAMS**

Big Smiles provides Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Before and After Care programs. We accept children from ages 3 months through 13 years of age.

### **Infant** (Ages 3 months – 12 months)

During the first 18 months of Development, infants learn through their senses. They begin to learn about their environment through touching, tasting, seeing, hearing and smelling. Language is an important part in the life of an infant. Curiosity starts to develop; the child begins to display independence and impulse control.

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Infants</u>	Social/Emotional Development	Physical Development
Language Development		

### **Toddlers One** (Ages 12 months – 2 years old)

Toddlers begin to respond to simple questions and directions. They begin to mimic key words and attempts to sing songs and rhymes. Toddlers are very active explorers and they are in their prime age for building connections with the brain, language, and cognitive skills, social, emotional and physical development.

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Toddlers</u>	Physical Development	Color/Shape Recognition
Language Development	Phonological Awareness:	
Social/Emotional Development	Rhymes, Finger-plays and Songs	

### **Toddlers Two** (Ages 2 years old – 3 years old)

At the age of two they are full of energy and curiosity. They begin to become independent and aware of “self”. They begin to have favorite words such as “no” and “me do it”. They have a short attention span and use language to express ideas.

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Two's</u>	Phonological Awareness:	Shape/Number
Language Development	Rhymes, Finger plays and Songs	Recognition
Social/Emotional Development	Letter Recognition	Self-Concept
Physical Development	Color Recognition	

### **Preschool Three** (Ages 3 years old – 4 years old)

At the age of three they are cooperative, cheerful and eager to please. They enjoy their friends and new experiences. The sense of independence increases.

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Three's</u>	Phonological Awareness:	Number Recognition
Language Development	Rhymes, Songs and	Counting
Social/Emotional	Alliteration	Name Recognition
Development	Letter Recognition	Self-Concept
Physical Development	Color Recognition	Problem Solving
	Shape Recognition	

#### **Preschool Four (Ages 4 years old – 5 years old)**

Four year olds are imaginative, silly, fun and excitable. They are enthusiastic and excited to meet new adventures. Five year olds are creative, fun and eager to learn and please.

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Four's</u>	Phonological Awareness:	Color /Shape /Number
Language Development	Rhymes, Songs and	Recognition
Social/Emotional	Alliteration	Counting, Sequencing
Development	Letter Recognition and	Name Recognition
Physical Development	Beginning Sounds	Self-Concept
		Problem Solving

#### **Before and After Care (Ages 5 years – 11 years)**

Here are the main skills that will be covered throughout the year:

<u>Curriculum for Before and After</u>	Creative Arts	Social and Emotional
Literacy	Physical Health	Growth
Mathematics	Science	

### **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Big Smiles is open to all children who meet the age requirement of three months through thirteen years of age, regardless of religion, gender, race, or special needs.

### **OPENING AND CLOSING / ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Our doors open at 6:30 am sharp and close at 6:30 pm. Each child must be properly signed in and out on classroom forms daily. Late Drop-off fee will be charged as follows: \$40.00 for any unexcused late drop off after 9:30am. Documentation must be provided at time of drop off (i.e. doctor's note). Late Pick-up fee will be charged as follows: \$15.00 per every 15 minutes after 6:30pm, or any portion thereof. If lateness occurs in excess with no parent contact, your child will be picked up by the Police Department.

### **HOURS AND DAYS**

Big Smiles opens from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm, Monday – Friday. **Children must arrive no later than 9:30 am** to gain full benefits from the program he/she is enrolled in. Our center is open all year around. Center will be closed only under State Emergency conditions, extreme weather conditions and special holidays.

## **TUITION LATE FEES**

Tuition Monthly: 1st of each month (Late fee of \$25 if tuition is not received by the 7th of each month)

Tuition Weekly: Tuesday of each week (Late fee of \$25 per week if not received by Tuesday of each week)

## **SIGN IN / OUT**

In each classroom there is a sign in/out sheet. It is the responsibility of the parent to **Sign In** and **Sign Out** daily. The parent's signature or initials must appear on every sheet. We are required to keep accurate attendance per each classroom. If the child is picked up by someone other than the parent, they must also sign him/her out. Parents must make sure to inform one of the teachers or staff when they are leaving with their child.

## **ID POLICY**

Only the parent/guardian or designees by the parent on the emergency contact form may pick up a child. If any other than the parents, they must show a picture I.D.

**We do not mean to cause any inconveniences. This policy is in effect for the child's safety.**

We have an I.D. Policy to protect the children. Parents provide us with a list of names of those who have the authorization to pick up their child from the center. No one else will be allowed to pick up a child. The Designees to pick up the child will be asked to show a picture I.D. and we will match the name to the authorized list in the child's file. If there is an unexpected emergency, the parent/guardian must call and speak directly with the Center Director or the child's teacher to inform them the name of someone else who is coming that day. In order to make sure the list is updated the parent/guardian should add or subtract names from the list, with written notifications, as needed.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Big Smiles field trips are walking trips or planned bus trips. The rules for our away trips are as follows:

1. All children should be dressed comfortable and appropriate weather and trip activity.
2. Children must arrive on time for the departure of the bus (we will not wait)
3. Chaperones will be required for infant and toddler classes.
4. Permission slip must always be completed in its entirety.

## **FOOD POLICY**

Big Smiles does not provide meals at this time. Each child must bring in all meals and snacks. Our center provides additional snacks and beverages. Each classroom is equipped with a refrigerator and microwave. Proper nutrition is an essential ingredient for good health. Every child needs a well-balanced meal to meet their daily energy needs to develop healthy bodies and strong minds. Please provide your child with a nutritional breakfast, lunch and snack. \* **It is very important that all lunches and utensils be put in a lunch bag and labeled with your child's name.**



## POLICY ON ILLNESS

Big Smiles is a center serving well children. We do not provide care for mildly ill children. In order to keep contagion down, we require that ill children stay at home. The child may return only after he/she is fever and symptom free for 24 hours or medical evaluation states that they may return to school. **Your child will have to be picked up within one hour of call from our Center if he/she develops symptoms during the school day.** If a child has been ill with a contagious disease we reserve the right to require a written statement from the doctor stating that the child is ok to return to the school setting. Children, who cannot participate in outdoor activities due to confirmed medical issues, will be kept indoors under supervised activities.

### **PARENT MUST PROVIDE UPDATED TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO THE CENTER IN ORDER TO BE REACHED IF A CHILD IS ILL.**

We are required to follow the guidelines of health requirements formulated by the New Jersey Department of Human Services. We are required to have on file a complete Medical History on your child. A copy of all your child's immunization record is required prior to your child's enrollment date. In addition, the Department's Policy on illness is as follows:

#### **POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Acute diarrhea
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Elevated oral temperate of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy
- Severe coughing
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Stiff neck

#### **TABLE OF EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others:

##### **Respiratory Illnesses**

Chicken Pox\*\*  
German Measles\*  
Hemophilus Influenza\*  
Measles\*  
Meningococcus\*  
Mumps\*  
Strep Throat  
Tuberculosis\*  
Whooping Cough\*

##### **Gastrointestinal Illnesses**

Campylobacter\*  
Escherichia coli\*  
Giardia Lambliia\*  
Hepatitis A\*  
Salmonella\*  
Shigella\*

##### **Contact Illnesses**

Impetigo  
Lice  
Scabies  
Shingles

\*Reportable diseases that must be reported to the health department by the center.

\*\* Note: If a child has chicken pox, a health care provider's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the center. A note from the parent is required, stating either that at least six days has elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

## **MEDICATION**

Every child must have a doctor's note and medication form filled out permitting the school to administer the drug. Parents must fill out a Big Smiles **medication permission form** with the name of the medicine, the dosage, and time to be administered. Parents must sign and date the form. Parents are asked to check the form when they pick up a child to make sure that the teacher or director has signed the form indicating that the medicine has been given to the child. **IF ASTHMA PUMPS ARE TO BE ADMINISTERED, THEY MUST BE LEFT AT THE CENTER UNDER THE TEACHER'S SECURITY.** Teachers or teacher's assistants are only permitted to administer medication from its original container.

**PARENTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO SEND ASPIRIN OR ANY OTHER MEDICATION IN A CHILD'S SCHOOL BAG OR CLOTHING POCKETS TO BE TAKEN BY THE CHILD.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

**NO CHILD IS GIVEN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND AT BIG SMILES.**

Redirection, positive reinforcement, modeling along with verbal explanation and problem solving training are better at changing unacceptable behavior. There are specific rules and regulations set by teachers and children for each classroom and outdoor activities. Children are taught the expectations for each activity, all being age appropriate for each classroom. They are taught to respect, help and take care of one another. At Big Smiles, teachers work with parents in discipline problems.

Here are some sample rules that are used at Big Smiles:

1. Use inside voices
2. Follow Directions
3. Only Adults Open the Door
4. Listen when others are Talking
5. Keep Hands, Feet and Objects to Yourself
6. Share and Take Turns
7. Show Respect for School and Personal Property

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Big Smiles conduct monthly fire drills and lockdown drills. The alarm will go off and everyone will exit. We have Evacuation Procedures posted in all classrooms, the office, and the kitchen.

**Emergency with a specific child:** Specific directions given to us by parents will be followed in a real emergency:

- a. Hospital
- b. Choice of Doctor
- c. Treatment for Allergies
- d. Medical Procedures
- e. Emergency Contacts

## EXTRA CLOTHING

Each child has a cubby in which a change of clothes and other items will be kept. Each child needs a change of clothes in the cubby. Bed linen **must** be taken home every **Friday** to be cleaned. No personal toys will be allowed in our classrooms, as our programs provides a variety of developmentally appropriate toys, games, manipulative and fine motor skills equipment.

## CUBBY AREA

Each cubby is the parent's responsibility to keep clean, tidy and neat at all times.

## POTTY TRAINING

### **Is your child ready?**

1. Expresses interest in coming into the bathroom with you to find out what goes on there and perhaps even sits on the toilet.
2. Understands what the toilet is for and what it means to have a wet or dirty diaper. If she also shows a preference for being clean and dry, fussing when she's wet, pulling off a dirty diaper, or asking to be changed; all the better!
3. Knows the words for urinating and having a bowel movement (such as "going potty" or whatever words your family chooses).
4. Can stay dry for at least two hours at a time.
5. Has regular bowel movements with soft, formed stools
6. Can and will follow simple directions, such as those for washing hands.
7. Can help pull pants up and down
8. Seems to recognize at least a few seconds ahead of time that she's about to go, and can tell you before it happens. (Many youngsters will squat, leave the room, or get "the look" before having a bowel movement.)
9. Is in a willing, receptive mood and isn't going through any major transitions (like adjusting to a new sibling or school).
10. Demonstrates a desire for independence (for example, wants to be a "big girl" and do things for herself) -- or, better yet, shows a specific desire to use the toilet like mommy and daddy do!

If your child meets most of these criteria, they are ready to try. If not, wait a month or two and reevaluate.

Potty-Training should begin at home over a long weekend or holiday. Once you have had success at home for at least a week, your child may begin wearing underwear at child care. You must still provide us with 2-4 pull ups for nap or other extended periods. Also you **MUST** provide us with at least 2 complete changes of clothing for your child. Please cooperate with us on this matter. Potty-Training takes place at our **Toddler 2 Classroom**. Also, if you begin training, please notify us so that we can continue with all the work you have accomplished. Further, if within 2-3 weeks, your child shows no signs of progress, we reserve the right to put your child back in diapers & try again in a few weeks.

## **VISITATION AND OBSERVERS**

Big Smiles follows an open-door policy. Parents and other family members are encouraged to visit. Parents are an essential element to Big Smiles family. Volunteering and participating in cultural activities keeps our community connected to their children's education. **We expect parents and family members to engage in salutary conversations and decorous conduct while in our Center.**

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Upon suspicion of abuse and neglect of a child, the Center Director will call the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) so that they can proceed with appropriate investigations. Our Staff receiving information of potentially missing, abused or neglected children must notify both DYFS and the Belleville Police Department.

## **EXPULSION POLICY**

*Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:*

## **IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION**

**The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.  
Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.  
Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.**

## **PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION**

**Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.  
Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.  
Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.  
Verbal abuse to staff.  
Other (explain)**

## **CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION**

**Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.  
Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.  
Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.  
Excessive biting.  
Other (explain)**

## **SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION**

If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.

The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

### **A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED**

If a child's parent(s):

- ◆ Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- ◆ Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- ◆ Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- ◆ Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

### **PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION**

Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.

Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.

Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.

Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.

Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.

Child will be given verbal warnings.

Child will be given time to regain control.

Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.

Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.

Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.

The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.

The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.

Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.

Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

In the interest of effective communication, problems or concerns are promptly addressed.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to talk with their child's teacher but are welcomed to address unresolved issues with the Center Director.

In order to give a clear understanding of the steps that must be taken in the event that a concern arises, the parent must:

- First communicate his/her concern with the Teacher. The teacher usually works on the resolution of the parent's concern to ensure parent satisfaction.
- Unresolved issues must be reported to the Center Director, who will meet the parent and or the teacher to resolve issues.
- Parents who are confrontational or verbally abusive to teachers, staff member or other parents will be escorted off the premises.

- Big Smiles will not tolerate any physical altercation by parents and the appropriate authorities will be called in.
- Threats, written or verbal, to our teachers or staff will also be reported to the appropriate authorities.

## **TEACHING STAFF**

Big Smiles has six classrooms that are led by full-time teachers. Our staff members are CPR/First Aid Certified. Our teachers have also demonstrated expertise in teaching and working with young children and their families. Our teachers satisfy continuing education requirements annually by attending workshops and presentation locally and at state conferences. Each classroom has a lead teacher and an assistant teacher. All teachers must utilize the New Jersey and NAEYC Teaching Standards.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR CLASSROOM TEACHING TEAM**

1. Plan and Implement a Creative Curriculum utilizing New Jersey and NAEYC Teaching and Learning Standards.
2. Prepare classroom centers, outdoor activities, and lesson plans. Create an environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable individual and group behaviors.
3. Provide learning opportunities and activities utilizing New Jersey and NAEYC learning practices. Guide children to encourage creativity, exploration and problem solving.
4. Interact with parents; maintain open and cooperative communication with parents and families. Encourage parent involvement in the program and supporting the child's family relationship.
5. Write and compile individual assessment of child's development; complete daily work sample, child attendance and related reports.
6. Participate in trainings and workshop programs relating to the improvements in child development and teaching.
7. Support, encourage, and share early childhood ideas and innovations with colleagues.
8. Perform job related duties as assigned.