

Where Learning is Fun & Educational Academy

Parent Handbook

Welcome to LIFE Academy. Choosing childcare can be a very tough decision and the staff at LIFE Academy would like to thank you for your trust in us to provide your family with a superior level of childcare. We look forward to working with you and your child for years to come.

Parent involvement is monumental in the success of our center. The Parent Handbook is designed to help you understand our center's policies and procedures. LIFE Academy handbook is divided in two parts including Texas Child Care Licensing operational policies and LIFE Academy policies and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions about this handbook or any of its policies, please stop by the office, contact the Director by phone at (682) 224-6660, or send emails to info@lifeacademyschools.com.

**Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide a fun educational early childhood learning experience that sets the path for lifelong learning.

**Vision**

In the pursuit of excellence in the care, development, and education of young children in our community, LIFE Academy believes in the ancient proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. So, in partnership with families we will strive to promote and encourage your child to become all that he or she can be, by teaching education, life, and greatness.

**Philosophy**

**Your child** **is** a unique and capable individual who has their own interests, talents, skills and ideas that we nurture and develop.

**Family is** the most important and influential aspect in the lives of young children and the significance of their relationships is our foundation.

**Program** facilitates your child's active participation in our meaningful, integrated, emergent curriculum

**Educators and staff** are a highly regarded and valued resource in our center.

**Community** enhances the growth and development of your children, your families, and center educators and staff.

**Goals**

* Every child is an individual who has his/her own rate of physical and emotional

development, and his/her own rate of learning. Each child is accepted, loved, nurtured, and taught as an individual with this thought in mind.

* Encourage and build each child's imagination, creativity, self-worth, and self-confidence.
* Provide activities that will nurture the child's self-esteem and help him/her gain and keep a positive self-image.
* All activities will be guided with positive reinforcement, encouraging every child to try or try again, but will never be pressured into participation of any activity.
* All activities, both play and learning, will be geared towards your child's ability level.
* Parents are welcome to visit their children anytime during the day. I enjoy getting to know all parents. My main concern and goal in caring for your child is to see your child grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially to the best of his/her ability.

LIFE Academy is a year-round program that offers all childcare services for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Our daily activities and program consist of a flexible schedule that has been created to provide diversity and challenge for children in all age groups.  We offer a structured program for children of all ages that includes a year-round curriculum.  Our activities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, music, outdoor play and story time.

**CURRICULUM**

LIFE Academy uses an emergent curriculum as well as play-based and hands-on learning. With our experience, it is best to offer children various ways to learn because each child learns differently. The goal at life academy is for each child to continuously develop in many ways physically, socially, emotionally, in language and literacy, and thinking (cognitive) skills.

**DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

LIFE Academy is open year around and regular hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:00pm. All children are to arrive at the center no later than 9:00am to avoid interruption of daily activities. If a child will be late the parents are to notify the center so that the child can be counted in the daily count.

**HOLIDAYS**

LIFE Academy will be closed on all major holidays. Holidays include New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, ½ Day Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the Day after Christmas. There will be no reduction in tuition for these holidays due to them being paid holiday for our staff and are such considered attendance days. Holidays that fall on Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday, and holidays that fall on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

**ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE**

Each day your child comes into the center, they must be checked in and out by the parent. The tablet in the lobby will be used for checking children in and out. Each parent assigns themselves a code to access the computer. Please do not give this code to anyone. The access code allows parents to access account balances, notes/messages from staff, etc.

All children must be escorted into their classroom by an adult. Never leave your child at the front door. The classroom teacher must acknowledge your child's arrival before you can leave your child.

Only the parent or legal guardian may go straight to the classroom to pick up children. All authorized alternate persons on file such as family members, grandparents, aunts/uncles, friends, etc. MUST first check in at the front desk. A picture ID or driver's license will be required. The adult picking up the child must always supervise the child after leaving the classroom, both inside and outside the building and in the parking area.

Also, at the beginning and end of the day the children may be all in the same classroom for the first and last 30 to 45 minutes of the day.

**RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Texas Health and Human Services-Childcare Regulation standards requires that each childcare center have a plan to follow to verify the identity of a person authorized to pick up a child who is unknown to the staff. Children are released only to those people designated by the parents on their enrollment form. Our plan is as follows:

1. Checking driver' s license of persons other than parents who have been authorized to pick up. (even parents if we've never seen you before or new staff have not met you).
2. All new parents and staff will immediately be introduced to prevent the child leaving with unauthorized persons.
3. Staff members who do not recognize the person picking up will check the child's enrollment file to find out who is authorized to pick up and/or call the parent if necessary.

Information on pick up by person other than parents will be kept in the child's file. Any person whose behavior or health, appear to be an endangerment to themselves or the children will not be allowed in the center to pick up children.

**ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION**

Every effort is made by the center staff to prevent the spread of disease. Even with precautions, children entering care for the first time are likely to experience an increase in mild illnesses. The frequency and severity of these will vary from child to child. However, an average child under the age of five has six to twelve mild illnesses per year.

When a child is ill, they need a special level of attention and care, and we are not able to provide that care for one child, because we must also consider the rest of the children. Also, when ill children are at the center, they are potentially spreading germs to other children and to center staff. In addition, an ill child is vulnerable to catching a second illness while their immune system is overworked.

If your child is so ill that they need special care, and they are not able to participate normally in center activities, including outdoor play they should remain at home. If they become ill at school, you will be called upon to take your child home. If your child becomes ill and we cannot locate a parent, we will contact the person(s) you designated on your emergency care form and ask them to pick up your child. The center's staff is the final judges of the severity of illness.

The following conditions are causes for exclusion from the center unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the center's activities (must have signed not from the health-care professional):

* Oral temperature above 100.4 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or

other signs or symptoms of illness

* Armpit temperature above 99.4 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or

other signs or symptoms of illness; child must be fever free, without the use of

medication, for at least 24 hours before returning to childcare

* Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness, such as lethargy, abnormal

breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash

with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior changes, or other signs

that the child may be severely ill.

* A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
* Diarrhea (watery, bad-smelling stools more than once in succession). Children may return when normal function returns.
* Vomiting (two or more episodes in the last 24 hours). Children may return when they can retain a light meal.
* Persistent hacking or congested cough with sore throat (very red or blistered throat). Children may return with doctor's written permission.
* Green nasal discharge (indicated a respiratory infection which requires treatment). Children may return with doctor's written permission.
* Difficulty in breathing to the point where child is very uncomfortable or unable to sleep normally.
* Swelling, redness, or throbbing in an injured part of the body.
* Undiagnosed profuse rash or blisters on parts of the body.
* Head lice. Children may return after treatment and removal of all nits.
* Infectious skin or eye conditions (such as ringworm, impetigo, or pink eye). Children may return 24 hours after treatment with an antibiotic is begun.

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

If a child or staff member is diagnosed with an infectious or communicable disease, you will be notified by a sign on your child's classroom door. The sign will contain the name of the disease, the date diagnosed, and any symptoms that would alert you to the presence of the disease. It is your responsibility to report to the school any infectious or communicable disease for which your child is diagnosed. The student with the communicable disease must be cleared by a doctor before returning to the school. LIFE Academy reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

**ALLERGIES**

We must be aware of any known allergies that affect your child. If your child has any known allergies, you will need to fill out an "Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement". This allows us to alert all of our staff to be on guard of their allergy. The Allergy/Food Exemption Statement must be turned into our office as soon as this allergy has been identified.  This form must be updated annually. You will also need to fill out a "Authorization to give Medication" form if your child requires an Epi-pen 0or other emergency treatment.

**MEDICATION**

All medication to be given to children must be in the original bottle with the instructions clearly printed on it as provided by the doctor's prescription or by the pharmaceutical company. All medicine including scripted and un-scripted medications must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be expired. All prescription medication must have that child's name on the bottle. All non-prescription medicine must have a permanent sticker with the child's name and the date the medication was left at the center. A "Medication Authorization" form needs to be filled out prior to the administration of any medication.

All medications must be dropped off and picked up at the front desk, each day. These medications will be stored in a secure area inaccessible to children. Medication may not be transported to the classroom by families. **NO MEDICATION MAY BE PLACED IN THE CHILDS BAG OR TAKEN INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR ANY REASON**.

LIFE ACADEMY reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. LIFE ACADEMY reserves the right to request a doctor's consent via handwritten prescription for any non-prescription medications. A copy of the "Authorization to Give Medication" form along with the medication bottle and any remaining medication will be given returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication.

Exceptions to this rule are life-saving medications such as breathing treatments and Epi-Pens. Any child needing these types of medications administered it will be on an as needed basis. A Medical Authorization Form will need to be completed.

LIFE ACADEMY staff will apply insect repellant & sunscreen to your child as requested with a signed "Topical Ointment Authorization" form. **All sunscreen & insect repellant must be in spray form**.

**HANDLING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If a child becomes ill, the parent/guardian will be called. If we cannot locate a parent, we will contact the person(s) designated on the emergency care form and ask them to pick up the child. The center's staff is the final judges of the severity of illness. In the event of a child getting injured the staff will determine the severity of the injury (i.e., scrapes, bumps, bruises, etc.) We will administer first aid and forward an accident report home with the person that picks up the child at the end of the day. In case of a serious accident or injury, EMS (911) will be contacted first. Within the limits of their ability, the staff will administer first aid. We will make every attempt to contact the parent/guardian immediately. If we cannot reach them, we will call the person you have indicated on the forms to make medical decisions for your child. If we cannot reach anyone, we will release your child into the custody of the emergency paramedics to transport your child for immediate medical care. Staff is prohibited from transporting an injured child. A staff member will remain with your child until you arrive.

**SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at LIFE Academy will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

 Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

 Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full-size cribs.

  For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.

 Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.

 Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. o If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing, such as sleepers or footed pajamas, as an alternative to blankets.

 Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.

 Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant’s clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.

 If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

 Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e- cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).

 Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.

 If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.

 Awake infants will have supervised “tummy time” several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

 Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant’s health care professional.

**PARENT NOTIFICATIONS**

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

The success of our program is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication will help your child have a positive early learning experience. We will make every effort to keep you informed concerning your child's day and overall development through several written means.

* Monthly parent newsletters to keep you informed as to the overall program.
* Parent Board – updated with current information about LIFE Academy and curriculum
* Daily written communication through our Parent Engagement app, "Incident/ouch" forms, and classroom memos will be place in the child's "cubby" from time to time.
* Parent/Teacher meetings twice each year
* Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child's development.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Our staff wants to work with you to make sure we are providing the best childcare experience possible for you and your child. We need communication and support of our parents to do this. We will strive to be communicative during drop-off and pick-up times. However, this is not a good time for extended conversations since the staff members/teachers have responsibilities for all the children in the group. Furthermore, the person caring for your child at the pick-up time may not be the individual who has spent most of the day with your child. This is because many children spend 10 hours a day the center and most of our employees only work 6-8 hours. Since children learn best in the morning, we schedule the teachers who are responsible for most of the classroom development for the earlier hours and most of the day. We suggest that you go to your child's "lead" or "primary" teacher to obtain detailed information on your child's general growth and development. You can call to see how your child's day is going or to speak to your child's teacher for more detailed conversation. The best time to call and speak to your child's teacher is during naptime. There is always a member of management available for you to talk to in person or on the phone. You may also use the Payment/Suggestion box to leave information for Management, or you can e-mail us at info@lifeacademyschools.com.

**DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE**

1. Cool down (thumb). If necessary, the teacher calms down all parties (including her- or himself) and sets the scene for the mediation process. Note that the teacher may temporarily separate or remove children as part of this step—but only as a cooling-off period that leads to mediation, not as a punishment.

2. Identify the problem (pointer). The children (with help from the teacher as needed) put the problem into words and agree on the cause of their disagreement.

3. Brainstorm solutions (tall guy). The children (with the teacher's help as needed) come up with possible ways to solve the problem. Children often come up with a different solution from the "ideal" one the teacher might have in mind. Try to use

the children's ideas, even when you believe justice is not completely served. If the children work it out and agree to it, the solution is logical to them, and they benefit from the process.

4. Agree on a solution (ringer). The parties decide on one solution and try it. The teacher encourages the children to agree on a solution, even if she or he must suggest one from the brainstorming step. Often, before a solution is implemented, the teacher has a chat with the children, known as a guidance talk. She reviews what happened, talks about alternatives for the next time, and discusses ways to make amends. Occasionally the teacher follows up with one or both children later.

5. Follow up (pinky). The children try the solution. The teacher follows up by encouraging, monitoring, and if necessary, guiding their words and actions. A guidance talk with one or more children may also be a part of this step.

We expect our teachers to model the behavior that they expect from the children. Children learn best from positive adult role models, so our teachers will treat each child with respect and patience. Positive statements will act as reinforcement for positive behaviors. Discipline will be appropriate to each child and their developmental level.

Any demeaning, humiliating, or abusive language toward a child will not be accepted. No physical abuse, corporal punishment, or threats of corporal punishment will be allowed. Discipline may not consist of leaving the child alone in a room, taking away food, drink, or bathroom, or making the child stay silent for an unreasonable length of time. Recurrent discipline problems may result in a parent meeting with the teacher and the director. Together we will try and reach a solution to try and improve the behavior situation. If no solution can be reached or inappropriate behavior continues despite the resolution, the director reserves the right to remove a child from the center or take an alternate action including but not limited to suspension and/or termination.

**BITING**

The center understands occasional displays of aggression, like biting, are typical in young children and are part of normal childhood development. We understand that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. Repeated incidents of biting will not be tolerated. Our objective is to ensure that our center maintains the highest level of safety within our environment and our staff members respond appropriately to aggressive behaviors.

**SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN**

LIFE Academy supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, special needs/differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

Children with disabilities and other special learning needs will be welcome in our classrooms to the extent they can participate in our usual program. If necessary, parents may be asked to provide additional staff for a child requiring exceptional care. Staff will work with outside specialists on methods and plans to best meet the individual needs of each child and their family. All specialists and therapist are welcome to work with children one on one in the lobby. Enrollment for children with special needs will not be terminated unless a child presents a danger to themselves or others, physically or emotionally.

**FAMILY COOPERATION**

A positive and constructive working relationship between the school and its families is essential to the fulfillment of the school's educational purpose. The school reserves the right to not extend the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment to a child if the school reasonably believes that the actions of the child's family make such a positive relationship impossible. The school also reserves the right to expel a child at any time if, in the judgment of the Director or Owner, conduct of anyone directly associated with the child, is not keeping with the school's standards. There will be no refund of tuition where such enforced withdrawal occurs.

**DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

If your child is responsible for destruction of property due to behavior or not listening to their childcare provider, the parent will be responsible for the cost of replacing the destructed property.

**MEALS**

LIFE Academy provides a breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack, daily, for each child in accordance with the nutritional guidelines set forth by the USDA. A 5-week rotating menu

will be utilized.

**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

If you would like to bring treats for your child's birthday you are welcome to. Remember food brought to celebrate needs to be commercially brought. Please make sure to plan time with your child's teacher in advance. All special birthday treats need to be done at afternoon snack time. If you are having a party at home for your child and want to give out invitations at the center, you may only do so if every child in the class is invited. Small children do not understand why they are not being inc1uded. We also ask that no presents be brought to birthday celebrations at the center.

**HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

The center is required to have a physician's statement on file verifying overall good health and required immunizations. All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date or provide an exemption affidavit. The child's immunization record must be provided by the parent and all information must be current. The parent shall also provide proof of this with a form signed by a health care provider. This form will state that the child has received all current, age-appropriate immunizations. If there is a medical reason that a child may not receive a vaccine, a physician must submit a letter stating the reason for exemption. If the letter does state the medical exemption is in place for the life of the child, the letter must be updated yearly.

If a parent does not want to immunize their child for reasons of conscience, they must apply to the Texas Department of State Health Services for an Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience form. This form must be notarized and updated every two years. A copy of this form must be kept in the child's file. Children four and older are also required to have a vision and hearing screening on file.

TB testing is not required by the county for children to attend childcare. TB testing is not required by the county for children to attend childcare neither for the teachers. All other immunizations recommended by the CDC will not need to be obtained.

**HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

All Children 4 years old and enrolled in a Licensed facility must have hearing and vision screenings on file at the center. If your child is currently 4 years old, we must have ibis at the time of admission. If your child will turn 4 at the center, at that time you must provide ibis information to the center. Most pediatricians do these screenings at 4 years well checks.

**ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Enrollment in our program is open to all families of our community. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin. Only the child(ren) 's parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend LIFE ACADEMY. All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all emergency data as needed, including address, home, cell, and work numbers and individuals authorized to pick up your child. Current immunization information must be submitted to the center upon enrollment, and all immunizations must be current. LIFE ACADEMY must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child(ren) 's file. Parents will be required to comply with all state regulations and center rules as set forth in this Parent Handbook.

To be admitted to LIFE ACADEMY, a child must be at least 18 months of age on the date of admission and no older than 5 years of age.

The following forms must be completed and on file in the center's office before a child may be admitted:

* Admission form
* Child Care Agreement
* Copy of current immunization Record
* Signed and dated copy of a health statement
* Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)
* Photo Consent
* Topical Ointment authorization Form
* Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
* ACH Authorization Form (if applicable)
* Copy of parents’ ID/Driver’s license
* USDA Food Program form (if applicable)

**PARENT ORIENTATION AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

Parent orientation to the philosophies and program practices at LIFE Academy is required of families new to our program. This Parent Handbook provides written policies and procedures and is reviewed and updated annually. Before enrollment each family is required to sign a Child Care agreement that they have read the Parent Handbook and understand the program policies. This agreement will be kept on file in the Preschool Office. In addition to the agreement, we encourage families to:

 \* Tour the facility, visit the classroom, and meet the teachers \*Attend Classroom visits held at the beginning of each school year

\*Attend New Family Orientation

 If changes in policy occur during the school year, we will notify parents of the change in writing, and will ask parents to sign a statement saying they have received and understand the new policy. Families who repeatedly fail to follow school policies and procedures will be subject to removal from the program.

**WEEKLY TUITION FEES**

It is our philosophy that clients are paying for the spot their child will take in our center.  This is not based upon attendance but rather on a set weekly or monthly fee that is due regardless of the number of days your child attends.  Our fee structure is based upon a weekly fee that is set by the contract which is signed by the parent's upon enrolling the child(ren) in the program. Since the weekly set fees remain the same, no bill will be given to remind you of these fees.

**STATE PAID TUITION**

LIFE Academy is authorized to receive payments from Child Care Subsidies childcare assistance program. Child Care Subsidies clients may also have a monthly co-payment that is set by Child Care Subsidies. This is based upon family income. LIFE Academy requires that all co-payments be made in full on or before the 1st business day of each month. Failure to make co-payment amounts will void your contract with Child Care Subsidies whether you stay at LIFE Academy or move on to another center.

 **PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Tuition is due on Friday before the following week of service being provided. There will be a $25 late payment convenience fee added if the account is not paid by the close of business on Monday. Failure to pay on time may result in termination of services.  No account will ever be allowed to carry a balance unless arrangements have been approved by the Director.  Fees for two weeks will be added if a two-week written notice is not given prior to your child leaving the center.  Clients may pay by cash, debit or credit card, and money order. All payments will be payable to**:** LIFE Academy.

**Cash payments must be given directly to the director. Money orders may be placed in the cashbox.** All tuition is non-refundable except for prepaid tuition that is over-and-above any additional charges, including the two weeks' notice.  All clients will pay the last weeks fees in advance.  Registration fees are non-refundable.  LIFE Academy may seek collection of fees due, and clients may be required to pay a two-week termination fee, and any collection costs and attorney's fees incurred by LIFE Academy to collect this amount.  If LIFE Academy elects, it may immediately terminate all services provided by it including but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the children from its facility.

**REFUNDS**

We do not issue refunds.  In the event you have over-paid the credit will be applied to your next week's tuition.  In the event you have a balance after your child's last day, all applicable fees including the two weeks' notice required will be subtracted from any balance prior to a final refund being issued.  Checks for this are cut monthly and will be mailed according to our monthly bill payment schedule.

**LATE PICK UP**

Parents are expected to be on time when picking their child up at the end of the day. If you will be late arriving to the school for pick up, please call and notify the administration. There will be an additional late charge of $10 for the 1st 5 minutes and $1 per minute thereafter. The late fee policy is per child and applies to any time after 6:00pm. If a parent is more than one hour past 6:00pm and no one on the authorized pick-up list can be reached local law enforcement will be contacted.

**ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWL**

Parents wishing to enroll their children in the center are encouraged to set up an appointment with the center office to come and tour the center and meet the director and their children's teacher. Tours are scheduled at the parent's convenience, however, due to rest time and other challenges in our schedule we encourage tours to be scheduled between 9:00am-11:00am or 2:30p-4:30p Monday through Friday. The purpose of the tour is for you to visit the center, learn more about our program and to answer any questions you might have concerning our policies and procedures. At this time, we will give you a copy of the parent handbook and any forms necessary to enroll your child(ren) in the center. All children shall be considered continuously enrolled from the time of enrollment until they are formally withdrawn according to the procedure outlined in this handbook.

**PAPERWORK, FORMS and ANNUAL RENEWALL**

We are required by the state to have current and updated information on each child in our center. This is also for your safety. As LIFE ACADEMY. Also, each year in August, we will have you renew and update all forms. There will be a deadline given for compliance to this requirement. Failure to renew and update paperwork does not constitute withdrawal from the program and fees will continue to accrue according to the newest published rates. This includes all late payment convenience fees; annual registration fees will also be added each year at this same time.

**CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Parents are strongly encouraged to update contact information as soon as possible. It is extremely important for staff to have the most current contact information in case of emergency. Any change to contact information must be submitted in writing or by email to the Preschool Office.

**WITHDRAWAL**

Families are responsible for initiating the child withdrawal process. Families will need to give the Director a two week notice before withdrawal. Full tuition is due during this time whether your child attends or not. No adjustments will be made to tuition during this time.

In extreme circumstances, withdrawal of a child may occur at the request of the center. In such a case, the Director shall determine the time of withdrawal after a conference with the parents.

**DISMISSALS**

The staff will work with each child to meet the needs of that child and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. However, the school reserves the right to ask families to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to the care provided by the center. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or poses and unsafe situation for the child or other children in the center, the child may be suspended up to termination.

If you, the parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow any LIFE ACADEMY policy or procedure, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from our center.

**TRANSPORTATION**

We do not provide transportation.

**WATER ACTIVITIES**

LIFE Academy doesn't have pools. However, in special occasions we will events such as water balloons or sprinklers.

**FIELD TRIPS**

We do not participate in field trips.

**ANIMALS**

There are not animals on the premises.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

LIFE Academy strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day.

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

LIFE Academy will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

* + Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits.
	+ Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
	+ Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom or on the playground, when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

* Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
* Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

* Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
* Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned for "rainy days".

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage all parents and or guardians to be involved in the activities. We believe that parental participation is key to any successful childcare program. At LIFE ACADEMY, we strive to fill the gap created during early separation and educational opportunities and when parents are not available. We welcome parental visits. We have an open-door policy that allows parents access to the center during operating hours. We have enclosed a sample list of some of the opportunities for involvement in our center. Parents are in no way limited to the involvement listed below. Any parent wishing to be involved in another area is strongly encouraged to contact the LIFE ACADEMY office with their suggestion.

* Fall Open House
* Two individual conferences/year
* Programs and Special activities, such as the Christmas Program
* Special parent's involvement activities such as THANKSGIVING FEAST
* Party Day Volunteer
* Classroom Volunteer
* Help with center Fund Raiser

**MINIMUM STANDARDS/LICENSING INSPECTION REPORT**

A copy of Childcare Licensing Minimum Standards is always kept at LIFE Academy. If a parent wishes to review the minimum standards, they may ask the Director for the copy to review or access them online at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing/minimum-standards> .

The most recent copy of the licensing inspection report is in the desk catalog in the lobby.

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

The State of YOUR STATE requires that LIFE ACADEMY and all members of childcare institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the State and appropriate authorities all suspected cases of abuse to a child. All staff members are required to complete a yearly training on the prevention and response to child abuse and neglect of children.

At LIFE ACADEMY our center and staff are mandatory reporters of Child Abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents will be turned over directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that clients make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment. To report child abuse, call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

To contact our local licensing office:

1501 Circle Dr., Suite 310

Fort Worth, TX 76119

(800) 582-8286

(817) 321-8604

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care>

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The center takes into consideration several factors when making a judgment as to whether we will open late or close early due to inclement weather. When weather conditions are questionable tune in to the local news station or weather station and please follow the school closing for White Settlement ISD. If unsure if the center will be closed, please visit our Facebook page for announcements.

**Emergency Preparedness Plan**

We have designed the Evacuation Plan, which you can find it in each classroom, being our relocation area: West Elementary School. We have designated the person in charge and how will we communicate during the emergency, what accommodations would be needed for our group, who will be helping the evacuation and how care givers and children will be transported to alternative site. We do this drill on a monthly basis.

* Evacuation procedures are posted on each classroom.
* Contact Emergency are electronically stored and accessible to Director or person in charge
* Accountability of children will be responsibility of person in charge.
* We will be contacting you as soon as we are in safe.

NOTE: If you wish to see the entire Emergency Preparedness Plan, please let us know and we can email it to you.

**BREAST FEEDING**

Children at LIFE Academy who require to be breastfed will be provided comfortable accommodations.

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION**

**Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children**

Teachers are trained at least for 1 hour annually in Prevention, Recognition, and Reporting of Child Maltreatment. You can help prevent child abuse and neglect by using techniques to help you manage the responsibilities and stress related to parenting and daily life. Regardless of whether you are a parent, you can help children by showing concern for their well-being, volunteering when you are able, and being a general advocate for them.

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

**Physical Abuse** is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

• Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations

• Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury

• Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human

 bite: cigarette burns on any part of the body

• Lack of reaction to pain

• Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior

• Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior

• Fear of going home or seeing parents

• Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days

• Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

**Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

• Obvious malnourishment

• Lack of personal cleanliness

• Torn or dirty clothing

• Stealing or begging for food

• Child unattended for long periods of time

• Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention

• Frequent tardiness or absence from school

**Sexual Abuse** includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

• Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases

• Evidence of injury to the genital area

• Pregnancy in a young girl

• Difficulty in sitting or walking

• Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex

• Sexual comments, behaviors or play

• Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age

• Sexual victimization of other children

**Emotional Abuse** is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

• Over compliance

• Low self-esteem

• Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression

• Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children

• Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development

• Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

**If you are a parent or caregiver of children:**

• Learn and use effective parenting and discipline techniques and avoid the use of corporal punishment. Parenting classes are offered in most communities. Ask your doctor or call a local hospital for more

information.

• Learn healthy techniques to resolve conflicts and manage stress. For more information, see the topic Stress

Management.

• Ask for help when you need it. Call a family member or friend to give you a break if you feel overwhelmed.

Find out about community resources that are available to help you with childcare or other services you need.

Call a doctor or local hospital for a place to start. Some communities have respite care facilities for children,

which provide temporary childcare during times when you need a break.

• Get treatment if you have ever been a victim of abuse. Also seek help if you have problems with depression,

alcohol or substance abuse, or violent behavior.

• Increase your knowledge of children's developmental stages. The normal pattern of crying in a newborn is a

common trigger for shaken baby syndrome (also called intentional head injury). For more information, see

the Growth and Development topics.

• Remove firearms and other dangerous weapons from your home.

• To help children in your community:

• Be aware of the children in your neighborhood. Learn their names and show basic concern for them, such as

waving to them or asking about how they're doing at home and school.

• Relieve a friend, neighbor, or relative who is feeling overwhelmed with childcare and other issues.

• Learn to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.

• Advocate for services to help at-risk families.

• Volunteer in child abuse programs.

• Know about organizations that can help such as Alliance for Children, Justice for Children.

**Health Checks**

A health check will be performed on each child upon entering the childcare each day. It consists of asking parents or guardians of any unusual behaviors, rashes or changes in eating or sleeping patterns. I also am very attentive throughout the day for anything out of the ordinary that might signal a child is ill.

**EMPLOYEE VACINE AND PREVENTABLE DISEASE POLICY**

LIFE Academy does not require employees to obtain flu shots or covid vaccines, this choice is left to the employee. We do require all employees to be screened for tuberculosis (tb) prior to being around kids in counties that deem it necessary.

**VISITING THE CENTER**

You are welcome to visit your child at the center at any time. We do ask that you check in with the office or sign-in desk before going to your child's room. It is the responsibility of each employee to make sure any visitor for a child or employee has checked in with the office. If you are coming to eat lunch with your child, please let us know in advance. Persons not listed on the "Pick-Up Permission" form, will not be allowed to visit your child. In a custody situation, please note that the same procedure will be followed as listed in the Pick-Up section. Parents are encouraged to pre-arrange opportunities to share lunch with their child or visit the class. Extended family members such as grandparents and aunts are also welcomed to visit in certain pre-arranged situations. The custody challenges of our current society demand that we follow strict guidelines in this regard. Feel free to contact a member of the management team if you wish to set up a "visit" from an extended family member.

**GANG FREE ZONE**

Our campus, as well as any area within 1000 feet of our campus, is a gang- free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

**OTHER GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**DIAPERING AND POTTY TRANING**

**DIAPERING**

Children are checked at scheduled intervals throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left wet or soiled clothing. For children who wear diapers or toilet training pants, each family must provide ample supply of diapers/wipes for each week. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name. You can bring a package of diapers to leave at the center. You will be notified when your child is running low on diapers. If you run out of diapers, we will provide them to you automatically for a fee of $2 per diaper. If you have any questions, please check with the office.

**POTTY TRAINING**

The center does not allow pull ups at the center. Pull ups make it difficult during diaper changing for clothes have to be completely removed. Pull ups are only allowed if they are the kind that you can unfasten and refasten on the sides. Toilet training is started in the 2-year-old classroom here at the center. Toilet training can be a very emotionally experience for children, parents and teachers. With the number of children in a group this can sometimes make the process more difficult. We would like the training process to go as smoothly as possible. In toilet training parent-teacher cooperation is essential. Toilet training is one of the major hurdles in the socialization of the child. We are very happy to work with your child in toilet training once they are in the two-year-old class. We find that children are not usually ready before the age of two. Once your child is in the two-year-old class we do not push them to toilet train right away. We go with the child. When the teacher feels that your child is ready to begin training, we will let you know, and have you begin bringing panties/underwear and lots of extra clothes.

Once we start working with your child they must be brought to the center in panties/underwear. If you bring your child in a diaper (we consider pull ups diapers and don't recommend them) then they will stay in diapers that day. We WILL NOT work on toilet training with your child if you are not working at home also. It does no good for us to work with them at the center if they are not worked with at home. From past experience, I have found if you don't push the children and wait until *they* are ready, they completely toilet train in about 2 weeks or less. We feel confident that if we all work together and make this a positive experience for the children and have consistency at home and at the center this will be a very smooth process.

**PARKING POLICY**

LIFE Academy has a drop-off area by the doors. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate you will be in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come into drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). LIFE Academy is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

**PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

We request that unless your child is requested to bring something for a class activity that all personal toys stay at home. The only personal belongings that are accepted are a small blanket and one comfort object. These items will be kept in a cubby until naptime, and then returned to the cubby after nap until the child is picked up. We will not be held responsible for personal items, as personal items often become lost, broken, or the subject of arguments. These items must be labeled and must fit in the designated cubbies. **No oversized blanket or pillows will be allowed.** We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

**CLOTHING GUIDELINES**

Children should dress comfortable and suitable for the weather. Please have weather/temperature appropriate clothing for your child. We will still be taking the children outside to play on chilly days, so a jacket or coat will be required. This includes closed- toe shoes only. **No open-toe shoes – flip flops or sandals – or pajamas will be allowed at school.**

Every child must ALWAYS have two extra changes of clothes at the center. We never know when they may spill something on their clothing or have an accident. When being potty trained, children need to always have several changes of underwear at the center. All c1othing must be labeled to prevent loss, this includes coats etc. Clothing worn to the center should be appropriate for active messy play.

**NAPTIME**

We provide a quiet rest/nap time for all full-time children. Some children may need sleep and others may only rest. We try to accommodate each child's sleep needs. We provide a mat/cot for each child. Children who cannot go to sleep but have shown us that they can rest quietly may be given a small bag of "nap toys" or books to keep them occupied while others are sleeping.

**TRANSITION PLAN**

LIFE Academy will create an individualized TRANSITION PLAN to help children who are about to transition from one class to the next.  This is to help the children become familiar with the new program, teachers and children.  It also allows the new teachers to get to know the individual needs of each child prior to the transition of an entire class group or several children together.  The plan allows flexibility in order for us to best meet the needs of each child.  Each child's individual need is different therefore the TRANSITION PLAN may vary quite a bit from child to child.  Your child's teacher or the director will provide more details about transitioning when your child will move to another classroom.

**BABY-SITTING**

LIFE Academy expects parents and employees to avoid activities that create a conflict of interest to the company. If you decide to arrange off – premises care with a staff member, the staff member undertakes such service on his/her own behalf- not as a staff member of LIFE Academy.  LIFE Academy offers no assurance of the fitness of it staff members for performing these services, and none should be implied or inferred under any circumstances.

**PORTRAITS AND PICTURES**

We offer school pictures two times a year, in the spring and fall. In addition, we may take pictures of the children playing or for use on their cubbies or for use with a project or we may need pictures of children for promotional use. There is a "Photo Consent Form" in your enrollment paperwork giving us permission to take/use your child's photos.

**PARENT RESOURCES**

Children don’t come with an instruction manual! Sometimes families will need support for their child on specific issues or may just have general questions about parenting. Parenting resources are listed on our website. Informational fliers about support for families are posted on the Bulletin Board and can be found on the bookshelf outside the office.

**PROGRAM EVALUATION**

 LIFE Academy sends a written parent survey to all families at the end of the school year. Suggestions and evaluation results are integrated into the preschool program whenever possible.

**IN CONCLUSION**

We hope you have found this handbook helpful in understanding our guidelines and procedures. If LIFE Academy changes any of its policies, they will be printed and handed out to each family to read, sign and return. Policies are subject to change at any time. Please speak to our director if you have any questions regarding our policies and procedures. Feel free to stop please stop by the office, contact the Director by phone at (682) 224-6660, or send emails to info@lifeacademyschools.com

**Parent’s Rights**

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**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parent of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

acknowledge that I have been provided a copy of the LIFE Academy Parent Handbook. This Parent Handbook outlines all the policies and procedures for the center. By signing this form, I am agreeing to abide by the policies set forth by the center.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this page and return it with your enrollment paperwork.