

# Academia



## EARLY LEARNING CENTER

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2025

## **WELCOME**

We are so thankful to have your child here with us at Academia! We look forward to caring for your child and providing them with a nurturing, engaging learning environment to help them grow in all areas of development. This handbook outlines our policies and procedures. Academia offers high-quality care to children ages 6 weeks to 5 years old and is open Monday through Friday, 7:30-5:30 for the children of Polk County Employees and Academia staff.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to provide exceptional care while guiding each child's journey of growth and discovery in all areas of development in a nurturing, engaging, nature-based environment, with exposure to different cultures and languages.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

At Academia Early Learning Center, we believe that each child has something to offer the learning environment, as evident in Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Each child's unique abilities and personality are a vital component of the learning community. We believe in providing high-quality care for all students. AELC believes in hands-on experience and learning through play. Our routines are structured around the idea that each child is strong, competent, and capable of making decisions and creating meaning. We value gratitude, kindness, and equity and seek to cultivate an environment of thankfulness, love, and diversity in each of our classrooms. These values are what we use to guide our decision-making. We believe in hiring staff who believe and support our values, and who represent these values in their daily work with children and families. We believe that our staff should participate in ongoing professional development that aligns with our values and allows them to give the highest quality of care to our children. Our goal is that each child and their families not only learn with us, but feel cared for, valued, and supported by us. Our program is committed to the belief that all children and families bring value to the overall program, and we work to create an inclusive environment that respects all families' socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. We encourage parents to play active roles in their children's learning through opportunities to meet with teachers and participate in the center in a variety of ways. We believe that student learning is more impactful when driven by the student's interests, and our curriculum is structured around students' curiosities. Our curriculum is a well-balanced, holistic program that provides outlets for creativity and self-expression while providing exposure and development of language and vocabulary skills, phonemic awareness, number recognition, science, and world concepts. Our curriculum reflects what we value and believe as a center. Social-emotional learning is a vital part of development at this age and stage in life. We emphasize self-regulation, problem-solving, and social skills, as well as understanding and expressing emotions. We believe in the importance of developing a love for inclusion within our classrooms as well as an appreciation for diversity. Children are taught songs, basic communication, and useful words in English, Spanish, and ASL as a way of expanding their exposure to other languages and giving them multiple ways to communicate. Thank you for trusting us to care for your child! We look forward to serving your family!

Sincerely,

Aleisha Preston

Program Director

503 623 9664 ext 2802

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Hours of Operation**

Child care services are provided from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM Monday-Friday and run year-round.

### **Contact Information**

Preschool Classroom: 503 623 9664 ext 2044

Toddler Classroom: 503 623 9664 ext 2328

Infant Classroom: 503 623 9664 ext 2819

Director's Office: 503 623 9664 ext 2802

Address: 182 SW Academy Street Dallas, OR 97338

Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/academiaelc/home>

### **HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE SCHEDULE 2025**

January 1st New Year's Day

January 20th Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February 17th President's Day

\*May 23rd

May 26th Memorial Day

June 19th Juneteenth

\*June 20th

\*July 3rd

July 4th Independence Day

September 1st Labor Day

November 11th, Veterans Day

\*November 26th

November 27th, Thanksgiving Day

November 28th Day after Thanksgiving

\*December 24th Christmas Eve

December 25th Christmas Day

\*December 26th

### **ADDITIONAL CLOSURE DATES**

Academia greatly values the professional staff that serve and work to provide quality care for our families and children. To help decrease staff burnout, there are 6 days each year that we will be closed to provide staff some breaks built in throughout the year. These dates are surrounding holidays as these are days that

we historically have had low attendance. These dates are included in the Holiday observance schedule as a way of putting them all in one space. The additional closure dates are marked with an \*.

### **Inservice/training day closures**

Twice a year Academia staff will participate in full-day training. These training days ensure that staff continue to grow as professionals in their skills and knowledge. The training days are posted and given to parents yearly.

**Thursday, March 27th \*Spring Conference**

**Friday, March 28th \*Spring Conference**

### **Admission & Enrollment**

Parents/Caregivers must complete all admission and enrollment forms and make the first tuition payment before your child's first day of attendance. These enrollment forms will be updated and signed at least once a year. Parents/Caregivers will be notified of any changes or updates made to the handbook or policies.

### **Center Description**

Academia Early Learning Center is licensed for up to 37 children ranging in age from 6 weeks to five years. We are a year-round program that provides care for children Monday-Friday from 7:30 am-5:30 pm. We provide care on each of these days except holidays, training days, and emergency closures due to weather or other unprecedented events.

### **Security**

Academia ELC is a safe and secure environment for children, staff, volunteers, and parents. The public has access to the Academy Building to receive various services. However, the public does not have access to the childcare center. Security badges are required for classroom entry. No members of the public have access to any portion of the childcare facility.

### **Injury Prevention**

Academia staff take every precaution to make sure your child is safe, and that you receive communication regarding accidents or injuries. AELC staff complete frequent inspections of our classrooms, playground, and equipment.

Despite all of our efforts, accidents do happen. If your child is injured at the center, you will be contacted immediately and you will receive a copy of an incident report at pick-up time. If your child needs treatment by a healthcare professional, we will make every effort to contact you and/or the healthcare professional you have identified on your Enrollment Form Agreement. If we cannot reach you, we will contact one of the individuals you have listed on the Enrollment Form.

In the event of an emergency, we will make sure your child receives any necessary medical treatment until we can reach you.

### **Pesticides/Toxic Substances**

Academia ELC stores all toxic substances away from children. Items such as laundry detergent and bleach are labeled appropriately and are inaccessible to children. Additionally, AELC does not store or use pesticides on site.

### ***Inclusion***

Academia believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation in child care. Our teachers honor these differences by providing your child with customized attention and activities that enable your child to learn and grow at his or her own pace and in your child's way. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage the full and active participation of all children in our program based on their capabilities and needs. If your child has an identified special care need, please indicate it on your enrollment forms.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At Academia Early Learning Center, equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation, special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released apart from that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children in our program are confidential. All information stored and shared on the Brightwheel platform is secure and private.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

We hire our teachers and assistants in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications. Our staff participate in orientation and ongoing training in child growth and development, safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural diversity, and professionalism.

### ***Parent Surveys***

Each year, parents will be invited to provide valuable feedback to our program through a parent survey. This survey will include items related to quality of care, staff interactions, curriculum, student growth, and communication. AELC highly values parent input and will use survey results to instruct the program.

### ***Licensing***

Academia holds an active certified child care center license through the Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD). Rules for certification of child care centers, annual reports from the CCLD, and Sanitation, and Fire Marshal inspections are available for viewing.

### ***Staff-to-Child Ratios***

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure quality of care. During breaks, the minimum ratio is maintained as outlined by CCLD rules and regulations.

Staff-to-child ratios are determined by age and can be seen below:

Age	Staff to Child	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks - 12 months	1 to 4	8
12 Months-36 months	1 to 4	8
3 years – 5 years	1 to 10	20

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers will have to be approved by the Office of Child Care's Central Background Registry and have proper education and experience before spending time in the classroom. Volunteers will never be unsupervised or left alone with children. We will inform parents when a new volunteer is going to start.

### **Practicum and Internship**

Occasionally college students studying in early childhood or teaching fields may complete a practicum or internship at the center. All of these students have to follow the volunteer guidelines listed above and any rules or conditions set by their college or university.

### **Visitor Plan**

Any visitor who is not actively enrolled in the Central Background Registry will be supervised within sight and sound at all times by a staff member who is enrolled in the Central Background Registry. These individuals will sign into the visitor log with their name, date, time of arrival and departure, classroom(s) they will be in, and who will be supervising them during their visit.

### **Communication & Family Partnership**

**Daily Communications:** Parent communication is of utmost importance at the Academia Early Learning Center. We welcome input and questions oriented towards a positive outcome for your child. We will discuss sensitive topics in private at a mutually agreed-upon time. Daily reports from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. We will do this through the Brightwheel platform.

**Bulletin Boards:** In the hallway outside of the classrooms, bulletin boards that provide center news, upcoming events, holiday closure dates, and announcements, are posted.

**Newsletters:** Monthly newsletters will be posted on Brightwheel as well as on the hallway bulletin boards.

**Weekly Learning Plans:** Will be available for parent viewing on Brightwheel under the 'Learning' section and posted in each classroom.

**Conferences:** Family & teacher conferences occur two times a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, learning goals, and progress. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns as soon as they arise.



### ***Outside Employment Agreements***

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e., babysitting). Any agreement between families and our teachers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected to or sanctioned by the Academia Early Learning Center. Families and staff must first sign a release form before entering into an outside employment arrangement.

### ***Temporary exclusion***

We will post all exposure updates and potential closures due to COVID or other communicable diseases (listed on page 19) on Brightwheel, and notifications will be sent to families via email. Children under age five are not required to wear a mask, but our staff will do our best to follow each family's requests regarding mask-wearing. In the rare event of extended classroom or center closure due to COVID-19 or other communicable diseases, we will work with families at that time to arrange possible credit. Daily sanitation of surfaces and materials, adapted mealtime practices, and small group playground use are other practices that Academia is utilizing to help create the safest environment possible.

### ***Brightwheel***

The Brightwheel app will be used for daily parent communication, recording of activities, lesson plan/snack menu viewing, billing, document sharing, and updates. Brightwheel is a secure platform that does not release any information related to your child. Message threads are only viewable to your child's teachers, and are not available to other families. You may also use the "admin" messaging to message just the director, this will not be visible to other staff or families.

### ***Publicity***

Occasionally, we will take pictures of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. We will obtain written permission before the use of photos for marketing purposes.

## **CURRICULUM AND LEARNING**

### ***Learning Environment***

We provide an engaging learning environment with a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed for each age group. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Interest areas that are included in the learning environment on a rotating schedule are blocks, dramatic play, toys and games, art, library, discovery, sand and water, music and movement, cooking, computers, and outdoors.

We have designed our program to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us and the ability to work and play with others.

### ***Cultural Considerations***

At Academia, we highly regard our students' cultures, values, and beliefs. Upon enrollment, each teacher will send home a Holiday Survey where they can share which holidays, if any, they celebrate, as well as their own family and cultural customs and traditions. Within this survey, parents/caregivers will indicate which holidays they are okay with their child celebrating. Holiday celebrations will be inclusive and capture familial traditions and preferences. When we talk about holidays at school, we will teach from a global perspective and capture many different cultures and traditions.

### ***Developmental Screening***

In addition to curriculum-based assessment, the Academia Early Learning Center uses the ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) to monitor each child's developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, early intervention, and treatment.

### ***Global Mindset***

We encourage an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community. Throughout the instructional year, children will explore customs and celebrations through diverse music, food, and traditions. Children will receive developmentally appropriate instruction exploring ideas such as world poverty, distribution of resources, and charitable initiatives.

### ***Nature-Based Learning***

Academia values the power of nature-based learning, and outside activity is part of our daily routines. We strive to integrate nature into indoor and outdoor learning environments, to improve confidence, build connections, and create meaning in content areas. To accomplish this, walking trips will be a regular part of our daily routine and approximately 30% of our instructional time is spent outdoors.

## **ROUTINES**

### ***Daily Schedules***

Classroom schedules will be posted outside of every classroom. Each teaching team is responsible for creating their schedule to best meet the individual needs of the students in their class. Daily schedules reflect best practices according to each age group and include learning activities that focus on all areas of development.

### ***Outings***

Weather permitting, we conduct 60-120 minutes of supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips to Dallas Park. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package. Each child will need a pair of rubber boots and a rain suit to remain on-site at Academia for outdoor play.

### ***Field Trips***

There will be times that we schedule supervised field trips and we encourage you to join your child. Permission Slips for each trip must be signed by the child's parent/guardian in advance.

### **Screen Time**

Children may have the option to use screen time as a tool to participate in mindfulness and social-emotional learning. Our focus is to use screen time as a tool to help children learn about emotions, regulation skills, and social skills through the use of age-appropriate videos that practice these skills in real-time. AELC will use no more than 10 minutes of screen time daily. AELC will not utilize screen time for children under 12 months old. Screen time is not allowed during meals or snack time. Screen time will not be utilized with children aged two and under.

### **Birthdays**

At Academia, we love to celebrate! We encourage family participation in making birthdays special by sending your child with a special activity to share with their classmates. We ask that these activities be non-food items such as play-dough, sidewalk chalk, a special game, or a puzzle.

### **Rest Time**

Infants sleep according to their own developmentally appropriate schedule. After lunch, all children participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep but will need to participate in quiet time by resting with a quiet voice and a calm body on their cot. After 20 minutes, children may be given quiet activities for the remaining naptime block such as reading a book, listening to music, or other quiet activities. Please refer to your child's classroom schedule for specific rest times.

### **Infant Safe Sleep and Monitoring Practices**

All infants will be placed in their cribs on their backs. The crib will contain a mattress with a tight fitted sheet and nothing else. Infants may be placed inside a sleep sack during rest times if requested. Infants may use a binky or **pacifier without a clip attached**. Please only send pacifiers without clips. Any clips will be sent home. Caregivers/teachers will remove any headbands, bows, or other accessories that may be a hazard to the infant. Caregivers/teachers will directly observe infants by both sound and sight at all times and will check on sleeping infants every fifteen minutes. During rest time shades will be drawn, and main lights will be off. A nightlight will be plugged in and in use during rest time to ensure the sight of resting infants.

### **Toilet Training**

The most crucial factor in making the toilet learning experience successful is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's preferences. Toilet training is, however, the primary responsibility of the family. Parents are expected to create and execute a plan for their child to be potty trained before entering the preschool classroom at 36 months old. Our preschool classroom is designed for higher levels of instruction and children must be fully potty trained upon entry to ensure participation in all learning activities. **Children who are not fully potty trained are not eligible to participate in the preschool classroom.**

Best practice suggests that the optimal age for potty training is somewhere between 18 and 30 months of age. Families in our program are encouraged to potty train during that age range. Once parents have created a specific plan, they will meet with their child's teacher to make sure the plan is consistent in the school environment. We look for signs of readiness such as waking up dry at night or from a nap,

communicating when they are going potty, and having an interest in the toilet. The toddler room will train one child at a time to give the full attention and support needed to be successful.

## **GUIDANCE**

### ***General Procedure***

Academia Early Learning Center is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem-solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, respectful of other people, and of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Academia Early Learning Center has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions and social-emotional skills. We take a proactive and preventive approach to guidance that reinforces appropriate behaviors rather than focusing on inappropriate behaviors. To do this, our teachers are trained to use various techniques including redirection, praise, relationship-building, and distraction. In this positive guidance atmosphere, most inappropriate behaviors are avoided. However, in extreme situations and as a last resort, a child may be guided to an alternate activity away from the group for the benefit of the child and the rest of the children. Teachers use this strategy not as a punishment, but to help redirect the child when he or she returns to group activities.

The child is allowed to return to the group activity when he or she feels ready to do so. This strategy is not used with children under the age of two. When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to ensure safety. If necessary, the child will be temporarily removed from the group until successfully de-escalated. Parents will be called to pick their child up as a last resort. In accordance with our policy and state child care licensing regulations, our staff never uses corporal punishment.

### ***Behavioral, Medical, or Psychological Issues***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. AELC staff will work with the parents to create a written plan or an individualized assessment that will be implemented to support the child within the classroom setting. This plan/individualized assessment will be completed based on the information

given by both parents and the working professionals within the center. This assessment will include documentation of reasonable accommodations that the center has made to support the individual child or an explanation as to why the center cannot make these accommodations. This documentation will also include reasonable modifications the center made to their policies and practices to integrate the child into the program, or will contain an explanation as to why this couldn't be done. If applicable, any direct threats to the safety and health of others posed by the individual child will also be documented and included.

Exclusionary and expulsion practices are used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety concern that cannot be reduced or eliminated with reasonable modifications. On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable care setting. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Parents are unwilling to work on a plan with the center staff to best meet the child's needs.
- Continued care could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.

### **Physical Restraint**

Academia employees will only use physical restraint if a child is a danger to themselves or others. Physical restraint is our last resort after trying other strategies such as offering choices, positive reinforcement, and getting on the child's level. On the rare occasion that a child needs to be restrained, AELC staff will be gentle and limit the time holding the child as gently as possible to accomplish restraint, as required by the Child Care Licensing Division's Rules. AELC staff will notify the parents both in person and on Brightwheel and will document the incident in the child's records and report to the CCLD as required by rule. AELC staff will be trained on and follow the restraint policy in the CCLD rulebook. If physical restraint is used more than once on a specific child, AELC will develop a written plan with input from the parents, primary care provider, and other professionals, as required by the CCLD rule

## TUITION AND FEES

### **Payment**

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control.

We will send invoices via Brightwheel at the end of every month. Childcare payments are due on the first of each month. Acceptable methods include online payments through Brightwheel or personal checks. If multiple parents are paying for care, please communicate directly with the director to arrange separate billing.

### **Late Payment Charges**

Late payments pose severe problems for our program. If payment is not received by the day it is due (the first of the month), a late fee of \$20 will be added for each day it is late. Once a payment is a week late care will be discontinued until the bill is paid. Your slot will be held until the next billing cycle. If the bill is unpaid at the beginning of the next billing cycle care will be terminated.

### **Prorated Tuition**

If enrollment begins midway through the month, your first month's tuition will be prorated based on the start date and the number of care days provided that month.

### **Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges**

All returned checks rejected ACH (automatic debits), or credit card transactions will be charged \$30. We may collect this electronically.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

Late pick-up is not a standard program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of **\$2 per minute** will be assessed beginning at 5:30 PM and will be charged electronically.

### **Special Activity Fees**

Occasionally, there will be additional fees associated with particular activities or field trips. These fees are due before the event, activity, or trip.

### **Additional Fees**

Loss or destruction of property may also result in an additional fee.

### **Credits & No Credits**

- We will give credit for extended excused absences. If your child is hospitalized, absent due to a contagious disease, or absent at the request of the child's doctor for more than two weeks, we will credit your account.
- We do not give credit for sick days. Sick days are considered when determining tuition and are non-refundable.

- Credit will not be given for inclement weather - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will not be credited for that day.
- Credit will not be given for vacation days.
- Credit will not be given for the two AELC staff in-service and training days yearly.

## **ATTENDANCE AND WITHDRAWAL**

### ***Absence***

If your child will be absent or arrive late, please notify your classroom teacher as soon as possible through Brightwheel messaging or phone call.

### ***Vacation***

Please notify the program director as soon as a vacation is scheduled. This allows us time to prepare for any scheduling changes that may need to occur. While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

### ***Withdrawal***

A written notice, 30 days in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn from the program.

### ***Temporary Withdrawal***

Suppose you and your family withdraw a child temporarily, such as maternity leave, summer break, or medical leave for a guardian. In that case, Academia cannot guarantee or hold your child's slot, but if you choose to, you can add your child to a waitlist to return and re-enroll when a slot becomes available. The rationale behind this is that staff still must be paid regardless of whether a child is taking a temporary leave of absence; due to this, it is the responsibility of Academia's director to fill available slots.

### ***Transfer of Records***

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally. If transferring outside of the program, parents need to fill out and sign the Transfer of Records form.

### ***Closing Due to Extreme Weather***

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, earthquakes, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on Brightwheel and sent to families via text message.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP

### *General Procedure*

Academia opens at 7:30 a.m. - children cannot be dropped off before this time. All parents will enter through the Academy Street door and ring the doorbell posted near the door. A staff person will buzz you into the hallway if your child is in the preschool or infant room, and you will then be greeted by the door. If you are a parent of a toddler, a staff person will open the door for you. Parents will then sign their children in on Brightwheel and assist them in storing their belongings in their cubby.

We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time. Additionally, keep in mind that your child's teacher may want to communicate with you about daily activities at this time. Late fees will be charged \$2 per minute starting at 5:30.

### *Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up*

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify us in advance. Your child will not be released without prior authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification.

We will need copies of any court-ordered custody agreements. Without court documentation, we cannot prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. A staff member will stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### *Right to Refuse Child Release*

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency Contact pick up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please **label all items** brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering. Each classroom has storage space for diapers, wipes, and pull-ups. Feel free to bring larger amounts of these items to have at the center. When items need replacing (cot blankets, tuffos, gloves...those are the parent's responsibility).

### *What to Bring*

- **Infants:**



- Clean, labeled, and dated bottles (enough for one day of feeding)
- Diapers & Wipes (at least 6 diapers per day and 1 pack of wipes)
- Clothing (At least 2 changes of weather-appropriate clothing)
- Lunch (if eating solid foods) in a labeled bag or lunch box
- Footed Snowsuit
- Waterproof Mittens
- Sleep Sack
- Pacifier if you choose to use one (please do not bring one with a clip attached)

Spring/Summer Items:

- Sun hat
- Sunscreen
- Closed Toe Water Shoes
- **Toddlers:**
  - Diapers & Wipes
  - Extra Clothing (2 changes of weather-appropriate clothing)
  - Lunch in a labeled lunch box
  - Snow coat
  - Waterproof Mittens
  - Rubber Boots
  - TUFFO SUIT in Yellow
  - ROLLEE POLLEE attachable cot blanket
  - Comfort Item for Nap
  - Water Bottle (Contigo AutoSpout 14 oz)

**Spring/Summer Items:**

- Sun Hat
- Sunscreen
- Closed Toe Water Shoes
- **Preschoolers:**
  - Extra Clothing (2 changes of weather-appropriate clothing)
  - Lunch in a labeled lunch box
  - Snow Coat
  - Waterproof Mittens
  - Rubber Boots
  - TUFFO SUIT in Yellow
  - ROLLEE POLLEE attachable cot blanket
  - Comfort Item for Nap
  - Water Bottle (Contigo AutoSpout 14 oz)

Spring/Summer Items:

- Sun Hat

- Sunscreen
- Closed-Toe Water Shoes

### Cubbies

Upon enrollment, each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that need to be taken home.

### Lost & Found

Communicate with your child's teacher as soon as you notice a missing item. You can look for lost items and bring found items to the office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### Toys from Home

Toys of any kind are not allowed into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. This excludes one comfort item, such as a stuffed animal, for nap time. All other **toys must be left at home** unless requested by your child's teacher.

## NUTRITION

At Academia, we love good food and are excited to help foster a love of nutritious food with your child! Mealtimes are exceptional opportunities for learning and skill development.

### Breakfast

All students are **required to eat breakfast before coming to school**. Morning snack is served at 9:00 and students need to eat before this to be physically, emotionally, and mentally prepared for the morning learning activities. An additional \$5 breakfast fee will be added for each morning that the center has to serve an extra snack or breakfast to a child who has not eaten breakfast.

### Lunch

Lunch will be the family's responsibility, and each child will need to bring their lunch in a labeled lunch box or bag with an ice pack. Your child's lunch must be sent in a manner that is ready to eat - with limited packaging and including any utensils needed. **Please be sure to label all dishes, utensils, ice packs, and lunch boxes.** We are not liable for any misplaced items. Lunch must follow USDA guidelines, and will need to include at least three of the following components: meat/meat alternative, legumes, vegetables, fruits, grains, yogurt/cheese, and milk/milk substitute. Please visit the USDA website (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) for more information on what to pack in your child's lunch.

Suggestions for a USDA approved lunch	
Bean & cheese dip	Chicken strips
Tortilla chips (crackers)	Whole Wheat Roll
Tropical fruit salad	Orange wedges
Broccoli	Broccoli
Milk	Milk

Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk
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### Snacks

Academia will provide two nutritious snacks for your child daily. Snacks will follow USDA guidelines and include two of the following food groups; fluid milk, bread/grains, yogurt/cheese, meat, fruit/vegetables. Snacks will be served at 9:00 and 3:00 and menus will be available weekly on Brightwheel and on our bulletin boards. Substitutions will be made for food allergies and listed on the menu. Children will be encouraged to try new foods and experience the joy of eating!

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
AM	Sliced Fresh Apricots & Greek Yogurt Substitution:	English Muffins w/Peanut Butter & Sliced Bananas Substitution:	Fresh Blueberries & Turkey Breakfast Sausage Substitution:	Sliced Bananas & Greek Yogurt Substitution:	Apple Slices & Peanut Butter Substitution:
PM	Salami Slices & Cheddar Cheese Cubes with/ Crackers Substitution:	Cantaloupe Slices & Cottage Cheese Substitution:	Whole Wheat Toast w/ Smashed Avocado & Sea Salt Substitution:	Cucumber Slices & Hummus Substitution:	Grape Tomatoes & Baked Pea Snacks Substitution:

### Sweets

Balanced nutrition is vital to your child's success in our program! To maximize energy levels and avoid misbehaviors related to food, we ask that you do not pack any items that have more than 7 grams of added sugar. Anything above this, we are counting as a treat and cannot serve at school. USDA suggests children have no more than 25 grams of added sugar daily, so we are estimating each meal with 7 grams leaving some room for added sugars for snacks. Some common items that often contain too much sugar are listed below.

- \*Chocolate chip granola bars
- \*Chocolate milk
- \*Fruit Snacks
- \*Go-gurts
- \*Cookies/PopTarts/Donuts/Pastries
- \*Drinks other than 100% juice or milk

- \*Candy
- \*Jello
- \*Pudding

### ***Food Allergies***

If your child has a food allergy, you must include this information on the enrollment form. Each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed during enrollment.

### ***Meal Time***

At Academia, we recognize the importance of mealtime and the valuable learning opportunity it is for developing minds. Children will eat with their classmates around the table and be encouraged to develop table manners and conversational skills.

### ***Infant Feedings***

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants under six months will be held for bottle-feeding. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed "on cue" to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child's home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child's name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be in permanent ink.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after consulting the child's family.
- 

### ***Children 24 Months and Older Meals***

- No child shall go more than 3.5 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than two years old are not permitted. These foods include hot dogs, whole grapes, and thickly spread peanut butter.

## **HEALTH**

### ***Immunizations***

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). We follow our state regulations regarding the attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons.

Unvaccinated children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

### **Illness**

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children, you **may not bring a sick child to the center**. Per CCLD regulations, Academia Early Learning Center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. If your child is not feeling well, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child. Below you will find a list of symptoms that will potentially require early pick up. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will ensure that your child is comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- **Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.**
- Conditions that result in a greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (**100.4 or higher temporal**, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Mouth sores
- Rash with fever
- Eye Infection
- Impetigo
- Strep throat
- Head lice
- Fleas
- Scabies
- Chickenpox
- Pertussis
- Croup
- Hand foot and mouth
- Hepatitis A virus
- Tuberculosis
- Rubella
- Mumps
- Measles
- Has a physician or other health professional written order that the child be separated from other children

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for **48 hours**. If a child has vomited due to excessive cough, this is 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic, steroid, or other prescription medication for **48 hours**.
- **They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.**
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions.
- They are completely free of lice, nits, or fleas.
- If a child has a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is **required**.

## Medications

Please indicate if your child needs to take medication on the medical release form. All medicines need to be given directly to your child's teacher for administration.

**Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's primary care physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container. Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication. After a child has taken his or her medication, it will be recorded on Brightwheel in their daily activities.

**Non-prescription medications** require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written authorization must include your child's name, dosage, current date, and frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than three days unless a written order by the physician is received.

**Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen, and insect repellent require a note signed by the family specifying the frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

## Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or the Department of Public Health. We will inform families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- COVID-19
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Infection
- Poliomyelitis
- Rabies
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital
- Tetanus
- H1N1 Virus
- Tuberculosis

## SAFETY

### Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities, including painting, outdoor play, sand,

weather, and other sensory activities. Outdoor space is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside.

Please remove or trim long drawstrings from your child's clothing. Sandals and flip-flops are not permitted.

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 95°F or less than 32°F degrees. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating is hazardous.

### ***Injuries***

First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). Parents will be notified and receive an incident report outlining the incident and the course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, we will contact you immediately by phone. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior.

Both children's families will be notified, and we will work together to develop strategies for change. Strategies that we most often implement are:

- Introduction of an appropriate item to bite (teether)
- Removal of the biter from the play area to a calming space
- Redirection towards effective problem-solving skills and language use
- Provision of additional sensory activities

As a last resort, children who repeatedly bite, 3 times or more per day, may need an early pickup. If a child bites 3 or more times in one day, the director may reach out to parents to arrange a pickup time.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child(ren) from our care.

### ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants' and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor areas used by the center are non-smoking areas.

### ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that involve a gun or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

### ***Child Custody***

In the event of anything related to divorce, restraining order, custody, adoption, or any other court proceedings, we need to have the final signed judgment and parenting plan. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody without court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of suspected child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. All staff members are mandatory reporters and must report any forms of suspected abuse to ODHS immediately. Staff are informed during orientation on how and when to report abuse, and are required to complete the Oregon-specific Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect training before entering the classroom.

## **EMERGENCIES**

Per CCLD licensing requirements, we will regularly practice emergency drills with the entire staff and all enrolled children. These drills will help prepare us for emergencies such as fire, gas leak, earthquake, or other situations. In case there is an emergency, and we have to evacuate, all staff and children will evacuate to the church street side of the Academy building. If it is unsafe to return to the building, parents will be called with instructions on where to pick up their children.

### ***Fire***

In case of a fire, all classrooms will be evacuated from the nearest exit and relocated to the southeast end of the property by the covered amphitheater. We will evacuate with a current roster of the children



present and contact information. If we are unable to return to the center, we will call families to pick up their children.

### **Earthquake**

We follow stop, drop, and cover procedures in our classrooms. Depending on the severity, we will relocate to the southeast corner of the property by the covered amphitheater, where custodial parents will be notified to pick up their children. If parents/guardians are unable to pick up children, we will relocate to the closest county building, the I.T. department, to shelter until parents can pick up their children.

### **Mandatory Evacuation**

We will evacuate using the fire evacuation route to walk to the Polk County I.T. department office, where families will be notified for pick up.

### **Emergency Transportation**

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the Academia Early Learning Center before enrollment, or sign electronically and submit via Brightwheel.

Thank you for taking the time to go over the policies and procedures we have established at our center. We look forward to getting to know you and your child! I have received the Academia Early Learning Center Family Handbook, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the Academia Early Learning Center staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management to clarify any policy, procedure, or information that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature	Date
Center Staff Signature	Date