

# Parent Handbook



Preparing children with the intellectual, social, and emotional tools for success through intentional and high quality academics, exposure to fine arts and sciences and nourishment of their social development through a rich and carefully designed environment.

# Welcome

## About me:

I am Christian Montgomery, owner/operator and lead classroom instructor at The Academic Foundation. As a graduate of Howard University and an educator of 16 years I have passionately taught reading and math content across Kindergarten through 3rd grade. I have also served as an academic readiness coach and interventionist for the Archdiocese of Chicago providing additional support for children to meet grade level standards. I was successfully able to grow students 1.5 years of demonstrated growth in a 9 month period. As a mother of two, both my daughters were avid readers by the age of 3. Having read over 1,000 books combined by the start of their Kindergarten year, they were both at a 3rd grade reading level leading them to one of the most sought after selective enrollment schools on Chicago's Southside.

## Mission Statement:

The Academic Foundation's mission is to prepare children with the intellectual, social, and emotional tools for success through intentional and high quality academics, exposure to fine arts and sciences and nourishment of their social development through a rich and carefully designed environment.

## Philosophy:

The Academic Foundation believes that **ALL** children are gifted and deserve an opportunity to study and compete in rich academic environments. The Academic Foundation is determined to prepare preschool- age children for not only Kindergarten, but ultimate success.

## Hours of Operation:

We are open Monday- Friday from 7:45am-5:00pm.

### The Academic Foundation Schedule

7:45-Drop off

8:00-8:45 Breakfast/ Fine Motor Exploration

8:50-9:15 Morning Meeting

9:20-10:20 Reading Block

10:25-10:45 Snack

10:50-11:50 Math

11:55-1:00 Lunch/Recess

1:10-2:30 Nap

2:35-3:00 Snack/Dismissal

3:15-4:15 Enrichment Hour

4:20-5:30 Free Play/Dismissal

**Late pick-up policy-** It is expected that parents arrive no later than 5:30pm. Parents will be charged \$1 per minute after the pick up time. For example, if you arrive at 5:37pm you will be charged \$7. Lateness will be documented and not acceptable should it be on a regular basis.

The daycare will be closed on all statutory holidays and if any other closures are expected, for instance on non-statutory holiday days, notice will go out to parents at least 2 weeks in advance. An updated calendar of events is posted at the beginning of each quarter featuring important dates and closures.

## We will be closed on the following Holidays:

New Years Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Emancipation Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, \*Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, \*Christmas Eve , \*Christmas Day, 2-4 Professional Development Days will be added to the calendar with a 30 day notice

**\*\*Full fees are due regardless of statutory holidays or holiday days off.**

## Enrollment Requirements:

- Signed Parent contract & Rate Agreement
- Completed Child Profile
- Copy of Immunization (or signed waiver)
- Signed consent forms
- Blue card
- All about me packet

\*Spaces will not be held by verbal contract, a minimum deposit of 2 weeks must be paid in order to reserve a spot for your child.

## Payment Procedures:

Forms of payment include electronic payment (preferred) or cashier's check.

All fees must be paid by Friday for the following week of service. If payment is not received by Monday, a late payment fee of \$50 will be applied to your account. In order to ensure accurate supplies to keep the school running efficiently, fees must be on time. Students are not allowed in class on Monday without payment received. After 3 late payments, fees may be required 2 weeks in advance, or service may be suspended.

**Full fees are due regardless of a child's illness, statutory holidays or holiday days off.**

A receipt for fees paid throughout the year will be provided at the end of each year. Receipts are also available electronically via your HoneyBook account. Fees are subject to increase with a minimum of 30 days notice.

The Academic Foundation offers a family discount of 5% off your bill for families with multiple children.

## Vacation:

*\*The Academic Foundation will be closed for two weeks during Winter Break and Summer Intermission (please see calendar). Families are responsible for one week of payment. Mandatory fundraising efforts will cover the second week of both Winter and Summer intermission.*

## Arrival to The Academic Foundation:

## Signing in and out/Attendance Records Policy:

Children are signed in and out by their parent/guardian upon their arrival and departure. If your child will not be attending care, please inform the center by 8am. This will help us keep an accurate record of attendance. Via text or voicemail, communicate the reason for absence (personal, religious, illness)--if it is a communicable illness, we are required to record in case of a break out. If we are unable to answer the call, please leave a message.

If someone else will be picking up your child please inform the staff upon arrival and have a note stating who the person leaving with your child is. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child. Please let any individuals other than parents who may pick up the children know that they will be asked for a picture ID in order to ensure the safety of all children. \*Children are not permitted to leave with any person who does not have a note/photo ID.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child without proper notification, we will not release your child until we have confirmed with legal parent/guardian that this is in fact permitted, received written communication from you, as well as confirmed a photo ID of that individual.

## Clothing Code:

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate clothing. Please note, some activities we do on a daily basis can be messy. A spare change of clothes is required for all children in the case of soiling clothes. The Academic Foundation wants to keep your children happy and comfortable.

Sneakers and socks are required every single day. It is never appropriate to dress your child in sandals, open toed shoes, or croc like shoes. In winter months, boots are acceptable.

A separate set of indoor shoes will be provided by The Academic Foundation. Children MUST wear socks everyday.

Please also remember whenever weather permits the children are taken outside for 1 hour per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable for outdoor play.

### Items Needed From Home:

- A labeled bag to fit your child's spare clothing and any over the counter topical ointments, sunscreens and repellants. This bag will be left hanging in our foyer on your child's hook. You are expected and responsible to look through this weekly/daily and restock any items from home that your child may need.
- Spare Clothing – including underwear and socks.
- Sunscreen/Sunblock/Insect Repellent and a wide-brimmed hat. \*Please note that I am required to have a signed document allowing permission for myself to use these items on your child. My program does not supply these items so please keep these items stocked for your child.
- Weather appropriate clothing - jacket/splash/snow pants/hats/mitts, boots etc. –lack of weather appropriate clothing could prevent not only your child from enjoying our outdoor play time, but the entire classroom if the assistant is not present. Please ensure you dress your child for outdoor play everyday.

Please ensure that children come dressed in “play” clothes. Although we are careful while doing art, cooking and playing outside; there are instances where clothes could become dirty and stained. I appreciate your understanding and so do the children. Extra supplies can be left at the daycare and replenished when necessary. The Academic Foundation is not responsible for any of your child's clothing damaged from play.

### Absences/Exclusion from Daycare:

If a child is ill, please keep him/her home. The best place for a child to recuperate from an illness is at home. It is extremely important that The Academic Foundation is kept as “germ-free” as possible to prevent the spread of sickness to other children. It is also important that the staff remain healthy to care for children. There are also many symptoms that a child may have that may prevent them from being able to partake in everyday activities. If your child experiences any of the following (for the safety of our center) please keep them home until they are gone, or are well enough to participate in normal everyday activities:

- Excessive drainage (clear or discolored) from the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears.
- Red discoloration to the whites of the eye(s).
- Skin rashes as they are difficult to diagnose unless seen by a physician.
- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhea.
- A deep, hacking cough
- Difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing
- Yellow discharge from the eyes
- An unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing
- Lice or nits
- Pain - any unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Difficulty in breathing - wheezing or persistent cough
- Fever (100.0° F/ 38.3°C or higher) – child must be free from fever (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to care at the facility
- Sore Throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin or eyes (mucus/pus draining) or an undiagnosed rash
- Severe body or scalp itching
- Children with a known or suspected communicable disease/illness
- Vomiting - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without vomiting
- Diarrhea (as defined by an increase in frequency and loosening of stool) - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without loose stools/diarrhea
- Just not feeling good - a child must be well enough to participate in the entire child care day to be at school

If your child(ren) are sent to daycare with any of the above listed symptoms, or develop these symptoms during the day they will be sent home. Children should NEVER be medicated and then sent to daycare (i.e. given Tylenol to break fever). You should arrange for alternative care when your child is sick. Unfortunately there are no refunds

or discounts for days that your child does not attend daycare. There are still costs that unfortunately cannot be avoided if your child is not in attendance.

If your child will not be attending daycare due to illness or any other reason, please let me know as soon as possible, as well as the reason they will not be attending. This will prevent activities from being delayed.

**\*\*For the safety of our center, please do not bring children back into the program without a dated, signed, doctor's note stating that the child is well enough to continue participating in the program.\*\***

**\*\*Full fees are due regardless of a child's illness.**

### Developing Illness Policy:

In the event a child becomes ill during the course of the day, to the point where they are not capable of participating in regular activities, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and be required to come pick the child up. If the parents/guardians can't be reached the alternate emergency contact person will be called to come pick up the child. Please make sure that members of your emergency list will be aware of this. Allergy related and common cold symptoms as well as non-communicable diseases/illnesses do not require that the child be excluded from care.

If any of the following conditions are present, it is required that children be excluded from care: Children may return to care when they are free of symptoms and approved to return by a medical doctor.

- Pain - any unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Difficulty in breathing - wheezing or persistent cough
- Fever (100.0° F/ 38.3°C or higher) – children must be free from fever (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to care at the facility
- Sore Throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin or eyes (mucus/pus draining) or an undiagnosed rash, severe body or scalp itching
- Children with a known or suspected communicable disease/illness



- Vomiting - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without vomiting
- Diarrhea (as defined by an increase in frequency and loosening of stool) - 2 or more times in 24 hours - may return to care after 24 hours without loose stools/diarrhea
- Cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing
- Lice or nits
- Excessive drainage (clear or discolored) from the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears.
- Just not feeling good - a child must be well enough to participate in the entire child care day to be at daycare
- A deep hacking cough

\*\*\*Parents are required to inform The Academic Foundation of any serious illness or communicable /contagious disease (with their child or within their family) within 24 hours to allow other families within the child care center to be alerted.

### Medications:

At this time, The Academic Foundation is not allowed to administer medications to children. Should that change, families will be informed.

With any prescription antibiotics, children may not return to care until they've had a full 24 hours of dosage, are no longer contagious and ready to participate in the full child care day, to ensure they are well on the road to recovery and must have a doctor's note.

If your child is given medication to be taken by a doctor to heal from an illness, please note that I am unable to administer these medications. It is asked that you/ parent/guardian or someone in the 3rd degree of consanguinity come to give your child the medication. Children are not to attend childcare services while on antibiotics.

### Allergies:

All allergies (and dietary concerns) will be clearly documented on the child's emergency info/consent cards. Children are not permitted to share food. If you send any food with

your child, or donate any food to any functions held at The Academic Foundation, please ensure that these foods are PEANUT FREE. If they do not have the appropriate symbols or ingredients list then they will not be served to anyone for safety reasons, and will have to be returned home, or discarded.

If your child has any dietary restrictions or allergies, please let me know in writing and provide me with the necessary medical statement from a doctor. If your child has an epipen or inhaler, please provide it to me with a label and expiration date. It is required that you provide The Academic Foundation training on how to use these.

### Child Abuse/Neglect:

If there is any abuse or neglect suspected of any children in my care, by law I am required to report it. Please be aware that children will NOT be released under any circumstances to impaired individuals. If I have reason to believe that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The incident will also have to be documented and reported.

### Discipline Policy:

Discipline and guidance centers around our core values: **respect, integrity, kindness, responsibility** and **cooperation**. Each child is expected to demonstrate the core values when engaging with their peers and adults.

The Academic Foundation's classroom management is proactive and intentional-thus creating and nurturing an environment where children can engage and participate in a meaningful way learning to create positive choices. We will offer regular incentives to create a positive culture and maintain motivation.

Children who present a threat to themselves or others will be removed from the program. Safety of the children is our priority and responsibility.

### Behavior Management Plan:

1. Involve the children in the development of the classroom expectations.
2. Redirect. In a conflict, give an alternate toy or activity to one of the children

competing for the toy. Have multiples of popular toys.

3. Focus on “Do” rather than “Don’t.” For example, “We walk inside” instead “Stop running inside.”
4. Offer choices: “You can either sit on the rug or at the table for story time.”
5. Encourage children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example: suggest using the phrase, “I was playing with that toy.”
6. Praise positive behavior: “Thank you for using your words.”
7. Model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example.
8. Arrange the program space to positively impact children’s behavior.
9. Listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. Keeping the children engaged with activities to help prevent conflict.

## Behavior & Conduct Policy

At The Academic Foundation, we believe a safe, respectful, and structured learning environment is essential for academic growth and social development. All students are expected to demonstrate our core values daily:

- **Respect** – treating peers, adults, materials, and the learning environment with care
- **Integrity** – being honest, accountable, and doing the right thing even when it is difficult
- **Kindness** – using words and actions that are supportive and inclusive
- **Responsibility** – following directions, managing personal belongings, and taking ownership of behavior
- **Cooperation** – working positively with peers and adults, following classroom routines, and contributing to the learning community

## **Behavioral Expectations**

Students are expected to:

- Follow adult directions promptly
- Use appropriate language and physical behavior
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves
- Participate in learning activities without disruption
- Demonstrate self-control and problem-solving skills appropriate to their developmental level

## **Incident Reporting & Disciplinary Action**

Behavior that interferes with learning, compromises safety, or violates the school's core values will be documented as an **incident**.

- Each incident will be **recorded and communicated to families**
- After **each recorded incident** a **mandatory parent conference** will be scheduled
- Following the third parent conference, **any additional incident may result in immediate termination of enrollment.**

## **Enrollment Termination**

Students who accumulate **three (3) incident reports** are subject to **termination from The Academic Foundation**.

Due to the size and structure of our program, **The Academic Foundation does not have the resources or staffing capacity to accommodate ongoing or significant behavioral challenges**. Families are encouraged to carefully consider whether our program is an appropriate fit for their child's needs prior to enrollment.

## **Commitment to Fit**

Our goal is to partner with families who share our commitment to:

- Strong behavioral expectations
- Accountability and consistency
- A learning-focused environment

Maintaining these standards allows us to provide a high-quality educational experience for all students.

## **Telephone Communication:**

If you need to contact the daycare for any reason, please feel free to phone (773-892-5142). If you reach the voicemail, please leave a message, as we are often engaged with the children. We check messages regularly and return phone calls. Texts are preferred. Thank you for your understanding. If you call outside of daycare hours please leave a detailed message. We will return your call during business hours.

## **Parent Involvement:**

Our doors are always open to parents who would like to be more involved in their child's care and education. Parents who wish to volunteer for special activities or events, can request a **volunteer form**. The Academic Foundation is open to any comments, suggestions and feedback from parents regarding programming and/or the care of their children. In addition to report card conferences, The Academic Foundation will host one quarterly event to encourage family engagement.

## **Photographs/Video Cameras:**

The Academic Foundation will take photos and videos to record and document our activities and daily achievements. We do understand the delicacy and sensitivity of public consumption. Please take your time and read through the **photo/video consent form** attached. This gives The Academic Foundation permission to use your child's photo in marketing/advertisement materials, social media platform, website.

\*We do have a video monitoring system protecting the exterior of the center.

### Use of the property:

- Smoking on the premises is prohibited.
- Please do not litter on the property.
- Owner is not responsible for accidents that take place on the property.
- Please watch over children closely when entering/exiting daycare or the car. Please reinforce to the children to never run in the road, to look both ways for cars, and to stay close to their parent/guardian at all times (this is one of our learning lessons as we take stroller walks, practice fire drills, and exit the side entrance for outdoor play). Always practice and prioritize safety.
- When dropping off or picking up with your other children who are not enrolled in the program, please keep a close eye on them.

### Withdrawal/Termination Of Services Policy:

**A MINIMUM 1 MONTH WRITTEN NOTICE is required for termination of childcare services.** 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 child care services will also be subject to daily late fees, until full payment is received. If fees are not paid, the unpaid bill will be placed into collections.

In the event of any concerns, a meeting can be scheduled to address the issues. The meeting will involve the owner/operator, and involved staff members and the parents/guardians involved. The concerns will be clearly stated (ex. late payment, failure to adhere to center policies, behavioral problems etc.) and discussed. Meeting minutes will be taken, and solutions will be sought in a fair, respectful and just manner. A plan will be designed to resolve the issue. A second meeting will be scheduled to review the situation within a reasonable time frame. In the event the issue cannot be resolved, a 2 week written notice of termination of services will be given. You are required to pay for the child's final 2 weeks.

\*All Policy HandBooks must be read & followed up by the Guardian Signing & Agreeing to our HandBook & Fee Agreement on the next pages. Please sign attached copy.

I/We (the undersigned) have read the parent handbook for The Academic Foundation and understand all the information, policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. We (the undersigned) have also received a copy of these policies and procedures for our own records and reference.

By signing this agreement we consent to all the handbook policies and procedures and agree to them, including payment policies and late fee procedures. By signing this agreement we acknowledge that the information supplied in the registration form regarding our child(ren) and the information supplied below is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Owner/Operator Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**Childcare Tuition Rate: \$1,700/month (425/week/per child) to be paid weekly each Friday.**

**2 Days Part Time Tuition Rate: \$1040/month (\$260/week)**

**3 Days Part Time Tuition Rate: \$1560/month (\$390/week)**

**This includes but is not limited to: curriculum, supplemental materials and nutritional meals/snacks, and special activities and events. Parents are responsible for a change of clothing, sunscreens & proper outdoor apparel.**

# Additional Services at The Academic Foundation

## **Selective Enrollment Test Prep**

We offer 8 week selective enrollment test prep sessions for entering Kindergartners ahead of CPS's testing window to acclimate your child to the testing environment and sharpen their reading and math skills. Our test preparation curriculum includes intensive and advanced reading and math instruction, critical thinking skills practice and test environment preparation.

## **Academic Preparation Program (Accepting Applications Now)**

We offer a full day academic preparation program featuring 1 hour of math instruction and 1 hour of reading instruction.

**The Math Curriculum-**Our curriculum includes both **Eureka** and **Everyday Math**. Eureka Math is meticulously coherent, with an intense focus on key concepts that layer over time, creating enduring knowledge. Students gain a complete body of math knowledge, not just a discrete set of skills. Additionally, Everyday Mathematics is grounded in an extensive body of research into how children learn. The design of Everyday Mathematics allows children to gain an understanding of mathematical concepts and a solid mathematical foundation by offering a meaningful and practical experience with everyday math concepts and experiences.

**The Reading Curriculum-** Our reading curriculum includes the Orton Gillingham approach as well as a scope and sequence based on Illinois Common Core Standards. **Orton-Gillingham** is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy. It is most properly understood and practiced as an approach, not a method, program, or system. Additionally, our scope and sequence provides students with intense and direct instruction from Illinois' Common Core Standards.