Excellence in Early Childhood Education

Why is it important?

We realize that there are many child care centers to choose from in Sheridan and we know that choosing the right one can be a painstaking decision. Therefore, we invite you to come visit with us and see for yourself the many ways we are different from any other center in our community. You can rely on First Light staff for unconditional love, quality education, professionalism, and a commitment to excellence in all that we do. We believe that we can be a vital extension of your family, sharing your love and concern for your children as we work with you to build a partnership that helps to grow your child’s unique gifts and abilities. In accordance with First Light Values and HighScope® principles, First Light staff join parents in expecting excellence from each child in our program.

Your peace of mind is of utmost importance to us.

Vision
A community of healthy families.

Mission Statement
To realize this vision, we provide a secure and loving program partnering with families to develop virtue, values and character, inspiring success in school and in life.

Values
These serve as guidelines for our conduct and behavior as we work towards the vision:

- Each child is a unique and valuable person.
- Operating with love, respect, dignity, compassion, grace, integrity, honesty and humanity is essential to our success.
- All endeavors will be carried out with excellence. We strive for continuous improvement and development at all levels of the organization.
- First Light Children’s Center CAN be a valuable resource for the community and positively impact the lives of people in Sheridan and beyond.

The principles of learning employed at First Light come from the research-based curriculum, HighScope, and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards. The HighScope curriculum will be taught by college-educated teachers to students of all ages within our center. First Light is working to achieve NAEYC accreditation by June 2014.

Parent Testimonials
Since coming to First Light "This is the first time I have not had to worry about my child while I am away.”
Shannon - Mom

"I couldn’t ask for any better staff/ environment for my child.”
Scott - Dad

Morning Glory Lead Teacher, Miss Missi, and her students after the May 2012 graduation ceremony.
Family Resources

We recognize and appreciate that parents play the primary role in raising and educating their children. Research indicates that child outcomes improve when parents participate in their child’s education and when they feel supported and respected.

First Light has a strong desire to equip children and see families connected with resources in our community as a support network that will allow them to function to the best of their ability. Each family has a unique set of strengths and needs. We try to incorporate a holistic perspective as we view the family system and look at how it operates.

The Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) is a position unique to First Light, as we believe the family system is the foundation for every child’s growth, development and successful future.

Family Activity

Blessing Your Children

Children thirst for parental acceptance — they long for their mother and father to reinforce their worth. Give your child the life-changing gift of unconditional love and acceptance with “The Blessing.” Use these five simple techniques to build up your sons and daughters and help them understand their worth in your family:

- Meaningful touch
- A spoken message
- Attaching high value
- Picturing a special future
- An active commitment

Each child is unique and will interpret these five elements differently. Age is also an important factor in how a child receives a blessing. Parents are encouraged to write out their thoughts in order to clearly articulate feelings of love and encouragement that fit their child’s unique personality. Parents can sing a blessing to young children, even if they don’t understand all that’s being said.

www.theblessing.com
www.thrivingfamily.com

“Childhood is the most beautiful of all life’s seasons.” — Author Unknown
Food for Thought... Literally!

Did you know that what your child eats throughout the day actually affects his/her ability to learn? Scientists have published a wealth of information in recent years establishing certain foods as “brain foods” or “superfoods” because of their effect on brain function. Research also links children that regularly eat breakfast with better standardized test scores, better behavior, and less hyperactivity. Cornell University found that not having enough to eat negatively impacted the academic development, especially reading, of young school-aged children.

Superfoods recommended for maintaining healthy brain function in people of all ages include: blueberries, wild salmon, nuts and seeds, avocados, whole grains, beans, pomegranate juice, tea, and dark chocolate. Adequate protein intake allows a preschooler’s brain to more efficiently transmit messages that aid in learning in the classroom. Increased iron intake can improve concentration and learning. A diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids (a type of healthy fat that humans cannot produce on their own) can yield better performance in school, reading and spelling.

Quickly peruse the First Light Children’s Center breakfast, lunch, and snack menus on a given month and you will see blueberries, bananas, cantaloupe, spinach, walnuts, oatmeal, whole grain breads and pastas, brown rice, peanut butter, eggs, yogurt, cheese, lean beef, chicken, avocados, and more. First Light’s commitment to serving healthy meals and snacks ensures our students’ brains are primed for learning new information all day long.

Fueling a child’s brain does not have to end when they leave the center each afternoon. In fact, the breakfast, lunch, and snack menus are published and archived each month on the First Light website (www.firstlightsheridan.com) for your family to easily access at anytime. Parents are encouraged to start by looking at the menus with their child and ask them what their favorite foods are at First Light. Once your child’s preferences are established, incorporate these food items into your family dinners, allowing your child to share his/her experience with other family members and continue reaping the health benefits associated with those particular foods. A second idea is to use the First Light snack menu to determine what you will serve your children for snacks on days they are home. Print the menu before heading to the grocery store and you have a ready-to-go shopping list, saving yourself time and effort and ensuring your child is exposed to a wide variety of healthy foods while at First Light and at home.

References

Community Partner Spotlight

Volunteers of America Northern Rockies and their social enterprise program, Catering for a Cause, is proud to have the opportunity to bring fresh, healthy and well-balanced meals to the children attending First Light Children’s Center.

Volunteers of America Northern Rockies, President & CEO Jeffrey M. Holsinger states, “We understand the importance a healthy meal contributes to a child’s early development which makes the partnership between Volunteers of America and First Light Children’s Center a perfect fit.”

Catering for a Cause is Sheridan’s premiere solution for catering. The program provides certificate training in the food services industry to clients, while providing generous and nutritious meals to businesses and events in the community. Catering for a Cause prepares 600 meals a day for several Volunteers of America programs such as the Milestones Children’s Home, Sheridan Community Shelter, and the men’s and women’s treatment centers - The Life House and The Gathering Place.

HighScope principles are incorporated into First Light mealtimes. Utilizing the PLAN/DO/REVIEW process, children set the table, serve and pour themselves the proper amounts of food and drink and clean up their area when finished.
Miss Ashley and Miss Tina at the 3rd Thursday Street Festival.

Don’t forget to join us for the final 3rd Thursday of the season on September 21st from 5:00-9:00pm!
Infant and Toddler

By using the clearly defined ten practices of the HighScope Infant-Toddler 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 anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers who support children as they play. Adults scaffold further learning as they interact with children throughout the day.

Preschool

HighScope’s active participatory learning approach allows young children to find out how the world works through their own direct experience with people, objects, events and ideas. The HighScope Preschool Curriculum® is built around 58 developmental milestones in eight curriculum content areas that are closely aligned with Wyoming Early Childhood Readiness Standards and correlate with the guidelines developed by the NAEYC. First Light currently offers three program options for preschoolers: Morning Glory, Rising Stars and PreK.

Enrichment Activities

First Light enriches a child’s learning with physical fitness, art/music/theatre appreciation, foreign language and field trips.

Special Acknowledgements

Scholarship Funding Provided By

- Cornerstone Church
- Legacy Pregnancy Resources
- Mayor Dave and Donna Kinskey Assistance to Moms Fund through Sheridan College Foundation
- Homer A. and Mildred S. Scott Foundation Endowed Fund at Sheridan College Foundation

Volunteer Opportunities

In order to achieve our mission, First Light recognizes that active partnerships between families and the community are essential. First Light welcomes family and community members to participate as volunteers in several different areas such as art, music, theatre, foreign language, outings, story time, Kindergarten readiness, yard beautification, and cuddling babies. We believe the opportunity to enrich the lives of the children through family and community member expertise is a priceless component of a child’s experience at First Light.

EMPLOYMENT

If you’re passionate about giving children a great start in life and want to help create positive outcomes for them, we invite you to explore career opportunities with us. Our team and program strive to be among the best in the industry. First Light is currently interviewing applicants for the following positions:

- Executive director
- Teacher
- Teacher Aide

Job descriptions and applications can be downloaded from the website. Employment is conditional upon a TB test, background check, fingerprinting and a negative drug screen.
Employer-Sponsored Childcare

Please consider First Light Children’s Center as your employer-sponsored childcare facility. We can provide an unsurpassed childcare and early learning experience to the children of your employees. For today’s working parents, access to high quality, affordable childcare is more than a perk - it’s essential. By driving down turnover, reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity on the job, employers find that their dependent care programs are not only an investment in their employees, but also an investment in their future business success.

First Light Children’s Center is the employer-sponsored childcare facility of EMIT Technologies.


DONATE

First Light Children’s Center is currently seeking additional donations for our General Scholarship Fund. Our 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. If interested in helping our local children become Kindergarten-ready through a First Light education, please call 673-0403 or email info@firstlightsheridan.com.

First Light is a nonprofit charity incorporated in 2008 and exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.