

*Rain River*  
**LEARNING CENTER**

**Parent Handbook**

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## Welcome To Rain River Learning Center!

**Aspire to excellence; Exceed the Standard.**

Rain River Learning Center (RRLC) is pleased that *you've* chosen *us* to meet *your* childcare needs. All of us here at RRLC would like to express our deepest appreciation for the confidence *you've* shown in *our* program. We know that entrusting your children to our care is a decision you will *never* regret. We are dedicated to working *with* you to nurture *your* children and give them a great start on the road to a long and happy life!

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lindsay Morris,  
Rain River Learning Center  
Program Director.

# RRLC Operations

Rain River Learning Center is open Monday through Friday 7am to 6:30pm except on the following observed holidays:

- News Year Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

## **VPK Program**

Rain River Learning Center is proud to offer the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten to children who are 4 on or before September 1st of each year. This program consists of 540 instructional hours! The program begins promptly at 9:00 AM and ends at 12 PM, Monday through Friday.

VPK is free of charge to all parents using a VPK voucher, and wrap-around care will be available to all VPK students wishing to arrive earlier than 8:45am and/or stay later than 12:15pm.

Because VPK follows a standard school schedule, there will be some days that VPK is *not* in session. However, the remainder of the facility will be open and active according to our hours of operation. Parents of VPK students will be notified in advance of any program closures.

**Tours:**

RRLC offer tours of our facilities during regular operating hours. You may have taken one of these tours with your child before enrolling him or her into our program. Therefore, it is not uncommon for children who attend our program to see other families touring the facility. We assure you that our staff is well-trained at keeping distractions to a minimum during these tours. We encourage our students to welcome new people and make new friends, so these tours also provide an opportunity for social-emotional learning.

**Enrollment**

RRLC offers enrollment a first come-first serve basis. Should all of our classes be full when you seek enrollment for your child, you may opt to request addition to our program waiting list. We will be happy to welcome your little one when the soonest available slot opens up! Remember to keep your contact information up to date, though. If we can't contact you, or if do not respond within 24 hours, the opening will be offered to the next family on the list.

When accepting a wait-list opening, please have the registration fee, and any other applicable enrollment fees ready to go. We cannot accept your child without them, and if fees are not promptly paid, we will have to offer the opening to another family on the list.

**Summer Enrollment**

Apart from the VPK Program, which runs from August to May of each year, RRLC is a year-round program. Parents who opt to keep their kids home for the summer risk losing their child's spot in the program. We will always work with our parents to provide their children care when it is needed, but a prolonged absence from the program could cause a child to lose his or her spot for care come fall.



## **Tuition Fee Structures**

RRLC charges a \$100 **registration fee** is for each initial enrollment. This is a one-time fee, and it will not be charged again unless a child is un-enrolled and re-enrolled again.

An annually recurring **supplies fee** of \$150 will be charged upon your child's enrollment. This fee will recur each year on the anniversary of your child's enrollment for as long as your child remains in our program.

**Weekly tuition** is due on Monday of the current week. Tuition can be paid in the following forms:

- Cash
- Checks written on site at RRLC
- Debit card payments via the Bright Wheel platform.
- Credit card payments via the Bright Wheel platform.
- ACH Transfers payments via the Bright Wheel platform.

Tuition must be paid promptly; otherwise a \$25 **late** fee will be added to your current balance. If late payments are made more than twice within a year, RRLC will require automatic payments to be arranged through Bright Wheel for the remainder of your child's attendance.

## **Groups Size and Ratios**

Keeping class sizes small and offering more one-on-one interaction between teachers and students is one way RRLC provides your family with excellent childcare! Environments with fewer students are proven to enhance the cognitive, emotional, and social development of learning children, and we always aim to keep our classes *below* allowed teacher-to-student ratios!

Our projected class sizes are as follows:

- 4 maximum for children aged 6 weeks to 1 year.
- 6 maximum for children aged 1 year.
- 6 maximum for children aged 2 years.
- 13 maximum for children aged 3 years.
- 15 maximum for children aged 4 years.

## **Placement**

Classroom placement is based on a child's age. When children are ready to transition to the next age group, parents and teachers will meet to coordinate a transition plan to be implemented following their current birthday. We believe that moving up is a celebration, just like their birthday, so we will make the transition fun and exciting!

## About Rain River Learning Center

RRLC is a faith-based establishment committed to offering children a warm, loving environment in which to learn and grow so that parents can meet their secular obligations with peace of mind. Teachers and staff at our facility are rigorously screened and trained to meet the unique emotional and physical needs of each and every child in our care. Exceeding the Standard is part of our vision, and by providing services above and beyond traditional daycare, we aim to ease the stress of providing a well-rounded education without sacrificing valuable family interactions.

**Our Mission** is to provide a safe, nurturing, and inclusive educational experience for *every* child in our care. We strive to exceed the standard for high-quality childcare so that parents can be confident that their children are building a strong and secure foundation.

**Our Faith** is an integral aspect of all we do. RRLC is founded on the belief that we are saved because Jesus Christ came, lived a perfect human life, and died so that we may live and be forgiven of our sins. Jesus showed us to be good people, to be good to others, and to be good to *all* of God's creation, so we strive to exemplify these Christ-like qualities in our daily interactions.

### Our Guiding Principles

- Integrity
- Respect
- Teamwork
- Discretion
- Education

## **Integrity**

Integrity is defined as conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong, but such a simple definition cannot convey all of the various shades of integrity. Showing integrity isn't simply an *act*; it is an *attitude*. Showing integrity involves *commitment* to upholding what is fair, and morally sound, even in the face of opposition or hardship. Integrity involves a *commitment* to truth and to accountability. This is the sort of integrity RRLC expects from *each and every* member of our team.

## **Respect**

Respect is defined as the act of giving particular attention, or honor to someone or something; to esteem with high regard. RRLC encourages a healthy respect for self and others. Regarding the families we serve as worthy of respect supports a healthy environment for everyone, and it also promotes healthy, happy relationships. Respecting parents fosters trusting parent-teacher relationships, and respecting children models appropriate social interactions and helps children feel safe and secure while they are with us.

## **Teamwork and Discretion**

Teamwork is defined as the combined action of a group of people, especially when effective and efficient. At RRLC the collaboration of minds is *extremely* important. Each member of the staff *must* be willing and able to clearly communicate their needs in a tactful and kind way *and* to listen to, and process, the needs of children and parents alike.

Collaborative efforts are not exclusively internal. At RRLC *you* are encouraged to take an *active* role in your child's education. This is why we view discretion and confidentiality as a *priority* when handling *all* situations that may arise. Remember, we *want* you to be part of our team *without* apprehension! Feel free to share any family or cultural or background information that you think will help your child adjust and grow within our program. Further, we encourage you to visit your child and see how he or she is interacting with teachers and others. We *love* it when

parents can join us for lunch, circle time or story time, or when they are able to share their own special talents with us! We want you to feel *warmly* welcome!

## **Education**

RRLC has curated a highly engaging educational environment that will stimulate your child's senses and kindle his or her natural curiosity and desire to learn! Our teachers have chosen materials that appeal to a large range of interests and sensory preferences. Some such materials include, but are by *no means* limited to, sand tables, blocks of various shapes and sizes, puzzles, and play props for all ages and styles of play.

Our teachers are also equipped to teach and engage in a wide variety of age-appropriate scientific activities. They encourage scientific investigation with high-quality, child-friendly magnifying glasses, binoculars, magnets, balances, weights and more. Also, computers, I-pads, books (lots and lots of books!), musical instruments, and art supplies are all available for use in identifying and encouraging the natural talents your child exhibits!

Positive social interactions are also modeled and actively taught throughout the day. These interactions are a key to developing the vital language skills children need in order to react and express themselves in effective and socially appropriate ways.

As you can see, RRLC places a high value on education. However, we also place a high value on *family*! This is why we provide a variety of services not present in typical daycare settings. These services include:

- Biblical instruction.
- Professional tutoring services.
- Homework help.
- On-site extracurricular activities.

By scheduling all of these essential services while children are with *us* we aim to help *you* use your free time as *family* time!

## **Rain River Learning Center General Policies**

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Discrimination is defined the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, typically based on a specific characteristic or trait, real or imagined, these people possess. Rain River Learning Center provides services to children and families regardless of their race, religious preference or nonreligiosity, gender, disability, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, veteran status, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Simply put, we do *not* discriminate! Any perceived discrimination is investigated promptly and completely. If discrimination is found to have actually occurred, the employee or employees involved will have their employment with RRLC terminated, and any necessary legal actions will be pursued.

Furthermore, RRLC reserves the right to deny services to any family who is found to have engaged in hate-motivated or otherwise discriminatory behavior toward one or more of our students or staff members.

Rain River Learning Center *does not tolerate* discrimination.

### **Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Policy**

Providing a safe environment for *all* children and staff is a primary concern at RRLC. Therefore, this policy applies to *all* staff members, volunteers, *and* visitors to the program including *you* the parent.

## **WE ARE A DRUG FREE FACILITY!**

The use of controlled substances, "recreational" drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products of any kind are prohibited *anywhere* on campus, *including* in personal vehicles. Our staff is held accountable for any and all prescription medications they may need for medically valid conditions. No medications are *ever* taken or stored anywhere that children might be present. *All* medications, including over-the-counter medications, are required to be *locked* out of reach of any and all children.

The use of alcohol is *expressly forbidden* on campus! Furthermore, anyone found to have alcohol in their system on campus will be asked to leave immediately. If they do not leave when asked, they will be escorted from the premises. Public intoxication is *always* reported to the proper authorities.

Use of or intoxication from so-called "recreational" drugs is *strictly prohibited* at *any* time. Any staff member, volunteer, or visitor suspected of being under the influence of controlled or illegal substances will be asked to leave the premises. If they do not leave voluntarily, they will be escorted off the premises. Suspected drug abuse is *always* reported to the proper authorities! Any form of intoxication on campus is *absolutely* unacceptable and will *not* be tolerated by any staff member, volunteer, or visitor to our program. So that we are perfectly clear on this, **we will report you if you attempt to enter our facility while under the influence of any intoxicating substance, for any reason whatsoever.** Furthermore, we will *never* release a child to anyone who appears to be in any way intoxicated.

## **RRLC Emergency Policy**

Each month, Rain River Learning Center is required by law to execute a **Fire Drill** to prepare the children in case of a real fire. During this drill, children will line up with their class and exit the building to the safe spot (our playground) using the evacuation route posted in each classroom. RRLC will also practice a **Tornado Drill** and a **Lockdown Drill** once a year.



## **Evacuations**

In the event of an actual emergency in which Rain River Learning Center must be evacuated, all staff and children will be moved to:

**Dunkin Donuts, 890 Santa Maria Boulevard, St. Augustine, Florida 32086**

In the event of an evacuation, parents will be notified upon our arrival at Dunkin Donuts via Bright Wheel messaging. It is *imperative* that *all* parents enable the Bright Wheel notifications feature on their phones and leave it on at *all* times in case of an emergency.

RRLC will follow the St. Johns County School Board for school closures due to hurricane or other natural disasters.

## Staff Qualifications

Rain River Learning Center's Staff is comprised of individuals who are *committed* to meeting your child's needs and developmental goals! Each of our staff members meet, and in many cases exceed, the formal education and DCF certification training requirements for childcare workers, and all have experience working with young children and their families.

Pediatric CPR and First Aid certification is *required* for *every* on-site member of our staff, as is Safe Sleep training.

Every staff member is trained in Conscious Discipline, and all will respond with sensitivity and appropriate support to each child's needs, desires, and interests.

Safety is a top priority at RRLC, so all staff members or other persons, such as volunteers, who regularly provide care for your child or support services in the facility are *required* to complete a Level II Background Check *and* a Criminal Offender Record Information check *prior* to employment with Rain River Learning Center. Level II Background Checks and a Criminal Offender Record Information checks *must* be completed bi-annually and/or anytime the program receives information that may indicate new checks should be completed.

## Child Wellness

At Rain River Learning Center, we do our best to maintain a clean and healthy facility, but we need your help and cooperation! In order to keep our staff and children healthy, your child may not attend school if they have:

- A fever of 100.4 or higher.
- Noticeable signs of Hand, Foot, Mouth disease.
- Head lice.
- Flu.
- RSV.
- Measles.
- Mumps.
- Chicken Pox.
- Corona Virus.

If your child is ill notify the school so that we can anticipate his or her absence. Children presenting with a fever may not return to school until the fever is broken for at least 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications.

Children presenting with Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease may *not* return until *all* sores are completely invisible. Regardless of whether or not these sores are invisible, the child *must* remain home for at a minimum of five (5) days post-diagnosis. If your child is sent home from school with Pink eye, RSV, HFM, Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, or Lice they may *not* return to school without being cleared by a physician.

## **COVID-19 Protocol**

Upon arrival at the center each day, *every* child is *required* to undergo temperature screening. Any temperature of 100.4°F or higher is considered a fever. *All* children with fever will *not* be permitted to enter the building and *must* be sent home. *All* children with a persistent cough, a fever, or a runny nose (that is not clear), will not be accepted into the facility until they are cleared by a physician.

## **Medication Protocol**

RRLC Staff are willing and able to administer medication to children when provided with detailed, written instructions *and* approval from the child's prescribing physician.

For children with an Epi-Pen, the following is required: The Epi-Pen must be in its original packaging with the child's full name, date of birth, and expiration date on the box.

All prescribed medications, *including* an Epi-Pen must have a detailed note of instruction from the child's prescribing physician.

## **Student Records**

Florida state law requires that *all* parents of children in childcare *must* provide a legitimate record of current, required immunizations, or an otherwise appropriate exemption form, to their childcare provider *before* their child may enter a childcare setting. Therefore, RRLC, in compliance with this law, requires *all* parents to provide proof of up-to-date immunizations along with their physical records upon enrolling. We will notify parents one (1) month prior to the expiration date of current documentation. If we do not receive updated documentation by the expiration of previous documentation, your child will be temporarily dismissed until we receive the appropriate documentation. During this dismissal, tuition must continue to be paid in a timely fashion. If we do not receive updated information within one (1) week, or if tuition payments lapse, your child will be removed from the program.

Please be aware that there may be children enrolled in our program who have medical or religious exception forms excusing them from the State of Florida vaccination mandate; and they may, therefore, not be immunized according to the Department of Health guidelines.

## Guidance and Discipline Policy

RRLC is committed to helping each child develop a positive self-image and a sense of personal accountability. Our goal is to teach children self-direction, self-control, and problem solving skills. Our philosophy is built on providing a positive, supportive environment, free from negative-impact discipline. We encourage appropriate behavior through modeling and strategy, as well as recognizing, and addressing, potential problems *before* they require disciplinary action.

Our Guidance & Disciplinary Policy is based on the Conscious Discipline Philosophy of Dr. Becky Bailey. All parents are *highly* encouraged to seek out information on this philosophy either online, or in the parent resource library. Our goal in implementing this philosophy is to give children every chance to grow and become both self-directing and responsible for their own actions.

### Disciplinary Strategies

Every goal *requires* a plan of action. With no plan, there is no direction and success is unlikely. This is why RRLC has a pointed plan of action with specific strategies to ensure consistent, effective discipline!

RRLC staff are *required* to learn, and to implement, the following disciplinary strategies each and every day:

- Maintain realistic expectations based on a solid knowledge of child development.
- Provide children with clear and simple boundaries.
- Plan the environment so that it ensures a caring, child-friendly atmosphere.
- Provide age-and-ability-appropriate activities to keep children engaged.
- Model appropriate and respectful behavior.

- Redirect inappropriate behavior to appropriate outcomes.
- Give children choices between two appropriate alternatives to inappropriate behavior.
- Encourage children to work together to solve problems.
- Encourage children to use words to solve problems or elicit peer cooperation.
- Provide logical and natural consequences for children's actions.

Even when these strategies are faithfully implemented, there will still be times that behavioral concerns are ongoing. When these situations become evident, teachers will address these through written reports or by means of a pre-arranged parent-teacher conference. When such conferences are scheduled, the program director, the teacher, and the parent will come together to discuss and develop a plan of action to be implemented both in school and at home.

Unfortunately, there may be times when even a teacher's best efforts are not successful and behavioral problems continue even after *all* strategies have been applied. Should this happen, you may be asked to keep your child home from the program for up to five (5) days depending on the gravity of the situation. Should the problem not resolve thereafter, as a last resort, your child may be removed from the program.

RRLC understands that there may be circumstances that hinder a child's ability to participate fully in group programs, such as underlying or undiagnosed behavioral disorders. We recognize that this program may not be equipped to manage the children who fall into this category.

The following forms of negative-impact discipline are *strictly* prohibited at RRLC:

- Corporal Punishment in any form
- Demeaning, or verbally abusive speech.
- Shame, humiliation, neglect, and other forms of emotional abuse and manipulation.
- Disrespectful, sarcastic, or threatening speech.
- Withholding food, drink, or sleep.
- Forced feeding.
- Disciplining or shaming children for soiling or wetting their clothes.

- Enforcing unusual or excessive toilet-training practices, such as leaving a child in soiled clothing to “teach them a lesson”, or forcing children to remain on the toilet until they produce results.



## Biting Policy

Biting is not an uncommon behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers engage in this behavior. While there are many reasons children bite, the most common reason is to communicate a physical or emotional need that they are unable to express verbally. Whether it be teething, exploration, or frustration, children do not have the ability to simply say “my gums hurt and it feels good to bite down on your finger.” Or “I am so frustrated because I can't make you understand that I don't like what you're doing.” This lack of language can be the cause for simple misunderstandings as well as serious boundary violations.

While biting is expected and understandable, it is harmful to both the biter and the bitten. Relationships between playmates and siblings alike have been hindered, or even ruined, by biting. Furthermore, injuries resultant of biting can pose serious health risks to everyone involved. Therefore, our staff are well-trained to help your children learn new and effective ways to communicate their needs and curb frustrations. They are also fully equipped to handle any situations where biting occurs.

### STATE MANDATE

**State of Florida regulations *require* that parents of both the biter and the bitten are notified whenever a biting incident occurs. This policy is in place to protect those who are bitten. Names of the children involved in biting incidents are not shared with the other child's parents regardless if they are the biter or the bitten.**

**Biting prevention begins at home.** If you notice a pattern of biting in your child, you may not always know how to get control of the issue. There are a number of folk remedies and generational anecdotes on how to prevent or stop biting. Some of these practice may actually encourage *more* biting. Below are some ways that you can help your child understand that biting

is unacceptable without unknowingly reinforcing this unhealthy habit.

- Intervene *immediately*.
- Stay calm.
- *Don't* over react.
- If possible, encourage the biter to help the bitten feel better. For example, have the biter go get an ice pack or cool compress, and have the biter give the offering to the bitten directly.
- Point out how the child's behavior has affected others.
- Encourage the bitten child to express how being bitten made him or her feel.
- When addressing the biter, make eye contact.
- Use facial expression and a firm, but not harsh or abusive, tone of voice to communicate that biting is unacceptable.
- *Don't* lecture or engage in lengthy explanations.
- Use simple, direct language. Consider the child's communicative ability when choosing your words.

For more information on biting intervention and prevention, please visit:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/biting-fact-sheet-families>.

### **What if biting becomes a recurring issue?**

It is important for RRLC to document biting incidents, even attempts to bite, in a careful, systematic way. When biting becomes a recurring issue, we make every effort to work with children and parents to identify, and remedy where possible, any potential behavioral or environmental triggers. If your child continues to engage in biting, we will ask to meet with you to create a more personalized plan of action.

Teaching alternative coping skills and social-emotional behavior usually resolves biting issues. However, if biting is persistent, and the child does not respond to our best efforts, you *must* understand that your child may be removed from the program.

## Program Removal Policy

Rain River Learning Center firmly believes that *all* children can be successful at school! Our discipline policy and the use of Conscious Discipline give us confidence that the need to permanently remove a child from our program will be an *extremely rare* occurrence. If, however, the need does arise, we reserve the right to do so.

Children will be removed from the program if they demonstrate a consistent pattern of destructive behavior above and beyond what is considered age-appropriate. Some reasons for removal are:

- Causing or attempting to cause serious injury to other children, staff, or themselves.
- Excessive Biting.
- Engaging in ongoing verbal or physical abuse of staff or other children.

Rain River Learning Center also reserves the right to remove a child from the program based on the following parental concerns:

- Parents who do not provide current required paperwork.
- Parents who verbally abuse *any* RRLC staff member or student.
- Parents who threaten or engage in other forms of physical or verbal intimidation toward *any* RRLC staff member or student.
- Failure to pay tuition bills.
- Exhibiting a pattern of late or partial payments.

## Professional Confidentiality & Communication

Professional confidentiality is acting in a way so as to keep private the personal and professional details of a working relationship. Therefore, it is a *requirement* that *all* of our employees act in a discreet manner when dealing with the families we serve. Information about child development, biting incidents, behavior, and other such issues *must only* be shared through appropriate means and with *only* the parents of the child or children involved.

Maintaining the dignity and trust of the families we serve is a top priority at RRLC. It is, therefore, important for all of us to keep and maintain professional confidentiality. To ensure your family's confidences are respected, we will:

- *Never* release your private addresses or phone numbers.
- *Never* release any student records without prior authorization.
- *Never* discuss a child or family with a non-employee of the program unless it is to report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.
- *Never* discuss a child or family with any other children or families.
- *Never* discuss protected information with colleagues and co-workers.
- *Never* discuss the personal details of, or sensitive information about, anyone served by, or employed by, RRLC.

### Parent Communication

RRLC understands that you are entrusting us with your most valuable asset: your child. That is why we do our utmost to be discreet and empathetic when dealing with sensitive issues. We are dedicated to treating *all* families with dignity and respect, and making sure that *all* of our communications are *constructive* and *beneficial* for everyone concerned. Whenever there is an issue or situation to address, we will be prompt and concise in our communications with you.

Timely communications are an important aspect of what we do. This is why RRLC utilizes the **Bright Wheel** platform. All of our classrooms are equipped with Bright Wheel-enabled iPads so that our teachers can communicate with you on a daily basis. Bright Wheel is accessible online or by downloading the Bright Wheel app onto your smart phone or other compatible mobile device. With the Bright Wheel app you can access messages from the teacher, pictures, and other updates about what's happening throughout your child's day. The Bright Wheel platform is specifically designed for educator-family communications, and it is safe and confidential.

While most of our communications are done via the Bright Wheel app, there will be times when other forms of communications are necessary. Please be sure to keep all of your contact information current with us in case we need to contact you via phone, email, or written correspondence.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are *required* by the State of Florida. They are held twice during the school year, initially in the spring and again in the fall. These conferences provide an excellent opportunity to discuss a child's screening and assessment results, as well as their developmental growth and goals. Parent conferences are an integral part of building open and trusting relationships with parents and guardians.

There are times when a conference may be necessary outside of these mandates. Some reasons may be discussing placement, collaborating on transitions, or disciplinary issues. If you would like to schedule a conference with your child's teacher, please call us at (904) 747-2240. If you prefer email, we may be reached at [hello@rainriverlearningcenter.com](mailto:hello@rainriverlearningcenter.com).

## **Parent Participation**

RRLC encourages *you* to take an active role in *your* child's care. We will do our best to make you feel welcome when visiting your child at our program facility. We welcome parents any time, with or without prior notice; however, we do encourage a courtesy call, so that we can minimize distractions for other students. Children always do better when they are prepared for a change in routine, and calling ahead gives your child's teacher time to plan a smooth transition from the usual day to a day with a visitor!

If your child, like many other children, is having difficulty with separation, please discuss it with his or her teacher. Working together, you may find a way that makes parting more sweet and less sorrow. Also, please take any separation issues into consideration if you plan on making a visit that will require you to leave again before the end of the day. You may decide that extra visits during the first few weeks could make your child's settling into the program more difficult. While it may seem counter-intuitive, it truly is a good thing to give your child time to develop a sense of security and safety in the program before you add day-time visits. This helps them develop trust that you will return for them at a set time each day, which will, in the long run, reduce their separation anxiety.

Mothers who are nursing and who wish to use work breaks to nurse infants are more than welcome to do so! We will do our best to provide you with a comfortable, private atmosphere.

Most of all, please feel free to reach out and discuss with your child's teacher any concerns you may have! We are here to help you in any way we can!

## **Transitions**

RRLC is organized and staffed to minimize the number of transitions children experience. We are mindful of the bonds children establish with teachers and peers, and we make every effort to maintain the continuity of relationships between the teaching staff and children. When planning transitions, we consider as many factors as possible, but the developmental needs of the child are

always a primary factor. Prior to planning your child's transition from one part of the program to another, clear communication must take place between parents, teachers, and administration. If you have any concerns regarding your child's transition within the program, please reach out to your child's teacher.

### **Newsletters**

RRLC is committed to clear communication. That's why each week we send you a newsletter to keep you up-to-date on center events and activities, and on what your child will be learning in the week to come. We know your life is busy, so we will also include key dates, reminders, and general announcements. Staying current on your child's care couldn't be more convenient!

### **Program Evaluations**

Rain River Learning Center conducts a semi-annual program survey in order to gather feedback from enrolled families. This survey is anonymous and is a way for families to provide the Center with any comments, compliments, ideas, or suggestions. We appreciate your feedback and look forward to hearing from you!

## Student Attendance & Drop off/Pick-Up

### Absence Policy

Daily attendance is necessary for optimal learning and proper adjustment to a daily schedule. RRLC allows up to three (3) non-consecutive, unexcused absences per month. If a child is out for two (2) or more consecutive days, you *must* provide a written note to document the child's absence. This note should specifically include one or more of the following:

- A statement regarding an illness or injury of the child.
- A statement regarding an illness or injury of one of the child's immediate family members.
- A statement regarding a medical or dental appointment for the child.
- A physician's note approving the child's return to school.
- Special education or related services for a child's disability. (If these services are needed, please let the office know, as we can make arrangements for services to be provided on-site.)

### Arrival Time

Rain River Learning Center opens at 7:00am each day, Monday through Friday. Upon arrival to the facility, it is your responsibility to sign your child in on Bright Wheel using the classroom or front desk iPad. We ask all parents to have their child in class by 9:00am so that they do not miss the start of their lessons.

If your child has an appointment, or if he or she will be arriving late, please let us know so we can ensure that their supplies are laid out for them. If your child will be absent for the day, please call the office at 904-747-2240 or send a message notifying us via Bright Wheel.

### Departure



You are *required* to sign your child out of school each day using their four-digit Bright Wheel code on the classroom or front desk iPad. You are free to pick up your child at any time throughout the day, but all children *must* be picked up from the facility no later than 6:30pm. If someone other than you is picking up your child in the afternoon, you are *required* to notify the front office or your child's teacher prior to pick-up. We *will* check ID for *all* new person's picking up a child from the facility.

### **Separation at Morning Drop-Off**

Sometimes younger children have difficulty separating from their parents when they begin attending our program. When you leave your child in our care, please reassure your child that you will return for them. Be specific, but not overly wordy or detailed. Let them know that their teacher and their peers are all looking forward to seeing them, and that you are looking forward to hearing about their exciting day. While it may be difficult, you should leave when *you* feel comfortable, even if your child is *not* quite ready to see you go. We promise to comfort and ease your child into having a wonderful day! If, however, you prefer to wait until you are sure your child will be okay, we will find you a comfortable spot, out of sight, where you can wait for the all clear from one of our "secret spy" staff members.

While it may seem counter intuitive, keeping morning drop off as brief as possible can help your child adapt to their environment and begin engaging in active play with their peers more quickly. Children generally become comfortable in classroom activities shortly after a parent leaves. If you're still apprehensive, however, it is our pleasure to reassure you with a phone call or text update and morning picture via Bright Wheel.

In order to keep mornings flowing smoothly and on schedule, it is important for parents to understand that transition times are *not* acceptable times for conferences. If you have concerns that you believe *must* be addressed one-on-one, please be courteous and make a conference appointment at the front desk, or via Bright Wheel.

### **Pick-Up Policy**

Keeping children safe is our business! That's why at RRLC we have specific procedures for student pick-ups.

- Children are *only* to be released to individuals on the child's "Authorized Pick-Up List".
- In order to release your child to someone other than you or another person on his or her Authorized Pick-Up List, *you must provide prior written authorization to the program director.*
- If there are multiple children involved, *each child's name must be included in this document.*
- Children will *not* be released to anyone without proper written authorization. Verbal authorization is *unacceptable.*
- Children are *never* released to anyone under the age of 18. Not even older siblings.
- It is RRLC's policy *never* to release a child to a person who is or who seems to be intoxicated.

### **Pick-Up Authorization**

Children are *only* permitted to be picked up by those authorized by the you. These people are listed on the Registration Form and in Bright Wheel under the student information tab. Please keep this list up to date, as we will *not* release children to anyone who is *not* on this list without prior *written* authorization from you.

We appreciate it when you provide photo identification with your authorized list, but please know that anyone unfamiliar to our staff will be *required* to provide a *valid* state ID before your child will be released to them, *even if they are on your child's authorized pick-up list.*

## **Late Pick-up**

RRLC closes *promptly* at 6:30pm. If you anticipate being late (past 6:30) picking up your child, please notify the center *immediately* so that we can notify staff. Continuous late pick-ups will result in additional charges.

## **VPK Policies**

**Absences of more than three (3) consecutive days without a note will be considered an *automatic, voluntary withdrawal* from the RRLC VPK program. Withdrawn students will lose their spot in the VPK class and their parents will be required to reapply with RRLC if they wish to continue care at the facility. Reapplications may be subject to waitlisting. Please note that parents of VPK students are required to sign the Parental Choice Certificate at the end of each month, verifying their child's attendance in the VPK program.**

## **Arrival**

Arrival for the VPK program is between 8:45am and 9:00am, and class instruction begins at 9:00am promptly. Upon arrival, the child's must be signed into the classroom, by you, via Bright Wheel. It is *imperative* that children arrive with enough time to become situated and ready for class to begin at 9:00am.

## **Tardiness**

Tardiness is serious. Students are marked tardy when they are late fifteen (15) minutes or more. If a student is tardy more than three (3) times in one month, they will accrue the equivalent of one (1) *unexcused* absence. These absences are treated exactly as a true absence, and they could result in your child being withdrawn from RRLC's VPK program.

## **Late Pick Up**

The VPK program ends at 12:00pm daily. Children who remain at the program for wrap around care will be finishing lunch and preparing for naptime. Please pick your child up no later than 12:15pm to ensure that there are no naptime disruptions. If you are going to be picking your child up later than 12:15pm, please notify the office. You will be charged \$25 for a single day of wrap around care.

## Infant Care

RRLC's Dew Drops classroom provides care for children six-weeks (6 weeks) to one-year (1 year) of age. For this classroom, each infant will have their own designated crib and supply storage area. Cribs are full-sized and will require clean fitted sheets which *you* must provide.

Please, pre-bottle your child's milk or formula in bottles labeled with your child's full name and birthdate. Any bottles you provide *must* be small, as once a bottle has been warmed for feeding, any unused milk or formula *must be discarded within one (1) hour*. Smaller bottles prevent waste and ensure that your baby is getting all the nutrition he or she needs throughout the day.

When you decide to begin supplementing your baby's milk with baby food (at 6 months or older), please discuss this with your baby's Dew Drop's teacher to ensure a smooth transition to the adjustment. Baby food jars can only be opened and used one (1) time, and any unused portions must be discarded. We *do not* accept partial, previously opened jars of baby food. Please plan accordingly when sending in baby food to ensure you provide enough. Also, please label your baby's food jars with what you want fed and when you want it fed.

## **Clothing & Possessions**

### **Clothing**

Children at Rain River Learning Center will be exploring and learning through play each and every day! Please send your child to the facility dressed in play-friendly clothing with appropriate shoes for the playground. We will be outside as often as weather permits, and while we will do our best to protect your child's clothing, we can never guarantee that it won't get soiled or stained. Keeping this in mind, each child will need to have two (2) extra changes of clothing (including underwear and socks) stored in their cubby at all times. These backups are assurance in case of the inevitable mess, or a possible bathroom mishap.

### **Possessions**

Throughout the year Fridays will be Show and Tell in age-appropriate classes. This is a chance for your little to bring a favorite toy or item from home to show to the class. Please refrain from bringing toys to class outside of Show and Tell items, as RRLC cannot be held responsible for lost or broken toys. To keep everyone's belongings safe and clean, we have plenty of toys and learning materials for all of the children in our classes. We promise, your child will need for nothing!

## Diapers and Potty Training

RRLC caregivers change all children's diapers at least once every two (2) hours. Of course, there may be occasions where more frequent changes are needed. Parents are required to provide a sufficient number of diapers to meet their child's needs on a daily basis. You may store diapers in your child's classroom if this is more convenient for you, and you will be notified when your diaper supply is running low.

If you prefer to use **cloth diapers**, you will need to provide enough cloth diapers for the day as well as leak-proof covers for each diaper you provide. You must also provide sealed wet-bags that staff may deposit dirty diapers into. Be advised that our facilities are *not* allowed to spray or otherwise rinse soiled diapers! We *will* manually remove as much debris as possible, but depending on the level of soilage, you may be dealing with some *serious* diaper duty at the end of the day.

### Consent to Apply

If your child requires **diaper cream or ointment**, we need your consent! Please ask for, and *completely* fill out, a Consent to Apply form specifying that which you wish applied (this form also is required for bug spray and sunscreen). When you turn in this form please make sure you have included *specific, detailed* instructions for your child's caregiver.

### Toilet Transitioning

When your child is ready to begin potty training, please let your child's teacher know so we can work together to make the transition as smooth as possible! Please provide *extra*, extra clothing during this time as we expect accidents to happen while children are learning.

**ATTENTION!** *All* pull-ups *must* have Velcro strip sides. Please do *not* bring pull-ups that only slide down! As you are surely aware, with pull-ups, things can get messy fast! Having to clean up a pull-up let down in a daycare setting adds additional strain on staff, and poses additional health hazards to children who may end up with you-know-what, who-knows-where!



## Naptime

Naptime is essential to your child's energy and attention for learning. We will have naptime in each class, but it will vary by age.

Our Dew Drops class (6-weeks to 1-year) will be free to nap on their own schedule, we will not force any infant to sleep or wake outside of their natural sleep rhythms, but we will work with parents to ensure that we align feeding and sleep schedules as closely as possible with those implemented at home.

RRLC provides full-sized cribs for infants under one (1) year of age. For babies and toddlers aged one (1) to two (2) years, pack n' plays are provided. Sleep cots are provided for all three (3) and four (4) year-olds.

While each child will have their own sleep space provided, you are *required* to provide *clean, safe* bedding for your child to use during naptime. If you wish to send in a blanket, a small pillow, and/or a naptime lovey you are welcome to do so unless your child is an infant. RRLC abides by Safe Sleep standards, so *nothing* is *ever* allowed in a crib with *any* infant. All naptime items will be stored in your child's personal cubby; therefore, it is important that you consider space constraints when choosing what to send along.

## Food & Drink

### Snacks

Students are offered a daily mid-morning and afternoon snack. Snacks provided by RRLC include but are not limited to:

- Saltines.
- Graham crackers.
- Goldfish.
- Fresh fruit.
- Fresh veggies, e.g. carrots.
- Cheese sticks.
- Yogurt.

You do have the option to send in daily snacks for your child. Anything that you send labeled as a snack will be provided to your child during snack times.

### Lunch

Students are *required* to bring lunch from home. Lunch is eaten either in their classroom, or outside on a playground picnic table when weather permits. During lunch time, children are directly supervised by a preschool teacher.

Lunches brought from home should be healthy. We ask that you to refrain from sending candy or soft drinks in a student's lunch. The children in our care have an active schedule, and good nutrition plays an important role in each child's ability to fully participate. Further, we strive to teach children how to make healthy choices so they can live a healthy life. Sending in healthy, nutritious foods will help us in doing this. Healthy food choices will also be modeled by RRLC

staff.

RRLC adheres to the Early Education and Care best practices. Staff will *neither* withhold, *nor* forbid children to eat one kind of food until that have eaten another kind of food. Keep this in mind when packing your child's lunches, and send foods that you wish your child to eat. Our staff will encourage the enjoyment of *all* foods you have provided for snacks and lunch.

Should your child's lunch include perishable foods, please make sure to include an ice pack. We do not want your child's lunch to become a hazard to him or her. In order to prevent waiting, please avoid regularly sending foods that need heating. We have only one (1) microwave for both student *and* staff use, and reheating food for everyone takes time away from your child's eating. Left-overs from your child's lunch will be packed up and returned to their lunchbox, so make sure to check it for anything needing to be discarded or cleaned at the end of each day.

## **Drinks**

Students are *required* to have milk, or a suitable milk substitute such as almond or rice milk, supplied by *you* in their lunch box. They will also need a *clean* "sippy cup" or a spill-proof cup with a lid *each day*, for water consumption. Cups must be labeled with your child's full name. We will refill the water cups throughout the day as needed to ensure your child stays hydrated and healthy!

## **Birthday & Class Celebrations**

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at the school, we would love to celebrate with you! *Advanced* noticed is *required* so that we may plan and prepare the days activities around your child's celebration. You're welcome to bring in cupcakes and *minimal* party decorations that *you* will set up *and* remove after the celebration. We wholeheartedly want to celebrate your little one and let them know they are loved and special! We do our best to do this each and every day, but especially on their birthday!