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Parent Handbook

TO THE PARENT

We are pleased that you have chosen Lake Dow Children's Academy as your partner in the care and education of your child. Like you, we are interested in your child's total development. Our commitment is to provide you and your child with the best in education and childcare.

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with our policies and procedures. Please read carefully and refer to this handbook as needed. The Director will answer any questions you may have.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The primary purpose of Lake Dow Children's Academy is to provide a loving, safe and educational environment for your child.

We offer four distinct programs for the children we care for:

- Infant for children 6 weeks to 12 months
- Toddler for children 1 and 2 years old
- Preschool for children 3 and 4 years old
- Before/After care and Summer Camp for children 5 to 12 years

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Lake Dow Children's Academy has an open door policy. We do not require an appointment to tour our center. Visitors are welcome to tour our center at any time between the hours of 9:00am and 6:00pm. Naptime is between the hours of 11:00am and 2:00pm. Therefore, room tours will not be allowed during this time.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Lake Dow Children's Academy is an equal opportunity childcare provider. Applications for enrollment are considered without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin or any other basis prohibited by law.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Lake Dow Children's Academy is licensed for operation from 6:00am to 6:30pm, Monday thru Friday and is open year round except for holidays and inclement weather days.

SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Bright from the Start requires that all childcare providers report suspicions of child abuse to the Department of Family and Children Services. Our center is a mandated reporter.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

For your child's safety and to comply with Bright from the Start rules and regulations, all enrollment forms must be completed, signed and turned in before your child can attend Lake Dow Children's Academy. These forms include an enrollment application, childcare contract, medical authorization, discipline plan, transportation forms, etc.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Henry County Health Department requires a current immunization record be kept on all children enrolled in our center. A Certificate of Immunization form 3231 is the only approved form that will be accepted and must be received within 30 days of enrollment. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center if the Certificate of Immunization form 3231 is not received within this time. The Director will notify you when the immunization record expires or needs to be updated.

REGISTRATION FEE

A \$50.00 registration fee is due prior to enrollment. The registration fee covers insurance, administrative costs and supplies. Registration fees are non-refundable. Therefore, if the registration fee was paid and you decide not to enroll your child in our center, the registration fee will be forfeited.

TUITION FEES

Tuition fees are due on Monday or on your child's first day attending in the week. Tuition fees are considered late if not received by Tuesday evening or on your child's second day attending in the week. Full tuition is due regardless of your child's attendance. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays or inclement weather closings. If the center is closed for a holiday or inclement weather, full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

Your account may be put on a cash only basis after two returned checks or ACH withdrawals. Continued delinquency may result in immediate disenrollment. United Services Agency will be used to collect all past due accounts.

OTHER FEES

- Late pickup fee: \$1.00 per minute for children picked up after 6:40pm
- Late payment fee: \$30.00 for accounts not paid in full by Tuesday evening
- Insufficient funds fee: \$30.00 for each returned check or ACH withdrawal
- Collection fee: 35% of past due account balance

MULTI-CHILD DISCOUNT

- \$10.00 per week for every additional child attending (Excludes CAPS recipients)

ANNUAL FREE WEEK

Every child is allowed one free week per year in which the parent does not have to pay tuition. The year starts on the day of your child's enrollment and rolls over every year after that. The annual free week may be used for vacations, holidays, illnesses, inclement weather closings, emergencies, etc. The annual free week may not be split into days and it must be utilized as one full consecutive week. Your child will not be allowed to attend the center during that week.

HOLIDAYS

We are closed for the following holidays:

- New Years (schedule varies)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (schedule varies)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas (schedule varies)

When the holiday falls on a Saturday, we will observe Friday as the holiday. When the holiday falls on a Sunday, we will observe Monday as the holiday. There is no reduction in tuition for holidays. If the center is closed for a holiday, full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Safety for the children, parents and staff will be our primary consideration on whether or not the center will be open during inclement weather. Please watch your local TV news stations for school

closings. If Henry County schools are closed due to inclement weather, the center will most likely be closed as well. Please call 770-957-7647 before bringing your child in to ensure that the center is open. You may also check the homepage of our website at www.lakedowchildrensacademy.com for the most up to date information on inclement weather closings. There is no reduction in tuition for inclement weather closings. If the center is closed for inclement weather, full tuition is due for that week. We do not prorate tuition.

LATE PICKUPS

If you are unable to pick up your child by 6:30pm, please call the center so that we can reassure your child of your arrival. You should have an emergency backup plan in case you are unable to pick up your child. Parents who are late picking up their child will be charged a late pickup fee of \$1.00 per minute past 6:40pm.

When a child is left at the center after closing time, our staff will attempt to contact parents first, and then will proceed to the emergency contact list. If we are unable to reach an authorized adult to pick up your child by 7:30pm, we must notify the Department of Family and Children Services.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency procedures such as fire and tornado drills are held on a monthly basis. We want to acquaint your child with these very important procedures in the event a real emergency does happen.

In the event of an emergency that requires the center to be evacuated, the police will be notified of our place for relocation. Please call the police if such an event should occur.

NAPTIME

After lunch, a nap period is provided for all children who are Pre-K age and younger. To protect your child's health, the center provides a sanitized cot which is labeled with your child's name and a cot sheet which is laundered weekly. Parents are required to provide a small blanket labeled with their child's name. Blankets should be taken home every Friday for laundering. We kindly ask that children are not brought into the center between the hours of 11:00am and 2:00pm.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes that are suitable for messy activities. Shoes should be safe for active play. Flip-flops or shoes without a back strap are not recommended. Clothing that promotes aggressive behavior or endorses alcohol or tobacco products will not be allowed. Older children should dress modestly. Extra clothing and jackets must be labeled with the child's name. Children should have an extra change of clothes in their cubby at all times.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Lake Dow Children's Academy celebrates Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and birthdays with special events for the children. Parents are encouraged to send a special treat for the class on their child's birthday.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Lake Dow Children's Academy participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and provides each child with a well-balanced lunch along with a nutritious breakfast and afternoon snack. The center provides these meals free of charge.

Children are encouraged to eat the food provided by the center at the scheduled times. Bright from the Start requires that exceptions be made only for documented medical reasons. Our center is proud to be a peanut free facility. Menus are located by each of the two entrance doors, in the cafeteria, in your child's classroom and on our website at www.lakedowchildrensacademy.com.

Breakfast is served from 6:00am until 8:30am. Lunch is served between 10:30am and 12:00pm. Snack is served between 2:00pm and 3:30pm.

INJURY

If a child is injured during the day and the injury does not warrant professional medical attention or causes less than moderate discomfort to the child, the parents will be notified at the end of the day on which the injury occurred. First aid will be administered to the child and an injury report will be completed, signed by authorized personnel and sent home with the child.

ILLNESS

Bright from the Start's current communicable disease chart of recommendations for exclusion of sick children from the center and their readmission will be followed. A copy of the chart is posted in the cafeteria.

A child will not be accepted or allowed to remain at the center if they have a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and/or shows symptoms such as a rash, vomiting, diarrhea, itching, swelling, conjunctivitis (pink eye) or persistent cough. The parent will be notified immediately of any fever, illness or symptom.

A child who has been sick should not return to the center until they have been free of all symptoms for 24 hours. If a child has been taken to a doctor for treatment, a doctor's note stating when it is safe for the child to return to the center should be provided.

Parents of all children enrolled at the center will be notified of the occurrence of any of the illnesses on the communicable disease chart within twenty-four hours after the center becomes aware of the illness.

MEDICATION

Except for First Aid, staff cannot administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child without written authorization. If medication must be given to your child, an Authorization for Medication form must be completed, signed and kept on file at the center. Authorization for Medication forms are located by each of the two entrance doors, in the cafeteria, in your child's classroom and on our website at www.lakedowchildrensacademy.com.

If any information is left off of the Authorization for Medication form, our staff cannot administer the medication to your child. Authorizations will be limited to a maximum of two weeks from the date started. All medications must be in the original container and labeled with your child's full name. Only the dosage prescribed by the doctor will be administered to your child.

All medications must be given to a staff member who will insure that they are properly stored out of a child's reach. Do not leave medication in your child's diaper bag, backpack or cubby. Parents are responsible for supplying Tylenol, Motrin or Ibuprofen when prescribed by a doctor. Expired medication will not be administered to your child.

HEAD LICE

Any child found with head lice and/or nits will be sent home and cannot return to the center until they are free from all lice and nits. The parent must provide a proof of treatment (doctor's note, Health Department letter) upon returning to the center or the child will not be allowed to stay until such proof of treatment has been received.

INFANTS

A nurturing environment with attention to the individual needs of each child is the basis of our infant program. Daily reports provide essential communication between the staff and parents regarding the infant's care. Parents must provide formula and baby food for their child that is not yet eating table food. The parent must write the child's first and last name on the bottles and baby food daily. Formula must be measured, prepared and bottled by the parent per Bright from the Start rules and regulations.

Parents must complete and sign an Infant Feeding Plan, Infant Affidavit and Safe Sleep Practices Policy when enrolling their child. The Infant Feeding Plan should periodically be updated as needed. Pacifiers must have the child's name or initials written on them. No pacifier clips or pacifier attachments are allowed to be used at the center. Any special needs must be brought to the infant teacher's attention as soon as they occur.

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM

Rather than limit the teacher to a single curriculum or teaching method, our center combines several curriculums so we can best meet the individual needs of each child. Assessment is a major part of our program. Blending ideas from Babies Can Read, Creative Curriculum, High Scope and Funshine Express allows us to use both teacher-directed and child-directed learning in the classroom. Teachers learn to watch, ask and adapt to the individual needs of each child.

Classrooms are set up with materials that are developmentally age appropriate for the children in that room. The room arrangement encourages exploration and discovery. Lesson plans and a daily schedule are posted in each classroom. Portfolios are kept on each child in the center so that the teachers and parents have an overall picture of how the child is doing.

STAFF

Every effort is made to hire only the most qualified teachers to help your child reach their full potential. References are contacted, background and fingerprint checks are processed and of course all state standards and requirements are met or exceeded.

The professional caregivers at Lake Dow Children's Academy are constantly improving their knowledge of child development through ongoing educational childcare courses in addition to First Aid and CPR training. From time to time we will pass new knowledge on to the parents. If you have a specific question or general concern, we will be glad to use the resources of the center to find an answer.

VISITORS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

No education program will succeed without the involvement of the parent. You are your child's first and most important teacher. The goal of our center is to work together to help the children of Lake Dow Children's Academy reach their full potential.

Parents are encouraged to visit their child's classroom and talk with the teacher briefly each day. Parents and relatives are welcome to observe or volunteer in their child's classroom. However, we

request your cooperation in not disrupting our program, especially during naptime. Visitors need to let the front office know of their presence and purpose of their visit at all times.

FIELD TRIPS

In addition to the regular program, field trips and special activities are planned for school age children. Before your child can ride the daycare van or bus, the center must have a signed Field Trip Permission form on file for your child. Only children who are five years old or older are transported on field trips. No child can attend a field trip without a signed Field Trip Permission form.

Children that act unruly on field trips will not be allowed to attend future field trips. The owner of the center chaperones all field trips and will make the final decision on whether or not the unruly child will be suspended from future field trips or disenrolled from the center altogether.

TRANSPORTATION

Lake Dow Children's Academy transports school age children to and from the following Henry County schools:

- New Hope Elementary
- Ola Elementary
- Rock Spring Elementary
- Tussahaw Elementary
- Unity Grove Elementary

The parent must notify the center, in advance, of any scheduled transportation changes. If your child was picked up early or was absent from school, please notify the center prior to 2:00pm.

PICTURES

- Spring pictures (April). All children will be photographed, there is no charge at the time of the session and purchase of the pictures is optional.
- Cap and Gown pictures (April). Only Pre-K students will be photographed, there is no charge at the time of the session and purchase of the pictures is optional.
- Fall pictures (September). All children will be photographed, there is no charge at the time of the session and purchase of the pictures is optional.
- Santa pictures (December). Only children who turn in a permission slip will be photographed, there is a charge at the time of the session and purchase of the pictures is pre-paid only. Santa pictures are printed and sent home the day of the session.

DISENROLL POLICY

A two week written notice is required if you wish to disenroll your child for any reason. Full tuition is due for the notice period, regardless if your child attends the center or not. We do not prorate tuition.