



**Discovery Kids  
Parent Handbook  
2025**

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This handbook is intended to familiarize families with current policies, practices, and standards. Discovery Kids reserves the right to revise its policies, practices, and standards as needed. Families will be notified of any updates to this handbook.

## History

Safe B.A.S.E. (before and after school environment) was started in 1994 offering care before and after school and the summer. This was rebranded in 2015 to Discovery Kids as we expanded our program to include extended learning (all day care) for preschool students. In 2017, we added our infants and toddlers to the program and became a licensed center!

## Mission Statement

Discovery Kids is designed to provide childcare where children can learn and grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Through our daily schedule, each age group will have sensory development, motor development, language development, and social interaction.

As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe, happy, and developmentally appropriate learning environment. Giving each child an opportunity to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

## Philosophy

Here at Discovery Kids, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating, and encouraging. Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.

## General Center Information

### LOCATION

1800 Nevada Avenue Benson, MN 56215

PHONE: 320.842.2723

FAX: 320.842.2030

[discoverykids@benson.k12.mn.us](mailto:discoverykids@benson.k12.mn.us)

### ADMINISTRATION

Director of Early Learning Program: Carissa McDonald

Office: 320.842.2723

Email: [cmcdonald@benson.k12.mn.us](mailto:cmcdonald@benson.k12.mn.us)

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Discovery Kids is open Monday to Friday from 6:30am to 5:30pm.

School year program offers before school care, 6:30am to 8:00 am, and after school care, 2:45 pm to 5:30pm.

\*We are currently opening at 7:00am. We will accommodate an earlier opening time as the need changes.\*

The center is closed for the following holidays:

\*New Year's Day

\*Memorial Day

\*Juneteenth

\*4<sup>th</sup> of July

\*Labor Day

\*Thanksgiving Day

\*Day after Thanksgiving

\*Christmas Eve

\*Christmas Day

\*\*\* All closed holidays are paid holidays **except** the day after Thanksgiving. \*\*\*

## CLASSROOM AGES/RATIO

Discovery Kids offers 4 classroom programs and we will always maintain these ratios.

- Scavengers: 6 weeks to 16 months 1 teacher to 4 infants
- Explorers: 16 months to 33 months 1 teacher to 7 toddler
- Developers: 33 months to KG 1 teacher to 10 children
- Inventors: KG to 12 years 1 teacher to 15 children

Children of different age groups may be combined with another age group, if needed. Ratios would end up being the youngest of the group. Example: toddler move to infant = ratio is 1 to 4.

## LICENSING

Discovery Kids is licensed through the state for infants, toddlers, and preschool. We are certified through the state for school age. A copy of our information is available. Our licenser for the infant, toddler, and preschool areas is: Cathy Kinney. Our certified licenser for the school age area is: Rodney Francois. They can be reached at 651-431-6157.

## PARENT AWARE

Infants, toddlers, and our preschool classrooms are a Parent Aware rated program.

We do offer Early Learning Scholarships through the MN Department of Education because we are a rated program.

For resources and services available for children and families like Help Me Grow, Nutrition Programs, Housing Assistance, Child Care Assistance program, Health Care coverage, Early Learning Scholarships etc., please visit: <https://www.parentaware.org/learn/> or stop in the office for further assistance.

## WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS

Discovery Kids will follow the following weather policy.

If Benson schools are closed due to weather Discovery Kids will be open from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm.

If Benson schools open late due to weather, Discovery Kids will be opening at 7:30 am. If Benson schools closes early due to weather, Discovery Kids will close at 4:30pm.

EX: Benson Schools opens 2 hours late, Discovery Kids opens at 7:30 am. Benson Schools closes at 12:30 pm, Discovery Kids will close at 4:30 pm.

The director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine if it is appropriate to close the center. In the event of a Blizzard warning Discovery Kids will be closed.

## UPDATING ENROLLMENT RECORDS

The end of each year, Discovery Kids will be doing a complete audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including contracts and consent forms.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physicals and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record.

In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new form must be completed.

The legal name of your child will be used to label their belongings and additional areas they use throughout the center. Areas will include cubbies, cots, clothes, and more.

#### OPEN DOOR POLICY

Discovery Kids maintains an open-door policy. You are always welcome to call or drop in to see your children at any time during regular hours. Please consider our schedule when dropping in or calling.

There is no video recording or audio recording of any kind while in the classroom or the center. This will result in automatic termination from the program.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is our top priority. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or incident/accident reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

#### BENSON SCHOOLS POLICY ON CAMERA/VIDEO (712 VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OTHER THAN ON BUSES)

Maintaining the health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, and visitors while on school district property and the protection of school district property are important functions of the school district. The behavior of individuals who come on to school property is a significant factor in maintaining order and discipline and protecting students, staff, visitors, and school district property. The school board recognizes the value of video/electronic surveillance systems in monitoring activity on school property in furtherance of protecting the health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, visitors, and school district property.

##### A. Placement

1. School district buildings and grounds may be equipped with video cameras.
2. Video surveillance may occur in any school district building or on any school district property.
3. Video surveillance will normally not be used in bathrooms or locker rooms, although these areas may be placed under surveillance by individuals of the same sex as the occupants of the bathrooms or locker rooms. Video surveillance in bathrooms or locker rooms will only be utilized in extreme situations, with extraordinary controls, and only as expressly approved by the superintendent.

##### B. Use of Video Recordings

1. Video recordings will be viewed by school district personnel on a random basis and/or when problems have been brought to the attention of the school district.
2. A video recording of the actions of students and/or employees may be used by the school district as evidence in any disciplinary action brought against any student or employee arising out of the student's or employee's conduct in school district buildings or on school grounds.
3. A video recording will be released only in conformance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

##### C. Security and Maintenance

1. The school district shall establish appropriate security safeguards to ensure that video recordings are maintained and stored in conformance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and the rules and/or regulations promulgated thereunder.
2. The school district shall ensure that video recordings are retained in accordance with the school district's records retention schedule.

### CENTER POLICY ON PETS

Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for children. No animal may be brought into Discovery Kids without first notifying and receiving permission from the director one week prior to bringing the pet. Pets must be up to date on vaccinations to enter the facility. Parents will be notified of any animal visiting.

### REVISION OF HANDBOOK AND PROGRAM PLAN

There will be a yearly revision to this handbook and the accompanying contract. Discovery Kids will give a two weeks' notice of changes made to the handbook. You can request a child care program plan at any time. Please contact your child(ren) teacher or the director to get this.

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Creative Curriculum is used as a planning guide for each of its program rooms.

Each classroom has weekly lesson plans, posted in the classroom. These plans contain several activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group as a whole. Lesson plans may be changed in order to accommodate the children's changing interests. Classrooms are set-up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art.

Free play is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills.

Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and will be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. It is important for parents to send their children in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please clearly label all articles of clothing with your child's name. Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

### DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

The classroom teachers work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children thrive on consistency! Routines will be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions

### NAP/REST TIME

Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children will be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

## MULTIMEDIA

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select multimedia rated G/PG that are based on the weekly themes. Another option would be dancing to GoNoodles or something similar when outside time is limited due to weather.

## **Assessments**

The Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is the assessment tool used by the program to evaluate and track each child's individual development. It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting each child's development. The same tool is used from birth through kindergarten, to allow a more complete picture of your child's development. By tracking a child's development, our teachers are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child's developmental abilities.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers conduct a minimum of two parent-teacher conferences per year and must make every effort to meet with each family. A copy of the parent-teacher conference form and child development summary must be placed in the child's permanent file after conferences.

## ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. Assessment portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. It is the responsibility of the teacher and assistant teacher to ensure portfolios are periodically and continuously updated.

In the event your child needs, or you wish to add additional services from outside sources, we would be required to get a written parental consent prior to any services starting.

## **Field Trips**

We offer several trips outside of our classroom. Field trip forms will be filled out if we are leaving the Benson area. Field trips in town will require you to fill out the signup sheet, in your child(ren)'s classroom. If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please find alternative childcare arrangements for that day, as we will not have staff available to stay behind with children not participating in the field trip.

As a participant in our child care program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to: taking walks, trips to local playgrounds, and trips to local businesses.

Teacher-child ratios are 1:5 and will be maintained at all times. Children are under direct supervision at all times and are assigned to one staff person to help keep in ratio and supervise each child. All children will wear a bright blue shirt to show they are with us and can be easily spotted in a crowd.

## **Meals and Snacks**

Discovery Kids follows nutritional guidelines through the Benson Public School Food Program Service. Children are provided breakfast, lunch, and two snacks during the day. Eating a well balanced diet will incorporate healthy growth for your child such as supporting brain development, muscle growth, healthy eyesight, and more. Menus will be posted in each classroom and sent to families monthly. Families are encouraged to fill out a free and reduced application upon enrollment and enrollment documentation participating in CACFP.

Breakfast is served from 8:00-8:30 am please arrive by 8:25 am. Lunch is served from 12:00-12:30 pm please have your child here by 12:25 pm. Meals will not be served after the cut off times.

Snacks are served at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Please notify Discovery Kids by 7:00 am if you are running late or will not be coming.

### FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

We work to have an alternative food provided for children, taking several methods to protect any children with food allergies. Please complete a special dietary statement and an allergy action plan form, available in the office. This form will be posted in your child's room, as well as, in food preparation areas. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please have your physician sign the allergy action plan as well.

### **Infant and Toddler Information**

The following is information for our infant and toddler kids. We offer Similac Advance and Similac Sensitive formula. We offer whole milk to children 12-24 months and reduced fat milk to children over 24 months.

- We do not supply solid food and fruit juice to infants younger than 6 months old.
- Parents must supply (5) bottles, diapers, wipes, diaper cream, formula (if different from what we offer), pacifiers, blankets, and a water bottle. Please label all items with the child's name.
- Infants can have pacifiers throughout the day. When not in use they will be placed up.
- Toddlers do not carry cups, bottles etc. while walking or crawling around. This is served at the table only. We supply Take-n-Toss sippy cups.
- If you are breastfeeding, please discuss with your child's teacher when your child should be fed breast milk, and/or when you would like to come in and feed your child.
- Please bring 3 complete changes of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school and replenished as needed.

Infants will only be placed in a crib to sleep. Children under age 1 cannot have a blanket in the crib with them. Once a child begins to roll it is acceptable to leave the child sleeping on their stomach. Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of children under age 1. The cause is unknown, but studies have found sleeping practices have been linked to increased risk for SIDS. We will do everything to reduce the risk and follow our strict policy for sleeping placement.

### INFANT TRANSITIONING

Several transitions will happen throughout your child's time in our infant room. They're exploring, growing, and learning new skills everyday. We give them the opportunity to reach their goals by giving them the transitions they need to learn new skills while they are growing.

By 6 months of age your child's napping schedule will move from short naps throughout the day to a set morning nap and afternoon nap. The morning nap is from 9:00 am - 10:00 am and the afternoon nap is from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Once your child reaches 12 months of age the nap schedule will transition to one nap a day from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Per licensing rules your child can only sleep in a crib and will not be given a blanket until 12 months of age.

At 6 months of age we can start serving baby cereal and baby food (fruits and veggies) at breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is served from 8:00 am - 8:30 am and lunch is served from 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm. We will introduce one fruit and one vegetable a week. If you have started foods at home prior, we will serve the foods you have



already introduced at home. *(You will need to let us know as you introduce new foods at home so we can keep our information updated.)*

Your child will begin to be offered an AM snack\*\* (10:00 am) and PM snack (3:00 pm). The AM snack will consist of foods such yogurt melts, baby puffs, lil crunchies (similar to a cheeto puff in texture), teether biscuits, Gerber Banana cookies, and baby rice teether crackers. PM snack will be baby cereal (a grain) mixed with a baby fruit or veggie.

\*Formula or Breastmilk is served with Breakfast, Lunch, and PM Snack.

At 6 months old your child will be offered a sippy cup and trying finger foods. This is a skill that has to be learned, just like crawling and walking. We will begin offering water in a sippy cup at AM/PM snack, Breakfast, and Lunch. Again, this isn't about liquid intake, but more of an introduction of a skill and getting used to the idea of a cup. *We use the First Years Take and Toss brand of sippy cups.*

Please note, your child is always closely supervised at the table during these times. We will introduce these foods slowly and take it at your child's pace. Again, this is not about liquid/food intake at this time, but rather the introduction of a skill.

Once your child reaches 12 months of age your child will start getting ready for the toddler room. Per state guidelines we need to remove bottle use and begin using a sippie cup for meals. We also need to offer whole milk instead of formula and give table foods instead of baby foods. If your child still needs formula after 12 months of age we will need a dietary statement filled out by the doctor of the child.

If your child drinks Breast Milk and you are planning on keeping him/her on it past one year of age, we can still serve 100% breast milk in a cup.

We will start transitioning off bottles and formula during the 12 month to the 13 month. Here is the schedule we will follow:

### **Bottles**

- Weeks 1 & 2: Bottles will only be offered before nap times. Cups will be given at meal times.
- Week 3: Bottles will only be offered before PM nap time. Cups will be given at meal times.
- By the end of week 4: Bottles will not be offered at all. Cups will be given at meal times

### **Whole Milk**

- Week 1: 3/4 formula or breast milk mixed with 1/4 whole milk.
- Week 2: 1/2 formula or breast milk mixed with 1/2 whole milk.
- Week 3: 1/4 formula or breast milk mixed with 3/4 whole milk.
- Week 4: 100% whole milk.

If your child uses a pacifier we will be giving it during nap times only. Once your child is in toddlers there are no pacifiers given during the day except nap time.

Please talk to the infant staff for more information regarding this.

## POTTY TRAINING

Children will start to get familiar with the potty when they reach age two. At this time, the child will sit on the potty during diaper changes allowing them to get comfortable with it. This also helps get them interested in using the potty. Once the parent has worked at home with the child and is ready for Discovery Kids to take part in it, we will work hand and hand with you. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful.

We recommend that when in training, your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! While toilet training, parents are to provide extra clothes including thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, shirts, and pants.

Children can not move up to the Developers classroom, until they are fully potty trained.

## **Clothing and Items from Home**

### PLAY CLOTHES

We expect all children to be dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. Bring all items needed for outside play including jackets, boots, snow pants, etc.

In case of any spills or accidents please bring three complete sets of change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at the center and replenished as needed.

Please be sure to clearly label all items of clothing.

### ITEMS FROM HOME

Toys, stuffed animals, or other items from home may help your child feel more comfortable at school from time to time. However, it is often difficult for young children to share their special "treasures" with classmates therefore we ask **no** toys to be brought from home. You may bring a stuffed animal for rest time, but it will be put on cot or cubby once rest time is over. Discovery Kids is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Please clearly label all belongings brought from home and place them in the child's locker or cubby.

## **Arrival and Departure**

### ARRIVAL

Parents must accompany their child into the center. The parent must check in with the teacher prior to dropping the child off outside the classroom door. We ask no parent or guardian to come into the classroom.

Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parent(s). This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

- Establish a regular, predictable routine. Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or help your child put his things in his cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.
- Separate once. If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase your child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for your child, so doing it more than once makes it more stressful for your child.
- Be reliable. Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

## DEPARTURE

Discovery Kids closes at 5:30pm Monday through Friday. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after 5:30pm.

Be sure to say good-bye to your child's teachers, so they know you are leaving and can sign out your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.

We can only allow people to pick up your child(ren) who is on the authorized pick up form. If you need to send somebody else, you must call to confirm ahead of time and we will need to see an ID of the individual who is picking up. You will also need to add them onto the form the next day.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom as a whole. If your child will be **absent or late**, please call the center **by 7:00am** to let us know. If you do not call by 7:00am you will not be able to use an absent day for this day.

## VARIED WORK SCHEDULE

Discovery Kids requires a 3 day notice of work schedule change. For example: your employer gives you a weekly schedule every Tuesday, by Friday of every week we need the new schedule for your child.

# Health and Safety Policies

## ILLNESS

Our first priority is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced:

- ☐ Communicable Diseases: Not permitted: Examples are Infectious Conjunctivitis (Pink eye), Impetigo, Ringworm, Infectious Diarrhea, Chicken Pox, Scarlet Fever, Lice, Hand Foot Mouth, and Strep Throat. If your child is thought to have a communicable disease, you will be notified and asked to pick him or her up. Your child will be able to return when no longer contagious.
- ☐ Fever: Not permitted of 100.0 degrees or higher. Once a child is sent home with fever, the child then needs to be fever free (with a normal temp under 99 degrees) for a minimum of 24 hours BEFORE returning to childcare. That means the child is fever free (under 99 degrees) without any kind of fever reducing substance given to him or her in that 24-hour period.
- ☐ Diarrhea and Vomiting: Not Permitted: Children may return to care 24 hours after beginning on an antibiotic or diarrhea free. Your child won't be able to return until he or she hasn't vomited in a 24-hour period. Diarrhea: If your child has diarrhea, keep him/her home. If your child has 2 or more diarrhea episodes, or any uncontained diarrhea while at childcare, you will be called to pick him/her up. Your child may not return to childcare until he/she is eating /drinking normally and hasn't had any diarrhea for 24 hours.
- ☐ Running Nose: Your child may be brought to daycare if he or she has a common cold (clear runny nose, occasional sneezing, and slight occasional cough). Discharge of any color other than clear is not acceptable in child care. If you are thinking your child has allergies, we will require a written note from your doctor stating that.
- ☐ Rashes: Not Permitted: Any rash other than diaper rash, must have a note from the doctor stating it isn't contagious.
- ☐ Runny and/or Crusty Eyes: Not Permitted. Watery, matted, and/or red/pink are not acceptable in child care under any circumstances.

- Lice: Not Permitted. Cannot return to daycare until after the second hair treatment has been done. Live and lice and nits must be gone before returning. All classes will be checked during the 28 days to prevent re-infestation.
- 24 Hour Rule: Your child must be free from any of the above symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours before you can return to childcare. NO EXCEPTIONS. If you arrive and say your child's fever broke at noon yesterday or the child hasn't thrown up since last night, you will be asked to leave until the 24-hour period is over. If your child is sent home at 9am and has not had any symptoms since leaving you cannot bring them the next day at 9am. They need to be out the full day before returning.

Please pick up your child within 1 hour of being notified of your child being ill. Discovery Kids reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious.

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be posted at the door to your child's classroom. Additionally, families who have provided an email address will receive email notification of the illness. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the director immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the director will notify the health department. Following the illness policies is the best way to help prevent the spreading of the illness to other children. Please read carefully.

### TEETHING

Teething isn't a cause for illness and licensing/state doesn't consider any other symptoms other than these listed below as teething symptoms.

- Drooling
- Swollen, bulging gums
- A tooth visible below the gum
- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Trying to bite, chew, and suck on everything
- Rubbing her face
- Rejecting food
- Grabbing ears

If your baby has diarrhea, a fever, or a runny nose, don't dismiss it as a sign of teething, especially if the symptoms last longer than 24 hours.

Even though many swear these symptoms seem directly related to their child's teething, there's no scientific proof that they're linked. One of many possible explanations for these symptoms is that because teething babies frequently put things in their mouth to soothe their gums, they get sick from coming into contact with viruses and other germs.

### MEDICATIONS

Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. Medicines can only be given with the syringe or cup that comes with the medication. We cannot administer any medication without a doctor's note and a signed medication authorization form. Forms can be obtained from the office. The form must remain with the

medication at all times. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored.

General items/medication such as, but not limited to: diaper cream, sunscreen, bug spray, etc. will be administered as needed.

#### PHYSICALS AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Each child must have a current health care summary and immunization record on file. The health summary on file must be updated at least annually and immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received. The health care summary is needed within 30 days of enrollment and immunizations are required to have on file before starting.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Staff members will document accidents and incidents that occur using an accident/incident report. A copy may be given to the parent, but all reports must be placed in the child's permanent file.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES

A child with allergies must have an allergy plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. Staff need to be informed of the plan and the emergency plan to use. All allergic reactions must be documented with a health incident form. Please see the office to get the allergy form.

#### DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

An emergency care plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

#### EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an admission/emergency form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary. Contact the office to get a new form to update.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Discovery Kids has a bus used for transportation to and from field trips. This bus is also used to transfer students during the summer for extra activities.

#### MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTERS

As childcare professionals who interact with children on a daily basis, each staff member is a mandatory child abuse and neglect reporter and must contact the human services whenever abuse or neglect is suspected.

#### TOBACCO USE

Cigarettes, vaping, and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas.

### **Guidance Strategies**

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility, and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers

negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Staff will only use positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

### REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

### PREVENTING MISBEHAVIOR

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (e.g., walking feet; gentle touches)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested in longer periods)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., "You may pick up the blocks or art center.")
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., "Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.")
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., "Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.")
- Set a good example. (e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

## RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR

Below are strategies staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

- Positive Redirection
  - This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."
- Logical consequences
  - These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.
- Participate in the solution
  - If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please apologize and help me make him feel better."
- Natural consequences
  - Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.
- "Take a break" or "Calm down chair"
  - In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "calm down chair." This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to calm down in a chair. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

1. Staff will document behavior and what strategies have been attempted and discuss with the director.
2. The director will observe the child and meet with the teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The director, teacher and/or assistant teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

\*\* If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period of time.

## BITING POLICY

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bite:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Stop biting. Biting hurts." in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary. It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills.

Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent and director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and the names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an incident/accident report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.



## Home and Center Partnership

### DAILY SHEETS

All children enrolled will have a Brightwheel profile. This is an app on your phone that you can use to check in on your child at any time of the day. Here you will see what your child has done for the day such as feeding, diapering, activities and more. You will also be able to send a message to your teacher through the app.

### ROOM TRANSITIONS

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the age and developmental milestones for a classroom. The current teacher will offer you a transition meeting prior to moving to the next classroom. This meeting will allow you to meet the future teacher and ask any questions or share any information you feel the new teacher would need to know. A form will be sent out to families two weeks prior to moving up to the classroom.

Unfortunately, the transition to the next classroom isn't guaranteed due to when the next available spot is open. However, your child would be first available to return once the spot has opened.

### PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice per year. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

### PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Parents will be asked to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point-of-view is different from a teacher's point-of-view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

### HOMEWORK

Discovery Kids offers a homework table in the classroom. This is available to any child needing to finish homework before getting home.

When the school has an e-learning day students assignments will be completed in the morning leaving the remaining part of the day for free time. You must send with your child all the items needed to complete these assignments. This includes chromebooks, folders, books, bingo cards, etc.

### QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, the director, Carissa McDonald, can be reached at 320-842-2723 or by email at [cmcdonald@benson.k12.mn.us](mailto:cmcdonald@benson.k12.mn.us). The director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving any concerns.

**Due to the privacy of our staff, we ask all families to message staff in the Brightwheel app regarding any updates, concerns, or changes in the schedule. You may also email or call the center regarding any updates or changes regarding your child. For the safety of the children, staff members are not allowed to use their cell phones during working hours. Please be respectful if you do have any contact information, for a staff member here, if contacting them outside of the center.**

## **Fees and Billing Policies**

### **FINANCIAL AGREEMENT AND TUITION INCREASE**

Any changes to tuition will result in a new agreement plan that will need to be signed. Any new financial change will be given out two weeks before it takes effect. This agreement should be carefully reviewed.

### **REGISTRATION FEE**

Discovery kids require a \$20 registration fee per family.

### **HOLDING A SPOT**

A \$100 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of signing the contract. This deposit goes towards your tuition for the first week in care.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Brightwheel gives you several options to pay your tuition. Being able to pay online from any place is a helpful option for the busy lifestyles we live! With Brightwheel you can also set up weekly ACH transactions, using your checking account. Paying tuition online with a card will result in an additional fee. Discovery Kids does require autopay to be set up. You can also pay using a check or cash, which can be placed in the black box by the office. Invoices will be sent Tuesday for the following week. Payment will be due every Friday and will cover the following week. If any additional fees/credits accumulate it will go on your next invoice.

### **MULTIPLE CHILD DISCOUNT**

If you have three or more children in our care, we discount 10% off the third child of the lesser rate. This only applies for full time or weekly rate. For instance, we care for an infant, a toddler and preschooler, I would take the 10% off the preschool weekly rate.

### **BENSON SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF DISCOUNT**

Discovery Kids offers a 5% discount to any staff who is employed by Benson Schools. The 5% discount is for full-time contract (weekly rate) families. If taking summers off, you will be required to pay your weekly tuition fee to hold the spot for your return. The weekly fee is non-refundable. If needing drop in care for the summer you will be required to pay the drop-in rate.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

Discovery Kids closes at 5:30pm, Monday through Friday. Parents will be charged \$5.00 for every 5 minutes per child present after 5:30pm. Teachers will record late fees for processing. The fee will be added to your invoice the following week. It will accumulate until the child is no longer in the center. An example is you pick up at 5:35 but don't leave till 5:41. You would be charged a \$10 late charge.

### **RETURNED CHECKS/INSUFFICIENT FUNDS**

All returned checks or direct debit payments rejected due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$25.00 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid within 2 weeks. Repeated incidents of returned checks or insufficient funds notices could result in termination of child care services. A payment plan should be discussed with the director if a family is having trouble making tuition payments.

### **LATE PAYMENT FEE**

There is a charge of \$10.00 per day (including weekends) that payment isn't received for your child's care. If the fee isn't paid by Monday morning, services will be halted until the outstanding balance is paid or an agreement is made with the director prior to this. Continued late payments will result in termination of services (with all fees due and payable).

## DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Families that are more than 2 weeks or \$400 behind in payments may have their child care services terminated. For information about assistance programs that will help cover the cost of child care tuition, please speak with the director. A payment plan must be agreed upon between family and center before an account will be considered "in good standing" and no longer eligible for termination.

## TUITION FEES

Rates are as follows:	<b>5 day (weekly)</b>	<b>Drop-In</b>
Scavengers	\$240.00	\$55.00
Explorers	\$230.00	\$52.00
Developer	\$210.00	\$50.00
Inventors	\$200.00	\$48.00
Before & After School	\$75.00	

## EXPLANATION OF RATE DESCRIPTION

- DROP IN: Any non-scheduled day. Call ahead to reserve a spot.
- 5 Day (Weekly): up to 5 days a week of care
- Before & After School Care: Flat rate for the week. Before/After or Both whatever you need.
- PRESCHOOL/SCHOOL AGE (NON-SCHOOL DAYS/EARLY/LATE DISMISSAL/SUMMER):  
Discovery Kids will provide a reminder for any non-school or early dismissal days. You can sign up by emailing or contacting your child's classroom teacher. Sign up cost will be the daily rate from the weekly rate. If you decide not to come after signing up you will be charged regardless.

Keep in mind that early release days/late start days are contracted and will be charged for whether here or not.

You will be required to update your contract for the summer months.

## CHANGE OF CONTRACT

Changing your child hours or days, requires a two week notice. This notice needs to be given two weeks before the effective date.

## ABSENT DAYS

Each child under a full-time contract (5 day/weekly tuition) will be given 5 sick/personal days a year. This will be credited to the next week's invoice.

Before & After school contracts, no absent days given.

## TERMINATION OF CARE

Care can be terminated with a two-week written notice for both part-time and full-time families. No other notice will be accepted. Along with the written notice we require a termination fee for the **full two weeks** of care.

Discovery Kids reserves the right to terminate for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Lack of compliance with handbook policies
- Failure to pay or pay on time
- Failure to complete required forms

- Lack of parental cooperation
- Disrespect
- False information given by parents either verbally or in writing
- Consistent late pickups/early drop offs
- Failure of child to adjust to childcare after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal: abuse of any person, animals, or property
- Our inability to meet child's needs
- Serious illness of child

Discovery Kids reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of staff or other children in attendance.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL/DENTAL PROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an admission/emergency form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. You can pick up a form in the office to update as needed.

### FIRE, TORNADO, BOMB OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire and tornado drills are conducted each month; all classrooms are required to participate.

In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to the meeting spot.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency situation.

### BLIZZARD/SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

If Benson school has a

- two hour late start, we will open at 7:30am
- closes early, we will be open until 4:30pm.
- is closed, our hours are 7:30 am to 4:30 pm.

The director and staff will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine if it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

### MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD

In the event of a missing child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the director to help with the search. If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the director will notify the police department and the child's parents.

### POWER FAILURE

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents contacted.

### WEAPONS

Discovery Kids does not permit or tolerate the possession, display, or use of weapons by any person on school premises or in vehicles.

**Return this portion to Discovery Kids office unless you need to update paperwork.**

Child name:..... Birth Date:.....

Please initial each permission below to approve:

..... I give permission to Discovery Kids, to apply and give general items according to manufacturer's instructions or by a health professional to my child. These items are supplied by you.

Circle items below and apply any additional notes by item:

Diaper Wipes	Diaper/Rash Ointment	Pain Reliever	Sunscreen
Diapers	Chapped Lip Remedies	Teething Gel	Insect Repellant

\*Any pain reliever medication will need a Medicine form filled out before giving-see handbook.\*

..... My child will attend during ANY LATE starts or EARLY release snow days from school.  
\*You will be required to notify us of any changes!\*

..... It is okay for Discovery Kids to take pictures of my child during activities. Photos will be used for activities, projects, social media, and newspaper articles.

..... Your child will be participating in Teaching Strategies GOLD.

..... I have given updated Immunization records for children in care.

..... I have been offered the updated program policies and read the parent handbook.

..... I have completed/updated my child's admission form by emailing any changes or stopping in office.  
\*If you need a new form, stop in the office.\*

..... Discovery Kids staff has permission to take my child on walks and field trips.

I am agreeing to the terms and conditions by signing below.

Signature..... Date.....