



Big Pine Academy Early Learning Center Parent Handbook

30220 Overseas Highway, Big Pine Key, FL 33043

bigpineacademy.com

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Welcome to Big Pine Academy Early Learning Center. We are so thrilled that you chose our school for your child. We are honored to be trusted with your child, and look forward to getting to know you and your family. You are now a part of our SCHOOL FAMILY!

Philosophy of Learning

At Big Pine Academy Early Learning Center our mission is to provide a positive, safe and educationally stimulating environment for children. We believe that children learn best through hands on, developmentally appropriate play. Throughout the day our schedule is full of stimulating and engaging activities that help children grow in cognitive, physical, and social and emotional areas of development. Our professional staff receives continuous training throughout the year to be able to offer focused learning with lesson plans designed to encourage children to become independent, self-disciplined and caring individuals. Communication is a key component to a successful relationships, and we encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's learning.

Attendance

Attendance is important in both our PK3 and VPK programs as children thrive when consistent and predictable schedules are adhered to.

***Important notes regarding attendance in the VPK Program:** Attendance in the VPK is closely monitored by the state and as such it is imperative that children attend daily. Parents must sign in completely using their first and last name (no initials) in the attendance register **EVERY DAY**. A doctor's note is necessary for any absences in excess of 5 days or could result in non-payment from the state.

Payment of Tuition

Payment for tuition is due in advance on Monday for the following week. Payment can be made in the following ways:

- Online at bigpineacademy.com with a debit or credit card
- Check made payable to Big Pine Academy (pay in the office with Jen)
- Cash (pay in the office with Jen)

Tuition fees are charged each week, regardless of attendance. Big Pine Academy follows the Monroe County School District (MCSD) Calendar and will be closed for scheduled district holidays. A MCSD calendar will be given to each parent at the beginning of each school year.

*Please note that BPA closes for Winter break, Spring Break and Thanksgiving. Parents do NOT pay tuition during these breaks.

Drop Off

Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Parents should drop their children off in either the VPK classroom or the PK-3 classroom, making sure to sign in with first and last name (no initials) and the exact time in the attendance register. Children can be dropped off **NO EARLIER** than 7:45 or dropped **of NO LATER than 8:30** unless the child has a Doctor or Dentist appointment etc. Please call or text your child's teacher if a problem arises and your child cannot attend school for the day.

Pick-up

Please be sure to pick-up your child on time as follows:

Children following the 8-11 schedule **MUST** be picked up on or before 11:00 a.m. or will incur a **\$5 per hour late fee after 11:10 a.m.**

Children following the 8-5 schedule **MUST** be picked up on or before 5:00 or will incur a **\$1 per MINUTE late fee after 5PM**

We understand that emergencies or unforeseen situations occur and late pick-ups sometimes happen, but please contact your teacher if you think you might run into an issue.

Behavior Management

At BPA we have a Behavior Guidance Policy that is included in the registration packet downloaded from our website. BPA teachers shall provide each child with guidance that helps the child acquire positive self-concept and self-control. Behavior guidance used by each teacher will be constructive, positive, and suited to the age of the child at all times.

The following rules and standards apply.

1. To prevent unacceptable behavior from occurring the staff will:
 - Model appropriate behavior.
 - Arrange the classroom environment to enhance the learning of acceptable behaviors
 - Ensure ample materials are available for children in the classroom.
 - Maintain a consistent daily schedule for children.
 - Use visual and auditory cues for children such as clean-up whistle, visual daily schedule and learning songs.
 - Communicate expectations to children with positive language such as: say, "Walk in the classroom, (instead of, "stop running"), say, "Use gentle hands" (instead of "No hitting"), say, "Put the green blocks in the white bucket," (instead of "stop throwing the blocks").

2. When unacceptable behavior occurs or is about to occur, staff will use:
 - redirection—substitute a positive activity for a negative one
 - distraction –change the focus of the activity or behavior
 - active listening to determine the underlying cause of the behavior
 - holding and rocking a child will be done when needed
 - giving a break- or separation from the group is used as a last resort, only when less intrusive methods has been tried and or behavior of the child is dangerous to himself and/or others. In the event a break is used, a child will be separated from the group for so many minutes depending on their age (i.e. 3 year old, 3 minutes etc.).

Please refer to the Behavior Guidance Policy for any other questions you may have, and always feel free to discuss any questions or issues with your teacher.

Safety and Security

Please arrive NO EARLIER than 7:45 to drop off your child (class starts at 8:00 a.m.). Please be sure to walk your child all the way into their classroom, and always sign in to the attendance register. Our gate is locked at 8:30, so if you come after 8:30 due to an appointment, you will need to buzz in at the gate.

Your child MUST be picked up by a parent/legal guardian OR a person listed on the student information sheet. Teachers will verify id's for anyone other than the parent/legal guardian picking up children. This is VERY important as we take the security of your child VERY seriously. Please note if we are in doubt **WE WILL CALL OR TEXT BEFORE WE RELEASE A CHILD**. IF you know that you will NOT be picking up your child on any given day, **PLEASE**, communicate that to your teacher or staff member either in person at drop-off, text or by phone.

First Aid and Emergencies

If your child has a minor accident at BPA we will administer first aid. A written accident incident report will be filled out by the teacher and left for the parent to sign in the attendance register. If the accident is more serious we will take immediate steps to gain medical attention and contact you.

Fire Drills, Tornado, Hurricane and Lock Down drills

BPA practices a fire and lock down drill once a month. During these drills, we practice how to remain calm and encourage students to listen to their teacher. All drills are handled in a way that is age appropriate as not to instill fear in children, but instead prepare them just in case.

Illness

We expect parents to use their own judgment and consideration regarding illness, However, **YOU MUST KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME** if your child is exhibiting signs and symptoms of suspected communicable diseases including but not limited to:

1. Severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
2. Difficult or rapid breathing;
3. Stiff neck;
4. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period);
5. Temperature of 101 degree Fahrenheit or higher in conjunction with any other signs of illness;
6. Pink eye;
7. Exposed, open skin lesions;
8. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
9. Yellowish skin or eyes; or
10. Any other communicable disease symptoms

*Parents will be called immediately to come and pick-up their child if symptoms such as these occur during the school day.

** If antibiotics are prescribed, a child should be treated for 24 hours before returning to school. Please be sure to follow the doctor's prescribed orders.

Along with illness, if a child is identified as having head lice, he/she will not be permitted to return to school until the following day, and then only if treatment has occurred and been verified. Verification of treatment may include a product box, box top, empty bottle, a receipt for purchase of a lice treatment, or signed statement by a parent that the treatment has occurred.

Allergies

Any allergies MUST be documented and discussed with a teacher upon registration.

Dress Code

Children should adhere to the Big Pine Academy dress-code which could include a BPA t-shirt a pair of khaki shorts/pants, jeans or blue or khaki skirt. Belts should be avoided, if possible, so that independent dressing can be encouraged.

* Please refer to the Dress Code sheet included in the packet for more specifics.

Morning Snack

Parents are charged a yearly snack fee of \$50 due upon registration. This fee provides your child with a morning snack served at 9 a.m. This snack does not replace breakfast, so please be sure your child eats breakfast before arriving to school.

Lunch

If your child is staying past 11:00 a.m., be sure to pack a nutritious and filling lunch. Please be sure that you pack foods that do not require heating up. Also, please pack extra food for afternoon snack (2:00 p.m.) and enough if your child is staying until 5:00 p.m. as many children require an additional snack after outdoor play in the afternoon.

Daily Schedules

PK3 and VPK class teachers follow a consistent schedule every day. The classroom schedules are placed near the bulletin boards near the classroom doors for parents to see.

Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are displayed weekly near the bulletin boards near the classroom doors for parents to see.

Fees

BPA VPK and PK3 charge 2-yearly fees listed below and due at the beginning of each school year:

Snack Fee-\$50.00, provides for morning snack at 9:00 a.m.

Supply Fee-\$25.00, provides for supplies for each student such as paper, glue sticks, crayons, markers etc.