



## **Playful Scholars Family Handbook**

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# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

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# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Welcome

Thank you for choosing Playful Scholars for your child's care and early education and trusting us with your child's care and early learning. Playful Scholars is a full-day, year-round, Child Led early learning center serving children from infancy through preschool.

This Family Handbook provides an overview of our programs, philosophies, policies, and state licensing requirements. We ask that parents and guardians read this handbook, sign the Family Handbook Acknowledgement form at the end of this handbook, and keep it for reference throughout your child's enrollment.

At Playful Scholars, we are more than a child care center - we are a community built on curiosity, creativity, and connection. Our goal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and developmentally-appropriate environment where children can play with purpose, learn with curiosity, and grow with confidence.

This handbook covers most, but not all Playful Scholars policies and procedures. It is intended as a guide to support families in understanding our programs and expectations. For additional information or questions, we encourage you to reach out directly to your child's teacher or the Program Director.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire children to play with purpose, learn with curiosity, and grow with confidence. Through a nurturing environment and intentional, play-based, Child Led learning we support each child's emotional, social, and academic development – building a strong foundation for school and life.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to become Michigan's premier provider of early childhood education, recognized for exceptional care, purposeful play, and a commitment to helping every child reach their full potential.

## What Sets Us Apart

Our teachers model kindness and problem-solving to help toddlers navigate big emotions – turning challenges into learning opportunities. Each day helps your child build friendships, independence, and emotional security that will serve them for years to come.

At the heart of everything we do are the 4 C's:

- **Classrooms:** Bright, sage, and thoughtfully designed spaces where learning feels like play
- **Curriculum:** A play-based, Child Led approach that supports hands-on discovery and early academics
- **Caregivers:** Passionate teachers who connect with children through compassion, patience, and understanding
- **Community:** Families and teachers working together to create lasting relationships that support the growth of your child

## What Parents Can Expect at Playful Scholars

### ✓ A Safe and Supportive Environment:

Your child's safety and well-being are our top priorities. Our classrooms are designed with age-appropriate materials, consistent routines, and attentive supervision to help children feel secure, comfortable, and confident each day.

### ✓ Experienced, Caring Teachers:

Our educators are trained professionals who genuinely care about the children they serve. They take time to build strong relationships with each child, understand individual needs, and support development at every stage.

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## ✓ Learning Through Play:

Children at Playful Scholars learn through hands-on activities that promote early literacy, math skills, creativity, problem-solving, and social development. Our play-based approach supports school readiness while allowing children to learn in a way that feels natural and engaging.

## ✓ Individualized Care:

We recognize that no two children learn the same way. Activities and routines are adapted to fit your child's age, development level, and learning style, helping them grow socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

## ✓ Clear Communication with Families:

We believe families should feel informed and connected. We use the Brightwheel app to share daily updates, photos, and important information so you know how your child's day is going and can stay involved.

## ✓ A True Partnership with Families:

By working together, we create consistency between home and school and support each child's success. Questions, feedback, and conversations are always welcome.

## Hours of Operation

Playful Scholars is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Any closures that are anticipated will be provided to you with a minimum of a seven (7) day notice.

Playful Scholars is closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve (half day)
- New Year's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Black Friday
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Independence Day
- Up to four (4) days of Professional Development per year

If a holiday falls on a weekend, Playful Scholars may close on the closest weekday (Friday or Monday). You will receive at least seven (7)'s notice of any additional or adjusted closings.

Holidays and professional development days are essential to maintaining the highest quality care and education for your child.

For example, if New Year's Day falls on a Saturday, Playful Scholars may close on Friday or Monday of that week.

## Weather Related Closings

Playful Scholars will typically remain open during severe weather. The Program Director monitors local weather conditions and news reports to determine if it is necessary to close the center early or cancel care for the following day.

If care is cancelled or the center closes early, you will be notified promptly via the Brightwheel app with instructions and updates.

We ask that children be picked up in a timely manner to ensure that all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home. Your cooperation helps keep everyone safe during severe weather events.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Programs, Costs, Daily Schedule

Playful Scholars provides school year and summer programs through our program offerings of four (4) Full Time programs and eight (8) Part Time programs:

Please note that the age ranges below are a reference and not a hard cut off. The best placement for a child is based on factors including age, child capacity and a discussion with the parents about their child.

### FULL TIME

Room	Age Range	Ratio	Schedule	Rate Per Month
Infant	2M - 15M	4:1 up to 12	7:30AM - 5:30 PM	\$1,225
Toddler	15M - 30M	4:1 up to 8	7:30AM - 5:30 PM	\$1,175
Preschool	30M - 48M	8:1 up to 16	7:30AM - 5:30 PM	\$995
Pre-K	48M - 72M	10:1 up to 23	7:30AM - 5:30 PM	\$995

### PART TIME

Room	Age Range	Ratio	Schedule	Rate Per Month
Infant	2M - 15M	4:1 up to 12	AM 7:30-12:30 or PM 12:30-5:30	\$795
Toddler	15M - 30M	4:1 up to 8	AM 7:30-12:30 or PM 12:30-5:30	\$765
Preschool	30M - 48M	8:1 up to 16	AM 7:30-12:30 or PM 12:30-5:30	\$650
Pre-K	48M - 72M	10:1 up to 23	AM 7:30-12:30 or PM 12:30-5:30	\$650

Time	A Typical Day's Activities (subject to change)
7:30 AM	building opens
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	arrival and breakfast
8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	story time
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	morning class time / snack
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	outside time
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM	lunch
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM	afternoon class time / rest or nap / snack
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	outside time / free play / gross motor play
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM	clean up time / departure

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

Time	A Typical Day's Activities (subject to change)
7:30 AM	building opens
5:30 PM	building closes *late pick up fee is \$25 per 30 minutes

## Infant (2 Months – 15 Months)

Safe, nurturing spaces designed for our youngest learners. Filled with sensory play, music, and gentle routines that build trust and early development.

## Toddler (15 Months – 30 Months)

Curious explorers develop confidence and independence through active play, movement activities, and early social interactions with peers and caregivers.

## Preschool (30 Months – 48 Months)

Active learners build language skills, cooperation, and growing independence through creative expression, and meaningful group activities.

## Pre-K (48 Months – 72 Months)

School-ready children master early literacy, math concepts, and teamwork in bright, engaging classrooms designed to prepare them for kindergarten success.

## Day Care on Public School Closure Days

When the local public school schedule is closed for the day, the center may offer drop-in daycare services to enrolled or approved families, subject to availability and staffing. Drop-in care must be requested in advance and is not guaranteed. A daily drop-in fee of \$65 per child will be charged for each day of attendance and will be billed via Brightwheel. All standard center policies, procedures, and behavioral expectations remain in effect during drop-in care days.

## Program Placement and Age Eligibility

Children are initially placed into programs based on their age as of September 1 of the current program year. Adjustments to program placement before or after enrolling will be made if needed based on the child's capacity and input from the parents.

Children enrolling mid-year are placed in the program that corresponds to their age at the time of enrollment. Transitions between programs are made at the discretion of the Program Director based on the child's age, developmental readiness, and available space. Parents will be notified in advance of any planned transition and will have the opportunity to discuss their child's readiness with the teaching team. Children are not moved to a new program solely based on reaching an age threshold; readiness and the overall needs of the child are always considered.

## Summer Program Placement

Summer program placement will initially be based on the placement from the prior school year.

## Application Process

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in its admissions, programs, or activities. All rights and privileges of the center are afforded to all children and families equally.

## **\*\*\$200 Non-refundable school year application fee per child\*\***

Upon completion of Playful Scholars Initial Application Package, payment of the application fee is required to complete the process. After your application is submitted it will be reviewed and an approval decision will be made. After that approval decision has been made, you will be notified and required to submit a few additional documents outlined in the enrollment section below.

## **Enrollment**

Every year Playful Scholars completes an audit of enrollment records. You will be notified if any information needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated annually, including the Child Information Record form.

Other records, such as physicals and immunization records, must be updated throughout the year. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly well-child appointment, please request a copy of the physical and most recent immunization record to provide to the center.

Any time your family information changes, such as address, phone number, or physician, a new Child Information Record form must be completed.

**\*\*A deposit in the amount of the first full month of care is required to finalize enrollment. This will be applied to the first month of tuition when due.\*\***

**\*\*The enrollment deposit is refundable up until the first day your child is in attendance. If at the conclusion of a 1-month probationary period for the new student, it appears that the student is not a fit for Playful Scholars, the parents will be notified to discuss dismissal and offered a refund of the first month's tuition deposit.\*\***

## **Enrollment Documents**

Please note that this list may change due to licensing needs and policy updates. You will be notified if additional documents are needed in the future.

### **Initial Application Package**

- Application (\$200 Non Refundable Fee)
- Family Handbook (this document which covers the below subcategories as well as others)
  - Pet & Visiting Animal Policy, Pg 8
  - Food Service Policy, Pg 10
  - Food Allergy Action Plan, Pg 10
  - Health & Emergency Policies, Pg 12
  - Parent Notification of Licensing Notebook, Pg 14

### **Official Enrollment Package Presented After Application Approval**

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Document / Item	Action Required	Notes
Enrollment and Financial Contract	Staff Witness	
Photo Permission / Non-Permission Form	Staff Witness	
Pet & Visiting Animal Approval Form	Staff Witness	
Permission to Apply Topical Lotions Form	Staff Witness	
State of MI Child Information Record (CCL-3731)	Staff Witness	
Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Care Plan (ECP-FAAP)	Staff Review	<i>If applicable</i>
Health Appraisal / Immunization Record (MDHHS-3305)	Staff Review	<i>Within 30 days</i>
Copy of Parent/Guardian Driver's License	Staff Copy	
Create Brightwheel Account	Staff Review	<i>Deposit, Supply Fee</i>
Deposit – First Full Month of Care	Payment Received	<i>Refundable</i>
\$200 Annual Supplies Fee	Payment Received	

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a top priority for Playful Scholars. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classrooms, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families. Brightwheel is the app used to communicate between parents and staff. Please know that staff can read messages sent via Brightwheel. Please keep Brightwheel communication limited only to information that you do not mind the staff reading.

### **Right to Reject Application**

Playful Scholars reserves the right to accept or reject any child's application at its sole discretion. Decisions are made in the best interest of the child, the safety and well-being of all enrolled children, and the effective operation of the programs. Submission of an application does not guarantee enrollment.

### **Withdrawal**

Playful Scholars requires a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days written notice prior to withdrawal from the program. Written notice must be submitted via Brightwheel or email to the Program Director. Tuition remains due through the end of the 30-day notice period regardless of attendance during that time. If written notice is not provided, you will be responsible for tuition through the 30 days following the date the center is notified of withdrawal. This policy allows us to responsibly plan enrollment and staffing and maintain the quality of care for all children.

### **Dismissal**

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Parents will be notified of possible dismissal of their child for the following reasons:

1. Non-payment of tuition for a two-month period.
  - a. Suitable arrangements must be made.
  - b. Reinstatement may be considered only if all payments have been made in full.
2. Persistent disruptive behavior in the classroom or repeated acts of bodily harm to self or others.
3. If at the conclusion of a 1-month probationary period for the new student, it appears that the student is not fit to continue with enrollment at Playful Scholars.

The following steps must be implemented to dismiss a student:

1. Notification by the teacher to the director.
2. Notification to the parents of the problem.
3. The child is placed on a probation period.
4. At the end of the probationary period, a parent-teacher conference will be held.
5. Final termination.

## Tuition

### Financial Agreements

During enrollment and any changes to tuition, you will be provided with an Enrollment and Financial Contract. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors. The contract states the days and hours your child may be at Playful Scholars as well as the amount due each month. This contract is binding and can only be changed with approval and signatures from you and the Program Director.

### Yearly Supply Fee

\$200 annual supply fee must be paid by parents upon enrollment.

### Payment Schedule

Tuition is paid via Brightwheel. Please contact [kevin@playfulscholars.us](mailto:kevin@playfulscholars.us) if help is needed to set up payments online via Brightwheel. Tuition is due on the first (1st) of each month. There is a \$40.00 late fee per day for payments not initiated by the fifth (5th) of each month. **No checks or cash will be accepted for tuition or other fees.**

An invoice will be sent via Brightwheel before it is due. If you do not receive an invoice, you are responsible for requesting one.

### Electronic Payment fees

-ACH Fee: 0.6%, \$0.25 min, \$2 max

-Card Fee: 2.95%

### Subsidized Care - DHS

Playful Scholars accepts childcare assistance. You will be responsible for full payments until authorization has been received, and then a monthly copay after a determination amount has been calculated. If at any time assistance is stopped, you will be responsible for full tuition as of the date the assistance ended.

### Multiple Child Discount

Families with two or more children enrolled full-time at Playful Scholars are eligible for a 10% discount to be applied to the oldest child's monthly tuition fee.

### Insufficient Funds

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All payments rejected due to insufficient funds will be charged a \$25.00 penalty. Missed payments and late fees must be paid within seven (7) days. Repeated incidents could result in termination of child care services. A payment plan should be discussed with the Program Director if you are having trouble making tuition payments.

## Delinquent Accounts

You will be charged \$25.00 per day starting on the sixth (6th) day of each month. Families that are behind in payments for more than seven (7) days without contacting the Program Administrator and setting up a payment arrangement may have your child care services terminated. For information about assistance programs that will help cover the cost of child care tuition, please speak with the Program Administrator. A payment plan must be agreed upon before an account will be considered "in good standing" and no longer eligible for termination. This may require a signed payment plan contract.

## Daily Arrival

You are required to accompany your child into the center and classroom and briefly communicate with the teacher about your child's needs that day such as sleep, meals, or temperament. Separation from parents can be challenging at times, which is developmentally appropriate for young children.

For a smoother drop off following the following principles:

- **Establish a routine:** follow the same arrival routine every day. Predictability helps reduce stress.
- **Separate once:** Say goodbye and leave promptly. Returning repeatedly can increase anxiety.
- **Be reliable:** Pick up your child as promised. Children who are picked up late may experience more separation stress. Use concrete time cues your child can understand such as, "after snack" or "before nap."

## Daily Departure

Playful Scholars closes at 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. If you will be late, please notify the center as soon as possible. Late pick-ups may be subject to a late fee.

If someone unfamiliar is picking up your child, please inform the teacher in advance. The person must be listed as an authorized pick-up on the Child Information Record form. Identification, such as a driver's license, will be requested for safety, even if the person has picked up before.

Always say goodbye to your child's teacher so they know you are leaving. Once you depart with your child, Playful Scholars is no longer responsible for their care. For safety, children should not run ahead inside or outside the building.

## Late Pick-Up Fee

Playful Scholars closes at 5:30 PM on Monday through Friday. You will be charged \$25.00 for every 30 minutes a child is present after the contracted pick-up time. Teachers will record late fees for processing. If there is a late pick-up fee, you will receive a notice via Brightwheel stating the amount of the late pick-up fee. The fee will be added to the next month's invoice.

If you do not arrive to pick up your child by 5:45 PM, staff members will first try to contact you using all appropriate phone numbers provided in the Child Information Record forms. If you are unreachable, staff members will try to contact all emergency contact persons listed for your child. If staff members are unable to contact emergency contact persons within a reasonable time, the Program Director will be notified and will notify the Department of Human Services and/or the local Police Department.

## Attendance

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Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of your child as well as the classroom as a whole. If your child will be absent, please send in a Brightwheel message by 7:30 AM so your child's teacher may make accommodations to the lesson plan and daily schedule.

If your child will be absent for more than five (5) days, the center should be notified in writing via Brightwheel message of the date of the beginning of the absence and the expected return date. Enrollment may be terminated if a child is absent for a period of five (5) days or more if no notice has been received or contact made by the family.

## Curriculum

### Daily Schedule and Activities

Each program has a daily schedule tailored to each age group. Playful Scholars uses play-based and Child Led curricula and methods. A daily schedule of your child's program may be provided.

### The Child Led Experience

An essential part of the Child Led experience, the term 'prepared environment' refers to a classroom that contains all the elements a young child needs to naturally respond to their individual desire to explore and learn. The environment provides the opportunity to take from the surrounding materials, which are child-sized and designed in a meaningful way and aid the child in their discovery of the world around them.

This prepared classroom environment differs from the traditional classrooms as it is a multi-aged environment. Children work and learn from each other as they advance at their own pace. This also builds a sense of family and community, creating opportunities for the younger child to learn from their older classmates while it builds confidence and self-esteem in the older children as they share their knowledge with their younger classmates.

Essentially this prepared environment becomes like a family atmosphere where a child feels safe and comfortable. Along with the prepared environment are the distinct areas of the classroom. Each of the areas deals with certain skills which, as the children explore, all relate back to each other. There are five main areas in a Child Led Classroom: Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, Everyday Living and Geography/Culture.

**Sensorial:** This area allows the children to explore each concept developing their senses. The children arrange and organize materials according to the concept they are exploring. They train themselves to observe, make comparisons, form judgments, reason and decide while they repetitively use the materials. Work in this area ends up being indirect preparation for later more advanced mathematical concepts.

**Everyday Living/Practical Life:** The practical life area helps a child explore and participate in hands-on activities that teach the child how to function in the environment around them. Exercises such as pouring, spooning, sorting, food prep, care of self, care of the classroom environment and grace and courtesy are included in their daily lives. The children learn to become independent and confident in their abilities while building their concentration and focus as the child learns simple everyday tasks.

**Mathematics:** In the beginning the child explores quantity and symbols all in a concrete manner. Sequential materials allow 'hands on' exploration of shapes, relationships, dimensions, and amounts. The child's ability to touch a 'one' or 'hundred' helps them internalize the process of the mathematical concept. The sensorial work carries over into the math area allowing them to begin this concrete exploration and move at their own pace into more abstract concepts.

**Geography and Culture:** This area encompasses several smaller areas both physical and intellectual. Child Led looks at geography and culture together, working to bring awareness to the child of their place in the universe. Geography begins with the globe and works down through the physical aspects of the earth. Nature exploration brings experiences in biology, botany, and zoology. The children also learn about the people and cultures

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of our human family, including exploration of our similarities and differences. The art and music included in this area give the children an opportunity to enjoy creative activities.

**Language:** Child Led exposes children to the sounds letters make as they once again use their senses and movement to physically trace the sandpaper letters through the process. Once they have learned to discriminate a few individual sounds, they begin putting sounds together working forward through this natural progression of learning to read. A very individual approach, which allows the child to develop their reading skills and vocabulary at their own pace. Also included in the Language area are the children's writing skills, which themselves tie back to Everyday Living where the explorations help develop their small motor skills and finger strength.

## **Additional Classroom Experiences**

### **Free Choice**

"Free-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choices, self selection) activities are incorporated into the children's schedules. During free-play, teachers actively participate with your child by asking questions about what your children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging your child to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free-play is another opportunity for your child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

During free choice time, your child can explore and learn through purposeful play in a thoughtfully prepared environment. Your child is encouraged to choose activities that match their interests, helping build independence, confidence, and a love of learning.

Your child may work independently or alongside peers, using hands-on materials that support early skills such as math, problem-solving, language development, fine motor growth, and practical life experiences. The children are free to explore, repeat activities, and follow their curiosity at their own pace.

Teachers observe and gently guide play, offering support, encouragement, and new challenges when your child is ready. This balance of freedom and guidance allows your child to learn naturally through play while developing focus, creativity, problem-solving skills, and social skills.

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is an essential part of the daily schedule and is thoughtfully incorporated into the daily routine twice a day weather permitting. Staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Children are encouraged to follow their curiosity outdoors just as they do indoors. Outdoor play is an opportunity to run, jump, climb, and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. These large-motor experiences support physical development, body awareness, coordination, and confidence. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are so engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who they wish to interact with.

Teachers are still present and largely engaged during outdoor play, observing children and joining activities when invited or when support is needed. They help extend play, model positive social interactions, and ensure a safe and respectful environment while allowing children the freedom to explore and take appropriate risks.

Outdoor play also plays a vital role in social development. Children learn to negotiate roles, practice taking turns, and build friendships. Daily outdoor play supports the whole child – physically, socially and emotionally – and is an important part of creating a balanced and healthy daily experience.

Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors.

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Our teachers refer to the Child Care Weather Watch information from the Michigan Department of Public Health to determine if it is too hot or too cold to play outdoors. It is important for you to send your child in appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g. coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.) Please clearly label all articles of clothing. Playful Scholars has a few extra hats and mittens, but not enough for every child. If your child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, staff will contact you to provide the appropriate attire.

## Nap/Rest time

The Michigan Department of Human Services requires that all children must be provided with a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Your child will not be required to sleep but may be encouraged to lie down quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children are provided with alternative activities if unable to rest. The time of nap will be determined by which program your child attends.

Your child is encouraged to bring a familiar item from home to use during nap/rest time, such as a small blanket or stuffed animal. These items will be stored in your child's backpack or nap bag as there is limited space for storage of these items. Please take this into consideration when deciding which items to bring. All items should be clearly labeled. All laundry is sent home weekly to be washed on Fridays.

## Multimedia

The use of multimedia is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in the classrooms. Teachers may select movies, television shows, and/or computer games based on weekly themes. Your child is not required to view the movie or television show, or to play computer games. Instead, this activity is offered as one of several options. All multimedia must have a rating of "PG" or "E" and must possess an educational theme. Children are limited to a specified amount of time per week they may view or use multimedia.

Room	# of Hours Per Week
Infant	0
Toddler	2
Preschool	2.5
Pre-K	2.5

## Pets and Visiting Animals

Staff may occasionally introduce a class pet to the classroom. Please make sure you share any pet allergies with your student's teachers. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. All parents must sign a Pet and Visiting Animal Approval form prior to the introduction of the pet into the classroom.

No animal may be brought into Playful Scholars without first notifying and receiving approval from the Program Director. Once approved by the Program Director, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

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## Assessments

Playful Scholars will assess students' levels when entering the program and then approximately every three (3) months thereafter. You are encouraged to work with your child's teacher to assess and meet your child's needs.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences / Assessment Portfolios

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be held two (2) times per year, as well as each time your child transitions between programs. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development, both in the center setting and the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. You are also encouraged to request a conference whenever necessary.

## Special Needs

### Special Needs Care Policy

Playful Scholars is committed to the principle of inclusion and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are committed to every child equally, regardless of their special needs, and will commit to learning more about each child's specific needs and finding the best resources necessary to accomplish our common goal of finding the best care for each child. We believe that including children with special needs can enrich the experience of learning for all children and Playful Scholars will make accommodations for children with special needs within the guidelines of the ADA. If we are unable to accommodate a child based on our training level, we will refer the child to the ESA.

### Right to Refuse Care

At Playful Scholars, the health, safety, and well-being of all children and staff are our top priorities. For this reason, Playful Scholars reserves the right to refuse care or request early pickup when your child cannot safely or comfortably participate in the daily program.

Care may be refused if your child is ill, shows symptoms of a contagious condition, poses a safety risk to themselves or others, requires care beyond what Playful Scholars is licensed or staffed to provide, or does not have the required health documentation on file.

If your child becomes ill or unsafe in care during the day, you will be contacted and expected to arrange prompt pickup.

Playful Scholars is committed to working in partnership with families and approach these situations with care, respect, and the best interest of both your child and the center community. Decisions to refuse care are made thoughtfully and with safety as the guiding priority.

### Meals and Snacks **\*\*NO NUTS\*\***

At Playful Scholars children are provided with nutritious snacks throughout the day which are tailored to each classroom's schedule.

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Room	Morning Snack	Lunch From Home	Afternoon Snack
Infant	On Demand	On Demand	On Demand
Toddler	9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	11:30 AM	2:30 PM
Preschool	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Pre-K	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

### Food Service Policy

Morning and afternoon snacks are provided daily and follow Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Families may request a copy to take home. Children are encouraged but not forced to try all foods offered. Please inform your child's teacher of any dietary restrictions or allergies so substitutes can be made. For certain restrictions families may need to provide food from home. Each child will be required to bring in a snack at a minimum, once a semester, to share with the class. This snack will be set up by staff, but will be brought in by the student to share their favorite foods with the class for the week.

Each student will need to bring lunch from home. The lunch will be kept in a refrigerator in their classroom and set up for them during lunch time. If there is something that needs to be heated up, the teachers will provide that.

Wednesday's will be pizza days and each child can sign up for \$4 per two slices of pizza and two sides. You may also choose to pay the entire year or semester upfront. That amount will be sent out at the appropriate times.

### Food From Home

Children are welcome to bring in treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we recommend supplying store-bought snacks still in the original packaging. Nuts are also not allowed in our classrooms. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing any homemade snacks. A list of healthy snack options approved by the USDA and Michigan Department of Education is available from the Program Director upon request.

### Food Allergies Action Plan

If your child has a food allergy please complete the Food Allergy Action Plan form which will be in the final enrollment package. This form will be posted in your child's classroom and in all food preparation areas. If your child requires medication for an allergic reaction, the form must be signed by your physician.

### Infant, Toddler, Preschool and Pre-K Program Supplies

For children in the Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs, parents are asked to provide the following items, if applicable for your child. Diapers (2 daily), wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, and 1 stuffed toy for rest time. Please label all items with your child's name. Pacifiers may be used during rest time but should be kept in your child's cubby or diaper bag at all other times to help reduce the spread of illness.

For families who are breastfeeding, please coordinate with your child's teacher regarding feeding times and schedules. Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers, and for health and safety reasons, frozen milk cannot be stored at the center for more than 24 hours.

We also recommend that any new foods be introduced at home first so you can monitor for potential allergic reactions. Please let your child's teacher know on the daily chart which new foods your child has tried.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## **Additional Items All Parents Need to Provide and Consider Daily**

Please send your child with extra clothing, a water bottle, sunscreen, a small blanket for rest, a travel-size pillow, and weather-appropriate clothing. Your child should have a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school and replenished as needed. All items should be clearly labeled. Your child's teacher will let you know if additional clothing is required or if items are missing.

Children should come to Playful Scholars in comfortable, washable play clothes and shoes, as play is often active and messy. Outdoor play is scheduled as part of our curriculum, so please dress your child appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities.

All items should be placed in your child's cubby shortly after arrival and clearly labeled. Items of value such as handheld gaming systems or other valuable items should be left at home due to the risk of damage or loss. Playful Scholars is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

## **Guidance and Behavior**

At Playful Scholars our goal is to teach children self-control, responsibility, and positive social skills in a safe, nurturing environment. All staff use positive guidance techniques based on the Conscious Discipline Method, which encourages learning through connection, empathy, and consistency.

### **Positive Guidance**

We work to guide children in ways that encourage learning and growth. At home, you can support this effort by validating feelings, offering choices, and using consistent routines. At school, staff:

- Encourage problem-solving and independence
- Respect each child's feelings and choices
- Use praise and positive reinforcement
- Maintain predictable and structured routines
- Preserve your child's dignity and self-esteem

Staff interact with children at eye level, circulate throughout the classroom, and ask open-ended questions to guide behavior.

### **Understanding Misbehavior**

Children misbehave for many reasons, such as testing rules, feeling tired, hungry, or overstimulated, seeking attention, or adjusting to different expectations at home and school. Understanding these reasons helps both parents and staff respond in ways that teach children healthy behaviors.

### **Preventing Misbehavior**

You can help prevent misbehavior at home by:

- Establishing consistent routines and expectations
- Encouraging your child to use words to express feelings
- Noticing and labeling feelings, actions, and intentions
- Helping your child contribute to family and community tasks

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

At Playful Scholars our staff:

- Build one-on-one relationships through “I Love You Rituals”
- Use classroom visuals, charts, and personalized support tools
- Teach emotional regulation with tools like Feeling Charts and Self-Control Boards
- Encourage your child to be helpful and contribute to the classroom community
- Support development of executive skills like self-control, patience, and focus

## **Biting Policy**

Biting is common in children under three, but it is not acceptable in the classroom. You can support your child at home by:

- Watching for triggers such as transitions, hunger, or tiredness
- Encouraging gentle interactions and teaching words to express needs
- Practicing turn-taking and sharing

At Playful Scholars our staff:

- Observe and identify triggers
- Increase positive attention and structured routines
- Teach alternatives to biting, like words, gestures, or appropriate toys
- Intervene immediately using firm guidance and redirection

## **Severe or Repeated Biting**

At Playful Scholars our staff:

- Will meet with you to create a behavior plan
- May recommend an evaluation which you must schedule within five (5) days and share results with staff
- If your child bites twice in one day you must pick them up immediately
- If your child bites three times in the same week the child must be picked up immediately and must stay home the following day

## **Destructive or Violent Play**

At Playful Scholars there is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play. Your child is not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, blocks, etc. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If your child brings a weapon to Playful Scholars the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior. All efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

## **Prohibited Discipline Practices**

In accordance with Michigan licensing rules, the following forms of discipline are strictly prohibited at Playful Scholars: hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment; restricting a child's movement by binding or tying; confining a child in an enclosed area such as a closet, locked room, or box; humiliating, ridiculing, threatening, or deliberately frightening a child; depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use; punishing a child for toileting accidents; and any form of emotional or physical abuse.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

Any staff member who violates this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Parents who believe their child has been subjected to any prohibited practice should contact the Program Director immediately.

## Health and Safety Policies

At Playful Scholars your child's health and safety are our top priorities. This section explains what you need to know and do to keep your child safe and healthy at school.

### SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age one (1) for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS; however, several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Playful Scholars has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

All infants less than one (1) year will be placed on their back to sleep. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing at Playful Scholars. Infants may sleep in a wearable blanket or sleepsack that is appropriate for the child's size and age. Swaddling is not permitted at Playful Scholars unless a signed and dated physician's note is on file that specifically authorizes swaddling for the individual child, states the medical reason, and specifies the approved method. All sleepsacks and wearable blankets must be free of loose fabric, hoods, and other entanglement hazards.

Once a child has been placed in a crib for a nap, if the infant rolls from back to front and is also able to roll from front to back it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib. A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request.

### General Illness Guidelines

Your child should stay home or will be sent home if they show signs of illness, including:

- Fever of 100.4 °F or greater (your child should stay home until fever free for 24 hours. Without fever reducing medication)
- Vomiting (your child may return 24 hours after the last episode or with a doctor's note confirming it is not contagious)
- Diarrhea (your child may return 24 hours after the last episode or with a doctor's note confirming it is not contagious)
- Persistent cough, difficulty breathing, or severe irritability
- Contagious rashes, pink eye, or other communicable illness (your child may return per doctor's instructions)
- Head Lice (your child must be treated at home and checked before returning to school)

Note - this is not an exhaustive list and we ask parents to also use their best judgment and consideration of the staff and other students when deciding to send their child to school or not for illness related concerns.

### Sick Child Pick Up

You should pick up your sick child within one hour of notification.

### Absence Due To Illness Notification

Call or send a message via Brightwheel by 7:30 AM if your child is ill. Families will be notified of exposures to communicable diseases in the center via Brightwheel.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Medications

Playful Scholars does not administer any medication without written parental authorization.

- Medications must be in the original container and clearly labeled with your child's full name and birthdate
- Only the Program Director or Lead Caregivers may administer medication
- Staff will document the type, dosage, and time the medication is administered
- Unused medication will be returned to you immediately
- Staff does not administer any fever reducers for your child at any age
- Doctor's notes may also be required for special instructions, allergies, or changes in treatment

## Health Records and Immunization Requirements

All children must have current physical and immunization records on file. A physical evaluation must be on file within 30 days of your child's initial attendance. Physical evaluations must be updated on the following schedule per Michigan licensing rules: every thirteen (13) months for infants and toddlers (birth to 30 months), and every two (2) years for preschoolers (30 months and older). If your child's records are due for an update, the center will notify you in advance.

All children must have current immunization records on file at the time of enrollment in accordance with R 400.8112. Immunization records must be updated as new doses are received. Playful Scholars accepts the following in lieu of completed immunizations: a medical contraindication form signed by a licensed physician stating why the child cannot receive immunizations, or a certified non-medical waiver on the official form prescribed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, signed by the parent, stating immunizations are not being administered due to religious, medical, or other reasons. Children whose immunizations are in progress due to age-appropriate dose waiting periods may remain enrolled with documentation showing the child is in the process of complying with all requirements.

Children with allergies or special health care needs must have an Action Plan or Emergency Care Plan on file. Staff review and follow these plans to ensure your child's safety.

## Accidents and Incidents

All accidents and incidents will be documented in Brightwheel and reviewed by the Program Director. You will be notified as soon as the situation responsibly allows via Brightwheel. Any child who is ill or injured will remain under staff supervision until picked up. All injuries or incidents that occur over the shoulders does require a phone call to a parent.

## Handwashing and Hygiene

Frequent handwashing is required for children and staff to reduce the spread of illness. Children will wash hands:

- Upon arrival and when changing classrooms
- Before and after meals
- After using the toilet or diaper changes
- After outdoor play
- After handling pets, animals, or sensory materials

## Emergency Medical Care

You must complete and keep up to date the State of Michigan Child Information Record form. In an emergency, staff will contact you or authorized contacts immediately. If urgent medical care is needed, staff will call 911 and accompany your child to the hospital with all necessary records.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

You must provide sunscreen for outdoor activities. Staff will apply sunscreen only with a signed permission form on file.

## Emergency Procedures

### Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or Other Emergency Situations

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Playful Scholars conducts emergency drills on the following schedule in compliance with Michigan licensing rules: fire drills are conducted at least once every three (3) months; tornado drills are conducted at least twice between the months of March and November; and other emergency drills, including lockdown and shelter-in-place, are conducted at least once per year. All classrooms are required to participate in every drill. A written log of all drills is maintained on file at the center. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each classroom's designated spot. Once all children are accounted for, all classes will meet at a designated location.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be notified as soon as safely possible following an emergency situation. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that you do not attempt to pick up your child during an emergency situation.

### Missing or Abducted Child

In the event of a missing child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area while another staff member informs the Program Director to help with the search. If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Program Director will notify the local Police Department and will notify you. In the event of an abducted child, the Staff member must immediately contact the Program Director and the Local Police Department and will notify you.

### Power Failure

Staff members and children will remain in the classroom and if safe and possible, and will proceed with activities as usual. If this situation requires it they may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes. If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close and you will be contacted. The Program Director is responsible for contacting you to inform you of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up your child.

## Licensing Notebook

Playful Scholars is a licensed child care center in Michigan, authorized to serve up to 59 children. Our program is licensed under the Child Care Organizations Act (Public Act 116 of 1973) and follows all rules set by the Child Care Licensing Bureau (CCLB) of the Michigan Department of Lifeline Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP).

Licensing rules set minimum standards for staffing and supervision, health and safety practices, indoor and outdoor space, and curriculum and daily activities.

The licensing notebook contains all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, corrective action plans, and approval letters for the last three (3) calendar years, along with a summary sheet outlining the documents in the notebook. The notebook is available to parents and prospective parents during regular business hours at the center. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past three (3) years are also available online at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare). A copy of the current Michigan licensing rules for child care centers is available for review in the center office or at the same website. You are welcome to review these materials at any time.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Home and School Partnership

### Family Partnership

At Playful Scholars we know that children thrive when families and teachers work together. Your active involvement, communication, and collaboration with our staff are essential to support your child's learning, development, and well-being. Many of our policies, routines, and guidance strategies rely on a strong partnership between home and school.

### Brightwheel

Playful Scholars uses Brightwheel to keep you connected with your child and teachers throughout the day. Brightwheel is used to communicate directly with teachers, share photos, notes, and incidents, to send billing statements, and process payments. We encourage all families to use Brightwheel to stay informed and engaged in your child's day.

### New Family Orientation

Each new family is encouraged to schedule a New Family Orientation with the Program Director typically five (5) days before your child's first day. During this time, families can drop off routine care items like diapers, bottles, etc. You can also participate in a portion of classroom activities with your child, review important policies and procedures, and also complete required enrollment paperwork.

This orientation also establishes the foundation for your partnership with Playful Scholars and ensures that you are fully familiar with your child's routines and needs.

### Newsletters and Calendars

Monthly calendars will be posted in your child's classroom and sent via Brightwheel. These updates will include weekly themes and lesson highlights along with announcements about center events and activities.

### Cultural Competence

At Playful Scholars we value each child and family's culture, faith, language, and traditions. We support cultural competence by:

- Treating families with respect and sensitivity from the first meeting
- Considering financial limitations when planning activities
- Learning about each family's culture, traditions, and home language
- Encouraging families to share this information to inform meals, holiday recognition, and classroom activities
- Inviting families to participate in classroom events and volunteer opportunities
- Supporting children in maintaining their home language with guidance from parents if English is a second language
- Providing ongoing staff training to enhance knowledge of culture, language, and diversity

### Room Transitions

Children transition to the next classroom when they reach developmental milestones for that program. You will receive a notification with transition information and you are encouraged to meet the new teacher before the transition and to familiarize your child with the classroom, classmates, and curriculum.

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## **Program Evaluations**

You may be asked to complete a brief program evaluation annually. Feedback is used to improve the quality of care and the overall Playful Scholars experience. Your perspectives are valued and directly influence program planning and improvements.

## **Questions or Concerns**

If you have questions or concerns you should first speak directly with your child's teacher. If the issue is not resolved, the Program Director is available to assist and can be reached at (989) 632-7446.

## **Contact List**

### **Center Phone Number**

(989) 632-7446

### **Program Director**

Fina Marthaler

(989) 698-6278

### **Assistant Program Director**

Leeann Emeott

(989) 280-7881

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

**\*\*Initial Program Application, Family Handbook Acknowledgement and Multi-age Program Acknowledgement Forms On Following Pages\*\***

## Initial Application Form \$200 Non-Refundable Application Fee Per Child

### Child Information

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex:  Female  Male

### Parent / Guardian Information

#### Parent/Guardian 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Parent/Guardian 2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Program Selection

*Full-Time: 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM | Part-Time AM: 7:30 AM – 12:30 PM | Part-Time PM: 12:30 PM – 5:30 PM*

Program	Full-Time (5-Day)	Half-Day (AM or PM)
Infant (2M – 15M)	\$1,225 / month	\$795 / month
Toddler (15M – 30M)	\$1,175 / month	\$765 / month
Preschool (30M – 48M)	\$995 / month	\$650 / month
Pre-K (48M – 72M)	\$995 / month	\$650 / month

#### Please select one:

- Infant:  Full-Time \$1,225/mo  Half-Day AM \$795/mo  Half-Day PM \$795/mo  
 Toddler:  Full-Time \$1,175/mo  Half-Day AM \$765/mo  Half-Day PM \$765/mo  
 Preschool:  Full-Time \$995/mo  Half-Day AM \$650/mo  Half-Day PM \$650/mo  
 Pre-K:  Full-Time \$995/mo  Half-Day AM \$650/mo  Half-Day PM \$650/mo

Requested Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Age at Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Special Requests, Food Allergies, or Other Notes

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Check this box if your child has allergies, allowing permission to post allergy information inside the school.

**Please return this form with your \$200 non-refundable application fee to complete your application.**

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Family Handbook Acknowledgement

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Playful Scholars Family Handbook, which contains written information covering the areas required by Michigan Administrative Rule R. 400.8113, including:

- Admission and withdrawal policies
- Schedule of operation and calendar
- Fees and tuition policies
- Guidance and discipline policy
- Food service policy
- Program philosophy
- Daily routine and schedule
- Parent notification plan for accidents, injuries, incidents, and illnesses
- Medication policy
- Exclusion policy for child illnesses
- Availability of the center's licensing notebook
- Pet and visiting animal policy
- Health and emergency policies

I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Family Handbook in its entirety and to ask questions if I need clarification on any policy or procedure.

I further understand that the \$200 non-refundable application fee per child must be paid in full prior to an enrollment decision being made by Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool

## Parental Permission for Enrollment Application

### Multi-Age Program Acknowledgement

I \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_ understand that by applying to enroll my  
child at Playful Scholars Childcare & Preschool, he/she will be in a classroom with children  
of similar ages within one of the following programs:

- Infant (2 months to 15 months)
- Toddler (15 months to 30 months)
- Preschool (30 months to 48 months)
- Preschool (48 months to 72 months)

I also understand that within the daily school environment and overall program, there may be times when my child will interact with children from other age groups during activities such as outdoor play, arrival and departure times, and special events.

**My signature below indicates my understanding of and permission for my child's enrollment application in the above stated programs.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date