

# Nicole's Academy of Excellence

## Parent Handbook



*ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER*

# Nicole's Academy of Excellence

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License L HC 432888  
311 Down Pine Drive  
Seffner, Florida 33584

To All Parents:

Attached is a copy of my **Risk Management Handbook**. With the implementation of this handbook you can be certain that I will do everything I can to protect your child in the event of a crisis or disaster.

With any disaster or crisis, your cooperation is necessary for the following, we will...

Explain to your child that the best place for them is here at the childcare.

Explain that if you are unable to pick them up quickly, I will care for them until you or your emergency contact person can pick them up.

Listen to the radio for updates.

Provide an emergency/comfort kit for your child.

Include an out of town contact number with your kit.

I will care for your child until you or your emergency contact person is able to reach them. Be sure to keep your child's emergency release card updated. Children will only be released to those specified by you, on their card. We will utilize the phone numbers on the emergency release card should we need to relocate to an alternate site.

If local telephone lines are unavailable, utilize my out of town contact number for information. If possible, we will call that number to give information on your child and to see if you have left any information for us.

Thank you for your attention on this matter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our Risk Management Handbook.

Keeping your children safe,

*Nicole Shepherd*

Nicole Shepherd  
Owner

Phone: (813) 650-6911

Fax: (813)409-2145

Program Name: **Nicole's Academy of Excellence**

Provider Name: **Mrs. Nicole Shepherd**

Address: **311 Down Pine Drive Seffner, Florida 33584**

Telephone Number: **Home (813)409-2145/Cell (813)650-6911**

Emergency backup person: **Mr. Arthur Shepherd**

Emergency backup person: **Mrs. Sylvia Vickers**

Primary Evacuation Location: **Burnett Middle School 1010 S Kingsway Seffner, Florida 33584.**

Directions from my house. Start out going north on Down Pine Dr. toward Thicket Crest Rd., turn left onto Fern Gulley Dr., turn left onto Kingsway.

Secondary Evacuation Location: **Lopez Elementary School 200 Kingsway Seffner, Florida 33584.** Directions from my house. Start out going north on Down Pine Dr. towards Thicket Crest Rd., turn left onto Fern Gulley Dr., turn left onto Kingsway.

Emergency Transportation: **Approved 2020 Chevy Suburban**

Out of town contact: **Mrs. Heather Canty (813)453-5979**

Creating a safe and friendly environment for your child (ren) is my main goal. Nicole's Academy of Excellence is committed to providing the highest professional quality childcare and ensuring that the children are safe from harm.

**Shelter In Place:** If an emergency or disaster causes Nicole's Academy of Excellence to shelter-in-place, all doors and windows will be locked. The children, sign-in sheet, emergency contact information and emergency kit will be moved to one safe room, which is in my hall bathroom away from windows. Attendance will be taken.

**Evacuation Meeting Place:** Whenever this is a cause to evacuate our facility, the meeting point shall be the pine tree to the left of the driveway when you exit the front door. From there any further action will take place if needed. Evacuating to the pine tree shall be practiced at least once a month so all the children and personnel are comfortable with the practice.

**Emergency Transportation:** In the event of an emergency evacuation every effort will be made to put children in the child car seats in the van. If there is not enough child car seat, the oldest children will be bucked in the van seats only long enough to reach the evacuation location. If a second vehicle is available, it will be used if a driver is available.

**Fire Evacuation:** In the event of a fire, we will evacuate the house together immediately and gather at the pine tree to the left of the garage. From that point 911 will be called. This will be practiced at least once monthly so the children are familiar with what to do. If a child would become lost, a thorough search of my house and grounds would be made. If the child were not located, police and parents would be notified, and a neighborhood search begun.

**Emergency Evacuation Shelter Location:** If there is a disaster, natural or manmade, we will evacuate the house and load the children into the van (and car if needed) to drive to Burnett Middle School located at 1010 South Kingsway Seffner, FL 33584. If we could not go to Burnett Middle School, we would then evacuate to Lopez Elementary School located at 200 Kingsway Seffner, FL 33584. I will make every effort to contact the parents by phone if possible.

**Missing Children:** Immediate notification of the police would be made once initial search of Nicole's Academy of Excellence has been made. The provider will report to Child Care Licensing and the Department of Children and Families. Call my emergency person to help with the search. Conduct a search of all areas of Nicole's Academy of Excellence, including closets, cabinets, etc., and the immediate surrounding areas. Continue searching while waiting for the police to show. The owner/operator is to remain at Nicole's Academy of Excellence as the point person and to gather information/description of the child to share with authorities. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. The provider will complete a written incident form at earliest opportunity.

**Security Threats:** To prevent possible security threats we have in place a monitored alarm system which chimes if doors or windows are opened. All doors and windows are to be kept locked at all times except to all parental access or to allow inspections by identified officials. If

a breach of security would happen we would gather the children in the bathroom and call 911. We would also push the emergency button on the fob for the security system.

**Dangerous Intruder in the Neighborhood:** Once informed or made aware that a problem exists, Nicole's Academy of Excellence will go on immediate lock down. This includes all doors, windows, garage, all blinds closed and any possible entrance or view to the inside of the academy will be closed or covered. A count of the children will take place. The children will be moved to a safe room within Nicole's Academy of Excellence (bathroom in the hallway) away from windows or access through an external door.

I will call 911 or emergency officials to let them know where I am with the children in Nicole's Academy of Excellence. Parents will be notified of the situation and will be updated every hour if possible. Provider will maintain updates through phone calls, texts or emergency officials as to when it is safe to resume activities. Parents will be notified once the event is over, and they may pick up their children. The Provider will notify licensing afterwards and complete an incident report.

**Intoxicated or Disgruntled Parent:** If a parent, or individual approved to pick up a child comes to Nicole's Academy of Excellence disgruntled or intoxicated, I will first ensure that the children are safe and away from the individual reach. I will attempt to talk the individual into leaving without the child. If I fear that the health or safety of the children or me or anyone in my family is threatened, I will immediately call 911. I will also contact the person on the child's emergency card to pick up the child. If the individual refuses to leave, I will move the children to a safe room within Nicole's Academy of Excellence (bathroom in the hallway) complete a count of the children and wait with them for the emergency officials. If the individual leaves Nicole's Academy of Excellence, I will go into immediate lockdown and wait for the emergency officials. Afterwards, I will notify Child Care Licensing and complete and incident report.

**Bomb Threat:** In the event of a security threat such as bomb threat or act of Terrorism, or any act that would jeopardize the safety or security of the provider, children, or Nicole's Academy of Excellence, an emergency lockdown will be initiated. The provider will take the children and the emergency kit and go to a safe room within Nicole's Academy of Excellence (bathroom in the hallway). The Provider will contact the local law enforcement for instructions on how to proceed. Children and provider will be prepared to evacuate if necessary. Parents will be notified of the situation and kept informed of where the Provider and the children are at all times and where they are able to pick up the children. After the crisis is over, Licensing will also be notified and a written incident report will be completed.

**Power Outage & Water Problems:** I will contact the utility carrier either Tampa Electric Company (TECO) at (813)223-0800 or City of Tampa Utilities Water Department 813)274-7400

to obtain a restoration time. If the time is longer than 1 hour, I will call (parents) immediately and may ask parents to pick up children. I will notify Licensing of prolonged power outage of water outage. I will also complete an incident report.

**Natural Disaster:** In the event of a tornado or other extreme conditions we would gather the children in the bathtub with a blanket over us to shield us from any debris. The emergency bag would also be moved into the bathroom area to be accessible following the disaster. Directly following the disaster we would call the parents and notify them if there is a need to evacuate as noted above or to pick up their children at our location. We practice at least once a month so all the children and personnel are comfortable with the practice.

**Tornado:** In the event that there was a tornado in the surrounding area. I will confine myself and the children in the bathroom (or another room in the home away from windows), along with my disaster bag and phone. I will make an attempt to notify the parents of our status. I will stay in the bathroom until I hear on the radio that it's okay to resume normal activities. Once the threat of danger has passed I would notify you of our situation. We practice at least once a month so all the children and personnel are comfortable with the practice. A written incident report will be filed, and Childcare Licensing will be notified about the status of Nicole's Academy of Excellence.

**Hurricane:** I will follow what Hillsborough School District does. If schools closed I will be closed and parents will be notified by phone call.

**Serve Storm:** In the event that there was a tornado in the surrounding area. I will confine myself and the children in the bathroom (or another room in the home away from windows), along with my disaster bag and phone. I will make an attempt to notify the parents of our status. I will stay in the bathroom until I hear on the radio that it's okay to resume normal activities. Once the threat of danger has passed I would notify you of our situation. We practice at least once a month so all the children and personnel are comfortable with the practice. A written incident report will be filed, and Childcare Licensing will be notified of the status of Nicole's Academy of Excellence.

**Chemical Spill:** Call 911 if needed. Close and lock windows and doors, and window sills. Turn off the central a/c unit. Gather all the children in a room with Nicole's Academy of Excellence and shelter in place. Take the emergency disaster supplies/kit and emergency contacts. Tune into the radio to listen for emergency information and instructions. Notify parents of the situation and or the out of town contact person. Notify Child Care Licensing. Complete and file an incident report

**Notification and Communication:** If there is ever a need to evacuate our location or in case of utility failure, etc., parents will be notified immediately or as soon as reasonably possible. The

first priority is the safety of the children, second is notification of parents. Parents will be contacted and notified if any of the above take place. The owner/operator (Nicole Shepherd) has all parents' number in her cell and in the kitchen over the fax machine. Parent will be notified via phone call or text.

**Communication with parents:** All parents and families will be treated with respect and dignity. I will remain nonjudgmental and fully approachable. Regular communications with parents is a key factor to developing relationships that benefit both the children and the quality of the home children. This will be done by:

- Informal daily communication
- Phone & formal parent-provider conferences
- Written notification of policy & procedure changes
- Group Meetings
- Parent newsletters

**Reporting of abuse/neglect:** As a state mandated reporter, the provider will report any suspected abuse or neglect to the abuse hotline (1-800-96ABUSE) immediately. All reports will be documented on an incident form and filed accordingly. These reports may become legal documents and confidentiality will be strictly enforced. Provider will also notify Child Care Licensing.

**The Buddy System:** Use the buddy system as soon as more than one child in the facility to protect the child and the child care personnel. The buddy system makes sure that a child is never alone and less likely to get lost or taken advantage of. The buddy system makes sure that a child is never alone with an adult and the adult is not open to accusations of any kind.

**Procedures to be followed to prevent an accusation of abuse/neglect:** To prevent accusations of abuse or neglect I will maintain a high quality Academy program by: Ensuring physical environment is safe and promotes learning. Ensure developmentally appropriate practices are used. Provider will attend regular trainings to ensure best practices are in effect. Ensuring proper child ratios are observed. Interaction with children will be sensitive and not harsh. Strong health and safety provisions including nutrition and food services will be observed. Maintain excellent relationships and communication with families. Maintaining an Open-Door Policy. I will also perform visual scans of children upon arrival daily. If there are visual marks of any kind on children, parents will be asked to complete an incident form stating the origination of the injury and what happened and both provider and parent will sign the report. This document will be placed with the child's records.

**Procedures to be followed if there is an accusation of abuse/neglect:** If an accusation of abuse or neglect is made, director/provider will call Florida Abuse Hotline 800-962-2873. Then I will call child care licensing. Director/provider will complete an incident report of accusation and events that may have led to accusation. All prior documentation such as, previous incident/accident reports, will be gathered to present to child care licensing and Investigator. I will cooperate with the investigation. Then I will type up a letter and give to all the parents at pick up time to notify them of the situation.

**Plans for children with special health or developmental needs:** Nicole's Academy of Excellence practices full inclusion and does not discriminate against any child who may have special health or developmental needs. I only ask to be completely informed of such needs so that I may be fully prepared to make proper accommodations, if necessary. I have a medical box on the shelf labeled first aid in the daycare area this is where all medication will be kept unless it should to be refrigerated. If evacuation occurs, I will be responsible for securing all medications from the box and/or the refrigerator. When and if children with special needs are enrolled into Nicole's Academy of Excellence will follow the same evacuation procedures as other children and all children (including children with special needs) will participate in the monthly practice drills. The following accommodations will be made if needed for children with special or additional needs: The child will be partnered with another child if mobile and able to evacuate without needing much assistance. He/she will be monitored during the evacuation process for any concerns or unexpected behavior. If children have special equipment and medication, the Provider will place the child's medication in the disaster kit. If the child is non-mobile, the provider will place the child in a crib and roll them to safety or carry them out. The Provider agrees to stay informed on which shelters can accommodate special needs. Children with life threatening health conditions who require medication, equipment, or supplies on a regular basis or if the child is required to be on equipment supported by power and an outage occurs, the provider will ask for assistance through 911 emergency officials. If the child is transported to an emergency facility so that their needs may be met, the provider will notify parent as to the location of the children.

**Special Needs Non-Evacuation Emergency:** If an emergency arises with a child such as a life threatening injury or medical condition, the provider will call 911 and notify parents immediately. Any other emergency will be handled with applicable emergency plan. These plans will be continuously assessed and modified to ensure the safety of all children. Parents will be made aware of plans and will play an active role in determining the best way to handle such situations.

**AS OF JANUARY 2024, THERE ARE NO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ENROLLED.**



PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signed Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Risk  
Management Plan

I \_\_\_\_\_ have  
received the Risk Management Plan on  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Child Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

This form will be located in your child's file at  
Nicole's Academy of Excellence.

UPDATE JANUARY 2024