



Parent Handbook/ Registration Packet

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Director: Carina Blair

Child led, play based curriculum following Missouri Early Learning standards

“Play is the highest form of research” -Albert Einstein

Dear Parents,

My name is Carina Blair. I am a mom to three wonderful, not so little, children, a Grandma, a wife to my high school sweetheart, and a preschool teacher! I am so excited to be living my dream and getting to do what I love! I have been a preschool teacher for 13 years, 5 years as an assistant teacher, 5 years as a lead teacher, and starting my fourth year as an owner/director/teacher!

I have dreamed of having my own preschool for a long time! I am very excited about how PLA has grown in the short time we have been open. PLA is a family and I hope you feel like home when you walk in the door. My mom, Miss. Vicki works here, as well as my daughter, Miss. Big Emilea, and Miss. Tiffany (my son's girlfriend) subs for us.

I believe that children learn best through play. "Play builds the kind of free-and-easy, try-it-out, do-it-yourself character that our future needs." -James L. Hymes (child development specialist, author) It will be our job to make sure all our children are learning the skills they need to be ready for "Big School" in a fun way. If children enjoy what they are doing, they are more likely to remember what they are learning. We will be learning fine motor, math, science, literacy, gross motor, and social skills, all disguised as play!

Parents are kids' first and most important teachers. What does that mean at PLA? That means we want you to be a part of your child's learning. We want you to be part of our team! One of the most important things is to have a very open line of communication with our families. We have two parent boards- one with any notes that got sent home, our calendar, and our menu. The other is where you will find all about our week! Our VIP, letter of the week, theme, and any other important reminders. We also have our blog, Facebook page, and our website! You have my personal cell phone number, my email address, as well as the PLA phone. If you have any questions or concerns, we want to know! Remember, we are a team with the same goal: ensure that your child is happy, healthy, and ready for success.

Thank you for choosing PLA Academy and I look forward to working with you and your family!

Miss. Carina

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Learning Through Play

You may be wondering, "What is a play based preschool?"

Through Play is how children learn best. A play based preschool promotes participation in age-appropriate activities, such as hands-on play, group story-time, and themed activities. Unlike a daycare or schools that are largely curriculum centered, you won't find kids wandering aimlessly at PLA nor are they expected to sit quietly for long periods of time doing worksheets. Our students are **encouraged to learn through play**, they have a say in what they learn and how they learn it. They have the opportunity to play outside every day (in inclement weather- our free activity room contains balls, parachutes, balance toys, etc); outside time isn't sacrificed for more instructional time. Teachers read books to children individually or in small groups throughout the day, not just at group story time.

One huge benefit of play based learning is our program was adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help. Our teachers recognize that different background and experiences mean that not all kids learn at the same rate or the same way. Most of all, the kids at PLA look forward to coming to school every day!

My passion is teaching children. I love what I do, and I am always so excited to introduce the children to something new. I love watching them take a new idea and use some old knowledge to put their own spin on it. I also love being an observer of how children play. It is our job to teach them their letters, numbers, shapes, colors, math, writing, creating, social, fine motor, gross motor skills, and even reading without them even knowing they are learning! You can teach a child so much by just getting down on their level and playing with them. Expand their play, ask them questions, challenge their thinking, show them a new way to try something, research a subject they are interested in. The best thing you can do for your child... be available to PLAY! It may look like they are *just playing*, but look closer and you will understand that for a child **playing IS serious learning**.

Policies and Procedures

Attached are all of our policies here at PLA. All are in place to ensure that you and your child have the best experience and are safe. If you have any questions about any of our policies please let us know. Please read over all policies and procedures and sign and date the back page acknowledging that you have read and agree.

**Please note that the days written on your tuition agreement cannot be changed unless in writing and with agreement from a teacher. We have only enough help as we need, we cannot be over ration. Which means that your child is only to be in our care of the days agreed upon. **

Registration

A non-refundable, one time enrollment fee of \$50 per child is due at the time of registration, as well as the first month of tuition. Documentation required for your child's records:

1. A completed registration packet
2. Copy of immunization record
3. A Well Child form from your Doctor
4. Authorization for pick-up/emergencies
5. A copy of any court orders regarding child custody/ visitation rights
6. School supplies

Programing

We serve children ages 2-6 years, with limited two-year-old spots. Our center is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We will be closed for holidays and Teacher Work Days (see calendar for those dates). Our morning preschool program is from 8:30-11:30 and includes breakfast. Our afternoon preschool is from 11:30-4:00 and includes lunch and snack. Our full day preschool is 8:00-4:00 and includes breakfast, lunch, and snack. We offer extended care from 7:30-8:00 and 4:00-5:30 for an additional charge (see Tuition and Tuition Agreement for more information).

Tuition

Your child is only to be in our care on the agreed upon days written on your tuition agreement. If you need your child to be in our care different or additional days, we need a few days' notice and there will be a \$25 charge per day. This charge will be on the following month's bill. Few exceptions. If you bring your child on a day not agreed upon or without notice, your child will not be allowed to stay and you will need to find other arrangements for that day.

**Tuition rates are subject to review and change each year*

Payments

We accept cash or checks made out to Play Learn Achieve Academy or PLA Academy. A billing statement will be placed in your child's cubbie. Payment is due on the 1st of each month. You will pay tuition for the month as well as any additional charges for extended care or extra days from the previous month. There are no deductions for child absences for days PLA is closed. Any changes to days/times need to be submitted in writing. If you need to remove your child from our care, 2 weeks' notice in writing is required. If you are 30 days late paying your bill your child will not be allowed to continue care at PLA Academy.

There is a \$25 charge for returned checks. There is also a \$20 late fee for bills paid after the 10th of the month.

Late Pickup

There will be a \$1/min. charge after 5:35 unless we have been contacted.

Privacy Practices

PLA Academy is required to keep records on all children enrolled in our program. This information is kept confidential and is located in a filing cabinet in the office area. You have the right to review your child's file at any time. Other than staff, this information can only be viewed by the Missouri Department of Health for licensing purposes. Permission will have to be granted by the parents for anyone else to access this information.

Attendance

Please notify your teacher or the office if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance, we do worry.

Two-Year-Olds

It is very important for young ones to start school and to be around older kids. But please remember that they are only two. They need time to adjust to a new environment. Two-year-olds need adequate time both at school and at home. It is recommended that children under three years of age stay at school no longer than 8 hours a day

Emergency Contact Information

Each parent must have on a file a list of names and phone numbers of emergency contacts. The emergency contacts are people in the area who are authorized by the parents to pick up and/or care for the child in case of illness or emergency when the parents cannot be reached. Please ensure the persons whose names you give are aware that they have been listed for this purpose and that staff members will ask for identification of anyone we are not familiar. In case of legal issues, the registered parent must indicate who has legal custody and who may pick up the child. We assume no liability if not properly advised. Whenever changes are made to your phone number, work, or address, it is your responsibility to update this information with the office. Written authorization is required for changes in this respect.

Children will not be released to persons whose name is not on the list without a note from the parents.

Adult/Child Ratios

Adult/child ratios are maintained according to licensing guidelines. 1 adult to 10 children with no more than 4 two-year-olds and no more than 20 in the group. Or 1 adult to 8 children with more than 4 two-year-olds and no more than 16 in the group.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a federal civil rights law that went into effect in 1992. The Act states that people with disabilities are entitled to equal rights in employment, state, local, and public services, and public accommodations such as preschools, childcare centers, and family child care homes. ADA presents an exciting opportunity to plan for and include children with disabilities in early childhood settings. Children and families benefit from inclusion.

Children with disabilities share learning opportunities with their peers. Inclusion also fosters caring attitudes and teaches children about interdependence and understanding for human differences. For early childhood professionals, it is an extension of continuing efforts to meet the individual needs of each child and family.

No-Smoking Policy

This is a non-smoking facility. No smoking is permitted inside the building at any time. Smoking is prohibited within 100 feet of the center.

Discipline

Discipline comes from the Latin word “disciplina” which means teaching and learning. Somehow, discipline in today’s world has taken on the meaning of punishment, At PLA, we believe that no child is “bad,” we will teach them to be accountable for the decisions they make. We will be respectful to each other and ourselves, we will be responsible for our actions, and we will work hard to be a good friend. We believe in teaching children to use their words and not their hands to solve problems. When problems do occur it is our job to help guide the children to come up with a solution to the problem. The first thing we will do to help children have ownership over their classroom is have them help set the rules. That way when someone breaks a rule we can remind them that these are their rules. That way when someone breaks a rule we can remind them that these are their rules that were designed to help keep peace and harmony in their classroom. We will also use positive reinforcement and redirection when needed. If a child does cause physical harm to another child they will be asked to sit and calm down before we bring them back together to talk about the situation. Children will be asked to apologize if they have hurt

their friends, we believe this is an important step in teaching empathy. If the behavior becomes too much for our staff to deal with we will contact you and you may be asked to find care for your child elsewhere. This is the last thing we want to do, and we will work with you to help find a solution to the problem.

Immunization

We strongly recommend every child gets immunized. But, if your child isn't, (whether from parental consent or a medical condition) please let us know as there are forms that need to be filled out. The State of Missouri says any parents has the right to know how many children in our facility are not immunized. No names will be given and all immunization records will be kept behind the desk along with you other records. You are able to access your child's file at any time. Our staff and licensing are the only other ones who can access these files.

Drills and Evacuations

PLA has an Emergency Preparedness Plan in the office. Evacuation Routes are posted in all classrooms. Emergency drills are practiced monthly for fire and quarterly for tornado. An emergency pack is readily available containing items needed in an emergency and contact information for each child. This may make quite an impression on your child the first time a drill is held, but your child will soon become accustomed to it and know just what to do. Our center is equipped with a fire alarm system, ceiling sprinkler system, and fire extinguishers that are placed throughout the building. The Fire Marshal Inspection Certificate is poster in the office.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All PLA Academy staff have a legal obligation to report and potential or suspected abuse and/or neglect under MO Statue RSMO Section 219

Sick Child Policy

For the safety and health of all our children and teachers, sick children need to be at home. It is very important you have alternative care for your child when they are sick. We know it can be a very frustrating time when a child is sent home because of an illness, but it is necessary for the wellbeing of the other children and staf.gf. No tuition adjustment will be made for absences due to illness. Please do not send your child to school if they have had any of the following conditions in the past 24 hours. If you child exhibits any of the following signs wile at school, they will be isolated immediately and you will be contacted to pick up your child. When you have been contacted because of illness, please pickup your child within the hour. Please notify us at once if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

1. Diarrhea (2 or more loose stools)
2. Rapid or difficulty breathing
3. Vomiting
4. Yellowish skin or eyes
5. A temperature of 99° under the arm or 100° orally
6. Mucus with a green or yellow color
7. Undiagnosed rash
8. Sore throat/Severe Cough
9. Ear infection, unless notified that child is under physician's care
10. Untreated head lice
11. Pinkeye
12. Unable to participate in class

Embedded Objects

It is our policy to call a parent if an embedded object is found on your child, such as ticks, splinters, etc. We will follow your wishes for what you would like us to do with the embedded object.

Medications

If your child needs to have medication administered during school hours, the parent will need to complete a medication authorization form indicating dosage and times of administration. Please bring the appropriate measuring utensils for administering the medication. No sharing is permitted. The medication must be plainly labeled, contain the name of the child for whom it is prescribed, dates to be administered, and expiration date. We are unable to take phone calls from your doctor's office. For licensing purposes, medication administered to a child must be in writing. Please do not give your child Tylenol before coming to school as it only masks the problem and leaves the illness untreated. Please notify the staff of any medical conditions that will require special considerations in the classroom.

Please note: Medication needs to be given to a staff member, not left in your child's cubbies. All unused or expired medication must be removed from the center by the parent.

Prevention

Young children are very vulnerable to infectious diseases, so we encourage you, as the parent, to be aware of our health policies as states. Prevention of illnesses or contagious diseases is crucial. We encourage you to be a brief assessment of your child's health each morning. Do not bring a sick child to school.

Sanitation Procedures

Parents must supply disposable diapers and wipes if your child isn't potty trained. Changing areas have running water and are disinfected after each use. Every precaution is made to keep the diaper changing areas as germ free as possible. Toys are sanitized regularly and all areas touched by the children are wiped down frequently throughout the day. Licensing regulations are adhered to in all areas of sanitations procedures. Our current Child Care License is posted in the office. The Health Inspection Certificate is posted in the kitchen.

Injuries

The staff makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. As a partner in the care of your child, we realize that you will want to be aware of your child's injuries or illnesses that occur at the center. In order to keep you informed, we will provide you with an Accident and Incident Report for each occurrence. In case of a serious injury, we will make every attempt to contact you for instructions. If we

cannot reach you, we will call all the emergency contacts you have listed. Please keep these numbers up to date. Your signed emergency medical release will also assist us in obtaining prompt medical attention. A staff member will stay with your child until your arrival. All staff is CPR and First Aid Certified.

Breastfeeding

PLA is a breastfeeding supportive center. We will provide a safe space if you choose to/need to breastfeed or pump. We will also help to provide any information we can.

Hygiene

Children will be encouraged to learn good hygiene habits. Children will be guided by teachers to wash hands with soap and water before and after meals and snacks, after using the restroom, and before engaging in any cooking activity or water play.

Rest Time

The children who are in our care for longer than 4 hours will have a rest time. Children do not have to go to sleep and after 1 hour of rest time, will be allowed to go to the quiet room and participate in quiet activities. To protect your child's health, sheets and blankets are laundered each week and cots are sanitized regularly. Parents should provide a familiar cuddly blanket to help soothe a restless body, which we will also wash at the end of the week. Please label the blanket with your child's name. A stuffed friend is also allowed for rest time.

Meals

We like to offer our kids all different, healthy, foods to try. We never force them to eat something they may not like, but we do encourage them to try everything. We offer fruit 2 times a day, vegetables one time, and a protein/grain. We have milk at breakfast and lunch and juice or water at snack. We send home a copy of our menu every month and we have a more detailed weekly menu on the parent board.

Screen Time

Here at PLA Academy, play comes first! Which is why we keep screen time to a minimum. We have no tablets or T.V.'s in the classrooms. We do have one television in the quiet room and is only available for children who wake up from nap early or don't nap. We play only shows like Bubble Guppies or Dora the Explorer. We also ask that your child keep any screens (tablets, electronic games, etc...) at home.

Toys

We ask that all toys, with the exception of a soft sleepy time toy, or toys for sharing days, stay at home. This assures they will not be lost or broken while at school. Any toys that are brought to school will remain in the child's cubbie until they leave for the day.

Play Time

Play is what kids do best! So we ensure that all kids get an appropriate amount of teacher-led and kid-led play time. We have free choice play in the classroom from 7:30-8:55 and again from 5:00-5:30. We have two playground times, once before lunch and again after snack. If it is snowing, raining, too hot, or too cold, we will play in the Gross Motor Room. The motor room has tunnels, balls, scooters, and lots of room to run. Please dress your child in appropriate wear. Be sure to send jackets, coats, gloves, sunglasses, and sunscreen, appropriate for the weather. We are unable to keep sunscreen for all the children, so if you would like to send some, labeled with your child's name, we will keep in in the office and apply it before outside time.

Clothing and Personal Belonging

We ask that all clothing be appropriate for child care. We do many fun and messy activities. Although children will have a paint shirt on for messier activities, there may be mishaps. We don't want to ruin anything special to you or your child. We ask that you leave at least one complete change of clothes for your child in their cubby. Children grow fast so please be sure to check the fit and weather appropriateness of these extra clothes. *Label everything with your child's name.*

Communication

Parents are the first and most important teacher in their child's life. We want you to not only have a very open line of communication with us, but also to be a part of your child's learning team. There are 2 parent boards hanging in the office. There is also a daily blog, newsletters, a Facebook and Instagram page, phone calls, emails, and texts! There will be many opportunities for parents to be involved in classroom activities as well.

Cubbies

Your child will have a cubby at school for storing personal belonging. Some children may have to share their cubby with another child. Please check the cubby daily for any artwork or notes. Also, please help your child learn where their cubby is located. (All notes and artwork will be directly into the cubbies, not in backpacks. Please be sure to take these home daily.)

Arrival

Parents must always accompany their children in and out of PLA Academy. Upon your arrival and departure, please make sure a staff member is aware that you are here. Share information that will help teachers with your child and in turn we will share information about your child's day. According to Missouri Child Care Licensing regulations, you must sign in your child at the time of arrival, and sign them out upon your departure. We have a new system we use. It is an app called Brightwheel. There is a tablet on the desk where you will sign in and out. You can also download the app on your phone and you can see everything your child is doing throughout the day.

Do not let you child enter/exit the building without an adult.

Guidelines for a Smooth Separation

When you arrive at the center, plan to spend a few minutes with you child. Seek out a familiar teacher or a favorite activity. A teacher will be there to greet you. Sometimes children need to share this time with parents before they can try it on their own. Interestingly, in most cases when children sense their parent's willingness to spend some time with them. They feel comfortable enough to move out on their own. However, when they think parents are anxious to leave, children sometimes feel the need to cling all the more. When you leave, be sure to say good-bye, then follow through with leaving. Continuity returning makes it more difficult for the child and parent to separate. When you do depart, you child may cry and protest. This is what psychologists call separation distress. It is part of the normal developmental process. The intensity of a child's distress seems to depend mainly on the child's personality and temperament. It also depends on the way teachers handle the anxiety and the way in which parents leave. Children may show this kind of behavior at the initial separation. As they become more familiar with the teachers in the classroom, their protest will taper off. If you are experiencing difficulties in this area, please let one of the teachers know.

Don't sneak away

Quick goodbyes leave drier eyes

Open Door Policy

PLA has an open door visitation policy for parents and grandparents. Remember, seeing you can be exciting to your child and they may act out. This is very normal, and I promise they don't always act like that.

Departure

Parents sometimes find it difficult to get their child to leave at the end of the day. It's important for the parent to not feel rejected or unneeded when this happens. In fact, the child may be feeling more secure with a parent there and may feel freer to participate with other children. Tell your child you will be leaving soon and stick with that decision. Be sure and check cubbies for any artwork and notes.

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at the center. Please talk to your child's teacher to make arrangements for a day and time. For health regulations, it is required that all food be store bought or made at the center. Food may not be prepared at home.

Holidays

Holidays represent opportunities for young children to learn about the celebrations of various cultures. Certain holidays are recognized in the preschool classrooms in ways that are consistent with the individual program's curriculum and the age of the children. The staff, however, recognize, understands, and value other holidays which reflect the cultural diversity represented among our families. Teachers encourage all parents to propose the observance of any additional holidays that reflect their family's backgrounds and traditions. Such celebrations represent unique opportunities for children to experience and understand various cultural heritages.

Field Trips

Transportation for field trips is provided by our staff and parents. We will ask for parent volunteers to assist on our field trips and they will need to fill out a short form with a copy of your driver's license and current insurance card. Parents will be notified prior to any field trips. Parental consent is required before children may be transported on a field trip.

Thank you for choosing PLA Academy. If you ever have any questions or concerns please bring them up! We look forward to having you on our team!

Handbook Agreement

PLA works endlessly to always improve and make our center better. These policies help us do that.

Please be sure to read all of the policies, sign and date, and bring this page back along with the rest of your registration.

Thank you!

I have read and agree to all policies as written above:

Signature:

Date:
