



# Discovery Kids Child Care

*Benson, MN*

## Established

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Background & Basic Info

When the community of Benson began to notice the shortage in child care in the area, business owners and community members began meeting to look for a solution. They researched locations in Benson and ultimately decided the best option was to expand the child care program already offered at the Benson Public School.

Safe B.A.S.E. began in 1994 at the school offering summer and before and after school care for school age children. In 2015, it was renamed to Discovery Kids when it added a preschool extended learning opportunity for families. The program then expanded to infant and toddler care in 2017.

### *Building*

Discovery Kids is housed in the Junior High/Benson Elementary school. They set their licensing limit based on the space available, which includes:

- 1 large infant room
- 2 toddler rooms
- 1 three-year-old preschool room
- 1 four-year-old preschool room
- 1 school age room

Benson School District provides the space for the child care center and covers the day to day operation costs such as heating, lighting, etc.



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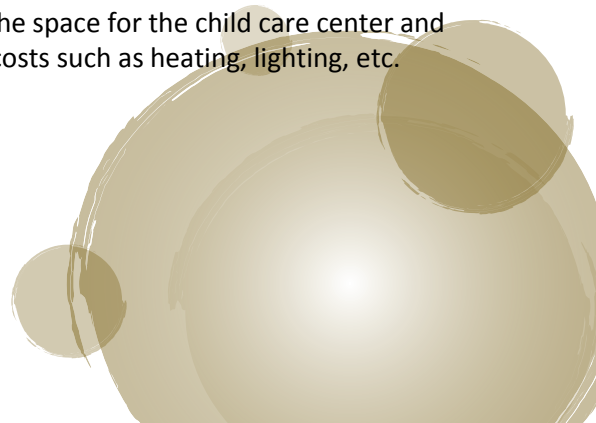


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## Schedule

Discovery Kids is open from 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with the exception of major holidays.

The child care center provides transportation to and from preschool and elementary school, as well as to all summer recreation activities.

## Food

Discovery Kids uses the Child and Adult Care Funding Program to pay for meals for the children. The school food service prepares meals for the child care and the costs of these meals are covered by the daily fee paid by parents.

## Enrollment & Fees

### Enrollment

The number of children enrolled often fluctuates weekly as new kids start and others leave. Contracts are required for full and part time children. The infant and toddler programs are licensed through Minnesota Department of Human Services. The preschool and school age program are a certified program through the Department of Human Services.

Age Range	Number of Children License Allows	Number of Children Enrolled
<b>Infant</b> 6 weeks – 16 months	16	14
<b>Toddler</b> 16 months – 33 months	28	23
<b>Preschool</b> 33 months – 5/6 years	40	25
<b>School Age</b> 5/6 years – 12 years	40	34
Total	124	96

### Fees

Age	5 days a week	3-4 days a week	1-2 days a week	Half day (5 hrs max)
<b>Infants</b> 6 weeks-15 months	\$165/week	\$35/day	\$38/day	\$22/day
<b>Toddlers</b> 16-33 months	\$155/week	\$33/day	\$36/day	\$20/day
<b>Preschool</b> 3-year-old	\$145/week	\$31/day	\$34/day	\$18/day
<b>Preschool</b> 4-year-old	\$130/week	\$29/day	\$32/day	\$16/day
<b>School-Age</b> Kindergarten +	\$125/week	\$27/day	\$30/day	\$14/day

- \$5/day for before OR after school
- \$7/day for before AND after school
- If space allows, drop-ins are welcome and are billed the 1-2 days a week rate

# Staff

Benson Public Schools employs all Discovery Kids staff. They receive paid time off and are PERA eligible. Several high school students are employed after school and through the summer. Discovery Kids aims to attract and retain employees through salary and benefits. Employees are eligible for raises and child care discounts.

Currently Employed	Position	Hourly Pay Range
7	Teachers	<b>\$13.38 – \$13.65</b> (+ \$0.75 shift differential if shift starts at 5:30 a.m.)
4	Assistant Teachers	<b>\$12.38 - \$12.62</b> (+ \$0.75 shift differential if shift starts at 5:30 a.m.)
2	Full-time Aids	<b>\$10.38 - \$10.59</b>
3	Part-time Aids	<b>\$10.38 - \$10.59</b>
9	High School Aids	<b>\$8.15</b> (under 18 years old) / <b>\$10.00</b> (18 years old)
3	College Students (work summer and holiday breaks)	1 Assistant Teacher ( <b>\$12.38 - \$12.62</b> ) 2 Aids ( <b>\$10.38 - \$10.59</b> )
2	Aid Substitutes	<b>\$10.00 – \$11.00</b>

Two of the assistant teachers are qualified to substitute for teachers and one full-time aid is qualified to substitute for an assistant teacher, if needed. There is also one Director employed at Discovery Kids.

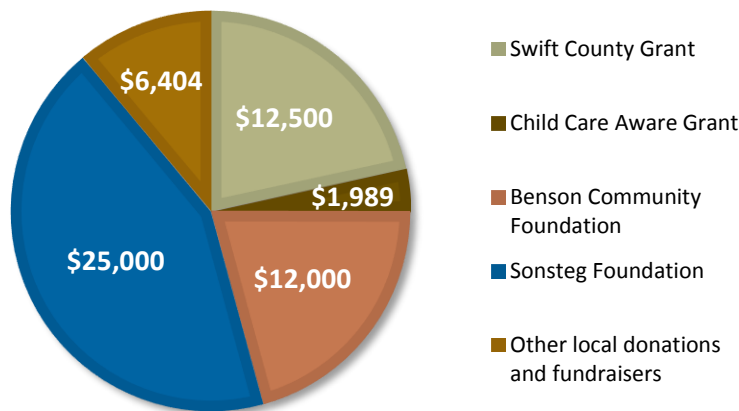
# Financing

## Start Up Costs

Discovery Kids had about \$62,000 in start up costs which covered:

- Toys and storage
- Handwashing stations
- Tables and chairs
- Cribs and cots
- Playground and fence

## Funding for Start Up Costs



## 2019 Fiscal Year (July-June) Operating Budget

Annual Operating Revenue	Amount
Fees	\$532,025
Donations/Grants	\$41,000
Fundraisers	\$1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$574,025</b>
Annual Operating Expenses	Amount
Space Rental/Utilities	In-kind
Staff	\$552,632
Operational (food, supplies, insurance, dry goods)	\$24,605
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$577,237</b>
Loss	\$3,212



### Loans & Grants

Discovery Kids utilized the Swift County Forgivable Loan Program for child care. This loan does not need to be repaid if the program is operated for five years. Discovery Kids has taken advantage of this opportunity to help pay for the playground, air conditioners, furniture, and much more. They also apply for the Child Care Aware Grant annually.

### Other Sources

The Swift County Benson Hospital, City of Benson, and Benson Public Schools have all agreed to help supplement budget shortfalls, up to \$10,000 each year.

The Swift County Benson Hospital held a fundraiser for Discovery Kids in April 2017 and raised enough money to buy strollers.

The Robert Sonsteg Foundation, a local foundation, also donates \$25,000 for the first five years of operation to help with the continuous start up costs that accumulate.

Several local organizations and associations have been very generous with donations of money and items. Discovery Kids has done a fundraiser with Go, Set, Ready—a local coffee shop and are in the process of setting up fall and spring fundraisers.

## Challenges and Successes

### Challenges

In the beginning, budget planning was challenging as Discovery Kids continued to grow, they realized they needed new items such as toys, books, craft supplies, cubbies, tables, and chairs.

Retaining staff has been a challenge, as well—finding people who are caring and committed to the emotional and cognitive development of all the young children is very important. It can be difficult to find someone who is comfortable with working with infants and toddlers, which sometimes leads to a high turnover rate.

### *Successes*

Discovery Kids has been able to work with the community to provide the financing required to start up and maintain the center. The infant, toddler, and preschool program all have a Parent Aware Rating so that these children can receive Pathway Grants.