

The Academy

Child Development Centers and Preschools



Parent Handbook

Parent Handbook

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WELCOME

Dear New Academy Family,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our school family. We are so happy to have you and your family here.

Our schools are proud of the continued community recognition as the “Best Preschool” in Middle Tennessee and we strive to maintain the high quality of care that the families have come to know and expect from our schools.

As child care providers, we strive to achieve a bond of trust with you and your child that comes from the daily interaction of caring for them. Each day, we focus on providing a nurturing, safe, and loving environment in which children thrive!

We ask that you read this handbook so that you are informed of all policies and procedures. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have. We know you have many child care options, and we thank you for choosing us to provide the high-quality care that your family needs and deserves.

Sincerely,

The Academy Team

...Grow, Learn, Play!

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STAFF AND CURRICULUM

About us

Our schools are owned and operated by a licensed corporation of child development centers and preschools in Middle Tennessee. We are dedicated to providing quality early childhood education and child care in a loving atmosphere.

Staff: "We're Creating Childhood"

Children deserve a fun and memorable childhood and we pride ourselves on having a home-like atmosphere in each of our centers to make that happen. Our experienced and degreed teachers are specifically chosen for their caring attitudes, knowledge of child development, and their enthusiasm for teaching young children. Professional development, including training in First Aid, CPR, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention, as well as age-specific training on child development is a continuous process for our staff. In addition, we make it a priority to remain informed about current child development, education research and trends in order to most effectively serve your child's needs. Each teacher undergoes a criminal background and fingerprint check to ensure your child's safety.

State Requirements

We abide by state requirements. These rules and regulations guide our practices and processes. All staff members have a health screening, background check, and reference check before beginning employment. Furthermore, our staff members participate in additional training hours each year for continued professional development.

Curriculum

Our program uses a nationally recognized, research-based curriculum as its educational foundation. Our teachers then expand upon this curriculum with additional projects, activities, and games designed to enrich your child's educational experience. Our teachers are trained to recognize the unique strengths and talents of each child to provide individualized activities to foster each child's development. Our educational program is designed to be creative and fun for your child, with hands-on learning experiences and many opportunities to learn through play!

Conscious Discipline

Our classroom management style is based on the Conscious Discipline model, which focuses on helping children achieve success by increasing safety, connection, and problem-solving. It is proven to improve the quality of student-teacher interactions and the social and emotional behavior of students. Conscious Discipline holds that change and self-control are possible and have a profound impact on others. It advocates that behavior is governed by connectedness, and views conflict as an opportunity to teach. Visit ConsciousDiscipline.com or talk to your child's teacher for more information on this unique classroom management philosophy.

Enrichment Programs

We know that it is important for kids to learn from the experts! Therefore, we bring in outside professionals to teach your children special skills. At the Academy preschools, we provide enrichment classes in art, culture, science/technology and movement/fitness. Some of these classes begin for children as young as one and a half year of age. Enrichment classes are a part of your child's regular program and are included in your weekly tuition!

Tadpoles

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Tadpoles is the program through which we manage classrooms, prepare lesson plans, and communicate your child's daily activities. Through Tadpoles, you can receive and download photos, videos, and notes about your child's day, and receive important messages and reminders from the center. Visit www.tadpoles.com or talk with your child's teacher for more information.

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ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Admission

Admission to The Academy is based on availability and the age of your child. When a classroom no longer has open enrollment availability, a waiting list will be established. Priority will be given to siblings of currently enrolled children, children of active military families, and children of Academy team members. Otherwise, individuals will be placed on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. The Academy does not discriminate against any race, religion, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation.

Enrollment Application

A complete and signed enrollment form is required. Please be sure to answer every question thoroughly. In addition, you must fill out a Health History checklist and provide an updated immunization record prior to your child's start date. The immunization record must be up to date and signed or stamped by the child's physician. Parents will be asked to sign state mandated forms annually, including a Flu Form and a Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum Acknowledgement.

Registration and Supply Fees

An initial registration fee and the first week of tuition are required to hold enrollment space until the requested start date. These fees are non-refundable. In order to provide our excellent curriculum and activities, we require an annual Supply Fee for materials, which is due each fall. Please refer to the Fee Schedule in your enrollment package for more detailed information.

Tuition Payments

Payment must be received prior to the first day your child attends. Thereafter, tuition is due at the beginning of each week. Upon deciding to withdraw your child from the center, a written two-week notice is required. If no notice is given, you will be required to pay tuition for the additional two weeks.

- Tuition is based on enrollment, NOT attendance. Full payment is required even if the child is not in attendance, regardless of absences or closings.
- No credit will be given for illness, vacation, center closing due to a holiday or an emergency situation, or inclement weather. We reserve the right to close the center for weather or safety-related reasons.
- All tuition is paid through automatic bank drafts. Your deposit and first week's tuition may be paid with a check. If the check bounces or a draft fails, fees will apply.
- Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the center.
- Ask your center's director about our referral program and how to win a free week of tuition!

Annual Rate Change

We reserve the right to adjust rates annually.

Disenrollment

We require a two-week written notice to be given in the event that a family ends enrollment at the center (including when a child leaves the center to attend kindergarten). Payment of tuition for these two weeks is required even if a family leaves prior to the end of the two-week period. We reserve the right to dis-enroll any family for any reason deemed necessary, including non-payment of tuition or other fees, disruptive or dangerous behavior as deemed by center staff (see Discipline and Behavior section for information on expulsion policy), or the inappropriate or disruptive behavior of a parent/guardian that interferes with the operation of the center.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Drop Off and Pick Up

Hours of Operation

The Academy centers are open Monday-Friday with the specific times varying at each location. Refer to your center's website for hours of operation at that location. Please refer to the yearly schedule of closings later in this handbook.

Cell Phone Free Zone and Drop Off/Pick Up Expectations

We ask that you refrain from using a cell phone during drop off and pick up times for the safety of our children and for efficiency during these busy hours. Our educators are required to exchange information with you about your child at drop off and pick-up. We appreciate your support, respect, and cooperation during these times!

Security Codes and Entry

Safety and security is very important to us, which is why at most centers, each family will have their own security code or fingerprint passcode to enter the building. Please do not share your code with anyone other than people who will pick up your children. Guests will be able to ring the bell and gain entry. Children must be signed in and out daily.

Absences and Late Arrivals

If your child will be absent, or will be arriving later than 10:00 a.m., please call or email to notify your center. Late arrivals must be approved by center management and without approval may be not be allowed to attend. This will ensure that your child can fully participate in classroom program and events for the day and will help with center scheduling.

Release of Children Policy

Please inform your child's teacher and/or management if someone other than you will be picking up your child. You will be asked to provide names of those individuals who are approved to pick up your child in the application procedure. A photo ID is required at time of pick-up. The Academy centers reserve the right to refuse to release a child to any person who appears physically, emotionally, or mentally unable to provide adequate care for the child as judged by the staff member responsible for the child. We will not be able to release a child to an adult who appears inebriated. In the event that this situation should arise, staff will release the child to an authorized individual on the child's emergency contact list who appears able to provide appropriate care for the child. A child will not be picked up during an active storm warning, school lock down, or without a proper car seat.

Late Pick Up

Late pick up fees are put in place to cover the staff after the center closes. The charge will be \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes after 6:00 pm, then \$1.00 per minute following that. Cash is due to the center management team at pick up or at drop off the next day. At 6:30 pm, if the child has not been picked up, local authorities will be called. Excessive late pick-ups may result in dis-enrollment.

What to Wear/Bring

Dress/Attire

Part of creating childhood means FUN! When choosing your child's clothing, bear in mind that sometimes our fun can be messy! For this reason, please follow our clothing policies to ensure your child has the best experience.

- Please dress your child in seasonally appropriate and comfortable play clothes.

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- Each child should have at least one, preferably two complete changes of seasonally appropriate play clothing, including socks and shoes, in his or her cubby at all times. (The number of spare sets needed may increase during potty training.) Please be sure to replace any articles of clothing that are used from the spare set.
- During the summer months, we will have water play. We will notify you of the times for water play so that you may provide a swimsuit, secure water shoes (i.e. closed-toe with a backstrap), and towel.
- Please label ALL items (including clothing, coats, hats, bottles, baby food, bags, and sippy cups) that you bring to the center with your child's first and last name.
- Children who are able to walk, and children in toddler one and up who go outside daily, MUST wear secure shoes (i.e. closed-toe with a backstrap) at all times.
- Children may not wear necklaces (including teething necklaces), bracelets, or watches.

Personal Belongings

Please refrain from allowing children to bring personal belongings to the center other than those we request (see the following sections). For the safety and well-being of all the children in our center, we ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home except on special "sharing" days. We are not responsible for personal items or toys from home that get lost or broken. Any items brought for a special reason requested by teachers need to be labeled appropriately with the child's first and last name. Labeling all of your child's items is the best way to ensure they do not get misplaced.

Infants (6 weeks - 12 months)

Please bring the following supplies, **labeled with your child's first and last name:**

- Clean fitted sheets for each day your child attends. Please ask the center whether Pack and Play sheets are an option.
- Two complete changes of seasonal clothing (including shoes) and bibs
- Diapers and wipes
 - Parent must complete a form in order for staff to apply diaper cream.
 - We will not use any form of powder, as it has been linked to lung and respiratory issues in young children. The American Pediatric Association strongly advises parents to refrain from use.
 - We are cloth diaper friendly! Please bring the brand with a plastic cover and a labeled bag in which to place soiled diapers.
 - Please do not leave diaper bags in the classroom.
- Any cereal or unopened jar food. State law prohibits the center from accepting any opened baby food of any kind.
- Prepared bottles (formula or breast milk) for enough feedings for each day. These will be refrigerated immediately if needed. We provide milk for infants no longer on formula.
 - For breastfed babies, please bring pre-made bottles ready to warm and serve. Bottles will be warmed in our bottle warmers on a low setting and served as needed.
 - For formula fed babies, please bring bottles with water only and separate pre-measured formula for each bottle. Teachers will mix formula with water as the child is ready to feed. Bottles will be served room-temperature unless parents request they be warmed.
 - We do not allow rice cereal or medicine (including teething tablets and gripe water) in bottles.

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Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) special note:

We are proactive against SIDS. In line with DHS regulations, cribs will only contain a fitted sheet. Mobiles, stuffed animals, extra blankets, noise machines, crib attachments, teething necklaces, pacifier clips, and propping will not be allowed. Infants in cribs are checked every fifteen minutes during napping times and are placed on their backs to sleep.

We have specific policies in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our infants.

- Infants may not sleep in swings or bouncers and will be removed immediately if asleep.
- Teachers may not swaddle children, but sleep sacks that are arms-free or have sleeves are permitted.
- No glass bottles or jars are allowed in the classrooms.
- We do not allow pacifiers that have attached animals/toys/teethers, etc.
- We have individualized feeding schedules, however if the child is hungry we will feed on demand, per state regulation.
- While bottle feeding, the teacher must be sitting in a chair with the child, when the child is too young to hold on to the bottle alone.

Toddlers and Twos (12 months - 2 years)

Please bring the following supplies, **labeled with your child's first and last name:**

- Diapers and wipes
- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks, shoes and underwear (if applicable)
- Sippy cups are provided. We provide milk, meals, and snacks for toddlers.
- A clean fitted sheet and a small, light blanket for each week for use on our nap cots/mats

Preschoolers (3 years - 5 years)

Please bring the following supplies, **labeled with your child's first and last name:**

- A complete change of seasonal clothing including socks, shoes and underwear
- A clean fitted sheet and a small, light blanket for each week for use on our nap cots/mats

Medication Policy

We do not dispense any over the counter or prescription medication other than REQUIRED medical equipment or emergency medication for life-threatening conditions that is supported by written and signed emergency medical plan from a physician that is kept in your child's file.

Communication and Parent Involvement

Communication

We provide weekly emails, blog newsletter updates, and electronic daily sheets with detailed information about your child's day. Daily sheets will include details about meals, snacks, diaper/potty, nap times, activities, your child's behavior, and needed items (diapers, wipes, clothing, etc.). In addition, where applicable, each child will have a "Take Home" folder or bin/cubby for you to check each day. Here you will find artwork and activities from your child's day. Please check these every day! Parent-Teacher conferences will be offered as well to discuss your child's progress and development. Please provide your child's teacher with any special instructions to help us serve your child better.

Child Assessments

In continuing to provide the best educational experience for your child, we offer developmental assessments each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. In addition to the assessments, we

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offer parent teacher conferences to discuss your child's development and to work with your child's teacher on special projects and activities uniquely designed for your child. This is also an opportunity to address any questions or comments you have. Conferences may be held at any time throughout the year, at either the request of the parent or the teacher.

Please remember, drop-off and pick-up times are considered transition times for a classroom and may seem busy. These transition times are not the best time to address your child's growth or development. Please let a management team member know your question or request to schedule an appropriate time to discuss your child's needs.

Confidentiality Policy

Staff will only have conversations with parents concerning his or her child. Personal information is NOT sold or shared.

Parent Engagement

We welcome parent engagement in your child's class, and parent feedback for the improvement of our program. We welcome all parents to serve on our Parent Board, which meets at least twice per year and maintains regular communication with parents and the directors throughout the year. We have several regular opportunities for class participation, such as reading in your child's class, sharing special family traditions or cultures, assisting with parties and open houses, and volunteering in the class. Please talk to center management for guidelines about class visitation during the day including time limits for parent visits. Additional ideas and suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated!

Birthdays and Special Events

Birthday Policy

We love to celebrate! Please first check with center management for center-specific guidelines for birthday celebrations. If you want to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, you may bring in party food (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) or party favors. We ask that you consider healthy options and planning with center management. Any food items that are brought in **MUST** be store bought in order for management to check ingredients for allergens. **Please remember we are a peanut and nut free company.** You may stay for the party or have the staff host the party. Please discuss plans for the party with your child's teacher, including date and time, class allergies, developmentally appropriate food choices, and favors. Some centers may have certain days of the week set aside for celebration, in order to avoid interrupting enrichment classes. If you are handing out favors or invitations to parties outside of the school, PLEASE bring enough for each child in the classroom.

Holidays and Special Events

We also celebrate holidays and special events. You will be given an opportunity to sign up to bring food, goodies, or paper goods for these parties. We also love to have parent volunteers during party time, so please let your child's teacher know if you are interested in participating.

Balloon Policy

Mylar helium balloons are the only type of balloons allowed in the school. Rubber or latex balloons are NOT allowed because they present a potential choking hazard.

Nut Free Commitment

All Academy centers are completely nut free. Please refrain from bringing lunches, snacks or food for parties or other celebrations that contain any kind of nut. This would include peanuts (including peanut butter), hazelnuts (including Nutella™ and similar products), almonds, cashews and coconuts (including almond milk, cashew milk and coconut milk), pecans, pistachios, walnuts,

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etc. During special celebrations, any items brought into the center MUST be store bought and sealed, and have an ingredient label. Once brought to the center, **you must drop off the items at the front desk**. Please refrain from removing the ingredient labels, as this is how we will check ingredients before delivering to the classrooms.

Due to continual changes in manufacturer's packaging and processing, please read the ingredient label of your chosen food to ensure that it does not contain any of the following: peanuts/nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts," or "may have been manufactured in a facility where a nut product is produced or is manufactured." If any of these are listed on the food items or we do not have an ingredient list to check, the food items will not be consumed and will be left in the kitchen.

We thank you in sharing our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all of our students and staff!

Diapering and Toilet Training

Diaper Changes/Cloth Diapers

Part of our high level of customer service is ensuring that all children are properly cared for. For children still in diapers, cleanliness is an essential factor of maintaining an appropriate level of care. Therefore, diapers/pull-ups will be changed when soiled or at minimum every two hours. Diaper changes will be noted on the child's daily activity sheet. The TN Diapering System will be used for all diaper changes.

Toilet training

Potty training is an extremely important milestone in your child's development. We are excited to partner with parents during this learning process. When you are ready to start toilet training your child, we ask that you let us know what routines you are using at home so the teacher can do the same in the class. Consistency is key when toilet training.

Please bring any supplies such as at least three complete changes of extra clothes, including socks and shoes, to put in the child's cubby for any accidents. Please read the guidelines below to better understand our commitment to support your child's growth and development.

1. The child must be developmentally ready as determined by Academy staff. Some examples of readiness include, but are not limited to, staying dry for longer periods of time, showing interest, understanding/following simple directions and beginning to pull pants up/down. We reserve the right to delay potty training until the child is developmentally ready per the above standards.
2. The initial potty training introduction must be initiated at home prior to starting the center process.
3. Teachers are not responsible for cleaning soiled clothing items. Soiled clothing items will be bagged and sent home. These items can be discarded at the request of parents.
4. Boys will be initially trained sitting down until they have reached the height to stand appropriately and/or they are capable of going potty by themselves.
5. Teachers will make potty training a positive and rewarding experience.
6. Children must be wearing loose fitting clothing that he/she can manage independently, such as pants with elastic waistband. Children will not be potty trained wearing onesies.
7. If pull-ups or diapers are used in the introduction phase they must have open sides allowing the child's clothing to remain on.
8. Children will be taken to the potty frequently during the introduction phase.

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9. Parents are responsible for providing necessary supplies. Some examples include but are not limited to over six changes of plastic underwear covers, underwear, clothing and shoes.
10. A regular porcelain toilet will be used. Potty chairs or seats are not permitted.

Transitions

Transitioning into school/other classroom

As your child grows and develops through our school, he or she will transition from one class to another. We strive to make this as stress-free as possible, not only for the child but for you as well. There are many decisions involved in graduating children to the next class. Children are assessed by age as well as terms of their developmental level. The child's interest level in the classroom activities will also be taken into consideration. The classroom teacher and parents will be consulted. When the final decision is made, you will get a transition letter and communication from the teacher as well as information about the next room. If needed, there will be a transition period to ensure that the child feels comfortable with the change. We help and encourage parents to be involved in the process.

Discipline and Behavior

Discipline Policy

Your child will be disciplined in a manner which protects your child's dignity and well-being. (Visit ConsciousDiscipline.com or talk to your child's teacher for more information on our unique classroom management philosophy.) Discipline will not be embarrassing, shaming or abusive, and physical punishment will never be allowed. Discipline will be consistent, fair, reasonable, appropriate, and in terms the child can understand. Discipline will never be related to food, rest, or toileting. Educators will focus on positive behavior and on the individual child's strengths.

The staff will use positive reinforcement, positive behavior management techniques, and redirection techniques. First, the child will be redirected verbally. If the behavior continues, the child may be separated from the group, within the classroom. If the behavior presents a safety issue, the parent may be called to remove the child from the center for the day. If a pattern of disruptive behavior is identified for a child, the director will have a conference with the parent and create a behavior plan. Behavioral interventions shall be developmentally appropriate, with consideration given to the attention spans and skills of individual children. Behavior issues that cannot be easily resolved will result in expulsion from the center.

Biting Policy

Biting is an age appropriate stage of development for infants, toddlers, and on occasion, preschoolers. In a group setting, most children will attempt biting at least once. Although normative, it can be troubling to parents and caregivers. Each child is different and bites for different reasons. When biting occurs, our focus will be on determining why the biting occurred and what we can do to help. Communication between teachers and parents will be a key aspect in reducing this behavior.

The following steps will help our commitment to provide quality care.

1. Model kindness and good behavior.
2. Redirect children.
3. Remove the child who bites from the situation.
4. Provide first aid for hurt child.
5. Write a report to each family.
6. Maintain confidentiality of all children involved.

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7. Teachers will notify management of incident immediately. Management will contact parents immediately if necessary.

In extreme cases we may need to ask a parent to withdraw a child from the center because we have been unable to diminish the biting occurrences. If the situation does come to this, we will welcome the child back after a period of time, perhaps when their language skills are better or this phase has passed. This is our last resort to solve the problem and will be used as such. We will work with each family individually.

Safety and Child Abuse Prevention

Child Abuse Policy

The Academy will comply with all Tennessee State laws for reporting any suspicion or evidence of child abuse. The Child Abuse Hotline (or 1-800-4-ACHILD) will be contacted and a report will be filed. A report will be made to the police if necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. The Department of Human Services will then be notified, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. Reports are filed accordingly when the center refuses to release a child to anyone deemed incapable of adequately caring for the child.

Keeping Kids Safe

The State of Tennessee mandates that all centers must provide the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum for all children 36 months and older. Parents must sign a form to be kept in the child's file which states that they understand that the school uses this curriculum. This curriculum is taught annually.

School Closings

Holiday Policy

We will observe and be closed for the following Holidays/Events:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Spring Teacher In-Service (Friday before Memorial Day)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Fall Teacher In-Service (Friday before Labor Day)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve - closing at 4:00pm

Note: Holidays listed that fall on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before, and those that fall on a Sunday will be observed on the Monday that follows.

At The Academy there is no vacation policy. Tuition for days missed will not be waived, and make-up days for part time enrollments are not guaranteed. Yearly tuition has been broken down into 52 payments per year regardless of time your child does not attend.

Snow Day Policy

Normal hours of operation are subject to change at any time to ensure the safety and well-being of your family and our team members. Emergency conditions cannot always be predicted with accuracy, so please be prepared for short notices on snow or ice days. Due to the unavoidable

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occurrence of emergency weather conditions, the center is unable to reduce tuition. Please remember any closure is to protect the children and staff in our care.

In order to communicate any inclement weather or emergency closings, there are several ways we will contact parents about closings:

- News Channel 5: You can sign up on their website www.newschannel5.com to have specific closings or delays texted and/or emailed directly to you.
- Mass text alerts and mass email through Tadpoles
- Social Media: We will post closings on our Facebook page.

Illness and Medical Records

Illness Policy

Your school will communicate with you about any health issues that are noted while your child is at the center. As a courtesy to all children and staff, please keep the staff informed about any health issues your child may have, even those occurring over the weekend. In order to protect the health and well-being of all children and staff within the center, the following health procedures and policies will be followed:

- Centers cannot admit a child who has any contagious illnesses or any of the following symptoms, including but not limited to:
 - Fever of 101 degrees or higher
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea that occurs more than twice
 - Open sores and/or mouth sores (including cold sores)
 - Unexplained or communicable rashes
 - Severe mucus drainage
 - Conjunctivitis (a.k.a. pink eye)
 - Any other questionable symptom

If your child exhibits any of the above symptoms while at the center, we will notify you, and the child must be picked up within one hour of contact. Your school reserves the right to require a child to be picked up immediately for suspected contagion. You will be notified should your child be exposed to a contagious illness.

Your child must be symptom and medication free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

We reserve the right to request a physician's statement prior to readmitting a child to the center. We do not administer medication to any child (see Medication Policy).

Children with **hand-foot-and-mouth disease** may return to school with a doctor's note only after having been fever-free for 24 hours and with all blisters dried. Children with **impetigo** or **strep throat** must also provide a doctor's note before returning to school. Children with open sores and/or mouth sores including cold sores may return to school with a doctor's note only after being symptom free for 24 hours.

Lice Policy

Children diagnosed with lice must have proof of treatment and be free of nits and lice prior to readmission. Center management will perform a scalp check prior to readmission.

Shot Records

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An Immunization Certificate is required upon enrolling and must be kept up-to-date according to Tennessee State Law. Your child will not be allowed to remain in the center without up-to-date immunization records.

Accidents and Emergency Procedures

Accidents/ Incidents

Safety is an important part of our jobs. We believe it to be our top priority to keep your children safe each day. Although we have many procedures in place to prevent accidents, sometimes accidents are inevitable. In the event your child has a minor injury such as a bump, scrape, bite, etc. we reserve the right to treat your child with the proper First Aid Care and will contact you immediately to inform you of any serious injuries. Per our requirements, we will also fill out an accident/incident report that must be signed by you or the person picking up your child that day.

Emergency Medical Procedures

In the event that your child requires emergency medical treatment, center staff will call 911 immediately. If your child requires emergency ambulance transportation, the ambulance drivers will transport your child to the closest local hospital at their discretion and depending on the speed with which your child must be treated. Decisions as to the necessity of emergency medical treatment will be made by the Director or Assistant Director, or another staff member standing in their position. Parents or legal guardians of the child will be notified as soon as possible and will be responsible for any and all medical expenses related to the child's injury including any medical transportation. It is the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide insurance information to medical personnel. Our employees are not responsible in any form for medical or transportation expenses.

Man-made Disaster Plan

In the event of a man-made disaster, such as a chemical spill, gas leak, emergency lockdown, etc., the following procedure will be followed: The children will be evacuated by employees and be transported, on foot or in employees' automobiles, to an alternative facility. All parents will be contacted and informed of the evacuation. Parents will be given instructions on how they can pick up their children. Please request a copy of your center's disaster plans from management if desired.

Natural Disaster Plan

In the event of a natural disaster (e.g. tornado, threatening winds, etc.), the children will be moved to an inside room or area of the center in accordance with the center's approved emergency action plan. A weather radio or app will be maintained at all times for updates on threatening conditions, as well as flashlights, first aid kits, and other necessary items. In the event the situation requires evacuation, the same procedure used for a man-made disaster will be followed. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. The Department of Human Resources will be informed in the event of an actual disaster, and an incident report will be filed within 24 hours. Centers will also follow a schedule of safety drills, such as fire and tornado drills, throughout the year to maintain preparedness for any emergency. Please request a copy of your center's disaster plans from management if desired.

Miscellaneous

Sunscreen/Bug Spray Policy

During the summer months, the children are frequently outside exploring and learning. In the summertime, we offer to apply sunscreen and bug spray in the afternoons. The sprays will be supplied by the center. Parents must sign a waiver to allow staff to apply sunscreen and bug spray.

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You can find information about which brand is used at the specific school. Parents should apply sunscreen and bug spray in the morning before arriving at school.

Gold Sneaker Initiative

At The Academy we offer your child healthy meal options in accordance with the guidelines of the USDA, and we are proud to be Gold Sneaker certified. If you prefer to bring your child's lunch from home or have any dietary restrictions, please remember that you **MUST** bring food that meets the guidelines, as well. If not, we will be required to supplement your child's meal with any missing items. For more information you can go to www.tn.gov/health/topic/goldsneaker. Gold Sneaker policies are reproduced below.

Physical Activity Policy

- Policy 1: Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of the physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules. Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) utilizing age appropriate activities.
- Policy 2: Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of limiting screen time according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan.
- Policy 3: Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. Childcare director/owner shall take Go NAP SACC Self Assessments (Infants and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards.
- Policy 4: Childcare providers must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior.

Nutritional Policy

- Policy 5: Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. All educators shall be trained to advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly. Providers shall publicly display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in Breastfeeding Welcomed Here through the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding).
- Policy 6: Childcare educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for snack and meal consumption and age-appropriate portion size. Childcare educators shall provide education to families twice each year (i.e., via parent meeting, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size. All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a positive attitude toward food. Childcare educators shall apply evidence-based early food preference learning strategies such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods.

Tobacco Policy

- Policy 7: The Childcare provider campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all

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indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Childcare employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e., fieldtrips, walks, and all other outdoor activities). Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to change clothes and wash hands thoroughly prior to interacting with children. "NO Smoking" signs shall be posted conspicuously at each childcare provider entrance, as required by state law.

Parent Recruitment of Academy Staff

Recruitment of any Academy staff member is not allowed. Families may not solicit, directly or indirectly, any employee of The Academy to enter into an employment contract while employed at the Academy centers. Team members may not provide care for center families outside of the center. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting, nannying, transportation, etc. Solicitation of an Academy team member may warrant a parent's immediate dismissal from the center, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for any employees involved.

Policy Changes

The Academy's policies are subject to change at any time. Every effort will be made to notify parents of any changes to the policies or procedures in a timely fashion.

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DAILY ROUTINES

Meals and Snacks

We provide nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Menus are posted for your reference. At The Academy centers, a continental style breakfast will be provided each morning from opening to 9 a.m. Parents may enjoy breakfast in the breakfast area with their child if they desire. This food must remain in the designated continental breakfast area and is not allowed in the classroom. Meal and snack times are scheduled according to a group's age and developmental level. Meals will not be provided outside of those schedule times. Please alert the staff concerning any special dietary needs or food allergies. Parents may substitute components of meals and snacks, but substitutions must be in line with USDA regulations and all components must be provided for the child.

Rest Time

Rest times are scheduled in the middle of the day after lunch for children age one year and up. Rest times will vary according to the group's age and developmental level. Children are not required to sleep, but must rest quietly so as to not disturb other children who are resting. Infants will form their own sleep patterns and may sleep at will throughout the day.

We request that no pick ups or drop offs occur during these two hours of your child's classroom schedule.

Outside Play

We have separate, age appropriate playgrounds. During a day with a normal routine and when weather permits, children will play on the playground two times per day, in the morning and again in the afternoon. Per DHS regulations, we will go outside when temperatures, after adjusting for wind chill and heat index, are between 32 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit. If weather conditions do not permit outdoor play, other gross motor activities will be substituted indoors.

Children may not be released directly from the playground. Please enter the building to sign your child out before picking your child up during play in this area.

Classroom Schedules

Schedules are designed to be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the group. Please check with your child's teacher to see their regular schedule.



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SUMMARY OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE AGENCIES

This summary is a guide for parents of children in licensed child care agencies. It outlines some of the requirements child care agencies must meet in order to be licensed. The Department of Human Services licenses child care agencies with five (5) or more unrelated children operating for three (3) or more hours per day unless exempt. **The purpose of licensing is to help maintain healthy, safe, and developmentally appropriate environments for your child.** Questions about these requirements or concerns about an agency's compliance should be referred to the local DHS office. You may ask your agency to see the complete set of licensure rules for child care agencies or you can access the rules through the Department's website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

Ownership, Organization, and Administration

- General liability, automobile liability and medical payment insurance coverage shall be maintained on the operations of the child care agency's facilities and vehicles.
- Enrollment of children less than six (6) weeks of age is prohibited.
- Children shall not be in care for more than twelve (12) hours in a twenty-four (24) hour period except in special circumstances.
- Written documentation that the parent performed an on-site visit to the agency to review the agency's facility and parent engagement strategies prior to enrolling the child (not required for children of homeless families).
- Child care agencies shall establish a drug testing policy for all staff having direct contact with children.
- A copy of the agency's policies, procedures, and the Department's Summary of Licensing Requirements shall be supplied to the parent upon admission of the child.
- Parents shall be permitted to see the professional credential(s) of staff upon request.
- During operating hours, parents shall be permitted immediate access to their children, unless legal documents prohibit or restrict access.
- Children's Records
 - ✓ Written consent for emergency medical care.
 - ✓ Written plan stating to whom the child shall be released.
 - ✓ Written transportation agreement between parent and the center regarding daily transportation.
 - ✓ Daily attendance that includes time in and time out for each child.
 - ✓ Prior written permission of parent for each off-site activity.
- The agency or agency staff shall not disclose or knowingly permit the use by other persons of any information concerning a child or family except as required by law.
- The child care agency's current license and agency report card shall be posted near the main entrance.
- Written expulsion policy clearly shared with parents and staff.

Staff

- Family and group home child care agencies must notify parents in advance of the person in charge during primary educator's absence.
- A staff member shall be designated in charge in the absence of the primary educator / director and the name of the person in authority shall be posted.
- At all times, one (1) adult educator with at least a high school diploma shall be on the premises.
- Pre-service training for all staff prior to assuming duties.
- Substitutes providing services for more than 36 hours in a calendar year shall meet background check requirements and

have a physical exam prior to beginning duties.

- Volunteers cannot be counted to meet the adult: child ratios and shall never be left alone with children.

Criminal Background Check

- Criminal background checks are required for all staff at least every five (5) years.

Record Keeping

- A record for each child shall be maintained within the child care agency.
- Written plan of action must be endorsed by a physician for a child with life threatening allergies.
- Parent must provide written consent for emergency medical care/treatment.
- Written statement must be on file that lists to whom the child shall be released.
- Written transportation agreement between parent and the child care agency regarding daily transportation.
- Maintain daily attendance records that include the full name and time in and time out for each child.
- Written permission slips from the parent for each field trip prior to the activity.
- Each child shall have a written transition plan for moving from one age group to another.
- The records of any child who is five (5) years old in an agency which lacks approved kindergarten status shall include a signed acknowledgment by the child's parents that recognizes that the child's attendance does not satisfy the mandatory kindergarten prerequisite for the child's enrollment in first grade.
- Children of homeless families and/or children in state custody may receive care for up to sixty (60) days prior to providing documentation of immunizations and well-child examinations.

Incident Reporting

- Incidents, accidents, injuries and signs of illness shall be reported to the parent no later than the child's release on the date of occurrence.
- Incidents, accidents, injuries and signs of serious illness to children shall be documented immediately and must include: child's name and date of birth, name of person writing report, date & time of occurrence and completion of incident report, description of incident and circumstances, and actions taken by agency.
- The child care agency shall notify the Department of all serious incidents the same day of the incident by contacting the Complaint Hotline at 1-800-462-8261.

Duty to Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Every operator, owner, licensee, director, primary educator or staff member of, or substitute staff member or volunteer in, a child care agency licensed by the Department of Human Services is individually responsible and required to

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immediately report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to either the Department of Children's Services and/or local law enforcement or the judge of the juvenile court in the county of the child's residence, pursuant to T.C.A. §§ 37-1-403 and 37-1-605.

- All child care agency staff shall receive annual training regarding proper procedures to report child abuse and neglect.

Supervision

- All areas of the building and grounds shall be visually inspected after closing the child care agency for the day to ensure no children have been unintentionally left in any part of the child care agency's facilities.
- Children shall be released to only the child's parent, or other person authorized by the parent in accordance with child care agency's policies.
- Child care agencies shall maintain a daily sign-in and sign-out sheet that includes each child's printed full name, date, time of entry, time of departure and space for the printed name and signature of parent or authorized representative.
- Educators providing supervision to children during meal and snack times are prohibited from performing activities/ duties unrelated to food service.
- Child care agencies shall develop, follow and post a written mealtime supervision plan.
- Child care agencies shall develop and follow a written playground supervision plan.
- During field trips, the adult:child ratios shall be doubled and attendance shall be checked upon departure and arrival at each destination and at the beginning and end of each activity (in family and group homes the adult:child ratio shall be increased by one (1) during field trips).
- When children are engaged in activities in or near a body of water, the following requirements shall be met:

Age Group	Adult:Child Ratio
6 weeks–12 months	1:1
13 months – 35months	1:2
Three (3) years	1:4
Four (4) years	1:6
Five (5) years	1:8
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:10

- One (1) adult present shall have a current certificate in advanced aquatics lifesaving skills and shall supervise above the level of the swimmers.
- Safe sleep supervision procedures must be followed to prevent suffocation and deaths in infants:
 - ✓ Infants shall sleep in cribs or play yards.
 - ✓ Infants shall not sleep on a sofa, soft mattress, adult bed, in a car seat, swing or other restraining devices.
 - ✓ Bibs shall be removed prior to placing a child in a crib for sleeping.
 - ✓ Soft bedding, mobile toys and other toys that attach to any part of the crib are prohibited.
 - ✓ Infants that arrive asleep in car seats or fall asleep in any piece of equipment other than a crib must be immediately removed and placed on their back in a crib.
- Any practice that is an exception to the Department's safe sleep supervision procedures shall not be used without written authorization from a physician.

Health and Safety

- Children shall be checked upon arrival each day for signs of illness and injury.
- The receiving educator shall document any obvious marks or injuries and shall note any comments from the parents pertaining to the marks or injuries.
- A child showing signs of illness shall be cared for apart from other children to the extent that supervision can be

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maintained for all children, and the parent shall be contacted and arrangements made for pick up.

- At least one staff with certification in first aid and one certified in CPR on duty at all times.
- Impetigo and diagnosed strep shall be treated according to a licensed medical professional's instructions prior to readmission to the child care agency.
- Children diagnosed with scabies or lice shall have proof of treatment prior to readmission.
- All medications and preventative products such as non-prescription diaper cream, sun screen and insect repellent, shall be received from the parent by a designated staff person and administered by a designated staff person.
- Unused medication shall be returned to the parent.
- Medication shall never be handled by children or administered in bottles or infant feeders unless authorized by a physician.
- All medications shall be inaccessible to children unless a physician's authorization for the current school year is on file that allows a school-age child to have self-administered medication.
- Smoking is not permitted in any indoor area or vehicle of the child care agency at any time.
- The use of alcoholic beverages is not permitted in a child care agency during the hours of operation.
- Firearms shall not be on the premises of a child care agency, in any vehicle used to transport children or in the presence of a child. (In a private residence, these items must be locked, out of sight and inaccessible to children).
- All items labeled "keep out of reach of children" shall be stored so that they are inaccessible to children.
- Personal belongings of residents and staff (purses, backpacks, coats, etc.) shall be inaccessible to children at all times.
- Children's diapers should be checked throughout the day to determine if they are wet or soiled.
- Educators shall provide rich social interchanges and engaging eye contact during diapering.
- Educators shall utilize sanitary diapering procedures.
- Pre-school and school-age children requiring assistance with toileting needs, shall receive assistance in a location designated for that purpose which provides privacy from other children and adults.
- Staff members with signs of a communicable disease shall not be present.

Food and Food Service

- Educators and children shall wash their hands with soap and water.
- At mealtime, children shall be seated at tables and chairs of appropriate size, and an educator shall be near any table or high chair where a child is eating.
- Educators shall ensure that infants have completed feeding and swallowed all milk/formula prior to being laid down.
- Bottles shall not be propped or given to a child while lying flat.
- Children shall not be permitted to carry a bottle with them throughout the day.
- Children shall not have food or drink while in beds, cots, cribs or on mats.
- In order to prevent injuries related to bottle warmers and microwaves:
 - ✓ Crock pots are prohibited as bottle warmers.
 - ✓ Crock pots shall be kept in kitchen and inaccessible.
 - ✓ Microwave ovens and surrounding area, including cords, shall not be accessible to children.
 - ✓ School-age children shall use microwaves only under direct supervision.
- In order to prevent choking:
 - ✓ Solid foods, including cereal, shall not be given in bottles

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- or infant feeders to children with normal eating abilities unless written authorization from doctor.
- ✓ Food shall not be accessible/served until cut, chopped, diced, mashed for each child's age, chewing and swallowing ability.
- ✓ Educators shall check to ensure that no food is left in the mouth of a child prior to placing down for nap.
- ✓ Educator is prohibited from performing classroom duties unrelated to food service during mealtime.
- ✓ Children shall not wear teething necklaces, pacifiers, or any item around their neck or attached to their clothing.
- All contents remaining in bottles after feeding shall be discarded immediately after feeding.
- Frozen breast milk shall be labeled with date expressed and name of child.
- Food, formula, milk or breast milk brought from home shall be labeled with the child's name; the date received and shall be refrigerated immediately.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be accepted in the child care agency.
- If food is fed directly from the jar by the educator, the jar shall be used for only one feeding and discarded.
- If the child care agency provides food, it shall be in accordance with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutritional guidelines.
- Breakfast shall be provided to children who arrive before 7:00 a.m. and have not had breakfast at home. (Not required if received at school)
- Children shall be given adequate time to eat.
- Food shall not be used as a reward and should not be forced or withheld.
- Each child's food allergies shall be posted where food is prepared and served.
- For a child with life threatening allergies, a written plan of action should be posted where the educator has immediate access.
- Staff shall support and facilitate a parent's decision to continue breast feeding.
- Home preserved food and raw milk are prohibited.

Equipment for Children

- Developmentally appropriate equipment and furnishings shall be available for each age group.
- All indoor and outdoor large and heavy equipment, appliances and furnishings shall be secured to prevent falling or tipping over.
- Electrical cords and cords on window blinds or curtains shall be inaccessible to children.
- Indoor equipment, materials, and toys shall be available to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities so that each child has at least two (2) choices during play time.
- In infant/toddler rooms, equipment and a safe space shall be provided for climbing, crawling, pulling up and exploring without the use of confining equipment.
- Trampolines are prohibited.
- Climbers, swings and other heavy equipment that could cause injury if toppled shall be securely anchored.
- Climbers and swings shall have a protective fall zone surface recognized by CPSC as a shock absorbing, resilient material maintained at a minimum depth of six (6) inches. (Effective for family and group homes by 7/30/2019).
- Portable equipment shall be securely anchored or rendered immobile if required by manufacturer.
- A quiet rest area and cots or mats shall be available for all children who want to rest or nap.
- For health and safety reasons each crib, cot, bed or mat shall be labeled to assure that each child naps on his/her own

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- bedding.
- Cribs and play yards must comply with CPSC requirements.
- Mattresses and foam pads shall fit the crib without any gaps or spaces.
- A blanket or covering shall be available to each child age thirteen (13) months and older.

Program, Language and Literacy

- The educator(s) shall give individual attention to each child throughout the day (activities are specified for infant/toddler, pre-school, and school-age children). These activities include, but are not limited to, reading to infants, toddlers and preschool age children individually or in a group daily.
- Every child should have an opportunity to participate in program activities.
- Upon arrival, infants and toddlers shall be removed from car seats immediately.
- Child shall never be left unattended in any restraining device and shall not be kept in any restraining device longer than fifteen (15) minutes, except when eating while in a high chair.
- The use of electronic media and other electronic devices is prohibited for children less than two (2) years of age.
- Programs, movies, computer games, and music with violent or adult content shall not be permitted in children's presence.
- Child care agencies shall inform parents in writing of any scheduled media program viewing.
- Other activity choices shall be available to children who do not wish to participate in media time.
- An opportunity for outdoor play shall be extended to children of all ages who are in care for more than three (3) daylight hours unless outdoor play is prohibitive or dangerous.
- Children of all ages who are in care more than three (3) daylight hours shall have a daily opportunity for outdoor play when the temperature range, after adjustment for wind chill and heat index, is between thirty-two (32) degrees and ninety-five (95) degrees Fahrenheit and not raining; children shall be properly dressed and the length of time outside adjusted according to the conditions and the age of the child.
- During outdoor play educators shall be alert for signs of weather related distress such as, dehydration, heat stroke, etc.
- Children in care for more six (6) hours or more shall have an opportunity for a reclining rest period.
- No child shall be forced to lay down/nap or stay on a cot/mat for an extended period of time.
- Nap areas shall have adequate lighting to allow the educator to see each child with a quick glance and respond appropriately to the child's physical and emotional needs.
- If music is played in areas where children sleep, it should be soothing and soft enough so children can be heard.
- Potentially shaming, humiliating, frightening, verbally abusive, injurious discipline methods/techniques that isolate children are prohibited.
- Discipline shall not be related to food, rest, or toileting.
- Spanking and all types of corporal punishment are prohibited.
- Staff shall not restrain a child by any means other than holding and then for only as long as necessary for the child to regain control.
- Toilet learning shall be done in cooperation with the parents, and communication with parents maintained throughout the process.
- Activities shall be intentionally planned based upon the developmental age of the child.
- Infants, less than six (6) months of age shall have direct supervised tummy time every day when they are awake.
- For ages three (3) through school-age, a personal safety curriculum shall be provided annually.

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- For school-age children the curriculum shall include instruction on reporting physical, verbal or sexual abuse.
- Parents shall be consulted in developing a plan to meet the individual needs of a child with special needs.

Physical Facilities

- All facilities shall annually pass an inspection verifying compliance with all applicable state and local fire and environmental requirements.
- At least one (1) working telephone shall be available in the agency and the number made available to parents.
- Outdoor play areas shall contain a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of usable play space for each child using the area at one time.
- The outdoor play area shall be enclosed by fence or barrier at least four (4) feet in height.
- Pre-play inspection of outdoor play area prior to use.
- Children shall not be present if an adequate water supply is not available.
- Children shall not be present if the sewage system is not operating.
- All rooms used by children shall be maintained at a temperature of between 68 to 78 degrees by means of heating, cooling or ventilation sources approved for use.
- Children shall not be present if indoor temperature cannot be maintained between 68 to 78 degrees.
- Unvented fuel burning heaters and portable heaters are prohibited.
- Swimming pools made inaccessible to children by use of fences and locked gates.
- Swimming is prohibited in drop-in care.
- Swimming pools and/or wading pools shall not be used without prior approval by the Health Department.
- If animals or birds are kept in classrooms as pets, they shall be caged away from the food storage and preparation area, and cages kept clean.
- Reptiles and amphibians shall not be kept as pets.

Transportation

- Child care agencies shall not transport children without prior written approval by the Department.
- Vehicle emergency evacuation drills conducted quarterly.
- Use of cell phones and texting is prohibited while driving.
- Routine transportation is limited to forty-five (45) minutes each way (does not apply to field trips for school-agers).
- Maintain documentation of daily inspections and necessary repairs
- The interior temperature of the vehicle shall be monitored during extreme weather to ensure child safety.
- An adult must be in the vehicle whenever a child is in the vehicle.
- A passenger log with the first and last name of each child shall be used to track the loading and unloading of children during transport.
- If the child was loaded from home, the parent or other authorized person will additionally sign the log indicating that the child was placed on the vehicle.
- The log shall be updated as children are released from the vehicle.
- When the child is released to a parent or other authorized person, that person must sign the log indicating the release of that child to them.
- Immediately upon unloading the last child the driver must walk through the vehicle to confirm that all the children are off the vehicle.
- A staff person designated as reviewer shall walk through the vehicle to confirm that all the children are off the vehicle. The reviewer shall have no other responsibilities during the walk

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through of the vehicle.

- Family and group homes with a single educator shall develop a Department approved alternative system for ensuring all children are off the vehicle.
- When children are transported to school, they shall be unloaded only at the location designated by the school and only at the time the school is officially open with staff present to receive them.
- Drivers must submit to an annual health examination and pass a drug screening test.
- Drivers and monitors shall hold current certification in CPR and First Aid.
- The following equipment shall be maintained in the vehicle and stored in a manner which is not readily accessible to children: fire extinguisher, emergency reflective triangles; first aid kit; seat-belt cutter or similar device manufactured and designed to immediately release the vehicle's child restraint system(s) in an emergency; blood borne pathogenic clean-up kit; and working flashlight.
- All child care vehicles designed to carry ten (10) or more passengers must conform to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for school buses.
- All child care vehicles designed by the manufacturer to carry ten (10) or more passengers must be inspected by the Department of Safety.
- Child passenger restraints must be used in accordance with state law and federal law.
- Signage that includes the agency name, phone number and the Department's toll-free Child Care Complaint phone number must be on child care vehicles.

Emergency Preparedness

- The agency, in consultation with appropriate local authorities, shall develop a written plan to protect children in the event of disaster.

Specific Requirements For Family Child Care Homes

- Adult:Child ratios shall be maintained at all times.
- Licensed capacity shall not be exceeded.
- Family Child Care Home Ratios and Group Size Chart

Maximum Number of Children and Ages (Including children "related" to the primary educator under nine (9) years of age)	Educators Required
Seven (7) or fewer children; and no more than four (4) under two (2) years	1
Seven (7) or fewer children; and five (5) or more under two (2) years	2
More than seven (7) children; and no more than four (4) under two (2) years	3
More than seven (7) children; and five (5) or more under two (2) years	3

- Effective 7/30/2018, primary educators receiving an initial license shall have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- The primary educator shall not be employed or engaged in any other full-time activities during hours of operation.
- A qualified educator shall be on site any time the primary educator is not on site during child care operating hours.
- Ongoing training required in specific health and safety topics.
- The maximum number of children present inside a physical space shall be determined by minimum square footage requirements.
- If the number of children exceeds seven (7) at one time or care is provided in one room of the home, the area shall provide thirty (30) square feet per child of usable play space.

Specific Requirements For Group Child Care Homes

- Adult:Child ratios shall be maintained at all times.
- The maximum number of children present shall not exceed twelve (12). Exception: Three (3) additional school-age children may be in care before/after school, school holidays/snow days

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and during summer vacation.

• Group Home Ratio and Group Size Chart:

Number of Children	Ages of Children	Educators Required
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	No more than twelve (12) children three (3) years of age or older	1
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Up to nine (9) children under three (3) years of age; and no more than four (4) present under two (2) years of age	2
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Ten (10) or more under three (3) years of age	3

- If school-age children are enrolled, a school-age program shall be provided.
- If four (4) or more infants/toddlers attend a group child care home, they shall have a separate and distinct space and their own educator.
- When children are sleeping or resting, there shall be at least one (1) adult awake and supervising and adult to child ratios shall be maintained.
- Primary educators shall have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Owners who are employed elsewhere shall ensure that a primary educator is always on-site.
- The primary educator shall not be employed at any other job during the hours of operation unless the Department has approved the primary educator's employment in an official capacity in a program sponsored or recognized by the Department.
- An educator shall be on-site any time that the primary educator is not on-site during child care operating hours.
- Ongoing training required in specific health and safety topics.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.

Specific Requirements For Child Care Centers

- Adult: child ratios must be maintained at all times.
- When more than twelve (12) children are present on the premises a second adult must be physically available on the premises.
- Child Care Ratio and Group Size Charts

Age of Children	Adult:Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks – 15 months	1:4	8
12 months – 30 months	1:6	12
24 months – 35 months	1:7	14
3 years	1:9	18
4 years	1:13	20
5 years	1:16	20
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:20	No max

Age of Children	Adult: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks – 30 months	1:5	10
2 years – 4 years	1:8	16
2 ½ years – 3 years	1:9	18
2 ½ years – 5 years	1:11	20
2 ½ years – 12 years	1:10	10
3 years – 5 years	1:13	22
4 years – 5 years	1:16	24
5 years – 12 years	1:20	No max

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• Ratio Chart first/last hour and one-half (½) of each day only:

Age of Children	Adult: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
2 ½ years – 5 years	1:10	10
3 years – 12 years	1:15	15
4 years – 12 years	1:20	20

- Each child must be on roll in a defined group and assigned to that group with a specific caregiver(s).
- Infants shall never be grouped with children older than thirty (30) months, and a separate area shall be provided for them.
- Children shall not be promoted to a new group until required based upon the age and developmental needs of the child.
- Groups, excluding infants & toddlers may be combined for short periods for a special activity of no more than sixty (60) minutes duration per day as long as adult:child ratios are met.
- Each group must have a designated classroom with enough space for the entire group.
- Child care centers shall provide written lesson plans for each group of children.
- When more than twelve (12) children in first grade and above are present, a separate educator, group, space and program shall be provided for them.
- Ratios can be relaxed during naptime and nighttime care but one (1) adult must be awake and supervising the children in each nap/sleeping area (infant/toddler ratios must be maintained).
- Ongoing training required in specific health and safety topics.
- The director of a single site child care center shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- The assistant director of a single child care center shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- Each group of children shall have at least one (1) educator present who has a high school diploma or equivalent.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- Each nap room shall contain a minimum of thirty (30) square feet of floor space per child.
- Individual lockers or cubbies, separate hooks and shelves or other containers, placed so that children may reach them, shall be provided for each child's belongings.
- In an infant or toddler room with more than one educator, each educator shall be responsible for providing consistent care for a specific infant(s)/toddler(s) which includes but is not limited to: planning, and record-keeping for the child, communication, general interaction with and routine care of the child.
- Following the issuance of an annual license, a child care center may operate without an on-site director for a period of not more than sixty (60) days total within the licensing year.

Specific Requirements For Drop-In Child Care Centers

- Before accepting a child for care, the parent shall provide a statement regarding the estimated amount of time that the parent anticipates that the child will be in attendance.
- The child care agency shall familiarize staff with personal safety material and be prepared to discuss those materials with parents.
- The drop-in center shall have an on-site director and the director shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- The director shall have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and one (1) year of full-time work experience with children in a group setting.
- Ongoing training required in specific health and safety topics.
- Each educator who is used to meet the minimum required

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adult:child ratio shall have a high school diploma.

- Children shall be placed in age appropriate groups and with adequate adult educator supervision:

Age Grouping:	
Age of Children	Adult:Child Ratio
Six (6) weeks –Fifteen (15) months	1:4
Twelve (12) months – Thirty (30) month	1:8
Two (2) years	1:12
Three (3) years	1:15
Four (4) years	1:18
Five (5) years (not in Kindergarten)	1:20
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:22

- The adult:child ratio for a multi-age group containing infants:

Majority Age of Children Present	One Infant	Two Infants
12 months – 30 months	1:8	1:6
2 years	1:10	1:8
3 years	1:12	1:10
4 years	1:15	1:12
5 years (not in Kindergarten)	1:17	1:13
School-age (Kindergarten and above)	1:19	1:15

- If the child care agency provides food, it shall be in accordance with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritional guidelines.
- The maximum number of children who may be present inside a physical space shall be determined in accordance with the minimum square footage requirements.
- A minimum of thirty (30) square feet of useable indoor play space shall be provided for each child.
- Each nap room shall contain a minimum of thirty (30) square feet of floor space per child.
- Staff shall have documentation of all children's allergies and how to deal with any allergic reaction.
- Staff shall review emergency preparedness and fire procedures and shall physically walk through the evacuation process every year.
- Prohibited activities include swimming, transportation and the provision of specialized services.

You can access the Department's website at:
<http://tn.gov/humanservices>

A wealth of child care information can be found on the Department's website.

You can:

- ✓ Learn more about the rules
 - ✓ Learn more about the types of regulated care
 - ✓ Locate a child care provider
 - ✓ Learn more about the Report Card and Star Quality Program
 - ✓ Locate the local child care licensing office
 - ✓ Review the current personal safety curriculum
 - ✓ Read about new initiatives in child care
 - ✓ Locate the nearest child care certificate office
 - ✓ Find info on choosing child care
 - ✓ Locate a resource and referral center
- And much more!

Report Card and Star Quality Program
<http://tnstarquality.org>

Child Care Resource and Referral Centers

Currently, there are eight (8) CCR&R service delivery areas located throughout the state. Child Care Resource and Referral helps parents find the type of care that is best for their child / children. These community resources also give providers technical assistance to better serve the children in their care. Contact information for the CCR&R centers can be found on the Child Care Services website.

Child Care Complaint Hotline

NASHVILLE AREA: (615) 313-4820
TOLL FREE: 1-800-462-8261

If you have a concern about an existing child care agency or wish to report an illegal operation call the Department's complaint hotline.

Department of Children's Services Hotline

Report Child Abuse or Neglect
1-877-237-0004

Information about child health, education, and development as well as available state services:
<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/>

Parent Handbook

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

This Parent Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with The Academy. This document is intended to provide guidelines and general descriptions only; it is not the final word in all cases. Individual circumstances may call for individual attention.



Because The Academy's operations may change, the contents of this Handbook may be changed at any time, with or without notice, in an individual case or generally, at the sole discretion of management.

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this Parent Handbook.

I have received and read a copy of The Academy Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies and procedures described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Company at any time.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and that I have received a copy of The Academy's Parent Handbook.

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgment of Anti-Solicitation Policy

I understand that I may not recruit or solicit Academy staff members for employment outside of the center, including, but not limited to, babysitting, nannying, transportation, etc. I understand that such actions may warrant my dismissal from the center, and may result in disciplinary action for any employees involved, up to and including termination.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The signed original copy of this acknowledgment should be given to management - it will be kept in your child's file.