



Family Handbook

Version 5.0

First Light Early Education Center

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I. Welcome

In order to make our relationship as enjoyable as possible, the following pages contain mutually beneficial requirements, which are necessary to ensure that there are no misunderstandings between parties. Please read this handbook carefully and feel free to discuss any questions that you may have with our Executive Director. We look forward to a terrific relationship with you and your child!

II. Statement of Vision, Mission and Values

- a. Vision. First Light Early Education Center’s vision is a community of healthy families.
- b. Mission. To realize this vision, First Light Early Education Center provides a secure and loving program partnering with families to develop virtue, values and character, inspiring success in school and in life.
- c. Values. These values serve as guidelines for First Light Early Education Center conduct and behavior as it works towards the vision:
 - i. Each child is a unique and valuable person.
 - ii. Operating with love, respect, dignity, compassion, grace, integrity, honesty and humanity is essential to the success of First Light Early Education Center.
 - iii. All endeavors will be carried out with excellence. First Light Early Education Center will strive for continuous improvement and development at all levels of the organization.
 - iv. First Light Early Education Center is a valuable resource for the community and positively impact the lives of people in Sheridan and beyond.

III. Introduction

First Light Early Education Center is a non-denominational, value-based center focused on providing quality care and early childhood education for children between the ages of six weeks and six years. First Light is open between the hours of 7:30am to 4:30pm with early care available for sign up from 6:30-7:30am Monday through Friday.

The center is licensed by and complies with the standards set forth by the Department of Family Services and is also accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since January 2015. All employees receive required training, continuing education and professional development as mandated and above and beyond what is mandated by the state.

First Light strives to exceed the staff to child ratios mandated by the State of Wyoming by following. In the event the State’s ratio is stricter the State will be followed. The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommended ratios, as follows:

State of Wyoming Ratios

| Ages of Children | Staff: Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Birth to 12 mos. | 1:4; 2:8; 3:10 | 10 |
| 12 mos. – 24 mos. | 1:5; 2:10; 3:12 | 12 |
| 24 mos. – 36 mos. | 1:8; 2:16; 3:18 | 18 |
| 3 year olds | 1:10; 2:20; 3:24 | 24 |
| 4 and 5 year olds | 1:12; 2:24; 3:30 | 30 |
| 6 and older | 1:18; 2:32; 3:40 | 40 |

NAEYC Ratios

| Ages of Children | Staff: Child Ratio | Maximum Group Size |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Birth to 12 mos. | 1:4 | 8 |
| 12 mos. – 24 mos. | 1:4 | 12 |
| 24 mos. – 36 mos. | 1:6 | 12 |
| 3 year olds | 1:9 | 18 |
| 4 and 5 year olds | 1:10 | 20 |
| Kindergarten | 1:12 | 24 |

IV. Program Overview

As an early learning center, our goal is to provide a safe place where children can learn and grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and socially at their own pace. We believe children learn through play and benefit from a structured yet flexible schedule. Activities are offered which stimulate sensory motor development, language development and social and emotional interaction. The development of strong self-worth and character building is also a focus. Children are taught to respect each other, adults and property. Enrichment activities may include; plan, do review, literacy/ reading, arts and crafts, music/singing, dancing, dramatic play/pretend, foreign language, and physical fitness.

The Daily Routine is an integral part of our HighScope® curriculum allowing children to predict the order and content of the day's events so they feel reassured and empowered. HighScope's educational approach emphasizes “active participatory

learning.” Active learning means students have direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas. We appreciate families considering the classroom routine when picking up or dropping off their children. The Daily Routine is posted outside of the door of each classroom.

- a. Tender Hearts – (Infants) and Precious Feet (1’s, 2’s) Full Day (7:30am - 4:30pm). Infants are cared for in such a way that you feel confident each time you leave the building. Each family’s care plan is completed by the family, reviewed and implemented with respect.

Infants shall receive individual direct care during feeding. Infants are fed on demand unless parents provide written instruction otherwise. A comfortable and private room is available for nursing mothers who are able to stop in throughout the day and feed their child.

No infant or toddler shall be confined to a crib, playpen, swing, high chair, car seat, carrier or position for excessive periods of time. Infants shall be provided with a designated and safe play area separate from children of other ages.

In addition to meeting the physical needs of children over 6 months, First Light caregivers will behave as responsive professionals concerned about all aspects of their development. By using the clearly defined practices of the HighScope Infant-Toddler Preschool Curriculum®, caregivers develop close, supportive relationships with the children in their care. Caregivers support children's natural desire to be active learners by consciously considering their social and emotional, physical, cognitive and sociolinguistic needs. Learning and development are to be anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers, who support the children as they play. Adults scaffold further learning as they interact with children throughout the day!

- b. Rising Stars Preschool (3’s & 4’s) and Sunshine Seekers (Pre-K – 4’s & 5’s) Full Day (7:30am – 4:30pm). Full day programs for children ages three to five years

are designed to include a minimum of 5.0 instructional early learning hours each day teacher lead by the interests of the children.

Utilizing the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, teachers support your child's natural desire to be active learners by exposing them to learning opportunities which span the domains of cognitive representation, language and literacy, initiative and social relations, movement, music, classification, seriation, numbers, space and time. This active participatory learning approach allows young children to find out how the world works through their own direct experience with people, object, events and ideas. The HighScope Preschool Curriculum is built around 58 developmental milestones in the eight curriculum content areas that are closely aligned with Wyoming Early Learning Guidelines and Foundations as well as NAEYC criterion.

- c. Extended Day Options. Early Care (6:30am – 7:30am) AM half day extended care (12:30pm – 1:00pm) are available Monday through Friday, at no extra fee, however monthly sign up is required for staff coverage.
- d. AM Half Day schedule (7:30am-12:30pm) is also available for Tender Hearts, Helping Hands, Precious Feet, Rising Stars and Sunshine Seeker programs.
- e. After School (2:00pm-4:30pm) Enriching activities, engaging curriculum, homework assistance, are provided during the after school program for students in Kindergarten through 7 years of age. Parents can coordinate with the bus to have their child dropped off at First Light.

V. **Enrollment, Tuition, Fees and Payments**

First Light Early Education Center has two enrollment terms per year, fall and summer. Spring enrollment is evaluated case by case based on availability. A child's classroom is determined by the number of years they are away from Kindergarten. First Light utilizes a September 15th cutoff date for age determination. Classroom

promotion occurs once a year at the start of the Fall semester unless it is necessary or developmentally appropriate for First Light to make the transition sooner. Families are notified with a transition letter and the child also visits the new classroom on numerous occasions to help acclimate to the new change.

To ensure your child receives the best care possible, there are enrollment forms that must be completed and signed/received prior to your child's first day in our center. A staff member will provide the requisite Enrollment Packet once your initial application is processed and \$75 fee has been received. It is your responsibility to inform us of changes to information provided in these forms. These notes can be included on the monthly schedule form.

Tuition and fees are based quarterly: Fall (Sep.-Nov), Winter (Dec.-Feb.), Spring (Mar.-May) and Summer (Jun.-Aug.). Tuition is payable in one lump sum or in installments, due on the 20th of each month or the last date of the week if the 20th falls on a weekend. Each installment is assessed a \$20 bookkeeping fee unless billed by semester. Payment is required one month in advance of service requested and enables us to plan for staffing, meals etc. Families are required to sign up to have payments automatically drafted by automated checking or credit card withdraw through Tuition Express. Tuition express does charge an added % fee for the use of a credit card that would be added to your bill. First Light does not accept cash or checks. A \$45 charge will be added to your account for each non-sufficient fund (NSF) occurrence. Failure to pay in advance will result in termination of services. All tuition and program fees are non-refundable. Families that pay by semester can credit a day not used for the upcoming semester.

Scholarships and financial aid are available as funds are available to families who qualify, please visit the Financial Aid page on our website for questions or to access the FAST application. Please inquire if funds are available before starting the FAST application.

For continuity of care of the child and in order to maximize the educational experience with the group; child schedules are designed to remain constant for each semester. Should the need arise to change your child's schedule during the semester,

you will need to submit a request for the change. A \$15 fee will be assessed to your account for each approved occurrence and will be granted only if the staff to child ratios for that day will allow. Children with a full time (4-5 days/week) will be given preference due to our learning culture. No refunds will be given when a decrease in service is requested. Switching days/times of service is only allowed by the 15th of the month prior, when schedules are due. For example, if your child attends Tuesday and Thursday mornings and you require a switch to Wednesday and Friday mornings instead starting the 15th of the month, you will be responsible for paying for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings for the remainder of the month and will not be able to drop Tuesday and Thursday payments until the start of the next calendar month. For a detailed payment schedule and quarterly payment dates, please see the latest version of our “Tuition and Fees Schedule”.

Tuition and fees are computed with the following expenses in mind:

- Nourishing whole foods, fruits and vegetables prepared daily by a chef that includes breakfast, lunch, AM & PM snack, milk and water.
- HighScope Infant-Toddler and Preschool Curriculums.
- Maintaining a sanitized daily, clean/healthy environment.
- Classroom supplies, toys, manipulatives, literacy, games and equipment.
- Educator salaries and professional development.
- Indoor and outdoor facilities maintenance.
- Locked secure building with internal alarm and fire system.

First Light tuition rates are not based on your child’s attendance. No refunds are given for absences, late arrivals/early departures, withdrawals, or vacations. You must pay for your child’s scheduled time in our center regardless of whether or not your child is here. Students with DFS assistance will be responsible for the full cost of any day scheduled but missed. Planned absences can be noted if turned in on the monthly schedule form by the date requested. Typically, the 15th of the month. Families will be notified if another due date is needed.

VI. Arrivals and Departures

Parents use the computerized sign-in/sign-out log located at the front desk when dropping off and picking up their child. In order to maintain accurate records for your child, it is important that you sign in and out each day. If you have an alternate caregiver picking your child up, please make sure they are aware of the process and you have filled out the proper authorization form for them to pick up your child. At times, the attendance computer may give you an error message; which can be fixed by an Administrator. Please see the Administrator when you notice an error or leave a note on the clipboard next to the computer stating the problem and the times needing correction. A child may only be released to an alternate caregiver who is on the approved list provided by parents and presents picture identification. Information will only be released to a child's parent or guardian. First Light provides unrestricted and immediate access to your children at all times.

Drop-off and pick-up times are not good times to discuss problems. We are not comfortable discussing children in the presence of anyone except their parents.

A \$5 per minute late fee will be collected at the time of pick up if your child is picked up after his/her designated pick-up window times. Your drop-off and pick-up window cannot be set to begin or end beyond the program's scheduled times. The late fee will typically be charged within 48 hours and you will be notified via email. A courtesy call is offered at 4:30 ensuring someone is in route to pick up your child.

First Light discourages the practice of idling vehicles in the parking lots. Please only do so if necessary in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

VII. Firearms, Weapons, Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

No individual shall bring a firearm, simulated firearm, destructive device, deadly weapon or ammunition on First Light premises.

The use of alcohol, tobacco, drug or any controlled substance is prohibited on First Light premises.

These policies apply to both indoor and outdoor facilities, including parking lots, sidewalks and playground areas.

First Light is a non-smoking campus, and this includes our parking lot.

VIII. Security and Visitors Early Education

The front door of First Light Early Education Center is the only accessible entry. Card access for enrolled families will be provided. Additionally, please refrain from opening the locked door for other parents/individuals to ensure only those with keycards are able to enter the building. Do not give your key card to others for use. It is important that parents remember their cards each time they need to enter the building as our staff's priority is the safety and education of your children. First Light does not employ a receptionist to be readily available to open the front door. The first access card will be provided free of charge upon enrollment. Cards will be replaced at a charge of \$10 each or a fob for \$15 each. Alternate caregivers and visitors needing to access the building must do so by following the instructions on the exterior phone in the entry vestibule. Visitors will need proof of identification to prove identity to the First Light staff, they must sign in, and wear a visitor's tag. First Light staff are identifiable by the logo shirts and aprons which are worn while working in the center.

IX. Meals and Snacks

For children over age one, nutritious morning and afternoon snacks are served daily and supplied on a rotating basis by parents for each classroom. A snack shopping list is provided along with the scheduled dates for each family. Snack fees are included in your tuition.

Meals are included in First Light Early Education Center tuition rates. First Light provides breakfast (8:00am) and lunch (12:00pm) for students in the center at the time the meal is served. First Light provides meals that are healthy, feature fresh fruits and vegetables and exceed USDA requirements. Milk will be served with both

meals. Monthly breakfast and lunch menus are available on the website and posted in the center.

Children who arrive after breakfast has been served in our center, should be fed before they arrive. Special dietary requirements must be substantiated by a physician completing and signing First Light's requisite form.

X. Learning through Play

Each classroom contains age appropriate toys, activities and floor space for each child to play together with the other children or by themselves if they choose. In addition, we have a larger indoor play area for rough and tumble play, which is utilized by classes according to the need and schedules of the day.

Children play outside as much as possible every day that weather permits, as outside activity and exercise is important for stimulation and exploration. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play at all times. Determinations for outdoor play in extreme cold/hot weather conditions will be made from the Department of Family Services Child Care Weather Watch chart.

XI. Rest Periods

Children need a balance between periods of activity and periods of rest. Infants are provided rest periods each day based on their individual schedules. All other students are provided a period of rest each afternoon. Children are encouraged to lie down on their cot or mat whether or not they fall asleep. Each child has their own separate bedding for rest/nap times that will be stored in the child's cubby or bin in order to keep clean. The sheets shall be washed a minimum of once a week by the center and the cots are sanitized daily. Parents will be given the other bedding items to take home to wash at the end of each week or more frequently if soiled or child is ill. Infants shall be placed on their backs for sleeping, without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless a licensed professional sign a waiver. Once placed on the back to sleep, an older infant may be allowed to assume any position that seems comfortable. If the infant can repeatedly turn from back to side or tummy, then it is allowable for



him/her to sleep in that position. We recommend you also implement these practices at home to maintain consistency.

First Light adheres to the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that all infants nap without the use of any blankets or other items in the crib. If the temperature of the room indicates the need for additional warmth, the thermostat will be adjusted.

XII. Clothing, Attire, and Belongings

Children should arrive clean and fully dressed. Please do not send your children in pajamas (unless we have a pajama day). Clothing should be comfortable and appropriate for outdoor play regardless of the time of year. First Light is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or ruined items. Please do not bring toys, books, items that can get lost, damaged, or become a concern to your child.

XIII. Birthdays, Holidays and Closings

Once a month birthday is celebrated for all students in that month with a fun treat and song. Homemade or store bought food items for celebrations are not allowed.

First Light students learn about and celebrate the following holidays throughout the year: Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Halloween (We're going to the zoo-dress up like a zoo animal), Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and others as they relate to the cultural celebrations students/families at enrollment have (e.g. Christmas, Hanukah).

First Light Early Education Center is closed each year on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Any additional holidays and closures are noted on the Master Calendar, posted on our website and in the center annually and updated as needed, prior to each new semester.

We reserve the right to close the learning center early or for the day without notice in the event of unanticipated situations such as, but not limited to, power outages, no water, widespread illness and/or extreme weather conditions. In the event that unanticipated closings exceed three days per calendar year, each additional day is an “unpaid day” and a credit will apply toward your next tuition payment. Closures will be listed on our website and Facebook page (facebook.com/FirstLightEarlyEducationCenter) by 6:30am. Parents are also encouraged to sign up for text message alerts.

During low enrollment days, rooms may be combined to maintain appropriate ratios between staff and children.

XIV. Toilet Training

First Light Early Education Center staff will assist children in toilet training with the understanding that it will only be successful if we work together consistently. Clothing should be easy to manage to encourage self-help skills. We require that parents of each toilet training child supply and continuously replenish a package of disposable diapers/training pants. In the event of an accident, your child will be changed promptly, and staff will place the wet or soiled clothing in a plastic bag for you to take home and wash. Children are encouraged as they demonstrate readiness to be toilet trained and not forced, punished, or rewarded in this process.

XV. Conflict Resolution and Discipline

Staff members utilize HighScope’s problem-solving approach when conflicts arise among children:

- Staff will approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions – Placing themselves between the children, on their level; using a calm voice and gentle touch; remaining neutral rather than taking sides.
- Staff will acknowledge children’s feelings – Simple statements such as “You look really upset;” let children know you will hold any object in question.

- Staff will gather information – Asking “What’s the problem?” Not ask “why” questions as young children focus on that what the problem is rather than understanding the reasons behind it.
- Staff will restate the problem – “So, the problem is...” Using and extending the children’s vocabulary, substituting neutral words for hurtful or judgmental ones (such as “stupid”) if needed.
- Staff will ask for solutions and choose one together – Asking “What can we do to solve this problem?” Encouraging children to think of a solution but offering options if the children are unable to at first.
- Staff will be prepared to give follow-up support – Acknowledging children’s accomplishments, e.g., “You solved the problem!” Staying nearby in case anyone is not happy with the solution and the process needs repeating.

First Light provides a supportive climate to help prevent undesirable behavior in the classroom. First Light staff use incidents that do occur as teachable moments focusing on prevention, redirection, consistency and structure with the goal being self-control. First Light staff implement a supportive climate when they:

- Teach children to respect themselves and to show that respect to others.
- Model positive behavior.
- Attempt to eliminate waiting time before children are able to start on activities.
- Help children identify and express their feelings.
- Utilize natural and logical consequences for unacceptable behavior, such as loss of privileges.
- Make daily observations and anecdotal notes about children in order to plan activities around children’s interests.

It is never permissible for First Light staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Suspension or expulsion of a child is not implemented unless clear strategies, behavior modification plans, and even outside resources used to support the child indicate the child is better served in another environment or the family is not willing or able to support the plans in place.

Therefore, the following intervention strategies are **unacceptable** behavior for First Light staff:

- Discipline associated with food, rest or toilet training.
- Rough handling of children including, but not limited to, spanking, hitting, beating, shaking, pinching, pushing or other measures that could cause physical pain.
- Inappropriate use of language, including, but not limited to, profanity, name-calling, derogatory or demeaning terminology or screaming related to disciplinary purposes.
- Any form of humiliation including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional maltreatment including rejecting, terrorizing, corrupting, isolating or ignoring a child.
- Isolating or ignoring a child that was removed from the group or placing a child outside the visual sight of the caregiver.
- Expressing personal opinions about a child or their appearance or behavior.
- Touching a child in any “private place” which is commonly identified as any place their bathing suit would cover for a purpose other than diaper changing or toilet training.

First Light staff members only ignore behaviors, not the child. Requiring a child to utilize the calm down area for a break from the situation shall only be used as a last resort for a child who is harming another or in danger of harming herself/himself to enable the child to regain control of himself/herself. This intervention is used infrequently and for very brief periods.

In a situation where a child is unable or unwilling to follow verbal directions and is behaving in a manner that is potentially harmful to themselves or others and all other attempts at re-direction have failed, a teacher may lift that child into their arms in an embracing manner and attempt to speak softly to the child to win their cooperation while being removed from the situation to ensure their safety. In these rare situations,

another staff member must be present before a team member physically intervenes in order to supervise the other children and serve as a witness.

XVI. Child Abuse/Neglect

All staff at First Light are required by the Child Protective Services to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. The staff will report the concern to the Executive Director who shall report immediately to the Department of Family Services or local law enforcement any circumstances indicating that a child in care may have been subjected to abuse or neglect under Wyoming state law 14-3-205(a). All professional persons are mandated reporters.

In the event that a First Light staff member is accused of abusing or neglecting a child in the program, an Employee Counseling Statement will be completed to determine the appropriate next steps involving the employee and a thorough internal investigation will be conducted as well notification to the state licensor of the concern and outcome.

XVII. Property Damage

In the unlikely event that your child damages First Light property or another child (e.g. glasses) in a destructive not accidental manner, resulting in the need for repair or replacement, staff may request that you arrange for the replacement of the item or reimbursement for the cost of the item.

XVIII. Biting

If biting occurs First Light staff members will immediately separate the biter from the child bitten, redirect the biter to other activities, and ensure the biting child knows biting is a problem and hurts. The incident will be documented. Both sets of parents will be notified of the occurrence. The staff member's caring attention will also be focused on the child bitten by comforting the child and administering first aid if necessary.

First Light staff will work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change. Staff members may hold a conference with the parents of the biting child to develop a written plan of action and schedule follow-up meetings or telephone conversations as necessary. In severe biting cases, as biting is developmental and often teething issue at times with toddlers, but severe repetitive biting may result in the family being asked to make other childcare arrangements for the safety of our staff and students.

XIX. Illness

We operate a WELL CHILD CENTER. This policy will help protect all involved. A child ill with any of the following symptoms shall not be admitted into the learning center:

- Temperature of 100°F or higher; fever must be broken without medication for at least 24 hours before child returns to center.
- Vomiting (any within 24 hours).
- Diarrhea (Two or more loose bowel movements within 24 hours).

- Green mucus discharge from anywhere on body.
- Excessive crying.
- Fatigued/lethargic.
- Lice.
- Impetigo.
- Strep Throat.
- Scabies.
- Rash of any kind.
- Scarlet Fever.
- Chicken Pox.
- Ringworm.
- Hepatitis A.
- Croup.

If your child develops any of the above symptoms while in our care, you will be required to pick up your child immediately. Your child may return to care only after symptoms of the illness have disappeared. You will also be required to pick up your child immediately if your child is under-immunized and a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the center per Wyoming statute. In the event a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the center, the state or county health authority will determine the period of exclusion.

Please call the center if you are unsure whether you may bring your child. Please have a backup plan available to you in the event your child is ill and you feel you cannot miss work. Tuition/fee refunds are not provided for absences due to illness.

XX. Medications

Only First Light staff trained in administering medication will administer medications. Medications include those prescribed by a health care professional when your child is no longer deemed contagious and non-prescribed over the counter

medications. You must complete and sign a Medication Consent Form listing the type of medication, the dosage, the time of day it should be administered and any side effects or special instructions. For a prescription medicine to be administered at the center, the medication must be in original pharmacy container. All other medication must be in the original container. If at all possible, please give your child the medication at home.

XXI. Minor Injury and Emergency

Minor injuries occurring on the First Light premises receive first aid and a staff member will complete an Injury/Accident Report Form. This form will be provided for parents to review and sign before returning a copy to the child's file.

If an injury or illness occurs that requires immediate medical attention, we will use 911 and contact the parent immediately. If necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital or immediate care center where you will be asked to meet us. In the event we are unable to reach you, we will contact the emergency contact person listed on the child's enrollment forms.

Parents are responsible for all costs involved in the medical treatment of their child, including but not limited to transportation to hospital or medical facility.

XXII. Health and Safety File

The health and safety contents of a child's file maintained at First Light is confidential. It is only immediately available upon request to: (1) administrators; (2) teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian; (3) the child's parents or legal guardians; (4) regulatory authorities.

XXIII. Communication

We believe parent/provider communication is critical to a successful learning center relationship. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for your child and the center. Sensitive issues

will be discussed in private outside of regular center hours either by telephone or conference.

Conferences will be scheduled near the end of each semester. If you desire additional conference(s), you may request one and the team will work to arrange a time that will work for all involved.

First Light staff will convey important or significant child specific information to the parent verbally and follow up the information with documentation on the Daily Child Interaction form as necessary. Staff will make every effort to notify parents of class or center specific information and events in a timely manner through notes/memos in the child's Take-Home Folder and/or email communication. Collect your child's Take-Home Folder at the end of each day and return it the next morning with your child. Place documents to be returned to the center in the left pocket. Documents found in the right pocket are to be taken home and reviewed by parents. It is important that every parent/guardian have a working email that is checked regularly on file at First Light.

XXIV. Termination

First Light strives to eliminate any need for the suspension, expulsion, or any other exclusionary measure of a child. However, First Light reserves the right to terminate services for reasons such as, but not limited to, those listed below. Prior to a termination of services, First Light will partner with the family to utilize all other possible interventions. In the event of the exhaustion of all other possible interventions, First Light and the family may determine that termination is in the best interest of the child.

We reserve the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the child or other children in attendance. No tuition or fee refunds shall be given in the event of termination.

- Failure to complete the Enrollment Packet forms.
- Failure to pay in advance of service.
- Lack of parental cooperation.

- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time (two-week probationary period).
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property.
- Child continues to exhibit disruptive behavior after a reasonable amount of time (two-week probationary period).
- Lack of compliance with Family Handbook policies.
- Continuous late pick-ups.
- Blatant disrespect of provider.

In the event of a termination, First Light can assist the family in accessing services and an alternative placement by contemplating options with the family and by providing support through answering questions the family may have about their choices within the community. First Light's termination policy complies with the USDA Nondiscrimination Statement.

XXV. Family Resource Center

First Light strives to be a Family Resource Center, as we believe that the family system is the foundation for every child's growth, development and success in their futures. First Light desires to see families connected with resources in our community that will allow them to function to the best of their ability. Each family has a unique set of strengths and needs. At First Light we try to incorporate a holistic perspective as we view the family system and look at how it operates.

XXVI. Parent Advisory Team and Parent-Teacher Organization

First Light will enlist a parent advisory team to seek input and needs assessment on the best ways to serve our families, team, and community. A (PTO) parent-teacher organization is also available for you to join and coordinate fundraising/fun family events for the center.

XXVII. Revision to Handbook

First Light Early Education Center reserves the right to make changes to this Family Handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing of policy changes.

XXVIII. Concerns

Please share a concern in private directly to the person you are concerned with and/or seek support from their supervisor if needed or someone on the executive team noted on our website and on the staff board in the café area to help resolve the conflict/concern in a timely manner. First Light expects the team and families to respect confidentiality, not gossip, and work through concerns in a professional manner.

XXIX. Consumer Product Safety Commission

The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides product recall notice emails. To subscribe, simply visit <https://www.cpsc.gov/> and select “Subscribe for Recall Emails.” The First Light team receives these important notices, and we consider it of value to pass along this subscription information to our families. Notices are posted in the center, on our parent resource table and on Facebook.

THIS PAGE CAN BE REMOVED FROM THE HANDBOOK FOR YOUR REFERENCE

XXX. Supplies List

Please label (first and last name) and provide the supplies listed below for each child. Please do not bring additional personal items to the center unless a show and tell day is listed on the calendar for your child. First Light is not responsible for items brought to the center that are lost or damaged.

a. Infants (6 weeks through 12 months).

- Bottles /Sippy Cups.
- Wipes (Please bring plastic pop-up dispenser to remain at the center, then replenish with two refill packages at a time).
- Disposable diapers (Please bring a two-week supply at a time).
- Two full sets of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks in a labeled re-sealable zippered bag.
- 1 blanket for cuddle time not to be used in the crib while sleeping.
- Sunscreen and lotion.

b. Children (Ages one to six years).

- Two changes of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks in a labeled re-sealable gallon size zippered bag (only one change required for Morning Glory students).
- Seasonal outerwear (snow pants, boots, mittens, hats, coats).
- Wipes, if not toilet trained (Please bring plastic pop-up dispenser to remain at the center, then replenish when teacher notifies you).
- Disposable diapers/training pants, if not toilet trained (Please bring in a two week supply at a time).
- Small blanket for rest time.
- Water bottle: to remain at the center and will be sanitized weekly.
- Sippy cups (if used by your child).
- Sunscreen, lotion and lip balm (if used by your child).



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**PLEASE REMOVE THIS PAGE FROM THE HANDBOOK AND RETURN WITH
SIGNATURES TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

XXXI. Acknowledgment of Expectations in Handbook

The First Light handbook is the parent’s resource guide when it comes to the background, curricula, activities, policies and procedures. By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have received and read the First Light Early Education Center Family Handbook and agree to abide by the principles outlined herein.

Parent Signature

Printed Name

Date

Parent Signature

Printed Name

Date

ON BEHALF OF FIRST LIGHT EARLY EDUCATION CENTER:

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Date

ATTACHMENT A: FIRST LIGHT EARLY EDUCATION CENTER FAQ'S

Why Is Early Childhood Education Important? The benefits of high-quality early childhood education are irrefutable. Early childhood education results in successful students, responsible adults, and stronger communities. Visit First Light to learn more on early childhood education's measurable effect on test scores, classroom productivity, tax-dollar savings, high school graduation, crime, special education placement, teen pregnancy, and unemployment.

What forms of payment do you accept? Acceptable payment methods include automated withdraw from checking and credit card accounts. First Light does not accept cash or checks. Tuition and fees are paid in advance of service through Tuition Express.

What Is TANF? The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is housed under the Wyoming Department of Education. First Light Early Education Center is the only TANF Preschool grant recipient in Sheridan. Over \$150,000 is available to help provide preschool for local underserved children who are at risk due to family income that falls at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.

Can I apply for financial aid? Yes, First Light Early Education Center offers partial financial aid, as funds are available, to families whose children have been accepted and can demonstrate need for financial assistance, but do not qualify to receive state funds. Priority will be given to students registered in a full time programs. Visit the Financial Aid page to apply today.

Why do I have to pay for days/hours my child is not in the center? First Light Early Education Center is a "pay for the slot" facility and requires payment in advance of service.

Why can't I pack my child's meals to save money? Participation in our meal program ensures the nutritional intake of our students and provides opportunities to learn and practice healthy eating patterns that should be followed throughout adulthood. Our menus are created by the collaborative efforts of a chef and PhD food scientist. Investing in your child's health by forming good eating habits at an early age will pay dividends for the rest of his/her life.

What does NAEYC accreditation mean? First Light is dedicated to bringing your family the highest professional standards in early care and education and is working toward National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation. NAEYC is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8. NAEYC accreditation is the industry's most respected rating and demands that programs demonstrate consistent quality and meet high standards. Parents looking for a high-quality program for their young child are encouraged to search for an NAEYC-Accredited program. Currently there is only one NAEYC accredited program in Sheridan. Achieving accreditation takes at least three years and requires a significant investment from First Light to meet the rigorous standards set forth by NAEYC, which are above and beyond those of the State of Wyoming in many cases.

Why does First Light have a Family Resource Coordinator (FRC)? First Light's vision is a community of healthy families. The FRC position is integral to us accomplishing this vision. We understand that issues a child faces outside our center may impede his/her ability to become Kindergarten-ready. The FRC is therefore positioned to direct a child and his/her family to the community resources available to help remove any barriers to success

in school and life.

What does non-denominational values-based mean? First Light believes all children are unique and valuable. Operating with love, respect, dignity, compassion, grace, integrity, honesty and humanity is essential to the success of First Light Early Education Center. Our staff's conduct and behaviors will model these values to children at our center. Our goal is to provide a safe place where children can learn and grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and socially at their own pace. The development of strong self-worth and character building are also major goals. Children will be taught to respect each other, adults and property.

Do children go outside every day? The First Light playground is considered an extension of the classroom. In addition to running, jumping and climbing, teachers plan nature walks, picnics and other learning opportunities. Weather permitting, children play outside every day!

What security measures are taken when releasing children? First Light has a computerized sign-in / sign-out log and password procedures. A child may be released to an alternate caregiver who is on the approved list provided by parents and presents picture identification.

How do you resolve conflicts? Staff members utilize HighScope's problem-solving approach when conflicts arise: Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions; Acknowledge children's feelings; Gather information; Restate the problem; Ask for solutions and choose one together; and Be prepared to give follow-up support.

Are teachers allowed to play with the children? Absolutely! It is critical to children's social development to see adults play. This serves a dual role - letting children know that people of all ages can and do play and helping them grow as players through their modeling new roles and possibilities. However, it is still important to maintain the teacher role and perspective by setting boundaries.

When do you expect children to be toilet trained? Children < 3 years old enrolled in our full day programs are not required to be toilet trained. In each room detailed instructions for changing diapers will be posted and followed by all adults in the program. A specific plan of toilet training will be worked out with the parents when it is time for a child to transition out of diapers. This will be posted discreetly out of sight inside a cabinet door and followed consistently by everyone working in that area. Toilet training is a prerequisite for admission into the Preschool program for all ages.

What do you do when a child has an "accident?" Children > 3 years old enrolled in our full day programs are expected to be toilet trained and their classrooms are not set up with changing tables. However, it is very typical of preschool children, especially the younger ones, to have "accidents" or regress a little due to stress, excitement, being too busy to notice or stop, or other situations that may accompany being in group care. It is very important that the child not be punished or shamed for this. It shall be handled carefully and tactfully to avoid embarrassment for the child.

What is your position on Kindergarten readiness? Kindergarten readiness is a top priority for all our staff. First Light has committed the resources necessary to work with the local school districts to design programs that will ensure we reach our goal of 100%

Kindergarten readiness in our graduates. All children will be provided the opportunities they need to learn and grow academically and developmentally so they will be prepared to enter Kindergarten and life. First Light will quantify and report their ability to meet this important center goal.

Will my infant be interacted with or just left in a crib or bouncy chair? Infants will be cared for in such a way that parents feel confident each time they leave the building. In addition to meeting the physical needs of the very young children, First Light caregivers will behave as responsive professionals, concerned about all aspects of a child's development. By using the clearly defined practices of the HighScope® Infant-Toddler Curriculum®, caregivers develop close, supportive relationships with the children in their care. Caregivers will support children's natural desire to be active learners by consciously considering their social and emotional, physical, cognitive and sociolinguistic needs. Learning and development are to be anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers who support the children as they play. Therefore, caregivers will be interacting with infants utilizing every opportunity to nurture and teach new skills. Cribs will be used for napping.

What will I see children doing during the day? Children and teachers engage together in learning activities throughout the day. Children work and play individually and in groups – accessing materials, investigating their interests, and exploring and testing out ideas. Children contribute to the classroom community in multiple ways, including caring for materials, participating in routines, and supporting and caring for one another. Each classroom follows a Daily Routine that parents are encouraged to review.

Do the children just play all day? Our teachers carefully plan the environment and daily activities so that children are offered rich experiences and multiple opportunities for discovery, interaction, and growth. Teachers offer engaging and meaningful learning activities as part of every routine during the day. Our full day programs offer a minimum of 5.0 instructional hours daily. Preschool students receive 3.0 instructional hours each day they are in the center.

How do you share information about children's learning with parents? Our teachers meet formally with parents each semester to discuss their child's learning and to celebrate his or her progress at school. In addition to the formal conferences, teachers will share important information with parents through newsletters, social media, and e-mails throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to view portfolios or discuss their child's progress or any concerns they may have at any time.

What if my child does not nap well at First Light? Children need some quiet rest during the day. Children may rest quietly if they are not able fall asleep during the Rest component of the Daily Routine.

Who administers medication? Only staff trained in medication administration will administer medications as outlined in the Wyoming state regulations.