



Frequently Asked Questions

Bridges Early Learning Center
An Early Childhood Development Program
at The Emerson Center

Director: Brenda Neely
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License Number: C15IR0060

1590 27th Avenue, Suite A+
Vero Beach, FL 32960

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7:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.
www.BridgesELC.org

***A Preschool that's
as Unique as Your Child.***

REVISED 7/21/17

FL Daycare License # C15IR0060

May we help you find answers? Do you have a question we haven't covered? Call us.

General Questions

Q. Do you have any openings? Do you have a waiting list?

A. Our vacancy situation is constantly changing. We frequently have openings in one age-group, but not in others. When this situation occurs, we maintain a waiting list. We recommend inquiring as soon as possible to make certain we can secure your enrollment.

Q. Where are you located?

A. We're in the south side of The Emerson Center, 1590 27th Avenue in Vero Beach, near the corner of 16th Street and 27th Avenue. Look for us in Suite "A+."

Q. How long have you been serving children?

A. Bridges has been in continuous operation since October 2005. Nearly 900 children have benefitted from enrollment at Bridges

Q. Is the Center licensed?

A. Yes, we are licensed under State of Florida Day Care License No. C15IR0060.

Q. Do you conform to Florida state standards for childcare centers?

A. Bridges is one of the top providers in Indian River County that meets and exceeds Florida standards for Day Care and VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten).

Q. What is traffic like during typical morning and evening pick-up times?

A. We open at 7:00 AM and close promptly at 6:00 PM. Busiest drop-off times are between 7:45 and 8:45 AM. Expect the most pick-up activity between 4:30 and 5:30 PM.

Q. Do you offer part-time or flexible care? Before and after school care?

A. Part-time care is available for either three full days a week or for 5 hours or less five days a week. Sorry, to assure we're staffed optimally at all hours of the day, we do not offer flexible care. Yes, we offer before and after school care for students at 6 nearby schools. Our bus departs Bridges ELC at 7:45 AM and stops at Citrus Elementary, Imagine Charter, Rosewood Magnet, Osceola Magnet, Vero Beach Elementary, and Glendale Elementary. We start afternoon pickups at 2:30 PM, returning to the Center by 3:45 PM.

Q. What steps do you take to insure a clean and safe environment?

A. Our classrooms are clean, safe, secure and inviting. Cleanliness is everyone's job. Trash is removed from the building three times each day. Similarly bathrooms are checked and cleaned three times daily (or as needed).

Cleanliness is a top priority and on every staff members' job descriptions.

Q. How large is the Center (size of classrooms and other facilities)?

A. The Center comprises nine total classrooms with more than 3,000 total square feet. Our rooms are inviting, comfortable, and child-friendly rooms. There is easy access to age-appropriate toys, books, computers, and training resources. The two playgrounds invite fresh air, fun, and healthy exercise under the watchful eye of our vigilant staff.

Hours of Operation

Q. What are your operating hours?

A. We're open Monday – Friday, 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM.

Q. What happens if I need to bring my child early or pick him up late?

A. We open at 7:00 AM and close promptly at 6:00 PM. We ask that you please have your child here no later than 9:00AM. Classes begin with "Circle Time" at 9:00. (Our VPK Program begins at 8:30AM.) Your child must be picked up by 6:00PM. There is a late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child, according to the office clock.

Q. Will I be charged if I take a vacation or my child is sick?

A. After 90 days of enrollment, you are entitled to a week of vacation or sick time for which you will not be charged. Otherwise, normal enrollment costs apply.

Q. Are there key holidays or dates that the facility closes?

A. We are closed to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day (Thursday and Friday) and Christmas Day. If a holiday falls on a weekend, we will observe that day on Friday or Monday.

Organization

Q. How many children do you serve?

A. Our ratios are based on Department of Children and Families standards, currently allowing a maximum of just over 100 children.

Q. What are their ages?

A. We serve children 6 weeks to 9 years old.

Q. Do you care for the same group of children every day?

A. Yes.

Q. How are children organized? By age?

A. We serve children in similar age groups to facilitate socialization and team learning.

Q. What is the staff-to-child ratio in the classroom my child would be in? Does this ratio change throughout the day or will it always remain at or below this level?

A. We fully conform to Florida state standards for staff-to-child ratios. Here's what that means: Infants, 4 children to 1 staff; 1 year olds, 6:1; 2 year olds, 11:1; 3 year olds; 15:1; 4 year olds; 20:1; VPK, 11:1 (or sometimes 10:1); school-agers, 25:1. While the state allows some exceptions to these standards, we rarely make any exceptions. Typically, we are comfortably within the prescribed ratios.

Q. How do you discipline children?

A. Our discipline policy is consistent with the age of our children. We believe in using a positive approach using re-direction, direct, and indirect praise, and logical consequences. Physical punishment is never permitted by any persons. On occasion your child may be asked to take a break or a time-out.

Relationships with Parents

Q. How do you communicate with parents?

A. Our primary line of communications is face-to-face, although we don't hesitate to pick up the phone, send an email, etc. We regularly give parents reports (daily reports for infants, weekly reports for others). We distribute monthly newsletters, maintain a "Parent Information Center" at the door to each classroom, and send home activity reminders. Importantly, performance assessments are provided to every parent twice each year (at VPK level, we assess three times per year).

Q. What are your expectations of parents?

A. We ask parents to be proactive in support of their child's development and to step forward whenever they feel their child requires special attention. In addition, we encourage parents to be involved in curriculum-based activities with their child. We have an open door policy.

Q. Is there a parents' group or program?

A. Many activities facilitate parental involvement with other parents. We stage many events (some are listed below) and parents get acquainted as they participate in our functions and activities.

Q. May I drop in anytime?

A. Yes, parents are welcomed at any time. Bridges ELC's door is always open to parents and caregivers. Communication is important. And while we carefully manage security, visits are invited at any time.

Q. May I participate in program planning?

A. We welcome your input, particularly as it relates to serving your child's unique needs. Especially, we want you to join us in an initial Discovery Session (and subsequent follow-up reviews) to make certain our program is addressing your child's specific needs.

Q. May I take part in special events and trips?

A. To encourage parent involvement we plan several events each year. We host a Mothers' Day Tea, a Fathers' Day

Social, a Fall Fest Thanksgiving luncheon, a Christmas program, Graduation Ceremonies, a lending library, and more. Frequently, with parental cooperation, we'll stage birthday parties (or other celebrations) to honor our students. We want your involvement and readily accept help from parent-volunteers

Security

Q. What steps do you take to assure the safety and security of my child?

A. At Bridges our first priority is the well-being and safety of your child, caregivers, and our staff members. First of all, we control access to the property with an electronic lock system on our front door. Also, as a safety procedure we conduct fire drills on a monthly basis. We conduct tornado drills and evacuate to the sanctuary. In the event of an emergency, we will contact parents immediately. Additionally, each teacher is required to take daily attendance and document head counts.

Q. Are there restrictions of who may pick up my child?

A. You are required to provide us with names, addresses, and numbers of persons authorized to pick-up your child. Admission to the Center is granted only by proper ID, At times, you may want to grant time-limited authority for someone (say, a visiting grandparent). In all circumstances, anyone picking up your child other than you will be asked to provide us with the proper identification.

Activities

Q. What is the range of activities in which the children participate?

A. Our core curriculum, "Learn Everyday," is a literacy-based educational plan. Children need time to play, adequate space to play, and developmentally appropriate props with which to play. Play provides children opportunities to explore, manipulate, and interact with their environment.

Q. What is a day like for the children?

A. The typical day begins with "Circle Time," where students are briefed on plans for the day and receive a short lesson. Afterwards, we break into "centers" where small teams practice skills, play, or perform learning activities. During the morning, students rotate among the various activity stations. At some point, they break for outside activities, lunch, and a nap. Afternoons follow a similar format, although we frequently feature special activities, often involving music, art, or other activities conceived by our instructors or resourceful parents.

Q. Is there an outside play area? Do children use it every day?

A. Yes. Our two fenced playgrounds provide fresh air, fun, and healthy exercise under the watchful eye of staff. The

playgrounds are well-equipped with age-appropriate equipment.

Q. Do you ever take children on outings off-site?

A. We frequently take excursions, like our Halloween Parade at local nursing homes, a tour of a restaurant's kitchen, a behind-the-scenes visit to a fire station, and so much more. Plus, frequently we welcome outside programs that come to us, such as puppeteers, dentists, reptile demonstrations, etc.

Q. Do you let children watch TV?

A. Children's' movies are slated on Friday afternoons only. Typically, we integrate the movie content into the curriculum plan. Staff uses the time for administrative duties, including preparing reports to parents.

Q. Do you encourage children to read?

A. Yes, and we also invite them to take books home with them.

Q. What do you offer to specifically meet the needs of my child?

A. At the outset, we invite you to a Discovery Session — our way to make certain we're identifying the uniqueness of your child and creating a plan that will help your child. From time to time, we may update this plan so it can "grow" as your child grows.

Staff

Q. What is the tenure of the staff? What is your staff turnover rate?

A. Many of our staff members have been here since Bridges' opening. Plus, we have been able to recruit new teachers from time to time. During our first eight years, we've employed 45 different people with an average tenure of 2.7 years.

Q. Is each child assigned to a primary caregiver? Who is the teacher that will work with my child?

A. Yes. We'll introduce you to yours.

Q. Are the caregivers trained in child development?

A. Yes. Training levels may vary, but all staff members meet or exceed state standards. Some of our caregivers are currently working on their own educational advancement plans.

Q. What are the hiring procedures? Are background checks conducted on all staff members?

A. We carefully screen all employees, conducting background checks that meet state standards

In the event of illness

Q. What happens if my child becomes ill or is injured at the Center?

A. Should an accident occur you will be given an accident/incident report. Please sign report and give back to the teacher. You may request a copy.

Q. What kind of medical information do you need?

A. The state requires us to gather medical information on each child. We will need your cooperation in meeting this requirement. The documentation must include immunization and physical records. All records are kept confidential.

Q. If my child gets sick would you give him medication?

A. We administer medications under written instructions from a parent or doctor. If your child becomes ill while in our care or we suspect that your child has come in contact with anything, you will be notified immediately. Should he/she run a fever, you must wait 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Q. Do caregivers have first-aid/CPR and child development training?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you let children attend if they have a runny nose or a cough?

A. For the health of all individuals, we will not accept a child with the following symptoms: vomiting; diarrhea; a temperature over 100 degrees; green, runny nose; rash, communicable disease; or constant cough.

Summer Programs

Q. What happens for my child when summer comes?

A. Bridges operates year-round to meet the needs of our children and their families. But, when summer comes, we feature a "Super Summer Camp" for children ages 5—9. This special program involves travel and exploration with weekly themes to spark a child's interest and encourage learning. Our staff will give you separate information on this summer alternative program.

Costs

Q. What are the fees? What does this include?

A. A registration fee is due upon enrollment and is due annually by the first Monday of September. The registration fee is \$60.00 for a child and \$90.00 for a family. Registration fees are non-refundable. Weekly fees range from \$105 to \$165 (for infants). See our Parent Manual for details. Before/after school enrollment costs \$45 - \$60. Special rates apply to students in the VPK "wrap-around" program. In most cases, we offer a 10% sibling discount.

Q. What meals and supplies do I need to provide?

A. Children need to bring their own lunch daily. Lunch boxes must be labeled with your child's name. Please provide healthy foods such as fresh fruits, a sandwich,

juice, pudding, Jell-O, milk, carrots, etc. Please do not pack candies. Due to licensing requirements we are unable to cook foods. However, we are able to heat up any pre-cooked foods. Please do not send in food that needs to be cooked. Food that requires refrigeration such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, fruit etc. must be sent in an insulated lunch box with a frozen pack or a frozen juice box.

Q. Are there extra fees (such as activity fees or enrichment opportunities) in addition to the cited standard fees?

A. No.

Q. Is there a reduction in fees if my child is sick or takes vacation?

A. Once your child has been enrolled for 90 days, you are entitled to a week of vacation or sick time annually for which no payment is required. Days missed beyond this allocation are charged.

Additional Considerations for Infants

Q. How much experience do you have with infants?

A. We have four staff members with 16 to 20 years' experience working with infants in childcare settings.

Q. Are you certified in infant CPR and first aid?

A. Yes.

Q. What are your philosophies about infant development?

A. We are committed to progressive infant development strategies including verbal and visual stimulation, physical contact, and age-appropriate play. We are committed to the belief that emotional caring and support give your child a secure base from which to explore the world.

Q. How responsive will you be to my child?

A. We recognize that the child who receives love, attention, and affection in the first years of life will experience a direct and measurable impact on his/her physical, mental, and emotional growth. For this reason, we consider excellence in infant care to be "job #1."

Q. What type of equipment and materials are available for infants?

A. Our infant rooms are equipped with a complete array of resources to nurture and stimulate the developing child — including swings, bouncing seats, floor gyms, and more. By visiting our facility, we can show you the resources we have assembled.

