

Grace Kids Academy

Family Handbook 2022



January 2022

WELCOME

Dear Family,

Welcome to Grace Kids Academy. We are happy that you are considering placing your child in our care. We are sure that you have many questions about our facilities and our program. We hope that this pamphlet will answer some of your questions. We want you to know that we take the responsibility of caring for your child very seriously. We strive to provide a supportive environment and challenging, exciting, educational and recreational program in which children are respected and encouraged in their growth as creative, capable, curious human beings.

Grace Kids Academy has been open since 2011, and strives to provide the best care to all families. Our center is a member of the Pennsylvania Association of Child Care Agencies and we participate in the CACFP nutritional program from the US Dept. of Education and the US Dept. of Agriculture, Keystone Stars Program and we also are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. As a Keystone Star quality-rated program, our goal is to help all children reach their full potential to succeed in school and life.

Thank you for choosing Grace Kids Academy. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Grace Kids Academy Administration

Special note: Some of these policies may change and are dependent on recommendations by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) due to changes in COVID or other health and safety concerns.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Us	6
History	6
Mission	6
Certification	6
Hours of Operation	7
Holidays	7
Definition of Family	7
CACFP- Non Discrimination in Services	7
Admission and Enrollment	9
Waiting Lists	9
Inclusion	9
Non-Discrimination	10
Optional Transition Period	10
Family Participation	10
Confidentiality	10
Staff Qualifications	10
Child to Staff Ratios	11
Communication & Family Partnership	11
Open Door Policy	12
Publicity	12
Tuition and Fees	13
Full Day Rates (effective 1/1/2022)	13
Full-Day- when the child is enrolled at the center up to 10 hours a day at a maximum.	13
Part Day Rates (effective 1/1/2022)	13
Payment	14
Late Pick-up Fees	14
Families using Subsidized Funding	14
Special Activity Fees	14
Late Payment Charges	14
Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges	14
Additional Fees Credits	15
Tuition Scholarship	15
COVID-19 Policy (May Change as requirements in state guidance changes)	16
Immunizations	18
Physicals	18



Illness	18
Allergy Prevention	19
Medications	19
Communicable Diseases	19
Curricula & Learning	21
Learning Environment	21
Curricula & Assessment	21
Assessment of Child Progress	21
Referrals to outside agencies	22
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	22
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	22
Outings & Field Trips	22
Transition	23
Transition from home to center	23
Transition between classrooms	23
Transition to Kindergarten	23
Television Time	23
Electronic Media	23
Multiculturalism	23
Celebrations	24
Rest Time	24
Toilet Training	24
Family Activities	25
Guidance	26
General Procedure	26
Challenging Behavior	26
Physical Restraint	26
Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families	26
Attendance & Withdrawal	28
Absence	28
Withdrawals	28
Transfer of Records	28
Closing Due to Extreme Weather	28
Drop-off and Pick-up	29
General Procedure	29
Drop-off	29
Pick-up	29



Daily Health Check	29
Cell Phone Usage	29
Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up	30
Right to Refuse Child Release	30
Personal Belongings	31
What to Bring	31
Cubbies	31
Lost & Found	31
Toys from Home	31
Nutrition	32
Foods Brought from Home	32
Food Prepared for or at the Center	32
Food Allergies	32
Meal Time	32
Infant Feedings	32
Toddler Feedings	33
Safety	34
Uniform	34
Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play	34
Injuries	34
Biting	35
Respectful Behavior	35
Smoking	35
Parking	35
Prohibited Substances	35
Dangerous Weapons	35
Child Custody	36
Suspected Child Abuse	36
Emergencies	37
Lost or Missing Child	37
Fire Safety	37
Lockdown and Shelter-in-place Drills	37
Emergency Transportation	37
Termination of Services	38
Nondiscrimination in Service	39
Civil Rights Compliance	39



About Us

History

Grace Kids Academy was formed in 2011 with one mission: to help the needs of families in North Philadelphia and provide a secure, nurturing, and high-quality educational environment for children; a place for children to bloom into responsible members of our society. As a faith-based organization, we also believe that each child and family has a God-given potential to impact our community.

Philosophy

Grace Kids Academy wants all children to have the opportunity to grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually by playing, exploring, and learning with others in a fun, safe and healthy environment. We want to encourage our children in learning in a culturally and linguistically diverse environment focusing on the Hispanic background of the community.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a warm and inviting atmosphere that allows children to develop at their own pace. We strongly believe in establishing a positive self-image for each child. We foster that image, along with nurturing their development in the areas of Intellectual, Social, Spiritual, Physical, and Emotional Skills through a variety of activities. Our program aims to provide a strong foundation for their academic future by making use of play and learning materials designed to help our children gain confidence in all of their abilities. We aim to teach each child the character traits (kindness, obedience, self-control, etc.) that proves God's love for us.

Certification

Annually Certified by the Department of Human Services, Pennsylvania Keys to Quality Rating (Keystone Stars), and Annual Federal Head Start Revision (Early Head Start Program). For information and regulations that pertain to each organization, please visit the following websites:

1. DHS Childcare Regulations -
<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Child-Care/Pages/Child-Care-Regulations.aspx>
2. Office of Child Development and Early Learning - SouthEast Region
1-800-346-2929
3. Keystone Stars -
<https://www.pakeys.org/keystone-stars/>
4. Early Head Start Performance Standards -
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>

Additionally, copies of our state Licenses, Regulations and standards are available in the lobby for your reference.



Hours of Operation

Services are provided from 7 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

Holidays

We are closed for certain holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Staff Development Days
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Winter Break
- New Year's Eve

*Note: Closed holidays may vary from year to year. Advanced notice will always be given to parents.

There will be early closings on:

- Fall Parent Conferences (date to be determined) – 12 pm dismissal
- Fall Staff Development Day – 12 pm dismissal
- One Day in December for Class Christmas Celebration – 12 pm dismissal
- Day before Christmas Break – 12 pm dismissal
- Spring Parent conferences (date to be determined) – 12 pm dismissal
- Spring Staff Development Day – 12 pm dismissal
- Preschool Graduation – 12 pm dismissal

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to a family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

CACFP- Non Discrimination in Services

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information



requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Fax: (202) 690-7442
E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.



ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Waiting Lists

Grace Kids Academy maintains a waiting list. Parents wishing to enroll their child/children in the program must complete an application and return to the office with the enrollment fee. An orientation must be completed and enrollment documents turned into the office. When the request cannot be made (ex: not enough space for child/children in the classroom) they are kept on a waiting list. Applications are entered on our waiting list using the date the enrollment forms were received with the following priorities:

- Families affiliated with the center (e.g. Sibling of child enrolled).
- Families requesting full time care.

When a space becomes available, the next child on the waiting list is selected. **All admission and enrollment forms must be completed prior to your child's placement on the waiting list.** Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 12 months to 5 years of age in the childcare center and 4 months to 35 months in the Early Head Start Program.

A gentle reminder that in order for your child to be enrolled in our program:

- Your infant must be at least 8-weeks old (for the Early Head Start Program)
- Your toddler must be at least 13-months old
- Your preschooler must be at least 3-years old and toilet-trained

Updating and Changing Forms

Parents/Guardians will be informed when forms need to be updated. **Emergency Contact and Agreements should be updated every 6 months unless a change (phone number, address) has occurred before, in which parents/guardians are expected to advise staff.** Health Assessment forms must be submitted at least annually with all updated vaccinations. A child may not be in the center with an expired health assessment form.

Inclusion

Grace Kids Academy believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs. **Grace Kids Academy will accept children with special needs whose IFSP and/or IEPs are compatible with large group settings for predominantly typically developing children.** If your child currently has an IEP/IFSP, please share a copy of this plan with us at enrollment so we can work together to ensure that the plans in place are put into practice.



Non-Discrimination

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. At **Grace Kids Academy** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Optional Transition Period

Some parents find it beneficial to gradually phase their child into the Center. This process may include several visits prior to the first day of attendance and perhaps staying only through lunch or nap time on the first day. Phasing-in assists not only the child's adjustment to a new schedule and new program but also the parent's. This may also be an opportunity for parents and staff to determine "goodness of fit" for the child and the center.

Family Participation

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals. Due to facility capacity, classroom activity guests are limited to a maximum of 2 parent guests per child or pre-authorized family friends representing the parents.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential. You may observe children at our center who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Grace Kids Academy are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. Parents may not discuss specific children other than their own with staff or other parents. Any parent who violates the confidentiality policy will be terminated from care.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Administrator	Master's Degree in Business/Early Childhood Education	3 years
Director	Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or above	2 years



Teacher	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or above	2 years
Teacher Asst/Aide	Child Development Associate Credential or above	2 years

Caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Grace Kids Academy.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff	Maximum Group Size per DHS	Group size Observed at Grace
0-12 months	4 to 1	8	4
13-24 months	5 to 1	10	10
25-36 months	6 to 1	12	12
3 year olds	10 to 1	20	18
4-5 year olds	10 to 1	20	18
6-12 year olds	12 to 1	24	20

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Child Care Regulations Code 3270.55

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be placed into your child's cubby at the end of the day or documented for parent access via the Smartcare App.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are available at the parent communication area for your taking.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a



field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in at the main office is required for the safety and protection of our children. Due to facility capacity, classroom activity guests are limited to 2 parent guests per child or pre-authorized family friends representing the parents. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child's learning experience and connect with other families. The Early Head Start Program also requires 2 home visits a year.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur three times a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Social Media. Grace Kids Academy is on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We use these mediums regularly to send announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates including emergency closings.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room in the EHS program welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants. Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

If a problem or concern arises regarding a child and their academics, behavior, or attendance, your point of contact is the Director. If there is a financial concern, the Receptionist or Administrator may assist. Anything related to nutrition and meals can be directed to the Services Director. Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Unless the family indicates that they do not want their child to participate, general pictures will only be used for informational reasons on our Facebook page and website. Photos will also be taken during normal daily activities and posted in areas within the classroom. Names of children will not be released. Please contact the main office if you do not want your child photographed.



TUITION AND FEES

Full Day Rates (effective 1/1/2022)

Full-Day- when the child is enrolled at the center up to 10 hours a day at a maximum.

Infants (4-12 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 260.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 229.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 203.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 156.00 week

Old Toddlers (25- 36 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 220.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 194.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 172.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 132.00 week

Young Toddlers (13-24 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 245.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 216.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 192.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 147.00 week

Preschooler (36 months-Kindergarten)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 210.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 185.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 164.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 126.00 week

School Age (YSA & OSA)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 200.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 176.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 156.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 120.00 week

Part Day Rates (effective 1/1/2022)

Part-Day- when the child is enrolled at the center up to 5 hours a day at a maximum.

Infants (4-12 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 215.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 190.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 168.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 129.00 week

Old Toddlers (25- 36 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 190.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 167.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 148.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 114.00 week

Young Toddlers (13-24 months)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 205.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 181.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 160.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 123.00 week

Preschooler (36 months-Kindergarten)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 170.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 150.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 133.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 102.00 week

School Age (YSA & OSA)

Full Time 5 days -	\$ 155.00 week
Part Time 4 days -	\$ 137.00 week
Part Time 3 days -	\$ 121.00 week
Part Time 2 days -	\$ 93.00 week

*Rates will automatically increase annually on July 1st of every year.



Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement on MONDAYS*. Payments can be made via check or cash in the main office or with a credit card through the Smartcare App (convenience fee charges apply).

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and is considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of **\$5 per minute** will be assessed beginning at 5:30 PM and will be due upon **arrival the following day**.

Families using Subsidized Funding

Please be advised that families using subsidized funding via ELRC must adhere to all ELRC policies and requirements. You are required to pay the assigned copayment weekly and non-payment will be reported on the 6th day (please see your case worker for questions). No additional discounts are permitted as per ELRC policies and requirements.

Child absences in excess of 5 days will be reported to ELRC. If your child is absent for more than 8 days, your child will be unenrolled and placed on the waiting list. To retain your child's spot for absences more than 8 days, 50% of the regular tuition is due weekly until the child returns to childcare.

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. Payment is due on Monday beginning in the week that the service will be provided. If payment is not received by Friday, a **late fee of \$25** will be added to the following week.

If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may not return to the center until the full balance is paid. If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees. Non-payment of copays from Families using subsidized funding will be reported to the ELRC.



Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Additional Fees Credits

- **Vacation** - to retain your child’s spot during vacation, 50% of your regular tuition is due. Vacation days can be used if written notice is given in advance for the days the child will not be in attendance. Tuition must be paid prior to going on vacation. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- **Withdrawals** - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 2 week written notice of withdrawal, a 2 week tuition fee may be applied.

Credits & No Credits

- **Credit will be given for Excused Absences** - if your child is hospitalized for more than two weeks, absent due to a contagious disease for more than two weeks, or absent at the request of the child’s doctor for more than two weeks, the absence is considered excused and parent will only be responsible for 50% of tuition to hold the child’s spot. A written doctor’s note is required to receive a credit. Spots can only be held for a maximum of 21 days.
- **Credit will NOT be given for Sick Days** – there are no credits for sick days. Sick days are considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.
- **Credit will NOT be given for Inclement Weather** - if we do not open due to inclement weather on a day that your child is scheduled to attend, your account will be credited for that day.

Tuition Scholarship

Grace Kids Academy offers a 10% tuition scholarship for private paying families that qualify under the following eligible circumstances. Tuition scholarships will only be given when tuition is paid on time:

- Emergency Services personnel (Police, Firefighters, EMT’s, Paramedics, and Nurses)
- Families with multiple children enrolled at the center
- Community Affiliates



HEALTH

COVID-19 Policy (May Change as requirements in state guidance changes)

Our top priority is the safety of the children in our care and we are taking every precaution for the health and safety of our students. Accordingly, we have made various changes in the way our facility looks, as well as implemented new practices and protocols in accordance with the CDC and the PA Department of Health. Our goal is to collaboratively ensure you and your child feel safe and secure so, together, we can navigate the complexities that this pandemic is presenting. In response to the COVID-19 virus, we are implementing the following to help keep our locations safe and to support you:

- Using a no-contact thermometer, we will screen the temperature of every child before admitting him/her into our facility each day. Parents will also have their temperature checked before entering the doors.
- Parents will only be permitted to drop off and pick up children at the entrance to the classroom's door. Only one parent will be allowed for pick up/drop off. Children who are not enrolled in our care will not be permitted to enter our facilities. Parents must wear masks/face coverings when entering the building.
- Parents must notify the time they will be dropping off their child and picking up to ensure a smooth transition. Families who are running late must call in advance and a time to drop off your child will be given to you. For the safety of your children and staff, we are strongly enforcing families to pick up their children on time (before 5:30pm) to not delay the disinfection process that needs to happen at the end of each day.
- More frequent cleaning and sanitizing of all classrooms, bathrooms, books, toys, play equipment, door handles, and other frequently touched areas will be done with EPA and OSHA approved cleaning products.
- Access to hand sanitizer/sanitizing wipes will be available throughout the facility.
- Required wearing of face masks by employees, children, parents/guardians, and any other individuals entering the building. Signs will be posted directing that no individual will be permitted in the facility without a mask. We will provide masks to all employees as needed. This requirement does not apply to children under the age of 2 or to individuals who are unable to wear a face-covering due to a medical condition.
- Required wearing of gloves by employees during diaper change, mealtimes or when they have contact with body fluids.
- We have removed plush toys and other toys that cannot be frequently disinfected.
- We are teaching children social distancing and proper handwashing:
 - Children are discouraged from any peer-to-peer contact, including high-fives;
 - Students are learning ways to greet each other without touching;
 - Children and staff are continuously washing their hands, following CDC guidelines on proper handwashing;
- A minimum of 6 feet of distancing will be implemented where feasible.



- Staggered shifts and arrival times for staff and students.
- As we receive more information from the Department of Public Health and other entities, we will implement those recommendations and guidelines.

We have also implemented the following plan in case the facility is exposed to a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19:

- Employees or children who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath), or who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 must immediately notify the Center Administration.
- Sick employees or children must follow CDC-recommended steps, including not returning to work until the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with their health care provider.
- GRACE KIDS ACADEMY will seek to identify and promptly notify employees and families who were in close contact (within about 6 feet for 10 minutes or more) with a person with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 from the period 48 hours before symptom onset to the time at which the person isolated, consistent with applicable confidentiality laws.
- GRACE KIDS ACADEMY will immediately secure affected areas and commission decontamination by our facility maintenance team through the process of Ultra Low Volume (ULV) fogging, and hand wiping application of an EPA-registered, commercial-grade disinfectant or other approved sanitizer.

Here are some things we expect of our families to keep our facilities safe:

- Do not send your child or enter the facility if:
 - either of you are experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, or fever;
 - in the previous 14 days you have had contact with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19;
 - is under investigation for COVID-19 or is ill with a respiratory illness;
 - In the previous 14 days, you have traveled internationally to countries with widespread, sustained community transmission.
- Report if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with anyone exposed so we can properly trace and notify those in the facility with whom you may have had contact. We will implement necessary measures to ensure confidentiality and protect your privacy.
- Report if you, your child or anyone in your household has traveled outside the United States so we can determine whether any quarantine needs to be implemented.
- Abide by the safety protocols in place such as face coverings when interacting with staff, and practice social distancing when entering our facilities.

What to bring:

- 2 changes of clothes (just in case children have an accident and soils their clothes)
- Extra shirts or onesies for teething babies. (CDC requires us to change your baby's clothes if any secretion is present which includes drool/Saliva.)
- Blanket and cover sheet for cots. (Washed once a week in the Center)



- A backup mask in case the first one gets misplaced. (Children 2 and up).

***** Thank you for your understanding of these new guidelines and please note that procedures are subject to change.**

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every January, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

The following schedule is required for Vaccinations by age:

- Infants: Birth, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months
- Toddlers: 18 months, 24 months, 30 months
- Preschoolers: Yearly

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 2 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program. A child may not be in the center with an expired health assessment form.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- **Illness that prevents your child from participating in regular activities.**
- **Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.**
- **Fever** (above 100°F) accompanied by other symptoms.
- **Diarrhea** – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- **Vomiting** – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- **Mouth sores** caused by drooling.
- **Rash with fever**, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- **Pink or red conjunctiva** with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- **Impetigo**, until 24 hours after treatment.



- **Strep throat**, until 24 hours after treatment.
- **Head lice**, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- **Scabies**, until 24 hours after treatment.
- **Chickenpox**, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- **Pertussis (Whooping Cough)**, until 5 days of antibiotics.
- **Hepatitis A virus**, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when after staying home for 24 hours AND:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration written on a medication log form. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- **Prescription medications and Non-prescription topical ointments:** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among



the reportable illnesses are the following:

- **Bacterial Meningitis**
- **Botulism**
- **Chicken Pox**
- **Diphtheria**
- **Haemophilus Influenzae (invasive)**
- **Measles (including suspect)**
- **Meningococcal Infection (invasive)**
- **Poliomyelitis (including suspect)**
- **Rabies (human only)**
- **Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)**
- **Tetanus (including suspect)**
- **H1N1 Virus**
- **Any cluster/outbreak of illness**
- **COVID-19**



CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Grace Kids Academy uses the Creative Curriculum published by Teaching Strategies combined with a multicultural curriculum focused on the Hispanic Heritage. As part of this curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom so as to deliver the best individualized instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources. As a Christian Childcare center, a bible lesson may be included in the weekly lesson plan. For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules and lesson plans posted in each classroom.

Assessment of Child Progress

All age groups are assessed formally and informally to ensure that the teachers plan their curriculum goals and activities to support individualized learning. Our teachers observe, record and document children's development, participation and learning throughout the year. The assessments are ongoing, systematic and gathered from natural play activities and realistic settings that reflect children's actual performance.

Our center uses a variety of methods such as observations, checklists, rating scales, and individually administered tests. The assessment results are used to benefit children by informing sound decisions about children, teaching, and program improvement. When assessments identify concerns, appropriate follow-up, referral or other intervention is used with parent participation.

Our formal assessments are done 4 times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter). All our assessments are kept in the child's portfolio, which follow the child from group to group to show the progress in cognitive, language, physical, social and emotional areas of development that are consistent with our program curriculum and philosophy. Our families are part of the assessment process with regular communication, partnership and involvement. Once the formal assessments are completed the Lead teacher will schedule a parent conference.



Referrals to outside agencies

On occasion, it may be determined that a child may need to be referred to an outside developmental agency for evaluation. With parental consent, the director and teachers will follow up the referral by contacting the agency or service provider for evaluation. The agency will then contact you and schedule an evaluation with developmental professionals. If it is determined that the child does have special needs, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed. If the child is not in need of services from this agency, or is ineligible to receive services, the center will review the child's progress at the center every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

A copy of the Individual Education Plan must be turned into the office as it states in writing the specific services required to meet the needs of a child and any change or limitation in his/her participation in regular center activities. Specific services, where appropriate, shall include, but not be limited to 1) physical therapy; 2) speech and language therapy; 3) psychological services; 4) psychiatric services; 5) education services; 6) social services; 7) occupational therapy. The plan describes the method by which the above services will be provided including 1) who will provide the service 2) where the service will be provided; 3) schedule for provisions of the services 4) any special equipment, materials, ramps or aids required by the child. **The IEP shall also recommend the size of the group to which the child may be assigned and the appropriate staff/child ratio required for such group.** The IEP must specify the group size best meets the needs of the child. The parent is responsible for providing a copy of any revised IEPs.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

A copy of the Individual Family Service Plan must be provided. The IFSP is determined by Early Intervention Agencies for a child under the age of three. It states in writing the specific services required to meet the needs of a child and any change or limitation in his/her participation in regular center activities. The specific services and methods by which these services will be provided are similar to those in an IEP.

Outings & Field Trips

Weather permitting, the children play outside in the playground daily. According to child care regulations, children will go outside if the temperature is between 25 degrees Fahrenheit and 90 degrees Fahrenheit as long as there is no precipitation and no weather warnings. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in outdoor play is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family. For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must.



The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Transition

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition between classrooms

Children are transitioned to the next classroom based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with you to propose a plan to introduce your child into the new classroom.

Transition to Kindergarten

Transition activities such as a field trip to a local elementary school, creating a mural of special friends and special times at our center will be part of your child's education at our center. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

Television Time

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may record a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than 1/2 hour and the program will be screened prior to showing. Programs will consist of non-violent and high-quality educational material. Our focus is to provide your child a positive experience with increased understanding of the world.

Electronic Media

Electronic Media are limited to 15 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content. All electronic media are shared in whole group settings.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as



aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community. All special events and celebrations will be communicated through the monthly calendars in advance.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating birthdays with our families. We welcome an alternate snack such as cupcakes which must be store bought. Families must advise the Director when you plan to celebrate in advance and who will attend. Please be mindful that our classrooms are specifically designed for our children, therefore, we only allow 2 adults to attend. Festivities begin at 3:30pm. Items that you can bring are decorations, cupcakes, and 100% juice. If you choose to bring in candy or other treats, they will remain in the cubby until parents pick up. Please do not photograph other children without their parent's consent.

Rest Time

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs. Infants will need a crib sheet for their crib. As blankets are not allowed to be used in cribs, it is recommended that you dress your baby warmly or bring a sleep sack to be used for napping.

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age participate in a quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities. All children will be required to bring in a blanket to be used when resting on the nap cots. Each child will have an assigned cot for sanitary reasons. Blankets will be sent home at the end of the week for washing. Cots are sanitized and disinfected weekly.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles.

Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns. When toilet training begins, please bring enough clothing for your child as multiple accidents are expected during this process. An extra pair of shoes is also recommended in the event that they should become soiled.



Family Activities

We offer a variety of ways for families to participate in the growth and improvement of our program. We encourage families to take an active role.

Advisory Meetings:

- Discussion of Program Goals – annual meeting for families to provide input into our plan for the program.
- Parent Advisory Committee – meets 4 times a year to review progress toward annual goals.
- Classroom Representative – serves as a liaison between classroom parents and teachers
- Parent Committee – meets monthly to plan family events and fundraisers

Family Events: We have several events throughout the year that bring our entire community together. Watch for the announcements:

- Holiday Gatherings
- Book Swap
- Fall Festival
- Annual Field Day

Classroom Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Donate requested items
- Serve as a parent representative
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class Potluck Meal
- Family Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Safety in the Home and Childproofing Your Home
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child



GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Grace Kids Academy is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each student at Grace Kids Academy has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. For the protection of our staff members, if a child is having a tantrum, the teacher ensures that the child or any other child is not in any physical danger but will not pick up the child until he/she has calmed down. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation or to move the child to a safe area where they cannot harm themselves or others.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. Teachers and Parents will meet to develop a plan for improvement and strategies that will be used in an effort to improve behavioral issues.

In the event that the child is exhibiting extreme behaviors, the parents will be notified to pick up the



child from the center immediately. Situations that warrant immediate pickup may be:

- When a child causes major physical harm to another child or staff member
- When a child is causing major physical harm to themselves
- When a child poses a danger to themselves, other children, or staff members

On rare occasions, **a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care** after significant time (30 days or more) on a behavior action plan and teachers/parents have exhausted any and all strategies and methods including external evaluations and services. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to themselves or others on multiple occasions.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation in the program.

Some circumstances are not tolerated by our program and will require disenrollment. These instances are:

- Three or more instances that a child causes major physical harm to another child or staff member
- Three or more instances that a child poses a danger to themselves, other children, or staff members
- Any instances that a child actively continues to bully another after communication with both parents
- Anytime that a parent refuses to continue with a behavior action plan or refuses to seek external evaluations or services.
- The program has exhausted all of its resources and processes in helping the child without success.



ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:30 AM, please call us at 215-455-1234. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Withdrawals

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally. If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, and loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on Smartcare, via text message, and on our social media pages. If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.



DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

We open at 7:00 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children to the classroom and sign them in via electronic pin pad. Each parent will be assigned their own pin. Sharing of pin numbers is prohibited. We will receive children until 9:30 am. The time frame for late arrival is 11:00 am only when a child has a doctor's appointment and a doctor's note is required. Please let the teacher and office know. We close at 5:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Drop-off

Parents are responsible for escorting their children to and from their classroom area. Children should never enter the classroom alone. We ask that parents please allow sufficient time upon arrival to assist with the following:

- Removal of coats, hats, gloves, etc and place them in the cubby
- Speak with the teacher
- Wash your child's hands and/or check your child's diaper
- Say goodbyes

Siblings should remain with parents at all times. If a child is upset when you leave, please know that children usually calm down and are participating before a parent reaches the parking lot. Feel free to call at any time to check on your child. Please note that children will **NOT** be received if they are sleeping. For safety reasons, children must be awake and alert at drop-off. Similarly, children going home during pickup times should be awake and alert.

Pick-up

At the end of each day we ask that parents once again allow sufficient time to prepare for departure by assisting your child with the following:

- Check cubby for take home items
- Putting coats, hats, gloves, etc on
- Speak with the teacher about your child's day
- On Fridays, please remember to take all washables home and return them again on Monday

Please plan to arrive before closing time in order to assure that this process does not keep our dedicated staff past 5:30 pm.

Daily Health Check

Staff will perform a daily health check on each child upon drop off every morning. The daily check will examine whether or not the child has signs of illness or injuries. A pre-existing report will have to be filled out for injuries found.

Cell Phone Usage

The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of



time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, **we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.**

Authorized & Unauthorized Release Contacts

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts and will be assigned their own electronic pin number. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification and must be over the age of 18 years. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency. Repeat instances will be reported to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child physically or otherwise. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.



PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day.
- **Toddlers:** enough clean bottles or sippy cups for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day, a toothbrush.
- **Older Toddlers:** at least two changes of clothes or more per day if going through the toilet training program, a toothbrush.
- **Preschoolers:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes, a toothbrush. You may be asked to bring a notebook for homework in the Preschool 2 classroom.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the main office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.



NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

We request that you do not bring food from home into our center. For special events and birthdays, food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original packaging.
- Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration and are made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients is required, and there must be enough food for all children.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the state requirements for food service. The menu rotates on a monthly basis. Meals are served family style with children being encouraged, not forced to eat. We encourage children to taste each item being served. During snack time, children have the opportunity to develop independence and self-help skills by serving themselves when they are ready to eat.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing by your child's doctor so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

Breakfast is served from 8:00 am until 9:00 am. Children arriving later than 9:00 am should already have eaten at home. Lunch is served at 11:00 am for Toddlers and 12:00 pm for Preschoolers. At meal time, the dining table is set with disposable plates and flatware, and the food is placed in small bowls from which the children can help themselves. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food passed around each table. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers. A teacher who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:



- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed “on demand” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly).
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months.
- Formula must be brought to the premises in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength or powder or concentrate. Formula will be diluted at the child care site according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer or from the child’s health provider, using water from a source approved by the local health department. Formula brought from home must be labeled with the child’s name.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.



SAFETY

Uniform

Grace Kids Academy encourages the use of the uniform as follows:

1. Red shirt
2. Blue, black or gray shorts or sweatpants depending on the season or weather. No Jeans. No drawstrings.
3. Comfortable closed shoes or sneakers. No laces, no sandals, and no flip-flops. Velcro preferred.
4. No jewelry that has hoops or that can be pulled off, ripped, or caught on play equipment. Grace Kids is not responsible for broken or lost jewelry.

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever the weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution. Jeans are sometimes difficult to pull down quickly during bathroom time and children may have accidents.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Shoes with laces are prohibited due to safety risks. Velcro shoes are preferred.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 25°F degrees or if there is any active precipitation. Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if there is an air quality alert or other weather warning.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations. In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact. A Grace Kids Academy employee will remain with the child until you arrive.



Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once. When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting. Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Parking

The parking lot is shared with the visitors and employees of Concilio. The speed limit while driving in the parking lot is 5 MPH. When picking up, please park your vehicle in the designated parking spots for Grace Kids Parents or in any available spot. **Please DO NOT park in or near the exits, in the handicap spot if you do not have a placard, in the drive through areas, or any area that is not a spot.** We also ask that you not leave car motors running or leave other children unattended within your car when you enter the building. Concilio reserves the right to call local police and have the vehicles ticketed or towed.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited. Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to



visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.



EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms, pull-stations, sprinkler system, safety lighting, evacuation cribs, and evacuation doors in every room. Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis. When children are evacuated, their lives are the priority. All personal property including bookbags, coats, clothing, etc., are left behind. Our Evacuation Reunion point is St. Christopher's Hospital. Please see the Emergency Plan letter in your enrollment packet for specifics.

Lockdown and Shelter-in-place Drills

Our center conducts center wide Lockdown and Shelter-in place Drills regularly throughout the year to help our staff and students know what to do in an emergency. For those not familiar, a Lockdown is used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in and around the school. No one is allowed to enter or exit the building and parents may not come to the school during a lockdown. During a lockdown, teachers and staff quickly clear hallways, bring students into the classrooms, and classroom doors are locked and secured. Although lockdowns are utilized as a response during an active shooter situation, that is not the only time the procedure is used. The center might also implement lockdowns for hazards and threats, including, a missing student, a medical emergency, a dangerous animal in the building or on-site , or a non-custodial parent who enters the center and attempts to leave with his/her child.

Our center has worked closely with local authorities and representatives to correctly develop and implement safety procedures. The goals of drills throughout the school year are to improve our ability to protect students, save lives, and reduce injuries. These practice drills allow us to evaluate our emergency operation plans and improve our response skills. A copy of our Emergency Plan is available in every classroom and on the resource board by the front door.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.



TERMINATION OF SERVICES

Grace Kids Academy's goal is to work with parents in a joint effort for their children to grow and thrive in a safe and respectful environment. We make every effort to work with families to successfully reach these goals. In the rare event that attempts to work together fail, we reserve the right to terminate care. Reasons for Termination include:

1. Recurrences of nonpayment of fees and tuition.
2. Failure to comply with State licensing regulations as stated in PA Code 55. Chapter 3270. This includes providing all required paperwork.
3. Refusal to follow up on a referral for professional services recommended by the Director/teachers.
4. Program not able to make reasonable accommodations for the care and education of child.
5. Parents who threaten employees, children or other adults associated with Grace Kids Academy.
6. Parents who have confrontational behavior towards employees, children or other adults associated with Grace Kids Academy.
7. Three or more instances that a child causes major physical harm to another child or staff member
8. Three or more instances that a child poses a danger to themselves, other children, or staff members
9. Any instances that a child or parent actively continues to bully another child after communication with both parties.
10. Failure to abide by the confidentiality policy.



NONDISCRIMINATION IN SERVICE

Admissions

The provision of services and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex. Program service shall be made accessible to eligible handicapped persons through the most practical and economical feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Parents Awareness:

In accordance with the applicable Federal and State Civil Rights Laws and Regulatory Requirements, you and your children as clients of this facility, have the right to:

- Be provided with services at this facility and to be referred for services at other facilities without regard to your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, nationality, age or sex.
- File a complaint of discrimination when you feel that you have been discriminated on the basis of your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, nationality, age or sex.

Complaints of discrimination may be filed with any of the following organizations:

Grace Kids Academy

141 E. Hunting Park Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19124
(215) 455-1234

Department of Human Services

801 Market Street
Suite 5040
Philadelphia, PA 19107

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

Philadelphia Regional Office
110 North 8th St. Suite 501
Philadelphia, PA 19107

