



PARENT HANDBOOK

4721 Plank Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22407
Phone (540) 785-3437

Table of Contents

- A. Center Philosophy
- B. Operating Information
- C. Payment Schedule and Policy
- D. Transportation Policy
- E. Arrival and Departure Policy
- F. Medication and Medical Procedures Policy
- G. Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
- H. Custodial Parent's Rights
- I. Policy for Communicating an Emergency Situation with Parents
- J. Daily Schedule
- K. Parent/Teacher Conferences
- L. Food Policy
- M. Special Events
- N. Discipline Policy
- O. Withdrawal Notice/Termination Policy
- P. **Certificate of Receipt:** please return this page signed along with your child's registration forms.

Welcome!

The Little Academy welcomes you and your child! Thank you for allowing us to care for and take part in your child's daily growth. This handbook is intended to give you information regarding the policies and procedures of this center. We welcome and encourage parent participation and involvement.

A. Center Philosophy

We are committed to provide an atmosphere that will be a caring environment to encourage independence, constructive problem solving, positive self-esteem, and improved self-worth. Your child will be offered experiences that will foster physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth.

B. Operating Information

1. Hours of Operation

The Center will operate during the opening hours of 6:30am - 6:30pm Monday through Friday.

2. Who We Serve

Enrollment is offered to children ages 2 and up. Each child receives special educational attention based on his/her age, interests and development. Children are separated into groups based on their age.

3. Contact Information

Parents can call the Center's main number at (540) 785-3437 during normal operating hours to reach staff. Please check our website for additional updates and information. Our mailing address is 4721 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407.

4. Holidays and Closings

The center will be closed and will not operate on the following holidays. New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas. On New Year's Eve, the center reserves the right to close at 4:00pm. *No tuition adjustments will be made when the center is closed.* Families will be informed by posted notices.

The center will attempt to remain open at all times during stated hours. However, some conditions may arise which require closing of the center. The following is the center's policy regarding closing:

Weather Conditions/Dangerous Conditions

It is within the discretion of the Director, Assistant Director, or designee to determine when weather conditions or other dangerous conditions require closing of the center.

Utility Outages

The center will close if an extended utility outage significantly impacts the center's operations so as to create a health or safety risk to attending children and staff. This type of occurrence is rare but may include and is not limited to such things as extended power outages, gas leaks, a water main break, and HVAC breakdowns.

Notification of Closing

If a determination is made to close the center prior to opening, notification will be posted on the center's website, Facebook page, and Fredericksburg.com.

If a determination is made to close the center after the children are already present, notification will be posted on the center's website, Facebook page, and Fredericksburg.com. Staff members will attempt to contact parents using phone numbers provided and, if unsuccessful, will attempt to call the emergency contacts. Parents are responsible for having emergency transportation in place, in advance, and for notifying the center of these arrangements on the registration form, a written note. Parents are also responsible for ensuring contact information on file at the center is up to date.

No tuition adjustments will be made when the center is closed due to weather conditions or dangerous conditions.

C. Payment Schedule and Policy

\$60 new students, \$50 returning students (due at enrollment). Registrations fees are due at enrollment and annually on or before September 1st. If a child withdraws and subsequently re-enrolls, a new registration fee is due at that time.

Childcare and Preschool

All payments are due one week (in advance) by closing at 6:30pm on Friday. Payments can be made by automatic payment, at the front desk, left in the drop box or mailed to the center. Please do not leave cash in the drop box and do not mail cash to the center. Rates may change on September 1st of each year.

Family Discounts

Siblings

Siblings will receive a 10% discount per week (discount applied to the lowest tuition rate) and will also receive one-half (1/2) off the regular registration fee for the additional registration.

Vacation Policy

After one (1) year of continual care, families earn one (1) *free* week of not attending for five (5) consecutive days. Credit must be used by the next year's anniversary date. Two weeks advance notice in writing must be received for credit to be used.

D. Transportation Policy

When field trips are planned, a reputable company will be hired to provide transportation needs.

E. Arrival and Departure Policy

1. Arrival

Parents MUST walk their child(ren) into the center and sign them in. Please place your child's labeled lunch box in the container provided at the entrance door. Please escort your child(ren) to his/her classroom teacher. Place your child's labeled belongings (backpack, sweater or jacket) on their labeled hooks or cubbies. To ease separation anxiety, please consistently drop off your child, hug them and exit the building. You may call the center after 10-15 minutes to check on your child.

To receive the maximum benefit from our program, it is recommended that children arrive no later than 8:55 am. Young children respond positively and have less separation anxieties if their schedule is kept consistent. A young child arriving late often finds it difficult to join in activities and may not be ready to eat or nap with the class. Additionally, late arrivals can be a distraction for the teacher and other students if activities have begun.

2. Departure

Children will only be released to parents or adults listed, in writing, as an authorized person to pick up your child. In the event of an emergency, and written authorization is unavailable, the parent may call and give verbal permission identifying the person's name, and time of pick-up. Proper identification will be required to release the child(ren).

a. Late pick-up Fee

As a reminder, the center closes at 6:30pm daily. Out of respect for the staff, this closing time is strictly adhered to. A family emergency plan must be in place when you cannot arrive at the center before closing. If a parent is late, the parent will be charged a fee and will be due with the next tuition payment.

If a parent is late, a late pickup fee will be charged and due with the next tuition payment. \$15 per 15 minutes late. (\$15 for 1-15 minutes, \$30 for 16-30 minutes late, etc.)

b. Unpaid Balance

If legal proceedings are required to collect any unpaid balance, families will be responsible for paying said balance with current interest rates from the date the balance is due and all costs of collection including reasonable attorney fees. Despite the circumstances, families will agree to pay any fees and unpaid tuition balances.

F. Medication and Medical Procedures Policy

1. Medication

At this time, no medications will be administered to children at this center.

2. Sunscreen and Insect Repellant

Teachers and staff may apply sunscreen and insect repellant. Parents *must* provide labeled sunscreen and insect repellant products and given to a staff member for safe storage. Additionally, a current authorization form must be on file.

3. Illness and Communicable Diseases

a. Communicable diseases are illnesses that are spread from one person to another either directly by such means as coughing, sneezing or skin contact with infected body fluids, or indirectly by handling contaminated objects such as tissues, linens, toys etc, or through contaminated food, or by a living carrier of disease such as a fly, tick or mosquito. The communicable disease chart is displayed in the director's office. Control and prevention of these diseases among children and staff are important in order to promote well-being, prevent absenteeism and avoid serious health problems. Several illnesses that can have serious consequences can be prevented by immunization. Proper and frequent hand-washing is the most effective measure that everyone can take to help prevent the spread of illness. Staff must also be alert to signs that a child is not feeling well so he/she can be isolated promptly and cared for appropriately.

b. We are unable to care for children that are ill and have any of the following symptoms:

Severe coughing
Diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times in a day
Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more
Sore throat
Eye redness, swelling, drainage
Unusual spots/rash with fever or itching
Crusty, bright yellow, gummy skin sores
Yellowing of skin and white part of eyes
Itching of scalp; if nits are found the child is isolated and parents are notified and advised to seek treatment immediately

In order for the child to return to the center, the child must be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours:

Fever free (without the aid of medication), no vomiting or diarrhea, excessive coughing or yellow-green nasal discharge or yellow discharge from the eyes, or have an unidentified rash or nits (eggs from lice).

If medication has been prescribed by a doctor, the child may not return until 24 hours from the time of pick up and after receiving one full cycle of medication which is usually 24 hours from the first dosage given. Medication as indicated above does not include over the counter medications.

c. In order for children to benefit fully from our program, children that are "too sick to go outside or participate in regular activities," are too sick to be at school.

G. Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by § 63.2-1509 of the *Code of Virginia* to report any case of suspected child abuse. Any employee that suspects abuse of any child will immediately report this information to the Director who will then, by law, report the information to Child Protective Services.

It is therefore important to communicate with your child's teacher about any serious injury that may have occurred at home.

H. Custodial Parent's Rights

Appropriate paperwork such as custody papers shall be on file if a parent is not allowed to pick up their child. Section §22.1-4.3 of the *Code of Virginia* states that unless a court order has been issued to the contrary, the non-custodial parent of a student enrolled in a public school or daycare center must be included, upon the request of such non-custodial parent, as an emergency contact for events occurring during school or daycare activities.

I. Policy for Communicating an Emergency Situation with Parents

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted immediately. Unless a request has been made in writing, parents will be contacted in the following order:

Work
Cell
Home
Alternate Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the premises, County emergency operations officers will evacuate the children to a local County emergency evacuation center. The children and staff will be transported via County transportation. In this event please do not come to the center. The children will not be released to parents or guardians until the evacuation is complete. Evacuation details will be announced on local television and radio stations and if possible as a message on the center's main number. Parents will have to show picture identification when picking up children at the new location.

In the event that the center is confined to the premises and is in a "lock-down" situation, the children will be confined to their classrooms and the building will be locked to the public. County officials will be notified and will then be in command of the situation. Parents will not be allowed to pick up their children until the "lock-down" has expired. Staff will do their best to contact parents and let them know of the situation.

J. Daily Schedule

A daily schedule will be given to parents when children are registered. The schedule is designed to include activities, play-time, eating and resting periods. Please note, the schedule is meant to give parents an idea of their child's day. Actual times may vary depending on the time of year, weather, child's age and temperament. Age appropriate activities are scheduled with flexibility allowed to respond to the needs of each individual child and their age.

1. Naptime

Naptime is 12:30pm - 2:30pm daily. Full-time students will need one (1) single crib/toddler sized sheet and one (1) small crib/toddler sized blanket. All bedding will be sent home weekly on Fridays. We ask that you wash them and return them the following Monday for your child's use.

K. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents will be provided semi-annually information in writing on their child's development, behavior, and needs. Parents will have an opportunity at these times to schedule a conference to speak with their child's teacher regarding the above information. We ask that you refrain from long conversations with your child's teacher during drop-off and pick-up times. Teachers need to focus on all the children in their care. Please, however, feel free to request a conference to discuss any concerns.

L. Food Policy

- a.** The Little Academy will provide two nutritious snacks for children daily. These snacks are listed on the bulletin board at the entrance of the building. Parents are required to pack their child a nutritious lunch daily. Please only provide healthy and nutritional items for your child's breakfast and lunch. We have available a refrigerator, if needed. In your child's lunch please include any utensils or specific containers they will need. Please refrain from sending in soda, anything other than 100% fruit juice, cookies, brownies, candy and other sugary items for your child's lunch. Please save any and all sugary drinks and food items for special events. All food, utensils and drink containers must be labeled with your child's name.
- b.** If you wish for your child to eat breakfast, please have them at the center by 8:00 am. Any child arriving after 8:00 am must have already eaten.
- c.** Out of respect for all of our children and staff, we will not observe birthday celebrations as a center. However, you are welcome to send in a treat for your child or the class. Please let your child's teacher know, in advance, if you will be bringing in a treat for the class on their birthday or any other special day. Please provide cupcakes or cookies since they are less messy than cakes.

M. Special Events

Out of respect for all of our children and staff, we will not observe any holiday celebrations, religious or otherwise, as a center. However, parents are welcome to send in holiday related treats or gifts for the children. The staff will make these available to the children. No child will be pressured in any way to participate in any holiday related activity, and alternatives to a holiday related activity will always be made available. At various times throughout the year, there will be class parties. Teachers will provide a sign-up sheet for parents who wish to send items in for these special days.

N. Discipline Policy

- a.** We provide a loving environment for children to grow and develop. The teachers and staff of this center are responsible for helping children learn to make appropriate choices and self-control. Discipline is not punishment.
- b.** Our ways of handling discipline must vary according to age. Physical or verbal punishment of children is not tolerated. With all ages, rules are clear and consistent. The most important technique we use is positive re-enforcement. A smile, a touch, eye contact, a hug and verbal praise tell children their behavior is approved.
- c.** We use other methods of discipline such as distraction and redirection as well. We role model problem-solving techniques also. We ask each child involved in a disagreement to state the problem from his/her point of view. Then we talk about what happened, what should have happened and why, and try to reach a solution that each child can agree to. In other instances, the teachers will explain the reason for our rules and may ask a child to repair any damage he/she has done.
- d.** Situations may arise where a cool-down time may be necessary. A child may need to be moved to an area of the classroom to cool down. At this time, the teacher will make every attempt to talk to and solve the situation. If a child is unable to get under control, he/she may be removed to the Director's office to calm down further.
- e.** The key to discipline is consistency. Rules are consistent within our program from day to day. It is also important that the rules be consistent between the center and home. Children can become confused when rules change. Teachers are always willing to discuss our methods of discipline. Any changes in behavior or unusual instances of aggressive behavior will be communicated to the parent. Our goal is to help every child realize his/her potential for controlling their own behavior.
- f.** In situations where the child consistently disrupts the classroom routines or demands too much of the teacher's attention, the parent will be called for a conference. The purpose of this meeting will be to identify and discuss the problem behavior and to develop a joint plan to correct the situation. Should the unacceptable behavior continue, the center may implement any of the following: Call the parent to remove the child from the center for the remainder of a particularly difficult day, require the parent to remove the child from the center for a designated period of time, or require the child to be removed from the center permanently.

O. Withdrawal Notice/ Termination Policy

- a.** Parents are required to give the Center two weeks' notice in writing if they are withdrawing their child from our program. Without such notice, parents will be billed two weeks' tuition. If for any reason we ask you to withdraw your child, you will be provided two weeks' notice UNLESS the Director or other designee determine your child must be withdrawn sooner, even immediately, from the Center for any of the violations listed in Section O.b.
- b.** We reserve the right to ask parents to withdraw their child for the following reasons:

Non-payment of tuition

Unresolved and repetitive behavior issues

If we feel we are not able to serve the child's family any longer

Habitual non-compliance with any rules/regulations in the Parent Handbook

P. CERTIFICATE OF RECEIPT

I have received a copy of The Little Academy's Parent Handbook and agree to all terms.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date

Please return this page to The Little Academy along with your child's registration forms. We look forward to partnering with you for your child's early educational success!