

PARENT HANDBOOK



VERSION 01/2024

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License# C09OS0208

Welcome to the Edukids Academy family!

We are honored to have the opportunity to provide your child with an exceptional early learning experience. It is our pleasure to care for your child and contribute to his/her growth and development.

Our Mission

Edukids Academy is dedicated to providing a well-rounded educational environment that emphasizes our five core principles:

Learning, Playing, Friendship, Partnership, and Community

Our Philosophy

Edukids Academy offers affordable, fun, high-quality childcare that focuses on learning, socialization, emotional development, and child/family connections. Our goal is to be a positive influence in the lives of our children and families and prepare our children for school and the real world.

We recognize that children learn differently, and learning takes place all the time, everywhere.

Children need to be active participants in their learning and be given opportunities to explore and discover. Edukids Academy believes that it is essential to provide intentional experiences while maintaining children's interests. A supportive, wellrounded, balanced environment creates learning experiences that result in confident, successful children.

Confidentiality

Edukids Academy will maintain confidentiality and respect all families' right to privacy, refraining from all disclosure of confidential information except where required or permitted by law. In addition, neither staff nor administrators will disclose children's records or have verbal communication about children with other professionals. Exceptions to this policy are suspected child abuse or neglect, pursuant to a subpoena or if a child's welfare is at risk. Edukids Academy is mandated to share confidential information with agencies that may intervene on the child's behalf.

Curriculum

Edukids Academy appreciates that all children have diverse backgrounds as well as skill levels. Our curriculum along with monthly themes offers a content-rich program that allows for children to be successful through hands-on exploration, creativity, and ageappropriate activities. The program promotes confident learners.

School Hours

We are open from 6:30a.m. to 5:45p.m. Monday through Friday.

Non-Discrimination

Edukids Academy welcomes all children and families to our school and embraces diversity and inclusion.

Special Needs

Edukids Academy believes in inclusion of all children and may provide accommodations and modifications as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. We are happy to meet with parents, school officials or therapists in order to help develop and implement an individualized education plan.

Visiting During School Hours

Parents are always welcome to visit during school hours. For security reasons, Edukids Academy requires that all visitors check in at the front desk. If you need to see your child and the class is in the process of completing a lesson, a staff member will be happy to chaperone your child to the front office.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences

Edukids Academy offers parent conferences at least twice per year. This gives the parents and teacher the opportunity to focus on goals, expectations, and concerns. If a parent would like to schedule an additional meeting, please contact the Preschool Director. It is our goal to keep lines of communication open between parents and staff.

Discipline Policy

Edukids Academy follows a discipline policy which utilizes positive behavior support and interventions. Our teachers recognize appropriate age and developmental needs for each child and may use positive techniques to teach proper behavior interaction. A child may be removed from a classroom by a teacher or the Director but will never be humiliated or treated with disrespect. Physical punishment is never tolerated at our school. If a child's disruptive behavior continues and affects his/her well-being or that of other children, the parent may be contacted, and the child may be required to go home for the rest of the day. In addition, a parent conference or behavior plan may be required. If acceptable resolution or behavior cannot be achieved, suspension or termination of enrollment may occur. Edukids Academy reserves the right to terminate enrollment for any reason. We will always strive to provide a nurturing and positive learning environment that is conducive for each child to learn and thrive.

Holiday Closings

Edukids Academy may be closed on certain designated holidays such as: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday and professional development days. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the holiday is observed on the Friday preceding the holiday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday, the holiday is observed on the Monday following the holiday. A holiday calendar for the school year may be provided to parents.

Parking

During drop off and pick up, all vehicles must enter and follow the parking lot counterclockwise or park in a designated parking space in our parking area. Please do not block other vehicles. The safety and welfare of the children is of the utmost importance.

Required Registration/Enrollment Forms

There are multiple forms that need to be completed to successfully enroll your child in Edukids Academy. You may receive a packet with a checklist of the documents that are required prior to the first day of attendance.

The Registration/Enrollment forms may include:

- Enrollment Application
- School Discipline Policy
- Alternate Nutrition
- School Health Entry Form and Immunization Form
- Student Emergency Card
- Florida State Food Program Forms
- Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure and Influenza Brochure
- Distracted Driving Brochure
- Photo/Video Release
- Food Related Activities
- Public Health/COVID Acknowledgement form
- Early Learning Coalition Agreement
- Playground Release Form*

Allergies/Meals

All allergies must be noted in writing by a physician so that the school staff may make necessary food substitutions and post a notice. Edukids Academy is a peanut/tree nut free facility. We ask parents to refrain from bringing in outside food. Meals are provided daily to include breakfast, lunch, and snacks. A weekly menu can be found in the front office.

Medications

Edukids Academy does not dispense any medication. If your child requires medication to be administered during the day, it is your responsibility to plan to come and administer the medication yourself. The only exceptions are sunscreen or diaper cream.

Financial Responsibility:

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due every Friday for the upcoming week and considered late after Monday. A late fee of \$25.00 may be added if tuition is not received by Monday's close of business. We may not accept your child on or after Tuesday until your balance is paid in full. Auto-Pay of tuition is mandatory unless otherwise agreed upon with Management. Auto-Pay should be set up as a recurring ACH or debit/credit through your Brightwheel account on the Brightwheel mobile app. Cash payments are not encouraged, and due to the increasing occurrence of counterfeit bills, Management reserves the right to reject suspicious cash payments or bills over \$20.

Non-Sufficient Funds ("NSF") fee of \$35.00 will be charged for any returned/rejected payment of any kind, including but not limited to, rejected bank ACH or Card payments.

All tuition will be due in full for any missed days and no credits, make-up days or reimbursements are given for any days missed due to illness, vacation, weather emergencies, natural disasters, or holiday closings.

We do not accept checks as payment for tuition or any other charges.

VPK/Subsidized Tuition Policy

Edukids Academy is contracted to accept certain subsidy payments for eligible families under specific conditions, provided all obligations, rules and regulations are followed by our parents and guardians. The subsidy certificate must be active and in force (non-expired, non-cancelled, non-suspended) in order to cover that portion of tuition and fees owed.

If your child has a VPK certificate or you have a subsidized contract (ELC, Family Central, VPK, etc.) please be aware that Edukids Academy does not receive payment reimbursement when your child is absent or unaccounted for by proper sign-in and signout procedures. We are also not reimbursed for weeks where VPK instruction is not held.

Absences: If your child has more than 3 absences within a month, you are financially responsible for tuition for the days not paid by your subsidized contractor. If your child was ill for whatever reason, please provide doctor's notes or any permissible documents explaining the absences, so we may provide those to the subsidizing organization. The Early Learning Coalition requests that we notify them immediately for excessive absences and/or absences of 5 days or more within a month. Lack of attendance may result in termination of enrollment from the subsidized program.

Non-VPK Weeks: If your child attends wraparound VPK and there are no VPK classes held during any week, you are responsible to pay full price tuition for that week. If your subsidized contract is cancelled, expires, or is not paid for any reason, you will be financially responsible for the entire amount due.

Sign-In/Sign-Out: Children MUST be signed in and signed out daily by an authorized adult. If a daily sign-in/sign-out adult signature is not provided, a nonnegotiable, non-compliant fee of \$35.00 will be charged to your account.

Unenrollment Policy

If you decide to unenroll your child from Edukids Academy for any reason, you must provide two (2) weeks' notice in writing to Management with the last date of enrollment clearly stated. We require the final two weeks tuition to be paid timely; otherwise, Edukids

Academy may engage an agency to pursue collection of all charges outstanding plus reasonable and appropriate collection costs.

Changes in Tuition

Edukids Academy reserves the right to make changes to tuition rates at any time.

Edukids Academy reserves the right to charge fees in addition to tuition for services or materials provided.

Discounts

Discounts to tuition or fees are at the discretion of Edukids Academy Management only. Discounts may not be combined. Discounts are applied as a courtesy to current accounts only. Late or delinquent payments do not qualify.

Multi-Child/Sibling:

A family enrolling more than one child from the same immediate family at the same time. Two or more children may receive a discount per week off the tuition for the oldest child/children.

Active-Duty Law Enforcement, Fire, Military: A discount may be applied to the weekly tuition fee for children from the same immediate family of the active-duty adult. Proof of active duty must be presented at registration and/or on demand.

Other School Policies:

Drop-off

All parents must sign their child in and out each day. All parents/guardians must sign in and sign out their child daily per DCF requirements. After signing in, the parent may be allowed to enter the school and escort the child to his/her classroom. Children may

not walk to the classroom unsupervised at any time and must be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older. Please hold your child's hand as you walk to greet the teacher. Running is not permitted in the school.

All classes will begin promptly, therefore, we request that the children be in attendance no later than 9:30a.m. If you are running late, please inform us via phone as soon as possible.

If your child is enrolled in a 3-hour VPK or VPK wraparound class, we request that the children be in attendance no later than 8:30a.m. Please drop off at the time your class starts and pick up promptly at the time it ends.

Dismissal/Pick-up

All parents must sign their child out each day. All children must be picked up by closing time. After signing the child out, the parent may be allowed to enter the school and pick up their child from the teacher. Be sure to collect all your child's belongings, including any materials in their front office cubby. As safety is our highest priority, children will only be released to their authorized parents/guardians on file unless prior notification from the parent is received. In addition, families must have a password on file.

Passwords must be provided by all individuals whose parents or guardians authorize to pick up their children. A picture ID will be required for all individuals unknown to our staff. If we do not receive prior notification, are not made aware of changes to pick up, or do not recognize the individual picking up the child, the child will not be released.

**Edukids Academy reserves the right to refuse the release of a child to any person who is suspected to be or appears to be intoxicated or impaired, or if the school is on lockdown initiated by local governing and law enforcement agencies.*

**If parents/guardians are experiencing a legal custody issue, it will be necessary to obtain a notarized court order outlining the custody arrangement. We must keep a copy on file, by state regulation.*

Late Dismissal Fee

After a 5-minute grace period, a late fee of \$5.00 may be charged to your account for every 5 minutes past dismissal time, per child. Repeated failure to pick up your child on time may result in enrollment termination.

Daily Reports

We believe communication with parents is of great relevance. All parents will need to sign up with Brightwheel to receive the daily reports electronically.

Biting

Biting is common and developmentally normal during the toddler years. We are aware that it is difficult to prevent biting, however, we will do our best to use positive means to redirect a child who does bite. An incident report may be completed, and the parent may be contacted. As a result of excessive bite reports, suspension or termination of enrollment may be necessary, especially if the child biting is over three years of age.

Diaper Changing

Parents are responsible for supplying diapers and wipes. Check with your child's teacher often to make sure your child has enough supplies. Your child's teacher may provide you with a list of required items for diaper changing as well as remind you when more items are needed.

Toilet Training

When toilet training, it is important that the parents start the process at home. The teachers at Edukids Academy will do their best to support and maintain toilet training at school. We will encourage and assist your child as he/she develops independence.

Daily Quiet Time

All children will have scheduled quiet time after lunch. We do not expect that all children will sleep; therefore, they may relax or read a book during this time. While we provide mats/cots for quiet time, it is the parents' responsibility to provide a sheet and a light, small blanket. Label all items. We may send these items home at the end of the week for laundering.

Toys from Home

Toys from home are not permitted at school as they distract the children from planned activities and may even be considered a choking hazard. Children under the age of 3

years of age are not permitted to wear jewelry or hair beads. EdukidsAcademy is not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items brought to school including jewelry.

TV and Movies

Edukids Academy does not permit teachers to utilize TV or movies as part of the regular daily lesson plans. TV and movies may be allowed for special circumstances and/or weather restrictions. Programs may be educational and/or relate to our curriculum.

Holiday/Birthday Celebration

We love celebrating holidays and birthdays! This is a wonderful way for the children to learn about many cultures. If you would like to bring a treat in for your child's class, please notify the staff in advance so preparations can be made. Per Florida Department of Health regulations, all food items must be store bought and unopened and may not have peanuts or nuts.

School Environment

We strive to maintain a professional, positive, and respectful school environment. To do this, it is important that everyone who enters our school dresses, speaks, and acts in a proper, respectful manner. We strive to maintain an environment that reflects self-discipline, self-control, and respect towards everyone. Unprofessional behavior and abuse towards staff members and other parents are not tolerated and may be grounds for child/children unenrollment or trespassing notice being issued.

School Cameras

Cameras are for the safety of the school and may be used for training purposes for Edukids Academy staff. Edukids Academy does not allow parents to view the school cameras and/or videos from the school cameras.

Abuse/Neglect

Under Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes, employees of Edukids Academy are mandated to immediately report knowledge or suspicion of child abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation of any child by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the welfare of the child to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families. If any professional fails to make a report or knowingly prevents another from

doing so is guilty of third-degree felony and may be prosecuted. Edukids Academy may not release a child to any caregiver if inappropriate behavior is exhibited or substance abuse is suspected.

Health Information

If your child has a change in their health during the year, written notification is strongly encouraged. If your child is taking any type of medication, it is also strongly encouraged that you notify your child's teacher. Medication may sometimes influence a child's behavior and knowledge of your child's medication will allow your child's teacher to be on notice of such changes. It is important that we have accurate health records, immunization records and contact information for your pediatrician on file. Report any changes promptly so that your child's file is current.

Illness Policy

Any child with a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will not be permitted to attend school. Children with diarrhea and/or vomiting may not attend school. A child must be fever and/or symptom-free for 24 hours to be readmitted. If your child was diagnosed with a contagious disease, please contact the Director of the diagnosis. Also, please obtain a doctor's note for your child to be readmitted to school. It is important to keep your child home while sick and recovering so as not to infect the school, the other children, and the staff. Any child who becomes ill at school may be isolated and made comfortable until a parent or guardian can be contacted. Parents or persons on your authorized list are expected to arrive to pick up the child as soon as possible after being notified of an illness.

Minor Health Issues

Staff members are trained in first aid/CPR and will be able to attend to all bumps, scrapes, and bruises. If a child has an accident/incident during the day, we may complete an incident report. Parents may receive a copy of this report that day at dismissal.

Serious Health Issues

In the event of a serious accident or illness, the school will make reasonable efforts to contact a child's parents/guardians and secure medical attention by contacting 911 or as described on the Authorization for Medical Treatment form.

Communicable Disease

If a child has contracted a contagious disease or condition, he/she will not be admitted to school without medical authorization and/or until signs and symptoms of the disease are no longer present. Edukids Academy follows CDC and health department guidelines. Parents may be asked to complete a Health Acknowledgement Form acknowledging Edukids Academy guidelines and procedures. Such diseases may include but are not limited to:

- Head lice
- Whooping cough
- Pink eye
- Ringworm
- Chickenpox
- Hand-Foot-Mouth
- Measles
- Mumps
- Hepatitis
- Meningitis
- COVID-19

Our Staff

Our staff is trained in early childhood education and may hold Florida Department of Children and Family Services staff credentials. We have high standards and will provide the best staff possible to work at our school. We are a licensed childcare facility; therefore, we adhere to county and state requirements. Our staff members may be trained in CPR and First Aid and are required to maintain their 12 hours of yearly professional development in early childhood education, at a minimum.

Complaint Procedure

All concerns regarding the classroom or curriculum should be brought to the attention of Management. You may contact Management via school phone, Brightwheel or our website contact form at www.edukidsacademyfl.com.

Emergency Information

Fire drills are held once a month. Disaster drills may be conducted each quarter per state regulations. The Director will maintain a record of fire and disaster drills. A fire alert and weather emergency plan, including evacuation routes, is posted in each classroom.

Parents will be notified by phone if an evacuation is necessary. Please have a plan in place in the event your child must be picked up from the school. If there is a threat either at our facility, or nearby, local law enforcement officials may be contacted, and the school

may need to maintain lockdown. During lockdown, all doors are locked, children and staff will not be permitted to leave the school for any reason and no persons, other than safety officials, will be allowed to enter the school for any reason until an “all clear” is given.

Hurricanes/Inclement Weather

Edukids Academy may follow the county school system to determine if we should close or remain open in the event of a hurricane watch, warning, or inclement weather. All inclement weather notifications may be posted on our Facebook page and/or on Brightwheel. If this occurs during school hours, we will notify parents immediately and will release children if it is safe to do so. In the event of a tornado, the children will remain in a safe place within the building, away from doors and windows. Lastly, if thunder can be heard or the lightning alarm sounds, no children will be allowed anywhere outside the building. They will remain indoors away from doors and windows. All classrooms may be equipped with emergency packs, flashlights, and walkies in case of loss of electricity.

Attestation and Signature Page

I have received, will read, and follow all policies and procedures as outlined in the Edukids Academy Parent Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Print Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Director's Initials

Date