



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## Center Contact Information

Address: 6620 Arlington Expressway. Jacksonville, Florida 32211

Phone: (904) 743-3131 Fax: (904) 212-2787

Business Hours: We are open Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 6:00 pm

## Enrollment Records

Each fall, RTSALC completes an audit of enrollment records. At the conclusion of this audit, families will be notified if anything needs to be updated. Some forms must be updated every year, including the Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form.

Other records must be updated throughout the year, such as physical and immunization records. When visiting your child's physician for a yearly "well-child" appointment, please request a copy of your child's physical and most recent immunization record. You must bring these items in yourself.

In addition, any time a family's information changes such as address, place of employment or health insurance provider, a new Emergency Contact and Medical Consent form must be completed.

## **Enrollment Procedures**

Enrollment Application	Registration Fee (non-refundable)
Signed Handbook Agreement	Copy of Driver's License
Shot Record and Physical Form	Lunch Application
Financial Agreement	Pledge of Cooperation
Parent/Student Questionnaire	Photography Release form
Permission slip waiver	Screening and assessment form
Attendance policy acknowledgment	Uniform policy agreement
Emergency medical release form	Disciplinary/ behavior acknowledgment form

## **Legal Custody**

A copy of a court order recognizing the parent who has legal custody of the child, as well as visitation schedules will be requested for the child's file. Otherwise, I have no choice but to release the child to their parent.

If you remove a person from the enrollment application, you will NOT be able to place them back on unless there is a written or legal document notarized stating they are allowed or required to pick up child(ren)

The person that enrolls the child(ren) is the only person who can make changes to the enrollment application. We also do not give any information over the phone about any enrolled student.

**Termination-** The first two weeks of childcare are to be an adjustment period. It is our responsibility to let the parent know if the child seems unhappy or the arrangement is unsatisfactory for any other reason. It is the parent's responsibility to let me know in advance of any behavioral or documented IEP. The parent or center director can terminate/ withdraw the service during the adjustment period in writing on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day after care starts.

**2 weeks' written notice** is required by the parent to the director. Fees will still be due if the parent withdraws the child before notice is given, or at any given time during the notice. Two weeks of fees may be paid in lieu of two weeks' notice. Termination notice will not be accepted while the director or parents are on vacation. Parents will receive two weeks' written notice if we're no longer able to provide services for your child. You are still responsible for paying the weekly fees during this notice regardless, I will terminate our childcare arrangements immediately for any of the following reasons (but not solely limited to):

- Failure to comply with the policies set forth in this book.
- Failure to comply with the contract or agreements.
- Destructive or hurtful behavior of child that persists even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior.
- Non- payment childcare/ school tuition or late and or recurring payment or fees.
- Failure to show up for 5 or more days without communication.
- Failure to complete required forms.
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- Blatant disrespect towards staff members.

## **Multiple Child Discount**

Families with two or more children enrolled full-time at RTSALC are eligible for a 10% discount to be applied to the youngest child's weekly tuition fee.



## Arrival and Departure

### Arrival

Parents are required to accompany their child into the center.

Children are to arrive clean and fed (unless arriving before mealtimes) Students are expected every day based on weekly tuition payment. If your child will not be attending or arrive late parents are asked to give a phone call no later than 9:00 am. We encourage parents to communicate with a staff member about their child's prior night or morning, how he/she slept the night before, whether he/she has eaten that morning, etc. Most children go through periods of difficulty separating from their parent(s).

**Talk about going to school:** Explain what school is like and what they can expect. Use positive language to build excitement.

**New friends:** Encourage your child to make new friends and talk about how fun it will be to meet new people.

**Words of encouragement:** Remind your child to do their best and that it's okay to make mistakes. Praise their efforts and reassure them that they are capable.

**Morning talks:** Have a calm and positive conversation in the morning. Ask them how they feel and what they are looking forward to.

**Affirmations:** Use positive affirmations like "You are brave," "You are smart," and "You can do this" to boost their confidence.

**Routine:** Establish a consistent morning routine to help them feel secure and prepared.

**Visit the school:** If possible, visit the school or childcare center beforehand to familiarize your child with the environment.

**Pack together:** Involve your child in packing their school bag. Let them choose a favorite snack or item to bring.

**Read books:** Read books about starting school to help them understand and relate to the experience.

**Stay positive:** Show enthusiasm and confidence about their first day. Your attitude will influence their feelings.

I hope these tips help make the transition smoother for both you and your child! 😊

### Sign In/Out:

Parents and authorized persons are required to sign children in and out daily. Staff also track children throughout the day by signing them in and out of class logs, whenever they are moved or combined, go outside, and go home. Upon enrollment parents and authorized parties are assigned a pin code. Code sharing is not allowed. ELC parents will be charged per day per occurrence for any or all missed sign in/out. ELC does audits and may request a log of children at any time and the center will be deducted for any missing signatures or timecards. RTSA will bill any parent for money deducted for failure to comply.

### Departure

RTSALC closes at 6:00 pm M-F. If you will be late picking up your child, please provide us with as much notice as possible. Please note that there is a late fee for arriving after scheduled pick up time on file. If someone we are not familiar with is to pick up your child, it is essential that you inform your child's teacher in advance of the pick-up. This person must be listed as an authorized person on the Emergency Contact and Parent Consent form. Remind the authorized person that they may be asked for identification such as a driver's license to ensure your child's safety. Even if the individual has picked up before, he or she may still need identification if the teacher in charge has never met him or her.

### Pick-Up Policy

To prevent inappropriate release of a child to an unauthorized person procedures and safeguards are followed to ensure the safety of your child.

All children must be signed in and out by an authorized responsible adult of 18 years old or older. Proper I.D. is required. Must be on authorized pick-up documentation with a pin code.

Calling in advance to let a staff know someone other than you will be picking up your child may be allowed if they are listed on the authorized pick-up sheet. We ask that any last-minute emergency authorized parties are made in written via Parent portal or email. Once you have reunited and signed your child out and are departing, RTSALC is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.



## **Access Policy**

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with childcare shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. Unrestricted access means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for childcare.

Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Head of school unless he/she delegates it to the center dean due to a conflict of interest with the person. RTSALC Buildings are locked at all times and only staff may open doors for visitors. If staff doesn't know the visitor, they shall ask for ID or get the center director. Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is.

If a staff member is unsure about the reason, the staff is to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the Florida sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the childcare center.
- Shall not be on the property of the childcare center without written permission from the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to and from the center. The center director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their licensing agent first.

## **Affidavit Policy**

At times families may be dealing with difficult situations at home. When legal matters are present in the home, families may need to collect affidavits for their legal team. Due to the nature of the relationship between caregivers and child, families may choose to ask a RTSALC staff member to provide such a statement. Our program's priority is providing the best possible care when children are away from home and our focus will remain on the child, making sure all their needs are met during what could be a difficult time at home. RTSALC staff members will not provide written statements or affidavits of a professional nature to families.

## **Field Trips**

RTSALC offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips where students will be transported will require a "Field Trip Permission Form." Parents will be notified at least 24hrs in advance of all field trips requiring a "Field Trip Permission Form." If you do not wish for your child to attend a particular field trip, please find alternative childcare arrangements for that day, as we will not have staff available to stay behind with children not participating in the field trip.

As a participant in our childcare program, your child may participate in short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times.

A "Parent/Guardian Permissions" form must be completed at the time of enrollment for this type of field trip



### **Open door policy**

Parents of currently enrolled children are welcome to visit the center during regular business hours of operation. Please feel free to drop in and check on your child, however, keep in mind a child adjusting to a new surrounding will want to leave with you if you pop in for a visit. We greatly appreciate you taking into consideration our schedule when dropping in or calling. Also, remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when we're alone with the children. Please keep in mind there may be times when it is not possible for us to answer the phone. If the phone goes unanswered, please do not become alarmed, simply leave a voicemail or ProCare message and someone will return your call.

### **Communication**

Is very important. When a new family is accepted into our center, I like to be sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. Questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that affect a positive outcome for the child are welcome. Sensitive issues will be discussed in the form of a letter, phone, or scheduled conference. However, you may send an email or use parent app to message during school hours. If time allows, I'll be more than happy to speak with you. Parents will be notified via email, Parent app, newsletter or we ask that you check our parent board for upcoming events, activities, special announcements, or other helpful information that may pertain to you. Each preschool family will receive a communication folder that will travel between the center and home each day. This folder may contain the child's daily notes, newsletters, artwork, important information, and homework that may be one activity page and reading log.

### **Parental Involvement**

Time is the most important investment you can make in your child. We encourage parents to be active participants in school activities. However, as a volunteer or guest of the classroom, a parent may not discipline, help with diapering or toileting, or be alone with children other than his/her own. Children will be evaluated, formally and informally, throughout the school year while performing age-related activities and tested on material covered in the curriculum. Written progress reports will be sent home in the fall and spring for your consideration. Parent conferences are always available throughout the year.



**Statement of Confidentiality-** Here at Road to Success Academy the director and employees understand that some of our work will involve access to information/records that are considered confidential. We acknowledge our responsibility to respect the confidentiality of our clients. A child's record, emergency information, photograph and other information that may identify a child by name or address is confidential and may not be copied, posted on a website, or disclosed to unauthorized persons, without written consent from the child's parent. Employees are trained to adhere to policy to protect privacy, and act in a professional manner. I can assure you the utmost confidentiality will be always maintained by staff. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families



**Photographs and videos** are taken on different occasions such as birthdays, holidays, outings, annual yearbooks, and special events. We use these pictures/videos in our childcare center for folder presentations during conferences, arts& craft, albums and may be posted on the center website or social media sites for advertising or promotions. Please be aware that if you choose NO Pictures this will include school pictures, class pictures, class projects and events. If we are hosting an event your child may be required to sit out to ensure the privacy per your request and we cannot control other parents that may take pictures during this time.

### **SURVEILLANCE PURPOSE**

Video Surveillance is used to record access at building entrances, parking lots, rooms and playgrounds. The video surveillance system is not intended for the use of parents. It is also used for the safety of employees and all patrons. Management is the only personnel who has access to surveillance systems. In the case that a major incident needs to be reviewed for any reason, management has 24-48hrs to review and consult with the parent. This DOES NOT mean that the video footage will be shown to you. Cameras will not be reviewed for every incident or accident report for the privacy of the other children and staff in the center, management is required to view the footage without the assistance of a parent.

## Meals and Snacks

<b>Breakfast: 7:45am – 8:30am</b>	<b>Lunch: 11:30am -12:30pm</b>	<b>Snack: 2:00pm -3:00pm</b>
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**Food service policy:** At RTSALC, children are provided with nutritious meals and snacks.

All meals must meet the USDA guidelines for each child's daily nutrition at the center.

All meals are served at scheduled times. Mealtime: 7:45 am – 8:30 am (sharp)

Menus will be posted on parent board in front lobby.

Children must be seated prior to 8:30 am to meet the breakfast cut off time. If your child will be arriving after mealtime, please feed them before they arrive. Children will be encouraged to sample all the food that is being offered but will never be forced to eat.

If your child requires a special diet due to allergies, please see the center director for proper forms and procedures.

If you choose to bring your child's lunch from home, please keep the lunch box and thermos bottles always labeled. We ask that all hot food items are sent to school in a thermos. In the Toddler through Pre-K rooms there will be no heating up of food in a microwave. Prepare a meal which is nutritious and to the liking of your child. Florida Food Program holds the center responsible for overseeing those lunches served meet set quality standards.

Please advise us if your child is restricted in diet or allergy to any food or drinks. A doctor's note from a certified physician is required for all alternate items to be served or restricted.



**\*RTSA does not allow outside food or drinks in the building at any time.**



## Tuition & Fee policies

### **Financial Agreement**

Upon enrollment and any changes to tuition, families are provided with a Financial Contract. This contract should be carefully reviewed and checked for errors. The contract states the days and hours your child may be at RTSALC as well as the amount due **Weekly**. This contract is binding and can only be changed with approval and signatures from parents and the center director.

### **Payment Schedule**

Payments are due on a pre-payment basis and expected on time. Payments are due every Friday by the close of business. Tuition payments are to be paid using the parent app. We accept pay by phone or pay link.

### **Subsidized Payments- ELC**

RTSALC accepts childcare assistance 3rd party vouchers. Parents are responsible for full payments until voucher is received and authorized to the center. Once a weekly copay is determined by ELC and the amount has been calculated parents will then be responsible for the parent co pay and differential amount not covered by the voucher. If at any time the assistance is stopped, parents will be responsible for Full time tuition as of the date the assistance ended, and service was provided.

**Registration Fee-** There is a per child registration fee of \$50.00. This will be collected at the time of enrollment and is non-refundable. A multiple child discount of 20% will be applied to registration fees for families with more than one child enrolled. The discount applies to the second child.

**Annual Supply Fee-** \$100 annual supply fee to be paid by parent in {Aug and Jan} \$50

There are two types of late fees that can be assessed to your account a late payment fee and late pick up fee.

### **Late payment fee**

\$35.00 will be applied to all accounts with a balance of 0.01 after Friday close of business day and must be paid on Monday by close of business. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> late payment fee billed, we reserve the right to withdraw your child and offer the space to the next child on the waiting list.

**Turn around Tuesday!** If all payments have not been received by Tuesday morning your child will not be able to attend unless payment is made in full. All accounts will be deactivated and charged by the end of the week. Parents will need to reenroll and clear all past due balances to continue service.

### **Late pick up fees**

We understand that some days traffic or circumstances are beyond our control. We ask that if this shall be the case the center is notified in advance prior to pick up time. Late pickups will be documented and tracked. Habitually late accounts are subject to termination or scheduled for pick up 2 hours before the close of business. We ask that you keep in mind that our staff has families to go home to as well and to show respect for their personal time. You are considered late 1 minute after your scheduled pick-up time. The late pick-up fee is \$25.00 and \$1.00 per minute after the first 15 minutes. Late pick up fees must be paid upon pick up or before your child can return to the center. Late pick up fees are not negotiable and separate from weekly tuition.

If parents do not arrive to pick up their child from the center by the scheduled pick-up time, staff members will first contact the parents using all phone numbers provided on file. If parents are unable to be reached, staff members will try to contact emergency contact personnel. If the center is unable to reach emergency contacts for pick up beyond 1 hour the center director will be notified and they will then notify The Department of Children and Families and/or the local police department.

**Delinquent accounts-** Families that are behind on payments more than [2 weeks] without contacting the center and setting up a payment arrangement may have their childcare services terminated. All unpaid accounts will be handled by the center's third-party collection agency and processed to the Duval County Clerk of Court. Each registered parent will be responsible for paying past due balance and all court costs. A promise to pay payment plan must be agreed upon between family and Center before an account will be considered "in good standing" and no longer eligible for termination. This requires a signed payment plan contract.

### **Attendance:**

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged for the benefit of the child as well as the classroom. If your child will be absent, please call the center by **9:00 am** so your child's teacher may make note of this absence. VPK and School readiness cannot be absent more than 3 days out of the month.

If your child will be absent for an extended period (more than 5 days), the center should be notified in writing of the date the absence begins and the expected date your child will return. Enrollment will be terminated if a child is absent for a period of 10 or more, and no notice has been received or contact made by the family.

### **Holidays and Vacation**

**RTSALC** will be closed in observance to all major holidays (please see the center calendar for details.)

If the holiday falls on a Saturday, we will observe on a Friday/ If the holiday falls on a Sunday we will observe on a Monday.

**Paid Holidays** (RTSA Staff) Center will be closed in observance of the following holidays (school calendar) and Professional development days.

**Vacation:** Each family who attends RTSALC full-time for at least **6 months of service with no break** and are current with payments qualify to receive **1 week** which totals up to 5 consecutive days per calendar year. Please note vacation days are per family, not per child. Any vacation days not used by December 31 of each year will expire. Vacation days may not be used on a paid holiday. Please provide the center director with **2 weeks'** notice when you wish to use vacation days. Requests to use vacation days must be provided in writing.

### **Extended Absences**

If a child needs to take an extended absence, such as summer break, and wishes to return to the program after a period of time, a weekly tuition fee will still apply to secure your child's spot.

1. Parents have the option to provide written notice of days the child will be absent and place an account on hold while making payments.
2. Provide RTSALC with 2 weeks' notice with the number of days and dates the child will be absent from the center. Upon return parents must check with the center director for available space and pay any registration fees.
3. More than [5] consecutive weeks of non-payment and no contact with the center could result in termination of enrollment. If possible, notify the center director at least 2 weeks in advance before an extended absence.



## **Health and Safety Policies**

### **Physicals and Immunizations**

Each child must have a current physical and immunization record on file at [Center Name] to attend. The physical on file must be updated at least annually; immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received.

### **Documentation of Accidents/Incidents**

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at RTSALC using an Accident/ Incident Report and Incident report on Parent App. The parents shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parents. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the center director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

### **Documents of Health Incidents**

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, a Health Check will be completed on Bright wheel. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign posted on the main entrance to the center explaining the illness as well as Bright wheel. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive an email regarding the illness.

### **Hand Washing**

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcare such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival.

Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- Upon arriving at the center or when changing classrooms
- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after mealtimes
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off the faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

**Cleanliness/ Hygiene-** We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children's hands should be washed before and after meals, coming in from outside and after toileting. If these skills are stressed at home also your child may remain a good hand washer when he or she gets older. Please have your child dressed for play. A clean child is a healthy child. Infants sleep in separate cribs/ play pens with clean blankets, used only by them. Beginning at toddler age child size cot will be used. Each child will sleep on his/ her own cot during nap. Each child's personal blanket will be sent home to be washed weekly. Toys and classroom furniture will be sanitized daily.

### **Sunscreen & Insect Repellent**

All families will be required to supply sunscreen for their child/ren for outdoor activities (if applicable). A medical permission slip must be on file before sunscreen is applied to a child. Sunscreen must be [SPF level] or above and will be applied by classroom teachers regularly throughout the day. Parents are encouraged to apply insect repellent to their child before arriving at RTSALC for the day, as RTSALC staff are not permitted to apply insect repellent.

## Sick/Illness

Our priority at RTSALC is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 (under the arm) or greater, until 24 hours symptom-free without fever-reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 12 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling

**Notice of Exposure & Reporting Disease** If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be shared by Parent Portal. Additionally, families who are signed up for Bright wheel will receive email notification of the illness. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the center immediately. In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the center will notify the health department.



**Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters** is the law and is required to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to proper authorities. Department's office of child protective and preventive services or to local law enforcement. The director and each employee are trained to never ignore the possibility that a child is being abused or neglected. Therefore, we will immediately notify child protective and prevention services or to local law enforcement agency in the county where the child resides when it appears that a child in the center is being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, neglected, or exploited.



## RTSALC Childcare Center Environment Policy



At RTSALC Childcare Center, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment for all children, parents, and staff. To ensure the well-being of everyone in our community, we have established the following policy regarding the presence of strong odors, including smoke and marijuana:

### **Prohibited Items and Odors:**

Children's bags and belongings must be free from any strong odors, including but not limited to smoke and marijuana.

If a child's bag or belongings are found to have a strong odor, parents will be asked to refrain from bringing the bag into the center. Alternative arrangements for storing the child's belongings may be required.

### **Respect for the Environment:**

Parents and guardians are expected to respect the environment of the childcare center by not entering the premises with the smell of smoke or marijuana on their person.

If a parent or guardian is found to have a strong odor of smoke or marijuana, they will be politely asked to address the matter before entering the center.

### **Health and Safety:**

The presence of strong odors can affect children with allergies and sensitivities. To ensure the health and safety of all children, adherence to this policy is strictly enforced.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in termination of childcare services.

### **Respect for Our Community:**

We ask all parents and guardians to be mindful of our diverse community, which includes individuals with various professional backgrounds and religious beliefs.

Maintaining a clean and odor-free environment is essential to respecting the needs and preferences of all members of our community.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and welcoming environment for everyone at RTSALC Childcare Center

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Medical Emergencies**

Minor bumps and scrapes are inevitable, but I make every effort to keep your children safe through supervision and child proofing. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and if an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted immediately. I must have numbers where the parents or guardian can be reached, plus numbers of a personal physician or clinic. It is extremely important that these numbers be kept current, so that I may reach you, when necessary, not just during emergencies. If I am unable to contact either parent, I will call the emergency contact numbers supplied to me to make the medical decisions for the child. If necessary, your child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Parents are responsible for costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including transportation if required. A permission form for emergency medical care and transportation if parent/guardian is unavailable for formal consent. This is to be signed for the medical authorities, so care isn't unnecessarily delayed. In the event of an emergency, this form would accompany your child to the hospital so that medical treatment can be rendered.

### **Fire, Tornado, Bomb, or other Emergency Situations**

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire and tornado drills are conducted every three months; all classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and go to each class's designated spot. Once all children are accounted for all classes will meet at center gym or church basement.

In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency. For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child during an emergency.

### **Blizzard/ Severe Winter Weather**

The center director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. The center director will post on Bright wheel to inform parents of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

### **Missing or Abducted Child**

In the event of a missing child, the staff on duty will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the center director to help with the search.

- If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director will notify the local Police Department and the child's parents.
- In the event of an abducted child, the staff must immediately contact the center director and the department of children and families Police Department, and the child's parents.

### **Power Failure**

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

- If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents will be contacted.
- The supervisor or center director are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as soon as possible until parents arrive.

### **Weather Related Closings**

RTSALC will remain open during the most severe weather. The center director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. In the event that RTSALC closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation via Bright wheel.

Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.



### **Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure**

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows RTSALC staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parents to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If the child requires immediate medical attention: The staff member who witnessed the emergency will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.
- A staff member who witnessed the emergency will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The center director or on duty supervisor will contact the parent(s).



### **Medication**

**Medication:** Prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. RTSALC staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or from the Director.

Prescriptive and non-prescriptive medications are given to children only under the following conditions:

Medication is required 3 times or more a day

Medication or inhalers are needed on as needed basis daily

Medications are stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at RTSALC. The Medication Authorization Form must always remain with the medication. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at RTSALC.

Medications are administered only by assigned staff, center director, or nurse on duty. When a medication is given, the teacher will log and document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given.

### **Documents of Special Health Care Needs**

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs. A child with allergies must have a written doctor's note signed by a physician. An Allergy Action Plan will be posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food-related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

## **Programs**

There are 7 programs offered at RTSALC. They are:

Room	Age	Ratio
Infant Care	4 – 12 months	1: 4                      8 Max
Pre- Toddlers	12 – 18 months	1:6                      12 Max
Toddlers	18- 24 months	1:11                      12 Max
Preppers	24 – 36 months	1 :11                      12 Max
Preschool	36- 48 months	1:15                      20 Max
Pre- Kindergarten	48- 60 months	1:24                      VPK 2:11
School Age	60 -72 Months	1: 24

## **Assessments**

RTSALC uses assessment tools to assess students' levels when entering the program and then every quarter. Parents are encouraged to work with their child's teacher to assess and meet their child's needs.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences/ Assessment Portfolios**

Parent-teacher conferences will typically be held twice per year, as well as each time your child transitions classrooms. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, your child's development and any goals you may have for your child will be discussed. RTSALC uses Age-appropriate assessment tools to help assess children's development. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

Each child will have a portfolio which includes a sampling of the child's progress. Depending on the age of the child, these samples may include Ages and Stages Questionnaires, literacy and numeracy assessments, artwork, dictation, writing samples, pictures, anecdotal notes, photos, VPK assessments. Portfolios for toddlers may also include copies of daily notes, growth charts, and other developmental checklists. Portfolios are to be shared with parents during scheduled parent conferences.

## **Multimedia**

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select movie, television, and computer game titles based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show, or to play computer games. Instead, the activity is offered as one of several centers. All multimedia must have a rating of "PG" or "E" and must possess an educational theme. Children are limited to a specified amount of time per week they may use or view multimedia:

- **Infant and Toddler:** 1 hour a day
- **Preschool:** 1 hour and 30 minutes
- **School- Age:** 1 hour and 30 minutes



## **Infant, Toddler, and Two-Year-Old Programs**

The following information is specific to the infant, toddler, and two-year-old program rooms: Parents must supply diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula, baby food, extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, for rest time. Please label all items with the child's name. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during the day. If you are breastfeeding, please discuss with your child's teacher when your child should be fed breast milk.

### **SIDS**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS; however, several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, [Center Name] has a strict policy for infant sleep placement.

All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep. Infants are not allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing at RTSALC.

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib. A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request.

## **Curriculum**

### **Daily Schedule and Activities**

Each program has a Daily Schedule tailored to each age group. RTSALC uses Fun shine Express, Gee whiz, and ABEKA curriculum.

A Daily Schedule will be provided of your child's program.

### **Free Choice**

"Free-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) activities are incorporated into the children's schedules. During free-play, teachers actively participate with the children by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc. Free play is another opportunity for a child to grow socially and cognitively through the development of relationships.

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is incorporated into the daily schedule. Staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-directed play, children can choose their friends and who to interact with.

Children will go outside year-round, including winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will the children remain indoors.

Our teachers refer to the Child Care Weather Watch poster from the Florida Department of Public Health to determine if it is too hot or cold to play outdoors. It is important for parents to send their children appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please clearly label all articles of clothing with your child's name. If a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, we will contact parents to provide the appropriate attire. Please ask your child's teacher if you have any questions about weather-appropriate clothing.

**Potty Training-** We will assist in potty training with the understanding that it will only work if we work together. RTSA will provide parents with our potty-training handbook and guide when the child reaches that stage. All pull-ups must have tear away sides to allow staff and child an easy bathroom experience.

3 yr olds **must** be fully potty trained and independent using the restroom. Newly enrolled 3 year olds who have more than 2 accidents in a week are considered non potty trained and will be charged an additional fee or disenrolled. If your child is currently enrolled and is not potty trained by the age of 3 we will work with parents for 3 months. If after the 3 months they have more than 2 accidents in a week they will be disenrolled. Our 3 year classroom is not equipped to constantly change children and our 2 year old classroom is not for children over the age of 3yrs.

### **Nap/Rest time**

The Florida Department of Children and Families requires that all children be provided a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided with alternative quiet activities if unable to rest. Children are encouraged to bring a blanket from home to use during nap/rest time. These items will be stored in your child's cubby; there is limited space for storage of such items. Please take this into consideration when deciding which items to bring. All items should be clearly labeled with your child's name, as all class laundry is sent home weekly to be washed.

### **Weapons/Violent Play**

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at RTSALC. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapons or violent play. If a child brings a weapon to RTSALC, the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

### **What to Provide> Parent Responsibilities**

#### **Clothing and Items from Home. Please label all items**

2 sets of Extra clothes, small blanket for rest, pampers/wipes, weather appropriate clothes, no spill sippy cup, small bookbag.

#### **Change of Clothes**

Play is usually active and often messy; comfortable, change of clothes are important if your child is to participate fully in the program. Outdoor play is scheduled every day as an essential part of our planned curriculum.

Children participate in both indoor and outdoor activities. Children occasionally get their clothes wet and have toileting accidents. Whenever this occurs, it is best to change the child into an extra set of clothing provided by the family. Your child's teacher will request that you bring a complete change of clothing, including underwear, to be kept at school



No toys, jewelry, or expensive items should be brought from home unless prior permission is given.

**Show & Tell-** At times we will allow the children to bring in their favorite toy or thing to share with friends. Parents will be informed ahead of time when this may occur.

**Damages-** It is expected that your child be respectful of the center's property and furnishings. A certain amount of wear and tear is normal and expected, but if your child intentionally damages property through destructive behavior or roughness, you will be required to replace any object or its value.



## Home and School Partnership

### **New Family Orientation**

Each family is strongly encouraged to schedule a time with the center director to complete a "New Family Orientation." This orientation is a great time for parents to drop off routine care items (diapers, bottles, etc.) as well as an opportunity to participate in a portion of classroom activities with their child, familiarizing themselves with their child's routines at RTSALC. Important policies and procedures are also reviewed with the center director at this time, as well as the paperwork required for enrollment completed. Typically, "New Family Orientation" is scheduled 24-48 hours prior to the start date.

### **Parent App.**

RTSALC uses Bright wheel to communicate, share photos, notes and incidents. Bright wheel is an app to help parents stay connected with their child and teacher during school hours. This is where you can communicate directly with your child's teachers throughout the day. It can also be used to pay your bill with RTSALC.

Talk to the center director to get set up.

### **Newsletters**

A monthly newsletter will be posted on the bulletin board in the front lobby. If you sign up for Bright wheel a copy will be sent to you. This newsletter provides you with general information and announcements about the center and the detailed weekly themes and announcements.

### **Cultural Competence**

RTSALC is committed to respecting each child's and family's culture and diverse needs. We recognize that culture influences every aspect of a child's development and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices. We believe it is important to support and preserve the child's home language usage, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions. We recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English even when their home language is used and respected.

RTSALC carries out this philosophy of cultural competence in the following ways:

- Families are treated with respect and sensitivity from our first meeting.
- Families' financial limitations are respected when planning activities that could potentially result in additional costs, through the acceptance of ELC payments, and clear understanding of payment expectations from the time of enrollment.
- We attempt to learn accurate information about each family, their culture, faith and beliefs, and cultural traditions (we encourage each family, if they feel comfortable, to share this information with us at the time of enrollment). This information is part of the child's daily plan as it relates to meals and snacks, holiday recognition, etc.
- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in what their child is doing in our program through family "homework", dress up days, holiday parties, and volunteer opportunities such as chaperoning field trips.
- Families are asked to inform us of the best way for them to receive communication (i.e. verbal, written, text, email, etc.)
- Families where English is their second language are encouraged and assisted in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children of knowing more than one language and providing them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve their home language. RTSAL will continue to acquire training annually to further our knowledge of culture, language, and diversity.

## Guidance Strategies

### Reasons for Misbehavior

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct, and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation, and a good understanding of the child.

RTSALC staff will use only positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open-ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children – not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

### Understanding Misbehavior

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems.

Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave:

- Test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or is held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

### Preventing Misbehavior

Intervention strategies include but are not limited to the following:

1. One-on-one relationships building activities such as the I Love You Rituals
2. Utilize mental health, social workers, and psychologists in service of the child and family. Refer to special needs' programs if available.
3. Class-made books individualized for the student. Individual picture cards to support behavioral expectations.
4. Ways for the student to be of service to the school, others or his or her community.
5. Noticing and describing the child's body, face and actions, labeling of feelings, and acknowledging or true intent.
6. I Am: Feeling Chart, I Choose: Self-Control Board, and intense work with the Feeling Buddies.
7. Assessing, teaching, or scaffolding missing executive skills.

### **Room Transitions**

Your child will transition to a new classroom when he/she has reached the developmental milestones for a particular classroom. As the time for a transition to a new room approach, you will be informed in advance about your child's transition into his/her new classroom. Both your child's current and future teacher is available to address any questions or concerns you have during the transition process. Before the transition into a new classroom has been completed, parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the new teacher to familiarize themselves with the new classroom, children, and curriculum.

### **Parent Participation**

Parent participation is strongly encouraged in our program. Some possible opportunities to participate and contribute to your child's RTSALC experience:

- Field trip transportation and supervision
- Leading or assisting special projects (sewing, carpentry, cooking, etc.)
- Construction or collection of raw materials for art projects, dramatic play props, etc.
- Eating lunch or snack with your child – please inform the teachers one day in advance
- Volunteering in your child's classroom

### **Program Evaluations**

RTSALC asks parents to complete a program evaluation annually. The information gathered from these anonymous surveys is used by the staff to develop goals for our center and to improve the overall quality of care at our center. A parent's point of view is different from a teacher's point of view. Therefore, parent feedback on the program evaluations is very important to the success of our program and satisfaction of our families.

### **Questions/Concerns**

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved.

If the concern is not resolved, the center director can be reached at 904-743-3131 or [rtsa\\_childcare@yahoo.com](mailto:rtsa_childcare@yahoo.com).

The center director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

RTSALC is a private licensed to serve 105 children by the Florida Department of Children & Families. A copy of the license is available for review in the office.

### **RTSALC Handbook Agreement**

You can find the RTSALC Handbook agreement on our website at [rtsachildcare.org](http://rtsachildcare.org). A handbook agreement must be signed and initiated before your child starts their first day.