



FOUNDATIONS

Early Learning Academy

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Contact Information

Center Name	Foundations Early Learning Academy
Address	8001 Waterloo Avenue Abbeville, La 70510
Phone Number	337-283-0317
Website	www.foundationsearlylearningacademy.com
Email Address	foundationsela@yahoo.com
Owner/ Director Assistant Director	Ashley Trahan 337-344-0834 Jen Webb 337-356-2964

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Mission Statement

Building a strong foundation for future success!

Foundation's Focus

- Safety and well-being of children is our top priority
- Keeping parents highly involved in our activities
- Providing children with an environment where they can learn and prepare to reach their full potential in Kindergarten
- Creating an environment where everyone is welcome
- Easing the transition between home and school

Our Philosophy

At Foundations Early Learning Academy, our goal is to provide a loving child and parent centered environment where all children, parents and their families feel welcomed and valued. Children participate in a program of educationally challenging activities and supportive personal interactions planned to foster their social, physical, emotional and intellectual development. All Educators are responsible for working with children, parents, family members, and other staff members in the spirit of collaboration and dedication.

Our education philosophy is that young children develop and learn best when they have opportunities to:

- Observe and be part of respectful, supportive and friendly adult-child and child-child interactions
- Engage in experimenting, exploring, creating, discovering and idea-sharing, which are all part of the children's activities adults describe as 'child's play'
- Make choices and become involved in activities that are personally and developmentally right for them

Early Childhood Education Standards

- Foundations Early Learning Academy holds a Type 2 license through the Louisiana Department of Education
- All regulations can be found at <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood/child-care-and-development-fund-licensing>

Parents' Grievances and Suggestions

We at Foundations Early Learning Academy are open and interested in your feedback. If any parent should have a grievance or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Family Involvement

Family involvement is as integral a component of high-quality child care as providing direct education and care to children. We respect and support families by maintaining ongoing communication between Educators and parents (and other important family members). Educators communicate with families through regular parent-Educator communication, daily reports and bulletin board displays of children's learning. This way immediate concerns can be properly addressed before minor problems become big ones.

Emergent Learning

Educators use assessment results to create appropriate goals for each child. These goals are used to generate daily, weekly, and monthly curriculum plans. Educators use observation and assessment results to guide program planning and to create an individualized curriculum. The use of systematic assessment as a basis for classroom planning is an integral part of our emergent learning approach.

Parent and Family Definitions

In this Family Handbook, and in all other forms and correspondence, we use the term 'parent' or 'parents' to indicate the adult or adults legally responsible for the child. A parent can be the child's biological parent, a step-parent, a foster parent, an adoptive parent, or a legal guardian assigned by the court. You (the parent) tell us who you include when you use the term 'family'. This can include a child's sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, but it can also include friends and neighbors that are dear and important to you. Parents establish in writing which family members and friends are allowed to pick up their children from our center and who should be notified in case of an emergency.

Family Members as First Educators

Children learn about the world from their parents and other important family members from birth through childhood to adulthood. While your child is enrolled in our Academy, you have a golden opportunity to learn a great deal about high-quality early childhood education. Digital communications, parent meetings and workshops, parent lending library resources and conferences with your child's Educator are all ways to learn how children's development can be promoted in all areas.

Parents are the experts when it comes to their own children. The Educators don't know your child nearly as well as you do, but they have known hundreds of children your child's age and they have gone to school to learn about child development and early childhood education. When you share your special knowledge of your child and your family, and the Educator shares her or his general knowledge of how children learn and grow in healthy ways, you are both better equipped to meet the challenges of successful childrearing at home and at school. The Educator gets to know your child better by talking with you. The better the Educator understands your child, the better she or he can individualize your child's education to capitalize on your child's interests and skills.

It is helpful to tell the Educator what is important to you about your child's education and upbringing. The Educator can make adjustments in the classroom to honor these values. Often, the Educator can show how our educational program already supports values commonly held by parents such as the goal of high academic achievement for their children.

Parent-Educator Partnership

The lead Educator in your child's classroom is in charge of the curriculum, schedule and supervision of all other staff in that room. Feel free to set up an appointment to discuss any concerns or questions with the lead Educator. Educators are able to correspond with parents by email. All Educators keep records documenting individual children's growth. They track children's interests, skills and conceptual development. This data is used to write reports for parents, which Educators present at conferences, and it is used to tailor curriculum to each child's learning needs in the class.

Admissions

Admission to Foundations Early Learning Academy is open to children age 1 up to age 5. Current students are allowed to pre-register each year. Applications are reviewed on a first-come basis.

Discipline Policy (Green Choice/ Red Choice Chart)

Teaching students to make good choices is HARD! Students need to learn how to make good choices just like they need to learn their letters and numbers. Social development directly affects ALL other areas of learning. One of our main goals for students is to be happy, confident learners who can solve problems and work collaboratively with others. Being able to make good choices when they are alone and interacting with others is a BIG part of that.

Foundations uses the "Pocket of Preschool" system of teaching children about their actions by implementing a green/red choice behavior chart. We introduce green and red choices over several class meetings. Green choices are good choices and red choices are bad choices. This system gives us an opportunity to have an open discussion with students about their choices. Students can ask questions, reflect, and talk about them. We introduce the choices a handful at a time, not all at once.

If there is a reoccurring problem in our classroom we have a class meeting to talk about the red choices students are making and what green choices they could make instead.

Classroom Educators embrace and uphold a few basic rules and routines and give warnings and reminders (for scheduled transitions as well as for rules of behavior). Gently and consistently, Educators insist on compliance. In general, we try not to say 'no' and 'don't'. Educators make an effort to frame directions in positive language (instead of 'don't run', we say 'walk indoors, please').

Students making bad choices (red choices) will get two warnings upon the first and second instances of the child not acting safely, or being irresponsible or disrespectful. If the child continues the action that is unacceptable, the child will receive a third strike and a time-out. It is explained to the child as "when you make red choices", you must take a break from the class". The child will be removed from the group and asked to sit in a chair by themselves, but still within the same classroom. They will be asked to sit for a few short minutes to calm down and think about how to make green choices. The time-outs will last the amount of time that corresponds with the child's age (for example, if the child is 3, they will get a 3 minute time-out). Before rejoining the group we will briefly discuss what appropriate behaviors will need to be used to be a part of the group again. The Green/Red Choice chart will be used to reteach "Making Good Choices".

Parents will be notified immediately if their child is consistently (3 or more time outs during one school day) making red choices. A family conference will be scheduled and daily logs will be provided to parents.

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Foundations Early Learning Academy has a **ZERO** tolerance policy for extreme behavior. Conferences will be scheduled with parents if particular disciplinary problems occur. **If a child's behavior consistently disrupts the learning process, the Director has the right to terminate enrolment for that particular child.**

It is strongly against our policy to physically discipline children (no spanking, hitting or shaking). We do not believe in threatening shaming or belittling children for misbehavior. We never withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline, nor do we bribe children with food or any other treat in order to get them to do what we want.

Dress Code

Clothing must consist of play clothes that promote freedom of movement and freedom from worry about spills, splatters, and dirt. Some of the projects that your child will be doing may get quite messy at times. Clothing should also be simple enough for your child to get in and out of easily, with little or no help. Belts are not allowed because they can hinder your child's ability to use the bathroom quickly and can lead to embarrassing accidents. Clothing with fasteners that children can handle themselves builds confidence. **Closed toed, rubber shoes are mandatory.**

Items from Home

Change of Clothes

If your child had a busy and involved day at school, chances are he or she got at least a little dirty. Each child is required to have an extra set of clothes in his/her cubby at all times. These extra clothes should be sent to school in a large zip-loc bag that is clearly labeled, and should include a complete change of clothes. In the event that these extra clothes are used, please replace them the following day.

All clothing should be marked with your child's name. This is essential for sweaters, jackets, coats, and hats

Naptime

Please send one beach towel or small blanket for your child to use during nap time. This item will go home **ONLY** on Fridays to wash and return on Monday. Stuffed animals, pacifiers and other sleeping toys are **NOT ALLOWED.**

Birthdays

Talk to the Educators at least two days before if you wish to provide treats to celebrate your child's birthday. The Educators will help you decide what and how much to bring, but here are some guidelines:

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- No balloons! Due to the choking hazard they present, balloons are not allowed in licensed child care centers.
- Standards require commercially prepared goods only. This protects children with allergies, and ensures that foods consumed at school are prepared according to local health department specifications. **NO HOMEMADE ITEMS ALLOWED**
- No gifts, please. Keep it simple; cupcakes and singing are what make the party in the eyes of the child!

Meals

All meals and snacks provided by the center, and their preparation, service and storage, shall meet the requirements for meals of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), 7 CFR 226.20, and LAC 51:XXIII.

Foundations may use wheat, egg, soybean, dairy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Please be aware that normal operations involve shared cooking and preparation areas, including common fryer oil and grills. The possibility exists for food items to come in contact with other food products. Due to these circumstances, we are unable to guarantee that any menu items can be completely free of allergens.

No outside food will be allowed in the Academy for breakfast, lunch or snack unless required by a doctor's order due to medical issues.

The weekly menu will:

1. Be planned for each day of the week and list the specific food items served
2. Be prominently posted by the first day of each week and remain posted throughout the week; and
3. Have substitutions or additions posted on or near the menu.

Foundations will serve breakfast, lunch and snack daily

Children under age four shall not have foods that are implicated in choking incidents. Examples of these foods include, but are not limited to: whole hot dogs, hot dogs sliced in rounds, raw carrot rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonful of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than what can be swallowed whole.

Children shall be allowed a reasonable time to eat each meal and snack. Children shall not be forced to finish all their food.

Food shall be given to children on individual plates, cups, napkins, or paper towels, as appropriate, and individual utensils shall be provided, as appropriate.

Drinking water shall be readily available indoors and outdoors to children at all times.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6 and 17:407.40(A)(4).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 41:640 (April 2015), effective July 1, 2015, amended LR 44:257 (February 2018), effective March 1, 2018, LR 44:1867 (October 2018).

Fees and Payment Schedule

Registration Fee of \$100 must be paid (non-refundable) in full to secure enrolment for the coming school year. Parent must agree to pay the non-refundable registration fee upon registration. Enrolment in Foundations Early Learning Academy will not be guaranteed until registration is paid in full.

Tuition payment in the amount of \$600 is due monthly. The parent/guardian agrees to be responsible for the tuition payment for the 2020-2021 School Year (August 1, 2020 – July 31, 2021). The parent agrees to pay the tuition payment on the first day of attendance each month or split payment by the 1ST (\$300) and 15th (\$300) of each month. The parent understands that if payment is not made in full by the 15th, they are subject to a late fee of \$25.00 which will be added to the balance **each week** until the balance is paid in full. The parent understands they are subject to a \$35.00 fee assessed for a returned check which must be paid by the end of the month during which the fee was assessed. The parent/guardian understands that scheduled days are established by Foundations Early Learning Academy. Fees will not be waived or refunded for school days missed due to family vacations, illness, unforeseen closures due to inclement weather or for any other reason.

All payments can be made in the form of cash or auto draft.

Withdrawal Of Services Policy

Parents must provide A **MINIMUM 2 WEEKS WRITTEN NOTICE** for termination of enrolment at Foundations Early Learning Academy. Even if your child does not attend during that two week period, payment is still required. Any fees not paid on time with regards to termination of services will also be subject to previously stated late fees, until full payment is received. If fees are not paid, the unpaid bill will be placed into collections.

Record-Keeping

It is extremely important to tell us about changes in your home address, home phone number, workplace (or school), work (or school) address, work (school) telephone, and cell phone of parents in the home, emergency contacts and all those authorized to pick up the child. For your child's welfare we must be able to reach you (or your alternative emergency contacts), all day, every day. Keep us informed in writing immediately of phone number changes.

All pertinent information related to your child's health should be updated regularly, including allergies, food restrictions, medical procedures, health

conditions, your pediatric health providers and dentist's name, address and phone number.

Child Pick-Up Authorization

Children are only permitted to be picked up by those the enrolling parent(s) authorize. These persons are listed on the pick-up authorization provided in your registration packet. Keep the list up-to-date. If you need to ask someone to pick up your child who is NOT on the authorization, please notify us ahead of time by adding them in writing to your child's pick-up authorization. Anyone picking up a child should be prepared to supply photo identification. **(Signed Child Pick-Up Authorizations will be placed in student's folder)**

When dropping off or picking up your child, **NEVER** leave your child unattended. **DO NOT** leave children of any age unattended by parked or moving vehicles. All children **must be** directly supervised by an adult family member during drop off and pick up time.

Drop-Off / Pick-Up Process

Drop-off Lanes

Foundations provides two drop-off lanes for the convenience of our families. One lane features a covered awning and one does not. Families are asked not to park in staff parking spaces during the drop off process. Families should pull as far forward as possible in the available drop off lanes, park their vehicle, hold their children's hands and bring them into the classroom during the drop-off period. Families are asked to follow the same process during the pick-up period ensuring the safety of ALL children. Parents are asked to respect the needs of all families by dropping off and picking up children as quickly, as safely possible.

If a parent needs to address issues with an Educator and cannot do so effectively through email, we ask that they hold all conversations to the pick-up time. Additionally, parents who need to discuss significant issues are asked to contact the director directly to schedule a one on one meeting.

When dropping off or picking up your child, **NEVER** leave your child unattended. **DO NOT** leave children of any age unattended by parked or moving vehicles. **DO NOT** leave other children unattended in your vehicle. All children **must be** directly supervised by an adult family member during drop off and pick up time.

Drop-off/ Pick-up Times

Drop-off time begins at 6:30 am. ALL students must check-in by 9 am. Students will not be allowed to check-in after 9am unless prior arrangements have been made. This policy helps to ensure that all students are provided uninterrupted learning during morning lessons.

All students must be picked up by 6 pm.

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All children must be signed in each morning and out each afternoon. After sign out, the child will be allowed to leave the classroom with the adult.

We ask that all parents adhere to a “no cell phone” policy **when on our property**– not only for safety reasons but so you can give your child the full attention he/she wants and deserves at the beginning and end of each school day.

Penalties for Late Pick-Up

Parents picking up children after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child. Late fees are payable in cash to the closing teacher upon pick up.

Inclement Weather Closures

We aim to notify parents at least 24 hours in advance of any anticipated closures due to inclement weather, most notably in the case of a major flood, snow or ice storm. It is possible that in some case, a 24 hours' notice is not possible. All family members will be notified through Himama! If you do not receive notification regarding a weather related closure, assume the center is open as usual.

Holiday Closures (our center will be closed on the following days)

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Mardi Gras Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day/ day after
- Christmas Eve / Christmas Day

Emergency Response/ Evacuation Plans

Foundations will maintain a comprehensive emergency response plan and emergency evacuation plan developed with state and local authorities, as required by Bulletin 137. A copy of the plan will be posted in the lobby.

Health Regulations

Each child entering Foundations Early Learning Academy must present proof of immunization as required by state law. This proof is to be presented in the form of a shot record dated and signed by the physician or healthcare provider. This record must be submitted in order to complete enrolment.

Please do not bring your child to school with any potentially communicable disease including, but not limited to, a cold, discharging eyes, rash, fever over 100.0, diarrhea, head lice/nits, or if he/she has had an upset stomach (vomiting) or fever within the past 24 hours. Until your child has been fever free and symptom free, without medication for 24 hours, he can still be contagious.

If your child has been placed on an antibiotic please keep him at home until he has been on the medication for at least 24 hours.

If your child becomes ill or injured at school, they will be isolated and made comfortable. Parents will be called and asked to make arrangements to have the child picked up within one hour. No one can care for your sick child like you, so please let us know if any of your contact numbers change during the school year.

Medication on Premises

If your child is on medication, try to arrange the medication schedule so your child does not need the medicine at school. If this is not possible, and if the medication is prescription, we can administer a dosage ONLY after the parent signs a Medication Administration Release form.

If your child is required, by a physician, to maintain either an EpiPen or a Rescue Inhaler

Please provide us with any medications that your child would need in an emergency (for example, rescue inhalers, or an EpiPen for allergic reactions).

Complete and sign a medication checklist. Under no circumstances may children hold their own medicines, and medications may never be kept in children's cubbies. [Nothing may be in the classroom labeled 'Keep out of Reach.']

Child Abuse/Neglect

If there is any abuse or neglect suspected of any children in our care, our team is required to report it to Child Protective Services. Please be aware also that children will not be released to impaired individuals. If our team has reason to believe that any family member or guardian picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child and the incident will be reported.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Types of information which are kept confidential and shared only with those who need it to carry out their jobs include: medical history including any current or suspected medical problems; family status; financial information; and other personal issues like family matters or children's behaviors.

Access to written records is restricted to administrative staff, state monitors, and the Educators directly responsible for the child. In order for records to be released to any other person, school or agency, written permission is needed from the child's parent.

Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a day care, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

When Biting Does Occur:

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The "Injury Occurring at School" form is filled out documenting the incident.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "NO! DO NOT BITE!"
2. The child will be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (one year old, one minute).
3. The parents are notified.

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4. The "Parent Contact Form" is filled out documenting the incident.

When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for 2 business days.
3. If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements. If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again. If a child bites twice in a 4 hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the 2 day suspension.