



# Our Family Handbook

## My Little Stars Family Day Care

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**Welcome:**

Hello and Welcome! The information in this handbook has been provided for you as a guide for your child's enrollment in our facility. Please take the time to read it and familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures. This is a living document and can be modified or changed as needed.

**About Our Facility:**

We are a NYS licensed group family daycare located in Youngsville, NY. My Little Stars was established in 1999 as a "family daycare". In 2006 we expanded to become a "group family daycare", doubling the number of children we could serve. As a "group family daycare", we are licensed to care for up to 16 children. Our daycare space includes a large family room, kitchen and beautiful fenced in backyard with a whimsical playground. We are located in the Sullivan West School District where our own children attend school and participate in extracurricular activities. We have over 25 years of experience and an excellent reputation in our community! We strive for a warm, loving, home like atmosphere for children to grow, learn, and play.

**About Our Family & Staff:**

Kat graduated from JYCS in 1993 and went to school to become an LPN. After receiving her certification, it wasn't long before she decided she wanted to work with children. She is also certified in Phlebotomy and Nutrition Education. She went back to college in 2009 and graduated with an Associate's of Arts in Elementary Education. Alan is a cleaner at the Sullivan West School. He has been there since October 2001. Prior to being promoted to a day shift position, he was my primary assistant. Nowadays, he only fills in if needed. We are a family owned and operated daycare and each of our grown children has had their turn working in the daycare. Our current assistant is our son, Michael. He is a 2019 graduate of SWCS. Our children have spent their entire lives living in the daycare and following NYS regs. This makes them the best candidates as staff, since they are already well trained. We do occasionally hire outside of our family when the need arises. All staff must be medically cleared, pass a federal background check, get fingerprinted and be CPR and First aid Certified. Additionally, all of our staff are trained as mandated reporters for child abuse and neglect and attend child care trainings yearly as required by NYS.

**Our Philosophy:**

We value and respect children as unique individuals. We see them as capable and full of potential. We recognize the diverse ways that they express what is meaningful to them. Every child comes in to our program with their own unique temperament, family structure, cultural heritage, and learning ability. We provide opportunities that will foster positive social, emotional, cognitive and physical development in a safe, healthy and loving environment. We believe that children benefit from play and discovery.

**Discipline:**

We believe that discipline should be used to teach a child. We achieve this through love, consistency, and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The following methods of discipline will be used: Encourage children to solve problems themselves - Intervention and discussion - Re-direction - Loss of privileges - Logical consequences.

**Communication:**

We believe that communication is the key to success! Our primary correspondence will be through Brightwheel. Our website, [www.mylittlestars.org](http://www.mylittlestars.org) has a ton of info available for you. If you are on Facebook, like our Facebook page and join our family group! Parents are responsible to use our resources to stay informed and up to date on what's happening in your child's daycare.

**Our Hours:**

Our regular business hours are MONDAY to FRIDAY from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Our hours of operation reflect the needs of our current clients. If you need an earlier drop off or a later pick up let us know, we might be able to accommodate you.

**Our Tuition Policy:****We have a strict No Pay, No Play Policy.**

If you fail to pay your tuition as described, your spot in our program will be terminated. We use the Brightwheel App for billing and tuition. You will receive your weekly tuition bill via Brightwheel and your bill is due on FRIDAYS for the upcoming week of care.

- ❖ We are enrollment based, your weekly tuition is due every week regardless of closings or absences.
- ❖ We offer multiple payment platforms: Cash, Check, PayPal (Friends & Family), Venmo, Cash App, Sezzle, and more. We can even take credit cards, but there is a credit card fee.
- ❖ We do accept the Child Care Assistance Program. Call 845-292-7166 for more info and to apply.
- ❖ You must follow your schedule of care.
- ❖ You can claim your daycare on your taxes each year.

**Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP):**

The Child Care Assistance Program is a great way to reduce your out-of-pocket child care costs. However, it will not cover ALL of your child care expenses and there are some restrictions. Please call the child care council at 845-292-7166 for more info and eligibility.

- ❖ You must know and comply with ALL CCAP rules & regulations.
- ❖ CCAP DOES NOT PAY if you are not at work or if we are closed.
- ❖ You are responsible for any portion of your child care tuition not covered by CCAP as well as all family shares determined by CCAP.
- ❖ Your tuition must be paid in accordance to our payment policy.
- ❖ If you apply for CCAP after you have enrolled in our program, you must notify us immediately and you must continue to pay your normal fees until a letter of approval is received.

**Holidays & Vacations:**

A yearly calendar is available on our website and includes all scheduled closings for the upcoming year. A monthly calendar posted each month on our Brightwheel App. It is your responsibility to utilize our resources to know when we are closed.

- ❖ We are closed for ALL FEDERAL HOLIDAYS
- ❖ We are closed for MOST Sullivan West School District closings. This includes SNOW DAYS & both WINTER & SPRING BREAKS.
- ❖ We may be closed for up to 5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT or WELLNESS DAYS.
- ❖ We may be closed for up to 15 days of VACATION time each year.
- ❖ Occasionally, we have days that we need to close for SICK or PERSONAL reasons. Just like everyone else we need the occasional day for doctor appointments or family events. We will give as much notice as possible in these situations.

**Drop Off/Pick Up Policy:**

Since COVID we have been greeting parents on the front porch for drop off and pick up. We will be continuing this policy for a number of reasons. Originally, it was to limit germ exposure. This works well and our cases of sick children is much, much less. However, it's also much easier for both parents and caregivers to do drop off and pick up this way. The transition is smooth, the kids know what to expect and there is less chaos and overstimulation using this method.

**Schedule of Care:**

Your schedule of care is the days and times you need childcare. Please complete it as accurately as possible. We use this schedule to ensure we have the correct staff: child ratio and that we are within our licensing numbers. It determines your child care tuition and it helps us plan for each day. We reserve the right to change your schedule of care to accurately reflect your child's schedule. Changes in your schedule of care are dependent on availability.

**Early/Late Fees:**

Early Drop Offs or Late Pick Ups (more than 5 minutes outside your schedule of care) will result in a \$25 fee per child. This fee will be charged for every hour that your child remains here past their scheduled pick-up time. You must let us know if you will be early or late. Failure to respect our hours of operation and/or continuously drop off or pick your child up outside of your schedule of care (more than 3 times per month) will result in termination of services.

**Absences:**

You are required to let us know if your child will be late or absent BEFORE their scheduled drop off time. If you are 15 minutes late without notification, we will attempt to contact you to ensure the safety of you and your child. In the event your child will not arrive in time for morning snack or lunch, you will need to provide that meal before dropping them off. We do not accept drop offs after 11am.

**Inclement Weather AKA Snow Days:**

If SWCS is closed or delayed due to weather conditions, we will be closed or delayed also. Our first priority in the event of inclement weather is the safety of the children, family and staff. There are many factors to consider before making the decision to delay or close. It is not an easy decision. It is better to be safe than sorry and so we will always err on the side of caution. In the event we are delayed or closed you will be notified via our Brightwheel App.

**Contract Terminations:**

We understand that circumstance and situations change every day. All we ask is for parents to be honest and upfront with us. Please be courteous, and let us know as soon as you know that you will be terminating services. We reserve the right to terminate any contract for any reason. Failure to comply with our policies will result in immediate termination of services.



### **Brightwheel App**

You will be required to download and use our Brightwheel App. There is no cost to our families. You will need to sign your child in and out each day using this app. We use Brightwheel for attendance records, health checks, billing, communication, and more. All our communication and notifications are done through Brightwheel. Be sure to turn on notifications and check it regularly.

### **Meals:**

Parents must provide healthy, ready to serve lunch for their child each day. If you want to send a hot lunch, a thermos works well. Please do not send any food your child has never had before. If your child has a special diet or food allergies than you must provide all foods and drinks for your child daily. Your child may not enter with any open food or drinks. This is a safety issue and will be strictly enforced! Children are not permitted to walk around our home with food and/or drink. Not only is this a choking hazard, but we must be mindful of food allergies and unsanitary food sharing.

- ❖ Lunches must be packed daily in a lunch box or bag with your child's first and last name on it.
- ❖ All non-disposable food containers must have your child's first and last name on it.
- ❖ All food sent must be ready to eat. We will not prepare, cook or reheat any food.
- ❖ There will be a \$10 charge per child per day if lunch needs to be supplied by us.

### **Supplies:**

We have almost everything we need to take care of your child. We will need you to supply a few personal items.

- ❖ You must supply a complete extra change of clothing for your child in a Ziploc bag with their first and last name to stay here.
- ❖ Diapers – We supply Parents Choice Unscented baby wipes.
- ❖ Formula/Breast Milk and Bottles/Pacifiers

### **Pets:**

Our pets are a large part of our family. We have a few dogs and cats. We also have a bearded dragon. Additionally, we have chickens, geese, and goats. They have been family raised, vaccinated and visit the vet regularly. We teach all children in our care how to respect and care for pets. Being around pets may help your child develop a sense of independence, responsibility, patience, kindness, and discipline. Pets often make transitions easier on the child. Should your child be allergic to animals or develop allergies to our animals then you will need to find alternate child care.

### **Toys:**

We prefer you don't bring toys to daycare. If you do, the toys will be confiscated and put away until dismissal time. Children at this age find it difficult to share their toys and it only causes tears and heartache. We will not be held responsible for lost or damaged toys. **Absolutely no cell phones or other electronics are permitted to be brought in from home.**

**Sick Policy:**

To preserve the health and well-being of each child in care we must insist on a strict adherence to our Sick Policy. We do not provide care for children who are ill. We are not authorized by NYS to administer medication.

**Siblings:** If one sibling is sick with a highly contagious illness, the other sibling(s) must stay home until everyone is better or they are cleared to attend by a doctor. Germs spread easily amongst children. They can be carriers and not have symptoms.

**Dope & Drop** (The practice of medicating your child before drop off to hide symptoms and not letting us know) is grounds for immediate termination. You must inform us daily if your child was given any medication for any reason.

**Symptoms Requiring Exclusion from Daycare (No Exceptions):**

If your child develops an illness or any of the following symptoms while in our care you will be called to come get them within 30 minutes. Your child may not return to care for 72 hours (3 DAYS) and must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours.

- **Fever:** A fever is considered to be any temperature of 100.4 or higher. A child needs to be fever free, without the aid of any fever reducing substance for a minimum of 24 HOURS.
- **Cough:** Your child may not attend daycare if they have any type of cough.
- **Vomiting & Diarrhea:** Doesn't matter what the reason is, must be symptom free for 24 hours.
- **Any Highly Communicable Disease:** Including but not limited to the following illnesses: COVID19, Influenza, Pink Eye, Strep Throat, Gastroenteritis, and 5ths Disease. Your child will be accepted back into care when they are no longer contagious and must have a doctor's note stating they are able to return. All other parents will be notified of the communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for.
- **Runny Noses:** Any type of discharge from the nose is considered a runny nose and is no longer acceptable in daycare. If your child has allergies see a doctor for help.
- **Rashes:** Any unexplained rash requires a doctor's note stating it is not contagious.
- **Runny and/or Crusty Eyes:** Watery, gunky, matted, and/or red/pink eyes are not acceptable in child care under any circumstances.
- **Excessive Crankiness:** If your child is irritable, excessively whiny, cranky, or wants to be constantly held, or requires more attention than I can provide without disrupting our daily routine, then you must keep your child home regardless of the presence of other symptoms.
- **Inability to Participate:** If your child is too tired, ill or irritable to participate in our daily activities, they may need to be sent home.
- **COVID:** Your child may not attend daycare if they test positive for COVID or have any signs/symptoms. If anyone in your household tests positive for covid, your child may not attend for 10 days and must have a doctor's note clearing them to return. We must follow all regulations put in place regarding COVID. Due to the ever-changing policies, we will update you as we are updated.



**Staff Personal Days and Emergencies:**

We do our best to schedule staff effectively to avoid the need to close the daycare for sick or personal days. However, emergencies can happen. Parents may or may not be informed of a change in staff for any given day. If we have to close, we will notify you as soon as possible.

**Medical Emergencies:**

Unfortunately, emergencies do happen. Your child's health and safety come first and we strive to prevent accidents or injuries from happening. In the event of an injury, we will administer basic First Aid and/or CPR as needed. Parents will be called and the injury and actions taken will be described. In the event that a child needs to go to the hospital, the ambulance will be called first, then the parent. If the parent has not yet arrived and a substitute is available, I will accompany the child to the hospital.

**Evacuation Plan:**

In the event of an evacuation, provider and children will go directly across the road to the Ridley's house. If we need to evacuate the immediate area, we will go to The Cacklin' Hen. If we must evacuate from the town, we will go to the SWCS Elementary Campus. The Cacklin' Hen is the official evacuation point for the village of Youngsville. The SWCS Elementary Campus is an official shelter for the town of Callicoon. Before the provider leaves any building or evacuation site attendance will be taken and documented. Parents will be contacted via text and/or phone to pick up their children. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, we will keep that child in our care. A message will be left at parent's home, cell, and/or place of work where provider and child can be reached.

**Shelter-In-Place:**

In the event that we need to "shelter-in-place" we will take shelter in the Playroom. We will close and lock all doors and windows. Parents will be notified via text/phone. Children will be kept as comfortable and secure as possible. We will stock sufficient water and food for all children in care for up to 3 days. Everyone will remain sheltered until public officials broadcast that it is safe to evacuate the building. We will hold 2 drills per year.

**Other Emergencies:**

Some emergency situations do not call for a trip to the hospital or an immediate evacuation of the premises. Things like loss of utilities, dangerous weather or personal emergencies. In this type of situation parents will be called to pick up their children and the day care will be closed. No one expects an emergency to occur, but we have no control over certain things and sometimes accidents happen. Safety for the children in my care will be the primary concern in any emergency situation. It is imperative that the provider know where a contact person will be every day, just in case an emergency does occur. It is also important for parents to be cooperative and understanding in such situations.