



Family Handbook

Vision Statement

At Morning Star, our vision is to nurture a vibrant, inclusive environment where children, teachers and the community thrive together. We create a safe, supportive space for children to grow and build meaningful relationships, empower teachers with competitive pay and opportunities for growth, and serve as a trusted cornerstone in our community, fostering connection and a brighter future for all.

Morning Star Child Care

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Welcome to Morning Star Child Care!

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

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

Our Philosophy

We believe...

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

Cultural Competence and Accountability

Cultural competence is the basic understanding of one's own culture, the cultural practices and worldviews of others, maintaining a positive attitude toward cultural differences, and a willingness to accept and respect these differences. The purpose of this plan is to bring awareness to any unconscious biases we (as a community of teachers and learners) may have; and to be accepting of knowledge about differing cultures and how culture impacts management style, problem-solving, asking for help, learning, etc. It is important for children, families, and teachers to have an awareness, positive attitude, willingness to learn, and skills to communicate with everyone. While diversity may include different faiths, gender roles, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity it is not limited to just these areas. We believe that diversity also includes the different physical, cognitive, and social abilities that one possesses. We strive to create a developmentally appropriate classroom environment using an Anti-Bias curriculum that supports each child's uniqueness, their home culture and heritage, and their beliefs.

One of the most important things that we can do to teach our children about diversity is through role modeling that **all people** are treated with kindness and respect. While it is impossible to list all the things we do to encourage diversity, listed below are some of the ways we incorporate diversity into our curriculum at Morning Star Child Care:

- Our CHILD ENROLLMENT form encourages families to share their home traditions with us.
- Each classroom invites students to bring in a picture board to hang in the classroom highlighting family, traditions, and likes/dislikes.
- We encourage families and members of our community, through newsletters and announcements, to visit with us throughout the year, not just special occasions, and share their traditions and customs.
- Our teachers are trained to provide culturally responsive "mirrors" that reflect the children's home cultures and "windows" into cultures that aren't represented.
- We use multilingual labels around our classrooms, and we encourage children to use their home language at school to support their academic success, strengthen their cultural identity, and promote inclusivity.
- We collaborate with Child Care Network and the State of Michigan to ensure that any family can receive tuition assistance and participate in a high-quality, nationally accredited preschool program.
- We collaborate with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) which assists families from the Armed Forces with child care expenses.

Special Needs Statement of Support

Upon enrollment a family is asked to complete an Ages and Stages Assessment. This, along with an assessment by our early childhood professionals, is a good indicator if there is a developmental area of concern. Twice a year each family has the opportunity to meet with their child(ren)'s teachers to review developmental assessments and set individual goals. The purpose of this Special Needs Statement of Support is if there is an area of developmental concern then a plan is created to support the child(ren). The earlier an area of concern is identified the better chance that child has to reach that developmental goal prior to going off to an elementary school setting. Morning Star works with the families, outside agencies, and school special education departments to advocate for the child(ren) and their needs.

Here are a few ways Morning Star Child Care support families.

- We provide a Preschool Support Process in which we work with the families to gain access to assistance (Occupational Therapists, Counselors, etc.).
- We collaborate with Early-On and Build Up to ensure that children with varying abilities have the best resources available to them to meet their needs.
- We work with Dexter Early Elementary Complex to provide supplemental care for children in the Early Childhood Special Education preschool program.

Enrollment and Tuition

Children between the ages 8 weeks and twelve years are eligible for enrollment at Morning Star Child Care. Children may attend the center for a 10-hour block between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

- *Child Enrollment Form*
- *Tuition Express Electronic Funds Transfer Form**
- *Child Information Record (4x6 card)*
- *Health Appraisal*
- *Policy Contract*
- *Non-Prescription Release*
- *Infant/Toddler Supplemental Information Form (if applicable)*

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

A registration fee of \$100 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time, non-refundable charge. If a child is withdrawn then re-enrolls at a later date, a second enrollment fee will be expected.

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

- Monthly Payment-due the 1st day of each month. Late after the 10th day.
 $Tuition \times 50 \text{ weeks} \div 12 \text{ months} = \text{Rate due}$
- Weekly Payment-due by 5:30 p.m. child's first scheduled day. Late after 5:30 p.m. the second day.
 $Tuition \text{ is based on } 52 \text{ weeks.}$

**Tuition Express Forms must be filled out, and kept on file, at MSCC at enrollment regardless of payment method being used (check or online credit card). If tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, then tuition will be processed through the Tuition Express system, along with a \$15 late fee.*

Credit Card Processing Fee: There will be a mini-

mum 4% processing fee (higher depending on type of credit card company) charged by MSCC for every transaction. Electronic Checking Withdrawals are a fee free option.

If paying by check is your standard form of payment, and it is not paid by the 10th of the month, funds will be transferred electronically on the 11th, including a \$15 late payment fee of the month using the electronic withdrawal option, unless arrangements are made with the director ahead of time.

School-age Tuition

The school-age tuition is computed according to the first day of enrollment until the last scheduled day for the school year. The total is then divided by nine months, Sept. through May (June is divided into the previous months). The "Set Monthly Payment" is due the first day of each month and considered late after the tenth day. Tuition expected according to the child schedule, not according to the actual days attended.

Fees

A \$15 fee is charged for late tuition payment on the 10th of the month. Special payment arrangements may be made in advance with the director.

Any child who is in our care for more than 10 hours in one day will be charged an additional \$20 fee for each day.

A service fee of \$25 will be charged for any **returned checks**.

Two-week notice required for any schedule change. The first schedule or payment change is free. Additional changes will require a \$25 **Schedule Change Fee**.

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday. After extensive research, we have found our policy to be consistent with other schools and child day care centers. Because our costs

remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week to meet our expenses. Consequently, as much as we might like to, we cannot make allowance for any days missed in your regular attendance schedule.

For other fees see:

Drop off and Pick up & Enrollment and Tuition Sections

We do not trade a scheduled day for another day.

Families may request an added day or extended hours to a day. We will check our schedule and will let you know if an opening is available.

Families who are receiving DHS childcare assistance must pay the full regular tuition rate until the authorizing paperwork is delivered to us for DHS billing. Upon our receipt of DHS payment, your account will be credited towards the following month. You are responsible for directly paying us your DHS co-pay each month. Rates may vary according to DHS disbursement. If DHS billing lapses it is your responsibility to pay the full tuition amount until DHS notifies us otherwise.

Withdrawal & Dismissal Policy

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

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

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

MyProcure

Your child's records are located at a secure site on MyProcure.com. The best way to access this link is from the home page of our website (morningstarchildcare.net). Families are encouraged to check their child's site frequently to view tuition status. **It is the family's responsibility to check MyProcure.com for their current tuition amount.** Contact the office to receive your *Welcome Letter*. You will log on to MyProcure.com to receive your confirmation code and login information. Families without internet connection will receive "hard copies" of tuition statements and center communications. Inform the office if you need to be placed on our *Family Print Out list*.

Family Involvement

We believe that strong partnerships with families enhance children's learning and well-being. Families are encouraged to participate in classroom activities, attend special events, and communicate regularly with staff. We offer parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, and opportunities to share feedback. Your involvement is valued and welcomed!

Communication

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

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

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

- address and/or phone numbers, or e-mail address
- parent/guardian employment,

- health/immunizations up-dates, or.
- other pertinent information related to your child.

In addition, if you are a family that uses English as a second language, we will try to communicate to you in your chosen language if requested.

Family Resources

Our program provides information on family resources in the community through multiple ways. We maintain a dedicated family resource board in our main entrance area with flyers, brochures, and contact details for local services such as health clinics, food banks, parenting support groups, and educational programs. Each classroom also has a dedicated Family Resource space on their Family Board. We also regularly share updates through newsletters, emails, and our program website or app. Additionally, staff members are trained to connect families with specific services based on their needs and can offer support in multiple languages to ensure every family feels informed and supported.

Inclusion and Support for Individuals with Disabilities

Our program is committed to providing an inclusive environment for children, school-agers, families, and staff with disabilities. We offer reasonable accommodations, adapt activities as needed, and collaborate with families and specialists to support individual needs. Our facility is accessible, and we strive to create a welcoming, respectful space for everyone.

Confidentiality

Each family has the right to confidentiality. MSCC keeps certain information on file regarding children and families that may be considered personal in nature. We maintain this information in confidence and do not discuss or release it to persons outside of MSCC unless written permission has been obtained from the parent(s).

Drop-off and Pick-up Policies

Families are expected to accompany their child into the center. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however,

will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care. You are welcome to stay for a short while and assist your child through this transition. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave, and the teacher will assist.

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

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

Families are expected to assume full responsibility of their child once they enter the classroom.

Your child has waited all day to see you and is excited when you walk in the door. At pick up please ***put away your cell phone*** and give your full attention to your child.

Children enrolled on a part-time basis are expected to be picked up at the agreed upon daily time. The parent or guardian of a child not picked up until after the agreed time, or past closing (5:30 p.m.), will be charged **\$1 per minute. Families who pick up late more than 3x, in a one-year period, will pay \$5 per minute after 5:30pm.** All late fees are expected by 5:30 p.m. the following day. This fee applies per family. Payment should be given directly to the staff member. Excessive abuse of late pickup times can result in disenrollment.

We discourage leaving your idling vehicle in the parking lot during drop off and pick up times. In cases of extreme cold or heat please make your transitions brief, so the vehicle is not left unattended for a long period of time. **NEVER** leave a child in an idling vehicle unattended.

Building Security and Access:

Our buildings are open for business from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm and can be accessed by using the 3-digit code given to you at the time of enrollment. Due to security reasons, we ask that this code be used only by immediate family. If someone is picking up your child that don't normally pick up, but who is listed on your emergency contact information, please have them ring the bell or knock on the door.

For your child's safety please do not allow your child to touch the exit door handles or open the doors and/or play yard gates. This includes entering in the code to unlock the door. We work very hard at teaching the children not to touch the exit doors/gates.

Custody Orders

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

Holidays

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

In-service Day

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

Unexpected Closings

Morning Star will be open on public school designated "snow days"--we may open late if necessary. On a rare occasion our center may be forced to close due to a situation beyond our control (e.g., ice storm, electrical outage, no water service). Every attempt will be made to inform families of an emergency closing. In cases where MSCC is told we must close temporarily, and it is beyond our control, tuition is still due. MSCC will make every effort to pro-rate, discount, or credit accounts as necessary.

Tornado and Disaster Procedure

In the event of a tornado or disaster warning, the children located at the "house" will be taken to the basement. Students from "west" will also be taken to the "house" basement if time and safety allows. Otherwise, they will shelter in place. Students will remain sheltered until the all-clear signal is sounded. MSCC posts evacuation and Critical Management Plans at each door.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Teachers are trained on what to watch for and how to properly report it.

Treasures and Possessions

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

Important...there are four things we feel strongly must remain at home: toy guns, gum, money, and candy.

Clothing

Because of the wide range of activities, it is rec-

ommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Plastic aprons will be provided by the center for art and water activities.

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

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

Diapers & Toilet Training

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

Our teachers are experienced in training young children in how to use the bathroom. It is essential that the family 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! During toilet training, families are to provide lots of thick training underwear, plastic pants, socks, and outer clothing. We do not allow the use of "pull-ups" at Morning Star. They seem to only delay the toilet training process plus require extra time to change.

Bodies and Boundaries

There is a natural curiosity among children with regards to their bodies. When situations arise where

we must speak to children about body parts, we use the anatomically correct terms. We also teach children that every person has boundaries and that our bodies are private and should be respected. Families will be notified if situations occur in the classroom that directly affects their child(ren).

Bottles, Blankets and Pacifiers

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

Field Trips

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

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

Birthday Celebrations

Families are welcome to send in a treat to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing. This is for the safety of all the children. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions. Families are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration.

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school

and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, you may distribute the invitations into the cubbies. Our center will not distribute mailing lists or phone numbers.

Photographs and Publicity

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

Your child's photo will also be displayed on their classroom's ProCare site.

Meals, Snacks and Food Allergies

The center will provide milk for lunch and two snacks with water for each day. Families will provide formula or breast milk for children up to the age of 12 months. MSCC will provide whole vitamin D milk for children between the ages of 12 and 24 months. 1% milk will be provided for children from 25 months to 12 years of age. If there are dietary needs, or allergies, it is the family's responsibility to notify both the center director and the classroom teacher. Families will need to supply any special food required. An Allergy Action Plan and a Medical Action Plan are available in the main office and must be filled out if a child has an allergy or medical need.

Families need to send lunch with their child each day. Teachers will monitor that each child has an adequate amount of formula, milk, or food and supplement as needed. Lunches sent from home should be self-serving or easy to serve and clearly labeled. A microwave will be available. Lunch boxes that have a frozen pack inside are recommended. The children participate in preparing snacks as much as possible and are served family style at each snack time.

Morning Star offers a hot lunch option depending upon the demand. Check with the director for options. Hot lunch is purchased by the month according to a set weekly schedule. No refunds for missed days.

Families may bring breakfast for their children pro-

vided the arrival time is before 8:00 a.m. Food must be simple and self-serving (e.g., yogurt, breakfast bar, dry cereal, fruit). We ask that you set out your child's breakfast before leaving. The teachers are not responsible for preparing breakfast but will help with the clean-up process.

Breastfeeding

We proudly support breastfeeding families. We offer a private, comfortable space for nursing or pumping. Our staff follow each baby's individual feeding plan and maintain open communication with parents to ensure consistency and care. We're here to support your breastfeeding journey with respect and understanding.

Healthy Choices

While the occasional donut, chocolate milk, and fruit snacks make for a good treat they do not necessarily make a healthy meal. We ask that families reserve these items for special occasions. Bringing in these items daily for their child does not encourage healthy eating patterns. We are happy to provide parents with a list of healthy, fun, alternatives upon request.

Oral Care

We work in partnership with families to support healthy smiles and instill lifelong habits of good oral health. We promote healthy oral care with annual visits from a local dentist. Our toddler and preschoolers learn from hands on activities with the dentist. They also receive free toothbrushing kits after the visit. Free and reduced fee dental care can be found at The Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti. More information can be found at www.hopeclinic.org.

Transitions

MSCC provides each family with a Welcome Packet upon enrollment. It includes important forms to complete as well as helpful tips for families. We also offer tours so families and children can get to know our center before starting. When it is time for a child to transition to a new classroom, the lead teachers will coordinate days for the child to visit

and share that information with families, assistant teachers, and administrators. Families also have the option of touring the new classroom before the transition. When families leave our program, we have a variety of ways to help make that transition smooth for the child and family. Our administrators may provide resources based on the individual needs of the family. We hold an annual Family Picnic and DK Graduation at the end of the school year. The DK class also takes a field trip to the Dexter Early Elementary Complex so the children can see their new school. When families leave at other times of the year, teachers work with the class to make cards for the child as a way to say goodbye.

Home Language

At Morning Star young children and school-age learners are encouraged to use their home language in play and learning through intentional practices that value their linguistic backgrounds. At MSCC this may include books, songs, and games in multiple languages, and encouraging children to express themselves freely during play using their home language. For school-age children, teachers may invite students to share stories, write assignments, or complete projects in their home language alongside English. Classrooms often display multilingual labels and signs, and peers are encouraged to learn and respect one another's languages, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where all languages are seen as assets.

Immunizations and Physicals

All children who attend childcare programs in Michigan are required by law to be fully vaccinated. **Morning Star requires all children enrolled in the program to be immunized.** Families must contact their local health department to obtain a signed certified *Nonmedical Waiver Form* for delayed vaccines. A *Health Appraisal* form is required prior to enrollment. This form requests a record of your child's immunizations and the date of last physical examination.

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

The Michigan Department of Health requires the following immunizations:

Children Ages 2 Months through 3 Months

- 1 dose of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- 1 dose of polio vaccine
- 1 dose Haemophilus influenza type b vaccine
- 1 dose of hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 dose pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)

Children Ages 4 Months through 5 Months

- 2 doses DTaP
- 2 doses polio vaccine
- 2 doses Haemophilus influenza type b vaccine
- 2 doses hepatitis B vaccine
- 2 doses pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)

Children Ages 6 Months through 18 Months

- 3 doses DTaP
- 2 doses polio vaccine
- 2 doses Haemophilus influenza type b vaccine
- 2 doses hepatitis B vaccine
- 3 doses pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)

Children Ages 19 Months through 5 Years

- 4 doses diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)
- 3 doses polio vaccine
- 4 doses pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13)
- 3 doses hepatitis B
- Complete series, or 1 dose Haemophilus influenza type b (Hib)
- 1 dose measles, mumps, rubella vaccine
- 1 dose Varicella

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

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

tion record to the office. A new letter must be signed yearly.

Wellness Policy (Please see attached Wellness Policy for full details.)

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

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

- Unknown rash will need to be seen by a physician and the child can return to school by the written recommendation made by the doctor. A doctor's note is required.
- Fever of 100.5° or higher. The child must be fever-free for 24 hours *without the aid of Tylenol, or other fever reducing medications*. For a mild fever, muscle aches, toothache, or headache Tylenol (supplied from home) may be administered. *See *Medicine* below.
- Diarrhea (more than two loose, watery stools) - The child may return when bowel movements are normal, and no other symptoms of illness are present.
- Vomiting -Any vomiting is a reason to send a child home or keep a child at home. Consideration will be taken if your child is allergic to certain food/drink products or on medication. The child may return 24 hours after the last time he/she vomited, and no other symptoms of illness are present.
- Persistent cough or runny nose for an extended period (cough suppressants and/or allergy medications are not recommended unless prescribed by a doctor). Child may return 24 hours cough free without the aid of cough suppressant, or allergy medication.
- Crying and irritable for a long time, or not eating or drinking normally. Anytime a child is not themselves, cannot be soothed by a teacher, requires

one-on-one care, complaining about discomfort, or not interacting with the class is reason to take a Wellness Day and spend time in the comfort of their own parent(s) arms.

- Highly contagious condition such as:
 - COVID-19: See our most current COVID policy.
 - Head lice: suggested treatments available upon request. Child must be nit free to return to school.
 - Chicken pox and Hand Food Mouth: Child must be fever free and sores scabbed over.
 - Strep throat: Child must have 24 hours of antibiotics in his/her system.
 - Mumps, pin worm, impetigo, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc.: Follow doctor's recommendations or WCHD method of treatment. Information from our main office is available upon request.

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

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

Medicine

Non-prescriptive medication (Tylenol, nose drops, etc.) as well as prescription medication will only be administered after a parent/guardian signs, and dates a form entitled, *Medication Permission*. The parents/guardians must provide all medications.

Prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name. A parent/ guardian must administer the first dosage under their supervision; never the center staff. We will not administer cold medications to any child.

Staff cannot administer medication (prescription or over the counter) without the proper dosage for that child listed on the container. If the container reads, "Consult/see Doctor" then a note from the doctor with the child's weight, and the dosage recommended, must be provided.

Medication will be stored per the manufacturer's recommendations. We have locked cupboards, and containers for the refrigerator, for the storage of medication.

A *Non-Prescription Release* form for other applications such as diaper wipes, sun block, soap, etc. will be signed upon enrollment.

Pandemics

Our Preparedness and Response Plan (available upon request) will be followed during any pandemic period. The Center for Disease Control, Department of Health and/or State Child Care Licensing Rules will be followed. Response will include, but is not limited to, monitoring symptoms in staff and students, practicing social distancing, following proper hygiene protocol, implementing any/new safety equipment, isolating staff and/or students infected, decreasing class sizes, and transparent communication with families and regulating agencies.

Injuries and Accidents

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

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

Social and Emotional Care

Our program supports and observes the social and emotional health and well-being of children and school-agers every day through consistent routines, positive interactions, and intentional observation. Staff create a warm, responsive environment where children feel safe, valued, and heard. We use daily

check-ins, both informal and structured, to gauge children's moods and needs, and we encourage children to express their feelings through conversation, art, and play. Educators model and teach emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving skills. Any changes in behavior or emotional state are noted and, if needed, addressed in collaboration with families and support professionals to ensure each child's well-being is nurtured.

Family Conflict Resolution

If an issue should arise between a family and a staff member, or between two families, we encourage the concerned party to speak directly to the staff member, or family, prior to coming to the directors. If the problem remains unresolved, or the parent wants to make sure the administration is aware, our door is always open. Administration will act as a moderator in situations that require more attention or are reoccurring. We will make every effort to remain fair, with our main priority being the safety and quality of care of the children at Morning Star.

Family Gatherings

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

Center Happenings

Morning Star makes every attempt to keep families up to date on happenings here at the center and in the community. Center newsletters are sent out at least 4 times a year and classroom newsletters are sent out monthly. Bulletin boards with dry erase boards are in each classroom and updated daily for families. Daily messages may be sent to families using our ProCare app for reminders and updates. **Please read them.** It

is also the families' responsibility to stay informed by being aware and checking for updates. Together, as partners, we will be able to provide your child with a fun and safe learning environment.

Daily Routines

Every classroom has their daily routine posted on the family information board, and a copy is included in their classroom handbook. Infants do not have a set schedule for activities as their care is based on their individual needs.

Licensing Notebook & Other Information

Morning Star Child Care strives to offer a quality program for our families. We maintain a licensing notebook that is available for families to review during our regular business hours. The notebook contains all licensing inspections as well as any special

investigation reports and related corrective action plans.

These reports, from the prior two years, are also available on the child care licensing website @ www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

MSCC also posts CC Administrative Licensing Rules, R400.8110, at each building for parents to review.

MSCC runs a background check on all unsupervised volunteers and employees.

Changes in Policies

The fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the center owner.

Handbook Revised: June 2025

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

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



Morning Star Child Care

Discipline and Guidance Policy

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

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

Difficult Behavior

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

Initial Consultation:

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

Second Consultation:

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent or guardian will again be asked to meet with the director and teaching staff involved. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, and establish a new, or revised, approach to solving the problem. Parents or guardians may be asked to consult outside professionals or bring in behavioral specialists to help identify the problems or provide new strategies, in order for MSCC to continue care. Our goal is to work as a team to better serve each child.

Disenrolled:

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, the child may be disenrolled from the center at the discretion of the center director. We will make every attempt to assist you in accessing services, and/or finding placement in another childcare setting.

NOTE: Corporal punishment will not be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.), exclusion from large motor or outdoor activities, or exclusion from any learning activity. In certain instances, a child may be physically restrained to keep the child, other children, or staff safe from harm. No unusual punishment will be allowed such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.

MORNING STAR CHILD CARE POLICY CONTRACT

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

I have been provided a Morning Star Child Care Family Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures therein. I agree to pay the following tuition, any late fees, or change in schedule fee amounts, and understand that these may change depending on schedule and rate adjustments during enrollment. A two-week notice must be given for disenrollment. This contract can be terminated by MSCC at any time if policies and procedures are disregarded by parents/guardians.

1 st Child's Name _____	Monthly Tuition _____	Weekly Tuition _____
2 nd Child's Name _____	Monthly Tuition _____	Weekly Tuition _____
3 rd Child's Name _____	Monthly Tuition _____	Weekly Tuition _____

____ Monthly Tuition is due the 1st of every month and processed through Tuition Express. If paying by check every month then Tuition Express will be kept on file at MSCC as back up. Tuition will be processed through Tuition Express if payment is not made by the 10th of every month. A \$15 late fee will be assessed to the account.

____ Weekly Tuition is due the 1st day of attendance every week. If paying by check every week then Tuition Express will be kept on file at MSCC as back up. Tuition will be processed through Tuition Express if payment is not made by the 2nd day of attendance every week. A \$15 late fee will be assessed to the account.

Registration Fee \$ _____ is due upon enrollment.

Approved Start Date _____

Weekly Schedule/Days _____ *Hours _____

____ I have read and agree to the Tuition and Payment Policy for Morning Star Child Care.

____ I have read and agree to the Discipline & Guidance Policy for Morning Star Child Care.

____ I have read and agree to the Wellness Policy for Morning Star Child Care.

____ I have read and agree to the Assessment Policy for Morning Star Child Care. I will complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire on a yearly basis, provided by MSCC.

____ I have read and agree to the Special Needs Policy for Morning Star Child Care. I will seek assistance for my child if concerns of cognitive/social/emotional needs arise. MSCC will work with me as a team and provide support and resources.

____ I give my permission for MSCC to use photographs/videos of my child for advertising, training and education purposes, and to be put on Shutterfly (names will not be used).

____ I am aware that MSCC's licensing notebook is available for review during regular business hours.

Both parents or guardians must sign OR parent/guardian with sole custody of the child:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

*MSCC limits daily enrollment to 10 hours a day maximum. Fees will be applied for over 10 hours. Any change in originally scheduled hours needs to be approved by the Director/Owner of Morning Star Child Care and is not guaranteed due to possible staffing and ratio restrictions. Change in Schedule fees will be applied.

Electronic Check and Credit Card Payment Option

Morning Star Child Care is pleased to provide you with an E-check or credit card payment option for tuition payments. Every family will be required to have an automated bank or credit card on file with MSCC through Tuition Express.

Here is what you need to know:

Bank Account Option:

This is a fee free option. Fill out **Section B** of the **Tuition Express Automated Payment Processing Form**. Attach a voided check to that same form. Your monthly balance will be automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account the first of every month.

Credit Card Option:

This option has a minimum 4% processing charge. Fill out **Section A** of the **Tuition Express Automated Payment Processing Form**. Your monthly balance will be automatically charged to your credit card the first of every month.

Tuition Express is a secure, encrypted site. Morning Star Child Care does not have access to your bank information via computer once your information is entered. The Payment Processing Form will be kept in our confidential, locked, filing system in our main office. For more information about the security and convenience of Tuition Express visit tuitionexpress.com.

In order to further keep your information, secure please deliver your completed Automated Payment Processing Form directly to our main office.

If you have any questions, please contact our main office.

734-424-9193