



PARENT HANDBOOK

Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower young minds and uplift our local community by providing nurturing, affordable, and enriching childcare services, fostering a safe and supportive environment where children can learn, grow, and shine bright.

About Us

Sunny-Steps Childcare Center is a warm and inviting child care center located in Gardner, KS, that provides a safe and nurturing environment for children aged 6 weeks to elementary. Our center offers a range of educational and developmental activities to support the growth and well-being of young children, focusing on helping little minds shine bright. Our commitment to the community sets us apart, with tuition priced below market rates while still offering quality care and structured programs. Our tagline "where little minds shine bright," encapsulates our vision of providing an environment where children can thrive, learn, and grow.



Where Little Minds Shine Bright!

Our Childcare Programs

INFANT

Our program has been formulated through research-based developmental theories embedded in every activity to build healthy brains. Higher thinking skills are supported through a curriculum rich in language and tailored to your child's individual needs to support a lifelong love of learning. This integrated development will help the children form critical thinking skills and build upon those skills as they grow. Sunny-Steps Infant curriculum is designed to build a strong foundation for little ones aged 6 weeks to 12 months.

WADDLER

Welcome to the waddler care program at Sunny-Steps, where we celebrate the unique stage of development between infancy and toddlerhood. Our waddler care program is designed to meet the evolving needs of children who are transitioning from crawling to taking their first confident steps. As waddlers begin to assert their independence, our caregivers support and encourage their natural curiosity and exploration. From providing opportunities for sensory exploration to fostering self-help skills such as feeding and dressing, we empower waddlers to develop the confidence and capabilities they need to navigate the world around them.

* All Waddlers must be walking to enter this room

TODDLER

We believe in the power of play as a tool for learning and development. Our toddler care curriculum incorporates structured play activities that focus on language development, sensory exploration, and social interaction. Through games, creative arts, and group activities, we encourage toddlers to express themselves, share with their peers, and build important social skills.

Toddlers thrive on routines, and our caregivers work closely with parents to establish consistent daily schedules that align with each child's needs. From meal times to nap schedules, we aim to create a predictable and comfortable routine, providing a sense of security for toddlers as they navigate the world around them.

PRE-K

We chose to use the Funshine Express's Fireflies curriculum for our preschool classroom. Supplies are provided, but occasionally you may need additional supplies for activities. If you need supplies for a teaching activity, please ensure you have planned for the month ahead to have any supplies added to your monthly order.

In addition to our core curriculum, we offer a variety of enrichment opportunities to further enhance the preschool experience. These may include music and movement classes, art exploration, gardening, cooking, field trips, and guest speakers, providing children with opportunities to explore their interests, develop new skills, and broaden their horizons.

SCHOOL AGE & DROP-IN

At Sunny-Steps, we understand the importance of providing a safe, engaging, and enriching environment for children beyond regular school hours. Our After School & Drop-in/In-Service Day Care program offers a convenient solution for working parents and a fun-filled extension of the school day for children. We provide a welcoming and supportive environment where children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, and where parents can have peace of mind knowing that their children are in good hands.

Our dedicated staff provides supervised homework assistance to ensure that children complete their assignments accurately and on time. We offer a quiet and conducive environment where children can focus on their studies, receive guidance when needed, and develop good study habits and organizational skills.

Session Options

Full Day M-F: 7:00 am - 5:30 pm

After School Program M-F - 3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Tuition

Tuition is paid in advance and due on the Monday of each week. You are responsible for paying tuition whether your child is in attendance or not. Payment may be made via check, credit card, or online. If cash pay is your only option, please communicate with us when enrolling your child(ren).

Tuition Rates

Tuition is based on the child's age. A child may transition to a new classroom sooner or later based on the child's development and availability. Our rates are based on a full week, regardless of the number of days in attendance. This tuition structure is to pay for a spot in our program. Please see drop-in rates for daily rates.

Program/Class	Full-Day / Week	After School Program / Week
Infants	\$300	
Waddlers	\$275	
Toddlers/Toddler II	\$275	
Pre K	\$300	
Elementary Age		\$210/wk

Enrollment Fees

Fees	Per Child	Each Additional Child	Notes
Infants	\$100	\$80	Non-refundable, applied to the first week of tuition
Waddlers	\$100	\$80	Non-refundable, applied to the first week of tuition
Toddlers	\$100	\$80	Non-refundable, applied to the first week of tuition
Pre K	\$100	\$80	Non-refundable, applied to the first week of tuition
Elementary Age	\$50	\$30	Non-refundable, applied to the first week of tuition

Additional Fees

Fees	Per Child	Each Additional Child	Notes
Drop-In (7:00 am-5:30 pm)	\$65	\$50	As available
Late Pick-Up Fee	\$20 after 5:30 pm, \$1/minute at 5:45 pm	N/A	Charged if the child is picked up after closing
Late Payment	5% of outstanding balance	N/A	Charged if not paid within 5 days of the due date
Returned Check	\$40	N/A	Charge for each returned check

Return Check Policy

A family with more than 2 returned checks for insufficient funds will be required to pay by cash, money order, or credit card ONLY.

Suspension of Service for Non-Payment

Services will be suspended for any account that is more than 2 weeks past due. If the account is not paid in full within one week of suspension, services will be terminated. Students are not allowed to participate in extracurricular school activities if the tuition account is not current.

Termination of Services or Change in Program

A two-week written notice is required if you wish to change or withdraw from your child's program.

Payment for the two weeks after notice is expected, regardless of your child(ren)'s attendance during the notice period. You are responsible for your child's current tuition during this time. Also, you are responsible for your child's full tuition beginning on your child's start date. If you change your child's start date less than two weeks from your scheduled start date, you are still responsible for tuition. Sunny-Steps Childcare Center reserves the right to terminate services for any reason including but not limited to nonpayment, bullying, or threatening/violent behavior by the child or parent. Unused tuition will be refunded if service is terminated by the school.

Attendance

The facility opens at 7:00am. Parents are responsible to contact the school if their child will not be in attendance or is running late.

For days when the Gardner-Edgerton School district is closed for In-Service and Conference days, the center is still open and available for school-aged children enrolled in the elementary after-school program.

Holidays

The center will be closed on the following holidays:

New Years Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day

The Day after Thanksgiving

Christmas Eve

Christmas Day

*Full Tuition is due for any week that contains a holiday

*If we anticipate low attendance for a holiday not listed above, we may decide to close the center at our discretion. Notification of this closure will be provided the day before the holiday.

Assessments/Conferences

Formal assessments are completed twice a year on children 1 to 6 years of age for developmental milestones and to assist your family in knowing the strengths of your child and challenges your child may have. Face to face parent/teacher conferences are held twice during the year for children 3 to 6 years of age enrolled in the preschool program. If you wish to schedule additional conferences, you are encouraged to do so during center hours. Assessments of your child's progress are continually documented throughout the year and accessible via Brightwheel.

Parental Involvement

There are many opportunities throughout the year to participate in your child's educational experience. These opportunities include:

-Community Outreach

- Fundraising
- Holiday Parties
- Fieldtrips
- Volunteering during class hours

We encourage all parents to take advantage of these opportunities and help us build a strong school community.

Communication

Communication is essential in building a strong bond between the school and families. Sunny-Steps uses email, our website, and Facebook as tools to provide fast and effective communications. We also use an online application called Brightwheel. This is a parent portal that allows the director as well as your child's lead teacher to send you emails, reminders, pictures and other attachments throughout the school day. You will also be able to access your tuition account, print off tax receipts, update your child's information, and add contacts to your child's approved pick up list. You will receive an invitation to access the portal via email.

To ensure open communication, the school will provide you:

- Monthly school newsletter
- Monthly lunch menu
- Bi-weekly class newsletter
- Information on special events
- Portfolio that show your child's progress
- Parent/teacher conferences twice during school year to review child's progress for preschool program

As a Parent, we request that you provide us:

- Written instructions concerning your child that need to be conveyed to the staff.
- Notification if the child is going to be absent.
- Notification of any illnesses your child develops.
- Notification if enrollment information changes such as telephone number, address, email address, or emergency contact information.

Clothing/Personal Items

During the day, your child will be involved in a variety of activities. Ample clothing that is washable allows your child to participate comfortably in all activities from playground fun to messy art projects. Please remember that accidents happen, and we take every precaution to protect your

child's clothing. Girls should wear shorts or bloomers under their dresses. Children must wear closed toe shoes each day. Please leave all candy and toys at home. Nap-time items are allowed. Please label all clothing and bedding with the child's name.

Toilet Learning

We prefer all children to be using the toilet before they enter our Preschool Program. If a child is not fully proficient yet, our teachers will assist him/her in the toilet learning process. No child will be forced to be potty trained. As toilet learning is a process, we focus on all the skills necessary to become proficient, such as pulling pants up and down, wiping, and washing hands. By the time a child enters the Pre-K Classroom, he/she must wear pull-ups with Velcro sides, training pants or underwear. The teacher will encourage the child to sit on the toilet each time the pull-up/pants are changed and at regular intervals. The teacher will ensure a child's request for using the toilet be acknowledged and carried out promptly. A child will be placed back in a pull-up if he/she has more than 2 accidents in underwear within one day.

*You are responsible for providing enough pull-ups or diapers for each day. There will be a \$5 per day charge anytime the school has to supply diapers/pull-ups to a child.

Field Trips

Parents must give written permission for field trips. Permission forms stating the destination, time gone, and means of transportation will be provided in advance of the field trip. Parent volunteers are encouraged to participate. Field trips are reserved for students in Preschool only.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Safety drills are conducted at regular intervals to ensure proper procedures in case of an emergency. A record of safety and tornado drills is posted by the main exit.

Incident Report

An Incident Report will be completed if a child's behavior becomes aggressive, a child is injured, a child has an illness, or any other miscellaneous incident for which a teacher believes a parent should be informed. The teacher and director will review the report and provide a copy to the parent. The form will be kept in the child's file.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency or accident requiring a doctor's treatment, we will make every effort to contact the parent. If we cannot contact the parent, the emergency contact person and/or the child's physician will be contacted. The child will be transported to the hospital by an ambulance

or a staff member if needed. The staff member will stay with the child until the parent or an authorized person assumes responsibility for the child.

Illness & Medication

You will be notified to pick your child up immediately if your child becomes ill while at the center. Your child will be isolated from the other children until you arrive. Please keep your child home if he/she displays one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 100 degrees
- Vomiting
- Constant coughing
- Green nasal discharge
- Diarrhea
- Un-diagnosed skin rash
- Other communicable disease

*Your child MUST be symptom-free without the aid of medications for 24 hours before returning to school. If your child is on antibiotics, he/she must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Exception: Your child may return to school immediately with a written note from your physician stating your child is not contagious.

All medications, including non-prescription, must have written authorization from a physician and/or parent. All medication must be in the original container, indicating the child's name, type & date of prescribed medication, and amount & time of dosage. Please be sure to give the medication to a staff member so it can be safely stored. An Authorization for Dispensing Medication form must be completed before medication can be administered to your child.

Meals and Snacks

Eating together creates an excellent atmosphere of community. Nutritional breakfast, lunch, and snacks are served daily. If your child has special food needs, please inform the staff in writing. Your child may choose to bring his/her food. The food will be stored properly and served to your child at appropriate times. However, it must meet State requirements or will not be served. If a copy of the state requirements are needed, please request a copy. The school will provide milk, juice, or water to drink with each meal and throughout the day. We also ask that if you do choose to bring food from home, it must be a cold lunch (ex: a sandwich).

It is your responsibility to inform the staff of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. Sunny-Steps Childcare Center will not be held liable for any food allergies or religious food restrictions if not notified by the parent in writing. If a child has a nut allergy in the classroom, that classroom will be designated as nut-free. A copy of the monthly lunch menu is posted in each class and on your Brightwheel app. If you would like a physical copy of the menu, please ask a staff member.

Parents are able to provide snacks for their child's class if they choose. Please be sure to read all food labels to ensure the selected snack does not contain nuts or has been processed in a factory that processes nuts if your child is in a designated nut-free room. Please make sure provided snacks meet state requirements for nutrition. Sweet snacks such as cupcakes, cookies, and candy are preferred on your child's birthday or party days only. Please inform your child's teacher if you wish to send a special treat. An approved snack list is available upon request.

School and Family Partnership

The partnership between the school and its families creates a sense of community and well-being for the child. By forming a trusted relationship, staff and families will effectively communicate in order to maximize academic success in the classroom. Staff and families will work together to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance of every student, staff member, family member, and guest of Sunny-Steps Childcare Center. By collaborating together, staff, families, and the community will help foster a love of learning within the student to set the child up for academic and personal success.

Unacceptable Behavior Possible Consequences

- Violation of School Rules - Incident Report
- Profane Language - Phone Call to Parents/Guardians
- Obscene Gestures - Conference with Parents/Guardian
- Excessive Tardiness or Absences - Loss of Privileges
- Bullying - Out-of-School Suspension
- Threatening Violence - Expulsion
- Destruction of Property (school or student)
- Noncompliance or Defiance
- Physical or Verbal Abuse
- Theft
- Causing a False Alarm
- Dishonesty

Disciplinary Action Policy

Sunny-Steps Childcare Center reserves the right to escalate the Disciplinary Action Policy based on the severity of the incident.

- Three infractions in one day will result in the child being sent home for the remainder of that day.
- Second day in a week with three infractions of any kind; child will be sent home for the remainder of that week.
- Two consecutive weeks of being sent home for the week will result in suspension for one full week.
- Three suspensions during a calendar year will result in expulsion from the program. Readmission to the program may be negotiated with the director team.
- Refusal of a parent to pick up their child will result in immediate expulsion from the program.

Enrollment

Per Kansas Department of Health and Environment regulations for childcare facilities, all enrollment forms must be completed and on file before a child may attend the center. All fees are due at the time of enrollment. Children will not be allowed to begin the program until all required forms are submitted.

Required forms include:

- Non-Refundable Registration fees
- Non-Refundable Prepaid Tuition
- Parent Agreement form
- Student Registration form
- Immunization Record
- Emergency Medical Release form
- Medicine Release form (for any necessary medications administered at Sunny-Steps)
- Photo Release form
- Safe Sleep Policy (infants only)
- Food information sheet (infants and toddlers only)
- Developmental Milestones (infants only)
- Field Trip Form

Admission Policy

Sunny-Steps Childcare Center does not discriminate in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, or sex.

Teaching Staff

Sunny-Steps Childcare Center is staffed with qualified Early Childhood professionals.

Teacher to Child Ratio is:

- 6 weeks to 12 months 1 to 3
- 12 to 36 months 1 to 5
- 2 to 3 years 1 to 7
- 2 ½ to 6 years 1 to 10
- 3 to 6 years 1 to 12
- School age (6 and above) 1 to 16

What Your Child Should Bring

Please label all personal items.

Infants

- Baby food
- 4 feeding bottles (more if needed)
- Formula or breast milk
- Bibs
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper cream
- 2 extra sets of clothing
- Socks or slippers
- Swaddle blanket or sleep sack
- Sunscreen

Waddlers, Toddlers, and Toddler II

- Diapers/pull-ups
- Wipes
- Diaper Cream
- 2 extra sets of clothing
- Sunscreen
- Toothbrush
- Labeled Water bottle/sippy cup (to stay at center)
- Bedding items for nap

-Closed toe playground shoes (to stay at center)

Preschool

-2 sets of extra clothing to include underwear

-Sunscreen

-Labeled Water bottle (to stay at center)

-Pull-ups (if needed)

-Toothbrush

-Bedding items for those who nap

-Closed toe playground shoes (to stay at center)

-Full-size backpack large enough to fit standard folder

-Classroom supplies as indicated on supply list