

# ACADEMY KIDS MESQUITE

Parent Handbook  
of  
Operational Policies



**Revised May 2016**

# **Academy Kids Mesquite PARENT'S HANDBOOK of OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

## **ACADEMY KIDS MESQUITE MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Academy Kids Mesquite Childcare Center exists to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for infants through prekindergarten age children. Our focus is to provide a stimulating early care and education experience which promotes each child's individual social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Our goal is to support children's desire to be lifelong learners.

## **STATEMENT OF SERVICES:**

Academy Kids Mesquite is an alternative to "Traditional Daycare" serving ages newborn through prekindergarten. Our daily activities and program consists of a flexible schedule that has been created to provide diversity and challenge for children in all age groups. We offer a structured program for children of all ages that includes a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Our activities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, music, outdoor play and story time.

## **HOURS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite offers two different hours of operation programs.

1. "Full Day Program" from 7:00am to 6:00pm

## **DAYS:**

The Academy Kids program meets with a choice of three different programs:

1. Five day program on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Children will be released only to parents or the persons that have been authorized on the enrollment form. Identification will be checked for your child's protection.

## **SNOW DAYS:**

The program will observe the same holidays as the M ISD.

In the event of bad weather and the MISD schools are closed or delayed, the program will not meet that day. If the public schools do not close but travel is hazardous, we may close. Every effort will be made to notify you of any changes.

## **STATE LICENSING**

We understand the importance of keeping strict compliance with the state licensing regulations in order to ensure a quality environment for your children. Academy Kids Mesquite complies with the applicable state licensing regulations and policies. These requirements cover staff qualifications, facility, playground, health and safety guidelines, and child/staff ratios.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Enrollment in our program is open to all families of our community. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin. Only the child(ren)'s parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren) (Proof of custody may be required). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend Academy Kids Mesquite. AKM requires the following forms along with our admission packet:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Physician's Health Statement
3. Immunizations that are up to date

All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all emergency data as needed, including address, home, cell, and work numbers and individuals authorized to pick up your child. Academy Kids Mesquite must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child (ren)'s file. Parents will be required to comply with all state regulations and center rules as set forth in this Parent's Handbook.

**ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Parents wishing to enroll their children in the center are encouraged to set up an appointment with the center office to come and tour the center and meet the director and their children's Lead Teacher. (Tours are scheduled at the parent's convenience, however, due to rest time and other challenges in our schedule we encourage tours to be scheduled between 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday). The purpose of the informal tour is to answer any questions you might have concerning our policies and procedures and make you aware of the flexible schedule of your child(ren)s average day. At this time we will give you a copy of the parent's handbook and any forms necessary to enroll your child(ren) in the center. All children shall be considered continuously enrolled from the time of enrollment until they are formally withdrawn according to the procedure outlined in the section "VACATIONS, ABSENCES, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CENTER"

**GUARANTEED START DATE:**

Academy Kids Mesquite works on a "Guaranteed Start Date" rather than a "Waiting List". Upon deciding that Academy Kids Mesquite is the place for your child(ren), you will be asked to fill out a "Guaranteed Start Date Agreement" and pay a non-refundable enrollment and supply fee. Prior to your first day you must bring your child's(ren's) enrollment packet(s) (one for each child) along with the following for verification: Birth certificate, and shot records. Parents are required to notify the center prior to their child(ren) withdrawing.

**PAPERWORK, FORMS and ANNUAL RENEWAL:**

We are required by the state to have current and updated information on each child in our center. This is also for your safety. As mentioned above, we require all forms to be filled out on each child prior to their initial attendance at academy Kids Mesquite. Also, each year in August we will have you renew and refresh all your paper work and all forms. There will be a deadline given for compliance to this requirement and a fine may be charged if the new paperwork is not turned in on time. Failure to renew and refresh paperwork does not constitute withdrawal from the program and fees will continue to accrue according to the newest published rates including all late payment convenience fees and all other fees due. Annual registration fees and annual material fees will also be added each year at this same time. . If Your Center Name is penalized or fined for incomplete information on one of our admissions forms or for failure to update/renew this information due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

**DROP-OFF:**

Parents must accompany their child(ren) into the Academy Kids Mesquite every morning and clock their child(ren) in immediately after dropping their child(ren) off in the appropriate room. Children will not be permitted in the building prior to opening hours. The clock in/out system is located across from the office. The children are not allowed to come into Academy Kids Mesquite alone or to sign themselves in unless prior written permission has been given by the parent and approved by the Director. This is for their protection in case of a fire or other emergency. We require that all children have direct contact with a person upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. If any of these things are determined, the child must go home immediately.

**PICK-UP:**

All children must be picked up and clocked out by an adult and/or person approved by the parent and the center. All children must be clocked out before being picked up from their classroom. Anyone, including all parents, who are to be allowed to pick the child up, ***must*** be listed on the Pick-up Permission form or be approved in writing by a parent. In an emergency, parents may call the center and give verbal approval of an alternate individual. However, this is strongly discouraged. The center reserves the right to not allow any individual onto Academy Kids Mesquite for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. In the event anyone out of the ordinary is to pick-up the child, please alert the office prior to that time. This is in addition to them being on the Pick-up Permission form or approval as stated above. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on this form whenever necessary. This form is re-done annually.

**PARKING POLICY:**

Please park in one of the parking spaces when dropping off or picking up children. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come in to drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). Academy Kids Mesquite is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

**PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM:**

All persons authorized to pick a child up from the center must be listed on the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. To avoid confusion, it is the responsibility of the parent signing the child into our center to properly fill out all forms. In a custody situation the parent signing the child into our center takes full responsibility to ensure that this is in accordance with their specific court agreement, which must be attached to the enrollment forms if any limitation of rights is suggested by the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. If a parent who is not listed, or who believes the information given to us was inaccurate, contests the authorization details they must first offer proof that they are indeed the legal parent or guardian and have legal rights to pick the child up. We then will require lawyers for both sides to be contacted and both attorneys will be requested to give us documentation as to the individuals approved for pick-up. The center reserves the right to not allow any individual onto our property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONSENT FORM:**

This form will give us your consent to call an ambulance or your child's doctor or dentist if he/she needs emergency care. Please list your child's doctor, dentist and the hospital you would prefer. Also, please list phone numbers, addresses, and additional emergency numbers of contacts. It is strongly suggested that all emergency contacts all be listed on your Pick-up Permission form. If your child has any allergies or is on any medications, please include this information on the form as well as filling out one of the food or nonfood allergy forms. All of these forms will be re-done annually. Immunization cards need to be presented on or before the first day the child attends the center. A photo copy of these will be kept on file. When your child receives additional immunizations, you are required to bring your immunization card back in for us to take a current photo copy of it so that we can up-date your file. Whenever any information on this card changes – it is your responsibility to notify us and up-date or re-do this form.

**INFORMATION CHANGE**

Parents are to notify the center of any change in home or work phone numbers and addresses. This is for your safety so that we may reach you in an emergency. The center requires that someone listed on the Pick-Up Permission form of each child be available within thirty (30) minutes notice to come and pick up a sick child or a child that Academy Kids Mesquite has determined needs to go home. It is required that all changes of phone numbers, places of employment, residence changes or changes in pick-up information be turned into the office immediately. Please give the Director written notice of the change as soon as possible.

**IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:**

All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date or provide an exemption affidavit. The child's immunization record must be provided by the parent and all information must be current. The parent shall also provide proof of this with a form signed by a health care provider. This form will state that the child has received all current, age-appropriate immunizations. Parent's wishing to take a religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure for providing an affidavit of such a religious opposition. If Academy Kids Mesquite is penalized or fined for non-compliance of immunization cards due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

**MEDICATION:**

All medication to be given to children must be in the original bottle with the instructions clearly printed on it as provided by the doctor's prescription or by the pharmaceutical company. All medicine including scripted and un-scripted medications must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be outdated or past-dated. All prescription medication must have that child's name on the script. All non-prescription medicine must have a permanent sticker with the child's name and the date the medication was left at the center. A "Permission to give Medication" form needs to be filled out prior to the administration of any medication. All medicines must be personally handed to the teacher in charge at the time of arrival along with the "Permission to give Medication" form (Filled out). Academy Kids Mesquite reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. Academy Kids Mesquite reserves the right to request a doctor's consent via hand written prescription for any non-prescription medications. A copy of the "Authorization to Give Medication" form along with the medication bottle and any remaining medication will be given returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication.

**ALLERGIES:**

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

**ILLNESS AND CONTINUED HEALTH:**

These guidelines are for the welfare of all of our children. In order to provide a safe and healthy we rely on our parents to monitor their children with these guidelines in mind. Outdoor play is essential to your child's development. We feel that if your child is too sick to play outdoors then they are too sick for group care. A child that is ill or has a temperature of 100 degrees or above should be kept at home. All children shall have direct contact with a staff member upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior, see the Drop-Off section above. The child will be sent home if he/she is running a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, if he/she is vomiting or has diarrhea, or if it is suspected that he/she has a contagious disease. In the event you are called to come pick up an ill child, you must pick your child up within 30 minutes, or overtime rates will apply. If a child needs to be sent home and their parents are unreachable, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the Pick-up Permission form. If no one is available by contact after 30 minutes the overtime rate will apply. The center reserves the right to request the child to see a physician or have a physician's note prior to returning.

**AFTER ILLNESS OCCURANCE & RETRNING TO THE CENTER:**

To return to the center an ill child must be fever free and symptom free for 24 hours, including 24 hours free of using medication to control symptoms.

**IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY**

In case of an emergency such as a seizure, deep cuts, or any other serious illness, Academy Kids Mesquite personnel will administer CPR and First Aid if needed. Another staff member will call 911 and have the child transported to the nearest hospital. One staff member will accompany the child. The manager or duty will notify parents.

**ACCIDENT REPORTS:**

Safety is a top priority of Academy Kids Mesquite. Yet, there are times when a child will have an accident/ incident between your child and another child. If the accident/incident requires "more than a hug and a kiss", our teachers will complete a report for you detailing what happened and the nature of the injuries. If any first aid is administered, the treatment will be described to you. A copy of this accident report, signed by the teacher in charge at the time of the accident, will be provided to you and a copy filed with the Director's office. We ask that you sign the copy provided to you and return it to the Director's office to confirm that you were notified of your child's injury. This system is aimed at ensuring communication at all levels and can be a very good way to be certain little things are not forgotten in a hasty departure. If your child happens to be injured by another child, we ask you to please respect the child's privacy by not asking us to reveal the name of the child. It not only puts our staff in an awkward situation but could cause a confrontation between our families. We will handle any and all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

### **REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We desire to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file. Whenever we deem it appropriate to the needs of the child to have a child with special needs in our center, the entire staff must follow the reasonable accommodations we have made for that child. Any questions about the accommodations of the child should be referred to the leadership staff.

### **TOYS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite has a wide variety of toys, games and other resources to offer children during center time. Preschool classes will have show and tell related to the week's lesson. Personal toys are not permitted in the center, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell or sleep-toys which should be labeled with the child's name. Academy Kids Mesquite is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing.

***Do not bring toy guns, war toys or other toys of destruction.***

### **TOILET TRAINING**

Toilet training is best accomplished with the cooperation of teachers, parents and children. Children learn toileting skills through consistent positive encouragement from adults and home and at the center.

Toilet Training usually begins around 2 years of age. When a child shows an interest in toilet training, the parents and teachers communicate with a daily report regarding the progression of the toilet training.

Each child will begin at a different time and progress at a different rate. The staff will provide documentation of your child's progress each day. The director and staff are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training progress at Academy Kids Mesquite. Several complete changes of clothes should be kept on-center during this process.

### **CLOTHING:**

We encourage the children to dress for play and comfort as the seasons change. Because our program is based on play and exploration your child WILL get dirty!! Children will have opportunities for outdoor play twice a day weather permitting. Children will go outside if the temperature is above 32 degrees or below 100 degrees with the wind chill and heat index taken in to consideration. It is required that you bring one set of extra clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. We have some extra clothes available, but we may not have the item your child needs in his/her size. If your child comes home in center clothes, please wash the clothes and return them within one week. **It is strongly suggested that all clothing brought or worn to the center have the child's name on it.**

### **DIAPERS:**

Please provide diapers, wipes and diaper ointment (if needed) for your non-potty-trained children. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name. You can bring a package of diapers to leave at the center. You will be notified when your child is running low on diapers. If you run out of diapers we will provide them to you automatically for a fee of \$2 per diaper. If you have any questions please check with the office.

### **SUPPLIES:**

Each child will be provided with all the instructional supplies necessary here at Academy Kids Mesquite. An annual materials fee of \$150 for the program. Children who enter the center after August or prior to August of the following year enrolling students will pay a pro-rated supply fee upon registering.

***Please mark all items clearly with your child's name.*** Additional personal items which are needed include:

- 1) A small blanket for rest time
- 2) A small pillow for rest time
- 3) A crib size sheet or king size pillow case for their nap mat
- 4) Backpack for your child to bring the above items to school on the first day of the week and to take home on the last day of the school week.

## **CURRICULUM:**

Children learn by doing. They learn through play, experimentation, exploration, and testing. Learning should be a joyful, natural experience. We have chosen a curriculum based on the developmental needs of the children. 90% of brain growth occurs from zero to 5 years old. Each class's lesson plans and your child's class flexible schedule are posted on the parent's board in your child's room. We incorporate current trends in Early Childhood and School Age Education and then structure this curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of the children in the group. Our curriculum, although it will vary depending on age, is guided by the following underlying principles:

- Children learn through dynamic investigation
- Children instigate their own learning
- Learning comes from open-ended experiences
- Adults are facilitators of children's learning

## **INFANT CURRICULUM:**

We will keep your child on his/her daily schedule as much as possible. During the day, we will do activities with your child to help them develop their social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills. These activities may include, playing with toys, art, pretending, enjoying stories and books, discovering sand and water, music, and exploring outdoors.

## **PRESCHOOL and PREKINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM:**

The preschool curriculum will cover the following areas:

### Movement and Coordination

- Physical attention and relaxation
- Gross motor skills
- Eye-hand, and eye-foot coordination
- Creative Movement and Group Games

### Autonomy and Social Skills

- Sense of self and personal responsibility
- Working in group setting

### Work Habits

- Memory Skills/
- Following directions
- Task persistence and completion

### Language

- Oral language
- Nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays/songs
- Emerging literacy skills
- Vocabulary
- Phonetics

### Mathematics

- Patters and classifications
- Geometry
- Measurements
- Numbers and number sense

### Science

- Human, animal, and plant characteristics
- Physical elements (water, air, and light)
- Tools

### Music

- Attend to different sounds
- Imitate and produce sounds
- Listen and sing
- Listen and move

### Visual arts

- Attention to visual detail
- Creating art
- Looking at and talking about art

### Orientation to time and space

- Measure of time
- Passage of time (past, present, future)
- Actual and represented space
- Simple maps
- Basic geographical concepts

### Christian Experience

- Verse Memory
- Song / Dance
- Story
- Large Game
- Foundation of Bible and Parts
- Christian Holidays

**DAILY SCHEDULE:**

Although your child's schedule varies somewhat day to day, a typical flow of a day's activities is below.

1. Activity Time: Activities specific to the weekly theme are presented along with basic activities such as puzzles, table manipulative, dramatic play, blocks, etc.
2. Group Time: Group times are child-centered participative sessions. The planned group activities include reading, music, movement, finger plays, and discussion, dramatization, games, and experience stories.
3. Outdoor time: The playground is an extension of the classroom. Children can participate in an activity of their own choosing. Inclement weather, special events, or celebrations will occasionally affect the scheduling of outdoor time.
4. Snacks and Meal Time: Staff sits with children while they are eating, encouraging and participating in quiet conversation.
5. Rest Time: Children are given the opportunity to nap or rest each day.
6. Specific activities vary based on age, all are posted weekly in each room.

**CLASS DIVISIONS AND CLASS SIZE:**

We endeavor to have a challenging and appropriate atmosphere for children of all ages. Homeroom class divisions are based upon three issues. These are: the individual developmental needs of each child, state set student to teacher ratios, and the overall enrollment management plan of the center. Children not yet in school are generally divided into classes by age since this usually keeps them with children in their own developmental level and keeps our age-based student to teacher ratios easy to calculate. In most cases it is our target to have children together with the children with whom they will be attending Kindergarten.

**STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS:**

Student to teacher ratios are based upon guidelines set by Texas law. The following chart shows the maximum ratios that we observe.

| Age of children      | Number of Students | Per teacher | Group Max |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Infants to 11 Months | 4                  | 1           | 10        |
| 12 to 17 Months      | 5                  | 1           | 13        |
| 18 to 23 Months      | 9                  | 1           | 18        |
| 2 Year-Olds          | 11                 | 1           | 22        |
| 3 Year Olds          | 15                 | 1           | 30        |
| 4 Year-Olds          | 18                 | 1           | 35        |
| 5 Year Olds          | 22                 | 1           | 35        |
| School-Age Children  | 26                 | 1           | 35        |

In addition to the teacher to child ratios each group also has a group maximum. We meet or beat these ratios and minimums at all times.

**MIXED-AGE GROUPING**

Our program encourages times for mix-age grouping of children to provide a rich learning environment that recognizes that all children are unique and develop at their own pace and according to their individual interests and abilities. In times of the day where mixed-age grouping is implemented, children who are at least one year apart in age are sometimes placed in the same classroom. Our teachers and staff are educated in mixed-age grouping to help ensure it is implemented with the utmost focus on the child's development and safety. Mixed-age grouping is an effective tool in child development providing many benefits including:

- Older children learn to be helpful, patient and tolerant, while developing increased confidence in their own skills and abilities.
- Younger children have the opportunity to learn more advanced cognitive and socialization skills from the older children.
- Individual differences in development are better accommodated.
- Children are challenged to think about problems in a more creative and flexible way as they observe children of different ages approaching problems differently than they do.



## **TRANSITION PLAN**

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

## **OUR STAFF:**

At Academy Kids Mesquite we strive to provide nurturing, quality care in a highly interactive learning environment. Our friendly qualified staff are an integral part of providing this environment. Our current staff has had

- A detailed interview and screening process.
- Approval by the state of Texas through a background analysis that cross references state and federal criminal records as well as child abuse reporting records to insure that each employee has a background that is clear.
- State CPR and first aid requirements fulfilled

We believe firmly in training and continued education for all our employees and staff. Each has qualified themselves to work with your children by attending specific training classes and often college level courses to learn about early education and the needs of children. We emphasize training and encourage all of our employees to exceed the state minimum number of clock hours of training required to be qualified to continue to work in an early education setting.

## **STAFF AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite considers it inappropriate for parents and clients to solicit our staff to work for them either in their business or homes. We are not legally or financially liable for our employees or any of their actions when they are off the clock or no longer employed by Academy Kids Mesquite. All employees have signed a statement saying that they will not engage in "care for hire"(Non-Compete Agreement) or any employment by or for any past or current client family of Academy Kids Mesquite while currently employed by Academy Kids Mesquite or for eighteen (18) months after their last day of employment. An employee who violates this policy has violated their employment agreement and is subject to possible termination. It is inappropriate for a client or parent to solicit any employee for any type of work. Clients who violate this policy may be subject to termination of services.

## **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:**

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

- Monthly parent newsletters to keep you informed as to the overall program.
- Parent Board – updated with current information about Academy Kids Mesquite and curriculum
- Daily written communication in the form of "Daily Report" forms, "Incident/ouch" forms, and classroom memos will be place in the child's "cubby" from time to time.
- Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child's development.

## **VERBAL COMMUNICATION:**

We will endeavor to be communicative during drop-off and pick-up times. However, this is not a good time for extended conversations since the staff members/teachers have responsibilities for all of the children in the group. Furthermore the person caring for your child at the pick-up time may not be the individual who has spent the majority of the day with your child. This is due to the fact that many children spend 10 hours a day the center and most of our employees only work 6-8 hours. Since children learn best in the morning, we schedule the teachers who are responsible for the majority of the classroom development for the earlier hours and the majority of the day. We suggest that you go to your child's "lead" or "primary" teacher to obtain detailed information on your child's general growth and development. You can call to see how your child's day is going or to speak to your child's teacher for more detailed conversation. The best time to call and speak to your child's teacher is during nap time. There is always a member of management available for you to talk to in person or on the phone. You may also use email to leave information for Management at Office @academykidsmesquite.com

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

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

1. Fall Open House
2. Programs and Special activities, such as the Christmas Program
3. Special parent's involvement activities such as THANKSGIVING FEAST
4. Party Day Volunteer
5. Come and eat lunch with your child
6. Classroom Volunteer
7. Send special treats for snack or meals (please notify the teacher a day or two in advance)
8. Help with center Fund Raiser
9. Participation in a parent's group
10. Reverse Field trips (When we bring a "field trip" type activity to our property)

**We also expect parental involvement in discipline and behavior intervention as outlined in these policies.**

### **POLICY FOR PARENTS WHO CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL EVENTS:**

In the event that a parent feels like they would like to be more involved in the center but cannot due to their work schedule, or due to other conflicts, we will help them find a project or area which they can do on their own time. A member of the leadership staff will meet with the parent to find their area of interest. We will offer suggestions to them based on their interests and time. For example, if the parent likes to sew, we may offer to have them make doll clothes or repair mat sheets.

### **CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Academy Kids Mesquite, please make early arrangements with your child's teacher. Hard or chewy candy and balloons are not permitted because they pose a choking risk

### **VISITING THE CENTER:**

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

### **CLASSIFICATIONS:**

Due to strict licensing guidelines and safety issues we require that all individuals on our property be categorized as one of the following:

- 1) A scheduled employee during the regular course of their work day
- 2) A Child who is in our care (all paperwork has been filled-out)
- 3) Parents or others during the course of regular drop-off or pick-up (This to be approximately fifteen (15) minutes)
- 4) Delivery personnel – From a regular or expected company delivering items to the center (should be in eye sight of an employee at all times and arriving at an expected time)
- 5) Visitor's – Must be approved by the office and should be accompanied by an employee at all times not to exceed once per month and limited to a maximum of 2 hours
- 6) Volunteers – Anyone who is helping with a class party or in any other capacity or anyone who has been a "visitor" for more than once a month or for over 2 hours.
- 7) An Intruder – Action will be taken by the staff to notify the proper authorities

Therefore anyone who is in the building or on the property for an extended period of time must be considered either a "visitor" a "volunteer" or an "intruder" including parents and employees who are off the clock.

**VOLUNTEERS:**

Any parent wishing to help chaperone an event must go through our screening process. Volunteers are also welcome in our center. Anyone visiting or volunteering for more than one day per semester must go through a screening process. Our screening process includes, but is not limited to, 1) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have had a conviction of any law in any state, or any record of founded child or dependent abuse in any state; 2) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have a communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the children; 3) undergoing a fingerprinting and background check 4) a signed statement regarding child abuse 5) going through New Teacher Orientation. Any "visitor" who spends extended periods of time in the center will be considered a volunteer and be required to go through the screening and training listed above.

**INTRUDERS:**

The safety of the children is our first concern. Although we have an open door policy and welcome parents to visit their children we also have a commitment to the parents of the other children in the program. Since we cannot attest to the background of anyone that has not gone through our screening process we also cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without requiring them to fulfill certain screening and training requirements. These are set by state law and our policies. Any individual who does not submit to our safety policies concerning "Visitors" and "Volunteers" must be considered an intruder and steps will be taken according to the "Intruder" portion of our "Safety and Evacuation" policies.

**MEALS AND SNACKS:**

Our meal and snack service consists of a morning snack, a packed nutritional lunch from home, and an afternoon snack for full day students. All food served will be nutritious and healthy. Each child will be encouraged to eat what is prepared and to try new items as introduced. Please alert our staff of any food allergies or food restrictions as we want to accommodate and respect individual preferences.

**FOOD FOR INFANTS AND CRAWLERS:**

Parents must provide food/ formula/ liquid/ milk for children in the Infant and Crawler rooms. The Infant and Crawler rooms are equipped with crock pots and refrigerators. All bottles are required to have a sticker with the child's name and the date the bottle was made. Please be certain to inform staff in the classroom the type of formula your child is using, and any other facts regarding diet. Do not bring open baby food jars - Licensing requirements restrict us from serving prepared baby food from previously opened jars. Any unused baby food will be sent home or thrown away each evening. Breast milk must be handled in a manner consistent with universal precautions. Please clearly identify all breast milk.

**PORTRAITS AND PICTURES:**

We offer school pictures two times a year, in the spring and fall. The fall photos usually include two sittings per child and should be delivered in time for use as holiday gifts. The spring portraits include one sitting and a complete class portrait. In addition we may take pictures of the children playing or for use on their cubbies or for use with a project or we may need pictures of children for promotional use including our center website. There is a "Photo Release form" with your paperwork giving us permission to take your child's picture or include them in short video footage.

**REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS FEES:**

As stated in the *Guaranteed Start Date* section of this policy, there is a registration fee and supply / materials fee that are due prior to the child's first day. These fees are due upon initial enrollment then annually each August. These fees shall suffice for that "School Year's" materials fee provided the child remains continuously enrolled in the program. Children who pull out of the program for a specified or un-specified length of time will be required to pay a re-registration fee as well as an additional materials fee upon returning. The exception to this will be children who physically pull out of the program but whose parent's continue to pay their full weekly fees in order to retain the spot in our program. Children who attend in a "Drop In" fashion who pay the "Drop In" rate will be considered as continuously enrolled for that school year and will only be required to pay one registration and one material fee provided they continue to fit the definition of this program.

**WEEKLY TUITION FEES:**

It is our philosophy that clients are paying for the spot their child will take in our center. This is not based upon attendance but rather on a set weekly or monthly fee that is due regardless of the attendance habits of the child who has the spot. Our fee structure is based upon a weekly/monthly fee that is set by the contract which is signed by the parent's upon enrolling the child(ren) in the program. These contracts may be adjusted from time to time as needed with a two weeks' notice of intent to change services. This to be allowed at the discretion of the management based on space availability. Contracts are re-done annually prior to the first of August. Since the weekly/monthly set fees remain the same, no bill will be given to remind you of these fees. Add on fees may occur such as in the case of School aged children who are in need of additional services due to an irregularity in the school schedule such as an early dismissal, schools out day or school break. In the case of summer break, a new contract will be entered into by the parent's specifying the charges for this period.

**PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

Weekly/monthly fees are due in advance on Monday. There will be a \$50.00 late payment convenience fee added if the account is not paid by the close of business on Tuesday. An additional \$5 maintenance and collection fee will be added each day the account is not paid in full. Failure to pay on time may result in termination of services. No account will ever be allowed to carry a balance unless arrangements have been approved by the Director. There will be a \$50.00 fee added on all returned checks. After two NSF checks are received by the center, payment will be required by cashier's check or money order. Fees for two weeks will be added if a two week written notice is not given prior to your child leaving the center. Clients may pay by cash, check, cashier's check, credit card or Money Order. All payments will be **payable to: Academy Kids Mesquite. Payments may be given directly to office personnel or Director, or may be placed in the payment box located outside the office.** All tuition is non-refundable except for prepaid tuition that is over-and-above any additional charges, including the two weeks' notice. All clients will pay the last weeks fees in advance. This will also be adjusted annually or as the contracted rates change. See the REFUNDS policy below. Registration fees are non-refundable.

**DISCOUNTS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite is pleased to offer the following discounts:

1. A 10% discount for multi children families.
2. When 5 or more employees of any business enroll their child in Academy Kids Mesquite, each family will receive a 5% discount.

**REFUNDS:**

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

**RECIPTS AND STATEMENTS:**

Receipts are available upon request. Annual statements for tax and accounting purposes are available upon request for all accounts with a zero balance.

**LATE PICK-UP FEE:**

There will be a \$1.00 per child, per minute, fee if pick-up takes place after closing. This fee is non-negotiable and is the responsibility of all clients. Parents, or those picking the children up, are required to call ahead if they feel they are going to be more than 5 minutes late. Parents notified that a child is ill and needs to leave the center for the day a "reasonable period of time" to pick-up the child or the above "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. If no parent or emergency contact can be located within 30 minutes of trying to contact the parent, the "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. An attempt will be made to contact individuals on the emergency contact list after children have been left 15 minutes past closing. Children left at the center later than 60 minutes past closing will be considered abandoned and Child Protective Services will be informed.

**QUIET TIME:**

It is our philosophy that children under 5 years of age need adequate quiet time and or rest, as a part of their daily routine. Since all the children are constantly engaged in stimulating activity, we require that everyone rest on mats after lunch. Realizing each child’s rest needs are different, we try to offer alternative ways of resting by providing soft music, stories, etc. for those who choose not to sleep. Infants’ individual schedules will determine when they nap. According to “American Baby” the following chart is a guideline as to the sleep needs of children under 15 years of age:

| <b>Age</b>           | <b>Suggested Hours of Sleep</b> | <b>Number of Naps Suggested</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| One Month            | 15.50 hours                     | 3                               |
| Three Months         | 15.00 hours                     | 3                               |
| Six Months           | 14.25 hours                     | 2                               |
| Nine Months          | 14.00 hours                     | 2                               |
| One Year             | 13.75 hours                     | 2                               |
| Eighteen Months      | 13.50 hours                     | 1                               |
| Two Years            | 13.00 hours                     | 1                               |
| Three Years          | 12.00 hours                     | 1                               |
| Four Years           | 11.50 hours                     | 0-1                             |
| Five to Nine Years   | 10-11 hours                     | 0                               |
| Ten to Fifteen Years | 9-10 hours                      | 0                               |

We believe that children need a balance of activities that include large motor and active play as well as structured quiet time. Our program includes a quiet time for all children Kindergarten and younger. All children from 1 year of age through pre-K will receive a quiet time each day for a specified length of time. This will be established by their flexible schedule posted in that respective classroom.

**VACATIONS, ABSENCES AND LEAVING THE CENTER:**

Vacations and illnesses will be charged at the regular weekly rate. We request that all absences be reported to the Academy Kids Mesquite office prior to or the day of the absence. We require a two week written notice prior to your child leaving the center or a change in your child’s contract. Fees for two weeks will be added if a two week written notice is not given prior to your child leaving the center. Failure to notify the center will cause all fees to continue until written notification is given. When notification is finally given, two additional weeks will be added. This handbook includes a form to use when giving a two week written notice of leaving the center. The center reserves the right to require the dis-enrollment of a child according to our “Discipline Policy” and or the “Behavior Intervention Policy”. The center also reserves the right to require the dis-enrollment of any child whose parent and or guardian has become a problem at the center or who has developed and un-cooperative, aggressive, dissatisfied, or angry demeanor towards the center, its policies or its staff.

**TRANSPORTATION POLICY:**

Parents are responsible for their child’s transportation to the center and for arranging their own car pools.

**INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

Academy Kids Mesquite complies with the minimum insurance coverage as suggested by our independent agent.

**For more information concerning policies and liability see management**

**PET POLICY**

Children must not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, amphibians, frogs and toads, including exotic animals such as monkeys

Classroom may have pets that are kept in a cage or habitat specifically designed for their species.

Dogs and Cats are welcomed visitors to our center providing they are current on shots and have a wellness note from their Veterinarian stating they are disease free.

**HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS**

All children ages 4 and up are required by law to have a hearing and vision screening yearly. Your pediatrician may be able to do the testing and provide a form for this. Academy Kids Mesquite will also provide a company to provide these screenings at the parents' expense if your pediatrician does not provide them.

**OUTDOOR PLAY TIME**

- Children will walk to the playground area using a knotted transition rope.
- There will always be two adults, one in the front and one in the back during transition to and from the playground
- Water will always be available on the playground
- Children will be escorted by a staff member to and from the bathroom
- Staff will use their walkie talkie to stay in communication with staff inside the school
- The playground is inspected daily prior to use by the school compliance manager
- A monthly Playground Checklist will be completed each month

## Emergency & Disaster Preparedness & Plans

# EMERGENCY PLANS

### PREVENTATIVE PLANS:

Emergency/Disaster & Floor plans are posted & accessible to all program areas.

Fire drills are conducted and documented monthly.

Tornado drills are conducted seasonally & documented twice yearly.

Teachers participate in mandatory trainings regarding procedures & primary/secondary exit routes.

### FIRE AND BOMB THREAT EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

There will be a long continuous blast from the fire alarm. Children will be evacuated according to the diagram posted in each room or as directed by the police/and or other emergency personnel. In the case of an actual fire or bomb threat, teachers will take a head count and keep their children calm, out of the way of emergency vehicles and personnel until the children are released to their parents. The designated evacuation area is Whataburger, 128 E. Kerney Street 75149 972-285-4193. In the event the designated evacuation site is unsafe or unavailable the center will notify the "Emergency Closing Center". Parents should listen to the radio WBAP 1080am; television CBS (11), NBC (5), ABC (8), KDFW (4)

Parents may also check online at [www.EmergencyClosing.com](http://www.EmergencyClosing.com). An attempt will be made to call and inform parents if this is possible. Our website will be updated ASAP with all evacuation information. Cell phones will not be used by teachers until cleared for use by local emergency officials.

### TORNADO AND EARTHQUAKE PROCEDURE:

Notification of a tornado or earthquake will be made through the Walkie Talkie. The center keeps a weather radio on alert at all times. Children will be evacuated according to the diagram posted in each room. If the children are inside, everyone should take cover under desks, tables or in tornado safe area (as shown on the diagram posted in each room). If children are outside, they need to move away from the building. If there is structural damage to the building, the children will be taken to the designated evacuation site. In the case of an actual tornado or earthquake, teachers will take a head count and keep their children calm, in the contained area until it is deemed safe for the children to be released.

### BLIZZARD PROCEDURE:

Parents should call the center prior to dropping off their children, in the event there is an issue of inclement weather or due to power failure of some type. If the Mesquite Public Schools dismiss early due to a blizzard, parents are required to come as quickly and safely as possible to pick up their children. Parents should listen to the radio WBAP 1080am; television CBS (11), NBC (5), ABC (8), KDFW (4)

Parents may also check online at [www.EmergencyClosing.com](http://www.EmergencyClosing.com).

As ratios allow, the center will start sending members of the staff home according to those that live the farthest away. If the parents cannot come to pick up their child, a ratio sufficient number of the staff, including an on-site supervisor, will stay with the children for as long as necessary. The team will provide activities for the children to participate in until their parents arrive.

## POWER FAILURE PROCEDURE

In the event of a power failure the center will take the following actions:

- 1) Defining the Problem – The management will determine if the issue is temporary or permanent. Any issue that is determined to last longer than one hour will be considered permanent or semi - permanent and action will be taken.
- 2) Determine if an alternate source of power/heat or cooling is available. Issues to consider will be space heaters/fans to be used according to the guidelines in the “Texas Licensing Standards”.
- 3) The center will notify the parents and the state licensing office according to the plan developed for alternative power/heat or cooling.
- 4) The children will be taken to the designated evacuation site, if evacuation due to power failure and or loss of heat/cooling is deemed necessary,

## CHEMICAL SPILL EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

In the case of a chemical spill, the children will be evacuated in the same manner as a fire drill. Information will be given to the police and then the center will notify the “Emergency Closing Center”. Parents should listen to the radio WBAP 1080am; television CBS (11), NBC (5), ABC (8), KDFW (4) Parent’s may also check online at [www.EmergencyClosing.com](http://www.EmergencyClosing.com). An attempt will be made to call and inform parents if this is possible.

## INTOXICATED PARENT PROCEDURE:

If an intoxicated parent comes to pick up his/her child, center staff will try to detain the parent. The on-site supervisor will contact another person on the emergency list and request that they pick up the child. The on-site supervisor will then tell the intoxicated parent of the pick- up plan. If the center staff is unable to contact another pick up person, the child must be allowed to leave with the parent. The parent would be informed that the police and child protective services will be called to inform them of the incident.

## INTRUDER PROCEDURE:

If an unknown individual gains access to the property/building, a staff member would see if they could be of assistance. This staff member should determine if the individual is an intruder and try to get them to leave the property. During this time, another staff member would then use the designated code to alert other team members in the building and to contact the police. If possible, staff will be notified via walkie talkies and the intruder code to lock all doors. Staff would then proceed as directed by the police. An attempt will be made to try and keep in contact with the all staff members who are taking care of the children to keep them apprised of the situation.

Staff members who approach alleged intruders should refrain from putting themselves, the children or other staff member in an endangering situation. If the situation becomes hostile they should try to escape or do what the individual asks until the authorities arrive. The remainder of the staff will be insuring the safety of the children and will respond accordingly.

No person will be allowed to enter or leave the building until the situation has been cleared by the local emergency officials.



### **LOST OR ABDUCTED CHILDREN PROCEDURE:**

One team member would alert the on-site supervisor for assistance with the search while the other team members stayed with the other children. If the child is not found, the center would contact the parent and then the police. Staff would then proceed as directed by the police.

**The manager on duty is responsible to have the children's emergency forms book in their possession during any emergency event or procedure.**

**Each staff member is responsible to have in their possession at all times including during any emergency events or procedures an up to the minute roll sheet of all children in their care.**

**Each staff member is responsible to know a complete head count of all children in their care at all times, including the youngest and the oldest child throughout the day and during any emergency procedure.**

**IN ALL DRILL OR EVACUATION PROCEDURES, ALL STAFF MEMBERS IN ROOMS OR AREAS WITH NON-AMBULATORY OR INFANT CHILDREN SHOULD PUT ALL CHILDREN IN A STROLLER OR CRIB WITH WHEELS AND WHEEL THEM OUT OF THE BUILDING**

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

We believe that children need limits in order to feel secure about themselves and their environment. The purpose of discipline is to help children learn acceptable behavior and develop self-control. The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At **Academy Kids Mesquite** we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum. **If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.**

### According to licensing rules for child care centers in the state of Texas:

#### *Behavior Management and Guidance.*

Attention spans and skills of children shall be considered so that caregivers do not require behavior of children which is developmentally inappropriate.

- a. Discipline shall be reasonable, appropriate, and in terms the children can understand.
- b. Praise and encouragement of good behavior shall be used instead of focusing upon unacceptable behavior only.
- c. Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening, verbally abusive, or injurious to children shall not be used.
- d. Punishment shall not be related to food, rest or toileting.
- e. Spanking or any other type of corporal punishment is prohibited. ("Corporal punishment" is the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for behavior of which the punisher disapproves.)

### The following is considered unacceptable behavior:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Running in the classroom   | Leaving the area or group without permission           |
| Becoming disruptive  | Removing shoes or other articles of clothing           |
| Throwing toys, rocks, sand   | Using materials inappropriately                        |
| Aggressive behavior  | Using toys inappropriately                             |
| Abusive, or inappropriate language   | Arguing with team members or other children            |
| Lack of Cooperation  | Behavior determined by the director to be unacceptable |
| Hurting themselves or others, such as hitting, biting, spitting, kicking, and pulling hair |  |

The teacher has these prime responsibilities when dealing with inappropriate behavior:

- Redirection - Encourage child's good behavior and/or redirect his or her activity.
- "Time out" or "think time" within their area
- If a problem still exists, the child is then removed from the situation
- One minute per year of age, no more than three minutes after the child has regained control or composure.
- "Time out" or "think time" shall be defined as an area away from the group or activity yet within their area.
- The child will be allowed to return to the group as soon as possible.
- The teacher will not only decide if the child is ready to return, but will encourage him/her to be ready.
- If redirection and "time out" / "think time" periods are not sufficient, staff members intervene as soon as possible to prevent physical or emotional injury.
- The teacher will try to help the child identify his/her unacceptable behavior and possible alternatives
- "Time out" or "think time" away from the group
- If the child continues in the inappropriate behavior
- And/or the "time out" / "think time" with-in the area becomes either inappropriate or ineffective
- Behavior Report
  - ⇒ If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate
  - ⇒ OR the severity denotes an un-resolved problem.
- Behavior Intervention Meeting
- If the child's behavior continues to be inappropriate, a behavior intervention meeting may take place
- Those in attendance will be the parents, the child's lead teacher, and a member of the leadership team
- This may be called by any of the individuals listed above.

Sending a child home

- 1) When the child becomes out of control
- 2) And/or when the child fails to respond to the measures taken by the Academy Kids Mesquite Team
- 3) This is at the discretion of the most senior Leadership Team member present
  - Suspension
    1. Three written behavioral reports within a nine week period constitute the child's being suspended from the child care program for one week.
    2. Behavior Intervention Meeting - During this time the parent or guardian, the lead teacher and a member of the leadership team will meet in an attempt to determine if the child is capable of drastically changing his/her

behavior to allow reentry into the program. This is the mandatory behavior intervention meeting described in the Behavior Intervention Policy.

3. Fees will still be paid for this week to retain the child's space in the Academy Kids Mesquite program.
4. If the child does continue in the program and does receive a fourth behavioral report within a 30 day period, termination of services may occur.
  - o Termination of services
  - o When the severity of a problem is great enough that it could endanger the safety of the child(ren)'s welfare
  - o Termination may be effective immediately after consulting the most senior Leadership Team member present
  - o The parent or guardian will be notified.
  - o The Center considers this to be a drastic measure and would not resort to such unless the child's behavior significantly and directly threatens the physical or mental health, safety or well-being of one or more of the other children or team members and, that threat cannot be eliminated.

In addition to the above, the center will use three methods to track behavior and communicate with parents.

- 1) Daily Reports – a parent/center communication format that does not count as a written behavior report. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept on file.
- 2) Observation Form – an inner center documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be filled out at any time by any center team member and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are to be turned in daily to the lead teacher over the student and then to the leadership team for filing.
- 3) The “Behavior” Report – These are the “Incident Forms” and are duplicate. The original is filed in the child's file and the copy is given to the parent. These are pre-approved by a leadership team member. Each “Behavior” Report counts as one of the three that would result in suspension.

Academy Kids Mesquite expects parental involvement and cooperation in all aspects of discipline. Failure to comply can warrant termination. We reserve the right to discontinue work with any child/parent whose needs we cannot meet. The key to effective discipline is consistency. We try to be as consistent as possible in all areas. We provide the child with a warm and loving atmosphere in which to grow and learn.

## **BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION POLICY**

At Academy Kids Mesquite, our vision is to provide the best education to the most children possible. We strive to help every child be successful and to achieve their highest potential. We implement the Behavior Intervention Policy when needed to ensure this happens.

The basis for our Discipline Policy is an organized classroom and prepared staff members. At Academy Kids Mesquite we strive to develop a positive relationship between the teacher and the child. We also believe that if an interesting and challenging program is offered to the child, then discipline problems are at a minimum.

If inappropriate behavior does occur, we begin with a positive approach.

A Behavior Intervention Meeting may be called in three different manners:

1. The primary teacher or a member of the Leadership Team may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third disciplinary action as they deem necessary.

- Either parent may call for a Behavior Intervention Meeting at any time prior to the third disciplinary action as they deem necessary.
- A Behavior Intervention Meeting is mandatory after the third Discipline Note.

Under the first two scenarios, our first goal will be to determine and identify the behavioral difficulties that the child is having. The child's primary teacher will document the circumstances surrounding the behavior and the current actions that are being taken to correct this. Parents will then be asked to provide information concerning any changes in the home and will give input if they have noticed this behavior and what actions they are currently taking to correct it. A plan of action will then be discussed and agreed upon by all members present. If problems continue, an additional intervention will be scheduled.

The approach will vary slightly in the case that a mandatory Behavior Intervention Meeting has been called after the third discipline note. Our first goal will be to determine if our program is appropriate for the needs of the child. Services will be terminated if it is determined that we cannot meet the child's needs in our program. We will follow the steps listed above if we determine our program is appropriate for the child's special needs.

In addition to the above, the center will use three methods to track behavior and communicate with parents.

1. Daily Reports – a parent/center communication format that does not count as a written behavior report. If the teacher deems necessary, a copy will be kept on file.
2. Observation Form – an inner center documentation of observed inappropriate or challenging behavior. These may be filled out at any time by any center team member and are used solely to track behavior patterns. These are to be turned in daily to the lead teacher over the student and then to the leadership team for filing.
3. The "Behavior" Report – These are the "Incident Forms" and are duplicate. The original is filed in the child's file and the copy is given to the parent. These are pre-approved by a leadership team member. Each "Behavior" Report counts as one of the three that would result in suspension.

**Academy Kids Mesquite expects parental involvement and cooperation in all aspects of discipline. Failure to comply can warrant termination. We reserve the right to discontinue work with any child/parent whose needs cannot be met.**

The Behavior Intervention Policy's purpose is to establish procedures for the parents, lead teacher, and a member of the leadership team to utilize when planning to meet the needs of the child(ren) with unacceptable or inappropriate behavior. A parent, the child's lead teacher and a member of the leadership team will be in attendance at a Behavior Intervention Meeting and agree in advance on the time and date.

## **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a common and a developmentally appropriate behavior in young children, especially from 9-30 months. Generally children over the age of 3 have developed more appropriate ways to communicate. Experts in the field of child development report that biting occurs chiefly as a result of a child's incapacity to communicate. Children may become upset by a new experience, and may bite as a response. While biting during the toddler years is developmentally appropriate, it is upsetting to parents and caregivers when it occurs, the goal of our policy is to replace the child's undesirable behavior with more effective way of communication and to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our program. The following is a plan of our preemptive strategies:

3. For infants and toddlers, positive teething activities will be provided to comfort and soothe their gums.
4. When children bite out of frustration or anger, behavior will be redirected to some other activity and/or will be shown an alternate way to communicate what they want. We will encourage the use of language to express wants and needs.
5. Parents will be notified if their child is bitten at school. However in order to protect the privacy of all our families, parents will not be informed of the biter.
6. If a child bites frequently, staff will utilize a more intensive approach which involves carefully observing the child to determine precipitating events and maintaining a log to help track the behavior. Conferences with parents may also be utilized to discuss the child's actions at home, search for outside resources, etc.
7. Biting incidents will be communicated to the parents of the biter to ensure staff and parents are working together to understand and prevent this behavior.

In order to ensure the safety of all children, if all attempts to stop chronic biting fail we reserve the right to remove the biting child from the program.

## Abuse and Neglect Policy

The law requires that anyone having cause to believe that a child's safety or welfare may be threatened due to abuse or neglect must report the case immediately to any state or local law enforcement agency.

All caregivers employed with Academy Kids Mesquite are required to undergo at least one clock hour of annual training on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, including:

1. Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect;
2. Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect;
3. Internal procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and
4. Community organizations that have training programs available to child-care center staff members, children, and parents.

Employees will also undergo continuous training to increase their awareness of warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. Avenues for this training include staff meetings and our center resource library consisting of brochures, videos, and books.

Academy Kids Mesquite teachers and administrative staff will participate in many activities to raise awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect such as:

- o Designated Blue Ribbon Day
- o A Teddy Bear drive for local police department or Children's Advocacy Center for children in crisis
- o Send child abuse prevention information home

Academy Kids Mesquite plans to partner with community organizations such as the Children's Advocacy Center of Dallas which offers assistance to children who are victims of abuse. Academy Kids Mesquite's staff will utilize the training tools available through the Children's Advocacy Center. Parents can visit <https://www.txabusehotline.org> or call 1-800-252-5400 for more information or to report suspected child abuse.

### Reporting abuse:

If the suspected victim of child abuse or neglect is in immediate danger, you should call 911. If a parent suspects their child is a victim of abuse or neglect, it should be immediately reported to the Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800-252-5400. The hotline handles calls for the entire state so the reporter may have to hold for an operator. When reporting abuse, you should have as much information about the child and alleged person committing the abuse as possible. The identity of the person reporting abuse is confidential by law, however, if the case was ever tried in court they may be called to testify. Leaving contact information is encouraged but not required and you may obtain the reference number in lieu of leaving contact information as proof of the report. Abuse may also be reported online through <https://www.txabusehotline.org> web site however reporting through this site can take up to 24 hours to process.

Call the Texas Abuse Hotline if:

- You believe your situation requires action in less than 24 hours.
- You prefer to remain anonymous.
- You have insufficient data to complete the required information on the report.
- You do not want an e-mail to confirm your report

If you feel that you could possibly have a tendency to become abusive toward a child, please seek help immediately through your local police department or any other resources listed above or present in the center.

For additional information regarding abuse and neglect, you may contact the Department of Family and Protective Services:

8700 N. Stemmons Suite 104

Dallas, TX 75247

Office: 214-951-7902

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

This contact information as well as information on reporting abuse are posted on the bulletin board.

## Nutrition Waiver

Academy Kids Mesquite does not provide meals. We do provide two snacks per day around 9:00 am and 3:00 pm daily. Academy Kids Mesquite will not be responsible for meeting the children's nutritional needs daily.

Parents are responsible to send lunch and drinks daily to meet the nutritional needs of their child.

For more information regarding "Daily Nutritional Needs" for your child's age please see the Director.

## **Licensing Standards and Procedures Child Care Centers and Preschools**

This facility is regulated by the Texas Department of Human Services; Adult and Family Services Division. Parents may review a copy of The Texas Minimum Standards in the center director's office

Our Child Care Facility Licensing Coordinator can be reached at:

Texas Department of Human Services  
Child Care Licensing

800-252-5400 Toll free number

8700 N. Stemmons Freeway

Dallas, Texas 75247

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

All of our center's inspection reports are available upon request

# ACADEMY KIDS MESQUITE

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I understand that these policies describe important information regarding Academy Kids Mesquite. If at any time I have questions regarding these policies, I should consult a member of the management team.

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the policies contained in the Parent Handbook of Operational Policies, last updated August 2012  
I further agree to comply with these policies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Received by (Center Staff)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received

***Sign and Return to office***