



SOULSHINE™

Preschool DECATUR

PARENT HANDBOOK 2019

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT SOULSHINE PRESCHOOL 5

SOULSHINE PHILOSOPHY 5

WHAT IS PERMACULTURE AND HOW IS IT SHARED WITH THE STUDENTS? 5

OUR GOALS 5

WE PRACTICE INCLUSION 6

ORGANIC NUTRITION 7

ZERO FOOTPRINT GOAL 7

LEARNING AT SOULSHINE PRESCHOOL 8

GEORGIA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS 8

EXPANDING THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE 8

TUITION INCLUDES 8

CLASSROOM GRADUATIONS 9

INFANT ROOMS 9

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE 10

ENROLLMENT 10

MOVING FROM FULL-TIME TO PART-TIME 10

ADDING DAYS FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS 10

NO A LA CARTE OFFERINGS 11

ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTATION 11

FOUR WEEKS’ NOTICE REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW OR CANCEL 11

DISMISSAL POLICY 12

FEES 12

TUITION 12

SUPPLY FEE 13

TUITION DEPOSITS 14

PAYMENTS 14

FINES 15

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS 15

LATE PICK UP FINES 15

DROP-OFF TIME VIOLATIONS 16

CHILD CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT FINES 16

STAFF RELIEF FUND 16

DAILY OPERATIONS 17

HOURS OF OPERATION 17

FOOD17

PARENTS’ RIGHTS17

HOLIDAYS, WORKDAYS AND ALTERED HOUR DAYS17

THE CARE OF YOUR CHILD18

ATTENDANCE TRACKING18

COMMUNICATION PLAN18

SUPPLY LIST19

DROP-OFF 20

DROP-OFF TIMES..... 20

PICK-UP21

LATE PICK-UP FINES21

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS21

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE/LATE..... 22

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION 22

SAFE SLEEP POLICY..... 22

PARENT COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION 23

VOLUNTEERING..... 23

BOTTLE-FED CHILDREN 23

PERSONAL ITEMS..... 24

CHILD’S HEALTH AND ILLNESS..... 24

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE..... 25

MEDICATION 26

SKIN IRRITATIONS 27

POTTY TRAINING..... 27

DISCIPLINE..... 28

BITING 28

BULLYING 29

DRESSING FOR SAFETY..... 30

SHOES 30

SECURITY & SAFETY 30

CHILD PRIVACY 30

SEVERE WEATHER, FIRE OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS 32

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES 32

CHILD ABUSE..... 32

TEACHER PLACEMENT 33



TEACHER TURNOVER..... 33
TEACHER CHANGE WITHIN A CLASSROOM..... 34
MANAGEMENT TEAM..... 34
SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICIES..... 34
IMPORTANT LINKS 34
PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE OF HANDBOOK AND POLICIES 35
APPENDIX A – COMMUNICATION PLAN 36
 If your child is under the age of 12 months:..... 36
 If your child is between the ages of 12 and 24 months:..... 37
 If your child is between the ages of 24 and 36 months:..... 38
 If your child is between the ages of 36 months or older in Preschool:..... 39

ABOUT SOULSHINE PRESCHOOL

SOULSHINE PHILOSOPHY

SoulShine Preschool believes that every family and child is a universe unto itself. Therefore, we strive to create the best environment for your family's needs. SoulShine Preschool is your little one's home away from home. Our teachers practice loving kindness, warm embraces, positive teaching and work responsibly to provide for your child the way you would at home. At SoulShine Preschool, we embrace providing for your child's physical, social, emotional, and educational development.

WHAT IS PERMACULTURE AND HOW IS IT SHARED WITH THE STUDENTS?

Permaculture is a toolbox of ecological and resource-wise practices that create a more balanced and fair relationship with the earth and the people who inhabit it. By studying the patterns of nature and working with them, we become more harmonious participants in life and living. Permaculture works toward building a more regenerative landscape, and encompasses using less energy, eating wholesome, local food, involving your family in the life of the community and making wiser choices that will improve the quality of life for your family, your community and the environment around you.

We believe the connection to nature is the most important starting point for every child to grow richly in love with the community and world around them. Within the SoulShine ecosystem we have created an environment that puts nature study and stewardship at the forefront of our academics while also creating a strong social and emotional foundation.

SoulShine's Permaculture-Inspired Curriculum infuses STEAM and Georgia State GELDS into a cohesive, experiential, play based education that weaves in philosophies of both Waldorf & Reggio Emilia, making us uniquely SoulShine. We incorporate our permaculture-inspired monthly overview into our daily routines, educational lessons, and literacy within your child's classroom.

Each month's permaculture inspired overview is a reflection of our native Georgia ecosystem. The intention of providing this reflection is to inspire our students to take note of the world around them and begin to feel a stewardship and connection to the earth, their community and themselves. SoulShine's foundation is built around four pillars: Homesteading, Wellbeing, Nature Stewardship and Community. Each pillar contributes to SoulShine's value system, off which we base our decisions. Through our food or material sourcing, diligence in staff education, and dedication to child enrichment, we are committed to providing our brightest souls a daily experience filled with support and loving kindness.

OUR GOALS

At SoulShine Preschool, we engage, empower, educate, and encourage the children in our care in a healthy, supportive environment. By providing low teacher-to-student ratios, we are able to more fully engage each child, ensuring your child receives the attention needed to learn and thrive. Our teachers encourage your child to practice loving kindness with their peers, parents, and themselves. Based on the principles of Permaculture, SoulShine Preschool empowers children to connect with nature, their community, and themselves.

We strive at all times to:

- create a sustainable, eco-friendly, home-like experience for your child
- identify and support the optimal physical, social, and emotional development of each child
- concentrate our efforts and resources toward student readiness and school success
- develop creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, language and literacy skills
- provide a wide range of developmentally appropriate experiences
- provide daily opportunities for development of good physical health, well-being, and movement skills
- help children learn how to handle their own emotions and consider the feelings of others
- develop each child's sense of self-worth
- integrate multicultural awareness into all areas of the curriculum

WE PRACTICE INCLUSION

SoulShine embraces the loving light that emanates from the heart of every human, adult and child alike. We hold our staff, our contractors, and our parents to the highest level of acceptance and inclusion, and we encourage our community to endorse this loving philosophy, both here and in the world.

- We pledge to treat everyone fairly, equally and with respect
- We embrace and encourage our differences
- We pledge to welcome everyone, irrespective of
 - gender
 - race
 - ethnic origin
 - disability
 - age
 - nationality or national origin
 - sexuality
 - gender identity or expression
 - religion or belief
 - marital status
 - social class

SoulShine will provide annual training for staff and contractors on diversity and inclusion, and provide resources and opportunities for discussion. Every individual who works at SoulShine is expected to be professional, to seek to understand differences, and to honor and respect those whose views and beliefs differ from their own.

In support of our policy of inclusion, the SoulShine curriculum will neither incorporate nor ignore the practices, rituals, celebrations and holidays embraced by the organized religions of the world. We recognize that the home is the best place to teach the traditions and the history behind them. Instead, the SoulShine staff is trained to recognize expressions of tradition and ritual, and to encourage and compliment every child's creative effort.

ORGANIC NUTRITION

At SoulShine Preschool, we strive to utilize local, organic seasonal goods and produce to:

- Fine tune the foundations of taste and offer nutritional diversity
- Eliminate preservatives, excess sugars, and overabundance of sodium
- Focus on in-house preserving, jarring, and fermentation to reduce the use of packaged goods
- Create vegetarian, whole-food based meals, with a variety of nutrient-dense components

We make many of our products in-house to:

- Reduce the amount of sugar in daily diets
- Include fermented and cultured ingredients in meals to create probiotic-rich foods
- Include meat-proteins when trusted sources are found and available
- Educate others and bring awareness to food, wellness and lifestyle

We also continue and expand our sourcing of trusted dairy sources.

NOTE: SoulShine is a NUT-FREE facility.

ZERO FOOTPRINT GOAL

SoulShine is working toward achieving a Zero Footprint, in terms of impact on our environment. We are working hard to eliminate single-use products and we avoid purchasing products, produce, cooking supplies and staples that are produced without regard for sustainability. Straws, paper towels, tissues and other paper or plastic products that can be replaced with washable, reusable products will be reduced or eliminated.

Classroom parties and staff celebrations will be planned with respect for our zero footprint goal. SoulShine will keep parents apprised of changes as they are implemented across the school.

LEARNING AT SOULSHINE PRESCHOOL

GEORGIA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

SoulShine Preschool curriculum encompasses five areas of child development (Branches of Learning) that are patterned after the Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELDS):

- Physical Health, Well-Being, and Movement Skills
- Social and Emotional Development
- Independence, Hygiene and Transitions
- Thinking Abilities and General Knowledge
- Communication, Language and Literacy

More information about GELDS can be found at <http://gelds.decal.ga.gov/Default.aspx>.

EXPANDING THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

During morning & afternoon gatherings, we incorporate yoga, music, and stories that reflect a sense of self-love & nature education. Within our small group activities, we incorporate food sensory, exploration and preparation. We are not only committed to having the most nutrient-dense food available for our students to eat, we also are committed to educating them on the origin, cultivation, and harvesting of the food we serve.

TUITION INCLUDES

- Curriculum in compliance with Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELDS)
- Healthy locally produced organic food, prepared on-site
- Local (seasonal), organic, non-processed Breakfast, Lunch & Snacks
- Low student-to-teacher ratio
- Sustainable, environmentally and child-friendly wipes, bug spray, sunscreen and diaper rash cream

CLASSROOM GRADUATIONS

Children graduate from one classroom to another based partially on age but primarily on developmental progress.

Decatur Classroom	Approximate Age Range	To move to this classroom, children must:
Roly-Polies, Earthworms & Ladybugs	6 weeks to 12 months	Be 6-weeks old
Raccoons	12 months to 18 months	Be ready to transition from two naps per day to one nap per day
Turtles	18 months to 24 months	Be walking and able to sit at table in chair without assistance; play on playground; participate in circle time
Honey Bees	2 years to 2.5 years	Be 2 years of age
Katydids	2.5 years to 3 years	Be actively working on potty training
Chipmunks	3 to 4 years	Be potty trained and be 3 years of age
Wrens	4 years +	Be 4 years of age

A staff member will reach out to you before your child graduates to the next classroom.

Graduations of part-time students could be delayed, if the new class is already at capacity with full-time students.

INFANT ROOMS

An infant who enrolls at SoulShine Decatur will stay in the classroom they enter until their first birthday.

This allows the children to bond with their teacher and become accustomed to a routine and follow it for a year.

Georgia Pre-K

In 2018, SoulShine became licensed and approved as a Georgia Pre-K provider. SoulShine preschoolers who are eligible for Pre-K in a given year will have the opportunity to enroll before enrollment is opened to the general public. However, our classroom is limited to 22 children, so acceptance will be granted on a first come, first serve basis. A wait list will be utilized when enrollment reaches 22.

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment is open to children starting at six weeks of age up to five years of age, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, political affiliation or physical disabilities, insofar as we are able to provide quality services for the child and space is available. Most students are enrolled full-time.

Part-Time enrollment is offered to fill open slots in some classrooms, but availability is not guaranteed. Part-time enrollments are possible when two students within a similar age group are enrolled in complementary placements (one M-W-F student and one T-Th student). The two children will be enrolled together and graduate together. Any classroom that is already at capacity will not have a part-time enrollment option for new students.

MOVING FROM FULL-TIME TO PART-TIME

For students who are occupying a full-time slot currently, a limited number of slots in each classroom can be changed from full-time to part-time, but parents should understand the ramifications of changing from full-time to part-time, as detailed below.

If there is a wait list for the classroom in question, part-time enrollment (for new and existing students) will not be approved.

If a part-time slot is available, parents may apply for the part-time slot by completing the application. If the application is approved, the adjustment to part-time will occur four weeks after approval. The Chief Administration Officer will respond to the application within three business days of submission.

The application will ask the parent to define:

1. The number of days per week (two or three)
2. The days of the week the child will attend (Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday)

The days of the week, once set and approved cannot be changed without beginning the application process again and providing the requisite four weeks' notice.

Part-time students may only attend on their approved days, including during holiday weeks.

Full tuition is due in case of illness, absence, vacation, or school closings. Part-time students who miss a regular day of attendance may not attend on a non-scheduled day to "make up" the absence.

ADDING DAYS FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

Part-time students may be able to add an extra day to a given week, if desired. This option is not available during holiday weeks.

For example, if the part-time student attends Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but wishes to add the Thursday of the upcoming week, the parent may be able to do so, **WITH PRIOR APPROVAL**. However, you may not substitute one of your regular days for a different day.

SoulShine requires one week's notice of the desire to add a day, and parents should make the request via email to Kate Karassik at: kate@makeyoursoulshine.com. SoulShine will consider the classroom capacity and the desired student/teacher ratio and approve or deny the request as quickly as possible. If approved, a special draft of the \$105 daily rate will be made via Tuition Express, if it falls outside the regular collection day.

Classroom size and ratios will always drive part-time attendance availability. Therefore, advance approval is required for additional days.

FULL-TIME CAPACITY IS THE GOAL

The preschool functions at its best and is able to offer the most to its students when all slots are filled with full-time students. Parents should understand that, at any time, if the need for a full-time slot arises in the classroom, the part-time student's parents will have the opportunity to return to full-time enrollment or give the required notice for withdrawal from the program. The parents of the part-time student will have three business days to decide whether to move to full-time enrollment or withdraw.

RETURN TO FULL-TIME CAN'T BE GUARANTEED

If the child is enrolled on a part-time schedule and full-time enrollment is needed, the parent may apply for full-time status. If a space is available in the classroom, the child will be able to return to full-time status. If there is no full-time space, the child will be wait-listed until an opening becomes available. In the event there are two part-time spaces in a classroom and a request for full-time enrollment is made, the Executive Director will determine which parent will be offered the first option to move to full time. The criteria for making this decision will be (all are equally weighted):

- The age of the student
- The date of the shift to part-time (the shortest time in the program will be the first asked to shift)

NO A LA CARTE OFFERINGS

To insure inclusion for the children in our care, we do not offer ala carte services or activities. This allows our staff and teachers to focus on the quality of the curriculum and the children's daily experience at SoulShine Preschool and to more fully engage with each child.

ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTATION

The following forms must be completed and on file:

- Personal Record
- Signed Financial Agreement via Tuition Express
- Child's Medical Care Form
- Certificate of Immunization Form 3231 (from your pediatrician)
- Parental Acceptance of Handbook and Policies (included in this handbook)
- Infant Feeding Plan (for children under the age of 1 & must be updated every 3 months)
- Authorization to Dispense (if needed)
- Child Privacy Form
- Safe Sleep Practices Policy

You will find each of these forms in the Parent Portal (already enrolled) or in the New Enrollment Packet on the website:

<http://makeyoursoulshine.com/parent-information-library>

FOUR WEEKS' NOTICE REQUIRED TO WITHDRAW OR CANCEL

A minimum of four weeks' written notice is required to withdraw your child or cancel a reserved position. Notify us by emailing kate@makeyoursoulshine.com. If notice is not given, then you will be charged tuition for each week up to four weeks. The last day of enrollment must fall on the last day of the week of the fourth week. This applies even if your child is not attending. If you decide **not** to bring your child to SoulShine Preschool *after* you have accepted a confirmed classroom space, you must provide four weeks' notice of cancellation or pay equivalent tuition up to four weeks. There will be no exception to the requirement for four weeks' notice.

Transitioning to Summer Camp

Many of the 4-year old students who are heading to PreK or Kindergarten each fall choose to move to a SoulShine Summer Camp for the summer, instead of remaining in the Preschool. Parents must be aware that, even though they are transitioning to another SoulShine program, the four weeks' notice of withdrawal is still required. Registration for Summer Camp cannot serve as notice of withdrawal.

DISMISSAL POLICY

The staff will work with each child to fulfill their needs and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. Special needs will be accommodated when possible.

SoulShine Preschool reserves the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for childcare if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to group care provided by the center. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or becomes a problem that poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in our care, alternative arrangements will be required.

If you, as a parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow SoulShine Preschool policies or procedures, it may be necessary to dismiss your child(ren) from the preschool.

FEES

TUITION

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT

Our weekly tuition is \$355. Tuition is payable bi-weekly (every other Monday) and is due before childcare is provided. Receipts and statements can be accessed through the tuition payment system. Please contact management for your personal Tuition Express ID to set up your account. Full tuition is due in case of illness, absence, vacation, or school closings. A 10% discount is applied for the second (and more) sibling who is enrolled in SoulShine Preschool. It has long been SoulShine's policy to wait-list the expected sibling of a SoulShine student, and offer them "top-of-the-list" placement in a classroom when a space becomes available. That preferential placement opportunity will not be available to part-time students.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

Weekly part-time tuition is based on the days of enrollment. 3 days/week is \$255/week and 2 days/week is \$200/week. As described in the enrollment section above, part-time enrollment requires an application and placement can be lost if a full-time application is received. Full tuition is due in case of illness, absence, vacation, or school closings. Part-time students who miss a regular day of attendance may not attend on a non-scheduled day to "make up" the absence.

Adding Days: Part-time students may be able to add an extra day to a given week, if desired, as described above. If approved, a special draft of the \$105 daily rate will be made via Tuition Express, if it falls outside the regular collection day.

REGISTRATION FEE

SoulShine Preschool requires an annual registration fee of \$100 to be collected through Tuition Express on or about August 1, each year. The annual registration fee is a non-refundable deposit that secures your child's spot in their class. This annual fee allows SoulShine Preschool's administration to devote time and resources to expanding the school's offerings and enriching the learning experience for the children.

If your child starts after August, the registration fee will be due at the time of enrollment application and then will fall in line the next year with the annual August due date.

SUPPLY FEE

To enrich your child’s experience within the SoulShine Preschool Learning Landscape and enhanced curriculum a single supply fee will be collected for each child, each year in March. This fee funds the experiential materials used in all the expanded learning opportunities at SoulShine Preschool, including permaculture materials.

The fee is determined by enrollment status:

- Full-Time: \$300 per child
- Part-Time, Mon – Wed - Fri: \$180 per child
- Part-Time, Tue - Thurs: \$120 per child

Parents who enroll after the payment date in March will be assessed a prorated supply fee, based on enrollment date. The prorated schedule appears below.

If a parent withdraws within 60 days of the supply fee assessment, 50% of the supply fee will be credited toward the final tuition payment, based on enrollment status.

PRO-RATED FEE SCHEDULE

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT (with Supply Fee being assessed in March of each year)

Enrollment Month

March	\$300 added to first tuition payment
April	\$275 added to first tuition payment
May	\$250 added to first tuition payment
June	\$225 added to first tuition payment
July	\$200 added to first tuition payment
August	\$175 added to first tuition payment
September	\$150 added to first tuition payment
October	\$125 added to first tuition payment
November	\$100 added to first tuition payment
December	\$75 added to first tuition payment
January	\$50 added to first tuition payment
February	\$25 added to first tuition payment

PART -TIME ENROLLMENT (with Supply Fee being assessed in March of each year)

Enrollment Month	PT Mon-Wed-Fri	PT Tue-Thurs
March	\$180 added to first tuition payment	\$120 added to first tuition payment
April	\$165 added to first tuition payment	\$110 added to first tuition payment
May	\$150 added to first tuition payment	\$100 added to first tuition payment
June	\$135 added to first tuition payment	\$90 added to first tuition payment
July	\$120 added to first tuition payment	\$80 added to first tuition payment
August	\$105 added to first tuition payment	\$70 added to first tuition payment
September	\$90 added to first tuition payment	\$60 added to first tuition payment
October	\$75 added to first tuition payment	\$50 added to first tuition payment
November	\$60 added to first tuition payment	\$40 added to first tuition payment
December	\$45 added to first tuition payment	\$30 added to first tuition payment
January	\$30 added to first tuition payment	\$20 added to first tuition payment
February	\$15 added to first tuition payment	\$10 added to first tuition payment

TUITION DEPOSITS

SoulShine reserves the right to require four weeks’ prepaid tuition if a family has repeated issues with tuition payments. This requirement will be communicated in writing.

PAYMENTS

SoulShine Preschool uses Tuition Express automatic electronic payments.

SoulShine Preschool requires payment through Tuition Express and is automatically drafted from your checking account every other Monday. If you have any questions regarding your tuition, please contact Kate Karassik at: kate@makeyoursoulshine.com

SoulShine Preschool Tax ID is 20-8091336.

You will find details on how electronic payments are authorized and made in the Parent Information Library on the website:
<http://makeyoursoulshine.com/parent-information-library>

If you notice an error in billing, you are responsible for contacting the tuition department at kate@makeyoursoulshine.com. All billing errors will be corrected immediately.

FINES

DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Your tuition payment is processed through Tuition Express for withdrawal every other Monday.

Should you need to ask us to process the payment on a different day (e.g., your paycheck is direct deposited on the first of the month, which is Tuesday), you may do so, understanding that we will assess a pay-delay fine of \$10 per day, to cover the special handling.

If any tuition payment is processed and is returned for any reason, we are charged a \$25 return fine by our bank, and we will pass that on to you. It will be added to the next tuition draft.

LATE PICK UP FINES

SoulShine Preschool closes at 6:30 pm. A tardy fine is charged for each child not picked up by that time. The fine is \$15 from 6:30 pm – 6:45 pm and an additional \$15 for each quarter-hour thereafter. Late pick-up fines are paid directly to the school via Tuition Express and will be withdrawn automatically. If a parent is late three times, we reserve the right to ask them to find a school better suited to their schedule.

LATE PICK UP ON EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Early release days happen four times per year at SoulShine. Two early-release days are devoted to Student Reflections, and the other two are used for Staff Training. On early-release days, SoulShine Preschool closes at 3:30. A tardy fine of \$25 will be charged for any child picked up between 3:30 and 3:45. If it's after 3:45, the tardy fine will be \$75.

DROP-OFF TIME VIOLATIONS

Drop-off times are not suggestions for parents; they are **requirements** for parents to respect so that the daily routine is not disrupted for an entire classroom. We can accommodate the occasional need, but not without notice.

Drop-off times are spelled out on subsequent pages of this handbook. Any parent/guardian who fails to notify us of a late arrival during a restricted time period will be assessed a \$25 fine per occurrence.

CHILD CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT FINES

Attendance tracking procedures are thoroughly detailed in "The Care of Your Child" portion of this handbook.

Our license compliance mandates that **all children** be checked-in/out on a daily basis, and our licensing agency (Bright From The Start) can ask for our records any day, at any time.

We must know that your child is present in the classroom for their own safety, but beyond that, our license is at risk if we are unable to prove compliance with this core requirement.

Therefore, effective January 7, 2019, a \$25 fine will be assessed for ANY CHILD who is present in the classroom but who has not been checked in by their parent/guardian. This fine will be assessed every day, for every check-in -- meaning your fine could be \$50 per day. A \$25 fine will be assessed for ANY CHILD who is not checked out properly through BrightWheel when picked up and taken off premises. This fine will be assessed every day, for every failed check-out -- meaning your fine could be \$50 per day.

If you have any difficulty at all with the Brightwheel app, please speak to a manager on site immediately, so that the fine is not assessed.

STAFF RELIEF FUND

The purpose behind the fines detailed in the previous section is to attach a consequence to any action that puts SoulShine operations and child safety at risk. Parents who adhere to the policies defined here will never pay a fine.

SoulShine will not profit from fines.

Any fine paid, for any of the reasons cited above, will be deposited directly into a separate account created for the SoulShine Staff Relief Fund. This includes the return-check fine we assess when a tuition check is returned for non-payment, even though our bank charges us \$25 for each returned check.

Accumulated monies in the Fund will be disbursed to staff members who find themselves in a critical financial situation, through no fault of their own (e.g., car accident, victim of crime, medical emergency, legal emergency).

The decision to disburse funds to an employee will be made exclusively by the Parent Advisory Council, according to guidelines published and shared with all SoulShine parents and employees.

DAILY OPERATIONS

HOURS OF OPERATION

SoulShine Preschool hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 6:30 pm. The school is open year-round.

FOOD

SoulShine is a nut-free facility. We make sure our food products do not contain nuts and we ask that you refrain from sending any outside foods with your child, so that we can ensure a safe and healthy environment for all our children.

PARENTS’ RIGHTS

Parents have the right to have access to SoulShine Preschool any time their child is in our care. NOTE: Parents visiting during the day must check in with the manager in charge immediately upon arrival.

HOLIDAYS, WORKDAYS AND ALTERED HOUR DAYS

Standard Holidays Observed

SoulShine Preschool makes every effort to keep the school open, but some holidays and situations are unavoidable. We do not prorata tuition.

SoulShine Preschool is closed for the following holidays for the 2019 calendar year:

- New Year’s Day Tuesday January 1, 2019
- MLK Day Monday January 21
- Memorial Day Monday May 27
- Independence Day Th-F July 4-5
- Labor Day M September 2
- Thanksgiving W-F November 27 – 29
- Holiday Break December 24 – 31
January 1 – 2, 2020

There are also three additional days which SoulShine Preschool closes for teacher workdays.

**Teacher Work Days
(SoulShine Preschool Closed)**

- Friday, March 1
- Wednesday, July 3
- Friday, October 4

SoulShine Preschool will alter regular hours three times over the course of the year for teacher training and/or Student Reflections.

**Altered Hours
(for Training or Conferences)**

- Friday, February 8 Close at 3:30 pm (Student Reflections)
- Friday, Friday, May 24 Close at 3:30 pm (Staff Training)
- Friday, August 30 Close at 3:30 pm (Staff Training)
- Friday, October 25 Close at 3:30 pm (Student Reflections)

THE CARE OF YOUR CHILD

ATTENDANCE TRACKING

SoulShine Preschool utilizes the Brightwheel mobile app for attendance tracking. The app is available in the Apple App Store and in Google's Play Store and is free to use.

To create an account

- Create a parent account using your email on file with SoulShine.
- By entering your email, your account will automatically be linked to your school & child.
- You can also create an account online. Visit www.mybrightwheel.com, and select sign up.

Personalize the information

- Login and make sure your contact info and your child's info is up to date.
- If you have additional kids at this school or another school using Brightwheel, you may enter additional invite codes
- Add additional guardians to Brightwheel within your child's profile. For example, a nanny or friend who has your approval to pick up your child from school, or a grandparent who would like to see daily photos on Brightwheel.

Checking In/Out

- Set a personal code in the settings menu within the app or the web. You can change your check-in code at any time.
- Check your child in two ways:
 1. Use your personal device by scanning the QR code that is printed in each classroom.
 2. Select your child on the classroom iPad & use your personal code to check them in/out.

Accurate and up-to date attendance records are a requirement from BFTS, our state licensing agency, as well as instrumental in enabling SoulShine Preschool to run an effective preschool day. There will be a \$25 fine for every day your child attends SoulShine Preschool and your family is not registered through the app.

To complete your enrollment please ensure:

- Each guardian has an account with a clear photo and all personal information completed.
- *One* account is created for each child enrolled in SoulShine Preschool.
- Each child has a clear photo and all necessary information is completed.
- Each guardian is assigned to their child.
- Each child is marked as present in the app when attending SoulShine Preschool.
- Any authorized person(s) for pickup have also completed their account set-up and are assigned as delegate(s).

COMMUNICATION PLAN

SoulShine has lots of information to share with parents – some information will apply to your child only, while some information will apply to every parent – in the classroom, or in the school.

The communication guidelines for each age group are detailed in Appendix A.

SUPPLY LIST

Each classroom has specific supply lists that will be provided to you upon enrollment. You are required to provide the requested supplies to your classroom teacher on a weekly or monthly basis depending on need. Parents must supply their child with a napping mat that is a minimum of 2" thick and waterproof at the age of twelve (12) months.

Your tuition includes wipes, sunscreen, diaper cream and bug spray, so these do not appear on the supply list. We provide:

- Kirkland Signature Brand Ultra Soft Baby Wipes
- Kabana Organic Sunscreen
- Bug Soother All-Natural Bug Repellent
- Aquaphor & Coconut Oil Diaper Cream

If you would prefer a different brand of any of these products, please provide them, labelled with your child's name and make the appropriate notation on your Student Information Form providing authorization to use these products.

MEALS

SoulShine adheres to a vegetarian diet and is proud to serve fresh, homemade meals to over 200 children: breakfast, lunch and snack. Our ingredients are local and/or organic and are made fresh daily to ensure the children receive nutrient-dense and wholesome food for optimal growth and development.

If your child requires specific, individualized meals because your physician has ordered it, SoulShine can accommodate you. Your physician's written statement describing the dietary needs for a particular child is required. The written statement must include specific requirements and the time frame for the exception.

HOLIDAYS, BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS

SoulShine is determined to limit the school's impact on our environment. We have embraced the zero footprint concept and continue to take steps toward that goal. We are asking parents to embrace this philosophy for holidays, birthdays and other parties within the school.

Children's birthdays will be celebrated during morning gathering. The honored children will receive beads to wear and be celebrated through song and praise. Outside food will not be allowed, since birthdays will not be centered around food at SoulShine.

Other classroom parties and staff celebrations are welcome and always enjoyed. Party supplies must be selected from a sustainably sourced resource list, and outside food will not be allowed. If you have a question about what is permitted, please contact the leadership team.

DROP-OFF

For safety's sake, your child must never be left without direct transfer to an adult. Therefore, children should be taken directly to their classroom when dropped off.

If your child wears diapers, please check the diaper when you arrive in the classroom. If you find it soiled, please change the diaper before you leave. This assures that your child is clean and comfortable to start the day at SoulShine and allows the teachers to continue to greet and settle the children as parents leave.

SoulShine Preschool does not provide routine transportation or field trips.

Parent(s)/approved person(s) are required to check their child in and out each day using the app.

DROP-OFF TIMES

SoulShine Preschool opens at 7 am and drop-off windows are determined by the age of the child.

Children **up to 12 months** of age:

- Routine arrivals: 7 am to 9:15 am - parents may drop off at any time during this time interval (note that breakfast is served at 8:15, so the child must be in their classroom before 8:15 to be served)
- Late arrivals: 9:15 am to 11:00 am - parents must communicate with the preschool in advance if they plan to drop off their child during this time.
- If a child must be picked up during the day (e.g., doctor's appointment), the child may return to SoulShine between 2 and 3 pm.

Leverage nap times for the benefit of everyone. For children up to 12 months, nap times are 9:30 and 2:30, and the naps last from 60 to 90 minutes. To minimize disruption for your child and the classroom, please coordinate your arrival with naptimes. If they are arriving at 2pm, please be sure they are ready for a nap at 2:30, not just up from a nap at home.

Once the child has been dropped off at SoulShine, they should remain in our care until the end of the day. Pickup can begin again at 4:30 PM.

Children **12 months of age and older:**

Teachers and parents alike recognize the benefit of routines for children. So that the day's activities and naps can occur without disruption in the classroom, the drop-off times are different for older children.

- Routine arrivals: 7 am to 9:30 am - parents may drop off at any time during this time interval (note that breakfast is served at 8:15, so the child must be in their classroom before 8:15 to be served)
- Late arrivals between 9:30 am and 2 pm must call the office and speak to a manager to arrange for special accommodations, no later than the day before the planned late drop-off.
- Late arrivals or returns (e.g., after a morning with Grandma) 2 pm to 3 pm – parents may drop off at any time during this time interval

Once the child has been dropped off at SoulShine, they should remain in our care until the end of the day. Pickup can begin again at 4:30 PM.

Special Accommodations:

We can accommodate children who arrive late with prior notice, provided the child must be elsewhere at the routine arrival time. Doctor's and Dentist's appointments are an appropriate use of special accommodations.

If you just want your child to sleep in a bit, or go out to breakfast with you, please keep them at home until 2pm and then bring them to SoulShine.

PICK-UP

Children will be released to the parent(s) / guardian(s) and to the delegate(s) indicated in the app. If the delegate does not have the app available, guardians must provide written authorization for their child's release. We will request proper identification from that person for your child's safety and protection. Once an authorized person picks up the child, the supervision and safety of the child becomes their responsibility.

Parent(s)/approved person(s) are required to check their child in and out each day using the app.

Should we suspect that the person picking up your child might be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, we reserve the right to call someone else from your list to pick up your child.

LATE PICK-UP FINES

SoulShine Preschool closes at 6:30 pm. A tardy fine is charged for each child not picked up by that time. The fine is \$15 from 6:30 pm – 6:45 pm and an additional \$15 for each quarter hour thereafter. Late pick-up fines are paid directly to the school via the tuition payment system and will be withdrawn automatically. If a parent is late three times, we reserve the right to ask them to find a school better suited to their schedule.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The relationship between parents/guardians and the center staff is vital to the success of a child's experience. A partnership must be formed the first day, with open communication and understanding that the development and growth of the child is everyone's top priority. Parents can assist and help ensure a smooth transition by doing the following:

- Have all forms completed promptly
- Update forms, contacts as needed
- Keep staff informed of special needs or changes that might affect your child's behavior
- Notify the Preschool if your child is ill
- Do not bring an ill child to the center
- Notify the Preschool if your child will be absent
- Notify the Preschool if you will be late picking up
- Provide a change of clothes labeled with child's name (we are not responsible for lost items)
- Dress child properly for weather and play
- Ask questions and address concerns as they arise

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE/LATE

If your child will be absent please let us know by logging into the app, choosing the child and then SoulShine, and updating the Dismissal screen with “absent” for the appropriate day.

If your child will be late, please use the Notes function in the app to advise the school. Repeated failure to use the app to notify us of absences/late arrivals will result in a fine, as explained earlier.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is critical that you update your child’s files as soon as any contact information changes. Please inform a SoulShine Preschool’s director of any changes. Every child is required to have two emergency contacts other than parent(s) / guardian(s) who can reach the Preschool within 30 minutes and are willing to pick up your child if the need arises.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY

- Infants will be placed on their backs in a crib to sleep unless a physician’s written statement authorizing another sleep position for that infant is provided. The written statement must include how the infant shall be placed to sleep and a time frame that the instructions are to be followed.
- Cribs shall be in compliance with CPCS and ASTM safety standards. They will be maintained in good repair and free from hazards.
- No objects will be placed in or on the crib with an infant. This includes, but is not limited to, covers, blankets, toys, pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items.
- No objects will be attached to a crib with a sleeping infant, such as, but not limited to, crib gyms, toys, mirrors and mobiles.
- Only sleepers, sleep sacks and wearable blankets provided by the parent/guardian and that fit according to the commercial manufacturer’s guidelines and will not slip up around the infant’s face may be worn for the comfort of the infant.
- Individual crib bedding will be changed daily, or more often as needed. Bedding for mats will be laundered daily or marked for individual use. If marked for individual use, the sheets must be laundered weekly or more frequently if needed.
- Infants who arrive at the center asleep or fall asleep in other equipment, on the floor or elsewhere, will be moved to a safety-approved crib to sleep.
- Swaddling will not be permitted, unless a physician’s written statement authorizing it for a particular infant is provided. The written statement must include instructions and a time frame for swaddling the infant.
- Wedges, other infant positioning devices and monitors will not be permitted unless a physician’s written statement authorizing its use for a particular infant is provided. The written statement must include instructions on how to use the device and the time frame for usage.

PARENT COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

In 2017, parents created private Facebook groups for each campus, and for the individual classrooms. While Facebook use is pervasive, it is not in use by 100% of the SoulShine parent population.

In the interest of providing an inclusive forum for parent communication, SoulShine has underwritten the expense for a major extension to the makeyoursoulshine.com website that includes a parent portal. Within the portal, enrolled parents are able to have discussions with other parents, direct-message them and enjoy access to parent-only resources, forms and reports from SoulShine.

Access information is provided as part of the enrollment process.

The public Facebook pages for general updates from the three SoulShine Programs will remain:

SoulShine Preschool

Decatur <https://www.facebook.com/soulshinedecatur/>

Kirkwood <https://www.facebook.com/SoulShineSproutsandHomestead/>

SoulShine After School

<https://www.facebook.com/SoulShine-Homesteading-and-After-School-268281709886471/?fref=ts>

SoulShine Summer Camp

<https://www.facebook.com/SoulShineSummerCamp/?fref=ts>

VOLUNTEERING

To experience your child's community and environment in SoulShine Preschool, and to enhance your connection to the learning SoulShine Preschool provides, we strongly encourage you to volunteer your time at the school. We ask for a minimum of 10 volunteer hours per calendar year during scheduled school events (see the calendar on the website). If you complete 10+ volunteer hours before December 4, 2018, we will offer a \$100 tuition discount over the holiday break. Parents of part-time students are invited to volunteer as well; however, the ability to use volunteer hours to offset tuition costs over the holiday break cannot be extended to part-time enrollments. For parents of full-time students, you must log your hours on your own on the log form (included at the back of this handbook). After each volunteering event, please have a manager sign your hours that day. When your 10+ hours have been completed, please turn in the volunteer hour log in order to receive the discount.

BOTTLE-FED CHILDREN

We provide meals for those children on table food and will follow your individual Infant Feeding Plan for children 12 months and younger. If your child has special dietary needs, it is your responsibility to make us aware of these needs. For bottle-fed children, parents must provide prepared formula or breast milk in the bottle. All infant items should be marked with the child's first and last name. Please keep the Infant Feeding Plan updated. All baby food will be prepared on site from all-organic fresh foods, including purees and finger foods. SoulShine is a nut-free facility. Once your child is on the SoulShine Preschool meal plan, we offer breakfast, lunch, and snack. To participate in breakfast, your child must arrive at the school before 8:15am.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Each child must have at least one complete change of clothes at the school that is weather appropriate. Parents should mark all personal items with the child's first and last name. All infant bottles MUST be labeled with child's first & last name as well as the date. SoulShine Preschool does not allow student book bags or diaper bags to be left at school during the day. Please leave all labeled supplies in your child's cubby.

CHILD'S HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Any child who shows signs of illness, such as fever, rash, cough, diarrhea, etc., cannot be accepted into the classroom. The teachers have the authority to prohibit admittance into the classroom for any signs of illness. Should a child show symptoms of illness during the day, a parent will be called to pick up the child.

Your child should not come to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea/Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Persistent cough
- Reddened eyes with yellowish discharge
- Cough with green nasal drainage
- Unexplained rash
- Any symptom of a childhood disease such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, or severe cough
- Sore throat, earache or croup
- Any skin infections (boil, ringworm, impetigo, etc.)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or any other eye infection

If the child's temperature is 100.0 degrees or higher, please keep them home. If your child develops a fever at school, you'll be notified when it reaches 100.0 degrees.

If your child develops an infectious illness following a day of school, please notify the director on site. We may require a doctor's note before he or she is allowed to return to the center. Also, if your child suffers from non-contagious allergies or asthma, please ask the child's pediatrician for a note explaining this. Any child who is overly tired, affected by medication, or whose behavior is out of the ordinary should be kept at home. If a doctor's note is requested, please be sure to give it to an on-site manager when your child returns to school.

A sick child must be **symptom free for 24 hours beyond the day they become ill** before returning to school. (For example, if Bobby is sent home at 8am on Monday, he cannot return to school any earlier than Wednesday morning.)

Guidelines for returning to school:

- The child should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
- The child should be free of vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school
- The child should be diarrhea-free for 24 hours before returning to school
- If the child has been given any kind of antibiotic treatment (pills, drops, cream or liquid), they should receive that treatment for 24 hours before returning to school.



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

If a confirmed case of communicable disease (chicken pox) occurs, all parents will be notified via the school's preschool reporting system (Brightwheel) and a notice will be sent to all parents via email. SoulShine will adhere to the guidelines for childcare agencies in reporting the cases to Georgia Public Health.

VACCINATIONS

The Georgia Department of Health requires all children entering a school or childcare facility operating within the state to provide proof of immunization against 13 diseases. Details on the policy can be found at this website:

<http://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/Immunizations/Rules%20of%20DPH%20511-2-2.pdf>

A child may be exempted from the required immunizations if the parent or legal guardian provides a written statement affirming that receiving such immunizations would conflict with their religious beliefs.

Since SoulShine is a licensed facility within the state of Georgia, we are bound by these guidelines. Parents who are interested in understanding the vaccinated/unvaccinated breakdown of children enrolled at SoulShine should contact the Executive Director.

In the unlikely event that a county board of health determines a threat of epidemic exists, that board will notify the affected childcare facilities and schools and may require that all children be immunized or be prohibited from attending.

MEDICATION

All prescribed medication must be left at the office with the manager on duty. An Authorization to Dispense Medication form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent or guardian before any medication can be given.

Medications must be in the original container and labeled as follows:

- Child's name
- Current date
- Dosage
- Times to be given
- Expiration date
- Any other special instructions.

If your child is taking an antibiotic, he or she must have been on it for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the preschool and symptom free of illness.

When the medication is dispensed by SoulShine Preschool staff, the dosage is noted, along with the date, time, any adverse reactions and the name of the staff member responsible. If an adverse reaction was observed, any actions taken are described and the parent is notified.

Over-the-Counter Medication

When there is a specific reason (e.g., recovering from a painful injury or non-infectious illness requiring a visit to and treatment by a physician) to dispense OTC medication, as directed by a physician's written note, SoulShine Preschool will dispense OTC medication for up to two weeks.

The physician's instructions must include the reason for the medication, the dosage and the specific date range for dispensing (not to exceed two weeks). An "as needed for pain" statement does not meet the specific dosage and date range requirements.

If the child is fussy due to teething pain or gas, we ask parents to administer the pain medication before dropping them off at the Preschool. Parents are welcome to drop in to dispense over-the-counter medications during the day, when the need is only occasional.

Our goal is to maintain a healthy, safe and happy environment for all the children in our care. If a child is unexpectedly fussy due to pain from teething or from gas, we ask that parents treat the situation as if it were an illness, and keep the child home, to monitor their condition and provide medication and comfort.

SKIN IRRITATIONS

During diapering and toileting, the SoulShine staff will be on the alert for visible skin irritations. There are many possible causes, including insect bites, allergies or other sensitivities, but if the staff notices visible redness or a rash, the parents will be notified.

POTTY TRAINING

Potty training becomes part of the curriculum at SoulShine Preschool in the 2-year-old classrooms, and may continue as a focus in the 3-year-old classrooms as well.

SoulShine will begin toilet training with a child when:

1. The child is at least two years old
- AND**
2. The child shows signs of readiness

Signs of Readiness include:

- Tells you they are wet/dirty (or pulls at a wet/dirty diaper)
- Fewer wet diapers
- Shows interest in bathroom behaviors of others
- Physical coordination to sit and stand, pull-up, pull-down underwear
- Hides to pee or poop
- Warns you that they are about to go

Potty training is a team effort between the Preschool teachers and parents. Consistency is crucial for making potty training as straightforward as possible.

Parents can support SoulShine's daytime potty training efforts by:

- Setting a schedule for potty time at home that matches SoulShine's. Refer to the daily schedule for your classroom. The teachers let the children know that it's almost potty time, so they have a chance to think about it.
- Using pull-ups consistently – no more diapers.
- Using words to express the act of going to the bathroom. SoulShine teachers use "potty."
- Planning to allow your child to sit on the toilet within 15 to 30 minutes after meals
- Praising or other positive reinforcement every attempt to use the potty, even if nothing happens

As a general guideline, potty training is scheduled every two hours in the classrooms, with ample opportunities for as-needed visits, as the children become accustomed to the routine. The child will not have to wait for a group to need to go in between scheduled potty visits. If the child is actively potty training and shows signs or verbalizes they need to go potty, the teacher will take the child to the potty.

We encourage parents to dress toilet-training students in appropriately loose, easy-to-remove clothing. Once potty training begins, please provide pull-ups with adjustable sides.

SoulShine embraces the American Academy of Pediatrics' guidelines and recommendations when encouraging students to use the toilet successfully.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/default.aspx>

http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/103/Supplement_3/1362

DISCIPLINE

We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children hear explanations of the rules of the preschool frequently, so they are familiar with the guidelines.

There will be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. They may hit, throw toys, bite, and exhibit other less than desirable behaviors as they try to express themselves. SoulShine Preschool will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of "natural consequences". For example, if a child is misusing a toy they will not be allowed to play with the toy for a period of time.

Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will ever be withheld from children as a means of punishment.

If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to these techniques, we will hold a conference with the parents. Together, we will try to find a solution. You may be called to remove your child if their behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will be required for the safety and well-being of all.

BITING

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. They might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or their peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason.

SoulShine will encourage the children to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. The staff members will maintain close and constant supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at SoulShine:

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm "No...we don't bite our friends!"

- Staff will immediately direct their full attention to the bitten child, to see that they are comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation and remind them that biting hurts our friends and to use their words when they want something (guided by the apparent reason for the bite).
- The biter will then be redirected to an activity that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child will be assessed and cleansed with soap and water and ice is offered or applied.
- The parents of both children will be notified with an incident report (confidentiality maintained)
- If the bite requires medical treatment, a copy of the incident report must be mailed to the Department of Human Services (DeKalb County) within seven days.
- A biting log will be created for the biter, for the purpose of discovering if there is a pattern for the biting (overtiredness, hunger, crossed personal boundaries)
- If biting continues, classroom staff will meet with their manager for advice and support.
- The parents of the biter will be advised of the pattern of biting, and their involvement in a solution will be sought.
- If a biting incident happens more than three times in one day, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the biting child. The child may return the following class day. If it is deemed in the best interest of the child, the preschool, and the other children, the child may be terminated from the preschool's enrollment for the duration of the biting stage. Written warning will be given to the parents before this action will be taken.

For the child who was bitten:

- They will be comforted and the wound will be assessed
- The staff will use gentle questioning to discover how the situation transpired, if they are not aware
- If the child did nothing to provoke the bite, the staff will reinforce that they did nothing wrong
- If it's possible that the child's behavior did lead to the bite, suggest other responses and reinforce appropriate behavior
- Teach appropriate responses, like "No" or "Don't hurt me!"

After the incident, the staff will:

- Be mindful of children who indicate a tendency to bite:
 - Redirect potential biting situations before they occur
 - Teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior
 - Adapt the environment, if possible, to fit the individual child's needs
 - Consider early transition of a child who is "stuck" in a biting behavior pattern, if developmentally appropriate

BULLYING

Bullying can occur once children reach the age of 3. At that age, a child has the ability to understand another point of view, so they can understand how they can make another child feel.

Preschoolers might bully because they imitate behavior they've seen before, or because it earns them attention from adults or other kids.

Adults may adopt a "wait and see" approach, but that is detrimental for both children; however it is necessary to recognize the difference between an impulsive response during play and an intentional attempt to exclude, injure or taunt a child.

If bully-like behavior is noticed at SoulShine, the staff will follow a protocol similar to dealing with biting

For the child who was intimidated

- They will be comforted and any injury will be assessed
- The staff will use gentle questioning to discover how the situation transpired, if they are not aware
- If the child did nothing to provoke the behavior, the staff will reinforce that they did nothing wrong
- Teach appropriate responses, like “No” or “Don’t hurt me!” or "Stop that!"

For the more aggressive child

- The staff will use gentle questioning to discover how the child feels about the incident
- The staff will talk about kindness during playtime

After the incident, the staff will:

- Be mindful of children who indicate a tendency toward aggression:
- Redirect potential intimidating situations before they occur
- Teach non-aggressive responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior
- Adapt the environment, if possible, to fit the individual child’s needs

The parents of both children will be notified with an incident report (confidentiality maintained)

- If intimidation continues, classroom staff will meet with their manager for advice and support.
- The parents of the aggressive child will be advised of the pattern of aggression, and their involvement in a solution will be sought.

If an incident of aggression happens more than three times in one day, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the aggressive child. The child may return the following class day. If it is deemed in the best interest of the child, the preschool, and the other children, the child may be terminated from the preschool’s enrollment for a period defined by SoulShine management. Written warning will be given to the parents before this action will be taken.

DRESSING FOR SAFETY

All children should have a change of clothing in their bags in case of accident. All sweaters, jackets, and other items should be clearly labeled with your child’s name. We are not responsible for items left by parents or others who pick up your child.

SHOES

Bright From The Start guidelines require “mat sleepers” to wear shoes, because in the event of an emergency, they would walk outside. Mat sleeping begins in the Turtles classroom, so shoes will be required. We do not recommend open-toe shoes for walking toddlers. Please choose hard-sole shoes that protect the ankle for children 17-months of age and older.

For younger children, we recommend soft-sole shoes and socks that can be worn for outside activities. Barefoot children will be excluded from some outdoor activities.

SECURITY & SAFETY

CHILD PRIVACY

In years past, parents have been asked to sign a photo release form that allows SoulShine to publish pictures containing their child's likeness on the website and occasionally in marketing materials. We have a strict quality control system that allows us to manage that.

Sadly, the no-photo policy in today's culture has far less to do with marketing rights and far more to do with child safety. Custody issues and parental concerns over privacy are just two potential reasons to restrict photography.

We have learned that we cannot monitor parental usage of the pictures shared in the private Facebook groups, parent-only newsletters or in Brightwheel updates, and that parents may share a picture that includes a child who is not their own, without considering the other parents' wishes.

Every parent will be asked to complete our new Child Privacy Form, to allow or prevent photos of any kind of their child.

A master list of "no photo" children will be posted in each classroom. Any picture taken by a staff member, whether it's a Brightwheel update, a newsletter update or a picture for the website, will never include the "no photo" child. The staff will do their best to not obviously exclude these children, while following the parents' wishes.

If we become aware that a photo of children other than their own was taken and shared in any public forum, the parents guilty of posting said picture will be assessed a fine of \$500.

SEVERE WEATHER, FIRE OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If an emergency situation develops such as severe weather, loss of utilities such as water or electricity, fire, flood, physical damage to the building, or any other situation that poses a safety issue or threat, we will close the preschool. If the preschool is closed due to one of these emergency situations, the parents will be notified by email, phone, and/or Brightwheel to make arrangements for pickup. If there is severe inclement weather, SoulShine Preschool follows the lead of the City Schools of Decatur with regard to closure:

- If CSD closes for students, SoulShine Preschool will be closed.
- If CSD closes during a school day, please follow their announced closure plan. SoulShine Preschool will match this plan.

Exceptions may be made at the director’s discretion and will be communicated to parents via Brightwheel and email.

In the event of an emergency that requires sheltering in place within the school, emergency plans are posted in each classroom.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Each child is required to have consent for Medical Emergency Treatment on file. In case of emergency, a trained staff member will administer the necessary First Aid or life-saving treatments. An office staff member will make every attempt to notify the parents immediately for instructions. In the event a parent cannot be reached we will call 911 to have the most immediate medical help available to meet the needs of the child. If a contacted individual cannot pick up the child, a SoulShine Preschool staff member will accompany the child and the emergency medical team to the nearest hospital and seek medical attention.

In the event of an emergency, SoulShine Preschool staff are instructed to:

1. Call a parent for instructions. If parent(s) cannot be reached, we will continue with next step
2. Call an emergency contact
3. If deemed necessary, call emergency medical 911
4. Have emergency medical team transport child to nearest hospital. A staff member will accompany the child
5. Seek medical attention at the hospital

CHILD ABUSE

As required by Georgia law, teachers observe the children’s health and behavior on a daily basis and any signs of suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the Department of Family and Children Services.

TEACHER PLACEMENT

SoulShine Preschool endeavors to provide the best child care and education possible, and it begins with the quality of the teachers selected.

SoulShine Preschool salaries for teachers begin well above minimum wage because we recruit teachers who seek careers in education. This is atypical for the daycare industry, but necessary for the education industry. The SoulShine Preschool pay scale is based on a teacher's education and experience. SoulShine Preschool performs annual reviews and quarterly assessments to ensure the growth and well-being of the children in our care and teachers. When an individual joins the SoulShine Preschool family, they must have up to two working interviews so that SoulShine Preschool can determine the best fit for each staff member, current teachers, and class. During the first 90 days of each new staff member's employment they are considered a "provisional" employee. This ensures management and staff engage in constant dialogue to maintain that their classroom placement is a good fit from both the staff member's and management's perspective. During this period the teacher and/or management may decide that SoulShine Preschool is not a good fit for either party and consequently the teacher may move on from a particular class or from SoulShine Preschool. Our management does their very best at hiring only the best candidates to join the SoulShine Preschool team; often neither party can predict what their working experience will be until significant time has passed to assess their placement. Should SoulShine Preschool decline to offer a permanent position to a provisional employee, SoulShine Preschool management will be as transparent as possible with any affected families.

TEACHER TURNOVER

Our industry can have a high teacher turnover rate. SoulShine Preschool management works diligently to only hire the best candidates; however, employee's lives can be unpredictable. Teachers may leave for personal reasons, professional reasons, or unprofessional behaviors may dictate the termination of their employment by the management team.

Regardless of the reason for a teacher's departure, the SoulShine Preschool management team is committed to choosing teachers who have the greatest chance to succeed in their positions and with the children in their care.

We wish any staffer who leaves SoulShine the very best in their future endeavors. The children do not benefit from hearing about absent teachers, and we have found it counterproductive to discuss specifics of past teacher performance with both parents and staff. We will do our best to fill an open position with a familiar face from our staff until a permanent replacement can be hired and trained.

TEACHER CHANGE WITHIN A CLASSROOM

Our intention is to have continuity in the classroom, so that one teacher already known to the parents is always a part of the teaching team.

When both co-teachers are unavailable, at least one experienced teacher will be assigned to the classroom. If a substitute is placed in the classroom, they will be thoroughly briefed by a manager ahead of time.

Our goal is to maintain the standard of care and instruction intended in each classroom. While we like the consistency of the same teachers in the classroom, in truth, the children absolutely love meeting new teachers and welcome the chance to be the center of attention for someone new! All our teachers bring loving care into the classroom, and that, over everything else, is what the children respond to. Meeting new people is a life skill the older children especially enjoy practicing.

As of 2017, all prospective teachers will participate in a week-long working interview. This gives the teacher the chance to experience our environment and allows our management to be sure they are a good fit for the SoulShine culture. We will announce these interviews via Brightwheel for the specific classroom. When a permanent position is offered to a prospective teacher, we will make that announcement as well.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

SoulShine Preschool has a unique and highly effective management team. Our managers/directors are in our classrooms all day offering support to teachers, children and parents. Management is willing to step into a class to soothe an upset child, help engage our children during daily transitions, change diapers or work a shift when a staff call out happens. The management team is committed to cultivating solid relationships with the parents/guardians of our students, so they are always available, if support or a listening ear is needed. Please feel free to address any concern you may have with the management team. Strong parent communication makes SoulShine Preschool thrive, ensures that the children receive the best care and allows you to feel comfortable leaving your child. No concern is too small. The sooner we know about an issue the sooner it can be handled to the benefit of all students enrolled.

SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICIES

All staff members are trained on safety rules, special hazards, and commonly occurring accidents. They receive detailed instructions on evacuation procedures for fire and storm, use of fire extinguishers and how to report an accident. All staff members are trained in CPR and pediatric first aid. The children are under adult supervision at all times. Written procedures for fire and storm evacuation are posted in each classroom and are practiced monthly with the children.

IMPORTANT LINKS

SoulShine Parent Portal <https://parents.makeyoursoulshine.com> (username & password req'd)
Parent Information Library <http://makeyoursoulshine.com/parent-information-library>

Public Facebook Pages

SoulShine Preschool Decatur <https://www.facebook.com/soulshinedecatur/>
SoulShine Preschool Kirkwood <https://www.facebook.com/SoulShineSproutsandHomestead/>
SoulShine After School <https://www.facebook.com/SoulShine-Homesteading-and-After-School-268281709886471/?fref=ts>
SoulShine Summer Camp <https://www.facebook.com/SoulShineSummerCamp/?fref=ts>

SoulShine Event Calendar <https://www.makeyoursoulshine.com/events>



SoulShine Preschool
DECATUR PARENT HANDBOOK

PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE OF HANDBOOK AND POLICIES

Please signify your acceptance of this handbook along with the policies therein by going to this web page:

<https://makeyoursoulshine.com/ops/parental-acceptance-handbook-decatur/>

APPENDIX A – COMMUNICATION PLAN

If your child is under the age of 12 months:

at Kirkwood, the Earthworms and Ladybugs

at Decatur, the Roly-Polies, Earthworms and Ladybugs

	Communication Need	Method
DAILY	Individual Daily Log Information (activities) including individual pictures	BrightWheel (via activities in the app) At 10:30 am, 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm
AS NEEDED	Direct Messages	BrightWheel (via app, activities)
	Your direct emails	If you ask a question via email, we will answer via email
	General Announcements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather reminders ▪ Teacher changes ▪ Illness reports (a child in the school) ▪ Reminders ▪ Event announcements 	BrightWheel (via messages and reminders in the app)
	Group Activity Pictures	Parent Portal
	Policy Implementation or Updates	Email and BrightWheel (via messages in app)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to enrollment, financial transactions or policy applications specifically for your child 	Email
	Supply Lists	Parent Portal
	Teacher Rosters	Parent Portal
	Daily Schedule & Lesson Plans	Parent Portal
UNEXPECTED/ URGENT	Emergency notifications, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected school closure • Weather emergency (e.g., tornado warning) • Intruder or other building emergency 	BrightWheel ALERTS (via Alerts in the app) NOTE: If you check the BrightWheel settings, you can allow Alerts to notify you via text when they are sent. This is not automatic.
	Your Child’s Injury (if significant or blood present)	Phone
	Your Child’s Illness	Phone
	Incident involving your child (e.g. fall, biting)	BrightWheel (via activities in the app)

If your child is between the ages of 12 and 24 months:

at Kirkwood, the Turtles and Honey Bees

at Decatur, the Turtles and Raccoons

	Communication Need	Method
DAILY	Individual Daily Log Information (activities) including individual pictures	BrightWheel (via activities in the app) At 12:30 pm and 5:30 pm
AS NEEDED	Direct Messages	BrightWheel (via app, activities)
	Your direct emails	If you ask a question via email, we will answer via email
	General Announcements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather reminders ▪ Teacher changes ▪ Illness reports (a child in the school) ▪ Reminders ▪ Event announcements 	BrightWheel (via messages and reminders in the app)
	Group Activity Pictures	Parent Portal
	Policy Implementation or Updates	Email and BrightWheel (via messages in app)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to enrollment, financial transactions or policy applications specifically for your child 	Email
	Supply Lists	Parent Portal
	Teacher Rosters	Parent Portal
	Daily Schedule & Lesson Plans	Parent Portal
UNEXPECTED/ URGENT	Emergency notifications, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected school closure • Weather emergency (e.g., tornado warning) • Intruder or other building emergency 	BrightWheel ALERTS (via Alerts in the app) NOTE: If you check the BrightWheel settings, you can allow Alerts to notify you via text when they are sent. This is not automatic.
	Your Child's Injury (if significant or blood present)	Phone
	Your Child's Illness	Phone
	Incident involving your child (e.g. fall, biting)	BrightWheel (via activities in the app)

If your child is between the ages of 24 and 36 months:

at Kirkwood, the Katydids and Chipmunks

at Decatur, the Honey Bees and Katydids

	Communication Need	Method
DAILY	Individual Daily Log Information (activities)	Paper logs, found in cubbies at the end of each day
AS NEEDED	Direct Messages	BrightWheel (via app, activities)
	Your direct emails	If you ask a question via email, we will answer via email
	General Announcements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather reminders ▪ Teacher changes ▪ Illness reports (a child in the school) ▪ Reminders ▪ Event announcements 	BrightWheel (via messages and reminders in the app)
	Group Activity Pictures	Parent Portal
	Individual Pictures	BrightWheel
	Policy Implementation or Updates	Email and BrightWheel (via messages in app)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to enrollment, financial transactions or policy applications specifically for your child 	Email
	Supply Lists	Parent Portal
	Teacher Rosters	Parent Portal
	Daily Schedule & Lesson Plans	Parent Portal
UNEXPECTED/ URGENT	Emergency notifications, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected school closure • Weather emergency (e.g., tornado warning) • Intruder or other building emergency 	BrightWheel ALERTS (via Alerts in the app) NOTE: If you check the BrightWheel settings, you can allow Alerts to notify you via text when they are sent. This is not automatic.
	Your Child's Injury (if significant or blood present)	Phone
	Your Child's Illness	Phone
	Incident involving your child (e.g. fall, biting)	BrightWheel (via activities in the app)

If your child is between the ages of 36 months or older in Preschool:

at Kirkwood, the Wrens and Falcons

at Decatur, the Chipmunks and Wrens

	Communication Need	Method
DAILY	Individual Daily Log Information (activities)	Paper logs, found in cubbies at the end of each day
AS NEEDED	Direct Messages	BrightWheel (via app, activities)
	Your direct emails	If you ask a question via email, we will answer via email
	General Announcements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weather reminders ▪ Teacher changes ▪ Illness reports (a child in the school) ▪ Reminders ▪ Event announcements 	BrightWheel (via messages and reminders in the app)
	Group Activity Pictures	Parent Portal
	Individual Pictures	BrightWheel
	Policy Implementation or Updates	Email and BrightWheel (via messages in app)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues related to enrollment, financial transactions or policy applications specifically for your child 	Email
	Supply Lists	Parent Portal
	Teacher Rosters	Parent Portal
	Daily Schedule & Lesson Plans	Parent Portal
UNEXPECTED/ URGENT	Emergency notifications, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected school closure • Weather emergency (e.g., tornado warning) • Intruder or other building emergency 	BrightWheel ALERTS (via Alerts in the app) NOTE: If you check the BrightWheel settings, you can allow Alerts to notify you via text when they are sent. This is not automatic.
	Your Child's Injury (if significant or blood present)	Phone
	Your Child's Illness	Phone
	Incident involving your child (e.g. fall, biting)	BrightWheel (via activities in the app)