



Our Family Handbook

My Little Stars Family Day Care

Katrina Wingert
Youngsville, NY
845.594.4282
www.mylittlestars.org



Welcome:

Hello and Welcome! We have created this handbook to serve as a guide for enrolling your child in our facility. We kindly request you take the time to read it thoroughly and familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures. Please note that this is a living document and can be modified or changed as needed.

About Our Facility:

My Little Stars is a state-licensed group family daycare located in Youngsville, NY. We have been providing top-notch childcare services since 1999. In 2006, we expanded from a "single family daycare" to a "group family daycare", enabling us to serve more families. Today, we are licensed to care for up to 16 children. Our daycare is comprised of a large family room, kitchen, and a beautiful fenced-in backyard with a whimsical playground, providing the perfect environment for your child's growth and development. We are in the Sullivan West School District, where our children attend school and participate in extracurricular activities. With over 25 years of experience, we have gained an excellent reputation in our community, and our daycare has been a trusted choice for many families over the years. We are committed to creating a warm, loving, home-like atmosphere for children to learn, grow, and play.

About Our Family & Staff:

Kat is an alumna of JYCS, having graduated in 1993. She has received several certifications such as CNA, LPN, Phlebotomy, and Nutrition Education, as well as an Associate of Arts degree in Elementary Education. She is also certified in CPR and First Aid. Alan is an alumna of MCS, having graduated in 1994. He has been employed by SWCS since October of 2001. Before switching to the day shift at SWCS, Alan spent many years working with Kat as her assistant. Our eight children have been raised in our family-owned and operated daycare and are well-versed in the daycare regulations. It is natural for our children's first job experience to be working in the family business. Upon turning 18, each child is certified as a daycare assistant after completing the required training, fingerprinting, and background checks. We do hire staff 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 our staff are trained as mandated reporters for child abuse and neglect and attend childcare training yearly as required by NYS.

Our Philosophy:

We value and respect children as unique individuals, recognizing them as capable and full of potential. We understand that every child who enters our program has their own distinct temperament, family structure, cultural heritage, and learning ability. We provide opportunities that encourage positive social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development, all of which are fostered in a safe, healthy, and loving environment. We firmly believe that children benefit greatly from play and discovery.

Discipline:

We believe that discipline should be a means of teaching children. We aim to achieve this through a combination of love, consistency, and firmness. Our focus is to foster two main patterns of behavior - respect for people and respect for property. The following methods will be used for discipline: encouraging children to solve problems themselves, intervention and discussion, re-direction, loss of privileges, and natural and logical consequences.

Communication:

We strongly believe that communication is the key to success! We will primarily communicate with you through Brightwheel. You can also visit our website www.mylittlestars.org to get access to a ton of information. If you are on Facebook, please like our page and join our family group! As a parent, it is important that you use all our resources to stay informed and up to date about what's happening in your child's daycare.



Our Hours:

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

If you are looking for different hours, let's have a discussion about it, we may be able to accommodate your needs or offer you alternative resources. Anything is possible!

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, Zelle, 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 complete and follow the schedule-of-care in your enrollment packet.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP):

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

- ❖ You must know and comply with ALL CCAP rules & regulations.
- ❖ CCAP DOES NOT PAY for the day if you are not at work or if we are closed.
- ❖ You are responsible for any portion of your childcare tuition not covered by CCAP as well as all family shares determined by CCAP. CCAP payments arrive 4-6 weeks after the dates of service, so once we receive the payment your bill will be adjusted accordingly.
- ❖ Your tuition must be paid in accordance with 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 is 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 may 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:

We kindly request parents to drop off and pick up their children from the front porch. We have implemented this policy for several reasons. Firstly, it helps minimize germ exposure and has been successful in reducing illness in daycare. Additionally, it makes it easier for both parents and caregivers to handle drop-off and pick-up routines, resulting in a seamless process. Moreover, children feel more comfortable with the consistency of the routine, which leads to less chaos and overstimulation.

Schedule of Care:

Your schedule of care refers to the specific days and times that you require childcare services. It is essential that you provide us with accurate information regarding your schedule to ensure that we have the correct staff-to-child ratio and that we are compliant with our licensing requirements. Your childcare tuition fee will be determined based on your schedule of care, and it will also help us plan each day effectively. Please note that we reserve the right to modify your schedule of care to accurately reflect your child's needs, and any changes will be subject to availability.

Early/Late Fees:

Please note that there will be a fee of \$25 per child for any early drop-offs or late pick-ups that exceed 5 minutes outside of your schedule of care. This fee will be charged for every hour that your child remains on our premises past their scheduled pick-up time. You must notify us if you will be early or late. Continuous disregard for our hours of operation and/or regularly dropping off or picking up your child outside of your schedule of care (more than 3 times per month) will result in the termination of our services.

Absences:

It is important that you inform us in advance if your child will be late or absent before their scheduled drop-off time. If you are more than 15 minutes late without notification, we will try to contact you to ensure the safety of you and your child. If your child is not able to arrive in time for our scheduled meals, you will need to provide that meal before dropping them off. **Please note: We do not accept drop-offs after 10 am.**

Inclement Weather AKA Snow Days:

If SWCS is closed or delayed due to weather conditions, we will also be closed or delayed. Our top priority during bad weather is the safety of the children, families, and staff. We consider various factors before deciding whether to close or delay, as it is not an easy decision. However, we always prioritize safety and will err on the side of caution. Should we have to close or delay, we will notify you through our Brightwheel App.

Contract Terminations:

We understand that circumstances and situations can change unexpectedly. We kindly ask parents to be honest and upfront with us regarding any changes in their plans or needs. Please be courteous and inform us as soon as possible if you plan to terminate our services. We reserve the right to terminate any contract for any reason. Please note that failure to comply with our policies will result in an immediate termination of our services.



Brightwheel App

To ensure smooth communication and record-keeping, we require you to download and use our Brightwheel App. The app comes inclusive of your tuition fees and is an essential tool for signing your child in and out each day. We use this app to maintain attendance records, conduct health checks, manage billing, and communicate with you. All our communication and notifications are delivered through Brightwheel. Please remember to turn on notifications and check the app regularly to stay informed.

Meals:

Parents are required to provide a healthy and ready-to-serve lunch for their children every day. If you want to send a hot lunch, a thermos is a good option. Please do not send any food that your child has never had before. Your child may not enter with any open food or drinks. This is a safety issue and will be strictly enforced! Children are not allowed to walk around our home with food 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 them.
- All food sent must be ready to eat. We will not prepare, cook, or reheat any food.
- There will be a \$12 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. However, we will need you to supply the following items:

- ❖ A complete extra change of clothing in a Ziploc bag labeled with their name.
- ❖ Diapers. We supply Parents Choice Unscented baby wipes.
- ❖ Formula/Breast Milk and Bottles/Pacifiers. We have sippy cups.

Pets:

Our pets are a vital part of our family, and we take their safety and well-being seriously. We have several dogs and cats, and a bearded dragon, all of whom are family-raised, regularly vaccinated, and receive routine check-ups from a qualified veterinarian. Additionally, we raise poultry for both eggs and meat. Despite our best efforts to keep them within their designated areas, they tend to roam around. Therefore, we kindly request drivers to be cautious and drive slowly so they can get to safety. We take pet care and child safety very seriously. We teach all children under our care the importance of respecting and caring for pets. We believe that pets can play a crucial role in your child's personal growth and development by fostering independence, responsibility, patience, kindness, and discipline. Moreover, pets can help ease transitions for your child. However, if your child has allergies or develops allergies to our animals, we require that you make alternate childcare arrangements.

Toys:

We prefer you do not bring toys to daycare. Any toys brought from home 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 tablets, 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 our care, especially our infants, we must insist on 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, all siblings must stay home until everyone is better or cleared by a doctor. Children can be carriers without symptoms, making it easy for germs to spread.

Dope & Drop: The practice of medicating your child before dropping 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.

Cold or Allergy? Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference. Allergy medication should relieve allergy symptoms. When in doubt, seek the advice of a doctor or keep your child home for a day or two. Viral infections are the most contagious in the first 2-3 days.

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 48 hours from pick up and must be symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours.

- **Fever:** A fever is 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 a cough that prevents them from participating in our daily activities or a cough that causes vomiting.
- **Vomiting & Diarrhea:** Does not matter what the reason is, must be symptom-free for 24 hours. 2 diapers with loose or liquid stool will be considered diarrhea.
- **Runny Noses:** Any color discharge other than clear is not accepted. Clear or colored runny noses that need to be continuously wiped are not accepted. Use allergy medicine if needed.
- **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 childcare 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.
- **Any Highly Communicable Disease:** Including but not limited to the following illnesses: COVID-19, 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 can return. All other parents will be notified of the communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for.



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, unforeseen circumstances can arise. We may or may not inform parents of any changes in staff for a particular day. If we must close, we will notify you as soon as possible.

Medical Emergencies:

Emergencies can happen at any time, and the health and safety of your child are our top priorities. We take all necessary measures to prevent accidents and injuries from occurring. However, if an injury does occur, we will promptly administer basic First Aid and/or CPR as needed. In such a situation, we will notify parents and inform them about the injury and the steps taken to address it. If the injury requires transport to a hospital, we will call an ambulance first and then notify the parents. If the parents have not arrived yet, and a substitute is available, we will accompany the child to the hospital.

Evacuation Plan:

In the event of an evacuation, the provider and children will go across the street to 19 Pammer Road. If we need to evacuate the immediate area, we will go to the SWCS Elementary Campus. 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. If a parent cannot be reached, we will keep that child in our care. A message will be left at the parent's home, cell, and/or place of work where the provider and child can be reached.

Shelter-In-Place:

If we need to "shelter-in-place," we will take shelter in the Playroom. We will close and lock all doors and windows. Shades will be drawn. 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 emergencies 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 daycare will be closed. No one expects an emergency to occur, but we have no control over certain things, and sometimes things happen. Safety for the children in my care will be the primary concern in any emergency. It is imperative that the provider can contact you in case an emergency does occur. If you will be unreachable for any reason, please notify us so we are aware. It is also important for parents to be cooperative and understanding in such situations.