



Morning Star

CHILD CARE

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

At Morning Star Child Care children are gently encouraged to discover their individual strengths and unique talents. We believe that each child possesses a marvelous capacity to learn. Learning is best accomplished in a place that is emotionally secure, physically safe, and fun!

Morning Star Child Care

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Welcome to Morning Star Child Care!

We are delighted that you have chosen our center to provide for the needs of your child. You and your family are encouraged to visit our center prior to the first day of enrollment to give our teachers, and your child, an opportunity to meet and become better acquainted. It will make separating on the first day a bit easier.

The *Parent Handbook* has been written to describe our program, philosophy, policies, and all the practical details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. Please carefully read this handbook and keep it for future reference. The staff at Morning Star would be glad to address any of your questions or concerns. Once again, welcome!

Our Philosophy

We believe...

- That children are precious and must receive care from adults who are capable and caring—whose values enable them to be excellent role models.
- That children should experience numerous positive learning milestones, leading to an increased sense of competence and independence.
- That children's play is extremely vital to healthy physical development, acceptable social skills, and cognitive growth.
- That teachers, drawing upon their training and experience, must create an appropriate educational environment which carefully guides children from one developmental, and cognitive, level to another.
- That parents contribute to, and enhance the quality of care offered at Morning Star Child Care.

Morning Star welcomes those of diverse faiths, ethnic origins, and race.

Enrollment and Tuition

Children between the ages 8 weeks and twelve

years are eligible for enrollment at Morning Star Child Care. Children may attend the center anytime between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

- *Child Enrollment Form*
- *Child/Family Personal History*
- *Child Information Record (4x6 card)*
- *Health Appraisal*
- *Policy Agreement*
- *Non-Prescription Release*
- *Toddler Supplemental Information Form*
- *Child Placement Contract*

A registration fee of \$80 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time, non-refundable charge. If a child is withdrawn then enrolls at a later date, a second enrollment fee will be expected.

Tuition for full or part time child care is based on one of the three following options:

- Monthly Payment-due the 1st day of each month. Late after the 6th day.
Tuition X 50 weeks ÷ 12 months = Rate due
- Semi-Monthly Payment-due the 1st and 15th of each month. Late after the 4th and 18th day.
Tuition X 51 weeks ÷ 24 pay periods = Rate due
- Weekly Payment-due by 6 p.m. child's first scheduled day. Late after 6 p.m. second day.
Tuition is based on 52 weeks.

School-age Tuition

The School-age tuition is computed according to the first day of enrollment until the last scheduled day for the school year (usually the first Friday in June). The total is then divided by the number of months through May. The "Set Monthly Payment" is due the first day of each month and considered late after the sixth day. Semi-monthly payment is available upon request. Tuition expected according to the child schedule, not according to the actual days attended.

Fees

A \$15 fee is charged for late tuition payment on the 10th of the month. *This **Late Fee** will be applied for*

every week thereafter until the tuition is paid in full. Special payment arrangements may be made in advance with the director. A service fee of \$25 will be charged for any **returned checks**. Two-week notice required for any schedule change. The first schedule or payment change is free. Additional changes will require a \$25 **Schedule Change Fee**.

A 7% discount is offered to families with more than one child enrolled. This applies to full-time enrollment only. (School-age full time=AM, PM, No school days)

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change for toddler or preschool children in the event of a week including a holiday. After extensive research, we have found our policy to be consistent with other schools and child day care centers. Because our costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week in order to meet our expenses. Consequently, as much as we might like to, we cannot make allowance for any days missed in your regular attendance schedule.

We do not trade a scheduled day for another day. Parents may request an added day or extended hours (\$6/hr) to a day. We check our schedule and will let you know if an opening is available.

Parents who are receiving FIA child care assistance must pay the full regular tuition rate (by cash, check, or money order) until the authorizing paperwork is delivered to us for FIA billing. Upon our receipt of FIA payment, you will be reimbursed whatever you have paid, with exception of your co-pay. You are responsible to directly pay us your FIA co-pay each week. Rate may vary according to FIA disbursement. If FIA billing lapses it is your responsibility to pay the full tuition amount until FIA notifies us otherwise.

A two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from our center. Account must be paid in full before withdrawing—including your child's tuition for that two-week period. Any account past due at time of disenrollment will be sent to a collection agency.

The director at Morning Star reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement.
- Child has special needs that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired immunizations and/or physical.

Communication

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers and staff of Morning Star is extremely important. Teachers will be sending home information on a regular basis. Infant and toddler parents will receive daily reports. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher--even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the center director. Each child is provided with a mailbox and/or cubby. Please check these daily for notes, newsletters and daily reports.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. **We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child.** You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick-up your child on the *Child Information Record*.

Our main office must be informed of any of the following changes:

- address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address
- insurance coverage,
- parent/guardian employment,
- health/immunizations up-dates, or;
- other pertinent information related to your child.

Kinderstreet.net

Morning Star Child Care is on the Internet at Kinderstreet.net. Your child's records are located at a secure site. The best way to access this link is from the home page of our website (morningstarchild-care.net). Parents are encouraged to check their child's site frequently to view tuition status, messages from Morning Star, a monthly calendar, and other important information. All tuition is posted on Kinderstreet. **It is the parent's responsibility to check Kinderstreet for their current tuition amount.** Contact the office to receive your *User*

Name and *Password* access code or it will be e-mailed to you. Parents without Internet connection will receive "hard copies" of tuition statements and Center communications. Inform the office if you need to be placed on our *Parent Print-Out List*.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policies

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the center. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care. You are welcome to stay for a short while and assist your child through this transition. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave and the teacher will assist.

Only the individuals listed on the *Child Information Record*, or on a written permission note from the parent, will be allowed to leave with a child. The staff is expected to request a picture I.D. from any unfamiliar person (including grandparents). If there is any concern, the staff of Morning Star reserves the right to deny a person's request to pick-up a child.

Your child's classroom teacher may be available at pick-up time for short questions. For longer discussions or particular concerns please schedule an appointment.

Parents are expected to assume full responsibility of their child once they enter the classroom. *Do not allow your child to touch the exit door handles or open the doors.* We work very hard at teaching the children not to touch the exit doors.

Children enrolled on a part-time basis are expected to be picked-up at the agreed upon daily time. The parent or guardian of a child not picked-up until after the agreed time, or past closing (6:00 p.m.), will be charged \$1 per minute. All late fees are expected by 6:00 p.m. the following day. This fee applies per family. Payment should be given directly to the staff member.

Custody Orders

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking-up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director.

Holidays

Morning Star Child Care will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. If any of the above holidays fall on a weekend, the closest Friday or Monday will be selected. Regular tuition is expected. Teachers will be paid for these days.

Inservice Day

It is important for the staff to have time to prepare lessons, gather information from a guest speaker, or attend a conference. To accomplish this we include two in-service days per year. At the end of March our teachers attend the MiAEYC conference in Grand Rapids and at the end of August we have a staff training/ in-service day. The center will be closed to children. Tuition is expected.

Unexpected Closings

Morning Star will open on public school designated "snow days"--we may open late if necessary. On a rare occasion our center may be forced to close due to a situation beyond our control (e.g., ice storm, electrical outage, no water service). Every attempt will be made to inform parents of an emergency closing.

Tornado and Disaster Procedure

In the event of a tornado or disaster warning, children will be taken to the basement. They will remain there until the all-clear signal is sounded.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Treasures and Possessions

Each child will need a blanket to use at naptime. A pillowcase is also requested for storing the blanket. Your child's name must be clearly written on the pillowcase and blanket. The pillowcase and blanket are taken home each Friday to be washed and returned

the following Monday. A small pillow or small stuffed toy is permissible.

Sometimes children need to bring special toys or newfound treasures to use as a "bridge" between home and school. On these occasions we will work with you and your child to make it a positive sharing experience. Past experience has shown us that often toys from home create problems at school. We encourage you to keep personal belongings and toys at home unless the teacher has scheduled a "show-n-tell" day. Videos brought in to share with the class must be 'G' rated. **Morning Star will not be responsible for any lost items.**

***Important...there are four things we feel strongly must remain at home: toy guns, gum, money, and candy (unless enough for each classmate).**

Clothing

Because of the wide range of activities it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Plastic aprons will be provided by the center for art and water activities.

Water activities, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra set of clothing be kept at the center at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name and placed in a labeled plastic bag. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirt. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next morning.

Licensing requires that children be taken outdoors each day. The children will play outdoors if the temperature is 20° or warmer with calm winds. Children should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, rain boots (for damp days) in fall and spring; heavy winter jacket, mittens, scarf, hat, and snow boots in winter. An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature. **All clothing, including coats and boots, must be labeled clearly with your child's name. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.**

Diapers & Potty Training

Parents supply all diapers at Morning Star. Wipes will be provided by the center unless the parent makes alternate arrangements.

Our teachers are experienced in training young

children in how to use the bathroom. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful.

We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! While potty training, parents are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing. We do not allow the use of "pull-ups" at Morning Star. They seem to only delay the toilet training process plus require extra time to change.

Bottles, Blankets and Pacifiers

You may send extra bottles, a small security blanket and/or a pacifier for your child. Staff will make every effort to keep track of these items but will not be held responsible if lost. When you are ready to wean your child, please communicate with your child's teacher so a consistent strategy between home and our center may be established.

Field Trips

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically. The center will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance at the center. Your permission for your child to participate in *walking* excursions is part of this agreement.

We will occasionally take classroom field trips to museums, parks, apple orchards, and other community places. Families will be notified prior to any trips involving transportation. A permission slip must be signed and returned--including emergency phone numbers for that day. Parent volunteers are welcome to assist with field trips (and other special events). A child may be excluded from participation in a field trip for safety, health, or disciplinary reasons.

Birthday Celebrations

Parents are welcome to send cookies, cupcakes or cakes to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing. This is for the safety of all of the children. Please do not bring in any treats that contain peanuts or peanut products. Ask your child's teacher for sugges-

tions. Parents are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration.

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, you may distribute the invitations into the cubbies. Our center will not distribute mailing lists or phone numbers.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement.

Meals

The center will provide milk, fruit juice, and two snacks for each day. The children participate in preparing the snack as much as possible.

Parents may send a lunch with their child each day. Lunches sent from home should be self-serving or easy to serve. A microwave will be available. Refrigeration is not available for children older than 2 ½ years. Lunch boxes that have a frozen pack inside are recommended.

Dexter Schools provides a nutritious, daily hot lunch program as an option to parents. Hot lunch is purchased by the month according to a set weekly schedule. No refunds for missed days.

Parents may bring breakfast for their children provided the arrival time is before 8:30 a.m. Food must be simple and self-serving (e.g., yogurt, breakfast bar, dry cereal, fruit). We ask that you set out your child's breakfast before leaving. The teachers are not responsible for preparing breakfast.

Immunizations and Physicals

All children who attend child care programs in Michigan are required by law to be fully vaccinated. *Immunization Waiver* and *Medical Contraindication* forms are available at our office for those who wish to file an exemption to this law. A *Health Appraisal* form is required prior to enrollment. This form requests a record of your child's immunizations and date of last physical examination.

***Important: It is your responsibility as parent or guardian, to maintain up-to-date immunizations and physicals for your child(ren). Updates must be reported to the center director in writing.**

The Michigan Department of Health requires the following immunizations:

Children Ages 2 Months through 3 Months

- 1 dose of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DPT)
- 1 dose of polio vaccine
- 1 dose Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine
- 1 does of hepatitis B vaccine

Children Ages 4 Months through 5 Months

- 2 doses DPT
- 2 doses polio vaccine
- 2 doses Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine
- 2 doses hepatitis B vaccine

Children Ages 6 Months through 14 Months

- 3 doses DPT
- 2 doses polio vaccine
- 2 doses Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine
- 2 doses hepatitis B vaccine

Children Ages 15 Months through 4 Years

- 4 doses diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DPT)
- 3 doses polio vaccine
- Complete series, or 1 dose haemophilus influenza type b (Hib)
- 1 dose measles, mumps, rubella vaccine

A record of your child's physical exam must be submitted and is also a requirement by the Michigan Department of Health. This form is on the reverse side of the green ***Health Appraisal***. A medical examiner must sign and date this side of the form. Physical regulations are as follows:

- *Children younger than 2 ½ years* must have a physical within 3 months preceding enrollment and repeated yearly.
- *Children 2 ½ years to kindergarten--* a physical must be within the previous year (before enrollment) and repeated yearly.
- *Kindergarten children and older--*parents must sign the ***Physical Health/Immunizations Parental Acknowledgement for School-Age Programs*** letter, plus submit a copy of the child's immunization record to the office. A new letter must be signed yearly.

Illness

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if while in our care your child becomes ill or displays an unknown rash, your child's teacher will consult the director and you may be called to come take your child home. When called, you (or an alternate emergency person) are expected to come immediately. This is to protect the health of your child and his/her classmates. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

- Unknown rash.
- Fever of 100.5° or higher. For a mild fever, muscle aches, toothache, or headache Tylenol (supplied from home) may be administered. *See ***Medicine*** below.
- Highly contagious condition such as head lice, chicken pox, strep throat, pin worms, mumps, impetigo, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc.
- Diarrhea or vomiting (more than two loose, watery stools). Consideration will be taken if your child is allergic to certain food/drink products or on medication.

If your child is too ill to play outside with his or her class, then your child is too ill to attend the center.

Your child may return to the center after:

- Obtaining written verification from a doctor.
- Fever-free for 12 hours *without the aid of Tylenol*.
- In the case of chicken pox, when all the lesions are scabbed over.
- In the case of head lice, following treatment with appropriate shampoo (such as Kwell or RID) so that all the live eggs are gone.
- In the case of a contagious illness, your child should take an antibiotic for 24 hours before returning.

***If questions arise to the appropriateness of a child's return to the center, the final decision will be that of the Center Director or Assistant Director.**

Medicine

Non-prescriptive medication (Tylenol, cough medicine, nose drops, etc.) as well as prescription medication will only be administered after a parent signs, and dates a form entitled, *Medication Permission and Instructions for Day Care Homes/Child Care Centers*. The parent must provide all medications. Morning Star does not supply any medications. All medication must state the appropriate dosage for your child's weight or age. If not than a doctor's note stating proper dosage will be required before we can administer medication.

Prescriptive medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name. A parent or guardian must administer the first dosage; never the center staff.

Please inform a teacher if your child's medication needs refrigeration. A *Non-Prescription Release* form for other applications such as diaper wipes, sun block, soap, etc. will be signed upon enrollment.

Injury

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Should an injury occur, a *Minor Incident Report* would be completed by the closest adult and signed by the Center Director or Assistant Director. A copy of this report will be sent home. A parent or guardian will be notified regarding any injury suspected of needing immediate care by a physician.

In the event of a major medical emergency or an accident, the center teacher or director will call 911 first. The child will be transported to the hospital noted on the *Child Information Record* (or the closest hospital). The parent/guardian and family physician will be called immediately.

Family Gatherings

Morning Star families have a chance to meet with other families and the teachers several times a year. These gatherings are meant to provide a sense of community and to celebrate the families here at Morning Star. Dates and times will be posted. Our Winter Family Festival is usually held in January, dinner and entertainment are provided. In June we celebrate preschool graduation by having a family potluck. Often each classroom will have a special celebration also. Family members are invited to Grandparent's Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day celebrations.

Center Happenings

Morning Star makes every attempt to keep parents up to date on happenings here at the center and in the community. Center newsletters are sent out at least 4 times a year and classroom newsletters are sent out monthly. Parent bulletin boards are in each classroom. Notices are sent out at least monthly on Kinderstreet. **Please read them.** It is also the parents' responsibility to keep up to date by being aware and checking for updates. Together as partners we will be able to provide your child with a fun and safe learning environment.

Changes in Policies

The fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to be changed at the discretion of the center director or center owners. This *Morning Star Parent Handbook* revised: September 2008.

Morning Star Child Care is proud to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.



Morning Star Child Care

Discipline and Guidance Policy

At Morning Star Child Care the term *guidance* is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working with the children to develop internal control of their behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices. Guidance takes several forms within our center:

- **Environment**--A place designed for children. Each room is age-appropriate in furniture size, large and small manipulatives, and supplies required for hands-on experiences.
- **Logical Rules**--Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and taking care of the learning environment. These are discussed with the children as well as why such rules are needed.
- **Curriculum**--Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
- **Positive Behavior**--We reinforce the behaviors we wish to see repeated.
- **Redirection**--Often interesting a child in another activity can eliminate potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us or send a child to a different area to play.
- **Positive Reminder**--Telling the children what we want them to do rather than using "no" or "don't."
- **Renewal Time**--Occasionally, as a last resort, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time out. This allows the child time to calm down and consider an alternate behavior.

Difficult Behavior

We will make every effort to work with the parent or guardian to ensure a cooperative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We are here to serve and protect all of our children! A parent may be called at work or home at anytime the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the center's staff. The parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. The following steps may be taken regarding children who display *chronic* disruptive behavior, upsetting to the emotional or physical well being of another child or an adult.

Initial Consultation:

The director may request that the parent or guardian meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Intervention strategies will be discussed. The best solution toward solving the problem will be agreed upon by the center director, teacher, and parent or guardian.

Second Consultation:

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent will again be asked to meet with the director and teaching staff involved. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, and establish a new, or revised, approach for solving the problem.

Disenrolled:

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be disenrolled from the center at the discretion of the center director.

NOTE: Corporal punishment will not be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.). No unusual punishment will be allowed such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.

Spirituality

Morning Star is non-denominational and does not promote any set doctrine or actively pursue converts to a particular faith. Morning Star welcomes children from all religious or non-religious backgrounds.

Spiritual faith is viewed as an important component to healthy human development. A Christian Bible class is available as an option to parents. This class includes a time for singing, a short story from scripture, and prayer. Christian holidays are taught and celebrated. Children are presented with the following:

- God is real and loves each person.
- We can learn from lessons and stories in the Bible.
- God hears us when we pray.

Children not attending the class will engage in a teacher directed activity held in a different location. You are welcome to talk with the director for a further explanation of this program.

Please sign the form below to inform us of your preference. Thank you.

Child's Name: _____

I would like my child to attend the weekly Bible class. _____

I would prefer that my child remain with his/her teacher. _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

POLICY AGREEMENT

Please carefully read, sign, and return the following form to the center director:

I have read the Morning Star Parent Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures therein. I agree to pay the following tuition amount and understand that these may change depending on schedule and rate adjustments.

Tuition _____

Weekly _____

Semi-Monthly _____

Monthly _____

Registration Fee _____ Approved Start Date _____

Weekly Schedule _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for selecting Morning Star as your child care provider.