



# Academy Of Play

## Parent Handbook

### **Mission**

Academy of Play is cultivating children to be creative independent learning who will impact the world in partnership with families and empowering parents.

### **Curriculum Philosophy**

The Academy of Play believes that all children must be respected and loved dearly. Our program provides the children with an environment that promotes peace, focus, creativity, and leadership. Our Program Director has years of experience in a Montessori classroom. We have taken many ideas from that philosophy, including but not limited to the absorbent mind, prepared environment, and following the child.

Our program will ensure the environment is prepared peacefully, and ready for each child, where they are developing. The children will be active participants in the daily routine, learning how to contribute to their environment. We will also be introducing nature and safely encourage outdoor exploration. The daily schedule provides time for the children to have outdoor time rain or shine, rain suits or muddy buddies are welcome.

Our annual curriculum is posted that coordinates with the seasons, holidays, and special projects. If a family has anything special they would like to contribute is welcomed by the program if approved by the program director. We encourage families to be active and participate in events if they are able, as these bonds have been proven to lead to actively engaging in their school work throughout their lives.

We seek partnerships with families to promote children to be supported and thrive in our evolving world. Thank you for everything that you do, we are excited to see your child grow in our program.



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## Communication

For young children, consistency is a high priority for their development. We ask parents to communicate with staff on anything that may disrupt their daily routine, (sleepless nights, visitors in the home, extra exciting morning). This will allow the staff to be sensitive to the child's need for extra stability at school. Please communicate verbally or send a message as soon as you can.

It is paramount that the Academy of Play and each family are on the same page about your child for your child's success. If either party requests a meeting, it must be done within a month.

A post will be made weekly with pictures and descriptions of what is going on in the classroom on a private platform. Parent-Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports will be held and reviewed every 6 months to discuss your child's progress and kindergarten preparedness.

## Language Learning

If your child speaks a different language at home and is not familiar with English or Russian when they arrive at the program, we ask that you give us a note with helpful phrases we can use (and possibly train staff on pronunciation.) We will ensure your child's needs are met and a language barrier is not an issue.

From our experience, children pick up on language quickly, as their minds absorb the environment around them. If your child seems to need extra support, we will request you find a specialist or see your pediatrician. We want your child to be fully supported in communicating themselves and their needs.

## Diapering/ Toilet Training

Academy of Play practices "stand up diapering" for all children who can stand and be active participants in the diapering process. Stand-up diapering allows the child to gradually master skills that will lead to toilet training. For infants and young toddlers who are not able to stand for stand-up diapering will be laid on the changing pad for a diaper change. Diapers will be changed before going outdoors, nap, every two hours, and whenever the child needs a fresh diaper.



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Academy of Play does not require any child to be toilet trained for enrollment. The program is designed to set up children for success in toilet training. The program recognizes that this is a process, and the toilet will be available and offered at each diaper change and whenever a child asks for it. When a child is developmentally, physically, and emotionally ready the next steps will be discussed with the family.

Academy of Play recommends the family to take two days (a weekend should suffice), to have the child diaper/pull up free when awake. When the child is brought back to the program, please bring five pairs of pants, underwear, and socks. The program and the family will discuss daily their progress and individual plans. We do ask each family to try for a month of consistent diaper-free time, and not confuse the child by putting them into a diaper while they are awake.

The program will not bribe, shame, manipulate or embarrass the children during the toilet training process.

Whether your child is toilet trained or in diapers, we ask you to make sure your child has enough diapers and change clothing every day.

### **Nap Time**

Children will be allowed to rest their bodies and sleep daily, from 12-2:30 pm. Children will not be forced to nap, they will only be required to lay down or do a quiet activity for about 30 minutes. We will provide soft music, a dim-lit room, and child resting mats. Please bring in a clean crib sheet every week with a small blanket (or sleep sack for infants) for your child to use.

Infants will be put to sleep following safe sleep practices (WAC 110-300-0291) every time without exceptions, and they will be following their own sleep patterns.

### **Water Play**

On hot weather days, the Academy of Play may set up the outdoor space with sprinklers, shallow bins of water, and toys for the children to enjoy. We ask that you provide appropriate clothing and shoes for the children throughout the summer months. We will send all articles home to be cleaned and washed after each use.



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### Discipline Policy

Academy of Play's expectations is reasonable and developmentally appropriate for the children's behaviors. The purpose of the discipline in the program is to learn, mature, and grow, not to punish the children. The staff at the program are proactive and consistent in guiding the children to mastering the skills they are learning, constantly role modeling.

When a child experiences a big emotion, they have the option to sit at the peace table where they can calm themselves and staff may assist them through their feelings. When children have a disagreement amongst themselves/ hurt one another, they will be assisted by staff if needed to make sure the other child is ok, and show a gentle touch if they have hurt someone. We do not prompt the children to say "I'm sorry" as this is a bit abstract for young children, they will be guided to empathetically help their friend feel better if needed.

Behaviors that are dangerous to the environment, other children, or the child itself will be stopped right away. If a child needs to be restrained, only trained staff may gently restrain a child according to WAC 110-300-0335. The child will be given some time separate from the group to compost themselves and be safe.

If a child continues without improvement to have problematic behavior, a meeting will be set up with the parents in person or via zoom. Different strategies and resources will be discussed with the family on what can be done at school and home for consistency and if a specialist would be helpful. If a family is unwilling/ unable to partner with the program, the Program Director will let the parents know their child may be disenrolled. Pursuant of WAC 110-300-0340.

All adults and children on the premises are prohibited from name-calling, blaming, embarrassing, frightening, yelling, shaming, or physically hurting any person (adult or child). This includes parents, staff, guests, and children.

Academy of Play has a confidentiality policy. Staff will not discuss children in the presence of the child or other parents. If you have any questions, please reach out to the program director.



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### **Meal Program**

Food will be offered to the children every 2- 2.5 hours, with one lunch meal in the middle of the day. Meals will be homemade with organic ingredients (if organic is unavailable we will use the next best thing). Menus will be available on a weekly basis. Food will be prepared without nuts, and vegetarian/ vegan options will be ready for children who need them. If a child needs food brought from home due to allergies, that can be prearranged with staff.

Menus will be posted weekly. Children will be active participants in mealtime, to promote children to try new foods. They will be offered a well-balanced meal and snack, with organic fruits and vegetables.

Children will need to feed themselves if they are able, as this will allow them to independently listen to their bodies when they have had enough food. Children will not be forced to eat any particular food before getting another serving of food. The staff will not bribe, manipulate or shame children during meal times.

### **Bottle Feeding**

For infants receiving a bottle, the Academy of Play will follow WAC 110-300-0280 in bottle preparation and heat a bottle in a cup/bowl of hot water. If a family wishes to provide breastmilk WAC 110-300-0281 will be followed. If a mother would like to come onsite and breastfeed during the program, she will be provided a comfortable place to do so when scheduling ahead of time.

Infants will be held while they are bottle-fed, and the transition into solids will be done when developmentally appropriate and will be discussed with parents.

### **Nondiscrimination**

Academy of Play will not discriminate against any adult or child based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, or political beliefs. We apologize if we are unable to make reasonable accommodations to support individuals.



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### Hours of Operations

Academy of Play is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm for child care. If you plan to bring your child after 9 am or pick your child before nap or different from your usual pick-up time, we require notice of either verbal or a message. If you pick up your child after 6 pm, you will be charged \$1 per minute for the first 5 minutes and then \$5 for every minute after. This late fee will be added to your next monthly bill. Your child will not be able to spend 10 hours per day in our facility per state law.

Dropping off can be difficult for parents and children, we encourage parents to start their goodbyes in the car if necessary and have a quick goodbye when their child is inside. The staff will help the child put their things away and settle in. We encourage parents to connect, we only ask you to do that outside of the children's workspace. If you were unable to communicate with the staff at drop-off, please send them a message as soon as you can so they have a chance to see it as soon as possible.

We will be available for tours and meetings outside of child care hours.

### School Closures/ Holiday Celebrations

Academy of Play is closed on holidays, including New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Days between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

If any of these days fall on a weekend, the program will be closed on the closest business day.

The Academy of Play is all-inclusive of cultures. We welcome families to share their experiences and festivities with us and teach us about their traditions. If your family would like to visit and share how they celebrate holidays/festivals we would love to schedule a visit with you.

When parents visit and are involved in school children understand they are important and what they are doing matters.

Staff is also welcome to share how they celebrate holidays, we will include these in the curriculum and do our best to share photos of the children. These celebrations will not



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be forced on children and will be shown in educational ways. We will in no way force any sort of religious views on your child.

### **Signing In and Out**

Every child must be signed in and out by their parent or authorized adult. To sign in your child make sure to write your name, signature, and time you dropped off/ pick up to the daily sheet. Or use our electronics attendance sheet.

If you would like to authorize another adult to pick up or drop off your child, we will need the legal name in writing (email is ok), which will be verified with driver's license/ID at pick up/drop off.

### **Safety**

The use and presence of drugs (including tobacco, cannabis, or vape), alcohol, or guns are strictly prohibited on the property.

Our program will not have off-site field trips, or transporting the children to another location.

### **Kindergarten Transition Plan**

Parents and Teachers will meet every 6 months to go over your child's development and academic progress. We can go over anything we think may need to be covered in more detail to ensure the child is fully prepared for kindergarten.

### **Supplies from Home**



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Please make sure that your child has the following to fully participate in the daily routine (labels are not required but highly recommended):

- Crib size fitted sheet
- Small blanket -for toddlers or preschoolers
- Sleep Sack- for infants
- Inside shoes (preferably with rubber soles to prevent sliding)
- Two pairs of a change of clothing
- Diapers (if needed)
- Appropriate outdoor play clothing
  - Summertime: swimwear, towel, sunhat, light jackets
  - Winter: waterproof jackets, hats, warm clothing
  - Year-round: rain boots, rain suits/ muddy buddies

### Important Information

If families would like to review the Health Policy, Consistent Care Policy, Liability Insurance, or Inspection Reports, or your child's file they will be available upon request.

Academy of Play will provide consistent care for your child. Any new staff will be introduced to parents and children, they will have an opportunity to build a connection before they are left alone with new staff. All staff members will be trained on the rules and routines to ensure the children have a consistent daily routine.

We ask parents to try to limit their time at drop-off to make it easier for the child to adjust. If a parent would like to stop by during business hours that is not for picking up or dropping off to call and let us know. This way we can make sure the child does not see their parents and become distressed they are not getting picked up. Parents are allowed access to the main room, extra room, bathroom, and outdoor area during business hours.

All of our staff have a duty of reporting incidents reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or maltreatment.

### Student Records





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The Academy of Play must keep accurate records for each child enrolled at all times. We ask that if anything changes and update immunization records you will let us know so we may update our records as soon as possible. These records will be locked inside for privacy, you may request to see your child's at any time. Only staff that directly interact with your child may have access to your child's file.

We will need to have the following information before your child's first day:

- Birthdate
- Parent and Emergency Contact information
- Names and phone numbers of persons authorized to pick up your child
- Media Permission Form
- Signed Contract
- Health Records - \* if applicable
  - Immunizations or exemptions
  - \*Allergy Information
  - \*Medication authorization
  - Medical and Dental care providers name and contact information
  - Signed consent to seek medical care/ treatment in case of injury or illness

As your child stays in the program the following will be added as applicable

- Medication administration log (including date, time, and who administered medication)
- Incident/ Injury reports
- Documentation of food poisoning or contagious diseases were reported to the local health department
- An individualized education plan if needed
- Notes from meeting with Director- especially if discussing steps to take in order to avoid expulsion

### **Enrollment/ Tuition**

Before enrollment to the Academy of Play, you must tour the facility and meet with the Program Director. To enroll your child in our program we will need a signed agreement, your child's enrollment form, tuition for the first month, and an enrollment fee that are due before your child's first day.

### **Withdrawal/ Disenrollment**



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After an agreement of enrollment has been signed, the Academy of Play requires a 30-day notice to withdraw your child.

Academy of Play reserves the right to refuse service before or after initial enrollment if:

1. Families fail to provide the program with complete and updated required documents.
2. Unwilling to provide requested information or requested support for us to effectively care for your child (challenging behavior or special needs.)
3. Consistent failure to comply with policies (outlined in Parent Handbook, State Child Care Licensing Regulations, Washington State Department of Education, Health Department guidelines.)
4. Using fever reducers and/or other medication to mask symptoms that would prevent your child from attending group care.
5. Refusal to meet with Teacher or Program Director when requested or missing two or more scheduled meetings.
6. Consistent failure to pay tuition and fees on time.
7. Harassing anyone (staff, students, clients, guests) in our space, or interacting with them in a hostile, aggressive, disrespectful manner; or not leaving our facility when requested to do so.
8. Asking staff to disclose confidential information.
9. If families seem to misalign with our philosophies, as deemed appropriate by the Program Director.
10. If the Academy of Play is not able to fully support your child in their developmental needs without drastic measures.
11. If the child creates an unsafe environment for themselves and/ or the people around them, the steps taken by the program have little to no effect on the situation. Academy of Play will meet with families and do what we can in partnership with families before discussing dis enrollment.

### Notice of Handbook Review



## Academy Of Play

By signing below you agree that you have read the Parent Handbook. You also agree to follow all policies specified. If you would like to have a physical copy, just let us know we would be happy to accommodate. Let us know if you have any questions.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date