



Apopka Child Academy

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Parent Handbook

Welcome to Apopka Child Academy, where we provide quality child care to all families in our community. We have grown since our school first opened in March 2006. In this section we will define our policies as well as our parent's responsibilities. We feel open communication among staff, parents and children are crucial in providing quality child care. These policies exist for the safety and well-being of our children, families and staff. Please feel free to discuss any concerns or questions that may arise.

Philosophy

It is our belief that children learn best through active experiences, with materials, people, events, and hands on activities as they plan their day and make choices with their teacher's guidance. At Apopka Child Academy we put a great deal of energy into creating the best kind of learning environment that is not only educational but fun for both the teachers and students involved. We believe this environment is the foundation for developing high-achieving students and a place where they will begin to draw their future.

Payment Procedure

Tuition and other fees are due Friday, prior to the week ahead or on that Monday morning before dropping your child off to class. If tuition is not paid by Monday evening, a late fee of \$20.00 will be added to the account. **If not paid by Tuesday morning, your child will not be able to return until the full tuition payment is made.** Returned check fees are \$30.00. Your prompt payment allows us to provide your child with an excellent level of service. A re-registration fee of \$70.00 will be charged if there is a break in enrollment. After 2 returned checks, we will request cash only from you as payment. Under no circumstances will there be any refund by Apopka Child Academy for advance tuition payment.

Attendance

In order to provide quality child care services to our families, we ask that children attend the program daily, or as per the contracted hours. Children arriving at the Academy after 10:00 am will not be admitted unless prior arrangements have been made with the

administration or a medical reason. Children that have extended absences due to illness, vacation, or other reasons must inform the program in writing prior to the absence.

VPK Attendance

VPK is from 8:30am-12:00pm at no cost to the parent or caregiver. If your child is VPK ONLY then your child can not arrive any earlier than 9:00am and can not stay past 12:00am. If your child is here before or after VPK hours then you will be charged \$1 per minute. If your child is VPK EXTENDED then you will pay the extended day fee that is located on the price sheet.

Enrollment

All children and their families are welcome to enroll in our center. We do not discriminate against anyone (adult or child, staff or parent) on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, color, race, marital status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. We include children with special needs and make accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Children must have the following on file before starting:

1. Completed enrollment application
2. Immunization (signed by a pediatrician, up to date with expiration date)
3. Child's Physical
4. Registration fee
5. Food form
6. Flu form signed
7. Acknowledgement of policies and procedures
8. Infant form(if needed)
9. Prices form signed

Any given child-care slot will be considered open and available until the above criteria have been met. Once the above items have been received, the slot is guaranteed to be held for the child. If the parent(s) cancels the agreement before commences, the registration fees will not be refunded. In the event that a slot cannot in fact be held due to unanticipated enrollments, the parent(s) will be notified as soon as the closed slot is identified, and the registration fee will be refunded.

Hours of Operation

Apopka Child Academy hours of operation are from 6:00am to 6:30pm, Monday through Friday. The child is allowed to stay in our care for up to 11 hours per day. Parents or adults above the age of 18 must escort their child to the classroom and a teacher or staff member must see you to know who is dropping off or picking up. It is also the

responsibility of anyone picking up or dropping off to sign the child in and out in the books located in the front office. Other authorized persons to whom Apopka Child Academy may release your child **MUST** be 18 years of age and be listed on the enrollment Form. **LATE FEE**: After closing at 6:30 P.M., a late fee may be charged at the rate of \$1.00 per minute, per child, payable immediately. If your child is not picked up by 6:45 PM a call will be made to the Florida Department of Children and Families. We are only licensed until 6:30pm to have children in our center.

Days of Operation

Apopka Child Academy shall operate Monday through Friday except for posted holidays. **No discounts from tuition will be made for holidays on which the facility does not operate or days on which the center is closed due to severe weather conditions.**

Holidays

We will be closed on holidays listed: Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve were closing at 2pm and closed on New Year's Day.

***** If you are wanting to use vacation during these listed holidays you may as long it is NOT TWO CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.**

For example, you may use one week vacation for Thanksgiving and one week vacation for Christmas. Another example, if you are requesting to take two weeks off for Christmas break you can use ONE WEEK VACATION and the next you will be responsible to PAY HALF (as an absent credit).

Arrival and Departure

When leaving the building or your car, please hold your child's hand securely. Please help keep our parking lot safe by shutting off your car engine before you come inside. **Never** leave a child unattended in your vehicle. Please be mindful of the permitted parking spots aloud for our parents, the middle of the parking lot is only permitted for out Apopka Child Academy Vans. **The sign In/Out sheet is located in the office and you must sign your child in and out each day on the Sign In sheets.** Please be advised that you may be asked for identification at pick-up time if you are not known by the staff member on duty. If a staff member suspects an individual attempting to pick up a child who appears to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired we will prohibit the release of the child to the individual. You are required to call the school if your child has a doctor's appointment and will not be able to be at the school by 10am. Please bring a Doctor's note if you bring your child in after **10 A.M** to excuse their absence.

Vacation/Sick/Absent credit

If your child is absent, the tuition remains the same. After three months of enrollment, full time students will be allowed 10 days per year of vacation time which tuition is not charged (January 1st through December 31st), taken one full week per six month period, that you may use for vacation days. If in the event that the child(ren) are out sick and the doctor's note requires them to be out for 2 or more consecutive days tuition cost is then cut in half. When you sign your child's enrollment form, you are signing for regular weekly attendance at our center. You may not make modifications in your daily attendance pattern without permission of the Director. **In the event of withdrawal from the center, you agree to give Apopka Child Academy at least two (2) weeks advance written notice prior to withdrawal of your child.** The obligation of fees and tuition will continue until the last day of such notice given to Apopka Child Academy. Vacation time cannot be used as payment for the two week notice period. Please understand that our staff planning is based on enrollment patterns.

When Child Appears sick

If your child has a high fever (101 F or Higher), is vomiting, diarrhea or shows evidence of a communicable disease in which case you will be required to bring a Doctor's note before returning to the Center. **An Ill Child experiencing these symptoms should be excluded from daycare until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.** Please do not bring him/her to the center. If your child has the above –noted symptoms while at Apopka Child Academy, you will be asked to pick him/her up or arrange to have him/her picked up within **ONE HOUR** after the call. This requirement is imposed by the Department of Children and Families, and is for the protection of other children. Please make sure to put someone on your emergency contact list in the case of an emergency to come pick up your child in a timely manner.

Administration of Medicine

The front office staff of Apopka Child Academy will administer medicine to your child upon written authorization of the parent or guardian on the Department of Children and Families Medicine Authorization Form, valid for a specific time period not to exceed one week per form. Old authorization forms shall not be allowed for new medicines. All medicines must be in their original containers, clearly stating the child's name, dosage, frequency, possible side effects and dispensing physician and pharmacist phone numbers. Over the counter medicine may not be given unless authorized by a doctor or physician and the Doctor's authorization must say that it needs to be given more than 2 times a day. If the Doctor's note says the medicine only needs to be given one or two times a day then it must be given at home. Over the counter medicine must have the child's name, dosage, frequency, possible side effects and dispensing physician and pharmacist phone numbers. Medication is given at 10am and 3pm only.

Medical Authorization

We hereby grant Apopka Child Academy permission to take whatever action, in its judgment, may be necessary in supplying emergency medical service to the child. In accordance with the severity and time lines of the circumstance(s). Apopka Child Academy will try to contact and follow the instruction of the parent/guardian, physician or emergency contact(s) listed on the Enrollment Form. In the event that Apopka Child Academy is unable to reach those listed contacts, we hereby grant permission to Apopka Child Academy to contact and comply with the advice of an available physician, ambulance personnel or emergency room personnel. In the case a child accedes a temperature of 103 or higher and has not been picked up within an hour of notice then you are giving permission to Apopka Child Academy to contact emergency medical services.

Immunizations Records and Students Physicals

We agree to provide Apopka Child Academy evidence of age appropriate immunizations or the immunization exemption form provided by the Department of Children and Families. **It MUST be provided before the official start date.** These forms can be obtained from your physician. We further agree to maintain up-to-date immunization and physical forms while our child is enrolled at Apopka Child Academy. If the immunization or physical record expires the child(ren) won't be allowed to attend class until we received an updated form. There are children at our facility who are not up to date with their immunizations. Our program strives to ensure that our facilities are safe and believe that this should not be a reason to cause concern. These children have exemption forms on file.

Religious exemption from Immunization: a request for a religious exemption from immunization requirements must be presented to the facility /school on the Department of Health's Religious Exemption from Immunization form (DH 681 Form). The DH 681 Form is issued ONLY by county health departments and ONLY for a child who is not immunized because of his/her family's religious tenets or practices. If a parent requests such an exemption, then the county health department staff must use the current DH 681 Form available electronically in the Florida SHOTS, which the parent affirms a religious conflict exists. This form must be issued upon request. No other information should be solicited from the parent or guardian. We, at Apopka Child Academy accept children that have not gotten their immunizations due to religious purposes.

Dress Code

We have a **MANDATORY UNIFORM** dress code for all the children above the age of one. The uniform needs to be worn Monday through Friday. This excludes the children in Kindergarten through Sixth grade. **The uniform shirts must be purchased through our third party vendor www.mhouniforms.com.**

- Navy blue polo shirt with school logo
- Khaki Bottoms
- Navy Blue, Black and white socks
- Black closed toed shoes

If your child does not follow the dress code they will be given an out of uniform notice, after the 4th notice they will be disenrolled from the program.

Parent Dress Attire

In regards to inappropriate attire being worn while dropping off and picking up child (children). (Ex) pajamas, boxer shorts, anything that would constitute as sleepwear. This is a place where we model good behavior and we ask that you do the same.

Curriculum

The curriculum used at Apopka Child Academy has been proven to ignite a spark in children, helping them to embrace learning to their full potential. The lessons planned each week are designed to provide the basic foundation to help children excel in today's society. We feel the best way for children to learn is through play. Each center in the classrooms will reflect the theme focused on that month, such as Birds in my neighborhood, me and My Family, etc. The curriculum we use for infants through two years of age is Beyond Cribs and Rattles and the curriculum we use for three year olds and up is Beyond Centers and Circle Time. Both curriculums focus on the same concepts but just on different levels of learning for their age group. Television and Video viewing is only allowed during rainy days for no longer than 15 minutes at a time and are G rated with educational purposes.

Parent Conferences

Formal and phone conferences can be arranged at the request of either you or your child's teacher three times a year (August, December, and in May). At these conferences the parent and teacher will share goals, expectations and also problem solving for their individual child. Informal conferences are held for a couple of minutes when you drop off or pick up your child. Please remember that the staff member may be involved with a group of children at this time and it will be difficult for her to discuss your child at length.

Assessing your child's development

Through the use of a development checklist, we will be observing your child throughout the year to assess their development physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. This information will form the basis of our parent-teacher conferences. Upon signing this agreement, you are giving us permission to observe and record your child's development.

Nap Time

Most children stay all day nap for two hours. We ask that you bring a small blanket. Please be sure to mark items with your child's full name. These must be taken home on Fridays, to be washed and returned on Mondays. Children who cannot sleep but have shown us they can rest quietly for 10 or 15 minutes are given "nap toys" to play with by themselves while the others sleep.

Potty Training

At Apopka Child Academy we help assist the parents in potty training their child at the age of two as long as the parents are doing it at home. We ask that during the potty training process that you provide your child's teacher with four sets of extra clothes in a ziplock bag with their full name on it along with a pack of either diapers or pull ups that have velcro sides so the children are able to get them on and off themselves. Per DCF standards we are required to change the child(ren) every two hours even if they are dry for sanitary purposes. While it is never our intent to hold a child back, the child must be fully potty trained when they turn three in order for us to move them up. If the child is not fully potty trained they must stay in the two year old room and you will be responsible to pay the two year old price.

Snack and Lunch

Please do **NOT** send food in with your child, outside food is not permitted. We participate in the CCFP program. We follow all the USDA guidelines making sure to meet the nutritional and food storage and safety needs of the children while serving food. All food is kept at appropriate temperatures in the refrigerator and pantry. A breakfast, lunch and a nutritious snack is provided each day and is included in your tuition. You will find a copy of the menu each week in the front office. Please let us know of any special dietary arrangements with a note from the Doctor.

Breastfeeding

Apopka Child Academy is a breastfeeding friendly center, we recognize the importance of breastfeeding and undertake to promote and support breastfeeding by providing facilities and support necessary to enable mothers in our school to combine breastfeeding in their routine. Parents may openly breastfeed or ask where they can go to breastfeed their child. We provide access to breastfeeding resources, as well as a clean and secure area to store breastmilk. All breast milk will be stored in the refrigerator in your child's classroom labeled with the child's name, date and time. A bottle can only be warmed up once and must be discarded within one hour after feeding.

Visitation/ Parent involvement and Volunteers

Here at Apopka Child Academy we have an open door Policy. We encourage parent involvement, you are always welcome to visit the school at any time-whether for a few

minutes or a whole day. We also welcome your phone calls to check on your child's progress.

Parent Activities

So that we can accomplish our mission, we do need parental involvement. We welcome you to participate in any of the functions listed below. If you are willing to volunteer in your child's classroom you will need a level two background screening if you exceed 10 hours a month in the classroom. Parents or legal guardians will be advised in advance if we participate in any food-related activities, such as special occasions and learning activities that include food consumption. You will be given a permission form with the specific activities.

1. Parent Teacher Organization
2. Volunteer assistance in the classroom or for special activities.
3. Assist with screenings.
4. Assist on photography day.
5. Assist with Field Trips.
6. Attend parent education classes.
7. Help organize guest speakers.
8. Help with a fundraiser.

Field Trips

Field Trips can be memorable experiences for our school age students. They can also be stressful for all involved if adequate control cannot be maintained by the adult chaperones. Safety is our top priority. If a student has demonstrated disruptive behavior in school, he/she cannot be part of a group being chaperoned by a teacher or parent. We will require either that the students be supervised one-on-one by a parent or other adult family member, or the student will have to remain at the center. Each student must wear the summer camp shirt when leaving the center. These can be purchased in the front office.

Classroom Pets

Each classroom has a classroom pet. The following pets are in the classroom: Fish, Turtle, or Hamster.

General Authorization

We hereby grant Apopka Child Academy permission for our child to participate in all program activities including the use of indoor and outdoor equipment and to participate in the water activities when part of a planned field trip activity with Apopka Child Academy.

Termination by Parent

Parents are required to give at least two week's notice if they plan to remove their child from the Academy. There will be no refund of tuition or registration fees if a parent terminates enrollment.

Parental Behavior

Our staff always tries to resolve issues that may arise in our office to the best satisfaction of all concerned. We strive for great customer service. If an issue should arise we will have no choice but to ask you to leave the facility.

Biting

We recognize that biting occurs at times when toddlers are in a group care. Our teachers express strong disapproval of biting. We give immediate attention and, if necessary, first aid to children who are bitten. An accident report is written and signed by the Director, the teacher and the parent. After 3 bites from the same child we will make other accommodations for all children involved.

Safe Sleep Practice

Per DCF's guidelines: Cribs or playpens/play yards must have tight fitted sheets and no excess bedding, which includes but is not limited to: bumper pads, hanging mobiles, quilts, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals and cushions. When napping or sleeping, young infants who are not able to roll over must be positioned on their backs and on a firm surface to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, unless an alternate position is authorized by a physician. Written documentation from a physician of this authorization must be on file at the facility. Documentation must include the child's name, child's date of birth, description of sleep position required, description of any equipment needed, and length of time authorization is valid. Children must not be placed in the cribs, playpens, play yards or other sleeping and napping bedding with items that could pose a strangulation or suffocation risk. Cribs, playpens, play yards, other napping and sleeping bedding must be placed away from window blinds, draperies or any window treatment/cover that pose a strangulation hazard. Shaken baby syndrome also known as abusive head trauma is a serious brain injury resulting from forcefully shaking an infant or toddler. Shaken baby syndrome destroys a child's brain cells and prevents his or her brain from getting enough oxygen. Shaken baby syndrome is a form of child abuse that can result in permanent brain damage or death. Shaken baby syndrome is preventable. Help is available for parents who are at risk of harming a child. Parents also can educate other caregivers about the dangers of shaken baby syndrome.

Smoking

Smoking or e-cigarettes are not permitted on the Apopka Child Academy premises per DCF regulations, this includes the parking lot as well.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

If in the case of an emergency such as fire, tornado etc. our designated facility to evacuate to is the Fran Carlton Center. In the case of an emergency we will contact all of our parents within the hour of evacuating the center. Each classroom has a roster with a list of the children that will transport with them if we leave the center. After a head count is conducted and the director makes sure all children and staff are accounted for the parents will be notified. With any special cases or situations the director or administration staff member will handle it themselves.

Discipline Policy

Our goal is to build a positive self-concept. Future success in school and life depends on being able to handle various social situations and interactions. We believe that our attitude will be a great influence on the children. Mutual respect will always be respected. Children who have conflicts or problems with others while at our center will be encouraged to verbalize their anger and concerns; describing the problems, solutions and logical consequences. The role of the adults at our center is to be a helper to positive solving. Our staff members will guide rather than punish. At Apopka Child Academy of quality learning we use a method of redirection to guide your child (children) toward appropriate behavior. If a child is engaged in behavior not conducive to a safe and learning environment, the teacher will “redirect” the child toward appropriate behavior. Parents or guardians are required to adhere to the Apopka Child Academy discipline policy any time they are on center property. If the behavior continues we may have no choice but to start a disciplinary action plan. If the parents refuse to follow the steps of the disciplinary action plan we will have no choice but to terminate the child for the best interest of the staff and the other children enrolled into the program. We want to guarantee a safe, stable environment to every child enrolled.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with s. 39.201 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.)

Destruction of property

Initial and continued enrollment shall be at the discretion of Apopka Child Academy, based on the best interest of your child, his/her stage of development and the welfare of the other children. Enrollment shall be reviewed in cases of severe disruption of the center, damage to equipment and or continued violent or physical behavior toward other children or staff. In the event of destruction of property by a child it is the responsibility of the parents listed on the contract to reimburse Apopka Child Academy for the

replacement or repair of said destroyed or damaged property, whichever Apopka Child Academy deems appropriate.

Termination of Enrollment

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Director to decide to discontinue a child's enrollment. Such a decision would be based on whether it is in the best interest of the child, or other children in the class, and/or the overall operation of the Academy to terminate enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct the problematic situation before a final decision is made. Termination of enrollment may be the result of the following: Non-payment of tuition (Immediate termination) A pattern of late tuition payments. Verbal or physical abuse of other children, staff, or property. While it is never the intention of Apopka Child Academy to terminate a child's enrollment, we after speaking with the Board of Directors, teachers, and working on a case to case basis, may decide it is in the best interest of both parties to terminate the child's enrollment. In the event of termination of enrollment there will be no refund of tuition or registration fees if enrollment is terminated for any reason. Below is our termination process:

First write up-Redirect and talk about the action plan put into place to avoid it from happening again.

Second write up- Alternative solution or plan put into place and discussed with the parent and teacher to agree on what we can do in the best interest of the child.

Third write up-3 day suspension

Fourth write up- Child will be terminated.

Acknowledgement Page

I understand that if my child is absent, I will be held responsible for the weekly fee in order to keep my child's space reserved in the center. Weekly tuition is Friday for the following week and subject to a late fee if not paid by Monday evening. My child will be attending between the hours of _____ A.M. and _____ P.M. I understand that if I go beyond these agreed hours, I will pay the extended day fee that day. I further understand that , after three full months of enrollment , I will be allowed 10 days per year (January 1st through December 31st), **taken on a full week per six month period**, to be used for vacation , but not to be used for the two weeks' notice period when leaving the center.

I have read, understood and accepted the Handbook policies:

Parent Signature

Child's Name

Date

Administrative staff that checked paperwork Signature

Date