



Child Care Center

**FAMILY
HANDBOOK**

1036 Brookline Blvd | Pittsburgh, PA 15226
BrooklineSprouts.com
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Pick Up and Drop Off Procedures

Brookline Sprouts is located on the Brookline Boulevard side of Tree of Life Open Bible Church.

Please do not try to enter the building through the playground or any other door—those doors stay locked for safety.

When you arrive, go to your assigned entrance, which will be given to you when your child is enrolled. Ring the doorbell, and a staff member will let you in using the buzzer or in person.

Once inside, please use the check-in tablet to sign your child in using Brightwheel.

Important: Each adult should have their own PIN. Do not share your PIN. If you need help getting another PIN for someone else who will drop off or pick up, contact Administration.

After signing in, help your child with their coat and belongings. Then walk them all the way to their classroom area. **You must ensure that your child's presence is recognized by a staff member before leaving.** Never send your child unattended up the steps, down a hallway, etc.

Parking options:

- In front of the building on Brookline Boulevard
- Behind the building on Chelton Avenue
- Across the street near the cannon memorial (*this area may require paid parking*)

Please give yourself enough time to find safe and legal parking.

Safety reminders:

- Do not leave your car running
- Do not leave other children alone in the vehicle
- Do not double-park or block driveways (*Violating parking rules may result in a police-issued ticket.*)

Pickup works the same way:

1. Ring the doorbell
2. Sign your child out using the tablet
3. Help your child get their belongings and coat





4. Leave safely, not letting anyone else in

Staff may ask to see a photo ID at any time. Pickup individuals should bring ID with them every time they are picking up a child.

Early Drop Off and Late Pick Up

If a child is dropped off before their scheduled time or picked up after their scheduled time, a fee will be automatically charged. These times may or may not be the same as the center's hours.

- These times are tracked by the doorbell timestamp and the Brightwheel check-in/check-out system.
- Ringing the bell early and being let in early will still count as early drop-off.
- Please note, early drop and late pickup fees are not covered by ELRC copays.
- If you have any questions about your contracted times, contact Administration.

Adding or Removing Pick Up People

Adding a Pickup Person:

- Please call or send us a Brightwheel message with the person's full name.
- If possible, let us know before the day of pickup so we can update our records easily.
- If you add someone on the same day, we will also ask for the code word from your enrollment paperwork.
- All pickup people must bring a photo ID so we can make sure it matches the name you gave us.

Removing a Pickup Person:

- We cannot remove biological parents from the pickup list without a court or custody order.
- For anyone else, please let us know right away in writing (Brightwheel message, email, or a paper note) and we can remove them from their authorized pickup list.

If your child is included on any custody agreements, PFAs, or other legal documentation regarding caregivers, it is your responsibility to provide us with documentation. We are only able to follow the most recent documentation

provided to us, so please make sure we receive updated paperwork right away. Keeping this information current helps us ensure your child's safety at all times. If





custody disputes or related conflicts create ongoing disruptions to the program or the classroom environment, we may need to suspend or terminate care.

Late Drop-Offs

We appreciate families being mindful of our daily schedule when dropping off their children. If your child will be **late or absent**, please send a **Brightwheel message as soon as you are aware your child will be late or absent**. This helps with:

- Staffing
- Meal planning
- Illness tracking
- Most importantly, your child's safety

If we don't receive this important information in time, we may not have lunch available, or we may not be able to staff properly to add another child to the classroom that day.

To ensure smooth operations, **children must arrive by 10:00 AM** to attend that day. Exceptions can be made for scheduled appointments, but only with advance notice. Please send a message in Brightwheel. This alerts both the Classroom Staff and the Administration, and teachers can view it when they are available. There are times in the day when interruptions, like escorting a child to class, make it hard for teachers and children to stay focused. For example, Circle Time/Morning Meeting is an important part of the day. It helps children build social skills and strong relationships through fun, group activities.

School Age Children and Transfer of Care

Brookline Sprouts Child Care Center provides before and after school care for school age children. Transfer of care between Brookline Sprouts and their school is managed carefully to ensure the safety and accountability of each child.

In the morning, children are escorted by Brookline Sprouts staff to their school as outlined in their Agreement. Transfer of care from Brookline Sprouts to the school is considered complete when the child has been released to school grounds with school personnel present, or when the child has entered the school doors if no school staff are visible outside. At that point, Brookline Sprouts considers the

child under the supervision of school personnel and they will be checked out of Brightwheel.





In the afternoon, care is transferred from the school to Brookline Sprouts when the child is presented directly to our staff by school personnel, typically the Transportation Supervisor. Transfer of care is not complete until the child is physically received and checked into Brightwheel by a Brookline Sprouts staff member.

Children may be picked up by an approved individual from Brookline Sprouts at any point between the school and the center while the group is walking, provided it is safe to do so and staff are notified. Staff will not remain at the school with a child if the rest of the group is ready to leave. If a child cannot be released to our staff due to illness, behavioral concerns, or other circumstances, Brookline Sprouts staff will not stay behind. In such cases, school personnel will be instructed to contact the child's parent or guardian directly to arrange pickup from the school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify Sprouts if their child is absent from school or will not need to be picked up after school. If school personnel erroneously inform Sprouts that the child is not available for pickup due to absence, early dismissal, etc. and later determine that they should have had care transferred to Sprouts staff, and Sprouts has already left the school, Sprouts cannot return to the facility to pick them up. School personnel may be instructed to contact the child's parent or guardian directly to arrange pickup from the school. Sprouts will accept a child if school personnel transport the child to the group while walking or to the center.

Sibling and Minor Authorization Policy

For the safety and accountability of all children enrolled at Brookline Sprouts, specific procedures are in place regarding pick up authorization by a sibling or other individual under the age of 18 years old. Individuals of any age must be listed as approved pick-up individuals on a child's Emergency Contact and Authorized Pick-Up form. **For minors, an additional written note from the parent or guardian must be kept in the child's file detailing this permission.** This note should include any special considerations, such as a required phone call from the parent or guardian prior to dismissal or specific times when pick up is permitted.





Self Pick-Up and Drop-Off

Children in second grade or older may be permitted to self-present at the center in the morning or self-dismiss in the afternoon only when a signed note from the parent or guardian is on file. This note must outline the parent or guardian's consent and include any special conditions, such as a specific time window or the requirement for a confirmation call before dismissal.

Brookline Sprouts reserves the right to deny or revoke permission for self-dismissal or dismissal to a minor at any time if there is a concern for the child's safety or welfare. The center will always err on the side of caution when determining whether self, sibling, or minor pick up arrangements are appropriate.

Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency that requires us to exit the building and evacuate, staff follow the below procedure:

1. In a calm manner, staff will gather the children and follow the posted evacuation route to the designated emergency location. This is: Cannon Memorial at Brookline Veteran's Memorial Park, Corner of Brookline Blvd and Queensboro Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15226.
2. The person in charge must carry the following items:
 - a. Emergency Contact Book
 - b. Portable Phone
 - c. Complete First Aid Kit
 - d. Child Medications
3. The person in charge must contact Pastor Lance Rhoades and proceed to the emergency evacuation location to be with the group.
4. Once arriving at the designated emergency location, staff will call the children's families to inform them of the emergency and allow them to come pick up their child(ren) as soon as it is safe.
5. Staff will NOT release a child to anyone who does not show proper identification.
6. The person in charge will stay with the children until the last child is picked up from the emergency location.





EMERGENCY



LOCATION





In the event that we would need to **shelter in place** or have a lockdown at the center, staff follow the below procedure:

1. Staff will first assess if the safest area is to lock themselves in the classrooms with the children. Only the designated person in charge will answer the door or approach windows.
2. If the person in charge determines that the children should be moved, staff will:
 - a. In a calm manner, gather the children and take them downstairs to the Social Hall.
 - b. The person in charge must carry the following items:
 - i. Emergency Contact Book
 - ii. Portable Phone
 - iii. Complete First Aid Kit
 - iv. Child Medications
 - c. All will shelter against the interior wall of the Social Hall (by the Food Pantry storage).
3. Staff will contact each child's parent/guardian to inform them that the center is sheltering in place, and when it has ended.

In a **medical emergency**, staff will complete the following procedures:

1. Call 911.
2. Give the child(ren) first aid/CPR if needed.
3. Staff will contact the child(ren)'s parent/guardian.
4. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and stay with the child until a designated guardian arrives.

The center will also notify parents immediately if their child:

1. Is injured, and the injury requires medical attention by a healthcare professional.
2. Has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the program.





Other Considerations:

1. The center does not currently enroll children under 3 years old. If they are enrolled, this plan will be amended to include special accommodations.
2. If parents or staff feel that a child will not be able to participate in an evacuation, lockdown, or shelter in place due to a disability or chronic medical condition, a plan for special accommodations will be made in partnership between the family and center upon enrollment (and the child's doctor, if necessary). This will be included in their file and with posted Emergency Plan instructions as long as the child is enrolled, and staff will be trained.
3. If there is catastrophic damage to the facility, the center would cease operations until the facility has had adequate repairs before resuming care. If financial circumstances are too great, the center would close permanently.

Weather and Utility Related Closures, and Additional School Age Hours

Weather Related Closures

If it is snowing or extremely cold, please check for delays or closures before coming to the center. **On 2-hour delay days, breakfast will not be served.** You can check for closings here: [🔗 https://www.wtae.com/weather/closings](https://www.wtae.com/weather/closings)
Or tune in to your local **Channel 4 News (WTAE)**.

Please note: **While we often follow Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) for weather-related closures, we are an independent program.** This means we may choose to remain open or closed based on our own needs, staffing, and safety conditions. Always check Brightwheel and WTAE for final decisions.

For planned holiday closures, please refer to the calendar on our Resource Page. Printed copies are available upon request.





Utility Related Closures

If there is a **utility outage**—such as **no water or no power**—that makes it unsanitary or unsafe to care for the children, the center will close after a set waiting period. (Generally, when we have had a loss of utility for an hour.)

When this happens:

- All children must be picked up as soon as possible.
- Parents will be notified through:
 - A Brightwheel message (with text alert) of the utility outage, and
 - A phone call if there is no response on Brightwheel in a timely fashion.
- We may also post the closure on WTAE, just like we do for weather-related closures.

School Age Unexpected Drop-In Days

We have some planned drop-in days and half days for school age children during the school year. These planned days are shown on our calendar on the Resource Page. Printed copies are available upon request.

Sometimes Pittsburgh Public Schools will close, delay, or close early without much notice. Because our center is independent, we get this news at the same time as the public. It takes us a little time to decide if we can open for extra hours. **We will try our best to offer emergency care, but we cannot promise it every time.**

When this happens, we will send families a message through **Brightwheel** as soon as possible. If your family needs emergency care, please also send us a message in Brightwheel. This helps us know how many children to expect and how many staff members we will need.

Parent-Teacher Communication

At Brookline Sprouts, we believe your child's enrollment begins a partnership between your family and our staff. We want to work together to support your child's growth and development.

We schedule two or more parent-teacher conferences each year for preschool children. These usually happen:

- In the fall, at the start of the school year





- In the spring, at the end of the school year
- And possibly at the end of the summer session, if your child attends

In addition to these conferences, we value open day-to-day communication between families and Sprouts staff. If needed, more conferences can be requested via Brightwheel or the meeting link on the Resource Page. Caregivers for school age children are welcome to schedule parent teachers conferences at any time if there are concerns via the meeting link as well. As an OST (Out-of-School Time Provider) with Pittsburgh Public Schools, staff may seek information directly from teachers at their school, including requesting report cards, to track their progress and best provide support with their learning and

development. For other districts, we may request report cards or other progress reports from their parent or guardian.

Administration may also request a conference if there are concerns with a child in any age group. **When this happens, we ask parents to attend in person or virtually within 10 days of the request.** We may also request additional check-in meetings for children who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). These help us stay on track with your child's goals and ensure we are working together with your support team.

Please check your child's cubby and mailbox every day. We send home:

- Artwork and other learning materials
- Newsletters
- Flyers about upcoming events

We also use Brightwheel, our classroom communication app. You will receive an invitation by email when your child is enrolled. Brightwheel is used year-round and helps us share:

- Notes about your child's day
- Pictures
- Reminders and updates

We post photos and events on our Instagram and Facebook pages, such as our Fire Truck Visit, Winter Concert, and Graduation in addition to other daily classroom activities.

Incident Reports and Notes

We send a lot of reports and notes at Brookline Sprouts. These do not mean that





your child is “bad” or “in trouble.” Reports and notes are simply our way of keeping families informed when something happens. This could be anything from:

- A bump or fall
- A disagreement with another child
- An instance where they needed one-on-one redirection or support

Sometimes teachers may send several reports in a short time. This is normal. Teachers at Brookline Sprouts are always encouraged to tell parents about their children’s days through reports, as well as talking to parents face-to-face at pickups and drop-offs.

If you ever have a question about a report, it is more than okay to ask. You can always:

- Message us
- Talk to your child's teacher
- Call or Schedule a meeting to discuss any concerns with Administration

We want to make sure families feel informed, comfortable, and supported. Please do not feel intimidated by incident reports and notes. They are meant to open up conversation, not end it.

Caregiver and Visitor Conduct

We encourage strong connections between families, staff, and the community. When home and school work together, children benefit. We encourage families to be involved in their child’s day-to-day learning, as well as visiting for special events such as Winter Concert and Graduation.

Respectful interaction and support among other trusted adults in a child’s life is important for not only providing the best care, but for their own social-emotional health. The way we act as adults helps teach children how to behave.

Unacceptable Conduct

As we expect respectful behavior from children, we expect the same from adults. The following behaviors are serious and will not be tolerated when interacting with our staff or volunteers:

- Shouting or using foul language, in person or over the phone
- Emails that are openly sarcastic, combative, or aggressive in tone or wording
- Repeated emails or phone calls that amount to harassment or intimidation, even after the center has responded





- Sharing personal communication (verbal or written) from staff without permission
- Posting abusive or hurtful content about the school, staff, or students on social media or by email
- Cyberbullying, including, threats, harassment, embarrassment, defamation, and impersonation

- Physical violence, such as pushing or hitting
- Physical intimidation, such as:
 - Standing excessively close to someone threateningly
 - Using rude or aggressive hand gestures
 - Shaking or holding a fist at someone

What Happens If This Policy Is Violated

If a caregiver or visitor acts inappropriately:

- A senior staff member will try to resolve the issue through a conversation or mediation
- Visitors may be asked to leave immediately

- For parents or guardians, continued violations may result in the termination of services for their child
- In extreme circumstances, staff will call 911, law enforcement, or other outside agencies (such as Resolve) for safety.

Continuity of Care

Brookline Sprouts understands the importance of consistency in a child's life, and therefore strives to maintain continuity of care in our programming. This is done by:

- Assigning a teaching lead in each classroom, which will allow the children to see a familiar face each day and allow for strong, positive, long term relationships between the child and teacher, as well as the teacher and the child's family
- Keep children in the same classrooms as much as possible to foster long-term relationships with classmates and staff
- Assigning children of similar age groups to each group, which allows for easier transitions to a new classroom when familiar faces are transitioning together





- Allowing for the school age and preschool classrooms to be blended on occasion, thus introducing children to each other, and getting them comfortable with all of the teachers on staff
- Increasing Staff Retention by offering flexible schedules, pay increases, continuing education opportunities, child care discounts, etc.

Transition Support

We want every child to feel welcomed in their classroom. Each child is unique and will respond to change and new experiences in his/her own way. Some children are more resilient and open to change. Some children feel comfortable in a new setting right away and others may take significant time to adjust to a new classroom, teachers, routines, etc.

Starting at Sprouts

We encourage families to assist their child in their transition to care at Brookline Sprouts. Nurturing adults and predictable routines both at home and the center can help children through transition. Before a child starts, we encourage them to visit the center at least once so that they can see the space, as well as meet some staff and future classmates. For school age children, we encourage this visit to be in the afternoon so that your child can meet as many other children as possible. We welcome additional visits as the family feels necessary. Those visits can be easily scheduled via the link on our Resource Page.

There is an Orientation Night each August for preschool with informational support for caregivers, as well as time for the children to interact with each other and teachers. First Day checklists are available on our Resource Page to help caregivers feel more prepared for their child's first day. There is also a Getting to Know You form that we ask all families to fill out and return upon enrollment for staff to review.

Sometimes children benefit from physical objects to bridge the gap between school and home. Staff can make a wristlet with a laminated family photo at any time for a child. Sprouts makes accommodations for comfort objects from home whenever possible as well.

Changes at Home

We recognize that families may have other changes that have precipitated the placement of the child into our program such as relocation, new job, medical issues, new baby, etc. Sprouts would like to know about these recent changes





upon enrollment so that they can best support the children during these times. This is done with things such as books read aloud by teachers about relevant topics, introducing them to children in similar circumstances, or even teachers talking about their own experiences, when applicable.

We encourage families to share with teachers about these changes as they occur, even long after they have started with us, too. It helps us to best support the child and family in and out of school. Teachers can also be observant concerning behaviors related to a child who is trying to cope with change. We understand that sometimes this information is sensitive in nature, and families can call Administration or request a private meeting via the link on the Resource Page to ensure privacy is maintained at whatever level the family desires.

Transitions throughout the Day

To help children move smoothly between activities, Brookline Sprouts uses consistent, developmentally appropriate transition supports throughout the day. Teachers provide advance notice (such as 5 minute warnings) before shifting to a new activity. Staff also use songs, visual cues, simple routines, and positive guidance to help children prepare their bodies and minds for what comes next. These strategies reduce stress, promote independence, and create a predictable environment where children feel safe, supported, and ready for each part of the day.

Transitions to New Classrooms

When children are moving from one classroom to another, they are leaving the comfort of familiarity and secure attachments in their current room. Staff welcome the children to tour the new space at least a few times before their transition. Additionally, children are reminded of common areas and overlapping staff. While each classroom has a dedicated Teaching Lead, support staff are frequently scheduled in both rooms to ease transitions. Spaces such as the cafeteria and playground are used by all age groups. During the first few weeks, children can go back to “visit” in their old room upon request whenever Administration is available to escort them.

Kindergarten and Other Big Transitions

With regard to children leaving preschool for kindergarten, we have a challenging time connecting children directly with most “receiving schools.” Our preschool





program serves families from a large variety of neighborhoods and areas, leading to Sprouts preschoolers moving on to many different kindergartens. Parents who bring their children to Sprouts come from many surrounding communities. Administrators can, however, help families determine their school district and find contact information to enroll their child in kindergarten upon request. When provided to Sprouts by nearby schools, flyers for kindergarten orientation, back to school nights, and other events are shared with all families. We provide all families with resources such as: kindergarten readiness checklists, and other materials. The end-of-year curriculum for preschool children includes topics related to moving on to kindergarten and transitions.

Because Brookline Sprouts is located inside of Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) and is an Out of School Time (OST) Provider, we have some additional connections with local PPS elementary schools. If a child is a PPS student, more information on PPS partnerships and communication can be found in the Parent Teacher Communication section of this handbook. These connections are used to assist in transitions when applicable.

For older school age children who are approaching an age of self-care, Sprouts has resource materials to help parents determine when their child can safely transition out of the program available upon request. Sprouts also invites children who have “aged out” of Sprouts care to attend open-to-public programming at the facility, such as “At-Risk After-school” dinners that are available to children and teens through 12th grade.

Screen Time Policies

"Screen time" is a term used for activities done in front of a screen on a digital device, such as watching TV, working on a computer, or playing video games. Screen time is a passive activity, meaning you are being physically inactive while sitting down, and very little energy is used during screen time. Children's time on screens impacts their health in many ways. Too much screen time can keep children from being physically active and playing with peers. We are committed to limiting screen time in our program. We believe limiting screen time helps children be physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy. By limiting screen time, we help children get more physical activity, develop social skills, and learn school readiness skills through active play and hands-on learning.

Availability and Daily Practices:

- We offer 0-20 minutes of screen time each week for children when it is not directly related to lessons and interactions to supplement learning.





- There may be special "movie" days and other event-related times that screen time is used. This is rarely done and only with the approval of Administration to prevent overuse.
- All movies and shows will be G-Rated, TV-G, or TV-Y.
- While videos and recorded songs may be used to enhance learning times, screen time will never be used as a substitute for staff instruction.
- If screen time is used, teachers are talking to children about what they see and learn. Screen time is always supervised and always accompanied by

live interaction, which may include pausing the video at times to ask questions and reflect on the content. ("Look at all the animals!" "Can we count how many kids have ice cream cones right now?")

- Music videos of various types can be utilized for Music and Movement times to provide an option for guided dance. Following the movements of the video is never required, but general movement and physical interaction are greatly encouraged, and modeled by teachers. ("Let me see your dance moves!" "Let's get our wiggles out!")
- We utilize Gold Finch, an evidence-based assessment tool, to evaluate the children throughout the year. This includes both student and teacher-led "mini-games" on a tablet that are less than 5 minutes per week.
- Our rooms may include a tablet or desktop computers with interactive, educational activities as outlined by ECERS requirements as a technology interest center.
- When we use television shows or videos in our programs, they are always educational and commercial-free. Educational shows and videos are age-appropriate and support the children's learning goals.
- When screen time is being used outside of interactive/lesson times, teachers always give children the option to participate in another activity, such as extended free play, instead of watching a program.

School Age Considerations and Technology Time

School-age children are expected to keep tablets, phones, and other electronics in their cubbies during the day. However, they may have access to technology at designated times during the school year and summer related to their school work or as an option during daily quiet time. This content may or may not be educational in nature, but always age-appropriate. Screen time is never used as a reward or to manage challenging behavior unless outlined in a child's IEP or IFSP.





Outdoor/Indoor Policy for Gross Motor Play (Large Muscle Play)

Partial-day preschoolers will have 30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. Full-day preschool children receive 90 or more minutes. School-age children will have between 15 and 90 or minutes, depending on the length of time at the center around school times. This is achieved through playground and/or gym time, as well as Music & Movement time. Children

attending Brookline Sprouts shall play outdoors when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. The time planned for outdoor play and physical activity depends on the classroom and weather conditions.

- Activities shall include structured play, led by teachers and other staff, & free play, which an adult does not lead. Staff will use the outdoors as an extension of the classroom. This is done by:
 - Planning outside lessons, activities, and walking trips.
 - Incorporating gross motor skills practice (skipping, jumping, throwing, catching, kicking, balancing, stretching, etc.) into lessons, routines, transitions, and other times throughout the day.
 - Staff will take advantage of "teachable moments" to talk with children about the importance of physical activity.
- Adults will take an active role in helping children stay active during indoor and outdoor free playtime, including verbally encouraging children's activities and, when appropriate, joining in with children's activities to promote more movement.
- The center will provide a variety of toys and equipment in good condition, both indoors and outdoors, to help encourage children's physical activity.
- Staff will have opportunities to participate in continuing education related to physical education and activities in child care regularly.
- Outdoor play will never be revoked as a punishment for managing challenging behaviors. Children who appear overheated or overextended will only be removed from play for a few minutes to "cool down." Children with challenging behaviors will be redirected to another activity rather than sitting out altogether, such as moving to the slide from the balance beam.





Developmental Screening and Early Learning Standards

Screening and Evaluations

All children **age 5 and younger** who enroll at Brookline Sprouts will have an **Act Early developmental screening** completed within 45 days of enrollment. This helps identify children who may need extra evaluation or support. Families will receive the screening results via Brightwheel. If needed, we will help with referrals for further evaluation or intervention.

We also use Gold Finch, an evidence-based assessment tool. This is used throughout the year to complete baseline assessments and track your child's progress. The ongoing and completed evaluations will be made available at parent-teacher conferences, as well as at any time upon request.

Lesson Planning and Standards

Each week, our teachers create lesson plans that consider the current Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. These standards guide planning and help us document children's learning.

For preschoolers, we use the Frog Street curriculum. For school-age children in summer programs or other structured activities, lessons follow The Pennsylvania Learning Standards for their age. These activities support key learning areas and are aligned with state and national standards.

Social-Emotional Learning

We integrate Conscious Discipline into daily routines for all ages. This helps children grow in social and emotional skills. Developing emotional intelligence, including recognizing feelings, showing empathy, and solving problems peacefully, is just as important as learning "ABCs and 123s." Social-emotional learning builds the foundation for healthy relationships, resilience, and success in school and beyond.

If You Have Concerns About Your Child's Behavior and/or Development

If you have concerns about your child's development, you can:





- **For preschool children living in Allegheny County:** Contact AIU's Preschool Early Intervention Program at 412-394-5904 for screenings and evaluations.
- **Families within Pittsburgh Public Schools** can also call the district's Early Intervention Program at 412-529-4000 for evaluation as young as 3 years old.
- **School age children:** Contact your school district's administration to request further evaluation.
- **Any family with children of any age:** Ask your child's pediatrician for referral information to medical specialists such as the **Child Development Unit (CDU)** at Children's Hospital.

In addition to the above agencies, specifically social-emotional and behavioral concerns can be addressed through other resources, including the following:

- **Allegheny County Rapid Response Team (specifically for child care):**
412-204-7404
- **Resolve Crisis Services: 1-888-796-8226**
- **Child and Adolescent Crisis Team Intervention Services (CACTIS):**
412-864-5065
- **Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC):**
844-569-7253

Payments

Invoices and receipts are sent through the **Brightwheel app**. If you need help with billing access, please speak to Administration.

We accept:

- Credit/debit cards
- ACH transfers
- Cash
- Checks (*made payable to Brookline Sprouts*)

There is a payment box on the wall near the entrance for dropping off cash and checks. **Do not hand cash or check payments directly to classroom staff.** All electronic payments, including auto-pay setup, can be made in Brightwheel. Processing fees may apply to electronic payments. If you have questions about





tuition or financial policies signed upon enrollment, contact the Director or Administration. We can review them with you and give you a copy of these policies.

Late Payment Fees

Payment is **due in advance** of services and must be made **by the first scheduled day of attendance each week**. If payment is late a **\$10 late fee** will be added automatically each week until the account is paid in full. We reserve the right to pause care for a child if payment is late. Tuition will still be due during the pause in care. ERLC and other subsidies do not cover late payment fees.

Enrollment Deposits

A two-week enrollment deposit is required to secure your child's enrollment and schedule.

This deposit:

- Is **non-refundable** and **non-transferable**
- May be credited toward your child's last two weeks of care **only** if:
 - Your child stays through the current session (May or August withdrawal)
 - You give **at least two weeks' written withdrawal notice**

For families with **ELRC copayments**, the deposit is **two weeks of your copay** or **\$50**, whichever is greater. If you withdraw your child mid-session and/or without a minimum of 2 weeks' notice, you will lose the deposit credit.

Personal Property & Items from Home

We work hard to help children keep track of their belongings and to treat them with care.

Even so, items can wear out, break, or get lost at school. Children should only bring necessary items (nap blanket, extra clothes, coat, backpack, etc.). Children should be sent to school with a hat, gloves, etc. when appropriate for the weather. All other items, including personal toys, should be left at home.

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes. Children should be free to explore and enjoy activities without worrying about stains. Avoid sending your child in clothing you do not want to get dirty. We recommend closed-toe shoes for





running and playing. Flip flops are not allowed. Other sandals or crocs must have a strap around the back of the heel.

We need a **complete set of extra clothes**, appropriate for the season and their current size, on hand:

- Shirt
- Bottoms
- Socks
- Underwear

All other educational and craft materials and toys are provided at school. If you would like to donate materials or toys to the classroom, please contact Administration, or refer to the donation request list on the Resource Page for frequently needed items.

Prohibited Items

For safety, order, and to maintain state regulations, prohibited items must not be in children's belongings.

These include:

- Hand lotions
- Medications
- Adult-sized scissors
- Electronics (unless approved for school use)
- Outside food items (unless you provide a doctor's note)
- Water bottles for preschool children (water is provided by the center)

Responsibility for Personal Property

Brookline Sprouts is **not responsible** for lost, damaged, or stolen personal property. This includes, but is not limited to: clothing and outerwear, shoes, jewelry, blankets, backpacks, toys, district homework, and lunchboxes.

Please do not send comfort items that must be taken to and from the center daily if possible. If you send a digital picture of family to Administration, a wristlet can be made to function as a comfort item for children experiencing separation anxiety or other emotional challenges about being away from home.

To help prevent loss, label all belongings with your child's name. Please do not send items of high value, including worn clothing or jewelry. Belongings (including





medications) left greater than 30 days after your child's last day of enrollment will be donated or otherwise disposed of.

Blankets and Nap Time Items

If your preschool child's schedule includes nap/rest time, please provide a small blanket to be kept at the center. Blankets should be no bigger than 40X40 inches. Optional stuffed animals must be less than 7 inches tall and able to be washed/dried. Nap items are washed on-site weekly with hypoallergenic detergent.

Technology and Electronics

Electronics are prohibited for preschool children, unless there is a documented need according to disability, IEP, or other documentation according to a licensed professional. School age children may bring personal or school district electronics for:

- Technology Time in the summer
- School work or distance learning during the school year

If so, they and their caregivers must sign our Distance Learning and Technology Policy and follow it at all times. Please consult these policies for more information.

Items Handed Off Between Adults

If a restricted item must come to school for caregiver handoff (for example, medication passed from a parent at drop-off to grandparents at pick up), it must be given to a staff member to be locked away for the day. The pickup caregiver must also request it at pick up. Sprouts may refuse to store any items for any reason.

Bathroom and Accidents

Brookline Sprouts requires all children to be potty trained. We understand that occasional accidents can happen. However, frequent accidents make it hard for staff to care for your child and the rest of the class. **No child should arrive at school in a diaper or pull-up.** These items are not allowed in a child's bag or cubby. If your child needs pull-ups or diapers throughout the day, we cannot provide that level of care. If you feel your preschooler needs a pull-up for nap time only, a written plan must be agreed upon between the center and the family first. To help prevent accidents, we have scheduled group bathroom breaks





throughout the day. Children also get reminders that the bathroom is available all day.

When Accidents Happen

You may be asked to **pick up your child early** if:

- They have an accident involving **loose stools** (per our Health Policy)
- Your child does not have a change of clothes
- They have multiple accidents in one day

More than three accidents in a week require the child to be sent home upon the

third, and we may require a doctor's note to return. We do not launder children's clothing. In the case of minor accidents, soiled clothes are bagged and sent home with families. However, if clothing is heavily soiled and cannot be reasonably bagged without creating sanitation or odor concerns in the classroom, we may need to dispose of it.

Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

Belief Statement

At Brookline Sprouts, we believe that preventing, recognizing, responding to, and reporting shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma (SBS/AHT) is essential to keeping children safe, protecting their healthy development, providing quality child care, and educating families.

Background

Shaking, even for a few seconds, can result in severe injury or death. According to the PA Department of Human Services, *Caring for Our Children Basics: Health & Safety Foundation for Early Care and Education 3.4.43*, each childcare facility licensed to care for children up to the age of 5 must develop and adopt a policy to help prevent SBS/AHT.

Procedure/Practice

Recognizing

Children are observed for signs of abusive head trauma, including:

- Irritability or high-pitched crying
- Difficulty staying awake/lethargy or loss of consciousness
- Difficulty breathing





- Inability to lift the head
- Seizures
- Vomiting or poor feeding/sucking
- Unexplained bruises (upper arms, rib cage, or head)
- Failure of the eyes to track or decreased muscle tone

Responding

If SBS/AHT is suspected, staff will:

- Call 911 immediately and inform the Administration.
- Contact the parents/guardians.
- If the child has stopped breathing, trained staff will begin pediatric CPR.

Reporting

- Suspected child maltreatment in child care is reported to the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) by calling 1-800-859-0829 or emailing webmasterdcd@dhhs.nc.gov.
- Suspected maltreatment at home is reported to the Allegheny County Department of Social Services at (412) 473-2000 or Childline at 1-800-932-0313.

Prohibited Behaviors:

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

- Shaking or jerking a child
- Tossing a child into the air, a crib, chair, or car seat
- Pushing a child into walls, doors, or furniture

Prevention Strategies to Assist Staff:

For infants and toddlers:

- Rock the child, hold them close, or walk with them.
- Stand up, hold the child, and bend your knees repeatedly.
- Sing or talk to the child in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the child's back, chest, or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or distract the child with a toy or rattle.
- Take the child for a stroller ride.
- Turn on music or white noise.

For older toddlers and preschoolers:

- Encourage them to use words to describe what is upsetting them.
- Offer a hug or sit with them.





- Sing or talk in a soothing voice.
- Offer fidgets or calming sensory objects.
- Distract them with toys or activities.
- Offer use of a Calm Down Area if available.
- Take them for a short walk.

Other Prevention Strategies

For staff (including administrative, substitute, and volunteer providers):

- Staff may take a short, immediate break if they feel overwhelmed.
- The center will provide regular training on classroom management, handling challenging behaviors, and related topics.
- Infant-specific training will be offered if the center enrolls infants.
- New hires and volunteers will complete training on SBS/AHT before caring for children ages birth to five, including recognizing, responding to, and reporting child abuse, as well as children's brain development. This will be documented via an SBS/AHT Acknowledgment Form in their file.

For Families:

- All families enrolling children under five will review the center's SBS/AHT policy on or before their child's first day. The parent/guardian acknowledgment form will be kept in the child's file.
- The center will support parents in calming a crying child and encourage them to take a break if necessary.

Food and Meals

Brookline Sprouts provides nutritious, age appropriate, and flavorful meals for the children. Meals are served only during scheduled meal times. If a child arrives after a meal has ended, we are not able to prepare a separate meal for them. Please contact Administration if you have questions about meal times for your child. Brookline Sprouts is nondiscriminatory in all services, including meal service. See our Non-Discrimination Policy for more information.

The menu is posted weekly on the entryway board, in the upstairs classroom entryway, and on our web site. Paper copies of the menu are available upon request.

- Preschoolers: The children receive breakfast and lunch. Extended care preschool children also receive an afternoon snack.





- School Age Children: During the school year on a regular day, they receive supper and an evening snack. During summer, school age children receive breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. They are also provided meals and snacks as appropriate on half days and drop in days.

Meals and snacks are partially funded through:

- Child & Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)
- At Risk Afterschool Program (ARAS)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Food Restrictions and Food and Milk Substitutions

If your child has any special dietary needs, please complete a Food Restriction Request Form upon enrollment. Some dietary restrictions (such as milk substitutions), or other allergies may require additional documentation from a healthcare professional in order to safely feed your child.

We make every effort to provide substitutions rather than leave food off the plate when a child has an allergy or dietary restriction. We cannot make changes for picky eating. If you believe your child's meals must be supplemented with food from home, medical documentation is required.

Sending Food from Home

No outside food is permitted unless there is a doctor's note on file.

If food is sent from home:

- Bags or boxes must be labeled with your child's name
- Food must be ready to eat and require no preparation except microwaving or opening the package
- "Junk food," candy, and soda will be withheld and not served at meal times for preschoolers. School age children may have these items held until snack time.
- We cannot serve any food that contains an ingredient you previously stated your child is restricted from eating unless we receive written permission regarding this change. (For example, if you tell us that your child cannot have apples, but their packed lunch has applesauce, it will be removed.)





School Age Children are permitted to purchase items from the vending machine for snack time or to take home; these items cannot be eaten at other times. Sprouts staff is not responsible for lost or missing vending machine monies.

Celebrations (Such as Birthdays)

Our preference is that celebration items are non-food whenever possible. Ideas include small toys, stickers, bubbles, sunglasses, erasers, etc.

If you do bring food for sharing (such as for parties or birthdays), it must be:

- Store-bought
- Individually wrapped, if possible

This helps staff ensure they can check all ingredients for restricted and allergic children and adhere to Allegheny County Health Department requirements.

Please give at least 48 hours' notice before bringing in celebration treats.

This allows staff to adjust the menu if needed. Deliveries (such as pizza) must be coordinated ahead of time with Administration.

Sprouts Authoritative Feeding Policy

At Brookline Sprouts, teachers use an authoritative feeding style during meals and snacks. Staff maintains the structure of meals and snacks by following the guidelines on how meal times will be presented to children. We want to give children the control to make the right choices, but they're still developing and learning to make good choices. Adults set examples of how to eat healthy and make good choices while still giving them an option. We know that children learn better when there is consistency among caregivers. **Food is never withheld as punishment or given as a reward for good behavior.**

All preschoolers are served a complete meal per USDA guidelines during meal times. Then, condiments are offered when available. After a set amount of time, the children are encouraged by staff to try at least a portion of the meal's components. Partway through the meal, water is offered. Staff avoid comparing children and strive to provide verbal positive reinforcement and praise when the children make healthy choices at meals and snack time. Staff are encouraged to eat alongside the children, as well as discuss the food being served in a positive way.





Health Policies

Brookline Sprouts uses Caring for our Children Basics: Health & Safety Foundation for Early Care and Education to establish policies and practices for care plans for children with special needs, all health policies, and medication administration.

Health Records and Vaccinations

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). A copy of your child's physical (not just an immunization record) can be received before but no later than 30 days after your child begins in the program.

Failure to turn in a full, unexpired, dated, and signed health report from your child's physician could result in your child being suspended from our program until we receive these essential documents. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to Sprouts. They are expected to be renewed a minimum of once every 12 months. If you have made the personal decision not to have your child receive any vaccines recommended by AAP, you may be required to provide additional documentation.

Illness Policy

While we know it can be hard for a family member to miss work, **you may not bring a sick child to the center.** This helps protect all children and staff. Please do not give your child fever-reducing medication or other medication to temporarily mask symptoms and then bring them to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill at drop off. You will be called to pick up your child if they have any of the symptoms below. This list is **not** all-inclusive.

Symptoms that require pickup:

- Illness that stops your child from participating in activities
- Excessive sleepiness
- Illness that needs more care than we can give
- Fever of **100.5°F or higher** (They must be fever-free for 24 hours without medicine and/or have a doctor's note stating that they are cleared to rejoin group care.)





- Diarrhea, especially stools with blood or mucus and/or uncontrolled stools that cannot be contained in underwear or toilet.
- Pink or red eye with white or yellow discharge (They must be on antibiotics for 24 hours or have a doctor's note before return.)
- Vomiting (They must stay home at least 24 hours after last vomiting episode or have a doctor's note.)
- Persistent cough or runny nose, without a doctor's note for illness or allergy documentation
- Undiagnosed rashes
- Impetigo (until 24 hours after treatment starts)
- Strep throat (until 24 hours after treatment starts)
- Head lice (until treatment is complete and all nits are removed)

While waiting for pickup:

- We will try to keep your child comfortable
- Your child will be excluded from all activities until you arrive

Return to Care After Illness

Children may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for 24 hours without medicine
- They have been on antibiotics for 24 hours, when applicable
- They can join all regular activities comfortably
- A doctor's note is provided if required for that illness or symptom

Medications

All medication must be given to a staff member with instructions. **Do not leave medication in a child's cubby or with the child.**

We cannot give medication without:

- Complete documentation
- Parent/guardian signature
- Verification by Administration

Both Prescription and Non-Prescription medications require:

- A note signed by the family





- A written order from the physician (It can be a note with guidelines, or the prescription label may meet this requirement.)
- The original container with:
 - Child's name
 - Dosage
 - Current date
 - Frequency
 - Physician's name and phone number

You may request the pharmacy to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles. We will track all administration times and details. Topical non-prescription ointments (such as diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent) require a note signed by the family and/or physician with the reason, frequency, and dosage.

Other medication rules:

- Expired medications will be sent home and cannot be used
- Ointments and lotions for rashes, cuts, or other skin issues are considered medication and require proper documentation. They must also be kept in a locked area and administered with adult supervision only.

Allergy Prevention

Families must tell us about any food or environmental allergies.

For diagnosed allergies, families must provide a letter describing:

- Symptoms
- Reactions
- Treatments
- Care needed

Allergy lists are posted in:

- Classrooms
- Cafeteria
- Kitchen

Staff check Brightwheel profiles and ID tags to avoid exposing children to allergens.

Communicable Diseases

If a child or staff member has a **suspected reportable disease**, we must notify:

- The local Board of Health, or
- The Department of Public Health





We will also notify families if there is an outbreak so children can receive preventive care if needed.

Examples of reportable illnesses:

- COVID-19
 - Bacterial meningitis
 - Botulism
 - Chickenpox (until all lesions are dried and crusted)
 - Diphtheria
 - Haemophilus influenza (invasive)
 - Measles (including suspected)
 - Meningococcal infection (invasive)
 - Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
 - Rabies (human only)
 - Rubella (congenital and non-congenital)
 - Tetanus (including suspected)
-
- H1N1 virus
 - Scabies (until 24 hours after treatment)
 - Vomiting — green or bloody, or 2+ times in the past 24 hours
 - Mouth sores with drooling
 - Rash with fever (unless cleared by a doctor)
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough) — until 5 days after starting antibiotics
 - Hepatitis A — until one week after immune globulin has been given

Inclusion

In accordance with the policy statement of the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, Brookline Sprouts has a policy to promote inclusion while reducing suspension and expulsion.

At Brookline Sprouts, we support the belief that every child and family, regardless of ability, has the right to participate in all activities. Brookline Sprouts believes that giving children, with and without disabilities, opportunities and experiences together will create a sense of belonging, promote positive social relationships, and provide children the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. As teachers and caregivers, we are determined to provide access to high-quality education and promote participation and support to all children in learning and social activities.





Access to high-quality education is the right of all children. We believe in providing a fun and safe learning environment for all families. Providing access to information and helpful services is the first step to helping a family find early intervention for their child. If a child has a diagnosis, all established services and accommodations for the child shall be implemented with full acceptance by the teaching staff.

Sprouts promotes inclusion by:

- Ensuring the physical environment is set up to provide equal opportunities to all children for all program activities.
- Executing curriculum and instructional strategies to provide multiple ways of learning and expression of learning.
- Utilizing strategies that promote independent participation.
- Giving families contact information and referral information for community agencies. This is accessible via request and through the resource library

near the entrance, as well as in our Developmental Screening section of this handbook.

- IEP planning and implementation.
- Ensuring that all staff implement trauma-informed practices
- Providing professional development to all staff.
- Including special training for all staff when appropriate.

There are several general accommodations available to children throughout the day who need extra support, when available, for children with or without a diagnosis. These include things such as fidgets and walking paths for children who cannot sit during group times, chewy necklaces for children putting non-food items in their mouth, and short breaks away from the group if they are overstimulated. A more exhaustive list of common accommodations staff may offer during the day can be provided upon request by Administration.

Brookline Sprouts believes in meaningful participation. All children learn from each other, and Brookline Sprouts encourages and supports the development of genuine relationships and a sense of belonging. Brookline Sprouts provides adapted experiences and routines so that all children can participate in all activities. To ensure equal participation, teaching strategies are intentional to provide scaffolding learning, and models of instruction are tiered to meet the needs of all children.





Through relationships with local agencies and specialists, and access to a comprehensive Social/Emotional Curriculum, Brookline Sprouts strives to establish a system of services and support for children with disabilities and their families. It is important to us that all our children and their families feel included in every aspect of their child's education and care.

If your child has an IEP (Individual Education Plan), IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), or other Treatment Plan, it is essential to your child's development and for the continuity of services that you share it with us. All information will be kept confidential. Please give a copy to Administration upon enrollment or establishment of the document. **We will not have access to your child's IEP, IFSP, or other Treatment Plans unless you provide it to us.**

IEP/IFSP/Treatment Plan Responsibilities

If your child has an IEP (Individual Education Plan), IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), or other Treatment Plan, **it is critical that we receive a copy directly from you.**

- We do not receive IEPs from schools, therapists, or agencies. No outside organization will send them to us.
- It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to provide the IEP or IFSP to Brookline Sprouts upon enrollment or as soon as it is created.
- **You must also give us updated copies any time there is a periodic review, changes, or new evaluation.**

Not informing us of changes to the IEP or Treatment Plan can:

- Prevent us from providing the correct care and support
- Create safety risks for your child and others
- Harm the relationship between the child, family, and school

Delays in providing this documentation, and updates, may result in unnecessary distress for your child, staff, and your family. **Failure to keep us informed about IEP updates and other changes in treatment from their therapists and other**





professionals can pose safety risks and may be grounds for dismissal from our program.

We share this expectation because knowing and following your child's IEP is essential for:

- Your child's success and well-being
- Our ability to meet their needs
- Progress towards their developmental and educational goals/objectives
- The overall safety and harmony of the classroom

Dual Language Learners

We believe in embracing diversity and creating a climate that builds on each child's strengths. Brookline Sprouts supports dual language learners to help promote their academic achievement.

We believe that families are partners in their child's learning and bilingualism is a strength that should be nurtured. We provide tools such as visual and learning materials that support and reflect the languages and cultures of the children in our program. We also offer specialized staff training, if needed, to better support dual language learners.

Behavior Management Procedures

At Brookline Sprouts, every child has the right to learn, play, and grow in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment. We believe in guiding children toward self-control, kindness, and positive relationships through proactive teaching, consistent routines, and caring interactions. At the same time, **our staff has a responsibility to protect the safety and well-being of every child in our care.**

Children's Rights

Each child at Brookline Sprouts has the right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly environment.
- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Receive the help and support of caring adults.
- Experience positive, nurturing relationships.
- Have developmentally appropriate rules, routines, and structures.
- Receive positive verbal encouragement and recognition.
- Be guided by adults who model and encourage appropriate behavior.





- Engage in cooperative and respectful learning with peers.

Preventative Strategies

We work to prevent challenging behaviors by:

- Building strong, positive relationships with children.
- Maintaining predictable routines and clear expectations.
- Using developmentally appropriate rules and guidance.

- Providing a sensory-rich environment with engaging materials that stimulate their senses, such as textures, music, movement, and colors
- Providing a choice-rich environment gives children opportunities to make decisions throughout the day, which supports independence.
- Providing engaging activities and structured transitions.
- Encouraging children to use words to express needs and feelings.
- Teaching important social and emotional skills like respect for items, communication strategies, conflict-resolution, emotional regulation, and body boundaries through modeling, songs, pretend-play, and consistent gentle feedback throughout the day

Responsive Strategies

When a child is having difficulty, staff will:

- Help them use their words to work through the situation.
- Support them in resolving disputes with peers.
- Redirect behavior toward positive choices.
- View behavior concerns as opportunities to teach missing skills.
- Identify underdeveloped executive functioning skills and provide strategies to strengthen them.
- Offer specific interventions to help regulate emotions and change problem behaviors.
- Remove any items from the area that could become dangerous (e.g. large blocks)
- View behavior as communication, and respond to that communication, while teaching better communication methods

Consequences for Behavior

Consequences help children understand the impact of their choices:





- Natural Consequences: Outcomes that happen without adult intervention.
Example: If a child refuses to zip up their coat in cold weather, they may feel chilly outside.
- Logical Consequences: Outcomes planned by staff, related to the behavior. They are respectful, reasonable, and age appropriate.
Example: If a child spills blocks intentionally, they are asked to help clean them up.

Parents will be informed of behavior concerns and involved in creating a plan for improvement. This is often communicated through Brightwheel notes and parent meetings, as well as verbal communication. Brookline Sprouts reserves the right to bill parents/guardians for the cost of repairing or replacing damaged property when the damage is intentional or the result of unsafe behavior.

Serious and Dangerous Behaviors

While we believe in teaching and guiding, certain actions pose immediate safety risks and require a child to be sent home immediately and possibly suspended one or more days. These behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Bullying, intimidation, or verbal threats toward children or staff.
- Deliberately hurting another child or staff member.
- Biting that leaves bruising or breaks the skin.
- Excessive or repeated use of profanity and/or inappropriate language toward others.
- Wrestling, roughhousing, or physical aggression with siblings or peers while in care.
- Throwing objects with intent to harm.
- Sexually inappropriate language or touching.
- Running away from staff supervision, such as out of the classroom, playground, or facility (including hiding in other areas).
- Destruction of property in an intentional or dangerous manner.
- Deliberately damaging school materials in a way that disrupts class.
- Climbing or scaling furniture or unsafe structures.
- Removing shoes or other objects and using them to harm others.

Excessive 1-on-1 Needs

If a child consistently requires constant one-on-one attention from staff, including but not limited to:





- Failure to transition between activities
- Needing ongoing adult support to participate in classroom routines
- Repeated refusal to engage in group activities
- Excessive sleep needs outside of designated nap times

These situations will prompt a required meeting with parents/guardians to evaluate needs. If a higher level of support is determined to be necessary, we will work with the family to:

- Explore possible coverage for 1-on-1 care through the recommendation of their medical providers and therapists,
- Advocate for services when possible, and
- Support referrals to specialists or agencies.

The guardian's involvement is essential in this process. **If families do not participate in required meetings or follow-up, the child will be suspended until a safety or behavioral plan is in place that Sprouts has reviewed and determines they can accommodate.**

Incident Review & Required Meetings

- Consideration will always be given to the *number* and *severity* of all behavior incidents when determining next steps.
- If a behavior plan meeting is required due to safety or behavior concerns, the meeting must take place with the parent/guardian within a designated time frame. Meetings may be video or phone calls.
- If a parent/guardian refuses or fails to attend the meeting, the child will be suspended until the meeting occurs.

This process is designed to ensure that everyone is working together toward the safety and success of the child and their peers.

Ongoing Concerns

If a child exhibits repeated unsafe behavior or behaviors that prevent us from caring for them and other children appropriately:

1. Ongoing incident reports/notes will be documented and shared with parents through Brightwheel.
2. After three incidents of the same behavior within a month, an in-person or phone conference will be held to develop a behavior plan.





3. If behavior continues to pose a safety concern, the child may be sent home and suspended until a safe return plan is in place.
4. With parent permission, we may seek support from specialists or agencies to assist.
5. In rare cases, if all reasonable supports are exhausted, we may recommend a more suitable care setting and outside agencies that can assist with that transition.

Self Regulation, Calm Down Requests, and De-Escalation Choices

Brookline Sprouts encourages children to develop healthy strategies for self-regulation. This includes:

- Teaching and modeling calm down strategies as a group and individually during times that the children are not escalated to build skills, such as deep breathing.
- Validating feelings while also maintaining ownership of choices.
- Teaching and modeling vocabulary that can help the child articulate both their feelings and needs.
- Providing materials and toys that can assist in emotional regulation, such as fidgets and soft toys.
- Maintaining a calm down area in the classrooms that children can request to use throughout the day. Staff may also suggest it to escalated children.
- Students may also request to visit an administrator's office. While we cannot guarantee that a specific administrator will be present, staff will make reasonable efforts to accommodate the request safely and promptly.

Requests to access these spaces will never be punished or used against a child. For safety and support purposes, these requests may be documented to help staff track patterns and provide appropriate interventions.

If a child becomes escalated, staff will offer clear and respectful choices, such as: "Would you like to take a break in the calm down area?" or "Would you like to visit the administrator's office?" Staff will support the child in making a choice and ensure safe supervision in either location. Other de-escalation strategies may include:

- Going for a supervised walk with a staff member, if ratios permit.
- Participating in another staff-directed activity to help reset.





Planned Ignore

Brookline Sprouts staff may use planned ignoring as a proactive behavior management strategy for certain non-dangerous, attention-seeking behaviors. Planned ignoring means deliberately not giving verbal or non-verbal attention to specific inappropriate behaviors in order to reduce their occurrence, while continuing to monitor the child's safety.

- When Used:
 - Behaviors that are disruptive but not dangerous to the child or others (e.g., making silly noises, minor attention-seeking outbursts).
 - Situations where giving attention would reinforce the behavior.
- When Not Used:
 - Any behavior that poses a safety risk to the child or others.
 - Aggression, property destruction, or severe disruptions.
- Follow-Up:
 - Once the behavior stops, staff will promptly acknowledge and praise appropriate behavior to reinforce positive choices.
- Documentation:
 - If planned ignoring is used repeatedly for the same behavior, it may be documented and discussed with the family to ensure consistency between home and school responses.

Suspension & Expulsion

Suspension or expulsion is a **last resort** and will only be used when:

- A serious safety threat cannot be eliminated through reasonable modifications
- Medical, psychological, or social service personnel determine that continued attendance is harmful to the child or others.
- The needed accommodations would cause an undue burden on our resources or ability to operate safely.

Brookline Sprouts will collaborate with local agencies and specialists whenever possible to prevent suspension or expulsion. Even in these cases, we will work with families to connect them to alternative placements and community resources.

Suspension Guidelines

Suspension length will depend on the severity of the incident and the child's overall behavior history:





- May return the next day for serious incidents that are not an established pattern
- May return after 1 day for serious incidents that recur
- May require up to 1 week for more severe behaviors
- May require a doctor's evaluation and/or a written safety plan before returning

All incidents will be documented, and parents will be notified immediately.

Suspension and Children with an IEP or IFSP

If a child has a pre-existing IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan):

- If an ECE program requests assistance from the child's Early Intervention Program to prevent suspension/expulsion, Early Intervention must respond within 48 hours and hold an IEP/IFSP team meeting within 10 program days
- If the behavior was not previously noted in the IEP/IFSP, Early Intervention must add it at this time
- The parent's procedural safeguards will be followed for any placement changes

If a child not enrolled in Early Intervention is at risk of suspension/expulsion:

- The program will work with the family to facilitate the scheduling of appropriate evaluations, such as PPS' Early Intervention or AIU's Preschool Early Intervention.
- If the child is found not eligible for EI or PEI, the evaluator and Sprouts will help the family access other services and provide strategy suggestions.

One-on-One Support Requirements

There are times it is determined by a parent, clinician, doctor, or other qualified professional that a child needs one-on-one support in order to participate safely and successfully in the program, but the child is on a waiting list for formal support services.

The center may request, or require, that the parent or guardian provide the one-on-one support themselves or arrange for another qualified adult to do so until a clinician is available.

This ensures:

- The child can continue attending
- Safety is maintained for all children and staff





- The child's needs are met without interruption in care

Nondiscrimination Statement for Feeding Programs

In accordance with federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the state or local agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Nondiscrimination Statement for Child Care Services

SUBJECT: Non-Discrimination in Services Policy Statement
TO: Parents/Guardians
FROM: Amanda Rhoades, Director





Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race (to include hair type, hair texture, or hair style), color, religious creed (to include all aspects of religious observances and practice, as well as belief), disability, ancestry, national origin (including Limited English Proficiency), age (40 and over), or sex (to include pregnancy status, childbirth status, breastfeeding status, sex assigned at birth).

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods. Any individual/client/patient/student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

**Brookline Sprouts at
Tree of Life Open Bible Church**
1036 Brookline Blvd
Pittsburgh, PA 15226
Phone: 412-531-0590 Fax: 412-531-1199
director@brooklinesprouts.com

**Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Centralized Case Management Operations**
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Room 509 HHH Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20201
Customer Response Center: (800) 368-1019
TDD: (800) 537-7697
<https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/complaints>
Email: ocrcomplaint@hhs.gov
(Within 180 days from the date of incident)

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity**
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17120
Inquiries: (717) 787-1127
Email: RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov
(Within 90 days from the date of incident)

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
333 Market Street, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
<https://www.phrc.pa.gov/Complaints/Pages/How-to-File-a-Complaint.aspx>
Inquiries: (717) 787-4410
TTY users only: (717) 787-7279
(Within 180 days from the date of incident)





BROOKLINE SPROUTS AT TREE OF LIFE CHURCH

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Revised: **November 26, 2025**