



FAMILY HANDBOOK



Tax ID #52-1228660
A Non-Profit Educational Organization since 1981
www.academychild.com



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LOCATIONS & HOURS

Academy at Dr. Charles R. Drew E.S.

1200 Swingingdale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20905
(301) 989-0245
cdacademy@academychild.com
OCC, MSDE, EXCELS Level 5
7:00am-6:00pm

Academy at Galway E.S.

12612 Galway Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20904
(301) 586-0080
galwayacademy@gmail.com
OCC, MSDE, EXCELS Level 5
7:00am-6:00pm

Academy at Cold Spring E.S.

Summer in the K.A.V.E. Program

9201 Falls Chapel Way
Potomac, MD 20854
(301) 424-4318
csacademy@academychild.com
OCC, MSDE, EXCELS Level 4
7:30am-6:00pm

Stone Mill Center

14327 Stonebridge View Drive
North Potomac, MD 20878
(301) 762-8206
smacademy@academychild.com
OCC, MSDE, EXCELS Level 5
7:30am - 6:00pm

Academy at DuFief E.S.

15001 DuFief Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
(301) 309-1224
dufiefacademy@gmail.com
OCC, MSDE, EXCELS Level 5
7:00am-6:00pm

Main Business Office

9035 Shady Grove Court
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
(301) 424-6282
information@academychild.com
8:30am-6:00pm

Office of Child Care (OCC)

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

About This Handbook

This handbook will help to explain our organization and operational policies further. This handbook may be amended at the sole discretion of the Administration and/or Board of Directors at any time during the year. Families will be notified of any changes. Additionally, new policies and procedures may be added by the Administration on either a trial or permanent basis throughout the year, and the Administration has the authority to deviate from these policies if they deem it appropriate. An electronic version of the policies and procedures described in this handbook is available on the school's website. If additions or amendments are necessary after the publication of the handbook, they will be reflected on the website. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment Agreement provided to you. On your Enrollment Agreement, you will be asked to acknowledge your receipt and agreement to the policies outlined in this handbook.

2 WHO WE ARE.

Mission and Values

The mission of Academy Child Development Center, Inc. (Academy) is to create a stimulating and nurturing environment where children of all abilities, regardless of socio-economic or cultural background, can grow and learn together in acceptance of one another. This mission is conducted daily by highly trained staff, low teacher/child ratios, specialized curriculum, and contracted therapy services. At Academy, we value the importance of character, commitment to the family, commitment to the community, respect for the individual, and celebrating our differences.

Philosophy

Academy Child Development Center, Inc. offers the “Building Blocks for Life” philosophy - the foundation from which all learning takes place for the future. It is our mission to provide high quality, developmentally appropriate early care and education learning opportunities in a nurturing, safe environment for the children, families, and communities we serve. Academy believes that from birth, all children are capable and competent. Our teachers recognize that each child grows, develops, and learns at their own pace; therefore, a child centered approach is used to support the developmental needs and abilities of all children. A respect for and appreciation of individual differences inspires all that we do. Our teachers create meaningful learning opportunities that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child. Our teachers foster children’s self-esteem, creative abilities, sense of belonging and success by implementing a responsive, inclusive developmentally appropriate curriculum based on MSDE and Maryland EXCELS standards, through play-based experiences that promote vital pre-academic and social emotional skills. Our partnership with the children's families in our programs is built on a solid foundation of trust and mutual respect that plays a key role in your child's development and learning. When children are guided to live and play together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support, they develop positive character values. By encouraging creativity, explorations, and discovery children acquire a love of learning and a strong sense of self. Academy is dedicated to the world’s future - its children.

Board of Directors

Since our founding in 1981, Academy's been guided by a Board of Directors comprised of experienced educators, administrators, and professionals with backgrounds in non-profits. Board members are willing to give their time, talents, and enthusiasm to ensure Academy is fiscally sound and maintains the industry's highest standards.

The Board is led by the President and has a finance committee. Requests to address the Board may be submitted to information@academychild.com.

The Staff

The quality of the programs is directly correlated to the quality of the staff. It is vital to attract staff that are experienced and knowledgeable in the field of early childhood. Each classroom is staffed with a full-time teacher and an assistant. Additional part-time staff float between rooms to offer additional support or coverage where needed.

Academy strives to hire educators with the following qualifications:

- Lead Teachers have a baccalaureate in Early Childhood Education or another related field or the equivalent.
- Child Care Teachers are approved and qualified by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Child Care (OCC)
- Instructional assistants and Aides, as is true with all staff, have orientation and mentor support prior to starting.

Each staff person must meet the requirements of Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care, Accrediting agencies, and Academy Child Development Center. The requirements are crucial in maintaining qualified teachers for the ongoing success of Academy programs, and all teachers must have some level of experience with young children and demonstrate a genuine interest in children. All staff members must have an initial physical, TB test, all vaccinations, criminal records check, and a reference inquiry before employment begins.

Licensing and Accreditation

Our programs are state-licensed and regularly inspected to ensure everything meets or exceeds standards, including child-to-teacher ratios and safe facilities. Academy is subject to inspection by state and local health, fire, licensing, and building agencies. Regulations and inspections pertain to staff qualifications, the facility and playground, nutrition, health and safety matters, record-keeping, and child-to-staff ratios. If you have any questions regarding licensing or regulations, please speak with the Center Director. Additionally, Academy is accredited by MSDE for Infants through School-Age, licensed by the MSDE OCC and has achieved the highest ratings for quality early childhood and school-age programs by Maryland EXCELS for most of our Centers.

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/office-child-care>

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Classrooms

The individual developmental needs of each child are considered when placement decisions are made. For a child to develop a positive self-image and appropriate social skills, they need to be grouped with peers whose developmental age is like their own. In all groups of children, there will be varying ability levels. We will take all considerations into account and group children together who may best complement one another. Individual classroom compositions are listed below:

- **Infants/Toddlers** – Typically 6 children, between the ages of 2 months to 24 months with 2 teachers. We maintain a ratio of 1:3 [Teacher: student] always.
- **Tiny Tots** – Typically 12 children, between the ages of 24 months to 36 months with 2 teachers. We maintain a ratio of 1:6 always.
- **Preschool** – Typically 20 children, between the ages of 3 to 4 years with 2 teachers. We maintain a ratio of 1:12 during MSDE instructional time and 1:10 for childcare hours.
- **Pre-Kindergarten** – Typically 20 children, between the ages of 4 to 5 years with 2 teachers. We maintain a ratio of 1:12 during MSDE instructional time and 1:10 for childcare hours.
- **School-Age Before and After Care** - Typically 30 children, grades Kindergarten through Fifth grade with 2 teachers. We always maintain a ratio of 1 : 15.

Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant

Academy provides the Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant Program to qualified students. To qualify, students must be 3 or 4 on or before September 1st and their household income must meet the 200% or 300% Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The grant is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services under the authority of Sections 14005 and 14006 of the ARRA and the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2014.

To qualify as a Community Based Provider of these services, Academy met the stringent standards outlined by the state and federal mandates. Academy has achieved the highest level of the Maryland EXCELS and achieved and maintained MSDE State Accreditation. The teachers hold current Maryland Teaching Certificates issued by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The funding from the grant allows for supplies, materials, staff salaries, food, enrichment activities, curriculum upgrades, staff training, parent training and engagement activities, to name a few. Academy has well-established partnerships with various county agencies, including Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

The Pre-K Grant Program follows the MCPS school calendar. The hours are either 9:25 a.m.- 3:55 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., depending on location. Before and After care is available for an additional monthly fee paid for by the parent and provides all day child care on MCPS school holidays. Academy accepts Child Care Subsidy Vouchers and Fee Assistance Programs.

The School-Age Programs

Academy rents space for before and after school care through the Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). Academy's before and after school programs are selected through a cyclical bid process that CUPF oversees. Each School Principal appoints a Selection Committee and instructs each member to rate the applications individually. Then the Selection Committee meets to discuss ratings and determine interview questions. Programs with the highest scores receive an interview. The Selection Committee schedules and conducts interviews with the applicants. The provider with the highest combined total of application and interview scores is chosen to provide the licensed before and after school program on site at the school. The agreement between CUPF, MCPS, and the provider requires Academy to give priority enrollment to students enrolled at that school. Enrollment of students from another elementary school must first be approved by the Principal of the school where the Academy is providing before and after child care.

Curriculum

At Academy, we focus on child-centered teaching, developmentally appropriate practices, and the belief that play is a child's work. Our goal is to develop each child's confidence, creativity, and life-long learning skills in our program. To support this goal, we use the following curriculums for each classroom: the Creative Curriculum for Infants/Toddlers and Tiny Tots in conjunction with The MSDE Healthy Beginnings standards. Our Preschool 3s teachers use the Children Explore Their World (CEW) curriculum, while our Pre-Kindergarten 4s teachers use Children Study Their World (CSW).

Assessment

Child assessment is a vital component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is essential to understand and support young children's development. Academy has selected The Creative Curriculum for Infants/Toddlers and Tiny Tots, Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) developmental screening tool, and Early Learning Assessment (ELA) to measure development and progress for Preschool and Pre-K children. This system is a comprehensive means for monitoring children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical progress through teacher's observations and child work documentation within the context of the daily learning environment. One of the standardized developmental checklists is the ASQ which is completed by the parents. Conferences are scheduled three times per year and as needed to discuss children's progress and programming for their individual goals.

Assessment Plan

- Assessments are used along with written observations, work samples, and checklists that are built into our classroom activities.
- Assessments are structured around broad curriculum areas, outlined in:

1. The Creative Curriculum for Infants/Toddlers

<https://teachingstrategies.com/product/the-creative-curriculum-for-infants-toddlers-twos/>

2. Children Explore Their World: Curriculum for Threes

<https://education.umd.edu/cdw/children-explore-their-world-curriculum-threes>

3. Children Study Their World: Curriculum for Fours

<https://education.umd.edu/cdw/welcome-csw/about-csw>

- Initial enrollment and annual forms allow parents to provide information about their child that may assist the teacher when completing assessments.
- Children are informally assessed daily by adults they know in a comfortable environment.
- Assessments are conducted during one on one, small group, or large group opportunities.

Assessment Results

Teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process to:

- Identify children's interests and needs.
- Be intentional in their teaching.
- Develop goals for each child and plan for individual student needs.
- Guide instructional/environmental planning that best meets the needs of all children
- Share progress with families by pinpointing where children are along a continuum of development and education.

Assessment results and developmental progress is shared with parents at their parent-teacher conferences.

In the case assessments indicate a need for further evaluation, teachers will discuss this with the family and use the information gathered for referral to an outside agency for additional diagnostic screenings and assessments.

Placement Criteria

Children are grouped by age as required by the Maryland State Department of Education [COMAR 13A.09.09.10C.(3)(a) and 13A.09.09.10C.(4)(a)]; MSDE, Office of Child Care; National After School Association (NAA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For admission to our MSDE approved programs, children must attain the required age on or before September 1st of that school year. Other factors that are considered include licensed capacity, group size and child/teacher ratios. If parents, teacher, and program director feel that a developmental placement would better meet the child's needs and space permits, a written child care plan will be formulated. Vertical articulation/transition plans are established for each child in preparation for the next class program.

4 ENROLLMENT

Admissions Process

Children are eligible for admission starting at age 2 months. The admission process begins with inquiring at one of our Centers via the website: www.academychild.com. Once information is submitted on the inquiry form, the Center Director will contact the family with an application and to schedule a tour. If space is not available in the appropriate class, families can put their child on a wait list for a \$30 fee.

Academy has a non-discriminatory admissions policy and enrollment is on a trial basis. Our centers are open to all applicants without regard to race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.

“It is the policy of the State of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:

- i. Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.
- ii. Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual’s race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
- iii. Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.”

Inclusion Policy

Academy supports inclusion and welcomes children of all abilities to our program. If your child has a qualifying disability, please provide a copy of the most current IEP, IFSP or 504 Plan, or a special health care need that requires a special accommodation or modification to the Center Director prior to your child's first day in the program. Additionally, a completed and signed Authorization for Release/Exchange of Confidential Information must be submitted to the Center Director. The Director will schedule a meeting with the family, classroom teacher, administrative team, and any service providers who work with your child to better understand your child's needs while at Academy.

A plan of action will be developed in partnership between Academy, the parents and services providers who work with your child. The plan of action will be revised and updated, as necessary. Academy will consider all requests for reasonable modification of policies, practices, or procedure with respect to childcare services and will make every effort to make reasonable accommodations for children with qualifying needs. All required forms must be completed and on file for all children one month prior to the start date. Academy staff work diligently with children and their parents to create a successful environment.

However, since the nature of Academy is a group child care program, even with special accommodations, there are times when Academy may not be able to meet all the needs of the family. Consequently, Academy reserves the right to discontinue enrollment to students whose needs cannot be met in the group setting. A list of alternative programs and community resources will be provided to families of children who may need a different type of child care setting.

REGISTRATION & REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

Complete the Inquiry form on our website at www.academychild.com/enrollment.

Once the Inquiry form is received, the Center Director contacts the family to set up an orientation tour of our program, an interview for you and your child and gives the family the Enrollment Application to complete.

Upon receipt of the completed Enrollment Application and payment of the non-refundable Admission and Material fees, the family will receive an Enrollment Agreement, Family Handbook, required health and student information forms.

Within 3 days, the signed Enrollment Agreement, security deposit (12-month programs) or last month installment (10-month programs/school year) needs to be returned to the Center Director, as specified in the Enrollment Agreement.

All Enrollment forms must be signed, completed, and returned to Academy no later than a date provided by the Center Director. This includes all required MSDE Office of Childcare forms as well as Academy forms.

PLEASE NOTE: We are required to have each of these forms in our files to maintain our license to operate. State law requires us to exclude from school any student whose files are incomplete until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

Customized Schedules

Customized schedules include any program not published on the center's tuition worksheet, or requests for enrollment before/after the identified enrollment period. All customized schedule requests must be submitted in writing and must be pre-approved by Academy's business office. Priority placement is given to 5 full day and 12-month enrollment period (July 1st-June 30th), current student, and sibling applications.

Withdrawing

If you need to withdraw your child from Academy, you must complete and give the Center Director a withdrawal form 30 days in advance of the first of the month. You will be charged tuition during this 30-day period, whether your child is in attendance or not. There is no mid-month withdrawal prorate.

Program Cancellation

Academy reserves the right to cancel any program or session due to insufficient enrollment. Academy will make every attempt to give 30 days' notice to Families.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Your Child's First Day

Preparing for the first day of school can be exciting, but it can also be an overwhelming and an anxious time – we understand! We will collaborate with you to make your child's first day the best it can be. Do not hesitate to share any concerns you have before that first drop-off. If possible, we recommend new students start with a few half days, gradually lengthening their time. This helps your child become familiar with the new environment and new faces and reduces anxiety. Each child is unique in their patterns and ease of adjustment to new situations.

Be sure to talk with the staff daily during the transition phase. A consistent daily schedule (arrival and departure routines) also helps children adjust to a new routine and environment. You're always welcome to call any time to see how your child's adjusting or communicate with the teacher through the ProCare application.

On the first day, we ask that you send in the items listed on the materials list provided by the Center Director. Please make sure to label each item with your child's name.

Parking & Carpool

To ensure your children's safety, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lot. Staff and parents need to watch out for others, drive slowly, and hold children's hands. Please limit any distractions (i.e., cell phones) during this time. **Violation of the parking rules or traffic patterns is a safety issue and can result in fines, suspension or immediate termination of enrollment and forfeiture of your deposit.**

If you are entering the building, please **DO NOT** hold the door open for others. The person behind you may not be a parent.

Arrival

Mornings can be busy times, and they often set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at school:

- Sign your child in using the ProCare App and your check-in code. There is a kiosk at the entrance, or you can use your smart device to check in with the app or QR Code.
- Parents must accompany their child to and from the classroom each day.
- You must connect with the teacher upon your child's arrival. This is a wonderful opportunity to share any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.

Please plan to bring your child to school 5 minutes before the program starts. We want each of our students to gain the most they can from their experiences at Academy. When children consistently arrive late, they miss on educational opportunities and fun activities that the teachers have carefully planned, and it can be a disruption to the classroom.

Departure

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. You can sign your child out via the ProCare app at the front entrance kiosk or on your smartphone, like signing in upon arrival. It is also critical that you check in with your child's teachers before leaving.

Absences, Sick Days & Vacations

For children to learn from our program, they need to be here on a regular basis. Recording attendance is required for participants in our childcare programs.

Please notify your child's teacher if you know that your child will be out of school ahead of time for an appointment or vacation. If your child is sick, please notify us as soon as you can. You can send all notifications to your child's teacher via messaging within the ProCare App.

The director may not re-admit a child to the center after an absence of three or more days due to illness, without first receiving a written statement from the child's health care provider stating that the child may return to a regular schedule.

Rest Time

All children will participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep; however, we have a busy and stimulating morning, so most toddlers and preschool-aged children will nap when given a relaxing and quiet space to do so. If a child does not fall asleep after a short rest, they are given quiet activities. The center provides sheets and cots for nap time. The sheets are washed weekly, and the cots are disinfected after each use.

The required ratio of teachers to students within the nap room during naptime observing by sight and sound is always maintained. We do not use mirrors, video, or sound monitors in place of sight and sound supervision.

Classroom Schedule

Each classroom follows a slightly different schedule that is customized for their students. The MSDE instructional day is either 9:00 to 3:30 or 9:25 to 3:50, with a rest time in the early afternoon. While all parts of the school day are important, if you need to make appointments during the school day, we generally recommend your child not miss the primary educational time in their classroom. During this time, we focus on working in large and small groups, completing centers, and circle time.

Staff are sensitive to the attention spans of young children and plan accordingly, making activities extensive enough to be challenging and fun but short enough to avoid overwhelming a child. Each classroom has a schedule posted that lists approximate times of activities. Routine provides security, but flexibility is also important in meeting the varying needs of young children.

Classroom Activities

Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities for the learning centers in the classrooms weekly. Teachers strive to be culturally aware and sensitive in their approach to planning. They plan concrete activities that can be modified to meet the individual needs of each child and provide challenges in skill development.

The classrooms are organized into centers or defined interest areas. Activities are planned for each center in which the children move freely throughout each day. The variety of learning centers include:

- Dramatic Play
- Writing
- Blocks
- Science
- Math/Manipulatives
- Library
- Art
- Technology
- Peace Place

Learning Experiences

Teachers connect with and use community resources and the families we serve to expand our curriculum and provide additional hands-on learning experiences. In-house learning events may include cultural experiences through community members as well as a cultural experience provided by families within the center, demonstrations by community helpers, or scientific investigations.

Playground and Outdoors

We play outside every day that weather permits. When the weather keeps us inside, we find safe and fun ways to get active indoors. Our playground equipment and materials are designed for active play and exploration, which keeps kids learning while getting exercise and fresh air. Teachers plan outdoor activities to address multiple areas of skill development, including climbing, balance, and coordination, throwing, kicking, running, jumping, and pedaling.

Air Quality

Academy staff monitor the conditions and make decisions using the Child Care Weather Watch chart from US DHHS & The National Weather Service. On days that are labeled code yellow, outdoor time will be reduced. Children will not go outside on days labeled code red, and gross motor activities will occur indoors. Children will use the playground at least twice daily in most situations.

MEALS

General Mealtimes

Academy provides breakfast snacks, milk with lunch, and afternoon snacks to all students over age 2 daily. Weekly menus and mealtimes are sent via ProCare.

All snacks are served and prepared following the Child and Adult Care Food Program/USDA requirements for children ages two years and older. This includes one protein, one grain, two fruits and/or vegetables, and milk at lunch. Breakfast and snacks include one grain and a fruit or vegetable.

It is common at Academy that children will eventually try food at school that they may not consume at home simply because the other children are eating it. During mealtimes, students, and staff sit together and engage in conversations. Staff use positive reinforcement to encourage children to try new foods. Caregivers/teachers should not force or bribe children to eat nor use food as a reward or punishment.

Special Dietary Needs (Academy does not intentionally stock or serve foods that contain nut ingredients.)

Parents can provide allergy-friendly alternatives for their child. We encourage all students to eat the meals provided at school; however, we understand that may not be the best option for all students. We ask that you send healthy snack alternatives with your child.

For children with documented disabilities who have special feeding needs, program staff can keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and will provide families with that information.

Infant & Toddler Mealtimes

Healthy, balanced meals are just what growing bodies need! For children ages 2 months to 2 years, parents will provide food and formula or breast milk to be served. Food containers and bottles will not be heated in the microwave but in heated water when necessary. Parents will provide formula or breast milk in prepared bottles with nipples for each serving with the following labels on each bottle:

- Child's First and Last Name
- Date & Time Bottle Was Filled
- Contents (Formula or Breast Milk)
- Ounces

Only single serving bottles and nipples will be used for each meal. (i.e.- 3 meals should be 3 separate bottles with clean nipples - bottles with liners will be accepted but liners and nipples must be changed with each serving). Sippy cups are only to be used for single servings. They cannot be rinsed out and reused. Consequently, a separate sippy cup is required for each serving of milk. Opened food cannot be re-refrigerated after child has eaten out of the container; has drank out of sippy cup or served directly from a baby food jar. For the initial serving from a jar of baby food, staff will pour serving into separate container before serving to child. The last serving can come directly from baby food jar. Leftover perishable food/formula will be disposed of daily. Only nonperishable, unopened commercially packaged food will be allowed to leave the center in the child's lunch container. Food will be disposed of after each meal unless the parent submits written request to see leftover food at dismissal. At that time, the food will be discarded according to policy (all opened food is considered contaminated after 1 hour). Staff will not serve children less than two years of age using plastic utensils or Styrofoam containers (choking hazards). Parents will provide daily non-disposable serving utensils for each snack or meal for children less than two years of age.

Breastmilk/Formula & Bottles/Sippy Cups

Center staff cannot pour from breastmilk storage bags, mix formula bottles, and cannot add cereal to bottles. If a child is drinking breastmilk, it must already be pre-portioned into individual bottles. If a child is drinking formula, it must come to school premixed in bottles. Bottles must be labeled correctly as stated above. Please do not leave bottles at the center overnight; their contents will be discarded. Due to the potential risk, children will not be laid down to rest with a bottle/sippy cup, nor will the bottle/sippy cup be propped. Children cannot walk around the classroom with their bottle/sippy cup. We will work with our families to ensure our students are offered fluids from an open cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.



PERSONAL BELONGINGS

To prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost, please label ALL items brought from home with your child's name. Within each classroom, each child has a hook and/or cubby assigned to them. This will provide storage space for your child's personal belongings. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

Clothing & Shoes

A full day at our school includes fun activities like singing, painting, playing indoors and out, dancing, and eating, so we recommend easy-fitting, washable clothes. Being comfortable allows children to focus on learning and having fun!

Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, Crocs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside and limit their play. Please be sure that your child's shoes are rubber-soled and closed-toe with a closed heel or heel strap.

- Please provide two complete sets of extra clothes, including socks, for your child. It is always a good idea to keep an extra sweater or sweatshirt at school, too. Clothing should be labeled with your child's first and last name and checked periodically to make sure it still fits.
- Please provide appropriately layered clothing to keep warm in cold weather, including mittens or gloves, hats, sweaters or sweatshirts, socks, and warm, waterproof outerwear and footwear.
- Please have your children wear sun-protective clothing such as clothing made with fabrics rated for ultraviolet protection or clothing that protects skin areas most prone to sun damage.
- Sometimes learning and playing can get messy! Academy is not responsible for lost, stained, soiled, or torn clothing.

Diapers & Wipes

Parents of children in diapers and of children who are toilet training must provide an ongoing supply of diapers, wipes, and additional necessary clothing. Cubbies and coat hooks should be checked daily for items that need to be laundered.

Belongings from Home

Your child will be provided with stimulating, educational toys every day. Special objects such as a blanket, soft toy, or a stuffed animal are okay for rest time. Please leave other toys and belongings at home, unless instructed by your teacher. Toy weapons (guns, water pistols, swords, shields, or other items that resemble weapons) are not permitted at Academy. All personal or school issued electronics (except augmentative communication devices) brought to school must be stored in the "off" position in the child's cubby. Use of school issued electronics is only permitted in the school age program during homework time. We cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged personal belongings.

THE SCHOOL YEAR



Screen Time Policy

Activities using tablets, computers, movies, or video games may be used on occasion to enhance curriculum. Academy has established and posted rules for children and staff regarding the appropriate use of the computer and internet. The following guidelines are used to protect children:

Ages 2-36 months - No Screen Time

Age 3 and older - Total media time is no more than thirty minutes per week, and for educational or physical activity use only.

School-Age program - Computer use is no more than fifteen-minute increments unless required for homework assignments.

The teachers will carefully review and select screen titles that are appropriate and topic related.

Parents/guardians will be informed if screen media is used in the program.

Some classrooms may schedule a “fun” movie day. Academy will allow children to view “G” rated movies for limited periods, and alternative activities will be available for children who do not want to watch the movie. On occasion, and only with parental written permission, will an appropriate “PG” movie be selected for school age students. Academy has purchased a copyright permit.

Calendar

You will be provided with a calendar upon enrollment. Academy will be closed most federal holidays. We also dedicate time each year to professional development. This includes professional development days. Academy maintains the right to change the calendar at any time. Tuition and fees are not prorated for illness, holidays, inclement weather, or emergency closures.

Academy will be open on MCPS early release days, late openings, non-instructional days, most MCPS professional days, and some inclement weather days. Academy will be closed on MCPS Holidays when MCPS schools and their offices are closed for system wide closure days.

Inclement Weather Days

In case of inclement weather, Academy will close as determined by Montgomery County Government (CUPF) and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) or when conditions are otherwise judged to be unsafe.

- If MCPS Central Administrative Offices are CLOSED, Academy WILL BE CLOSED.
- If the Federal Government is CLOSED, Academy WILL BE CLOSED.
- If MCPS is closed but MCPS Central Administrative Offices are opening with a 2-hour delay, Academy WILL OPEN AT 10:30 A.M. for child care only.
- If MCPS is closed but MCPS Central Administrative Offices are opening on a 3-hour delay, Academy WILL OPEN AT 11:30 A.M. for child care only. Breakfast is not served, and all students should bring their lunch.
- If both MCPS and MCPS Central Administrative Offices are opening on a 2-hour delay, Academy WILL OPEN AT 9:00 A.M. for child care only. Breakfast is not served. Only part-day Pre-K students who would normally attend until MCPS dismisses may arrive when MCPS opens and will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled school dismissal time. Academy AM part-day programs are cancelled. Make certain that someone is responsible for your child's safe arrival at Academy. All students should bring their own lunch.
- If MCPS openings are delayed and MCPS Central Administrative Offices open on time: Academy opens at 8:00 AM for child care only. Only Part-day students who would normally attend until MCPS dismisses, may arrive when MCPS opens and will be dismissed at their regularly scheduled school dismissal time. Academy half-day programs are cancelled. Make certain that someone is responsible for your child's safe arrival at Academy. All students should bring their own lunch.
- If MCPS closes early: Academy will close early at 5:00 PM, Part-day students must be picked up early as follows: DuFief - 12:55 PM
Galway & Stone Mill- 1:15 PM

Pets/Animals

Academy will meet the OCC licensing requirements pertaining to pets and animals in the center. Regular classroom pets will consist of mainly fish aquariums. As part of the educational curriculum topics, visiting pets such as cats or dogs will have current rabies certificates. Student allergies will be considered prior to pets visiting. Professional companies that provide animal education programs and exhibits may be present at the centers. Parents will be notified of these special events. Service animals are the exception to this policy.

Change in Pick Up Person

The safety of our students is our top priority. Please notify your child's teacher if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Academy staff will only release your child to the parents and guardians or the other adults you authorized on the student's Emergency Form and within the ProCare App. If you need to authorize a new pickup person, please send the request via ProCare. For your child's safety, any time a person we do not recognize comes to pick up your child, we will ask for a government-issued photo ID.

Celebrations & Birthdays

Celebrations and birthdays are special days for children, and we want to share in the fun! If you would like to provide a small treat for the celebration, all items must be nut-free (including peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, and food processed in plants using nuts) and commercially packaged with ingredient statements so we can be sure we're accommodating any allergies or dietary restrictions. Please do not send in any treats or candy, which may be a choking hazard to our students. Healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, fresh fruit, fresh fruit popsicles, or yogurt are always a great choice. Please be sure to provide enough for everyone in your child's classroom and check in with your child's teacher before the special day so they can share any tips and plan accordingly.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

Academy strives to make the transition from one classroom to another as smooth as possible. When the time comes to transition from one class to the next, we look at your child's developmental and maturation levels, as well as space availability in other classrooms. A letter will go home to make you aware when your child is transitioning to a new classroom. Your child's current teacher will share with the new teacher about your child's strengths, areas for growth, and supportive strategies. If you are interested in setting up a conference centered around transition, feel free to reach out to your child's teacher.

Custodial & Foster Care

Some families have legal custodial orders that address who is permitted to pick up or visit a child. If there are custody orders or protection orders relating to your child, a copy must be provided to Academy for your child's file. This information is confidential and solely for the safety and well-being of your child. Families must update the Center Director when custody orders change or expire. Please note that employees cannot be responsible for supervising parenting time (visitation), and, as a result, visitation for non-custodial parents is not permitted in our centers.

All enrollment and financial arrangements must be resolved between the parents. Academy will not be a mediator for parents who are separated or divorced.

For enrolled children in the foster care system, Academy will need to receive a copy of the foster care paperwork. Academy will release the child only to the foster parents or the child's caseworker, who must sign the child in and out on the visitor's list and provide proper identification. The caseworker must verify any additions or changes in writing (by letter or email).

10 COMMUNICATION & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The ProCare App

Upon enrollment, you will receive an invitation via email or text to set up your ProCare account. Through the app, you can communicate with your child's teacher or administration via messaging and receive your child's daily report.

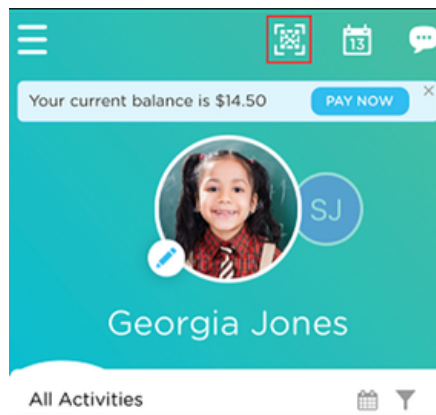
- Create a free ProCare account. When you receive an invitation via email or text, please create a free parent account using either the website or mobile app. Make sure to use the same email address or cell phone number that the invitation was sent to.
- Confirm your child's profile. You will see your child's profile after you create an account - you can confirm information such as birthdays, allergies, and additional contacts. If you do not see your child's profile, please contact us with the email address or phone number you used to sign up.
- Set your account preferences. You can adjust your notification preferences within your profile settings on the app.

Family vs. Approved Pick-Ups vs. Emergency Contacts

We ask that you add and edit Family Members, Approved Pickups, and Emergency Contacts on your child's profile. We do not recommend listing anyone as an Emergency Contact as emergency contacts do NOT have pick-up privileges. Only parents, family, and approved pickups may check a child out. All children must be signed in and out by an individual who is at least 16 years old.

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures for ALL families:

Once you have arrived at the center location.



1. Parents should open the ProCare mobile app and select the QR code icon in the upper right-hand corner.
2. Parents will then select the Sign-in/out button on the bottom of their screen. This is located to the right of the banner that reads "Looks like you are in school. Tap the button to sign-in."
3. Parents will then be prompted with 4 health screening questions. For our program to protect the health and safety of ALL children, staff, and families, we ask that you answer these questions honestly.
4. The app may then ask for your signature.

Conferences

Family participation is encouraged and welcomed. Academy uses family conferences to offer family support and communication. Family conferences are designed:

1. To guide families and teachers with a way of sharing valuable information about their child.
2. To individualize the planning process for each child in the context of their family, culture, and community.
3. To explore ways to use a child's family's strengths to promote growth and development.
4. To create an ongoing process for recording the growth and development of the child.

We schedule three formal conferences each school year, yet encourage parents to reach out to your child's teacher at any time if you have questions, concerns, or want an update on your child's progress. While conferences are not mandatory, they are encouraged, even for our youngest students, as they allow parents the opportunity to follow the progress that their child is making. During these conferences, you will be provided with a written report about your child's strengths and areas for growth.

If at any point you have developmental concerns for your child, please reach out to your child's teacher to discuss. We are happy to provide strategies, resources, or community programs that may be of support.

Family Support

While Academy specializes in providing high-quality early childhood education, we recognize that our students and families may have needs outside early education. We have a variety of ways that we can support our families.

These include:

- Assist families with locating community resources.
- Help families obtain emergency assistance in areas such as food, clothing, utilities, housing, and counseling.
- Assist families with a successful transition to school
- Access to a Family Resource Lending Library

Please reach out to the Center Director if you need of support.

Home Language

It is important to Academy that all families are given the opportunity to fully understand, interpret, and become involved in their child's education. Academy will work with the family to provide information in the language they are most comfortable with for any family that makes a request.

Confidentiality Policy

Academy will not, without written permission, give out or discuss information about a child or their family to anyone other than appropriate staff members and representatives of certain health, safety and welfare agencies as required by federal and state law. Other exceptions that allow disclosure without written consent-

- Academy will share health and safety information regarding school-age students with the appropriate elementary school officials, to protect the health, safety, and learning of all students.
- Representatives of a public agency in a safety or health emergency.
- Authorized government officials
- Judicial order or subpoena
- Accrediting organizations conducting accreditation functions.
- Financial aid personnel, if needed to determine eligibility for financial aid.

Upon written request from a student's parent or guardian, the director may be authorized to release copies of a student's records to a specified recipient. Cumulative records are maintained for each student enrolled. These are retained for two years after the student has left Academy and will be destroyed at that time. Records are confidential and kept in a secure location. Additional copies of individual student records are available at a cost of \$1.50 per page. Photographs of program activities are taken and may be used for educational research or publicity (web, brochures, mailings, flyers, Academy's Social Media pages, etc.). Early Childhood Education majors from area schools, such as the University of Maryland, may be placed at Academy centers for supervised training and observation.

Family Involvement

Academy believes that children thrive when the relationship between the family and the center is a partnership. We have an open-door policy—parents and guardians of currently enrolled students are always welcome at the center. We strongly believe in positive two-way communication. Families are encouraged to communicate with teachers and administration in whatever way is most convenient for them. This may include: by phone, notes, email, or in person. Information is shared with families through verbal conversations, the ProCare app, newsletters, flyers, family bulletin boards, notes, phone calls, posters, conferences, and e-mail. Academy has an open-door policy and offers many opportunities to be part of your child's early learning experience and connect with other families. Volunteering is always welcome! We would love to have you share your time and talents with the class. We encourage you to read a book, play an instrument, or share a hobby with the children. Ask your child's teacher about the many ways you can help such as:

- Annual Family Picnic Volunteer
- Children's Performances
- Parent Teacher Exchange
- Field Trip Chaperones

TUITION & OTHER FEES

We know that your child's early education and care is important. Paying tuition on time helps ensure that we can continue to retain our highly trained teachers and provide them a positive work experience. Information about current tuition rates is available through the Center Director. Tuition increases occur each year on July 1 and typically reflect a cost-of-living increase. All tuition is due on or before the 1st day of each month in accordance with your Enrollment Agreement.

No matter which program you choose, 12 Month or 10 Month (School year), enrollment at Academy is considered a commitment for the entire period. All budgetary decisions, including hiring teachers, are based on enrollment.

Academy may be forced to close temporarily or for an extended time due to communicable diseases, or other circumstances beyond Academy's control. Tuition refunds or credits will not be issued. Academy reserves the right to close a classroom if we are unable to staff it appropriately due to communicable diseases. If the State of Maryland, MSDE, MSDE Office of Child Care, MCPS or the Montgomery County Government mandates that Academy close due to an emergency, this enrollment agreement remains in full effect.

Early Childhood and 12 Month Programs (July 1 through June 30)

Early childhood programs start July 1 and continue through June 30. A \$500 Security deposit is required upon signing the Enrollment Agreement. The security deposit will be applied to the last month of attendance. Tuition is due on the first of each month. There are no refunds of tuition, admission or material fees for any reason including early withdrawal. If there is early withdrawal, the security deposit is refundable if the child attends the program for at least 1 month, the Director receives 30 days' written notice and there is no outstanding balance. There are no mid-month withdrawals.

School Age and 10 Month Programs (School Year, follows MCPS Calendar)

Tuition is an annual fee based off the number of weeks of the school year and divided into 10 equal installments. There is an option of equal, non-refundable tuition installments. The first non-refundable installment is due August 1st and will be applied to the last month's installment. Each subsequent installment is due on or before the 1st business day of each month through May. Space is reserved for the school year and follows the MCPS school year calendar. Applications received after August 1st will be adjusted so that all payments are completed by May 1.

Program changes - Only increases to the program will be accepted prior to October 1. There are no mid-month changes. Any increase or decrease will take place on the first of the month and requires 15 days' advance notice.

Withdrawals - **There are no mid-month withdrawals.** Withdrawal notice should be given to Center Director 30 days in advance of child's last day. Tuition collected pays staff salaries, therefore adequate notice is appreciated so appropriate staffing adjustments can be made in a timely manner. All previous payments made towards tuition, admission, or material fees are non-refundable in the case of withdrawal.

Summer in the K.A.V.E. (Kids Active Enrichment) Program

Summer in the K.A.V.E. Program is offered during the Summer for children going to Kindergarten through 5th grade in the Fall. Tuition rates are listed per week, however, all sessions must be prepaid.

Late Pick-Up

A late pick-up fee of \$1 per minute will be assessed when a child is not picked up at their scheduled time, including inclement weather/emergency closings. \$2 per minute if a fourth time occurs. Cash payment is due directly to the staff members who stayed with your child. Payment must be made prior to your child's return to the classroom.

If Academy has not heard from a child's parents within 30 minutes after closing and has been unable to reach emergency contacts for pick-up, Academy will contact the Montgomery County Police. The non-emergency police number is (301) 279-8000.

If your child is dropped off early or picked up 3 times late from their confirmed schedule, your child's tuition will be automatically increased to the next tuition option. You may be asked to find other child care if your child is picked up late on four occasions.

Drop-In Care

Drop-In Care is available to registered children on an intermittent and occasional basis for an additional fee, see Center Director for current fees.

Change in Program

Increase in Service – A new application must be completed by the Family and a new enrollment agreement or addendum will be provided to include any required adjustment to tuition.

Decrease in Service – If approved by Academy's business office, a new application plus a \$100 change fee must be completed by the Family and a new enrollment agreement or addendum will be provided to include any required adjustment to tuition. Fees paid prior to reduction are non-refundable, and special payment arrangements, tuition discounts or assistance, including child care subsidies may be discontinued.

Field Trips

Academy believes in offering experiences for exploration outside of the school. Academy contracts bus transportation through a licensed and insured bus company that complies with MSDE safety requirements.

Transportation fees are \$12 per child and admission prices are added if necessary. Typically, reservations are required, the fees are not refundable if the trip is canceled, or the child does not attend. Field trip frequency and format was altered significantly during COVID. Pre pandemic, Academy provided on average 1-3 field trips per year. We hope to be able to resume this average in the future. Similar onsite experiences have been provided as an alternative.

Property Damage

If a child purposely loses or damages equipment or other property through inappropriate use, parents will be informed and charged for repairs and replacement.

Payment Methods

Academy accepts tuition payment by direct ACH from your bank account or bank check. You will select the method on your Enrollment Agreement. Academy is committed to the security of your personal information online. Academy does not store confidential banking information and has the highest encryption levels on bank transfers. No one at our company or externally has any access to any customer banking records.

Under certain circumstances Academy will accept payments via PayPal and Venmo, however, these will be subject to additional fees.

All tuition is due on the 1st of the month. While we are a non-profit organization and strive to take the needs and requests of our families into consideration, we must maintain financial stability. Accounts 15 days in arrears or repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date may result in the termination of services. Any requests for exceptions must be made with the accounting department through the completion of a tuition payment plan. A late fee of \$50 will be assessed on any account that has not been paid in full by the 15th day of the month unless these arrangements have been made. Upon enrollment at Academy, all families will be expected to sign a statement that they have read, understand, and will abide by the tuition agreement.

Temporary Withdrawal or Vacations

It is not financially feasible for Academy to hold space for a child who wishes to temporarily withdraw from the program for vacation or other reasons. All tuition is due, or the child will need to withdraw from the program.

Receipts can be requested by contacting the accounting department at the Main Office.



CHILD CARE SUBSIDY VOUCHERS AND FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Academy accepts child care subsidy vouchers and/or fee assistance from the following agencies:

- Montgomery County Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA).
- Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP).
- Federal Employees Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA).
- The Military Child Care Fee Assistance Program through Child Care Aware of America (CCAOA)
- The Navy Child/Youth Program (CYP).

Enrollment Process for Families with CCS Vouchers or Applying for CCS Vouchers

Families who have an active voucher upon enrollment:

- \$30 Non-Refundable Admissions Fee due with application. Annual Materials Fee will be waived.
- Parents must fill out CCS co-payment determination form. This needs to be sent into CCS with their voucher. Copayments are determined by the units of care on each voucher. Example: \$4 per month (1 unit=\$1 per week), \$8 per month (2 units= \$2 per week) and \$12 per month (3 units=\$3 per week). The max copayment amount parents could pay is \$12 per month (3 units of care).
- Send the Center Director voucher to complete with Academy's weekly tuition rate.

Families who DO NOT have an active voucher upon enrollment and are applying for CCS:

- Academy will need proof that family has applied for the CCS program. Examples of proof: Application approval letter from CCS, screen shot of submitted application, email from CCS that their application has been received.
- \$30 Non-Refundable Admissions Fee & \$150 Non-Refundable Security Deposit
Annual Materials Fee Waived.
Once the voucher is received.
- The family must fill out the co-payment determination sheet.
- Send center Director voucher to complete with Academy's weekly tuition rate.
- Once you receive the completed voucher from Academy, submit both forms to CCSScholarships@maryland.gov.

* If Academy does not receive a voucher after 1 month the family will be responsible for any balance on their account and the full monthly tuition going forward.

*If you DO NOT receive an approval letter or email within 10 days after submitting a voucher, please have the family follow up on the voucher status and fill out an inquiry form to check on the voucher status yourself. CCS has not been notifying providers or families in a timely manner if they are missing information. This has led to vouchers being denied and payment being delayed, so it is important to check the voucher status, if you do not hear anything within 10 days.

Annual Fees

Admissions fees are billed per family, are non-refundable and are assessed annually when signing your agreement for the year.

Returned Checks

There will be a \$30 service charge for any returned checks. In the event of a returned check, a money order will be due immediately, late fees will apply, and immediate termination of services may apply. Payments from customers with prior unpaid returned checks must be, from there on out, in the form of a money order or cashier's check.

Family Discounts

Families with more than one child enrolled full-time receive are eligible for a discount off the older child's tuition. Only 1 type of discount will be applied per family.

HEALTH & SAFETY

We all know that safety comes first! At Academy, our first goal is to keep children safe, which starts with paying attention to every detail - big and small. Every day at our center, you can be confident that your child is in the absolute best hands.

Behavior Management Policy

Social-emotional health is one of the most critical factors in a child's healthy development and school readiness. Responsive relationships and positive discipline techniques create supportive environments where children can grow and thrive.

Positive guidance techniques will be used to establish discipline. Academy will endeavor to discipline children to help them develop internal self-control of their behaviors while building self-esteem. The staff will provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for each child to practice making good choices. It is imperative that adults, both staff and parents, have consistent responses to the children and model positive behavior.

The first and most effective strategy for creating a cooperative learning environment is to encourage positive behavior by providing positive reinforcement and guidance. Some examples of positive discipline techniques include:

- Set realistic, developmentally appropriate expectations and limits.
- Consistently enforce a few (3-5) rules with known consequences.
- Arrange the room to encourage positive behavior.
- Establish a consistent routine with a balance between teacher and child directed activities.
- Encourage the STOP, THINK, MAKE Good Choices program to allow children to make choices.
- Use redirection techniques where the adult changes the child's focus from a negative behavior/experience to a more positive one.
- Ignore some inappropriate behavior which is attention seeking and not harmful to the child, other children, or the program.
- Provide A Peace Place - a separate cozy area in the classroom away from the flow of activity for a child to calm down. The goal is for a child to learn when he/she needs to go to the Peace Place. After the child has regained control, the teacher asks the child if he/she is ready to return to the group.

Time out is a last resort and is used only when a child has done one of the following:

- Willfully hurt another person physically or emotionally.
- Endangered himself by not following a safety rule.
- Destroyed Academy or another child's property.

Time out takes the child away from friends and classroom activity for a short time (not exceeding one minute for each year of age). Time out is not appropriate for a child younger than three years old. The child is reintroduced into the class activities after a short conversation with the teacher. Follow-up: If the behavior persists, a behavior modification plan will be implemented with regular parental communications. Parents will be asked to cooperate with Academy support staff and the teacher in developing a program to change the inappropriate behavior. Outside resources will be contacted to assist. Should the socially unacceptable behavior persist in such a manner that is harmful to the well-being of the child, other children, or the staff despite efforts at remediation, Academy reserves the right to give the parents notice of termination of services for the child .

Corporal punishment is never used.

Additionally, socially-emotionally healthy children are better able to establish and maintain positive relationships with adults and peers. To support our students in developing these skills, we take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors.

Our Environment: We provide children with exciting materials and engage them in activities that are appropriate for their age to keep them focused and attentive. We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity. Yet, our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs.

Our Teachers: We work to develop a strong rapport with each child speaking to children calmly, especially during redirections. We help children put words to their emotions. We use social stories to help teach our students healthy social skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of young children.

Our Families: We communicate regularly with families to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school. We partner with families to offer support, guidance and, if necessary, connect them with experts to help give their children the best foundation for academic and life success.

Hyson, M. 2004. *The Emotional Development of Young Children: Building an Emotion-Centered Curriculum*, 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press

Kostelnik, M.J., A.K. Soderman, A.P. Whiren, M.L. Rupiper, & K.M. Gregory. 2015. *Guiding Children's Social Development and Learning: Theory and Skills*, 8th ed. Stamford, CT: Cengage.

Code of Conduct & Civility Policy

Academy Child Development Center, Inc. is extremely fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Academy families recognize that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, administrators, teachers, staff, and the school community. As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continue to welcome and encourage parents, administrators, teachers, and staff to participate fully in the life of our programs.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, administrators, teachers, staff, community partners and visitors to our programs about the expected conduct. This is so we can continue to succeed, grow, and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.

To provide a safe, caring, peaceful and orderly school environment, Academy expects civility from all members to include Administrators, Board of Directors, employees, parents, students, community partners, as well as visitors to our programs. Mutual respect, professionalism and common courtesy are essential qualities that all need to demonstrate in promoting a peaceful school environment free from disruptions, harassment, bullying, aggressive and hostile behaviors.

We trust that parents, administrators, teachers, staff, community partners and visitors will assist Academy with the implementation of this policy, and we thank you for your continued support of our programs.

Child Custody/Separation/Divorce/Other Personal Issues

So that all parents/guardians feel equally welcome at the center, Academy strives to remain neutral in all issues relating to child custody, separation and/or divorce or other personal issues between the parties involved. Academy personnel will not accept responsibility for mediation between parents regarding custody, tuition responsibilities, visitation etc. Legally, unless there is an active restraining order, court order, or court ordered visitation schedule on file at the center that designates otherwise, the center cannot deny a parent or guardian access to his or her child.

We require all families to resolve their differences or unsettled court orders through legal channels. Ultimately, Academy's primary concern is the safety of all children and staff at the center. For that reason, the center cannot be used as a place for scheduled visits, nor can we be responsible for supervising parent or guardian visits. If the Administration judges that a family's personal situation becomes or threatens to become a problem, this is grounds for immediate termination of enrollment.

Biting

Biting is a normal part of child development. Young children bite for various reasons, such as teething or exploring a new toy or object with their mouth. Biting can also be a way for toddlers to get attention or express how they are feeling. Frustration, anger, and fear are strong emotions, and toddlers lack the language skills to deal with them. If they cannot find the words they need quickly enough or cannot articulate how they are feeling, they may resort to biting.

Biting tends to occur most often between 12-24 months of age. Biting past the age of two and a half to three is less common. For repeated biting instances with preschoolers, we may request a parent/teacher conference. The purpose of the parent-teacher conference is to discuss what may be causing the child to be upset, frustrated, confused, or afraid and therefore lead to biting. Additionally, we would develop a joint plan of action following our behavior guidance procedures listed in this handbook. If your child bites or is bitten, you and the family of the other child involved will receive an Incident/Accident Report that keeps the identity of both children confidential.

Physical Contact Policy

Academy's physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and staff. We encourage appropriate physical contact with children and staff and prohibit inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by staff towards children in the programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Academy's policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions

- Side Hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder "temple" hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes, High fives
- Verbal praise
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
- Touching hands, shoulders, and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands with young children when assistance is necessary.

Inappropriate Physical Interactions

- Full frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Showing affection in isolated space
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling
- Piggy back rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a child to cling to a staff member or volunteers leg and/or arm.
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Compliments about physique or body development
- Bottom touching, chest, or genital areas

Abuse and Molestation Policy

Academy provides the highest quality childcare services available and we are committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for children, staff, and families. Academy will not tolerate any form of abuse/molestation or/and confirmed abuse will result in immediate termination. Any reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with children or staff or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously. Academy will fully cooperate with the authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The following are types of abuse that will not be tolerated at Academy:

- Physical abuse is an injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a client.
- Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult or between two children. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other client.
- Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs or the failure to protect a child from harm.

Bully-Free School

Academy does not tolerate bullying behavior. All students need to feel that they are valued and appreciated. They have a right to feel safe and know that all staff members will support them if they are bullied. It is important for bullies to realize that they will be held accountable for their behavior and face consequences each time they engage in bullying.

Bullying is the repeated teasing of another and/or regularly singling out another to make him/her feel uncomfortable or excluded. Bullying may include implied or explicit threats.

Bullies are people who rely on aggression and power to control others. They very carefully target their victims, choosing people who are vulnerable in some way. Bullies tend to have inflated self-confidence and an exaggerated sense of self-worth. They have little interest in others' needs and find it difficult to take responsibility for their behavior. Children who bully often feel the victim "deserved it" or "asked for it" in some way.

Bullying can take on many forms including:

- A. Physical bullying – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- B. Verbal bullying – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- C. Nonverbal or relational bullying – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

D. Cyberbullying – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings. Examples of cyberbullying are: sending mean or threatening messages or images; posting sensitive, private information about another person, pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad, intentionally excluding someone from an online group, hazing or sexualized bullying.

Academy staff will develop clear rules and consequences with the children at the beginning of each year. Staff are watchful and alert to signs of bully behavior and will immediately stop the bullying and report behavior to appropriate agencies if needed. Staff will refer to the bullying behavior and to the relevant Academy rules against bullying. Staff will support the bullied child in a way that allows him/her to regain self-control, to “save face,” and to feel supported and safe from retaliation. Staff will include the bystanders in the conversation and give them guidance about how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time. If appropriate, staff will impose immediate consequences for students who bully others. Staff will provide follow-up interventions, as needed, for the students who were bullied and for those who bullied. Staff will notify parents of children who were involved.

Consequences

Minimum: Removal from situation, staff intervention and parent notification/conference.

Maximum: Loss of social opportunities and/or dismissal from the program.

If the bully is a staff member, Academy will follow the evaluation and termination process.

If the bully is deemed an adult in the child’s immediate family or associates, parents will be notified, and Child Protective Services (CPS) will be contacted.

Daily Health Checks

Academy staff will conduct daily health checks at arrival and dismissal. This is a quick physical observation where we check and observe a child’s behavior/mood and physical condition, including breathing, skin, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Additionally, we ask that you please alert us of anything out of the ordinary we need to know regarding sleep, appetite, bowel movements and urination, mood, and behavior at home and/or unusual events. Additionally, staff will conduct mid-day health checks for children under the age of 5 years old.

Sick Child Policy

We need your help in keeping the outbreak of illness to a minimum. Our sick child policy is based on recommendations from CDC, Maryland DHMH and Montgomery County Health Officer guidelines. Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Children who have symptoms listed below should be excluded from the child care setting until:

1. The symptoms have been gone for a minimum of 24 hours.
-or-
2. A health care provider notes the child may return to the program without danger to himself or other children and staff.
-and-
3. The child is well enough to participate fully in the child care's daily routine.

If a child has any of the following signs and symptoms of illness, they should be kept/sent home from child care. If symptoms are severe or persist, parents should contact their private source of medical care.

Appearance/Behavior

Child looks or acts differently than usual: unusually tired, pale, loss of appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken plus has an oral temperature of 100° F or above.

Cough

See respiratory symptoms below.

Diarrhea

An increased number and/or abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours.

Eye/Nose Drainage

Red or pink eyes/thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.

Fever

Remember that temperatures taken under the arm are one degree lower than oral temperatures. Therefore, one degree Fahrenheit will be added to the armpit reading. Any child with an oral temperature of 100° F or above is considered to have a significant fever. Children should not return to child care until they have been fever free for 24 hours.

Respiratory Symptoms

Difficult or rapid breathing, severe cough, high-pitched croupy, wheezing, or whooping sound after cough.

Skin Problems

Undiagnosed skin rashes are possibly contagious. Be alert to rashes or sores with crusty, yellow, or green drainage. Rashes with fevers can be serious and need to be discussed with the child's health care provider.

Sore Throat/Earache

Sore throat and/or difficulty swallowing, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

Unusual color

Eyes or skin – yellow (jaundice)

Stool – gray or white

Urine- dark, tea colored

The above symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by the child's health care provider.

Nausea/Vomiting

Two or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.

Diarrhea, vomiting, undiagnosed rashes, fever, pallor, irritability, excessive sleepiness and change of behavior are signs of illness that must be noted. Parents will be notified when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the facility as described below:

A. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.

B. The illness requires more care than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

OR

C. The child has any of the following conditions:

1) Temperature: Oral 100 degrees F or greater; axillary (armpit) 99 degrees F or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.

2) Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing or wheezing).

3) Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water that is not contained by the diaper.

4) Vomiting illness: two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours.

5) Rash with fever or behavior change.

6) Identified disease that requires exclusion.

When a child is sent home, he/she should remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours or submit a written statement, from the health care provider, approving the return to the program. Parents are advised to arrange a plan for backup care when the child is ill.

If parents cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. A parent/legal guardian or authorized designee should pick up the child within an hour. If the child's condition warrants immediate medical attention, 911 will be called.

The director may not re-admit a child to the center after an absence of three or more days due to illness, without first receiving a written statement from the child's health care provider stating that the child may return to a regular schedule. If a child sustains a serious illness or injury or is hospitalized for any reason, a doctor's readmit certificate is required.

Medication Administration

In all MSDE and OCC programs, medication will be administered within the guidelines of Maryland law (According to COMAR 12A.16.11) and according to the policies outlined below:

Medication Administration

1) Medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, may not be administered to a child in care unless:

(a) Parental permission to administer the medication is documented on a completed, signed, and dated medication authorization form provided by the office that is received at the center before the medication is administered **and**

(b) A licensed health practitioner has approved the administration of the medication and the medication dosage.

2) A prescription medication may not be administered to a child unless at least one dose of the medication has been given to the child at home.

3) If the medication is by prescription, it is labeled by the pharmacy or physician with:

- (a) The child's name;
- (b) The date of the prescription;
- (c) The name of the medication;
- (d) The medication dosage;
- (e) The administration schedule;
- (f) The administration route;
- (g) If applicable, special instructions, such as "take with food."
- (h) The duration of the prescription; and
- (i) An expiration date that states when the medication is no longer useable.

Topical Applications

A diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent may be applied without prior approval of a licensed health practitioner.

Medication shall be administered according to the instructions on the label of the medication container or a licensed health practitioner's written instruction, whichever are more recently dated.

Recording Requirements

(1) Each administration of a prescription or non-prescription medication to a child, including self-administration of a medication by the child, shall be noted in the child's record.

(2) Application of a diaper rash product, sunscreen, or insect repellent supplied by a child's parent shall be recorded in the child's record. Lip balm must be non-medicated and contain no additives, flavorings, dyes, etc. Blistex, Chapstick, Carmex original lip balm are approved examples. If there is an omission of administration of medication to the child, the reason for omission must be documented.

Medication Storage

(1) Each medication shall be:

- (a) Labeled with the child's name, the dosage, and the expiration date;
- (b) Stored as directed by the manufacturer, the dispensing pharmacy, or the prescribing physician; and
- (c) Discarded according to guidelines of the Office of National Drug Control Policy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or returned to the child's parent upon expiration or discontinuation.

(2) All medications shall be stored to make them inaccessible to children in care but readily accessible to each employee designated by the operator to administer medication.

Employees of Academy Child Development Center, Inc. are not permitted to accept any medication from a child's parent/guardian without a completed Medication Administration Authorization Form. Additionally, medications going to and from one parent's home to another may not be stored in the center or placed in a child's backpack.

Emergency injections of epinephrine or other medications will be administered by non-health professionals according to the Medication Authorization Form completed by a physician. Parents are required to teach staff how to give these injections. For this reason, only pre-measured doses of epinephrine may be given. Academy staff members are not health professionals and therefore can not observe the development of symptoms before giving the injection.

Thank you for partnering with Academy to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all.

Cleaning & Sanitation

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of our broad approach to preventing infectious diseases at Academy. Contaminated toys are specifically washed, sanitized, and air-dried. All surfaces and toys are sanitized and air-dried daily upon arrival and departure. For more specifics about the frequency and type of cleaning that occurs for each surface at Academy, please reference the NAEYC Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table.

https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/clean_table.pdf

Hand Washing

Handwashing has long been established as one of the most important things to prevent the spread of illness.

In our programs, hand washing requirements for staff are as follows:

- Upon arrival at school/center.
- Before and after setting up snacks/food for student consumption
- Before and after helping students use the bathroom
- After handling items soiled with body fluids such as blood, drool, urine, stool, or discharge from nose or eyes.
- After overseeing an ill child
- After using the bathroom or taking care of other personal needs (i.e., nose-wiping) and eating
- After outdoor play

In our programs, hand-washing requirements for students are as follows:

- Upon arrival in the morning.
- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after sensory play
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or who has managed soiled items
- After blowing/wiping their nose
- After outdoor play

The required method for handwashing is as follows:

Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm water and soap.

Wash between fingers and back of hands and wrists.

Rinse hands well under running water and dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel.

Turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands. This helps prevent acquiring new germs on already clean hands.

Universal Precautions

Academy follows universal precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV/Aids, Hepatitis B, and other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to infection control measures that all health care workers and childcare providers follow to protect themselves and the children in their care from disease-producing microorganisms. The concept requires workers to treat all blood and various other bodily fluids as infected with HIV, hepatitis B virus, and other bloodborne pathogens. Academy staff follow the following universal precautions when encountering blood or bodily fluids:

1. Gloves are worn for contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, open wounds, and handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Only approved latex or vinyl gloves are worn. Gloves are never to be washed and reused.
2. Hands and other skin areas are washed thoroughly if they contact blood or body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
3. Saliva is not considered by the Center for Disease Control to transmit HIV. Still, it is a body fluid, and mouth-to-mask ventilation devices will be available for resuscitation and shall be used by trained personnel.
4. Staff must review information and procedures about universal precautions, HIV/HBV infections/transmissions, and handling of infectious waste annually.

Attendance Monitoring

All classrooms monitor attendance by updating their attendance records throughout the day and counting and matching the numbers of children present with names on attendance records. “Name to Face” headcounts occur throughout the day, particularly when moving about the center at every transition.

Injuries/Accidents

Your child's safety is of our utmost concern, but we recognize that minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Known minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents on an Accident or Incident Report Form, of which you will receive a copy. If your child is injured in our care, our first step is to administer first aid. A first aid kit is available in the office, and each class always has a small first aid kit with them. The most common treatment is ice on bumps, soap and water cleansing, and a bandage on a minor wound. All permanent staff members are trained in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR within the first 90 days of their employment, and they must maintain their current certification every two years.

If an accident is more than minor, a parent will be called to discuss the need for possible medical treatment. If the accident is more serious, a parent will be contacted and requested to come immediately. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, an ambulance will be called. To ensure your child's safety, your Enrollment Agreement provides a record of names, addresses, and phone numbers of the people you have authorized to pick up your child. We ask you to keep this information current and supply names and phone numbers for your child's doctor and preferred hospital.

Major Safety Requirements for all Academy Parents and Staff

Parents and staff are expected to read handbooks and understand and abide by all Academy policies.

- Staff and parents will drive safely and courteously especially when near schools.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved and visit the center at any time if it does not interfere with the classroom routine and is not disruptive to the children and staff.
- Children will be always supervised. Academy staff will not release children to any unauthorized person.

Parents must ensure:

- Children sign-in via ProCare and are escorted to their teacher onto the Academy property. as well as signed in and out by an adult (or individual who is 16 years or older).
- Any requests for change in pick-up or dismissal procedure must be in writing. Requests from children or others will not be honored.
- Academy is notified if their school-age child will be absent after school.
- They have completed Academy's extra-curricular activity release form and made special arrangements for their child to be picked up and returned to Academy by an authorized adult. Academy staff are not permitted to escort children to and from extra-curricular activities, as they are responsible for the group of children and must remain in compliance with the requirements for group size and staffing set forth in the COMAR 13.16 Regulations in the Child Care Center Licensing Manual.
- KEEP EMERGENCY CONTACTS CURRENT
- Anyone picking up a child, including parents, must be prepared to show photo identification. Academy will only release a child to the child's parent or legal guardian, a person identified as being someone authorized by the parent or guardian to pick the child up, as stated on the child's "Emergency Form", OCC 1214, or in a special written authorization for a specific date or situation (the parent has specified in writing who is expected to pick the child up, and when the pick-up will occur).

Fire drills and other emergency drills will be held on a regularly scheduled basis.

Staff will:

- maintain current CPR/ First Aid certification, Medication Administration training, and an Emergency Preparedness plan.
- carefully review and post emergency medical/special needs information.
- routinely check the environment for potential hazards.
- teach, encourage, and expect proper handwashing to prevent the spread of disease and illness.

If a school-age child leaves the Center grounds at any time, 911 will be called and his/her parent will be called immediately. Academy cannot be responsible for school age children who leave the site.

Parents should check the Food and Drug Administration's website at www.fda.gov and the Consumer Product Safety Commission's web site at www.cpsc.gov to stay up-to-date on food and product safety recalls, reports & alerts.

14 TOILET TRAINING

A child is considered toilet trained when he/she independently, successfully, and consistently toilets, cleans, and dresses him/her self. Academy strictly adheres to Montgomery County Health Department guidelines for diapering; therefore, "pull-ups" are not permitted. Children enrolled in preschool, and prekindergarten (Ages 3 to 5) must be fully toilet trained (unless they have an ADA identified physical disability).

Our Tiny Tot classrooms (two-year-olds) are designed to assist children and families with toilet learning. When your child shows interest, you and your child's teachers will discuss how to work together to encourage toilet learning. A collaborative partnership between you, your child's teachers, and child makes for successful toilet learning. Children learn toileting skills through consistent, positive encouragement from all the adults who care for them. Children who are toilet training need to be able to undress themselves, so parents should dress their child in clothing that is easy for him/her to remove. Clothing with buttons, snaps, and zippers should be avoided. Several complete changes of clothes, to include multiple pairs of underwear, and an extra pair of shoes should be kept at the center during toilet learning.

Our staff are committed to collaborating with you and your child so that toilet learning can be accomplished in a developmentally appropriate manner with minimal stress for you and your child. This is a learning process that takes time and is specific to each child. Many accidents will happen along the way, however, as partners, consistency, continuity, and patience is the best way to support your child as he/she learns. We are always available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's progress.

REPORTING PROCEDURES INVOLVING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse and neglect is a serious problem which requires the involvement of all private citizens and professionals in the community for the purposes of prevention, identification, and treatment. Reporting does not require proof that abuse, or neglect has occurred. Everyone in Maryland is obligated under the law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Individuals in their practice of employment, occupation, or profession, (health practitioners, police officers, social workers, educators, hospital staff, public health staff, child care providers, juvenile detention centers, schools and similar institutions), who have reason to believe a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect shall make a report as soon as possible to local departments of social services or law enforcement as set forth in Maryland Family Law 5-704. Any professional who knowingly fails to make a required report of child abuse/neglect may be subjected to certain professional sanctions.

What is Child Abuse?

According to Maryland Law, child abuse and neglect includes any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator (a caregiver or family member) which causes physical injury, puts a child's health or welfare at a substantial risk of harm, an act of sexual molestation or exploitation, substantial impairment of a child's psychological ability to function, or failure to give proper care and attention to a child to where the child's welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of harm.

Any individual who, in good faith, makes a report of abuse or neglect is IMMUNE from any civil liability or criminal penalty. When there is suspicion of child abuse or neglect, staff will immediately interrupt the behavior and inform the head of the institution or their designee. Internal reporting to the head of an institution does NOT replace a person's mandatory duty to report the abuse to local departments and law enforcement. These laws supersede any policy of an agency. The head of the institution or their designee and identified individuals will immediately meet to discuss and document the incident.

All Academy employees and volunteers will be sensitive to the need for confidentiality and will discuss matters only with the head of the institution or designee, Montgomery County Child Protective Services and the MSDE Office of Child Care. In the event the reported incident involves an employed staff person or program volunteer, the head of the institution or designee will, without exception, suspend the person from all activities involving the supervision of children. Reassignment to administrative functions may be appropriate if it involves a supervisor or administrator. Speak with the staff or volunteer who has been reported and document the conversation. If appropriate, notify parents and/or guardians. Reinstatement of an employee or program volunteer will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the responsible head of the institution or their designee and the investigating agency.

16 SCHOOL POLICIES

Tobacco-Free, Alcohol & Drug- Free, Weapon-Free Environment

All Academy centers follow the policies of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the Montgomery County Government, State of Maryland, Federal Laws and MSDE regarding Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs on Montgomery County Public Schools Property (State laws and regulations). The State of Maryland prohibits the sale or use of tobacco in any form and drinking or possessing alcoholic beverages on school property. Similarly, Maryland prohibits drugs in, on or within 1,000 feet of school property.

- COMAR 13A.02.04.01-.06, Tobacco free school environment (State Regulation) - “Tobacco” means products derived from the tobacco plant that are smoked, chewed, sniffed, or otherwise consumed. This also includes E-cigarettes, which are treated like tobacco and cigarettes.
- Ann. Code of Md., ED § 26-103, Drinking or possessing intoxicating beverages on school premises (State Law).
- Ann. Code of Md., HG §8-101, Definitions (State Law) - “Drug” means: (1) A controlled dangerous substance that is regulated under the Maryland Controlled Dangerous Substances Act; (2) A prescription medication; or (3) A chemical substance when used for unintended and harmful purposes.
- Maryland law prohibits firearms, as defined in federal law and MCPS Exhibit COE-EB, Firearms (U.S.Code).
- MCPS Regulation COE-RA, Weapons - This regulation sets forth the law prohibiting possession on MCPS property of weapons considered dangerous or deadly. Weapons are defined as “... implements that can cause bodily harm. This includes firearms, knives, and any object used as a weapon.”

Maintaining a safe, healthy school environment for the children, staff, families, and communities we serve requires shared responsibility with families and our community partners. These partnerships are built on a solid foundation of trust, respect, and transparent communication. Together, we are responsible for a secure school environment.

Suspicion of Drug/Alcohol Abuse

Staff will report any suspicions of other staff coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol to the Director or other Administrator. An immediate conference will be held with the Director or other Administrator to begin an investigation and staff will be placed on leave. If warranted, the Director or other Administrator will require a physical examination to rule out drug or alcohol abuse. If it is determined that the staff member has a drug/alcohol problem, the staff member will be placed on immediate leave.

Dealing with an Impaired Parent/Family Member

The safety of the children in our care is our top priority. An impaired parent / family member can be a very real concern. The staff at Academy Child Development Center will follow these procedures if they have reason to believe that anyone who arrives to pick up a child in our care is impaired. Address the adult in a private area whenever possible. Staff, preferably the Director or Lead Teacher, will ask the adult if there is someone else that we may contact to take them and the child home. If the person refuses, we will inform them that: “We cannot stop you from leaving with this child, but we are genuinely concerned about your safety and the safety of the child. If you leave with this child, we will call 911 right now and tell them that we believe you are unable to operate a vehicle in a safe manner and that this child is a passenger in your car.”

Babysitting

To maintain the professional status of Academy staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by center staff is strongly discouraged by Academy. If a staff member and family elect to babysit all activities must occur outside center premises and with the understanding that Academy Child Development Center is no way responsible for the child’s care in connection with these activities. Academy Child Development Center, Inc. and its Board of Directors do not condone nor are responsible for employees who babysit who babysit for families.

Program Evaluation

Academy asks parents to complete and return an evaluation of the program at minimum two times a year. Results of program evaluations are summarized and shared with families, staff, community partners and our Board of Directors to set goals and objectives for the program.

Code of Ethical Conduct

Academy follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct; please go to www.naeyc.org. Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available in the main office, and all staff receive a copy. For more information about NAEYC, you can go to NAEYC for Families.

Commitment to Diversity

Tolerance and understanding are fostered by positive exposure to various ages, genders, lifestyles, family structures, races, cultures, religions, and physical abilities. Therefore, we emphasize an environment that welcomes diversity and challenges bias and discrimination.

Grievance Procedure

Disagreements may occur, even with the best of intentions. Experience has taught us that open communication is the key to maintaining a positive relationship. Adults must demonstrate the cooperative, compassionate communication we want our children to imitate. If you have a concern, please discuss it with your child’s teacher or the staff involved. If the concern is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, a meeting can be arranged between the people involved and a member of the administration. At that time, a course of action can be determined.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Nondiscrimination

Academy does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring, and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff members, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. Academy is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Our policy is to accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations, and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities.

Record Retention and Request for Copies

Academy complies with the requirements outlined by the state of Maryland. Student records remain on file for two years. Requests for copies must be submitted in writing within 30 days of withdrawal. Fees will be assessed for labor and will be completed within 30 days of the request.

Availability of Asbestos Management Plan

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private elementary and secondary schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner. These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. You can review this plan during normal business hours without cost or restriction. If you have any questions about reviewing the management plan, please contact the MCPS Building Principal at the Public School Office or your Center Director. For new buildings, those completed after October 12, 1988; our “management plan” consists of the exclusion documentation including this notification. This means that to our knowledge there is no asbestos-containing building materials.