



Enrollment Agreement & Parent Handbook

My Baby Steps Academy I
4604 Ravensworth Rd
Annandale VA 22003
Phone: 571-378-0164
Cell: 703-927-5589

www.MyBabyStepsAcademy.com
Info@mybabystepsacademy.com

Director: Wilson Marroquin Wilson@mybabystepsacademy.com

My Baby Steps Academy II
7010 Little River Turnpike Suite 100
Annandale, VA 22003
703-712-7840

www.MyBabyStepsAcademy.com
Info@mybabystepsacademy.com

Director: Wilson Marroquin Wilson@mybabystepsacademy.com

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My Baby Steps Academy Center

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WELCOME

Hello parents! Thank you for choosing My Baby Steps Academy
We are looking forward to getting to know you and your family.

Please take the time to read the following policies.

This booklet is meant to create a mutual understanding and agreement
on how our centers operate.

Feel free to contact the Director with any questions or comments.

Wilson Marroquin

Director

My Baby Steps Academy I

4604 Ravensworth Rd

Annandale VA 22003

703-943-7916

Wilson@mybabystepsacademy.com

Wilson Marroquin

Director

My Baby Steps Academy II

7010 Little River Turnpike Suite 100

Annandale, VA 22003

703-943-7916

Wilson@mybabystepsacademy.com

MISSION STATEMENT

My Baby Steps Academy's goal is to provide children with a well-rounded education that will lay the foundation for kindergarten and beyond. Early childhood is a crucial stage in every child's life in terms of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.

My Baby Steps Academy is focused on genuinely nurturing our children's curiosity towards early education. Our program provides a welcoming and safe environment that allows children to freely explore and develop innovative minds to take on the world one baby step at a time. My Baby Steps Academy provides peace of mind to parents that their children are in a safe and secure environment that promotes continuous growth and development. Our passion for early education, along with our genuinely caring teachers who are energetic and have the proven talent to provide a well-rounded curriculum designed specifically for early learners. Our STEM-based program and early education provide the fundamentals for future academic success. The skills that are introduced help our students become creators, thinkers, leaders, problem solvers, innovators, inventors and most importantly respectful, joyful, and confident learners.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1. Before enrollment, we recommend you and your child/ren attend an interview with the Director to discuss the center as well as its policies and programs. Contact our center to schedule a facility tour and receive registration instructions. If you fill out the online registration form on the My Baby Steps Academy website, the admin will automatically receive an electronic notification of your request and will contact you within 24 hours regarding your inquiry.
2. You must complete an enrollment packet before your child starts school.
3. You will receive an email confirming your child's start date. By the start date, a one-week security deposit and a signed Fee Agreement form must be received.
4. You will be placed on a waiting list if enrollment space is unavailable. In the event that you find another daycare center that readily has enrollment space for your child, please contact us to have your child removed from the waiting list.

Enrollment at My Baby Steps Academy is open to children from six weeks to five years of age. Continued enrollment is contingent upon the parents', emergency contact person(s), and child's adherence to the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook, including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

To maintain capacity standards about the staff-child ratio, if available, children enrolled in part-time programs must be dropped off on the agreed-upon days unless authorized by the administrative team at your site.

A current health assessment is required during the first day of attendance. Please make an appointment with your child's doctor as soon as possible. To print blank health assessment forms, visit the registration page of our website or contact the administrative team to receive the forms.

Parents are required to notify My Baby Steps Academy immediately should any information collected at the time of enrollment, or any time thereafter change. My Baby Steps Academy reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time, with or without cause.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who "need to know" to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents, and children will not be shared with parents, as My Baby Steps Academy strives to protect everyone's right to privacy. Confidential information includes but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and health-related information.

Outside of My Baby Steps Academy, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the child's parent has given written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information to be shared outside of the program, the persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

PAYMENT POLICY

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians must sign a Fee Agreement prior to their child's enrollment at My Baby Steps Academy Preschool. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. A one-week security deposit is required to secure enrollment space. The security deposit must be received before your child's start date. The one-week security deposit will be applied towards the last week of attendance.

Weekly tuition is due before services are rendered and payable on the Friday before service week. Accounts with outstanding balances by Close of Business on Monday will be charged a late fee.

Tuition will not be prorated. There is no reduction or refund of tuition or fees for days missed for absenteeism, scheduled school holidays, child illness, closings due to emergencies, inclement weather, or acts of God.

A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of registration. Activities and supplies fees will be collected quarterly.

A non-refundable Deposit will be collected at the time of registration. The Deposit will be applied to your last tuition period within 30 days of the written withdrawal notice. If the withdrawal notice is not provided, the deposit will be forfeited, and parents are responsible for any outstanding balance through the end of the last tuition period.

If tuition and other applicable charges remain unpaid by Close of Business on Friday, the child(ren) will not be able to attend My Baby Steps Academy: (i) Your account will be turned over to a collection agency, and (ii) The deposit will be forfeited. If collection services, legal or court fees are necessary to secure payment in full, all costs will be charged to your account.

A 5% per month interest will be charged to any outstanding account balance overdue for more than one month.

A service fee will be charged for a returned payment. Credit cards or money orders will be the only accepted form of payment for three months after one (1) returned check.

Payment is collected via the Brighthwheel Software. You will get an invoice Wednesday before the service week to be paid by Friday.

Tuition and other fees are reviewed every year. Sixty (60) days written notice will be provided to parents in the event of changes to tuition or additional fees. Refer to your location price list for current amounts of tuition and fees.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Enrollment at My Baby Steps Academy may be terminated at the completion of any weekly tuition period or by My Baby Steps Academy pursuant to the terms of the Enrollment Agreement and this Parent Handbook. In the case of termination by My Baby Steps Academy, we will give you at least one week's notice for you to make alternate childcare arrangements, or termination may be immediate if deemed necessary.

Thirty days written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. Please note that your last day must end on a Friday. Tuition is not prorated should your last day not fall on a Friday, as tuition is due weekly. If you have notified us that you will be leaving and only attend a partial week, please keep in mind that you are still responsible for the entire last week's tuition. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and security deposit will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. Any unused tuition and security deposit will not be refunded if the required notice is not given. Your child's records can be transferred to your child's new educational setting upon your written request.

Parents are responsible for any tuition that remains after the application of the deposit, including any tuition obligation incurred for failure to provide the 30-day notice of withdrawal as outlined in this Parent Handbook and Enrollment Agreement.

My Baby Steps Academy reserves the right to withdraw your child if:

- The child's behavior constitutes a hazard to other children or staff.
- The child does not adjust to the center's program, and this condition remains after discussing with the parents regarding the child's ability to participate.
- The parent's language or actions are abusive or offensive to the children or staff.
- The parent's failure to abide by the Center's policies outlined in this Parent Handbook and Enrollment Agreement.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter the Center without prior permission of the Director. A withdrawn child and their parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to the Center following the last day of enrollment. Arrangements are made at the discretion of the Director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

My Baby Steps Academy reserves the right to change existing policies or introduce new policies with two weeks prior notice to parents.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment must submit a written request to do so 30 days in advance of the proposed change. The Director will notify the parents in writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional deposit and/or registration fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of the required fee. If the requested schedule is not available, parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until the requested schedule becomes available or may choose to withdraw their child from the program. (Please see withdrawal policy requirements above.)

PROGRAM HOURS

My Baby Steps Academy is open from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Temporary changes to these hours of operation are possible, and written communication will be provided to our families.

Our center is open year-round, except for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- The last Thursday and Friday of the month of September Staff Development Day and Back to School Night
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

Should any of the above holidays fall on a weekend, we will announce the day of closing in advance. Tuition rates take holidays into account, and you will not receive credit if a holiday falls on your child's scheduled day to be at the center.

CURRICULUM

At My Baby Steps Academy, our teachers use My Baby Steps Academy's very own STEM Curriculum. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Math. This curriculum was created to give young learners a fun and engaging learning experience. Our child-centered approach allows children to use their natural curiosity and provides ample opportunities to be active learners.

Our STEM Curriculum creates a solid foundation for future academic success by giving countless opportunities to explore and investigate the world around us.

Activities in all age groups are based on the most up-to-date practices recognized by experts in early childhood education. Our staff has access to publications and conferences on the latest developments available. We also conduct professional development with our staff to provide equal opportunities to gain and improve the knowledge and skills essential to their position.

We value your child's experiences. When your child starts at My Baby Steps Academy, observations will occur throughout their time here. This will help us provide your child with the best care socially, emotionally, and cognitively. We respect each child as an individual and set up their goals accordingly.

DAILY ROUTINE

Regardless of their program, ALL children must be dropped off by 10:00 am; unfortunately, we will NOT be accepting any students past 10:00 am. This time restriction minimizes program disruptions, allows your child to participate in the planned activities created to foster growth and development as well and allows the center to plan for the day ahead.

If your child(ren) has a scheduled appointment past 10:00 am we ask that they return home with you until the next school day, so that the classroom's typical schedule and routine are not disrupted. Late drop-off after doctors' appointments specifically can lead to a change in your child(s) mood, sleep patterns, and eating

schedule especially if they had a vaccine. We want to do our best to set your child up for a happy day ahead and we appreciate your help in doing so.

Daily routines are posted in each room, except for the infant classrooms; all specific eating, resting, and outside play have a specific schedule followed by staff and children daily. For rest periods, each child will have their cribs or cots.

Activities that stimulate language growth and encourage the development of motor skills, problem-solving skills, creative expression, cognitive skills, positive social skills, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math skills are all part of our daily curriculum.

Children are assigned to a program according to age and individual development readiness.

MEALTIME

My Baby Steps Academy is a nut-free program. Any food that contains nuts or nut products is not permitted.

Our catering food company will provide a morning breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack for children ages 12 months and older; however, we do not provide milk. Parents are welcome to bring their children a ready-to-eat snack, meals, or milk from home as needed. Our menu with detailed information regarding what will be served daily, gluten-free, and vegetarian options is available on our website. The meals are served to meet children's dietary needs and are planned in accordance with USDA standards. We request that you provide baby food for your infant or toddler who is not yet eating table food. Any food brought from home must be labeled with your child's first and last name daily.

CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

It is the parents/or guardian's responsibility to notify the center staff of any food intolerance, allergies, or special dietary needs your child may have. Notification should be given in writing on the enrollment form. Parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies" form, detailing any allergies, food, or other allergies from which their child suffers at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician, parent(s), or legal guardian(s) and must be updated every 12 months or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines for preventing and treating the child's allergies.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

My Baby Steps Academy uses Brightwheel software to manage communications, tuition payments, pick-ups, and drop-offs between staff and parents. Upon returning your registration forms, you will receive an invitation email or text to join the Brightwheel app. Please ensure you install the Brightwheel application once you receive this invitation in order to complete your registration process before your child's first day of attendance. If you have any questions about Brightwheel, how to install it, and how to use it, please contact our admin@mybabystepsacademy.com.

IMMUNIZATION & PHYSICAL EXAMINATION RECORDS

My Baby Steps Academy requires that every child receives all age-appropriate immunizations and physical examinations as required by the Virginia Department of Health Services. You are responsible for updating your child's health files to reflect new immunizations. My Baby Steps Academy requires a stamped or signed immunization record to show that your child(ren) is cleared to attend school. Parents must submit a **Virginia School Entrance Health Form** on their child's first day of school filled out entirely (pages 1-4) and stamped by a physician. Please note that your Brightwheel access will be suspended should you fail to provide the updated immunization records per the guidelines of The Virginia Department of Education. The reinstatement of Brightwheel access will have a \$25 fee per event.

WHAT TO BRING

Children will need one seasonably and size-appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. For ages 16 months and above we ask that you bring a child-sized blanket labeled with your child's first and last name. My Baby Steps Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing items.

For children not potty trained, please bring at least one week of disposable diapers or pull-ups and wipes per child.

For nap time, cots and cot sheets are provided by My Baby Steps Academy.

Separate sippy cups for water and milk (dated daily); each cup must be labeled with your child's first and last name.

Breastmilk or formula bottles for infants - label the tops and bottoms of all bottles with your child's first and last name and the date each day.

Every enrolled child will have a cubby in the classroom labeled with their name. All your child's belongings will be kept in this cubby during the school day. Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum.

DRESS CODE

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day. Some of these activities can be messy and athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing. Please do not dress children in clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children and staff in relation to toileting.

Coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and winter boots must be provided in the fall and winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. If your child is wearing rain boots or winter boots to school, we do ask that you also provide an additional pair of shoes to wear inside the facility. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

Children are not permitted to wear open-toed and/or open-backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child, and the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, My Baby Steps Academy will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables, it is the parent's responsibility to enforce this policy with their children. Following your child's last day of school, any items left behind will be discarded after 15 days. Any items not listed in the list above need prior authorization from the school.

Your child will need the following Items for their first day:

INFANTS

- A day's supply of disposable diapers and wipes and boogie wipes (additional supply can be stored in the classroom)
- A day's supply and formula or breast milk
- Breastmilk or formula bottles for infants - **label the tops and bottoms of all bottles with your child's first and last name and the date each day**
- Formula or breast milk, a 24-hour emergency supply, must be provided and stored at our Academy.
- A day's supply of baby food (if applicable)
- Three complete changes of clothing, including socks
- Silicone Bibs will remain in the classroom and will be washed daily
- Separate Sippy cups for water and milk (**dated daily**) **must be labeled with your child's first and last name**

TODDLERS

- A day's supply of disposable diapers and wipes and boogie wipes (additional supply can be stored in the classroom)
- A day's supply of food and snacks, if not eating from the Center's Menu
- Two complete changes of clothing, including socks
- Silicone Bibs (will remain in the classroom and will be washed daily)
- Sippy cup **labeled with your child's first and last name**

TWO'S

- A day's supply of disposable diapers and wipes and boogie wipes (additional supply can be stored in the classroom)
- Two complete changes of clothing, including socks **labeled with your child's first and last name**
- Water bottle **labeled with your child's first and last name**

PRESCHOOLERS:

- One complete change of clothing, including socks and underwear **labeled with your child's first and last name**
- Water Bottle **labeled with your child's first and last name**
- Boogie wipes

****GLASS CONTAINERS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE CENTER****

If needed, please provide over-the-counter skin products

1. Sunscreen
2. Insect repellent
3. Diaper Cream

An Authorization form for Over-the-Counter Skin Products is required to be completed by the parents or guardians with these items every year. Please make sure to label the form with the specific brand of skin products you have provided.

TOILET TRAINING

Children being toilet trained may need additional changes of clothes, including underwear, pants, a shirt, and socks, during this time. Please label all items brought to the center and all clothing that might be taken off during the day with the child's first and last names. Once potty training has been started at home, we can begin incorporating your child's toilet routine in our two-year-old classrooms. We ask that you provide us with all of the necessary information regarding your child's toileting routines and needs. Once they are accident-free for one week in their pull-ups, we are able to have them in their underwear throughout the day including naptime upon request.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING THE FOLLOWING TO THE ACADEMY:

Gum, lip balm, toys (outside of comfort items to assist with naptime) or other items are inappropriate for sharing for health and safety reasons.

NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE OR LATENESS

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late or absent are required to notify the center by 8:15 am so that we can best prepare for the school day.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Please note the arrival time is from 7 am to 10 am. If you would like your child to eat breakfast at school, please arrive by 8:15 am. We strongly encourage parents to arrive by 8:45 am so that children are included in breakfast, and greeting activities and have time to calmly set their minds for the day ahead. Upon arrival at My Baby Steps Academy, the parent or the adult dropping the child off must check in the child by Brightwheel App. Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or the Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. Please present the special instructions via the Brightwheel App and or verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to Early

Pick-Up, Alternative Pick-Up Person, health issues over the previous night that need to be observed, and/or any general issues of concern that the childcare providers should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

A parent or other authorized adult is required to sign their child out on the Brightwheel App. We do not accept text messages or phone calls as notifications of pick-up for any students. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and should directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents who drive must park in an available parking space and may not leave a vehicle idling in the parking area or driveway. Please be aware that it is against the law to leave an infant or child in a car unattended. Parents will receive written daily reports at pick-up via the Brightwheel app. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adults at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. Pick-up is not permitted during the school's nap-time or quiet time hours (12:00 pm – 2:30 pm).

EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

At enrollment, parents will complete Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up information. Parents are encouraged to include any and all persons who are authorized to pick up their child from My Baby Steps Academy in the case of any event/ emergency.

In an emergency situation, the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached, staff will contact the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide photo identification at the door, there will be no exceptions to this rule. Please note that these individuals selected by parents need to be available for emergency pick-ups and be able to arrive in a timely manner.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-Up form must be made in writing and dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

LATE PICK-UP

When a child is not picked up by the time the center is scheduled to close, there is a \$25 charge for the first fifteen minutes you are late. For every minute after the first 15 there will be a \$1 per minute charge that will occur. Parents will receive a late fee invoice through the Brightwheel application the following day.

If no authorized person has arrived to pick up the child within half an hour, the staff is instructed to call the emergency contact listed on the registration form to come and pick up the child. Please make sure that those

listed on your registration form are aware that they are listed and may be contacted in the event of an emergency. We recognize that it is possible that your late arrival may not have been under your control. However, it is still necessary that the late fee be paid to cover additional costs. Children repeatedly left at the Center after the closing time will be withdrawn from the program.

DISCIPLINE

The majority of discipline problems are avoided by keeping children engaged in challenging and exciting activities. When a problem arises, our staff will use the “Redirection Method” of discipline, complying with licensing standards and best industry practices related to behavior management.

Our approach is to address every situation, as a learning opportunity, with genuine compassion and age appropriateness. We will use the following techniques in doing so:

- Planning ahead to prevent problems
- Consistent, clear rules
- Encouragement of appropriate behavior
- Positive guidance
- Teach the children how to manage their emotions by showing them how to better respond to situations that may make them feel upset, sad, angry, excited, etc., and how to ask for help
- Redirection
- Involving children in problem-solving

My Baby Steps Academy recognizes that young children go through various stages of development. Certain behaviors are indicative of age. However, no child will remain enrolled if they have:

- Aggressive behavior towards other children or staff, either physically or verbally
- Aggressive or risky behavior against themselves
- Abusing or damaging school equipment
- Any different types of behavior deemed inappropriate by teachers and management.
- Requires more care than the staff can adequately provide without compromising the other children
- Continually disrupts the class to the extent that activities cannot be completed

In those rare instances when the behavioral concerns persist after the Behavioral Action Plan is in place, and My Baby Steps Academy’s staff determines that all efforts have been unsuccessful, the parent will be asked to find alternative childcare arrangements. Upon management’s decision to terminate a child’s enrollment and discretion, the parent will be asked to remove the child from the center immediately or be given a one-week notice.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION

Students are assessed twice per year in June and December. Parent/teacher conferences are available and encouraged to be scheduled which will be used to include an overview of the child's observations of the program. Topics will include the child’s strengths, achievement of developmental milestones, and social-emotional growth in a classroom environment. Parents are welcome to schedule a conference at any time and are encouraged to communicate freely with staff and the Director.

During program time, staff members are usually unavailable to have long conversations. Parents are welcome to write notes, call, or send e-mails to the Administration. If you leave a message on the answering machine, the Administration will return your call as soon as possible.

PARENTS' RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at My Baby Steps Academy, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order), My Baby Steps Academy must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The court's orders will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. If both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by the court order, both parents must sign the request for a more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. My Baby Steps Academy cannot, without a court order, limit one parent's access by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, it is suggested that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Director and are allowed in the childcare facility only at his or her discretion. An employee will always accompany visitors throughout the center.

AGENCY'S RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION

My Baby Steps Academy reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time, with or without cause. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with licensing regulations
2. Staff deems the child too ill to attend
3. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff, or other children if the child were to be present at the center
4. Parent's failure to maintain accurate, up-to-date records
5. Parent's failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion

Parents will not be reimbursed for tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program

STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY CLIENTS

My Baby Steps Academy staff is prohibited from being employed by any client (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for employment. Such relationships include but are not limited to babysitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling, regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of The My Baby Steps Academy are considered mandated reporters under this law. They are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. My Baby Steps Academy takes this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect all children's welfare and best interests. As mandated reporters, staff cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services, that are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

To protect the health of all enrolled children, we will not be able to care for your child if they have:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above (within the past 24 hours)
- Needs fever-reducing medication to maintain a normal body temperature
- Vomiting for any reason
- Diarrhea
- Chronic cough
- Excessive mucus coming from nasal passages, mouth, or eyes
- Needs cold medicine to suppress sneezing, coughing, or runny nose
- Has an unexplained rash that has not been treated by a doctor
- Pinkeye
- Teething discomfort
- Uncomfortable diaper rash
- Unexplained skin rashes or discharges
- Any other symptoms of communicable disease

When a child is prescribed antibiotics by a doctor, parents must wait 24 hours after the first dose of medication before sending the child to school.

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by Brightwheel or phone. If a parent is reached but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, it becomes the parent's responsibility to arrange an alternate pick-up with someone listed on the child's emergency contact form.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the infectious period for a specific illness are based on the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. My Baby Steps Academy reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if staff believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

If your child is absent due to illness, we request that you notify the Administration. This enables our faculty to track any illnesses that may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a "need-to-know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center's administration so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. We will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based on your decision to share (or not) the reason for your child's absence from school.

DISPENSING MEDICATION

My Baby Steps Academy will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication in its original, labeled containers. It is accompanied by a doctor's note with exact dosage and administration instructions. Parents are required to submit a completed Medication Form each day that medication is to be dispensed. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for ten days, the doctor's note must identify the dates that the medication is to be provided. Medication will be stored in a locked area, out of the reach of children.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Although we make every effort to keep your child safe, children are likely to acquire some bumps, bruises, and scratches during their early years. Less severe injuries will be taken care of by the staff. You will be notified on the Brightwheel application, or at the end of the day, depending upon the degree of injury, a written report will be provided.

If, in our opinion, your child's condition warrants emergency treatment, the first responder will be called, your child will be taken to the nearest emergency treatment center, and you will be notified of our decision. Parents will be responsible for any costs incurred due to any emergency treatment. In each case, a written report will be provided to the family and The Department of Family Services.

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident Report. The Incident Report will be placed in a sealed envelope and put in the child's cubby. Parents are required to sign the report at pick-up time and return it to staff. Should a person other than the parent pick up the child, a parent must sign the report and return it to the administrator within 24 hours.

FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire drills are conducted every 30 days. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

Parents may not sign children into or out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or actual fire/emergency. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into or out of the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of an actual fire/emergency, the Director will inform staff that the school will be closing early. At this time, any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone. As with the sick child pick-up policy, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION

Should the Director or any emergency services personnel determine that the Little River Turnpike location is too dangerous to be occupied, the staff will walk with the children to the playground located in the back parking lot of 7010 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003 location. Should the Director or any emergency services personnel determine that the Ravensworth location is too dangerous to be occupied, the staff will walk with the children to the playground located on the south side of the building of 4604 Ravensworth Rd, Annandale VA 22003 location. Once children are assembled at the alternate safe location, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contacts for pick-up.

EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the Federal Government is closed or declares a delayed opening due to inclement weather, My Baby Steps Academy will also be closed or delayed. Closing information is available on the Federal Government's local news and My Baby Steps Academy website.

If you are unsure, please call the Director directly at 703-943-7916.

If My Baby Steps Academy must close during the day, staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick-up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person of the pick-up location at the time of the call should the children need to be evacuated from the childcare center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is given.

Should the center need to close for an emergency, tuition will not be refunded.

BIRTHDAYS

When your child has a birthday, you are welcome to provide store-purchased treats (with an ingredient label) for each child in your child's group. Please coordinate with the teachers in advance. Balloons and candles are considered hazardous and are not permitted.

BABY'S DAY

Although every baby's daily rhythm is different, we will make every effort to follow the same eating and sleeping schedule as has been used at home. For some babies, the pattern may change from day to day. The baby may take a while to get on a regular schedule. Our biggest

challenge will be to get to know your baby's rhythm and signals and then to adopt a regular schedule for your baby gradually. The schedule may change as the baby grows. Please note that we cannot wake up a child from a nap to accommodate a particular nap schedule.

Pacifiers:

Children are allowed to use pacifiers in the classroom; all pacifiers must have a pacifier holder and your child's first and last name.

INFANT FEEDING POLICIES

BOTTLE FEEDINGS

Formula:

Powder or concentrated liquid or ready-to-feed formula can be dropped off at school in its original canisters or bottles. Parents choosing to drop off powder formula in bottles daily please ensure not to mix water with the powder.

Breast milk:

Parents choosing to use breast milk will need to bring milk in bottles from home each day ready to feed. Breast milk may be refrigerated for up to 24 hours or frozen for later use. You may store frozen expressed milk at the Academy.

- ALL bottles should be labeled with the child's first and last name and date.
- The Health Department recommends that bottles of formula/milk only be heated once. To assure your baby's health and safety, any formula/milk not consumed at that time must be taken home at the end of the day.

NAP TIME/QUIET TIME

Children will have the opportunity to rest each day quietly according to their classroom schedule. A crib or a cot will be assigned to your child and will not be shared with others. The infant classroom will not follow a specific schedule and will allow the children to rest as needed.

OUTDOOR PLAY WEATHER POLICY

Weather permitting; we will take the children outside daily for a minimum of one hour twice a day. During the winter months, we do not take the children out if the temperature is 32 degrees or below (wind chill factor included). We ask that you provide the following:

- Warm long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Coats, gloves, scarves, hats, and mittens
- Optional: Snow boots for the snowy days

During the summer months, we follow the Air Quality Index (AQI):

(AQI) VALUES	AIR QUALITY CONDITION	COLOR CODE	OUR POLICY
0 - 50	Good	Green	Outdoor Time Okay
51 - 100	Moderate	Yellow	We go outside shorter periods
101- 150	Unhealthy	Orange	No Outdoor Time Sensitive Groups
151- 200	Unhealthy	Red	No Outdoor Time

These are national air quality standards established by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency to protect public health. For more information go to www.airnow.gov Keeping everyone safe and healthy is our goal.

Employees of MY Baby Steps Academy

MBSA is staffed by qualified child development specialists. All staff members meet the Commonwealth of Virginia requirements for childcare workers and are carefully chosen based on education, experience, warmth, sense of humor, and their ability to nurture children’s individual needs.

All staff members are required to obtain the following:

- FBI National Fingerprint Criminal background check.
- Child Protective Services clearance in Virginia and any other state where the staff lives or worked for the last five years.
- Tuberculous Screening
- Minimum of 16 hours of training in Early Childhood Development per year
- MBSA On-going Educational Development Training Program participation
- CPR/First Aid/Daily Health Observation/ Bloodborne and Pathogens training
- MAT Certification for staff members administering medication to children
- VA Food Manager Certification for staff members serving food to the children



Enrollment Agreement

I, _____ the parent/guardian of _____, have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for My Baby Steps Academy. I understand that I must read, understand and agree to the terms and abide by the policies outlined in the My Baby Steps Academy Enrollment Agreement and Parent Handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Enrollment Agreement and Parent Handbook are subject to change. I acknowledge that the Parent Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, best practices for childcare service providers, or at the discretion of the Director. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Parent Handbook.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Director with any questions I may have about the contents of the Parent Handbook now and in the future.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____