



**Parent handbook**

# **Hills Academy**

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Everything your family needs to know: our programs, policies, schedules, and more.

5061 E 160th Ave · Brighton, CO 80602

# Welcome to Hills Academy



We're so glad you're here. This handbook walks you through how we do life together at Hills Academy: our programs, our policies, our daily rhythms, and everything in between. Keep it handy. And if a question comes up that isn't answered here, we'd love to hear from you.

## Contact Information

You can reach our Director, Tobbi Monroe, anytime.

- **Email:** [tobbim@hills.academy](mailto:tobbim@hills.academy)
- **Phone (Director):** 720-307-4439

## Our Mission

Hills Academy provides students an exceptional, biblically based early education, building a strong foundation for future learning in a caring environment that fosters social, physical, academic, spiritual, and emotional growth.

We believe in teaching the whole child. Here's how we live that out every day:

- **We keep communication open** between your family and our Hills Academy team.
- **We build a team that loves Jesus** and loves your kids: well trained, always learning, always growing.
- **We create a space that's safe, loving, engaging, and creative** so children can grow academically, spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally.
- **We teach hands-on** with lesson plans and activities that are developmentally appropriate and weave together academic and biblical learning.
- **We help every child see** how wonderfully God has created them, and get excited about it.

## Curriculum

Every classroom blends an academic curriculum with a biblical one. We believe that balance grows well-rounded kids who are prepared, intelligent, and creative, and who know Jesus.

**Infants and toddlers** learn with **The Creative Curriculum**, a research-based approach that supports our littlest learners through engaging activities, real connection, and guidance that shapes daily routines and meaningful learning moments.

**Preschool and up** build on the **Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence**. It focuses on specific skills across the physical, social, linguistic, and cognitive parts of a child's development. Because Core Knowledge continues from Kindergarten through 8th grade, our preschool gives your child a strong foundation for the years ahead.



**Our biblical curriculum is Brite**, a gospel-centered curriculum that builds lasting faith from babies through elementary ages. In every lesson, the Bible is read, heard, and connected to Jesus in ways kids can understand in their own lives. Our teachers are equipped to help kids build a faith strong enough to navigate tough cultural topics.

Brite makes disciples who can say:

- I belong to God and have a place in His church.
- I believe in Jesus as Savior.
- I am becoming more like Him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Assessments



We assess students of every age in August, January, and April, and you'll receive a copy of each evaluation. School-Year 3s, UPK, and Kindergarten families also get two parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Here's how we score:

- **NY (Not Yet):** Your child hasn't mastered the skill yet.
- **P (Partial):** Your child shows a partial understanding of the skill.
- **R (Ready):** Your child has mastered the skill and is ready for the next one in the sequence.

## Programs and Hours

Every family's needs look a little different, and we want to serve our community well. Here are the options for each of our programs.

Looking for tuition rates? Contact us for current tuition rates. Reach our Director, Tobbi Monroe, at [tobbim@hills.academy](mailto:tobbim@hills.academy) or 720-307-4439. We'd love to help you find the right fit for your family.

### Year-Round Full-Day Classes

Our **Infant, Toddler One, Toddler Two, Toddler Three, and Year-Round 3s/4s** classes all follow the same schedule options. Every one of these classes is full day.

| Days per week           | Program hours          |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Tuesday/Thursday        | Full Day 7:30am–4:30pm |
| Monday/Wednesday/Friday | Full Day 7:30am–4:30pm |
| Monday through Friday   | Full Day 7:30am–4:30pm |

### School-Year 3s

Our School-Year 3s class offers half-day or full-day programs.

| Attendance              | Session                 | Term               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Tuesday/Thursday        | Half Day 8:00am–12:00pm | August through May |
| Tuesday/Thursday        | Full Day 8:00am–3:00pm  | August through May |
| Monday/Wednesday/Friday | Half Day 8:00am–12:00pm | August through May |
| Monday/Wednesday/Friday | Full Day 8:00am–3:00pm  | August through May |
| Monday through Friday   | Half Day 8:00am–12:00pm | August through May |
| Monday through Friday   | Full Day 8:00am–3:00pm  | August through May |

### Universal Preschool (UPK)

We offer two UPK programs. Contact us for current out-of-pocket rates.

- **15-Hour UPK:** Half day, five days a week. Choose a morning session (8:00am–11:30am) or an afternoon session (12:30pm–4:00pm), August through May.
- **30-Hour UPK:** Placed in our Year-Round 3s/4s classroom.

## Kindergarten

Kindergarten meets five days a week, with half-day or full-day options.

| Attendance            | Session                 | Term               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Monday through Friday | Half Day 8:00am–12:00pm | August through May |
| Monday through Friday | Full Day 8:00am–3:00pm  | August through May |

## Ratios

| Infants | Toddler One | Toddler Two | Toddler Three | 3s   | 4s   | Kindergarten |
|---------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------|------|--------------|
| 1:5     | 1:5         | 1:7         | 1:7           | 1:10 | 1:12 | 1:25         |

*UPK classes follow the same ratios as our Year-Round 3s/4s classroom.*

## Sample Daily Schedules

Here's what a typical day looks like in each classroom. Kids thrive on rhythm, and these routines give them a day that feels safe, familiar, and full of fun.

*All schedules are subject to change. All classes end by 4:30pm.*

### Infant

| Time    | Activity                                       |
|---------|------------------------------------------------|
| 7:30am  | Arrivals                                       |
| 8:00am  | Breakfast for older babies                     |
| 8:30am  | Play time                                      |
| 9:00am  | Bottles                                        |
| 9:30am  | Art                                            |
| 10:00am | Sensory                                        |
| 10:30am | First nap                                      |
| 12:00pm | Lunch for older babies                         |
| 12:45pm | Bible                                          |
| 1:00pm  | Bottles                                        |
| 1:30pm  | Second nap                                     |
| 3:00pm  | Snack for older babies                         |
| 3:15pm  | Sensory                                        |
| 4:00pm  | Play time (outdoor time, depending on weather) |
| 4:15pm  | Music and bottles                              |
| 4:30pm  | Goodbyes                                       |

*We change diapers every 2 hours and as needed throughout the day. Bottles and naps can shift depending on your child's age and needs.*

## Toddler One

| Time        | Activity                                                      |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:30–8:15   | Greet/Handwash/Free Play                                      |
| 8:15–8:45   | Center Time/Focused Play                                      |
| 8:45–9:00   | Clean/Music                                                   |
| 9:00–9:20   | Diaper Change/Bathroom and Handwash                           |
| 9:20–9:40   | Morning Snack                                                 |
| 9:40–9:55   | Circle Time                                                   |
| 9:55–10:15  | Group Activity 1 (Bible or Creative Curriculum)               |
| 10:15–10:45 | Sunscreen/Bathroom (potty trainers)/Handwash and Outside Time |
| 10:45–11:00 | Bathroom/Handwash                                             |
| 11:00–11:30 | Lunch and Clean-Up                                            |
| 11:30–11:45 | Diaper Change/Bathroom and Handwash                           |
| 11:45–12:00 | Story                                                         |
| 12:00–2:00  | Nap/Rest Time                                                 |
| 2:00–2:30   | Wake/Diaper Change and Bathroom/Handwash                      |
| 2:30–2:55   | Afternoon Snack                                               |
| 2:55–3:25   | Group Activity 2 (Bible or Creative Curriculum)               |
| 3:25–3:55   | Sunscreen/Bathroom (potty trainers)/Handwash and Outside Time |
| 3:55–4:00   | Bathroom/Handwash                                             |
| 4:00–4:15   | Free Play (Diaper change 4:00–4:15)                           |
| 4:15–4:30   | Clean                                                         |
| 4:30        | Close                                                         |

## Toddler Two and Toddler Three

| Time        | Activity                    |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 7:30–8:15   | Greet/Handwashing/Free Play |
| 8:15–8:45   | Centers                     |
| 8:45–9:00   | Music                       |
| 9:00–9:20   | Circle Time                 |
| 9:20–9:40   | Morning Snack               |
| 9:40–9:55   | Bathroom                    |
| 9:55–10:25  | Outside                     |
| 10:25–10:45 | Group Activity 1            |
| 10:45–11:00 | Story                       |
| 11:00–11:30 | Lunch                       |
| 11:30–12:00 | Bathroom                    |
| 12:00–2:00  | Nap                         |
| 2:00–2:30   | Wake/Diaper                 |
| 2:30–2:55   | Snack                       |
| 2:55–3:25   | Group Activity 2            |
| 3:25–3:55   | Outside                     |
| 3:55–4:10   | Bathroom                    |
| 4:10–4:20   | Free Play                   |
| 4:20–4:30   | Clean                       |
| 4:30        | Close                       |

## School-Year 3s, UPK, and Kindergarten

| Time        | Activity                                                           |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:00–8:15   | Enter classroom, wash hands, table manipulatives                   |
| 8:15–8:35   | Circle time, calendar, songs and wiggles, Pledge, intro to the day |
| 8:35–9:00   | Wash hands and snack, independent book time                        |
| 9:00–9:25   | Bible Time! (Brite curriculum)                                     |
| 9:25–10:15  | Open centers, small group work (Core Knowledge), skill work        |
| 10:15–10:25 | Bathroom break and sunscreen if necessary                          |
| 10:25–10:45 | Recess                                                             |
| 10:45–10:55 | Wash hands, Story, Show and Tell                                   |
| 10:55–11:15 | Large group activity (Brite and/or Core Knowledge curriculum)      |
| 11:15–11:40 | Wash hands and lunch                                               |
| 11:40–11:50 | Lunch clean-up and pack-up                                         |
| 11:50–12:00 | Reading time                                                       |
| 12:00       | Morning session dismissal                                          |

## Optional Extended Afternoon

| Time        | Activity                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12:05–12:15 | Bathroom break and rest time set-up                                                                                                       |
| 12:15–12:45 | Rest/nap time                                                                                                                             |
| 12:45–1:15  | Quiet activities or continued nap time for those who are sleeping                                                                         |
| 1:15–1:30   | Clean up rest time, bathroom, and snack                                                                                                   |
| 1:30–2:00   | Enrichment time: Monday – Language and Literacy · Tuesday – Math · Wednesday – Science · Thursday – Language and Literacy · Friday – Math |
| 2:00–2:10   | Bathroom and sunscreen if necessary                                                                                                       |
| 2:10–2:30   | Recess                                                                                                                                    |
| 2:30–2:45   | Table centers                                                                                                                             |
| 2:45–2:55   | Clean-up and reading time (independent and group)                                                                                         |
| 2:55–3:00   | Pack up                                                                                                                                   |
| 3:00        | Extended day dismissal                                                                                                                    |

## Tuition and Enrollment Fees

All of our programs are priced as yearly tuition. You can pay the full year up front, or spread it out in monthly installments: 10 payments (August through May) for School-Year 3s, 15-Hour UPK, and Kindergarten, or 12 payments for our year-round classes. 30-Hour UPK is part of our Year-Round 3s/4s classroom, so it follows the 12-payment schedule, with 10 of those months subsidized by UPK funding. Contact us for current tuition rates.

**Got more than one little one with us?** We offer a 10% sibling discount. Your oldest child pays full tuition, and each younger sibling receives 10% off.

### Enrollment and Activity Fees

- **Enrollment fee:** \$150 for Infants through Year-Round 3s/4s (including 30-Hour UPK) and \$125 for School-Year 3s, 15-Hour UPK, and Kindergarten, due at enrollment.
- **Activity fee:** \$50, due within a month of your enrollment date.

### Late or Non-Payment

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. Here's how the rest of the month works:

- **By the 5th:** If tuition hasn't been paid, a \$50 late fee is added.
- **By the 10th:** If tuition still hasn't been paid, your child may not attend until the balance is paid.
- **By the end of the month:** If tuition remains unpaid, your child will be withdrawn.

Life happens, and we get it. If you're worried about making a payment on time, please reach out to the Director. We're for you and want to work it out together.

### Payment Options

Paying online through Brightwheel is quick and easy. ACH payments are free, and credit card payments carry a 2.9% fee. If neither works for your family, contact the Director and we'll set up another option.

## Communication

Open, consistent communication makes for a great school experience, so we stay connected with you in lots of ways: face-to-face conversations, our parent board, email newsletters, notes on the sign-in/out clipboard, and the Brightwheel app.

You'll find a parent board in or near your child's classroom with lesson plans, schedules, emergency info, classroom capacity and ratios, upcoming events, the school calendar, and more.

Please keep talking with us, too. The more we hear from you, the better we can care for your child and your family.

## Enrollment and Admissions

### Our Faith

Hills Academy is a faith-based program and a ministry of New Hills Church. Biblical teaching is part of everyday life in every classroom, from infants up, through Bible lessons, prayer, worship songs, and the way our team cares for your child. We teach according to our church's beliefs and values.

Families of every background are welcome here. When you enroll, you agree that your child will take part in this faith-based teaching as part of our program.

### Supporting Your Child's Needs

We want every child to thrive, and we want to be honest with you up front. Hills Academy is a small program with limited staff and resources. We are not a specialized or therapeutic program, and our ability to support children with disabilities or significant medical, developmental, or behavioral needs is limited.

Before enrolling, please tell us about any diagnoses, IEP or IFSP, therapies, medical needs, or behavioral support plans. We'll look at your child's needs together and decide honestly whether our classrooms are the right fit. Where we can, we'll make reasonable adjustments.

If your child needs one-on-one support, specialized care, or help beyond what our staffing and ratios allow, we may not be able to offer or continue enrollment. If needs change after enrollment, we'll meet with you to talk through next steps. Whenever we can't meet your child's needs, we'll do our very best to help you find a program that can.

### Tours

We'd love to meet you! A tour with your child's family is required before enrollment. Your enrollment fee (\$150 for Infants through Year-Round 3s/4s, including 30-Hour UPK, or \$125 for School-Year 3s, 15-Hour UPK, and Kindergarten) reserves your spot.

## Paperwork and Enrollment Requirements

Before your child's first day, please turn in all of the following to the Director:

- Enrollment form with accurate information
- Health form signed by your doctor, plus any health plans in place
- Any required medications
- Signed handbook agreement form
- Immunization card
- Medical treatment form
- Permission and authorization forms
- Signed tuition form
- Any IEP, IFSP, therapy plan, or behavioral support plan

*We may request additional items as needed. Your child may not attend until all required forms have been submitted and reviewed.*

## Withdrawal and Termination

If you decide to withdraw your child, we ask for two weeks' written notice. The Director needs to sign that notice for billing to stop after the two-week date. If your account balance isn't paid in full by your child's last day of attendance, a \$50/day late charge will be applied, and after 5 business days of non-payment, the account will be turned over to collections.

We want to partner with your family to make school fun and successful. School has to be a safe and loving place for every child, so physical violence is addressed immediately and is not tolerated. If a behavior concern keeps coming up after we've addressed it together and isn't improving, it may result in removal from the program.

## Attendance Requirements and Absence Policy

Children in our 3s, 4s, UPK, and Kindergarten classes must be fully potty trained on their own and wear non-disposable undergarments. To join the 3-year-old class, your child must be 3 by October 1st. To join the 4-year-old class, your child must be 4 by October 1st.

Showing up on time, consistently, is one of the best gifts you can give your child. Routine helps kids feel secure and ready to learn. Outside of illness, appointments, and the unexpected, regular attendance will serve your child best. Our day starts right on time, so please arrive promptly. If your child will be late or absent, let the Director know.

**There are no refunds or credits for absences, early withdrawal, holidays, snow days, vacations, etc.**

## Holidays

We close for one week at Thanksgiving, two weeks at Christmas, and one week for Spring Break. We also close a few days during the year for things like Teacher In-Service days, and we observe the following holidays.

**We're closed on:** New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, MLK Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday and Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

Some of these fall during our other closures, so be sure to check the school calendar and mark the dates. Tuition is based on a school-year or calendar-year rate (depending on the class) and has already been prorated for holidays. Because it's paid monthly, there's no tuition discount when a holiday happens.

## Arrival and Departure

Keeping your child safe starts at the door. Everyone needs to verify their identity with a valid ID when entering the building and the classroom. Please sign your child in and out every day they attend.

Teachers and parents should greet each other at every drop-off and pick-up. Please don't drop your child off without connecting with the classroom teacher first.

- **Infant and Toddler classes:** Drop off by 9:30am unless you've arranged otherwise with your child's teachers.
- **Year-Round 3s/4s:** Our day starts at 7:30am.
- **School-Year 3s, UPK, and Kindergarten:** Please arrive in time for the start of your child's session (8:00am, or 12:30pm for afternoon UPK).

This helps keep the classroom calm and focused. Thank you!

## Adjusting to School

When you enroll, we'll ask you to fill out a child information form. What you share helps your child's teacher support them as they settle in. Every child and family is different, but adjusting usually takes four to six weeks. You might notice some, all, or none of these:

- Your child (or you!) cries at drop-off
- Your child cries at pick-up
- Your child is fussy during the day or at night
- Your child is extra tired and ready for bed early (we keep them very active!)
- Eating habits change



All of this will pass, and soon you'll have a happy, well-adjusted kiddo. Try to stay as positive as you can about school. Your child picks up on how you feel about leaving them, so when you're confident in their care, they will be too.

Call the school office anytime to check in on your child. Our teachers will also keep you posted on how the day is going and reach out if your child is having a really hard time settling in. We're with you in this.

## **Release of Child and Unauthorized Pick-Ups**

Anyone other than a listed parent who picks up your child must be on the Pick-Up Authorization form. We'll ask for ID from anyone picking up whom we don't recognize.

If someone other than you is picking up, please let our team know. If that person isn't already listed as an authorized pick-up in your enrollment paperwork, give their name to the teacher and/or Director.

If someone without permission tries to pick up your child, we will not release your child. We'll notify you immediately and contact the authorities if necessary. Every child needs to be signed out with the classroom teacher and go home with all of their belongings.

## **Late Pick-Up**

We give a 5-minute grace period for late pick-ups. After that, a fee of \$1 per minute applies. If your child hasn't been picked up 30 minutes after class ends and we can't reach you or your emergency contacts, we will notify the local police department.

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# **Visitors and Volunteers**

We love having families involved! Parents and family members are welcome to volunteer. All volunteers must complete a background check before volunteering. Volunteers are never left alone with children. All visitors and volunteers need to check in with the Director using a valid ID, sign the log, and wear a visitor badge.

## **Custody Matters**

Hills Academy prefers not to get involved in custody disputes. We follow court orders exactly as written, and we will not honor any custody-related requests without a written court order.

## **Child Supervision**

Every child is under direct supervision and within sight the entire time they're with us. We take attendance every day, and teachers do head counts at every transition.

## Supplies

At the start of school, you'll receive a supply list of what your child needs. Two or three times a year, we'll also send out a list of donation items the classroom could use. Your generosity and involvement make a real difference in our program. Thank you in advance!

## Snacks and Special Treats



Hills Academy provides a snack for every class session, and we'll post the snack calendar. Please let your child's teacher know about any dietary restrictions or allergies. Some months we may also have a snack sign-up so families can bring in something to share. The kids love sharing snacks with their friends!

We love celebrating birthdays and special moments with treats. Just let the teacher know ahead of time, and be mindful of classroom allergies. We'll post any foods that aren't allowed in the classroom because of allergies.

Anything brought in for snack or celebrations needs to be **store-bought, shelf-stable, and in a sealed package**. Fruits and veggies are welcome, but they need to come whole or prepackaged from the store.

## Lunch

If your child's class has lunch time, please pack a healthy lunch and drink. Each classroom has a refrigerator and microwave for your convenience.

## Health and Medications

Your child's health and wellness matter to us. Handwashing is a must after using the bathroom; before and after snacks and meals; after coughing, sneezing, or wiping noses; and after coming in from outside.

Children may not attend school if they are ill and/or contagious. We'll send home a **"How Sick Is Too Sick"** document with every family, so please follow it carefully. Keep your child home if they have:

- A fever over 100.4°F for any reason
- Diarrhea (more than 2 loose stools in a 24-hour period)
- Pink, red, or yellow eyes, with or without pus
- Any COVID-19 symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, fatigue). Please follow our COVID-19 protocol.
- Any contagious or communicable illness without a doctor's release
- Vomiting (must go 24 hours without vomiting)
- Started antibiotics for any illness (must wait 24 hours after the first dose to return)
- Any rash without a doctor's written release stating it isn't contagious

Please notify the Director right away if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease such as COVID-19, measles, mumps, meningitis, rubella, or any others not listed.

## Illnesses That Require Time Away from School

- **Any illness treated with an antibiotic:** Your child may return 24 hours after the first dose.
- **Chickenpox:** Your child may return once all blisters have scabbed over and no other symptoms are present.
- **Rash:** Your child may return once the rash is gone and/or a doctor has written a note stating it isn't contagious.
- **Fifth Disease:** Your child may return to school, since children are no longer contagious by the time they're diagnosed.
- **Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease:** Your child may return once mouth sores are gone.
- **Head Lice:** Your child may return after the first pediculicide treatment. We'll keep checking, and your child may be sent home again if the infestation continues.
- **Influenza:** Your child may return 48 hours after fever and symptoms are gone, with or without medicine. This includes fever, chills, a flushed appearance, and sweating.
- **Measles:** Your child may return after the fifth day of the rash. Any child without vaccination or proof of vaccination who may have been exposed will stay home until 21 days after the last reported rash onset.
- **Stomach bug/flu:** Your child may return 48 hours after vomiting and diarrhea have stopped.
- **Pertussis:** Your child may return after taking 5 days of antibiotics or once the cough has stopped, whichever comes first.

*Exclusion times may vary based on a doctor's orders, and the Director can make adjustments when needed. Thank you for following these policies. They help keep every Hills Academy family and team member healthy.*

## Immunizations

A record of immunization or an immunization exemption is required to enroll and attend Hills Academy. Please provide proof of immunization from your child's doctor, or visit <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions> for the steps and forms for a medical or personal exemption. We do accept non-immunized children as long as an approved exemption is on file.

## When Your Child Gets Sick at School

Our team can't diagnose any illness or symptom. If we call you to pick up your sick child, you'll have one hour to get here. In the meantime, your child will have a quiet place to rest and will be supervised. Hills Academy may ask for a doctor's note before your child returns. Tuition is not reduced for illness-related absences.

## Medication Administration

If your child needs medication at school, you and your child's health care provider will need to complete and sign an authorized medication form. Medication must be in its original container, labeled with your child's name and the dosage, and handed directly to the teacher or Director. We'll store it out of children's reach. Our team is trained to give medication properly and follows the **Six Rights of Medication Administration**:

- Right Patient
- Right Route
- Right Time
- Right Medication
- Right Dose
- Right Documentation

## Reporting Communicable Illnesses

Colorado requires us to report certain illnesses, such as chickenpox, strains of the flu, measles, mumps, etc., to our local public health department. That report includes the patient's name, family information, doctor information, illness type, and any related lab work. Visit [cdphe.colorado.gov](https://cdphe.colorado.gov) for more information. We'll also let all of our families know by email and/or a note home. If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please tell the teacher and the Director as soon as possible.

## Allergy and Emergency Medications

If your child has an allergy, we'll need an Allergy or Emergency Medication form from your doctor. Emergency medications are kept unlocked but out of children's reach, and they go with your child whenever they leave the classroom. Our team is trained to give emergency medications and follows the **Six Rights of Medication**

### Administration:

- Right Patient
- Right Route
- Right Time
- Right Medication
- Right Dose
- Right Documentation

## Toilet Training and Diapering

All students in our 3s, 4s, UPK, and Kindergarten classes must be potty trained. Accidents happen, so please send an extra set of clothes to keep at school. More than 2 accidents in a week means a child is considered not yet potty trained. For details on infants and toddlers, see the Infant and Toddler Supplemental Handbook.

## Emergencies

### Accident Reports

When a minor accident or incident happens, we'll fill out a report. We'll ask you to review and sign it, and then we'll keep it in your child's file.

### Emergency Contact

If an injury or accident needs care outside of school, we'll do everything we can to reach you first. If we can't, we'll call the emergency contact on your enrollment sheet and/or your child's primary doctor. If emergency transportation is needed, your insurance will be used.

### School Evacuation

Emergency procedures are posted in every room, and we'll follow them in an evacuation. Our team will bring emergency backpacks and parent contact information, and we'll reach out to parents and emergency contacts immediately. We'll go to a safe location within walking distance and let you know exactly where to find us.

## Tornadoes, Fires, and Other Emergencies

We hold regular drills for fire, tornado, and lockdown/lock-in/lock-out situations. We'll let you know when drills are happening, and we'll prepare the kids ahead of time so they feel less fear and stress. In a real fire, tornado, or lockdown/lock-in, we'll notify you by phone and/or email. Every classroom has drill instructions, emergency plans, and evacuation routes on hand.

## Accounting for Every Child

Please sign your child in and out every day. We use it to track attendance, along with head counts our team does several times a day and at every transition. In the event a child is lost, our team will first call 911, then contact the parents, and keep searching.

## Inclement Weather

Colorado weather is all over the place and can change fast! We head outside every day as long as the temperature or wind chill is 20°F or above. Our team decides how long to stay out based on the weather, but we'll get outside even if it's just for a walk. On really hot days, we'll limit outdoor time, keep water bottles on hand, and apply sunscreen. Please dress your child for the day's weather.

## School Closures

We'll post any school closure in the Brightwheel app **no later than 5:30am** that day. Severe weather is the most common reason we close. Hills Academy generally follows the surrounding school districts (Adams 12, Brighton 27J, and SVVSD) on weather closures, though at times we may post an alternate schedule. When severe weather is in the forecast, the districts may cancel activities in advance. If that happens, we'll let you know as quickly as we can by phone, Brightwheel, or email if our hours need to change.

**If the surrounding districts call a Delayed Start:** Morning half-day sessions will not meet, and all other classes will start at 10:00am. Afternoon sessions (including afternoon UPK) will run as normal on a delayed start, but not when school is canceled.

And of course, if you ever feel it isn't safe to make the drive, please stay home and send us a message that your child will be absent. Tuition is not adjusted for snow days or delayed starts.

## Behavior and Guidance

At Hills Academy, we lead with positive discipline. We want to help kids grow academically and socially and build healthy self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Our team models these traits every day and uses teachable moments to grow the character of our young learners.

Every child learns at their own pace, shaped by their own culture, development, and temperament. Our team teaches and reinforces clear classroom rules and expectations, and we ask families to reinforce them at home too, so kids know exactly what's expected.

### How We Guide Behavior

We start with the simplest step and only move to the next one when we need to:

- **Redirection and praise.** Gentle reminders of expectations and lots of encouragement for good choices.
- **Meeting needs.** Time with a teacher, or meeting a need like tiredness or hunger.
- **A chance to reset.** When needed, a short separation or "time out" so a child can reset and refocus.
- **Loss of a privilege.** If that doesn't help, the loss of an activity or privilege.



### When Behavior Becomes a Concern

We keep observation logs for every child, and behavior logs when needed. If a concern keeps coming up or affects the classroom's daily routine, the Director will meet with you and your child's teacher to build a plan for your child's success. When a situation calls for it, a mental health consultant is available to work alongside you and our team.

Any unsafe behavior that redirection doesn't resolve will mean your child needs to be picked up from school. If concerns continue, we'll need to evaluate enrollment. Consistent behavior issues that create an unsafe environment for other students or for the child may result in removal from the program and forfeiture of tuition.

## Nap and Rest Time



If your child is with us for more than 4 hours, rest time is required. We provide a cot, and your child is welcome to bring a blanket, stuffy, or any quiet item that helps them rest. Children don't have to sleep, but they do need to rest their bodies for at least 30 minutes. After that, we'll give them a quiet activity while others sleep.

### Objects from Home

We recommend leaving toys and personal items at home unless it's Show and Tell day. Anything brought for quiet time stays in your child's cubby until rest time. We're not responsible for items from home that get lost or broken.

### Clothing

Please send an extra set of clothes, including undergarments and socks, and swap it out as the seasons change. Accidents happen, and some of our projects get a little messy!

### TV, Media, and Movies

We keep screen time limited. Teachers may show an educational YouTube clip or short educational video, and on days when it's too cold for outdoor play, we may do an exercise or movement video. If your child's class plans a fun movie day, we'll let you know and ask you to sign a permission form. If your child isn't permitted to watch, we'll have another activity ready.

An adult always supervises any use of technology or media. Internet access is limited, with safe settings in place.

## Field Trips

We'll plan occasional field trips throughout the school year! We'll let you know ahead of time, and you'll need to sign a permission slip with the trip details for your child to attend. Field trip fees are included in the fees at the start of the school year and need to be paid for your child to go. On every field trip, our team brings a cell phone, child emergency information sheets, sign-in/out clipboards, first aid kits, medications, and more.

### Late Arrivals on Field Trip Days

If your child arrives after the class has left for a field trip, you'll need to bring them to the field trip location or take them home. We'll post a sign on the classroom door with the trip details when the class leaves. Some days, the class will meet at the field trip location instead of at school.

### Field Trip Transportation

Parents will need to drive their child to and from field trips. We'll share all the details (location, times, and more) with plenty of time for you to plan.

### School-Provided Transportation

If school transportation becomes available in the future, parents will need to leave an appropriate car seat, if needed, for their child on field trip days. Children must stay seated, buckled, and show proper behavior. If there's an accident, flat tire, mechanical issue, etc., the teacher will contact the police first if necessary, then the Director (if not on site). If there's been an accident or injury, we'll notify parents immediately. Drivers must be at least 21 years old and provide a driver's license and insurance information to the school.

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## Abuse and Mandatory Reporting

By law, our team must report any suspected abuse or neglect to the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. Please understand that in some situations, the state instructs us not to notify parents of a report. If you suspect abuse or neglect, we encourage you to report it too.

If you suspect abuse, please call the Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at **1-844-CO-4-KIDS** or the Adams County Department of Human Services at **720-523-2000**. Law enforcement may need to be contacted.

# Infant and Toddler Supplemental Handbook

This section is for families of infants (6 weeks to 14 months) and toddlers (12 months to 3½ years). It doesn't replace the main handbook. It adds extra information and policies just for your littlest one.

Please read through it so we're all on the same page, and feel free to print a copy for your records. If you have any questions, reach out to the Director.

## Curriculum Guides

Hills Academy uses the Core Knowledge Sequence for preschool age and up, and developmentally appropriate curricula and guidelines from The Creative Curriculum for infants and toddlers. Bible is taught in every classroom, from infants up, using Brite. All of our administrators and lead teachers meet state licensing requirements and have goals and plans in place to keep growing in their education.

## School Supply Lists

Each infant and toddler will receive a supply list for their classroom. Please bring items in as teachers request them. Families provide diapers and wipes, and we keep a backup supply on hand just in case. Please bring enough pre-made bottles for each day.

## Emergency Procedures

We hold regular evacuation drills, including in our infant and toddler rooms using our evacuation cribs. Following Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) regulations, we plan for five infants in each evacuation crib. Toddlers follow the posted emergency exits out of their classrooms. Emergency backpacks go with every class during an evacuation.

Please make sure the office has your cellular carrier so you'll receive text updates in an emergency and so we can reunite you with your child quickly.

## Infant and Toddler Classrooms

**Infants.** Our infant classroom welcomes children ages 6 weeks to 14 months. Your baby will stay in the infant room until they are at least 12 months old and are walking independently, drinking from a cup, no longer using a bottle or pacifier, beginning to feed themselves with a spoon from a plate, ready to sleep on a mat on the floor, and socially and emotionally ready for more challenging activities.

**Toddlers.** Our toddler classrooms welcome children ages 12 months to 3½ years. Toddler One is 12–24 months and Toddler Two is 24–36 months. Our new **Toddler Three** class is a transition classroom for children about 2½ to 3½ years old, placed based on developmental readiness. It's a combined late-tuos and early-threes class, designed to help kids make a smooth transition into our School-Year 3s or Year-Round 3s/4s classroom. Your child will stay in their classroom until they reach the minimum age for the next



class and are socially and emotionally ready for more challenging, structured activities.

**Shoes in the infant rooms.** You'll find shoe covers at the entrance to each infant room. Please wear them over your shoes or take your shoes off before entering. When you leave, drop your shoe covers in the container by the exit door. Street shoes are not allowed in the infant rooms, and bare feet must be clean! Our team may wear Crocs or tennis shoes in their classroom.

## Signing (ASL)

Our caregivers use basic American Sign Language (ASL) with all infants and toddlers. You can encourage your little one by signing at home too! You'll find plenty of free signing resources online or at your public library.

## Pacifiers

If you do NOT want your infant or toddler to use a pacifier at school, please sign the Family Info packet.

## Communication

All Hills Academy teachers use Brightwheel, a web-based service that gives you secure access to your child's progress anytime from a computer or phone. Teachers share posts and pictures right in the app. Infant teachers post details on your child's sleep, eating, diaper changes, milestones, and more, so you get a full picture of your child's day.

Lesson plans and daily schedules are posted in the classroom or in the hallway by the classroom. We'd love to talk with you about your child's growth and development, so feel free to schedule time with your child's teacher anytime.

## Personal Belongings

Please label all personal items (disposable diapers, wipes, changes of clothes, etc.) with your child's name and store them in the right bucket on the shelves we provide. Label all food and feeding items, too, and place them in your child's food bucket on the classroom counter.

## Dress Code for Infants and Toddlers

Dress your child comfortably for all kinds of play, indoors and out. Please send extra clothes to keep at school.

## Schedules

Infants and toddlers are discovering so much: their surroundings, their caregivers, and themselves. We'll work together with you to keep things consistent between home and school so your child feels comfortable and settled. We use Brightwheel to track and share feeding, diapering, sleep, and more.

## Infant Feeding Schedules and Meals

We feed infants on individual schedules approved by a parent or legal guardian, using prepared bottles (breast milk, formula, or milk) that you provide.

- Please mix formula before drop-off.
- Bring enough bottles for the day, labeled with your child's first and last name. Label bottle caps, too.
- Date and label formula, breast milk, and regular milk with masking tape.
- Breast milk and formula will be thrown out after an hour if not finished.
- Once your child is using a cup, we can provide whole milk, or you're welcome to supply your own.
- We hold infants for bottle feedings up to 7 months of age. Bottles are not allowed in cribs.

Over time, your baby will move on to baby food and table food. Keep talking with your child's teacher about any changes to their feeding plan.

## Infant Diaper Changing

We use disposable diapers only (no cloth diapers, please). We change infants right away when they're wet or soiled and follow Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment diaper changing procedures. That includes washing both the baby's and staff's hands with soap and water after every change and sanitizing the changing surface after each use.

## Infant Rest Time



Every baby has their own unique rhythm, and one baby's schedule can't dictate another's. So our infant teachers let each child develop their own sleep pattern. If your baby falls asleep in the classroom area, we'll move them promptly to their assigned crib in the crib room, which we keep restful and ready for sleep. When they wake up, we'll bring them back to the classroom area. Infants 12 months and older will begin moving to the 12:00–2:00 nap schedule as they get ready for the Toddler One classroom.

Giving your infant a safe place to grow and learn is incredibly important to us, so we have policies and procedures in place for safe sleep. We provide the following environment to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is "the sudden death of an infant under one (1) year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history."

### Our written safe sleep policy:

- All infants will be placed on their backs in cribs that meet federal standard 16 CFR 1219, unless a different sleep position is medically needed and we have a written note from the infant's health care professional.
- Infants will not sleep on waterbeds, sofas, soft mattresses, or other soft surfaces.
- Infants who fall asleep in a swing or infant seat will be moved to their assigned crib for the rest of their nap.
- Soft materials such as pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and loose bedding will not be placed in an infant's sleep space.
- Infants will not share a crib with other children.
- Infants will stay lightly clothed and comfortable while sleeping.
- We'll provide supervised "tummy time" while infants are awake.

## Toddler Communication

Toddler One, Two, and Three teachers use Brightwheel too, giving you instant, secure snapshots of your child's progress anytime from a computer or phone. Teachers share posts and pictures, plus details on your child's sleep, eating, diaper changes, milestones, and more, so you get a full picture of their day.

Teachers post lesson plans in the classroom. As your child grows, we'll talk regularly about feeding updates, menus, activities, and new milestones. Feel free to schedule time with your child's teacher anytime to talk about their growth and development.

## Toddlers' Personal Belongings

Please label all personal items (disposable diapers, wipes, changes of clothes, etc.) with your child's name and store them in the right bucket in the hall cubbies. Teachers will let you know where to store anything extra.

## Dress Code for Toddlers

Dress your toddler in clothes that are easy for them to take off when using the toilet. Sweat suits are great in the fall and winter, and short sets and dresses work well in the summer. Clothes with lots of buttons, one-piece outfits, onesies, and overalls are really hard to take off. Easy-on, easy-off clothes help toddlers build independence, and that's a big deal!

All toddlers must wear shoes at all times. Sturdy athletic shoes with laces or Velcro are best. Activities can get messy, so comfy, washable clothes are always appreciated.

## Toddler Diaper Changing

We change toddlers right away when they're wet or soiled. That may mean a few extra diapers, but we have happy babies! Our team follows Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment diaper changing procedures, including washing both the toddler's and staff's hands with soap and water after every change and sanitizing the changing surface after each use.

## Toddler Feeding Schedules and Meals

Once children move on to table food, Hills Academy provides snacks, and families provide lunches and any specific snacks they'd like. Portions will fit your child's age and appetite, and mealtimes are never rushed. Toddlers who still drink from a bottle must be sitting while they drink. After their first 30 days in care, toddlers will not be allowed a bottle at nap time.

## Toddler Rest Time

The State of Colorado requires every toddler in full-day care to rest after lunch. Classrooms are set up for sleep from 12:00pm–2:00pm. Sleep is great, but it isn't required. Hills Academy provides cots and sheets for toddlers.

## Toddler Guidance

Hills Academy uses positive guidance. Our teachers keep their classrooms delightfully varied, busy, and inviting, which heads off a lot of behavior challenges before they start. When a child one year or older disrupts the class, a teacher will talk with the child about the problem and, if needed, separate the child from the group or redirect them. Every time, we talk with the child and remind them that we love them, but certain behavior isn't okay at our school. We encourage toddlers to use their words or signs, along with problem-solving skills, to keep the classroom a great place for everyone.

## Toddler Biting

Our toddler team is always supervising and watching to prevent bites whenever possible. We know biting is hard for the child who's bitten and for their family. The truth is, biting is a normal part of toddlerhood, and it happens for a few reasons:

- **Biting out of anger.** Toddlers may not have the words yet to express frustration. A teacher can sometimes prevent these bites by noticing a conflict building. This kind of biting gets better as toddlers learn to say things like, "Don't take my toy; I don't like that!" Teachers also encourage signing for children with limited language.
- **Biting because it feels good.** This is sometimes tied to teething. These bites are hard to prevent because they're so unexpected.
- **Biting to get acquainted.** These bites are also hard to prevent because they're so unexpected.

Please know our toddler teachers are doing their very best to prevent bites, but they can't always stop one from happening. Your child may still get a bite mark from a classmate, and we appreciate your patience if that happens. If your child is biting others persistently and our efforts to change the behavior aren't working, we may conclude that your child isn't ready for a group care setting and may ask you to withdraw from Hills Academy. You're welcome to re-enroll once the biting habit has stopped.

## Toilet Training

We don't do formal potty training before 24 months, but if your family wants support while your child is at school, we'll absolutely work it into the day. Once your child moves to Toddler Two, we'll schedule a parent meeting with the teacher to set potty-training goals and requirements. This is a big season, and home and school need to work together.

Once we start toilet training, please send at least two complete changes of clothes (including socks) and six pairs of thick training pants. Except at sleep time, please don't put your child in diapers or pull-ups during training. Pull-ups feel just like diapers when they're soiled, so your child can't feel the difference between wet and dry.

Because of our diaper changing procedures, only children enrolled in the Infant/Toddler classrooms may use disposable diapers and/or pull-ups. Children in other classes need to wear training pants at school until they're fully potty trained.

We'll put soiled clothing in a plastic bag. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regulations don't allow us to rinse or soak soiled clothes, so please check your child's cubby daily for laundry.

## Exploration Activities

Research tells us the first five years are crucial to a child's ability to learn, love, trust, and develop a strong sense of self. That's because three-quarters of brain development happens after birth, mostly in the first five years. How we care for children in these early years has a profound impact on how productive, compassionate, and confident they'll be as adults. Simply put, early experiences shape healthy development because they determine how the brain is "wired."

Think about it: confidence, competence, security, and self-esteem can be wired into a child's brain when they're stimulated, nurtured, challenged, played with, and free to explore. Kids learn best by doing, so our program is hands-on. Children will touch, feel, smell, listen, discover, get messy, and experience the world around them. Our curriculum themes and activities, and the design of our program itself, help children grow in every area of development.



Children from six weeks through three years have very specific needs for growth and learning. Here's what we'll provide for your child:

- Trusting, secure, and consistent relationships with caregivers who show God's love in their daily interactions
- Lots of different chances to practice self-help skills
- Real choices about how, when, where, and with whom they play
- Ongoing, meaningful language experiences
- Sensory experiences: touching, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting the wonders of God's creation all around them
- Lots of different experiences that invite play, discovery, and exploration
- Adults to imitate who show God's love in their words, actions, and interactions with the babies and with each other
- Literacy and reading, both one-on-one and in a group
- Healthy ways to express and recognize feelings
- Exposure to all kinds of art and music
- Encouragement to move their bodies and build gross and fine motor skills
- An awareness that Jesus is their friend, through music, books, and prayer
- Caregivers who pray with and for your child throughout the day

Our caregivers plan experiences that help your child build vital skills in listening and talking, physical development, creativity, and understanding the world around them. They switch up the classroom to bring new experiences, and our outdoor areas offer fresh air, things to see, and room to explore.

You can relax knowing your child is with loving, capable caregivers who make your child's safety and development their top priority.

## Outdoor Play

Fresh air and exercise are so important for kids' health. Please dress your child for the weather. When it's too hot, too wet, or too cold, we plan indoor activities. Following CDEC guidelines, infants go outside at least three times a week, weather permitting, even if it's just a short walk. Toddlers spend at least 25 minutes outside every day, weather permitting.

We watch outdoor play closely and make sure there's plenty of water and shade. Children under 6 months need a doctor's note for sunscreen, and parents must provide an appropriate sunscreen for infants. We provide Rocky Mountain 30 SPF Sunscreen for children 6 months and older. If your child is allergic to this brand, let the office know right away.

## Transportation

Our policy is to never transport infants and toddlers. However, if an emergency requires us to transport your infant or toddler in a staff vehicle, Hills Academy will follow Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) regulations on transporting infants and toddlers in emergencies. Please make sure our records include your cellular carrier so you'll receive text updates in an emergency.

## Changes to the Infant and Toddler Supplement

Hills Academy reserves the right to change, modify, amend, and/or delete any part of the Parent Handbook and this Infant and Toddler Supplement at any time. We'll let you know about any changes, and they'll also be posted on our website under the "Parent" section.

## Filing a Complaint and Licensing Information

To file a complaint about this facility, contact:

Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC)  
Child Care Licensing  
710 S. Ash St.  
Denver, CO 80246  
Child Care Complaints Line: (303) 866-5958

## Handbook Revisions

We reserve the right to make changes to this handbook at any time, and we'll let you know whenever we do. The signature requirement is included in your parent packet.

Thank you for trusting us with your child. We can't wait to grow alongside your family!