



Parent Handbook and Center Policies

Little Acorn Academy will help your child:

- ∞ Build a positive self-image
- ∞ Increase his or her confidence and independence
- ∞ Learn to share with others

Our goal is to prepare every child for their next steps in their journey. We promote young children's natural learning instinct by incorporating play and exploration into our daily curriculums. We use Frog Street Curriculum to prepare every child to be ready and confident to enter kindergarten.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Applications for enrollment are available at the school and online. These forms are to be completed and returned on or before your child’s first day with us. In order for your child to be enrolled, we must have the following on file:

- a) Completed Admission form with each section signed
- b) Current Immunization Record
- c) Signed Acknowledgement of Center Handbook
- d) Children 4 and older must provide copies of hearing and vision screenings
- e) Signed permission form for any medications.

Provisions needed from home are as follow:

- a) A complete change of clothing including socks and underwear, in a labeled Ziploc bag. Infants and Toddlers will need diapers, wipes, creams, food and bottles etc.
- b) If your child will be napping/resting with us, you will need to supply a small pillow, sheet, or a blanket. (Crib sheets and blankets are perfect!)
- c) All belongings including coats, shoes, Show & Tells, should be labeled with your child’s name.

Pre-Enrollment Deposit – For parents reserving a place for child to be enrolled at a later date, a half month’s tuition is due in order to hold a spot in the program. The deposit becomes **non-refundable 2 weeks prior to enrollment**. The deposit is applied to your first month’s tuition once enrolled. Should you decide to not enroll, a written notice will be required. Deposit will be refunded if written notice is received more than 2 weeks before scheduled enrollment was to begin.

LAA reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child for reasons consistent with the best interest of the child himself, the other children, and the school.

UPDATES: If you ever need to update your information (phone number, pick up authorization, etc.) please log in to your Brightwheel profile as soon as possible.

DROP OFF/PICK UP/ ABSENCES

Little Acorn Academy (LAA) has the following scheduled hours:

- School Opens 6:30am
- Breakfast 7:00am – 8:15am
- Class Begins 9:00am **ALL Children are expected to be here by this time.**

Late arrivals may be turned away. Doctor note and a phone call before of being late is the ONLY exception.

- Lunch 11:00pm – 12:00pm
- Rest/Nap time 12:00pm – 2:30pm
- Afternoon Snack 2:30pm or upon arrival for afterschool children.
- Infant Room Closes 5:30pm
- School Closes 6:00pm

Sign In/Sign Out - There is a sign-in/sign-out QR Code near the front door or a clip board for written record that must be used to check in/out each day by the person who brings or picks up your child. This is very important to the running of our school. We use this record to track attendance and is required by the state. Please make sure this a part of your daily routine.

If a person other than the parent/guardian is to pick up your child, please notify his or her teacher in advance. If the staff members at the school do not know the person, we will ask for an ID to validate his/her identity with the information you have given us.

Drop Off - If your child is attending our program, please have him/her to the school before 9:00a.m. Children arriving late often feel they have missed something or are being excluded from something. All teachers will do their best to bring late children into the happenings of the day as smoothly as possible.

All children must be signed in with the lobby QR Code and then walked to their classroom.

Pick up – All children must be signed out with the lobby QR Code or on the clip board. Any person picking up your child must have prior parental authorization. Anyone not recognized by the staff member at the front desk will be required to show a photo ID. Children will not be released to anyone who is not authorized for pick up.

Schedule Changes – If you are going to bring in or pick up your child at a different time, please talk to or message your child’s teacher in advance. This will allow us to plan our day.

Absenteeism – If your child is not going to attend school on a scheduled day, please call or message the school before 9:00am on that day. All parents who have not called in will be notified by 9:30 if their child has not arrived to confirm location of child.

Holidays – LAA will be closed on the following days: New Year’s Day; Good Friday; Memorial Day; July 4th; Labor Day; Thanksgiving; the day after Thanksgiving; Christmas Eve; Christmas Day; and 2:00pm New Year’s Eve. Should any of these days fall on weekend, the center will designate the preceding Friday or following Monday as the day of closing. We reserve the right to close the full day of New Year’s Eve and/or make adjustments based on each calendar year.

Vacation Credit - Following every 12 months of enrollment, each family is eligible for 5 days of vacation credit if notice is given that the child is not present. **No reductions are made for holidays, absences or severe weather days.**

Staff Development Days – LAA will close for 2 days a year – one in March or April and one in August. No children will be permitted on those days and notice will be posted 4 weeks in advance of the actual date.

TUITION & FEES

Payments – All tuition is due in advance on the 1st and 15th of each month (each Monday for Camps). A late fee of \$35 will be assessed on the 5th day past due. Every week that tuition goes unpaid, an additional \$35 late fee may be assessed. Any student whose tuition is more than 15 days late will not be permitted on campus until balance is paid in full.

Absences – Please let us know if your child is going to be absent. Tuition is still charged for that day, however if you have accrued vacation time, you may choose to use that for the days your child is absent.

Family Discounts – Discounts are provided to families enrolling multiple children to our facility. The youngest child is full price; each additional child will receive a 10% discount.

Supply Fees – Bi-annual supply fees will be charged to all families in the fall and spring to replenish items such as art supplies, library books, toys and games.

Registration Fees – Newly enrolled families will be charged a one-time Registration Fee of \$150. Required for all new enrollments.

Returned Check Fees – a fee of \$55 will be charged on all returned checks. A late fee will also be assessed since tuition was not received on time. We reserve the right to not accept personal checks if there are multiple returned checks from a family.

Holidays/Inclement Weather – No credit is given for holidays or inclement weather days.

Separation – The parent reserves the right to withdrawal their child from Little Acorn Academy at any time for any reason. **Withdrawals from the school must be notified in writing two weeks** or greater prior to the last day of attendance. Charges will continue to accrue until written notice is received. Pre-paid tuition will only be reimbursed if proper notice has been received and the pre-payment is for the period beyond the two weeks.

At no other time does Little Acorn Academy offer refunds of any kind.

Late or No-Show Procedures – If you are going to be late picking up your child, please call and let us know. If you are late picking up your child and it is 6:01, there is an additional fee of \$25.00. If you are late picking up your child and it is later than 6:15, there is an additional fee of \$2.00 per minute after 6:15. Late fees are to be paid in cash upon arrival. Please be considerate of staff members who may have plans for the evening.

LAA will take the following procedures regarding any child not picked up at the time of the center's daily closing time:

The child will be supervised at all times at LAA by staff members.

The staff will make every effort to contact the parent and/or all authorized persons.

A half hour or more after closing, provided the staff member was unable to make contact the parent or authorized person, the staff member may contact the child abuse hotline (1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

CENTER PET POLICY

Periodically, pets and other animals may be brought into the building by staff members. This includes, but is not limited to: dogs, chicken, goats, and donkeys. The animals will not be permitted to roam the center freely and will be kept to a designated area. All interactions between the animals and children will be highly structured and supervised by the teacher and administration. All animals are under the care of veterinarians and records are available at all times by request.

Interactions with the animals are optional. A permission request is included at the end of this document. The parent retains the right to decide whether or not their child can interact with animals on a case-by-case basis.

HEALTH POLICIES

It is one of LAA's highest priorities to have a happy, safe, and healthy environment for your child. Because of this, we must be strict with our rules about health and illness. Please do not bring your child to school when they are sick or exhibiting signs of illness. This is not fair to your child, the other children, or the staff. Keep in mind that one child's cough can become another child's bronchitis, pneumonia, or worse.

Children who are kept home from school will need to be out a minimum of 24 hours. Children that are sent home from school with an illness or suspected illness will need to be kept out of school for at least 48 hours or have a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious and fit to attend. A child must be symptom free WITHOUT MEDICATION for more than 24 hours before returning to school.

A parent will be contacted and have an hour and 15 minutes to pick up a sick child when the child exhibits any of the following symptoms at LAA:

- Fever (100.0 degrees F. or higher)
- Vomiting for any reason
- Diarrhea or 2 loose stools in one day
- 6 or more bowel movements in one day
- An undiagnosed rash (with the exception of Droll Rash which is normal during teething)
- An extremely runny nose that drains all day
- An uncontrolled cough
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Red or pink eye(s) with white or yellow eye discharge
- Matted eyelids, redness of the eyelid or skin surrounding the eye (doctor's note required for allergies)

If a parent is unable to pick-up the child in the allotted hour and 15 minutes, a late pick-up fee will be applied at \$1.00 per minute. It is necessary to have children picked up as soon as possible to ensure the health of the remaining children and staff at the center and prevent spread of any possible diseases.

The following is a list of Excluded Communicable Diseases per the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. A child or staff member with any of these diseases will not be allowed to return to the center without a doctor's permission. Parents will be notified of any outbreaks of these communicable diseases.

● Chicken Pox ● Tuberculosis ● German Measles ● Whooping Cough ● Hemophilus ● Influenzae ● Hepatitis A ● Measles ● Salmonella ● Meningococcus ● Shigella ● Strep Throat ● Giardia Lamblie ● Lice ● Scabies ●

LAA staff will sanitize all toys thoroughly each day, and will do its best to maintain a safe, clean environment for all students. Please do your part by keeping your sick child home to avoid the spread of illness to other students and parents. This will ultimately result in less lost work time, and a healthier, happier community of students, parents, and staff.

Hearing/Vision Screening – All 4-year-olds getting ready to start kindergarten are required by the State to receive hearing and vision screenings. The center may provide this service – for a fee – for all children who do not bring a completed form from their doctor.

Health Checks – Staff members in all classrooms conduct routine health checks upon a child's arrival to the Center at the point when a child is signed in. Staff are trained to look for obvious signs of illness (fever, rash, etc.) and ask the parent/guardian how the child is doing (how he slept, ate, etc.) and whether they had or will need any medication during the day. The child's health check will be documented on the Brightwheel app. For questions regarding illnesses that require exclusion from care see "illness and injury."

Sunscreen and Bug Spray:

Sunscreen – The center will have available for everyone to use either Coppertone Water Babies or HEB Solutions Baby Broad Spectrum lotion sunscreen and it will be applied to each child before we go outside for those whose parents have given permission. Each spring we will confirm the brand of lotions available and have everyone re-sign the permission to use center sunscreen.

Bug Spray – The center will have available for everyone to use either Off Family pump spray or HEB-Brand bug spray and it will be applied to each child as we go outside for those whose parents have given permission. Each spring we will confirm the brand of spray available and have everyone re-sign the permission to use center bug spray.

If you do not wish to use the center's supplied sunscreen or bug spray, please apply to your child prior to arrival. We do not have the space available for everyone to have their own bug sprays and/or sunscreens.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Current immunization requirements set forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control must be met at all times, are required upon enrollment, and must be updated as necessary thereafter. Conscientious Objection affidavits will **NOT** be accepted for the following immunizations due to public health concerns: DTap, HiB, IPV (Polio), MMR, PCV13 (Pneumococcus), Varicella (Chicken Pox). The following are highly recommended for everyone, and children without these immunizations must have a notarized Conscientious Objection affidavit on file: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Influenza. Children experiencing homelessness or foster care may be provisionally admitted for up to 30 days if evidence of immunization is not available.

Exceptions to the Little Acorn Academy Immunization policy are very rare and require documentation from a physician. For medical conditions, acceptable documentation may include a note from the child's health care professional providing a statement that the required vaccine is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child.

Staff are required to have any immunizations as required by the Williamson County health Department and encouraged to get the flu shot each year.

INFANT SAFETY AND NUTRITION

As a licensed childcare facility, we are required to have Infant Feeding Instructions for children ages 12 months and younger. These must be updated every 30 days or sooner regardless of whether or not there are changes to the infant's feeding schedule. Bottles and infant formula and/or breast milk should be supplied daily, with your child's first name and last initial labeled clearly on each container. If your infant is beginning to eat solid foods, please keep your child's teacher informed as you introduce new foods into his/her diet. Baby food should be sent daily, labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

A refrigerator, microwave, and bottle warmers are available in the infant/toddler classrooms for cooling/heating your child's food and milk. Daily reports will be sent home via email from Brightwheel to provide the following information: feedings (amount consumed and the times), diapers (wet/soiled and the times), sleep (amount and times), mood/observation, a daily photo, friendly reminders, classroom activities and anything special that occurred that day.

Little Acorn Academy encourages and *promotes breastfeeding by providing designated areas for nursing: the adult-sized rocking chair in the infant room or outdoor seating in the garden; and educating our infant teachers about the proper ways to store and reheat breast milk. Breast milk is stored in separate compartments of the refrigerator, labeled with each infant's name. We use a bottle warmer or warm water to heat breast milk—never a microwave. All parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care.

*Breastfeeding Information and resources are available in the infant/toddler classes, which include useful topics such as breastfeeding support group information, tips on returning to work while breastfeeding, and weaning. Additional breastfeeding information can be found at www.milkcounts.com

INFANT SLEEP/SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Parents/Guardians of children under the age of 18 months must sign an acknowledgment of our Infant Safe Sleep policy upon admission. As a licensed childcare facility, we are not permitted to use blankets, loose bedding, or stuffed animals in an infant's crib under the age of 12 months. We have sleeveless sleep sacks that we provide for each infant. You may want to send warmer clothing, such as sleepers, for naps. Infants less than 12 months of age will be placed in a safe sleeping position: on their backs to sleep on a firm mattress in a CPSC approved crib. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, swaddling infants when they are in a crib is not necessary or recommended, but rather one-piece sleepers should be used (see Standard 3.1.4.2 for more information).

When a health-care professional determines that it is medically necessary for an infant to sleep in an alternative position (other than sleeping on the infant's back), sleep in a restrictive device (such as a bouncer seat or swing), or needs to be swaddled to sleep, parents/guardians must use form J-800-2710 to ensure that our licensed child-care meets the minimum standards required by Texas Human Resources Code §42.042(e)(8). The standards for childcare centers require the operation to:

- follow the directions of an infant's health-care professional to provide specialized medical assistance to the infant; and
- maintain, while active, this form and any other directions from the health-care professional that the parent provides to the operation [See §746.603(a)(10) or §747.603(a)(9)].

Caregivers will keep the exception form in the infant's classroom, so that all caregivers may refer to the health-care professional's instructions.

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All children benefit from mild and vigorous physical activity and there will be scheduled times for every class for physical activity every day. Each classroom's schedule has times for structured physical activity outside as well as free choice physical activities. A total of a minimum of 1.5 hours of physical activity is planned each day. Most physical activities will take place in the outside playground areas. All classes have alternative indoor activity plans for times when the weather does not allow for outdoor time. They may use their classrooms or the lobby area for these activities.

UNIQUE LEARNERS

All children and families are unique, and we do our best to make accommodation for each child so that they can learn to the best of their ability. These accommodations can include support in another language, an area for a therapist to work with your child while here, or lesson modifications to meet the abilities and learning style of each child. We are happy to discuss your child's needs and talk about what options are available and put a plan together to help your child do their best.

FOOD AND FOOD ALLERGY POLICIES

LAA provides a breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all children in care. School age children are provided a healthy snack as they arrive. LAA participates in the FDA Childcare Food Program which monitors and assists the center in providing nutritional meals each day. Food is never used as a reward. The meals are prepared onsite in the kitchen which is monitored and inspected by Williamson County Health Department. Liquids and foods hotter than 110 degrees are kept out of reach of children. Any special food or milk request MUST have a doctor note.

All staff are educated on food allergies. We have adopted the following policies and procedures as they relate to food allergies in order to take precautions and do our best to protect any children with allergies.

Food from Home – We ask that children bring food from home for lunch or snack **only** in the event that they have special dietary needs. We will have milk, fruits, and vegetables available to supplement any of these meals. There is space in the milk fridge to store any home items that need to be refrigerated.

Special Snacks/Birthdays – Parents are welcome to bring in a special treat or snack for the class to share provided the snack is store bought only. This is so that the teacher can check that there are no allergens for any child in the class.

Resources – At the parent resource center, we have handouts for more information regarding food allergies, sample menus, healthy foods and snacks and breastfeeding information.

PARENT PARTICIPATION & COMMUNICATION

Meaningful family engagement in children’s early learning supports school readiness and later academic success. Parental involvement is a critical element of high-quality early care and education. We encourage parents and family members to be involved in many ways in our school. For safety reasons anyone over the age of 13 wishing to participate in any classroom activity must first do a State Background Check. Forms are available at the front office to register with TXHHS and Child Care Licensing.

Daily Communication – LAA uses the Brightwheel app to communicate daily to parents. For effective use of the tool, all parents are expected to participate and download the app.

Contact Information/Approved Pickups – At any time, you are able to update your contact information in Brightwheel, as well as a list of people who are approved to pick up your child. Please make sure this information is kept up to date, since this is what we will use to contact you and/or release your child at pickup. You will be asked to verify this information at least twice annually.

Open Door – We have an open-door policy and welcome parents to observe their child at any time. We do encourage parents to not disturb children during their nap time. It is important that all children have the opportunity to have a peaceful and undisturbed nap.

Classroom Visits – You are welcome at any time to visit or join a class at LAA. If you have something special you would like to share, we would be very happy to have you bring it in. The more parent participation we have, the better overall experience for the children. We do ask that you talk with your child’s teacher about your visit so we can plan the best way to utilize your time with us.

Special Materials – During the year, there will be times when you will be asked to bring in special materials for the school or your child’s class. These will be such items as magazines, paper towels rolls, baby food jars, etc.

Volunteers – We will be giving you many opportunities to volunteer at LAA throughout the year. These opportunities will include field trips, special school parties and joining the classes to share special topics of interest. Parents wanting to volunteer will be required to have a criminal background check as required by the State of Texas and is for the safety of all children.

Parent Conferences – Conferences will be scheduled by the teacher at least twice each year. These are a wonderful tool to discuss your child's progress, update on ongoing development and set up goals. At any time, a teacher or parent may schedule an additional conference to discuss or review a child's progress.

Technology Use/Cell Phones – We ask that you respectfully refrain from using your phone when you come to pick up or drop off your child(ren). Communication between parents and teachers is best when there are no distractions. Relationships are built on open, easy communication. Parents who come in on their phones do not invite discussion and are not focused on those around them. We ask that you please finish your conversation before coming into the center.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Together we are better and for us to be partners in your child's development we encourage constant communication and parent involvement. We goal is for you to feel our staff and center is an extension of your family. To promote clear and consistent communication each teacher will communicate at least once per week via the app on the weekly curriculum. You are welcome to contact your child's teacher any time and they will respond outside of their classroom time. In addition, the center offers the following types of reports and notices.

Infants and Toddlers will have a daily report with their daily schedule and notes from their teachers in their cubby each day (only if the parent is unable to download the app).

Classroom information posted near the class entrance will include:

- ☞ Classroom schedule
- ☞ Lesson plans for the week
- ☞ Special activities
- ☞ Sign-up for events

The front lobby features an information table with the following:

- ☞ Special events
- ☞ Informational and educational Handouts for parents
- ☞ Changes in center policies
- ☞ Upcoming closings/holidays
- ☞ Health/Nutritional notices
- ☞ Community Information

A copy of the State Minimum Standards and health, fire, and gas inspections are available upon request. Copies of the most recent inspection from the State will be posted in the lobby.

Licensing Information

Little Acorn Academy's License number is 1378726. You may contact the local Licensing office located at 14000 Summit Drive, Ste 100, Austin, TX 78728 at (512) 834-3426 and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) website is www.dfps.state.tx.us.

The DFPS abuse/neglect hotline is 800-252-5400. You may review a copy of the minimum standard rules in the office or online http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/ as well as Little Acorn Academy's most recent Licensing report on the bulletin board in the hallway or online at:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE/NEGLECT

Little Acorn Academy works tirelessly with our Staff, in collaboration with the community and our families, to help prevent and respond appropriately to abuse and neglect of children, including: at least 2 hours of annual training for employees; sharing information and resources with employees and families to raise awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect and factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect; providing educational opportunities to increase employee and parent awareness of prevention techniques for child abuse and neglect, such as the

use of Conscious Discipline for families; coordinating with community organizations, such as the Williamson County Child Advocacy Center; and informing the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect about the actions they should take to obtain assistance and intervention, including procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect. The DFPS abuse/neglect hotline is 800-252-5400

CLASS MANAGEMENT

Curriculum Goals – It is the goal of every classroom at Little Acorn Academy to provide the best possible educational experience for each child. This is achieved through individualized attention and nurturing a sense of discovery for daily life. Each week, teachers select a theme and create a curriculum around it to reach age-appropriate educational milestones while also having fun! Lesson Plans are entered every Friday for the following week and can be viewed at any time through Brightwheel.

Rest Time at School – Per State guidelines all children are required to have the opportunity to rest. LAA employees create an environment that fosters adequate rest during the school. Teachers are not allowed to keep children awake. Children who do not go to sleep are expected to rest quietly on their cot. (Please provide a crib sheet, a small blanket and if a pillow is needed, it must be travel sized.)

Sleeping Recommendations – Sleep is very important to your child's well-being. The link between a child's lack of sleep and his or her behavior is not always obvious. When adults are tired, they can either be grumpy or have low energy, but children can become hyper, disagreeable, and have extremes in behavior. As parents, we sometimes make the mistake of thinking that keeping a child up will make him or her sleepier for bedtime. In fact, though, our children can have a *harder* time sleeping if they are overtired. Establishing a bedtime routine helps children relax and get ready for sleep. For a preschooler, the routine may be from 15 to 30 minutes long and include calming activities such as reading a story, listening to soft music and saying his/her nighttime prayers.

Whatever the nightly ritual, your preschooler will probably insist that it be the same every night. This is a very important time and should not be used as incentive/punishment. It is important that rituals do not become too long or too complicated. Whenever possible, allow your preschooler to make bedtime choices within the routine: which pajamas to wear, which stuffed animal to take to bed, what music to play. This gives your little one a sense of control over the routine.

Cubbies – Each child is given a cubby to hold their papers and art projects. Most important information will be communicated to you through memos in your child's cubby. Please check your child's cubby daily.

Class News – Each class has a special News Bulletin Board. Please check these boards find out about events in your child's class.

Special Notices and School wide Activities – These events will be posted in the lobby and online on Facebook.

Sleeping Materials – These will be sent home every Friday for cleaning. Please have them back to school the following Monday.

Screen Time – No children under the age of 2 will have any screen time. Children over the age of 2 will have limited TV time periodically as special extensions to their curriculum. Some classes will have access to tablets or computers as part of their center activities. These will be used to enhance their learning with educational games and activities.

Toys – We ask that children not bring toys to school unless it is a special event designed by their teacher.

Personal Belongings – All personal belongings must be kept in the child's cubby or hook until they are needed. We are not responsible for lost toys, electronics, or other misplaced items. Please make sure all bags are free of any hazardous or dangerous items. Any items found that are deemed dangerous or hazardous will be removed and disposed as required by law.

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather and active play at all times. Their clothes should be durable and washable. Children should be equipped with appropriate coats, hats, and mittens. Also, shoes should be active wear in which your child can run. In warm weather, please do not send your child in sandals, flip-flops, or jellies.

Children get dirty! We will do many hands-on activities and there will be times that the children will get dirty. It is not our intent to ruin any clothing and will take precautions to protect clothing, but there is no guarantee that children and clothing will stay clean.

All children should have at least one change of clothes at the center at all times. Infants and toilet training children should have 2 or more changes of clothes.

Please remember your child's capabilities with regard to toileting when dressing your child (elastic waist pants versus button and zippers).

Please remember to update your child's extra set of clothes that are kept at the school. The changing of seasons or a change in your child's size should mean a change in the clothing kept at the school.

Please remember to label clothing, especially coats!

RULES AND DISCIPLINE

Learning what is acceptable and appropriate behavior is a natural part of a young child's development. Our goal is to take a positive approach and to maintain consistent, age-appropriate expectations and focus on school readiness. We believe it is important to redirect undesirable behavior and give the child positive choices to select from. Teaching by example, learning logical consequences, and praising acceptable choices help create a positive approach to discipline. We may occasionally redirect a child to the "quiet area" where we have soft pillows, books, and small individual play activities to allow time for contemplation and cool down.

Discipline must be individualized for each child and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Our goal is to direct each child towards acceptable behavior and self-control. The teacher will use positive methods of discipline and guidance that will encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction.

Some techniques used are:

- ☞ Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing on the unacceptable behavior.
- ☞ Reminding children of behavior expectations daily by using clear and positive statements.
- ☞ Redirecting behavior by using positive statements.
- ☞ Using brief, supervised separation or a quiet time out, when appropriate for the child's age and development. This time is limited to 1 minute per year of child's age, or until the child is ready to re-enter the group.

Rules for the children to learn to follow:

- ☞ They are asked to be considerate of the other children and teachers.
- ☞ One child is not allowed to interfere with another child's work or play unless invited to share by the other child.
- ☞ They must try to complete one task before going on to another.
- ☞ Work and play materials should be put away before new things are taken out.

Discipline:

- a. If a child is disruptive, they will be asked to cooperate. If the child refuses, they will be removed from the situation, either to sit in time-out or redirected to another area of the class. The teacher will discuss with the child why they are being disciplined. The goal of discipline is to teach, to help the child replace a negative behavior with a positive behavior. Children should see that their actions/words have consequences (both positive and negative). Our goal is to help them understand the connection.
- b. If a child's behavior becomes worse or is extreme, such as harming another child, the teacher will discuss the problem with the parent, so that a solution can be mutually agreed upon.
- c. A child will never be left alone in a room
- d. A child will never be physically or emotionally abused in any way.

We will work with children and families to work on any challenging behaviors and stay in communication with parents regarding their child's progress through the Brightwheel app and email or phone updates. We may from time to time request a parent conference to go over a plan to assist the family and child.

MEDICATIONS

We can administer medications for your child provided **all of the following** criteria have been met:

1. The prescription or medication is in its original container with doctor's name on it
2. Child's name is clearly on the bottle with current date
3. The directions are clearly stated on the container
4. You have completed a MEDICATION FORM & given it to the director or teacher
5. The teacher or director will put the medication in the proper storage location

It is essential that there is clear communication on any changes in treatment and monitoring the child's recovery. All prescribed medications must be taken consistently and at the designated times for maximum effectiveness. We will do our part to ensure your child recovers as quickly as possible.

INJURIES

While precautions are taken to help prevent accidental injuries, childhood accidents are a normal part of growing up. Minor scrapes, scratches, and bumps will be reported on an incident report given to you at the end of the day. This form requires your signature and the director signature, to acknowledge the awareness of the incident. The copy will go onto their file.

Minor accidents which occur at school will be treated by a teacher with basic first aid as needed. It will be recorded, and the teacher will let the parent know what happened. Any questionable injuries will be reported to you immediately so that together, the center staff and parents may mutually determine the best course of action.

All medications brought into school must be registered with the school in the Medicine Log and it must be handed directly to a staff member. All medicine must be brought in the original container. If it is a prescription medicine, the label from the pharmacy must be on the medicine.

The parent will be notified immediately of major accidents or illnesses. In the case of an emergency, 911 will be called and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital and will stay with your child until you or an authorized person arrives.

TRANSPORTATION

We provide transportation from local Leander ISD schools for children in our After-School program. We also transport to and from field trips for our Pre-K students and our school age program during camps. All field trip participants will be required to have a signed permission slip from their parent/guardian before they leave the center.

WEATHER & OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

All children in care will be taken outside for 90 minutes or more, weather permitting. We understand vigorous physical activity and fresh air contributes to a healthy environment and helps reduce illness. Be sure your child is wearing appropriate clothing and can layer if necessary due to weather changes. If the weather does not allow for extended outside play, children will use the gym area during their outside time to ensure plenty of opportunity of physical activities.

Common sense is a must with weather in Central Texas! Children will be allowed to play outside for 10- 15-minute intervals when the weather is excessively hot. If provided by the parent, sunscreen will be applied to all children. Water is available during the day and children will be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids. When temperatures are above 100 degrees, children will not be allowed to go outside.

Inclement weather – LAA follows Leander ISD in the event of inclement weather. Should LISD close or delay, we will do the same. If the weather becomes bad after school as already begun, we will contact each parent to inform them that the center will need to close for each child's safety and help parents get to their child quickly and safely.

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, the staff will follow the Center's emergency plan of action. Fire drills, evacuations and tornado drills are practiced on a regular basis to walk the children and staff through safety procedures calmly and efficiently. If an emergency evacuation of the center is ever necessary, we have made arrangements with LISD for a backup location.

EMERGENCIES (INCLUDING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES)

In the event of an emergency, we will call 911 and administer first aid/CPR. Our staff members are certified in first aid, CPR, AEDs, epinephrine auto-injectors. First aid will be administered while another Staff member calls 911, and an additional Staff member will call the parents/guardians. The Staff are trained to implement the Center's Emergency Preparedness Plan for natural disasters and emergencies. Little Acorn Academy's emergency evacuation site is Cypress Elementary School located at 2900 El Salido Parkway. In the event of an emergency such as a fire or prolonged electricity outage in severe weather, we will evacuate the children and notify families immediately via a Brightwheel alert.

Gang-free Zone

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include childcare centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections §71.028 and §71.029 of the Texas Penal Code

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Little Acorn Academy was founded on the belief that every child has the potential for greatness. Regardless of where they come from, all of our students are treated with equal potential and given the personalized attention they need for personal and emotional growth. Combining simple family values and tried-and-true teaching techniques, we work tirelessly to create a learning environment that caters to every child. It is our personal goal that each child who comes through our door leaves a brighter, wiser, with a smile on their face.

Though they all start out as little acorns, we hope to help them grow into tall, strong oaks!

These policies are reviewed annually and updated as needed. Parents will be notified when any policies are changed or updated. Last Updated 04/25/2022

Orientation & Receipt of Handbook and Center Policies

I, _____ have toured the facility, met staff members and read a copy of the Little Acorn Academy Center Policies and Procedures which is available to view or download online at www.littleacornacademy.com under the Enrolling tab. I agree to abide by centers polices and understand that these polices serve to protect the safety of all center children and staff.

___ I understand that there is a dog in the center and that all interactions with the dog are structured and supervised with the teacher and center administration. I understand that I may opt-my child out of these activities.

___ Drop off policy: Drop off ends each day at 9:00am, unless doctor note is present.

___ Late pick-up policy: A \$25 fee will be charged starting at 6:31pm running to 6:45pm, \$1 per min will be added there-after. Late fee is paid on arrive by cash only.

___ Sick policy: 48-hour return, if your child is sent home for ANY sickness. Your child may return after 24 hours only with detailed non-contagious doctor's note.

___ Late/Sick pick-up policy: Parents have 1.5 hours from the first call (answered or messaged left) is placed to pick up sick child. \$1 per min will be charged after allotted time.

___ Check in/out policy: It is the parent's responsibility to check each child in/out every day at check-in computer.

___ Late Tuition: \$25 late fee will be charged the 3rd day after tuition is due.

___ Brightwheel App: I understand that the app is the method used by the center for daily communication and I am required to download it to effectively communicate with the school staff and receive written information about my child(ren).

___ Field Trips: I understand that participation in field trips is to the discretion of the staff. Children may not go on field trips for any number of reasons and if your child is not permitted on a field trip it is for their safety and the safety of the other students.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date



Parent Name: _____ Child Name: _____

Walking Field Trip Permission (optional)

I grant permission to Little Acorn Academy to take my child off property, while walking or in a stroller or wagon at any time during their enrollment at the center.

Parent's Signature Date

Parent's Signature Date

Animal Interaction (optional)

I grant to Little Acorn Academy (LAA) permission to include our child in any supervised activities and interactions with the center dog as outlined in the center policies.

Parent's Signature Date

Parent's Signature Date