

The Smart Start

Preschool & Learning Center



Parent Handbook



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Overview/Introduction

Welcome to The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center. We are so happy you decided to send your child to our great school.

The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center is a childcare program dedicated to the physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth of children age six weeks to five years old. This program is designed around the belief that children learn in a variety of ways.

The Smart Start also offers before and after school program for children in Kindergarten up to sixth grade. Please ask for the Over 5 Club handbook for more information. Tutoring is also available at the Learning Center. Please see the director for more information on any of these two other programs.

The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center is a Limited Liability Company (LLC) owned and operated by Natasha Mendes. Natasha Mendes has over 20 years experience in the childcare industry working with all age groups from toddlers to preschool to kindergarten to school age children. She formed The Smart Start with the understanding that the field of education is ever expanding and more children need to be reached and be prepared for kindergarten than ever before. Natasha Mendes is a certified K-6 teacher with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in English and a Master's of Science degree in Elementary Education. Her enthusiasm, dedication and love for children are what led her to form this company.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide a safe, nurturing and caring environment for young children. We want students to grow not only physically, but also cognitively, emotionally and socially. Our program will enrich your child's life as well as yours. We are committed to you, your child and education making this a wonderful place for your child to start learning and growing.

Philosophy:

Our belief is that all children are special and unique and learn in a variety of ways. Children will learn through play, hands-on-activities, small group instruction, technology and community involvement. Our certified staff is committed to provide excellent care and quality education to your child. Our curriculum is literacy centered because we believe that literacy is the foundation to cognitive growth.



Our motto: The Smart Start has heart!



Admissions & Enrollment

Hours of Operation

The center is open Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 6:00pm, year round. The preschool runs from 9:00am to 1:00pm, however the extra hours are available for extended care for parents who need it.

Enrollment

The center generally serves children ages six weeks to twelve years old.

Parents must complete all forms and make all payments before a child can be fully enrolled in the program.

A non-refundable \$50 registration fee, along with a security deposit of one week tuition plus the first week's tuition is due upon registration. If your account remains current throughout the duration of your enrollment the deposit will be refunded at the time of withdrawal from the program (withdrawal from the program requires a two week notice). If payments are late or delinquent in anyway The Smart Start earns the right to keep your deposit and not refund it to you at withdrawal. Tuition will be due on Wednesdays (please see tuition/ payment schedule for more information).

Your tuition includes programs that come into our school like music, yoga, Jump Bunch, etc.

Registration forms need to be complete along with child health records and child information sheet.

Each child entering the center must have an up-to-date physical form, signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, which includes the child's date of birth. All children's physicals must be updated yearly and immunization records must be maintained per State of Connecticut requirements.

Tuition Rates

Tuition varies depending on which program your child is enrolled, which depends on your child's age. Our rates are competitive with other centers in the Hamden/Cheshire area. We offer both weekly and monthly rates depending on how you choose to pay your tuition.

Infant/Toddler Tuition (6 weeks to 3 years old)

Monday-Friday Rates:

Full-time (max. 11 hours/day): \$335/week ; \$1440/month

Part-Time Rates:

\$215/week; \$924/month (2 days/6-11 hours/day)

\$255/week; \$1096/month (3 days/6-11 hours/day)

Half-Day Rates

\$15/hour (daily rate/3-6 hours)

Preschool Tuition (3 years to 5 years)

Monday-Friday Rates:

Full-time (max. 11 hours/day): \$280/week; \$1204/month

Preschool (9am-3pm): \$235/week; \$1010/month

Part-Time Rates (two-three days/week)

\$190/week; \$817/month (2 days/6-11 hours per day)

\$230/week; \$989/month (3 days/6-11 hours per day)

Half-Day Rates

\$15/hour (daily rate/3-6 hours)

Over 5 Club Tuition (school-age)

\$15/hour (before/after school care)

\$60/day (single full days)

\$250/week (school vacation weeks)

Tuition Payment Schedule

Invoices and paid receipts is all done electronically. Invoices will be emailed at least 2 weeks in advance for the upcoming month. Payments shall be made in the form of check, bank check or Zelle bank transfer. Credit Card payments are accepted with an additional fee. We will not accept cash for tuition payments.

Tuition payments are to be made in advance for the weeks ahead. All tuition payments will be due on the first of the month for those who pay monthly and the Sunday before the start of the week for those who pay weekly.

Parent Referrals

If a parent recommends The Smart Start to another family and that family enrolls, the referring family and enrolling family will earn 50% off one week's tuition.

Overtime Rates & Late Fees

Late Pick-up Fee:

\$5 per minute for every minute after 6pm. This is due upon arrival.

Tuition Late Fee:

A \$25 late fee will be added after 5 days past due date. If payment is not made, in full, by 6th day child will be permitted from returning until payment is made in full.

Returned Check Fee:

In the event of a returned check, parents are responsible to pay a \$30 returned check fee as well as any fees incurred due to the returned check. The same rules apply to ACH deposits. If the account does not have enough to cover you will be charged the \$30 along with any incurred bank fees. If a check is returned more than once, then you will only be allowed to pay with a money order.

Receipts

Receipts are available upon request. The Smart Start will keep track of payments through Wave. You will receive your year-end tax statement at the end of January with the total amount paid for childcare services from the previous year.

Attendance

Child's Attendance

Both full-time and part-time fees will be charged based on contracted **days including missed days due to illness, holidays and school vacations, parent vacations, or inclement weather**. No refunds or deductions will be made for days your child is absent. You are paying for your child's space as well as for the services you receive. If your contracted schedule is not working for you, please see the Director if changes need to be made.

Two consecutive No-Shows/No-Calls are grounds for immediate termination at the Director's discretion. You will be billed for two-week tuition and will lose your deposit if you are terminated. Please be courteous and phone if your child will not be attending that day. Email is another way to reach us and if it is before or after hours just simply leave a message. You can also let us know via the tadpoles app.

Leave of Absence:

The Smart Start will not hold a child's space while the parent is not working, on maternity leave or for parent or child illness, or any other reason, unless you continue to pay for services. Failure to pay will result in the loss of your child's space.

Holidays

The Smart Start closely follows the Hamden School District's school calendar and will be closed on those same holidays in which the schools are closed, except for Election Day, Rosh Hashanah and other professional development days.

Please see list of school closings. A new list of school closings goes out every June for the upcoming school year.

Early Dismissals:

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the day before Christmas Eve is an early dismissal. The Center will close at 1:00 pm. Please make arrangements to have your child picked up by this time. Late fees will be applied to late pick-ups after the stated closing time. Please refer to the school closings schedule for a complete list of school closings.

Vacations

Please notify the director of any vacations at least two weeks prior. Full payment is required for any days your child is absent. The payment ensures your child's space in the center. Once a child has been enrolled for one year, one week's vacation will be free of charge pending two weeks notice was given.

Health

Illness

Children who are ill are not to be brought to the center. Parents are required to call if their child will be absent. You can also mark your child absent in the Tadpoles App. The following are examples of children who are ill:

- *A temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- *Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred more than once in the past 24 hours *
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or pink eye *An unidentified rash *Has not been on a prescribed medication for at least 24 hours or continues to have symptoms of illness
- *Has a constant, thick, colored nasal discharge
- *Lice or nits

If a child should become ill while at the center, parents will be contacted immediately. Sick children should be picked up within one hour of the phone call. If the child is not picked up within that hour, the emergency contact person on the child's emergency card will be called.

Children may return to the center when they are symptom free and fever free for 24 hours or if they have been appropriately treated or have been given medical approval to return to school.

All communicable diseases, when required, will be reported to the local health department and to parents of enrolled children. Parents of all enrolled children will be notified when their child has been exposed to an illness other than a communicable disease.

These procedures are in accordance with licensing rules and guidelines of the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Office of Early Childhood.

Injuries

All full-time staff has received first aid training as well as CPR. Standard emergency medical procedures will be followed for treating injuries. A head injury will be treated as a serious injury and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

If there is a need for emergency medical treatment, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to Yale-New Haven hospital unless otherwise indicated on the child's enrollment form. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after contacting 911. A major accident report will be written, signed and filed in child's records as well as copies given to the parents.

Superficial injuries will be washed with soap and water and covered with a bandage or treated with ice. An accident report will be written by the teacher witnessing the incident and signed by the director. The parent will be notified by Brightwheel and at pick up will be required to sign the report. A copy will kept in the child's records.

Medications

The Smart Start will store and administer prescribed inhalers and epi-pens, non-prescription topical medications and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e. Benadryl) with parent's consent. An authorization form, which must be signed by an authorized prescriber and parent, are available. Please see the director for the appropriate form.

The form includes information such as:

- *The child's name, address and birth date
- *The drug name
- *The prescribed dosage
- *The method of administration
- *The time to be administered
- *The side effects
- *The prescriber's name and address

Medications must be in their original container and clearly labeled. All medications will be locked in the office cabinet or the locked box in the refrigerator. Emergent, first line of defense medication will be stored unlocked but in a safe manner and inaccessible to children to allow quick access in an emergency. Non-prescription medication will be allowed to be stored in the locked containers with signed permission by parents. The topical medications must be stored "inaccessible" in the original container and be labeled with the child's name and directions for administering.

The center will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included in the documentation are:

- *The date the medications was administered
- *The time it was administered
- *The dose that was administered
- *The signature of the staff administering
- *Any comments

Parents will be notified when/if a child has been administered any medication. Full-time staff is trained in the administration of medication by our nurse consultant. This training is renewed every three years. Training for injectables is repeated once per year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer medications.

It is urged, however, that medications be administered at home whenever possible.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the premises of the center at any time.

Terminations

Withdrawals

Parents must give a two-week written notice of their intent to withdraw their child, and will be required to pay for the two weeks whether or not the child attends. All outstanding fees must be paid. If a two-week written notice is not given and the two weeks tuition is not paid, The Smart Start earns the right to withhold the tuition deposit given at the time of enrollment.

Discharges

A child may be discharged from the center for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- *Failure to pay fees on time (grounds for immediate termination, without advance notice).
- *Lack of parental cooperation
- *Inability of the program to meet the needs of the child. Director will consult with parent concerning these issues. Parent will be referred to other community resources
- *Repeated failure to pick up the child at the scheduled time
- *Failure to complete and return required forms

If it becomes necessary for legal action to be taken to collect any unpaid fees or balances, parent(s) will be responsible for any legal fees incurred by The Smart Start.

Procedures

Arrivals

The Smart Start does not open until 7:00 a.m.; please do not drop off children prior to that time even if a staff member is in the building. We encourage all parents to drop off prior to 9am, so that classrooms can begin their day with little interruption. If your child will be later than 9am please notify the school by phone, email or Tadpoles.

Staff is scheduled to arrive based on the contracted hours of the children. Please adhere to the contracted hours for drop off times. Do not drop children off earlier than his/her contracted start time unless 24 hour notice is given to the director and approved by the director.

When dropping off children parents are to come into their child's classroom with their child. Children are encouraged and responsible to put their belongings in their appropriate cubby. All notes, signed notices, etc. are to be placed in the tuition box located near the front door. Tuition payments should be placed in a sealed envelope with child's last name and also placed in the tuition box.

Departures

Again staff is scheduled to depart based on the contracted hours of the children. Please adhere to the contracted hours for pick up. Do not pick up children later than his/her contracted end time unless 24 hour notice is given to the director and approved by the director. If parents are late due to traffic or some other emergency please notify the center that the child will be picked up late. If the time exceeds 30 minutes parents are to notify an alternate pick up person.

The Smart Start closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Please pick up children prior to this time. If a child has not been picked up within 15 minutes of our closing time, a staff member will attempt to call the child's parents at their work, home and cell phone numbers. If the parents cannot be reached, the staff member will then attempt to call the emergency and alternate people listed on their enrollment form. Two staff members at least 18 years of age or older will remain with the child at all times. After one hour the police will be called if parents or other adults cannot be reached. At that time the child will be released to the police.

The Smart Start's number one priority is the safety of the children. Only people listed on the pick-up list are allowed to pick up children. If someone comes who is not on the list the child will not be sent home with that person. If someone is picking up a child who is not on the pick-up a list a note must be sent in with the first and last name of the person, address and telephone number. This note can be sent in the day before or the morning of. Any person picking must have their driver's license ready for viewing. The child will not be sent home with any person who does not present a valid photo id with name and address.

When parents come to pick up their children, the children are expected to clean up whatever he/she is playing with before leaving for the day. Parents should always speak to a staff member before leaving with their child for the day. Staff members are to check your child out for the day and always want to let you know how your child's day was. Parents should always check child's cubbies for anything that needs to go home.

Parents will be given a code for the security system for their convenience and for the safety of the children. This will allow parents to enter and exit from the building. Please do not share this code with other people unless they are to be added to the pick-up list.

What to Bring/What Not to Bring?

Infant Program:

Children need to have the following items (labeled with child's name):

- Three-four changes of clothes appropriate for the season
- Diapers and wipes
- For Winter: Hat and mittens
- For Summer: Sunscreen and hat
- Two Crib sheets
- Pacifier (if needed)
- Whatever else your child needs/uses for sleeping
- Bottles (for every feeding)
- Extra formula/breastmilk

- Food (for a.m. snack/lunch/p.m. snack)-Older Infants

Toddler Program:

Children need to have the following items (labeled with child's name) in their cubby for the week:

- Two changes of clothes appropriate for the season
- Diapers and wipes
- Cot sized sheet and blanket for nap time. Please no large pillows (they do not fit in the nap storage container)
- Slippers or Indoor Shoes (the whole building is shoeless)
- For Winter: Snow clothes and boots
- For Summer: Bathing Suit, towel, sunscreen and hat

Children need to have the following items (labeled with child's name) every day:

- Lunch packed in a lunch box/bag with an ice pack (food can be cold or warmed up in a microwave)
- Sippy cup or water bottle to be used daily

Preschool Program:

Children need to have the following items in their cubby for the week:

- A change (or two) of clothes appropriate for the season
- Cot sized sheet and blanket for nap time. Please no large pillows (they do not fit in the nap storage container)
- Slippers or Indoor Shoes (the whole building is shoeless)
- Sneakers for playing outside (it is okay to wear fancy shoes or flip flops, but sneakers are required for outdoor play)
- For Winter: Snow clothes and boots
- For Summer: Bathing Suit, towel, sunscreen and hat

Preschool Nap time/Rest Time:

Nap time/Rest time is important to the development of children; therefore, our school day includes a nap/rest time. All children will have a labeled cot and rest for the two hour time block. If a child no longer takes a nap, they are required to lay on their cot quietly for one hour. After the hour the child will then receive a busy box full of quiet activities to keep them busy on their cots, while their other friends nap.

Snacks

Morning and afternoon snack will be provided by The Smart Start. They are healthy kid friendly options and each snack includes two food groups. For example: pancakes and fruit, cheese and crackers, pudding and animal crackers. Parents are also responsible for packing his/her child's lunch every day (unless otherwise notified). The Smart Start is not responsible for keeping food cold; please pack lunch in a lunch box with a cold pack. However, The Smart Start will heat up food that needs to be heated. The center will provide milk and water with all snacks and lunches to ensure the drinks are cold.

Snacks are to be limited to a more healthy choice and please refrain from anything with nuts. Students may bring in cupcakes, ice cream, cookies, brownies, etc. for his/her birthday to share with the class or for party days.

Do not bring the following items to school:

- Toys (unless it is your child's share day, even then please try to keep these items to more meaningful items like an award, trophy, picture, etc.)
- Animals (please keep pets at home)

Communication

The Smart Start believes in strong family communication. We utilize Brightwheel which is a daily reporting system allowing teachers to track meals, diaper changes, and activities via a secure app-based program. Brightwheel has greatly improved the communication between teachers and parents. Parents are encouraged to download the Brightwheel app (available for iPhones and Androids) and we would be happy to provide a short tutorial on how to use this system! Using the App you can track your child's daily activity, communicate with teachers via the messaging system, read up on the weekly lesson plan under the Learning Tab, and even check in/out your child using the QR code posted in each of the rooms.

You may also email the director directly. The email addresses are as follows:

- natasha@thesmartstart.org

We are also always available via telephone.

Phone: (203) 660-7158 Fax: (203) 891-5856

We also have a few events throughout the year which encourage parent involvement. We have an open house every year at the beginning of the school year for parents to get a chance to meet their child's new teacher and learn the expectations of the classroom. We also have a fall festival, winter festival, spring fling and our annual graduation.

Policies

Notice of Change

Parents must notify the director of any changes in address, telephone number, work information, drop off/pick up lists, doctors, etc. Any changes that will affect the records kept for the child enrolled in the school needs to be notified to the director as soon as possible.

Discipline

The Smart Start believes the best way to handle problems is to prevent them from happening in the first place. Therefore, the physical environments and the programs for our school are set up so that as few problems will take place as possible. The rooms and toys are arranged so children can handle things mostly by themselves. Children are not expected to perform beyond their abilities. Activities are age appropriate. In addition, because the ratio of adults to children is more than adequate, there is a great deal of interaction between them and consequently less inappropriate demand for attention and opportunities for problems to develop.

There are three situations in which more direct guidance may be needed:

- *When a child is in danger of hurting himself/herself.
- *When he/she is about to hurt others.
- *When he/she is hurting equipment or the environment.

In these cases, children are redirected in positive terms so they understand not only what they cannot do but also what they can do instead. These limits are reinforced by a firm voice and the use of time out/pause time. In extreme cases, if a child does not respond to these methods, he/she is removed from the situation and given some time by himself/herself with an adult nearby to help him/her if necessary. No adult will administer physical punishment to any child, including his/her own on the school premises or during any school function at any time. Abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment is strictly prohibited. Physical restraint is also prohibited, unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

During any disciplinary action, there will be continuous supervision by staff at all times. Discipline varies from age group to age group. In the 2 year old and preschool classrooms we will teach the children to develop self control and learn to control their behaviors.

Abuse/Neglect

It is the responsibility of the staff of The Smart Start to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in the center.

1. Definition:

Child Abuse includes:

- any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him/her by abuse or neglect)

Child Abuse is defined as:

A child who has had

- non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her
- injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment

Child Neglect is defined as:

A child who has been:

- abandoned
- denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well being (CT GS 46b-120)

2. Staff Responsibilities

As child care providers The Smart Start staff is mandated by law to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect or the imminent risk of serious harm of any child.

3. Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be called.
1-800-842-2288
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF.

Staff is protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT GS, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

4. The management of the preschool supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action (suspension, reassignment of job duties, etc.) should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.

5. Staff training:

Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of the mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

6. Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy:

A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director will only notify the parents/guardians that a report has been made to DCF if it is deemed appropriate to do so. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect is toward a staff member, the staff member will be put on administrative leave until the case has been resolved.

Supervision

At no time shall a child be left unsupervised. Children will be supervised by sight and sound at all times.

1. A staff to child ratio of no more than 10 preschool children per staff shall be maintained at all times. A staff to child ratio of no more than 4 infants and toddlers per staff shall be maintained at all times (this includes indoor, outdoor & naptime).

2. The group size shall not exceed 20 preschool children and 8 under infants/toddlers.

3. At least two staff members 18 years of age or older will be present at all times in the building.

4. Staff will supervise all children arriving and leaving the center.

5. Children are carefully watched while outside at play. Staff members are stationed at the equipment at all times. Other staff will rotate among the play areas.
6. When a child goes inside to use the restrooms from outdoors, a staff member is designated to accompany him/her. Children are never allowed to travel from outside to inside by themselves.
7. Children are carefully watched while at play or during an activity within the building, or on field trips, including bathroom use.
8. When a child or children use the bathroom, staff will always be present.

Consultation

The Smart Start is required by the State of Connecticut to have an education, health, dental and social service consultant.

All consultants will be available to provide the minimum services to the school as required by the State of Connecticut Regulations for Child Day Care/Group Day Care Homes Sec. 19a-79-4a(h)

Emergency Plans

Medical

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member would notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. Another staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios at the center.

Fire

In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. iPads (which contain all student information) will be taken on the way out. The group will walk to the yard of the building next door and the parking lot on the side of the building, safely away from the building and line up for attendance. The staff will immediately take attendance. The Director or person in charge will be responsible for taking the portable first aid kit, cell phone and emergency file with them. Should it not be possible to return to the building, staff will walk children to the building next door. Parents will be notified via the cell phone to pick up their children.

There will be monthly fire drills, as well, so staff and children are prepared if there ever was a real fire emergency.

Weather

On snow days or during hazardous weather emergencies The Smart Start will make a decision of a closing or late opening by 6:00am. Parents will be notified via tadpoles, television announcements, or telephone by program staff to pick up their children due to early closing. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff will remain until all children are picked up. In the event conditions require the center to shelter children, we will have additional resources (flashlights, water, radio, food, clothing, etc.) available. In the event of other serious weather emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First aid staff will be

on hand to administer first aid, as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

Evacuation

In the event the facility must evacuate, the children will be driven to the nearest designated evacuation area, Quinnipiac University. Advanced contact has been made with the town's Civil Preparedness Unit, adding the center to their list for emergencies. Notes will be posted to alert parents of the location of the children. Parents will also be notified by cell phone to pick up their children. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff will remain with the children until all children are picked up.

Personnel

Job Descriptions:

Education Coordinator

- The coordinator is responsible for oversight of the Early Childhood Education Program of The Smart Start, ensuring the quality and integrity of all aspects of the program.
- The job of the education coordinator is to plan, organize and implement the curriculum and ensure that students have adequate learning materials, classrooms and teachers.
- The education coordinator will act as a role model, mentor and resource to the classroom teachers.

The coordinator will perform the following essential tasks and duties:

- Review, update and implement the curriculum to meet the required state standards
- Develop and direct program assessment, program review process and accreditation
- Recommend for hire, supervise and mentor the teachers at all locations
- Supervise, mentor and train teachers regularly
- Provide direct classroom services on an as needed basis
- Conduct classroom observations regularly
- Observe and evaluate teachers on a regular basis
- Facilitate trainings for all teachers at all locations
- Conduct monthly meetings with classroom teachers
- Resource for teachers
- Review and analyze data of child outcomes

Qualifications:

- Must possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in the field of education
- Have administrative experience
- Have experience planning and implementing curriculum and lesson planning
- At least 3 years of classroom teaching experience
- At least 2 years working in a center
- Continue to keep abreast on the field of early childhood education
- Must be at least 25 years of age
- Must possess the CT Head Teacher Certification in all age groups (infant through school age)

Director

- The Director is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the childcare program. She is responsible for overseeing all of the other staff, including but not limited to: hiring, training and terminating and disciplining as well as making sure staff files are kept current.
- The Director will show prospective parents the center, and keep track of child enrollment information.
- The Director possesses personal qualities to care for and work with children, relate to and supervise staff and relate to and communicate with parents.
- The Director must be at least 21 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and have experience supervising staff.
- All of the other staff members are to report to the director. In the event the Director is absent, the Assistant Director would be designated as in charge.

- The Director is available to fill in for absent teachers, or is responsible for finding qualified substitutes.

Assistant Director

- The Assistant Director must be at least 21 years of age, have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and have experience supervising staff.
- The Assistant Director directly works for the director. He/she will assist with the day-to-day administration.
- When the Director is absent, the Assistant Director will be responsible for all of the Director's responsibilities.
- The Assistant Director possesses personal qualities to care for and work with children, relate to and supervise staff and relate to and communicate with parents.
- The Assistant Director is available to fill in for absent teachers, or is responsible for finding qualified substitutes

Head Teacher

- The Head Teacher is required to be present 60% of the hours the center is in operation.
- He/she must be at least 20 years of age.
- He/she must have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- The Head Teacher must meet the qualifications for State of Connecticut approval as a Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for planning and implementing the day-to-day educational portion of the program.
- The Head Teacher is responsible for meeting all of the day-to-day emotional and physical needs of the children.
- He/she must possess personal qualities necessary to care and work with children, relate to other staff and relate to parents.
- The Head Teacher reports directly to the Director.

The Head Teacher will be responsible for writing lesson plans, planning daily activities, teaching and caring for the children and taking care of the daily needs of the children. In the absence of the director and assistant director, she will be able to open and close the center, meet with parents and supervise the teachers and assistant teachers. If there are any problems he/she will report them immediately to the director.

Teacher

- The Teacher must be 18 years of age or older.
- He/she must possess a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
- He/she must possess the personal qualities necessary to care for and work with children, relate to other adults, including staff and parents.
- The Teacher is responsible for the day to day direct care of the children.
- The Teacher will assist the Head Teacher in implementing the educational portion of the program.

The Teacher will aid the Head Teacher in the planning and implementing of the daily curriculum. The Teacher is responsible to teach and care for the children according to the plans and schedule of the day.

Assistant Teacher

- The Assistant Teacher must be at least 16 years old.
- The Assistant Teacher must work under the supervision of the Teacher or Head Teacher.
- He/she must possess the personal qualities necessary to care for and work with children.
- He/she will assist the Head Teacher or Teacher in meeting the day-to-day needs of the children.
- The Assistant teacher reports to the Director.

The Assistant Teacher will aid the Head Teacher and Teacher in the everyday tasks. The assistant teacher is responsible to teach and care for the children according to the plans and schedule of the day.

All Staff

All full-time employees are required to be a certified teacher or have a degree in the field of education, or experience equivalency.

All employees are required to receive training in early childhood education and development. They are also required to be CPR and First Aid certified. Staff are also required to accumulate professional development hours, equivalent to 1% of total annual hours worked. All employees will attend bi-monthly staff meetings. Employees must also have a current physical along with a TB test on file. Sick employees are encouraged to stay home and will be replaced with a qualified substitute. There will be a substitute list of pre-qualified teachers whom shall be called if the need arises. All employees will be fingerprinted and have a background check completed along with two letters of recommendation and a thorough application and interview with the director before being hired. Employees will be required to read and become familiar with the employee handbook as well as the parent handbook before working for The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center.

Volunteers

Volunteers are always welcomed especially if they are parents of children enrolled in the center. Volunteers must have permission from the director to volunteer in the classroom. Volunteers, along with parents, will have to complete a background check before volunteering at the school. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer to chaperone class field trips. Community volunteers will be selected and asked to interview with the director before coming into the center.

Educational Program

The Smart Start believes that all children are special and unique and learn in a variety of ways. Children will learn through play, hands-on-activities, small group instruction, technology and community involvement through weekly themed lessons.

The certified and experienced staff is committed to provide excellent care and quality education to children. The curriculum will be literacy centered because of the belief that literacy is the foundation to cognitive growth.

Natasha Mendes, owner/director of The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center, LLC, formed the childcare center with the understanding that the field of education is ever expanding and more children need to be reached and be prepared for Kindergarten than ever before. Early childcare and education is now universally regarded as an important component of basic education. The World Conference on Education for All held in March 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand promoted the idea that "Learning begins at birth". According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNICEF, proper early childhood programs can produce more agile minds, better school attendance, lower repetition and dropout rates and stronger academic skills. Involvement in quality center-based care, preschool, and prekindergarten programs can improve academic outcomes for children in kindergarten. Nationally, children who attend high quality center-based childcare, prekindergarten or preschool programs tend to have better pre-academic and language skills than other children. Children who spend more hours in high quality center-based care perform better in math and reading in the early grades of elementary school.

Natasha understands the need of quality preschool education and childcare. She is passionate about the need to assist children in their early childhood development in a structured, caring, friendly and fun environment. The environment is structured in that it follows a daily schedule. Teachers will teach to a specific theme each week. There are rules students will follow and tasks the students will complete. The Smart Start staff is caring because we understand that these students are small children who need nurturing just as much as education. The two have to go hand-in-hand. The staff is always friendly and smiling. We want our families to feel welcomed and comfortable in this environment, because it is important to the quality of the program. Lastly, the environment has to be fun. Children will always be engaged, always learning

and always having fun. No child will be bored or unhappy because of the variety of activities happening throughout the day.

The Smart Start preschool program is based on the core curriculum of the Connecticut State Guidelines of preschool education. Children will have the opportunity to engage in multiple intelligences activities that will aid in their physical, cognitive, creative and social development.

Assessments

Assessments will be completed at least two times per year. Students will be assessed according to their age level and dependent upon their developmental ability. Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held twice per year as well so that parents can meet with teachers to discuss their child's developmental and academic progress.

All students will also have a portfolio tracking all their developmental growth from when they start until when they graduate preschool. This portfolio will be given to parents when the child graduates from preschool. Parents of preschool students will also receive a report card at the end of the year, marking their child's progress.

Activities

Play is an important part of a child's life and The Smart Start is aware of that. Children will engage in play in a variety of activities. Some of these play activities include blocks, dramatic play and outdoor play. Hands-on-activities are essential in that it boosts fine motor and gross motor skills. Students will use manipulatives to learn counting and other math related skills. Students will also participate in science activities pertaining to the earth around them. The technology aspect of the learning center incorporates students and teachers' use of computers. Students will be able to use the computer as part of the daily centers. They will be engaged in many educational websites that center on math and literacy. Teachers will also use computers to teach lessons appropriate to the theme of the week.

Children learn better through small group instruction, so a lot of the lessons taught will be through small group centers, which children will visit throughout the day. Some centers will be teacher-directed and others will be student-directed (independent). These centers will incorporate the play, technology and hands-on-activities already mentioned as well as a few others. There will be

a writing center, reading center and listening center. The writing and reading centers will be teacher-directed. The listening center will give students the opportunity to listen to stories on compact discs. This helps students in their ability to understand letter formation, words and eventually their own ability to read.

Community involvement is important to the success of this program and its students' quality of education. The learning center looks to have police officers, firemen, dental hygienists, parents of students, etc. to come and speak to the students about their specific jobs and what is important for students to know. During fire safety week, firemen will come and speak about what children should know if there was ever a fire. Police officers will come and talk about stranger danger or what to do if there was an emergency at home. Dental hygienists will tell children about the importance of keeping their teeth clean. Parents will come and work with small groups of children or read to them or talk about their job and its importance. Community involvement is a key aspect to the success of the learning center.

Preschool Field Trips

Community involvement will also include the learning center going out into the community. Field trips are an important part of the child's education, because it allows children the opportunity to learn in a different environment and experience new things. Field trips will take place a few times throughout the year.

Parents will be asked to volunteer to chaperone field trips to keep small group ratios while traveling. The Smart Start will rent a bus and the price of the bus as well as admission to the facility will be included in the price of the field trip. Prices will vary depending on the field trip.

Curriculum

Curriculum focuses on all four developmental domains: cognitive, physical, social and emotional and creative aesthetic expression. The curriculum is broken up into thematic units for the entire school year.

Cognitive Development

Program Goals:

By the end of preschool, children will:

- Demonstrate the ability to think, reason, question and remember;
- Engage in problem solving;
- Use language to communicate, convey and interpret meaning; and
- Establish social contacts as they begin to understand the physical and social world.

Content Standards

Language and Literacy

Children learn about language through everyday experiences. Some concepts include oral language, listening skills and the ability to read and write.

Children will

- communicate their experiences, ideas and feelings by speaking
- listen with understanding to directions, conversations and stories;
- exhibit interest in reading; and
- use different forms of writing such as drawing, letter-like forms, invented spelling and conventional forms.

Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Math

Children begin to solve problems by moving and experimenting with real objects. Concepts include number, size, comparison, patterns, shapes and measurement.

Science

Children investigate their world and search for answers to questions. It develops the child's innate ability to wonder, discover new ideas and explore the world he/she lives in.

Children will

- express wonder, ask questions and seek answers about the natural world;
- recognize and solve problems through active exploration, including trial and error and interacting with peers and adults; and
- organize and express their understanding of common properties and attribute of things.

Physical Development

Program Goals:

By the end of preschool, children will:

- demonstrate control, balance, strength and coordination in gross-motor tasks;
- demonstrate coordination and strength in fine-motor tasks;
- participate in healthy physical activity; and
- practice appropriate eating habits, hygiene and self-help skills.

Content Standards

Children will

- engage in a wide variety of gross-motor activities that are child selected and teacher initiated
- use a variety of materials that promote eye-hand coordination and small-muscle development;

- demonstrate spatial awareness in both fine and gross-motor activities;
- choose nutritious meals and snacks; and
- practice hygiene and self-help skills.

Personal and Social Development

Program Goals:

By the end of preschool, children will:

- demonstrate a sense of self as a learner;
- demonstrate a sense of responsibility to oneself and others; and
- demonstrate effective functioning, individually and as a member of a group.

Content Standards

Children will

- exhibit curiosity, creativity, self-direction and persistence in learning situations;
- describe themselves using several basic characteristics;
- demonstrate awareness of one's own and others' feelings;
- participate in and exhibit self-control in group situations;
- interact appropriately with peers and familiar adults;
- use age-appropriate conflict-resolution strategies; and
- recognize similarities and appreciate differences in people.

Creative Expression/Aesthetic Development

Program Goals:

By the end of preschool, children will:

- use different forms as a vehicle for creative expression and representation; and
- develop an appreciation of the arts.

Content Standards

Children will

- exhibit curiosity about and explore how materials function and affect the senses;
- create (imagine, experiment, plan, make, evaluate, refine and present/exhibit) works that express or represent experiences, ideas, feelings and fantasy using various media;
- represent fantasy and real-life experiences through pretend play;
- engage in musical and creative movement activities; and
- describe or respond to their own creative work or the creative work of others.

Unit 1: Social Awareness

(3 weeks)

Learning Concept: Social Awareness

Goal: Children will become aware of themselves, each other and the world around them. They will explore their own characteristics, emotions, environments and find the similarities and differences in their peers. They will also be learning how to conduct themselves in a classroom setting. They will learn to care for themselves and their environment.

Content Standard: Personal and Social Development

Performance Standards:

Children will

- describe themselves using several basic characteristics
 - refer to themselves by first and last name
 - identify themselves by family and by gender

- demonstrate awareness of one's own and others' feelings
 - use words to express emotions or feelings
- recognize similarities and appreciate differences in people
- participate in small- and large-group activities
- manage transition from one activity to the next
- follow classroom and playground rules
- be aware of and follow the classroom schedule and routine

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Sentence Strip Name Cards: Children find their own name and spell it
- Cut-Up Sentence Strip Name Cards: Names are written on sentence strips and cut up into pieces. Children put them together to spell their name.
- Create an All About Me poster
- Create a Family Tree
- Graph the number of people in each child's family

Unit 2: Autumn

(5 weeks)

Learning Concept: Autumn

Goal: Children will learn about the changing season and how it affects the weather and temperature. They will explore and discover the attributes of the season and will participate in activities surrounding the season. They will learn how to classify and sort based on different attributes.

Content Standard: Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Performance Standards:

Children will

- ask questions about and comment on observations and experimentation
- collect, describe and record information
 - children will make comparisons among different objects using different senses. They will use words to describe their experiences.
- use equipment for investigation
- make and verify predictions about what will occur
- use language that shows understanding of scientific principles to explain why things happen
- engage in a scientific experiment with a peer or with a small group

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Compare and Contrast Apples
 - Guess the number of seeds inside their own apple
 - Life Cycle of an Apple
- Observe apples and pumpkins decomposing
- Go on a nature walk and observe the changes happening around us
- Compare and Contrast Leaves
- Listen to stories about autumn and retell the facts
- Life Cycle of a Pumpkin
 - Observe pumpkins, taste seeds, predict what the inside looks and feels like

Unit 3: Our Community

(4 weeks)

Learning Concept: Our Community

Goal: Children will become aware of the community and the country they live in. They will learn to resolve conflicts, problem solve and share with others.

Content Standard: Personal and Social Development

Performance Standards:

Children will

- Show self-direction with range of materials
- Show empathy and caring for others
- Interact cooperatively with peers
- Work to resolve conflicts

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Acknowledge when a child decides to share with a friend when sharing
- Working collaboratively on a project
- Listening to children working together in dramatic play activity

Unit 4: Cultural Traditions

(4 weeks)

Learning Concept: Cultural Traditions

Goal: Children will learn how other children in other countries and ethnic groups celebrate different holidays. They will learn about cultural traditions, i.e. food, music, clothing, etc. They will learn to recognize the similarities and differences between their own traditions and the ones in other countries.

Content Standard: Personal and Social Development

Performance Standards:

Children will

- Show empathy and caring for others

- Interact cooperatively with peers
- Recognize similarities and appreciates differences

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Multicultural Fair
- Observing children working together in small groups
- Create their own holiday traditions poster

Unit 5: Winter

(3 weeks)

Learning Concept: Winter

Goal: Children will learn about the changing season and how it affects the weather and temperature. They will explore and discover the attributes of the season and will participate in activities surrounding the season. They will learn how to classify and sort based on different attributes

Content Standard: Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Performance Standards:

Children will

- ask questions about and comment on observations and experimentation
- collect, describe and record information
 - children will make comparisons among different objects using different senses. They will use words to describe their experiences.
- use equipment for investigation
- make and verify predictions about what will occur
- use language that shows understanding of scientific principles to explain why things happen

- engage in a scientific experiment with a peer or with a small group

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Observe snow as it melts
- Make predictions of how fast snow will melt with salt
- Provide students with a range of materials to add to samples of snow and watch the reaction; acknowledge when change occurs
- Temperature Log: Record temperature and graph results

Unit 6: Our Country/Famous Americans

(3 weeks)

Learning Concept: Our Country/Famous Americans

Goal: Children will learn the meaning behind famous American symbols. They will learn about American currency, history and landmarks. They will learn about the world beyond their own neighborhood.

Content Standards: Cognitive Development

Performance Standards:

Children will

- Understand and participate in conversation
- Use complex sentences and vocabulary to describe ideas and experiences
- Show an understanding of stories
- Compare and order objects and events

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Children will talk about a trip they have taken and where
- Observe children having a discussion about what they have learned

- Share with each other what they like about their country and what they would change

Unit 7: Our Body

(4 weeks)

Learning Concept: Human Body

Goal: Children will learn about parts of the body, where they are located and their functions. They will learn how to care for their bodies on a regular basis and why it is important.

Content Standards: Physical Development

Performance Standards:

Children will

- Use coordinated large muscle movements
- Use coordinated small muscle movements
- Care for self independently

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Children will participate in an obstacle course
- Record physical activity at home
- Record caring for teeth at home
- Observe children doing physical activities

Unit 8: Spring

(3 weeks)

Learning Concept: Spring

Goal: Children will learn about the changing season and how it affects the weather and temperature. They will explore and discover the attributes of the season and will participate in activities surrounding the season. They will learn how to classify and sort based on different attributes

Content Standard: Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Performance Standards:

Children will

- ask questions about and comment on observations and experimentation
- collect, describe and record information
 - children will make comparisons among different objects using different senses. They will use words to describe their experiences.
- use equipment for investigation
- make and verify predictions about what will occur
- use language that shows understanding of scientific principles to explain why things happen
- engage in a scientific experiment with a peer or with a small group

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Rain collection, record how much rain we get in spring, graph results
- Predict number of days it will rain
- Life Cycle of animals

Unit 9: Our Earth

(5 weeks)

Learning Concept: Earth

Goal: Children will learn about their environment, animal habitats and the life cycle of plants and animals. They will learn how to preserve and protect the earth and learn to appreciate it.

Content Standard: Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Creative Expression

Performance Standards:

Children will

- ask questions about and comment on observations and experimentation (scientific)
- engage in scientific inquiry (scientific)
- build and construct to represent own ideas (creative)
- draw and paint to represent own ideas (creative)

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Draw a picture of their habitat
- Choose materials they will use for their planting project
- Observe how a plant will grow

Unit 10: Solar System

(3 weeks)

Learning Concept: Solar System

Goal: Children will learn about space exploration, the planets and stars and constellations. They will understand how the solar system works, where the planets are located and the importance of the system.

Content Standard: Logical-Mathematical/Scientific Thinking

Cognitive

Performance Standards:

Children will

- ask questions about and comment on observations and experimentation (scientific)
- engage in scientific inquiry (cognitive)
- compare and order objects and events (cognitive)

These standards will be assessed in the following ways:

- Create a solar system model
- Classify different types of things found in space
- Make their own constellation and name it

School Calendar

In the packet you will find a calendar for each month. This calendar includes all the school closings, major events, movie nights and other important dates for the entire school year.

School Closings

A list of school closings is also included the parent information packet you received. Please sign and return the attached form indicating you received the list of school closings. Please return prior to your child's enrollment.

*I have read and understand the policies and procedures set up by The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center. I will operate in agreement with **all** the policies and procedures. If I have any questions I will contact the Director to clear any misconceptions.*

Must be signed by Parent or Legal Guardian

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Child: _____

Date: _____

Addendum A.

Below is our updated Covid-19 Policy. These policies will remain in effect until otherwise stated.

Date: July 8, 2020

To: The Smart Start Preschool and Learning Center families

From: The Smart Start Administration

RE: Policies regarding Covid-19 requirements and guidelines for Childcare Center issued by the Governor and OEC

Please review the following policies we have implemented into our Program.

Building procedures and protocols:

The Smart Start's current protocols have come straight from The Office of Early Childhood who has been working in connection with the CDC. Upon arrival we ask that parents' knock on the front door and wait for a teacher. The teacher will do a visual inspection of the child and parent using the glass door as a physical barrier, looking for signs and symptoms including but not limited to flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing, fatigue, or extreme fussiness. Upon opening the door, the teacher will take the child's temperature. If the temperature is under 100 degrees, the teacher will take the child and their belongings into the building. We are enforcing that no parent and/or guardian enter the building during drop-off and/or pick-up. The teacher will escort the child to their classroom and put away their belongings. The pick-up procedure is similar. Parents are to knock and wait for the child to be brought to the door and released to the parent/guardian. Children's temperatures are kept recorded in their Tadpoles report. If the temperature reads 100 degrees or higher, the child will not be permitted in the building. Child will not be allowed to return to school until they have been fever free without the aid of medication for a minimum of 48 hrs, OR present a negative Covid-19 test.

Handwashing:

Adults and children are to use Soap and water and wash for 20 seconds. This must happen: upon entering the building; before coming in contact with any child; before and after eating; after coughing, sneezing and/or blowing your nose; after wiping a child's face, nose, etc; after using the restroom; before handling food; after touching and/or cleaning surfaces; after touching any shared equipment (toys, iPads, playground materials). If soap and water is NOT AVAILABLE, please make sure hand sanitizer is available.

Masks:

All staff is required to wear a mask inside the building at all times, and outside when a proper distance of 6ft CANNOT be maintained. Under Governor Lamont's order, all children over 2 years of age are required to wear a mask when in public places. However, childcare centers are exempt.

Respiratory Hygiene

All staff should focus and be mindful of covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow. Staff will encourage children to do the same followed by hand washing. Any and all soiled tissues will be disposed of immediately and then handwashing will take place.

Intensified Cleaning and Disinfecting

All surfaces, including doorknobs and gates, are to be cleaned with bleach. Staff will maintain cleaning procedures throughout the day using Clorox wipes, disinfectant sprays, and bleach. All surfaces, toys, cots, etc will be Lysol sprayed at the end of the day when children have exited the building. Toys played with during the day need to be disinfected daily. Staff will work to limit the number of toys made available to children at one given time.

Social Distance

Staff will implement social distance guidelines as much as possible. Children have been given their own chair and spot at the table in each classroom. Staff will spread the children out on the carpet during free play and at any given point during the day. Staff will give children as much outside play time as possible. Classes will be spread out on the playground and blacktop and no two classes will share outside space at the same time during the day.