

PARENT HANDBOOK



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Welcome.....	3
• Hours.....	3
• Uniform Policy.....	3
• Pick Up/Drop Off.....	4
• Attendance.....	4
• Philosophy & Curriculum.....	4-5
• Schedule & Daily Activities.....	6
• Nutrition.....	7
• Naps.....	7
• Nondiscriminatory Policy.....	7
• Communication.....	7
• Admissions.....	8
• Child Records & Confidentiality.....	8
• Payments & Fees.....	8
• Late Pickup.....	9
• Holidays.....	10
• Family Vacations.....	10
• Child Illness.....	10
• Enrollment, Withdrawal & Termination.....	11-13
• Discipline.....	14
• Emergency Evacuation Plan.....	14

Welcome to The Carter Academy!

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for entrusting the care of your child/children to us here at The Carter Academy (TCA). The following are some of the rules and regulations that we have at our facility.

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap.

We have an “open door” policy, which simply means you are welcome at anytime. Drop-off and pick-up times are usually busy, therefore we recommend that you schedule an appointment in order to discuss any problems or concerns that may arise.

School Year Hours of Operation:

7:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Summer Hours of Operation:

7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

School Year:

August-June

**We will close the last weekday in June and re-open the first weekday in August*

****PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR SCHOOL IS CLOSED THE MONTH OF JULY FOR SUMMER BREAK.**

UNIFORM POLICY:*

Our full time students are required to wear uniforms August-May. Students are permitted to wear regular clothing during summer months-June.. We believe that wearing a uniform is a badge of pride and creates an identity for a school while giving students a sense of belonging.

School colors: Navy, Red and White

Uniform:

TOPS: Blue (navy or sky), White or Red polos

BOTTOMS: Khaki or Navy *Girls are allowed to wear khaki/navy skirts or dresses*

****Students are required to wear their uniforms at all times during school, except on Fridays when regular clothing is allowed. Sandals without backs and flip flops are not allowed because of safety issues. Please send your child in a shoe that doesn't fall off easily. Preferably tennis shoes with a rubber sole.**

PICKUP/DROP OFF

We only allow the designated people on your list to pick up your child. If you send someone to pick up your child and they are not on the list as an authorized representative, your child will not be allowed to leave with them unless you have notified us. Proper ID must be provided. No child will be released into the care of anyone who is incapacitated physically or mentally. All children must be signed in and out daily using your first and last name. Drop off and pick up times can be very hectic, so we ask that you make sure we are aware that your child is being dropped off or picked up. Do not just leave without someone acknowledging you. Without prior arrangements and approval, students CANNOT be dropped off after 9:00. Please make sure your child eats at home if they arrive after this time. No food will be served or allowed in after 9:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

We encourage you to send your child daily except in the case of illness. If your child will not be in school, please notify the staff. Consistent attendance is important for your child to gain the most from our program, to meet their educational goals and develop attendance habits that will carry on throughout their school years. Please call as soon as possible if your child will be absent.

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

The Carter Academy(TCA) promotes an environment where children become independent, confident, lifelong learners with a strong sense of self. We proudly offer a positive, child-centered preschool experience that fosters a love of learning in a nurturing community. In each child, we strive to cultivate:

- Autonomy
- A sense of belonging
- Respect for others
- Enthusiasm for exploration

The policies in this handbook support and protect the values that strengthen TCA.

Curriculum

We offer a child-centered and developmentally appropriate program for three through five year-old children. TCA has chosen to implement Frog Street, an early childhood education company, focuses on helping to guide the next generation of children to success through research-based curriculum, digital resources, and professional development for public & private schools, Headstart programs, and childcare centers alike. This curriculum provides teachers with intentional age-appropriate curriculum that is aligned to both federal and state standards. These comprehensive, research-based programs integrate instruction across all key developmental

domains. Frog Street's continuum of curriculum includes all of the components teachers need to prepare students for kindergarten such as:

- Social-emotional learning using Conscious Discipline®
- Easy-to-use weekly teachers' guides
- Integrated STEAM projects
- Suite of Digital Products

FAITH-BASED COMPONENT While our preschool emphasizes developing reading, writing, and math skills through our leaning curriculum, we also guide children in learning about God, the Bible, and Christian values.

SCHEDULE

Children need a simple routine to follow, which helps them learn and anticipate what comes next. This is a sample of the schedule we follow. Please note the schedule is subject to change from day to day depending on the children's interest, weather conditions, or other special activities.

7:00-7:30 ARRIVAL/FREE PLAY

7:30 – 8:45 BREAKFAST

8:45 – 9:00 HANDWASHING/BATHROOM

9:00- 9:30 CIRCLE TIME: CALENDAR, SHAPES, COLORS, STORY, MUSIC, ETC...

9:30 – 9:45 LANGUAGE/SOCIAL SKILLS LESSONS

9:45-10:45 CENTERS/SMALL GROUP/TEACHER DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

10:45 – 11:00 BATHROOM

11:00-11:30 PLAYGROUND (IF WEATHER PERMITS) OR INDOOR FREE PLAY

11:30 – 12:00 BATHROOM/HANDWASHING/PREPARE FOR LUNCH

12:00 – 12:45 LUNCH

12:45-1:00 CLEAN UP/BATHROOM/VPK DISMISSAL

1:00- 3:00 REST TIME

3:00 – 3:30 WASH UP/BATHROOM/SNACK

3:30 – 4:30 OUTDOOR PLAY/LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES/CHILD CHOICE/PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE

*summer schedule may vary

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Our day will consist of one or more of the following: Use and develop of language skills, use of large and small muscles, use of materials that encourage creativity and imaginary play, daily indoor and outdoor activities pending the weather, active and quite play, individual and group activities.

Learning Through Play: Almost everything that children learn during their first six years is learned through play. Play develops children's skills, teaches them to relate to their peers, and develop their own personality. Children have a profound need to play, climb, and run, use their Imagination, test themselves and challenge others, and above all, to enjoy themselves.

NUTRITION

Our meal times are more than just balanced meals and nutritious snacks; it is a vital part of each day. This is a great time for learning manners, socializing with other children, and talking about the day. Each meal served will meet the nutritional requirements. We participate in the Florida Department of Health Childcare Food program. Menus are posed weekly on the parent board.

We serve two meals and one snack each day. If you do not wish to have your child participate in the food program, **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING ALL MEALS AND THEIR COMPONENTS.** *failure to complete food program application will result in your child not being able to participate. If your child has any food allergies PLEASE make sure to put this on their enrollment form and bring substitute foods needed for them. A doctor's note must be signed and kept on file in order for us to substitute foods during our mealtimes. If no note is provided, your child WILL be served what is on our menu.

NAPPING/REST TIME

It is required that all children under the age of 5 and in care for more than 4 hours have a rest time. You, the parent/guardian, are responsible for providing a mat for your child. Please see our office staff for specifics. Mats are ordered twice a year through our center, and can be purchased based on availability. Children may bring in blankets to use during nap time. Blankets will be sent home every Friday to be washed. Children who fall asleep will be allowed to sleep for the entire nap time.

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

TCA admits students of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin and does not discriminate.

COMMUNICATION

Communication between home and school is vital to a successful preschool program.

TCA communicates with parents in a number of ways:

- Telephone/Text
- Monthly Newsletters
- Occasional notes sent home in children's backpacks/folders

If, at any time, you have special concerns, please feel free to contact the school. To maintain integrity, we ask that problems or concerns not be addressed in common areas, and in the presence of other children or parents. Please communicate with the teacher about any changes at home or within the family (i.e., parent on a trip, family member in the hospital, sick grandparent). These changes can affect your child's behavior, and it is useful for staff to be aware of these developments. TCA will always respect your privacy.

ADMISSIONS

TC A admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin. If parents have any major educational, social, or developmental concerns about their child entering TCA, parents need to discuss these concerns with the director before the child's first day of class. It is important that a positive and appropriate learning environment be established for each child. In an effort to create the best fit for your child and family, TCA reserves the right to place children in classes by age, gender, and developmental level. TCA does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

Potty Training

All children must be fully potty trained prior to enrolling in our program. This requirement ensures a smoother transition into the classroom environment and allows us to focus on each child's overall development.

CHILD RECORDS & CONFIDENTIALITY

Child records are kept confidential at all times. Parents may request information from their child's file at any time from our office. Please allow up to 2 business days to process your request.

PAYMENTS & FEES

All payments are due on Monday, in advance. Your child care fees shall be paid on time at all times. If weekly payment is not made by Wednesday, a late payment penalty of \$35.00 per day will be charged. If payment & late fees have not been made by Friday, your child WILL NOT be allowed to stay until payment and late fees are paid in full. Balances will not carry over into the next week. ****Illness:** Parents are expected to pay on child sick days. If the child is under a doctor's care for three(3) or more consecutive days, your fees may be adjusted at director's discretion. Proper documentation will be required. Because your childcare fees secure your child's spot, we reserve the right to consider a discount or rate adjustment made to your account for certain family emergencies or illnesses.

***ECS/School Readiness** Parents with children enrolled through the School Readiness Program are required to pay the difference between the Private Pay rates and the School Readiness rates.

Application/Registration Fee:

\$35 (Initial fee)

Returned Check Fee:

There will be a \$40 NSF check fee for returned checks. Also, any additional bank charges as a result of non sufficient funds will be the responsibility of the parent.

LATE PICKUP

If the parent is going to be late picking up the child, every effort must be made to contact the provider. A late pick up fee of **\$30 per child will be charged for up to 15 minutes.** After the first 15 minutes, **an additional \$10 will be added for each 15min increment** that the child/children remain in care. Your willingness to pay these fees does not remove the personal responsibility you have to uphold your agreement to arrive on time. Upon three late pick ups, ***a one time penalty of \$75 will be billed in addition to applicable per-minute fees. Parents who pick up late habitually will be terminated without notice.*** Late fees are ***payable in cash*** to the closing teacher upon pick up, or by the following morning in order for your child to return to school.

We understand that occasional emergencies happen, however, you are expected to pick your child/children up on time, or arrange for an alternate person to pick them up in the event you are unable to.

TCA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO TERMINATE ENROLLMENT SHOULD AN ACCOUNT BECOMES OVERDUE.

HOLIDAYS**Tentative Holidays Closings:**

1. New Year's Eve, New Year's Day & The Day After (Given these days fall during the week. Weekends may affect these days)
2. MLK, Jr. Day
3. President's Day
4. Good Friday
5. Memorial Day
6. Juneteenth
7. Independence Day
8. Labor Day
9. Veterans Day
10. Thanksgiving & the day after
11. Christmas Eve, Christmas Day (TCA usually closes through New Year's)

**Notices are always given before changes are made to these holiday closings*

FAMILY VACATIONS

Each family is allowed one vacation week per year in which weekly tuition is waived. This vacation week must be three(3) or more consecutive days. If you plan on taking a vacation and the child will not be in care, please give the director a two week's notice. *Please note, vacation weeks will NOT be carried over if unused.

CHILD ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill in our care, we will notify you at pick up. In case of severe illness, vomiting, high temp (over 99), diarrhea, or head lice, you will be notified immediately. Someone will be expected to pick up the ill child within 45 minutes of the call being made. Medication will NOT be administered to any students. Parents/guardians may come in and give medication that is in its original container, prescribed by a doctor. Parent/guardian will be required to log the medication that was administered on a form that will remain in our records. We cannot accept any child who is experiencing diarrhea, vomiting, severe rash, a temperature over 99 degrees, or any child who has been diagnosed with a contagious disease. If symptoms appear while the child is in our care, the parent/guardian will be called and will be expected to pick up the child within 45 minutes. In the event you cannot be reached we will continue to call the listed contact people. It is very important that someone can be reached at all times. We will not continue to care for children whose parents cannot be reached in case of emergencies. Any child experiencing any of the above must be without symptoms for 24 hours, without using medication, before returning.

ENROLLMENT, WITHDRAWAL & TERMINATION

Enrollment

- Enrollment priority is given to current students, their siblings, and alumni families.
- When registration takes place, applications are taken on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Class placement is made on the basis of age and development level.
- ALL children must bring in items from the supply list. If these items aren't brought in within 10 days of enrollment, a supply fee of \$50 will be charged. All children use these supplies and are required to help keep them in stock.

[**Full-time + Part-time Enrollment** Full-time enrollment- 3 or more days per week;

Part-time enrollment- 1-2 days per week]

Please note that families MUST select a full or part-time payment contact upon enrollment. If your child is on a full time payment contract, you are responsible for full time weekly payment. If your child is ill and has a doctor's note that excuses an absence for 3 or more consecutive days, payments may be adjusted.

Enrollment Checklist

1. Enrollment Application
2. Physical Examination (school-age children 6yrs and older are exempt)
3. Immunization Record or exemption (school-age children 6yrs and older are exempt)

ALL CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOL MUST HAVE AN UP-TO-DATE IMMUNIZATION RECORD/EXEMPTION AND A PHYSICAL ON FILE AT ALL TIMES

You will be given a reminder 30 days prior to expiration. Your child will not be allowed to stay if Health and Immunization certificates expire. This is controlled by the State of Florida.

Additional Forms:

- Emergency Form (When you list persons to contact in case of an emergency, please list persons who live within a reasonable distance of the school, who are known to your child, and who would be willing to pick up your child in any emergency. Please bear in mind that, if your child is ill and TCA cannot reach you, we may call those persons listed on your card. This list can be updated at anytime during the year. Please note that your emergency contact forms must be updated each year)
- FYI Parent Signature Page
- Childcare Food Program Participation pages (2 documents)/Food Allergies Form
- Emergency Preparedness Form: TCA has formulated emergency procedures to notify parents of any unexpected events, such as our school closing or an evacuation. In the event of an emergency situation, TCA will contact you by text message and/or a phone call. Please keep your information up to date throughout the school year. Please make sure to let Staff know if your emergency contact number does not receive text messages so that we can make other arrangements for reaching you in case of an emergency.
- Medication Authorization Form: While TCA does not administer medication, there are

circumstances that make it necessary for a child to receive medication while attending school. Trained child care providers can give prescription and nonprescription medication under certain circumstances with prior written permission from the child's parent/guardian and doctor. These circumstances can include prescriptions for an illness, severe allergies requiring an EpiPen®, or over the counter medicine for allergies and pain. You can request a Medication Authorization Form from the office. This form must be filled out correctly, signed by both the parent and the child's doctor, and returned to the office. Prescription medicine must be in the container labeled by the pharmacy with the child's name, dosage, and expiration date, and at least one dose of the medicine must have been given at home prior to coming to school. A parent must provide a medicine spoon or cup for administering medicine.

Withdrawal/Termination/Dismissal

Written notice must be provided to TCA at least two weeks prior to withdrawal. If you are withdrawing during the summer, you must notify TCA by June 1. If a child is withdrawn without proper notice, there will be no refund after weekly/monthly fee has been paid. The registration fee and advanced fees are not refundable. **ECS Families:** Please note that you must have a zero balance in order to transfer your school readiness funds.

*Deposits will be applied to last week of care, if applicable.

Dismissal: On occasion, a program is not an optimal fit for a child or family. TCA is a school that will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child's success in the school environment. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted, and a problem cannot be resolved, TCA reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program. Reasons for termination include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to pay fees on time
2. Failure to comply with policies
3. Failure to attend regular hours as scheduled per signed contract
4. Failure to complete and submit forms/documents needed to complete registration
5. Lack of parental co-operation, communication, or respect for our school, children and families
6. Child exhibiting behaviors that impede learning, or causes threat or harm to others or themselves

We will work with you and your child as much as possible but ultimately we cannot put our business, the other children in our care, or our families in a compromising situation.

Notice of Withdrawal Form

*Required to give at least a two week notice.

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____

To whom it may concern:

This is to inform my child's child care program that I, _____, am

withdrawing my child, _____, effective _____ (mm/dd/year)

My reason for withdrawal is for the following reason(s): *(optional)*

For any further questions, I can be reached using the following contact information:

Email address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Call: _____ Text: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

TCA Use Only

Director Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

DISCIPLINE

The goal of disciplining children is teaching them self-control and acceptable behavior in a manner that does not undermine their self-esteem. The Carter Academy prohibits all use of punitive punishment. Any form of corporal punishment is considered physical abuse and is prohibited along with verbal mistreatment and the use of harsh punishment. We believe that discipline should be reasonable and logical in nature. We advise proper behavior, and present the consequences if the behaviors are not appropriate. Example: "The ball will be taken away if you bounce it against the window." We avoid consequences that are illogical or impractical. Threats, hurtful comments, remarks or withholding of food are not acceptable methods of discipline and are never used. "Time Out:" When a child is out of control and a disruption to the group he/she may be placed in a quiet corner of the room for time out. The minutes in time correlate with the child's age. Example: three minutes for a three year-old, Etc. Children are given a quiet activity (puzzle, book, etc...) during their time away from the group. "Time Out" is used infrequently and supervision of the child is mandatory. Aggressive physical behavior towards staff or children is unacceptable. GOOD BEHAVIOR IS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED AND PRAISED

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

The objective of this plan is to reduce the possibility of harm to the children, facility and visitors to the center in the event of an emergency. Care must be taken to ensure that all occupants are aware of the TCA's basic procedures. In case of emergency or drill, everyone will leave the building in an orderly manner. Our teachers and staff will search their rooms and close all doors before leaving. Additionally, the Director or designee will search all areas within the center and ensure all occupants have been safely evacuated. Teachers will refuse assistance from anyone not previously identified as a support person. This does not include police or emergency personnel. Children who need special assistance will be provided help to exit the building. At the assembly area, teachers will immediately take a head count of each classroom group to ensure that everyone is present and accounted for, and will report the final head count to the Director or designee. Names of any missing children or missing personnel will be reported. Parents will not be allowed to remove a child from the custody of the center during the evacuation. Once all children are accounted for at the assembly area, parents may be allowed to sign out their children.

Assembly Areas

Primary:

Capital City Bank
207 N Main Street
Hastings, FL 32145

Secondary

Gator Parts
319 N. Main Street
Hastings, FL 32145

Should we have to evacuate the building for any reason, each parent will be notified of which Assembly Area/ location their child can be picked up from.

Receipt of Handbook

**A copy of this page must be submitted with your application*

This is to confirm that I have read **The Carter Academy Parent Handbook** and agree to adhere to the policies outlined within.

Child/Children's Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

DATED: _____

Signature: _____

DATED: _____