BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

PARENT / GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2026 - 2027

The mission of the School District of Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department is to provide community services and life-long learning opportunities through recreation, education, and fitness programs to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Shorewood community.

Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department
1701 E Capitol Drive
Shorewood, WI 53211
(414) 963-6913
www.shorewoodschools.org

7/24/2026

SHOREWOOD BRIGHT BEGINNINGS
SHOREWOOD RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SHOREWOOD

Parent / Guardian Handbook 2026 – 2027

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SHOREWOOD

MISSION

The mission of the School District of Shorewood is to provide a liberal arts education that prepares students to embrace the challenges of the future. We will foster a love of learning and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will serve as the foundation and catalyst for a lifetime of learning.

CORE BELIEFS

Every member of the school community is **valued for his or her contribution** to the School District.

The **care and education of all children** are the first obligations of the entire community.

The family **plays a vital role** in the education of the child.

All children **want to discover and deserve** to reach their potential.

An **effective school culture** demonstrates high expectations, open communication, cooperation, tangible support, accountability, and shared responsibility.

Rich, **nurturing experiences** give children a greater opportunity to succeed.

Children will become **increasingly responsible for their success** as they mature.

Our community is strengthened when **diversity is valued**.

An effective learning community is based on **continuous professional growth** of all community members.

In an effective learning community, everyone works to **establish and maintain positive relationships** built on respect and dignity.

A **safe, orderly, healthy and clean** environment enhances learning.

Learning is **memorable and powerful** when **all school community members** are active, involved and find personal meaning in the experience.

Quality education recognizes children's **unique emotional needs and accommodates the multiple** ways they learn.

Quality education incorporates **authentic, real world learning experiences**. Quality education prepares children to **work collaboratively and to be caring, contributing** citizens of a democratic and global society.

BRIGHT BEGINNING'S INTRODUCTION

The Shorewood School District's Bright Beginnings Program opened its doors for the 2004-2005 school year serving children ages 3 - 4 at Atwater Elementary School. Today the program is operated at both Atwater and Lake Bluff Elementary Schools and serves children ages 2 years and 10 months through age 4.

Bright Beginnings program focuses on the individual child and provides an educational environment that stimulates and nurtures each child's unique growth potential. We provide numerous exciting and engaging thematic units throughout the year, allowing your child to freely explore and grow in important skill development areas, including large and fine motor, language and literacy, science and math, art, and music. Your child's social and emotional development is

of prime importance. At Bright Beginnings we help each child grow in his or her feelings of self-worth, self-confidence, respect for and appreciation of others and love of learning and of school. Our curriculum reflects the most current understandings regarding child development and early education and embraces Shorewood School District curriculum goals.

HOURS FOR ATWATER AND LAKE BLUFF BRIGHT BEGINNINGS PROGRAM

Mon/Wed/Fri morning class
September 4, 2026 – June 2, 2027
8:30 - 11:00 am (Sept 4 will be 8:30 - 9:30 am)

Tues/Thurs morning class
September 3, 2026 – June 1, 2027
8:30 - 11:00 am (Sept 3 will be 8:30 - 9:30 am)

Bright Beginnings will follow the Elementary School District calendar. Bright Beginnings will not be held on non-Elementary school days: September 7, 21, October 15, 16, November 6, 25, 26, 27, December 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, January 1, 18, 22, February 19, March 4, 5, 10, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 April 9, 30, May 28, 31. There may be additional days that Bright Beginnings will not be held due to field trips or conferences. The teacher will notify you of these dates at least one month in advance.

INSTRUCTORS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Atwater Bright Beginnings
Atwater Elementary School, Early Education Bldg, Northeast Corner
2100 E Capitol Drive, Shorewood, 53211
(414) 963-6962, ext. 5368

Sharon Maier, Certified Early Education Teacher	smaier@shorewood.k12.wi.us
Laurie Stephan, Teaching Assistant	lstephan@shorewood.k12.wi.us

Lake Bluff Bright Beginnings
Lake Bluff Elementary, Early Education Bldg, Northeast Corner
1600 E Lake Bluff Blvd, Shorewood, 53211
(414) 963-6972, ext. 7979

Molly Handelsman, Head Instructor	mhandelsman@shorewood.k12.wi.us
Becky Hoffman, Teaching Assistant	bhoffman@shorewood.k12.wi.us

WEBSITE ADDRESS

Bright Beginnings Website: https://www.shorewood.k12.wi.us/departments/recreation/preschool-program-clone
(Shorewood School District website, Recreation and Community Services Dept, Bright Beginnings)

DATES TO REMEMBER

Parent - student classroom visit: Tuesday, Sept. 1 & Wednesday, Sept. 2, 9:00 -11:00 am
Atwater Parent Orientation (without child) Wednesday, Sept. 2, 6:30 - 7:30 pm
Lake Bluff Parent Orientation (without child) Thursday, August 27, 6:00-7:00pm
September 3 and 4, class meets only one hour each of these days
Parent Teacher Conferences: March 4 & 5, 2027

ARRIVING TO BRIGHT BEGINNINGS
Parents are responsible for their child's supervision at the Atwater EEC NE Corner and Lake Bluff EEC NE Corner until the school start time. Please wait outside quietly with your child for the teacher to come and greet the children. The teacher will open the door at 8:30am to welcome everyone.

DISMISSAL FROM BRIGHT BEGINNINGS
Parents (or other authorized persons) are expected to quietly wait outside to meet their child after school. Teachers will dismiss children directly to them. A child will not be released to anyone other than those designated in writing by his/her parents. If you would like your child to leave Bright Beginnings with another child's parent, please provide the teacher with a note indicating the arrangements or indicate this on the student demographic form.

It is important that children are picked up promptly upon dismissal from Bright Beginnings. Parents/Guardians may be charged a late pick-up fee if they are more than 5 minutes late picking up their child. The late fee is $5 for everyone 5 minutes.

ATTENDANCE AND ILLNESS
Please call the Bright Beginnings telephone number and leave a message if your child is sick or will not be at Bright Beginnings for other reasons. Please indicate the symptoms of your child's illness.

Please keep your child at home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms which may be early signs of respiratory infections or contagious disease: unusual crankiness or fatigue, fever within the past 24 hours, loss of appetite, rash of any kind, runny nose, sneezing or coughing. Colds, viruses, childhood diseases, etc. are most easily transmitted in the early stages before the most obvious symptoms appear.

SCHOOL CLOSING
Bright Beginnings will follow the Shorewood Public School system should inclement weather or other emergency forces the closing of schools. Local radio and television stations will have announcements regarding school closings after 6:30 am. The School District website, www.shorewoodschools.org will also have the information listed.

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS TOILETING GUIDELINES
ALL children that are enrolled in the program are expected to be fully toilet trained before the first day of school.

Additionally, students should be able to get clothes on/off with minimal guidance, get on/off the child-sized toilet independently, clean themselves after toileting, and flush toilet. Staff will assist children with buttons or snaps on clothing as necessary. Independence and reinforcement of self-help skills will be encouraged by the staff.

If your child is not completely trained, you will be required to be present in the classroom to assist your child with toileting needs. OR If a child has a toileting accident, parents will be called to change the child into clean clothing. If a child has three or more accidents in a three-week period, the child is not ready for Bright Beginnings. At that time, the child will be required to stay home from Bright Beginnings for three weeks to work on toileting independence. Upon return, the child is expected to be fully toilet trained.

If the toileting accidents continue, the same procedures as listed above will continue. There will be no pro-rating or refunds of Bright Beginnings fees due to toileting issues.

CLASSROOM RULES and BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES
Bright Beginnings offers an environment that is emotionally and physically safe, so that each child can grow and learn feeling confident, happy, and secure. Teachers will discuss appropriate classroom rules with the children in the first week of school, inviting the children to share their own ideas. During these discussions, clear limits are set, and the children understand what appropriate behavior is. In general, at Bright Beginnings:

- We solve problems by using our words.
- We do not use angry hands or feet to solve our problems.
- We make good choices.
- We help each other.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT and VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Bright Beginnings has an "Open Door" policy. Parents and visitors are always welcome to observe and/or volunteer. No appointment is necessary; however, all visitors must enter and check in at the Main School Office.

Parents may initiate a conference should they feel there is a need.

Communication is maintained through the website, conversation, e-mails, newsletters, and flyers. Parents are welcome to contact teachers by telephone or email anytime.

Bright Beginnings welcomes parents or grandparents who would like to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Planning/organizing a classroom holiday party.
- Preparing (tracing, cutting, etc) classroom materials for art projects (this can be done at school or at home).
- Helping in the classroom with various activities.

Please let the teacher know if you are interested in volunteering at Bright Beginnings.

The Board of Education has approved a policy that all volunteers for the district must have a background check completed prior to volunteering in your child's classroom. All volunteers must complete the required steps to volunteer as outlined by the main office specific to that school.

HEALTHY SNACKS
Snack time is a special time each day at Bright Beginnings. It is a great opportunity for your child to learn more about delicious, healthy foods and food preparation, as well as to enjoy the very social experience of sharing food with friends. Your child even gets to practice early math skills such as one-to-one correspondence, counting and estimating as he/she sets the table with the correct number of napkins, cups, etc.

Lake Bluff Bright Beginnings: Each child brings their own snack to school. See below for healthy snack ideas.

Atwater Bright Beginnings: Children will take turns bringing the daily healthy snack to school. A snack schedule calendar will be sent home or emailed the first week of each month. As a reminder, a note will be sent home the day before it is your child's turn.

Talk with your child and plan together what he/she will bring to Bright Beginnings for a healthy snack. Teachers have a file of creative healthy snack ideas available. Please let us know if you need suggestions. No need to send a beverage as we have water available.

Please exchange snack days with another family if your child will be absent or for some reason cannot bring snack on his/her designated day. Please let the teacher know of the switch.

Snack is served family style to give the children control over the quantity of food they eat, and to cut down on waste.

IDEAS FOR HEALTHY SNACKS

Fruits: Apples, bananas, oranges, berries, grapes, pineapple, melon, applesauce, fruit cups.
Vegetables: Carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes (plain, with dip, filled with peanut butter, or cheese spread).
Breads: Bread sticks, crackers, cereal, cereal mixture, home baked bread or muffins, granola bars, mini bagels, graham crackers, pretzels, fish crackers.
Dairy: String cheese, cheese curds, pudding, yogurt, cheese slices or cheese spread.
Other: Popcorn, peanut butter on crackers.

FOOD ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

If your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please request the action plan from your teacher. Complete the action plan and return the form to your Bright Beginnings teacher.

CLOTHING

Please send your child appropriately dressed for Bright Beginnings. He/she should be dressed in play clothes that allow freedom of movement and that are readily washable. Every attempt will be made to avoid your child's clothing becoming stained with paint or dirt, but Bright Beginnings is the right time and place for creative expression. This can at times get messy! Give your child the freedom to concentrate on his/her artwork, not on keeping clothes clean.

Please send a complete change of clothing for your child in a labeled bag. These items will be kept at school for unexpected emergencies.

PLEASE label all clothing and shoes with your child's name. This is especially true of mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, and boots. It is amazingly easy for these items to get mixed up, and children often can not identify what is theirs and what is not.

SCHOOL BAGS

Your child must have a large tote bag or backpack to carry home artwork, notes, etc. Please label the bag with your child's name clearly visible on the bag. The bag must be large enough for projects to fit inside, and preferably should open easily from the top.

ACCIDENT, ILLNESS, or MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Whenever a child is injured during Bright Beginnings, an accident report will be completed by the teacher immediately following the incident. The teacher will be responsible for following up with the parent.

In case of an emergency: The Bright Beginnings staff/Recreation Department will try to contact the parents/guardians. School personnel will make a judgement regarding emergency care to be given. If emergency personnel are summoned, they will assume responsibility from that time on. Your child cannot be treated at a hospital until a parent/guardian can be reached. He/She can be transported to a hospital and given life saving measures only.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

It is our practice to allow students to go out-of-doors each day, if possible. We expect all students to come dressed properly for the day. In cold weather, students should arrive at school with 1) a heavy jacket or several warm layers; 2) warm gloves or mittens; 3) a warm head covering; 4) snow pants; and 5) boots. It is possible that cold weather may prevent students from going outdoors for recess. The chart below indicates the temperature and wind speed that will guide our decision-making in cold weather. Anything below these guidelines, we will not be going outside.

WIND CHILL CHART

Wind	**ACTUAL THERMOMETER READING (F')**						
Speed	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10
In MPH							
	EQUIVALENT TEMPERATURE (F')						
Calm	50	40	30	20	10	0	-10
5	48	37	27	16	6	-5	
10	40	28	16	4	-9		
15	36	22	9	-5			
20	32	18	4				
25	30	16	0				
30	28	13	-2				
35	27	11	-4				
40	26	10	-6				
	(Little danger for properly clothed person)						

INSURANCE
The school district does not carry insurance to cover student accidents/injuries.

LEGAL CUSTODY
If you are experiencing custody difficulties, we strongly urge you to keep the Bright Beginnings staff fully advised of circumstances which might affect your child. Unless legal documentation is submitted to the contrary, we will assume that parents share equal rights to drop off or pick up a child.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
The Shorewood Bright Beginnings employees are required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect to Protective Services. Please communicate if you have any concerns regarding your child's well-being.

MILESTONES ALL DAY CHILD CARE SUPERVISION
Milestones will be offering an all-day childcare supervision program for Bright Beginnings students at both Atwater and Lake Bluff Elementary School. The supervision will be available Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 6:00 pm. Students must be at least three (3) years old and completely toilet trained. If you require this supervision for your child while they are enrolled in Bright Beginnings, you must contact Milestones at (414) 964-5545 ext. 234.

PHOTOGRAPHY
Bright Beginning students will be photographed for educational/news publicity purposes. If you do NOT want your child in these pictures, please notify the Shorewood Recreation Department in writing.

CURRICULUM

Art
Children have many opportunities to explore a variety of art materials as they learn about the world around them and express themselves creatively. Bright Beginnings provides experiences with crayons, markers, pencils, paint, scissors, and many types of paper and everyday items for use in both planned and unplanned art projects. Through their participation in art activities, children expand on and develop their understanding of curricular concepts.

Language Arts
Bright Beginnings builds on the foundation in literacy that has already begun at home. Children engage in a wide variety of activities which develop and strengthen emerging early writing and reading skills. These activities include: the best of children's literature read aloud each day, audio books and stories, rhyming games and songs, poetry, learning about the alphabet and letter-sound connections, developing print awareness and phonemic awareness, practice at early writing activities.

Math
Children learn math concepts through their exploration of materials in the classroom and through games and activities which focus on early math skills. Literature is often used to make connections to mathematics. Concepts that children explore in Bright Beginnings include patterning, sorting, classifying, comparing, and estimating. Through daily activities children practice counting, graphing, measuring and problem solving.

Motor Skills
Bright Beginnings offers children many opportunities to develop both large and small muscle skills. Children use materials such as stringing beads to increase fine motor skills, which are important for beginning writing. Many of our art projects have the added benefit of developing fine motor skills. Large motor development occurs as we practice skills such as hopping, skipping, jumping, running, throwing, catching, kicking, rolling, etc.

Music
Music is an important aspect of each child's experience at Bright Beginnings. Songs are integrated throughout the day as a fun way to learn. Children can experience a variety of music and musical instruments as they participate in rhythm, beat and sound activities.

Science and Social Studies
Children explore the world around them and develop scientific inquiry by questioning, predicting, observing, comparing, and describing. Bright Beginnings offers children a deeper understanding of the changing seasons and animal habitats, behavior, and adaptations. Social studies at the Bright Beginnings level introduce basic concepts of self, family, and community.

GENTLY USED TOYS
We are always looking for gently used toys for our program. Please consider donating doll clothes, dress-up clothes, costumes, shoes, jewelry, purses, books, wood puzzles, cars, trucks, and toys.

BIRTHDAYS
We would be happy to celebrate your child's birthday / half birthday at school. Your child will be assigned a day to celebrate that is on or close to their birthday. The same "special events" apply for a birthday as for Star of the Day.

STAR OF THE DAY
Your child will have turns to be the Star of the Day throughout the school year. On this day, your child may wear a special crown, bring in snack for the day and much more.

On this day, family members (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and pets) are invited to join us at Bright Beginnings in celebrating your child's special day. A family member may want to read a special book, chosen by your child, to the class. Your child's special day is indicated on the snack schedule calendar (sent home or emailed the first week of each month). A reminder

note will be sent home or emailed the day before it is your child's turn to be the Star of the Day. Specific information will be provided by the classroom teacher.

FIELD TRIPS

Bright Beginnings schedules field trips during the year. We plan field trips to meet the specific needs of our Bright Beginnings children, and to coordinate our themes or units of study.

We generally travel by school bus. On occasion, we have taken advantage of trip locations near school and have walked or ridden the city bus.

Field trips would not be possible without the help of parent chaperones. The number of chaperones varies for each trip. Parent chaperones will be requested to supervise 2-3 children on the fieldtrip. Many factors determine how much supervision is necessary. We would like to give everyone the opportunity to attend field trips, but please understand that we are sometimes limited in the number of people we can take on a trip. For safety reasons, the bus company has a specific capacity limit that we cannot exceed. In the event that we do not have enough room on the bus for all interested parents, you are free to drive your own vehicles to the trip location to meet the group.

We will send home permission slips with specific trip details, including the number of chaperones we can accommodate, well in advance of the trip date. The permission slip will include a deadline for the signed slip. Fieldtrip fees for students have been included in the tuition fee. There may be a cost for parent chaperones to attend the fieldtrip.

On field trip days we are often locked into a tight schedule. To help us adhere to our schedule, please be at school at the designated time. We cannot hold the bus to wait for late students, doing so would adversely affect the quality of the trip for the rest of the group.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVATIONS/ HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES

Instruction in the Shorewood Schools may recognize and explain, but not celebrate, religious holidays. Teaching about religious holidays must be objective and avoid indoctrination and any implications that the religious doctrines upon which the holidays are based have any support of state or school authority.

The schools must remain neutral regarding religion. No religious services, prayers, or invocations may be held in conjunction with school programs or during public education except that a non-denominational ceremony or a moment of silence may be permitted.

Religious exhibits, displays, or symbols are appropriate in schools only when they are an integral part of the study of a subject. They are not to be used for decorative purposes.

Religious music is appropriate in schools only when it is presented for musical rather than religious content, or as an integral part of the study of a subject. Should a child choose not to participate in singing a religious song, the child's right to remain silent shall be respected.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The Bright Beginnings curriculum strengthens the skills which are necessary to prepare children for kindergarten. It has been developed to provide a foundation for the Shorewood School District benchmarks and standards for Junior Kindergarten. The Bright Beginnings program provides activities in all areas of your child's development including social skills, creative expression, language arts, motor skills, math, science and social studies concepts.

During the school year, teachers complete an assessment of each child's progress in these skill areas: Social Skills, Creative Expression, Language Arts, Motor Skills, Math, and Science/Social Studies. The progress report provides a springboard for discussion at parent/teacher conferences in March. Your child will be assessed at each skill level with a beginning, developing or secure level.

SHOREWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bright Beginnings Progress Report

Child's Name: Dates:

Social Skills	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Cares for self independently			
Demonstrates self control			
Follows directions			
Solves problems in daily activities			
Plays cooperatively with one child			
Plays cooperatively with small groups of children			
Shows respect for adults			
Shows respect for other children			
Shows respect for toys & materials			
Participates well in small group activities			
Participates well in large group activities			
Verbally communicates needs/wants			

Creative Expression	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Creatively uses a variety of art materials			
Participates in & enjoys movement, dance & drama			
Participates in group music activities			

Language Arts	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Handles books/printed materials properly			
Attends well to story read aloud			
Can retell beginning/middle/end of story			
Attempts to make predictions about events in stories			
Uses pictures in books to increase comprehension			
Plays with rhyming words in stories or games			
Identifies some upper-case letters of the alphabet			
Attempts to make some letters			
Recognizes own name			
Tells of a simple experience			
Asks a variety of questions using who, what, where when			

Motor Skills	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Uses scissors correctly			
Stands on one foot for 4 to 5 seconds			
Jumps over low object (6 to 8 inches)			
Catches ball in hands, arms flexed			
Throws a ball overhand/underhand			
Begins to hold crayon/pencil with fingers in opposition to thumb			

Math

	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Rote count to 10			
Count a set of 6 objects			
Identifies some numerals			
Sequence objects by size (biggest-smallest)			
Identifies several shapes			
Sort objects into groups with varying attributes			

Science/Social Studies

	Beginning	Developing	Secure
Make comparisons among plants & animals			
Make predictions			
Observe & describe various types of weather			
Describe seasonal changes			
Recognizes the work of community helpers			
Describe people as alike & different in many ways			

REGISTRATION

The Shorewood School District's Bright Beginnings program is for children ages 2 years-10 months to 4 years old. All children must be toilet trained.

Tuition Payments: A $200 nonrefundable deposit is required at time of registration to secure your enrollment in the program. Receive a $100 discount tuition discount if fees are paid in full at registration. Payment plans are available after you have paid the non-refundable deposit.

Children may register throughout the school year through the Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Department providing there are openings in the program. If the Bright Beginnings program has reached capacity, students will be placed on a waiting list. Parents/Guardians will be contacted in the order in which the names were received when space becomes available in the Bright Beginnings class. Fees will be prorated.

The School District of Shorewood's Bright Beginnings Program does not discriminate against students based on sex, race, religion, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, creed, color, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability in its educational programs or activities.

REFUNDS

The $200 deposit at registration will not be refunded under any circumstance should you decide to withdraw your child from Bright Beginnings.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Shorewood High School Administration Building
1701 E Capitol Drive, Shorewood, 53211 (414) 963-6913 x 1, www.shorewoodschools.org

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