

# ***Brownsburg Academy***

*Child Care & Preschool*



## *Parent Handbook 2009 Calendar Year*

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# Welcome!

Thank you for considering our services for your child. The Brownsburg Academy was founded to provide quality, reliable childcare for families. We realize how difficult it is to find a good place to keep your child so you can have piece of mind. We have personally visited several daycare facilities but were not completely satisfied with what we found. Therefore, we decided to start own early childhood education academy. We love being around children and teaching them new things. We enjoy encouraging them to try new things and the excitement they express when they learn something new.

Children are tender, curious, wonderful beings who need a safe and enriching environment to grow and thrive. We will do our best to ensure the safety, comfort, health, and happiness of all children in our care at all times and will present them with the opportunity to learn at their own pace. In order to meet our goals, we will attempt to gain as much continuing education and training as possible. We will keep the communications open between the families we serve.

We truly hope your childcare experience will be a positive one. With that in mind, we make it our goal to provide your child with the best care possible. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have at any time.

Brownsburg Academy

## OUR PHILOSOPHY OF QUALITY CARE:

We will strive to provide a safe, comfortable, stimulating, fun, educational environment with a semi-structured day plan. Activities will include free playtime, structured playtime, large motor skill playtime, small motor skills activities, story time and theater activities, arts and crafts, music and dance activities, nature and ecology awareness, nutrition, cultural activities, phonics, math, foreign language, and other educational yet fun activities. We will also provide nutritious meals and snacks, and encourage good personal hygiene skills and manners.

A computer will be available for all ages to use, but only under supervision. All of our classrooms have computers and we also have a computer lab on site. Videos will be available to watch in limited amounts if they apply to the curriculum.

Through a mixture of guided and undirected creative play, children in our care will have the opportunity to learn about color, shapes, textures, numbers, letters, animals, seasons, feelings, senses, nutrition, personal hygiene, manners, basic science and math concepts, and creative concepts such as “pretend” play, art, music, drama, and dance. For the children ages 1-5, we refer to a NAYEC approved curriculum, High Reach, which helps with all areas of development of the child, it also includes a phonics program which helps them with letters, sounds, and reading. Thus far, many of our four year olds have started reading short stories, and can print their name. Many of the two through three year old children recognize letters, and can make their sounds, colors, shapes, and numbers, etc. Infants and toddlers practice sign language so they are able to communicate with friends, family members and teachers. All of these activities are included with your weekly tuition. We do have enrichment programs such as Music and Movement, Gymnastics, Dance, Karate, Physical Education, etc. which come to our facility weekly. We consider these “extras”, which your child is not required to participate in. Extra fees are required for enrichment programs.

We also feel that security is very important for our families and staff. For this reason we do have a security system, which allows parents and staff to enter the building. Each person will have a different code which will allow them access. Please do not allow others into the building. The doors must be closed after each person enters to ensure security in the building. This is also monitored by a computer system, which records each person who has entered the building. We also ask that you clock your child in using our computer located at the front desk. This also allows you to retrieve messages from the teachers

You'll notice that all of our Teachers and Assistant will all be in uniform which consists of a red smock with our logo. This is another effort to ensure security for our families so you will easily recognize the teachers in your child's room.

These may sound like lofty goals for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, but children can learn all of these things and more through creative play. We do not believe in pushing any child to learn at an accelerated rate, and will not make a child feel pressured to achieve any developmental milestones. By providing the right kind of fun safe environment, we believe that children will learn at their own appropriate pace. We look forward to building our relationship with you.

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN OUR CARE:**

Our facility will always abide by the licensing standards required for the number of children in our care.

We will always give preferential consideration to the families I currently serve. I would certainly welcome the opportunity to care for new siblings as they arrive! Children need to feel they are getting quality attention from the adults in their lives, and they also benefit from lots of one-on-one care.

**PROVIDERS:**

All of our providers have gone through the Brownsburg Academy training. All providers will continue taking classes to improve their knowledge and skills relating to early childhood education. All providers have a Criminal Background Check, Physical, TB test and must complete a minimum of 20 hours annually in early childhood training. All providers are trained in CPR, First Aid, and Universal Precautions annually. We offer the TEACH scholarship to all providers. This scholarship will help pay for college classes working towards a CDA or Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education. The Academy pays for any costs the scholarship does not fund.

**PRE-ENROLLMENT VISITS/Unscheduled Visits:**

We believe that children, providers, and parents do best when everyone participates in “get-to-know-you” sessions prior to the first day of care. This helps children get used to the provider and allows parents plenty of time to ask questions of the provider. It also helps everyone feel more comfortable with the situation. This benefits the child by allowing us to approach the first day of care with ease which helps reduce stress for everyone.

Children benefit from a stable, long-term care environment. Our hope is that these visits will help reduce the number of misunderstandings that can inevitably arise, so we can develop a good working relationship and avoid the need for unnecessary termination of care. We will work with you to schedule as many pre-enrollment visits as possible without cost to you. These visits should only last about an hour or so, depending upon the number of questions you have. After your child is enrolled at the Academy the custodial parent/guardian may visit the child's classroom at any time.

**PARENT CONFERENCES:**

Parent conferences will be scheduled at a parent(s) and/or guardian(s) request. This will allow you to meet with us in a relaxed environment without the distractions of other children and parents, to discuss things such as your child's development, guidance strategies, and needs. We would also welcome your feedback on our effectiveness as an educator and care provider, as well as other issues and concerns that may arise. By keeping the lines of communication open, we hope to foster a more stable and enjoyable working relationship with the families we serve. We also provide a daily sheet for you so you will be informed on your child's day.

**TIPS FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONS AT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:**

Transition times can be stressful for some children. In the morning they may not want to say good-bye to you and at pick up time they may not want to go because they are involved with a fun activity. This is a natural occurrence and may vary with your child's age and developmental stage. To ease the situation we encourage parents to take a minute to help their child feel comfortable and to adjust by offering positive statements. A parent who shows reluctance to depart only makes the transition harder for their child.

Although parents should never sneak out without saying “good-bye” to their child, a brief good-bye usually works best. Crying will usually stop a few minutes after you depart. Whether you plan to stay for a while when during transition times or you prefer to keep transition times short, it is important that you establish a consistent routine and stick with it. You are always welcome to stay and chat about your child's day, but please do this outside the room so that your child doesn't get upset expecting you to stay.

If your child misbehaves during transition times, please correct their behavior. Our rules apply from the time they walk in until the time they walk out. This is a time of testing when two different authority figures are present (parent and provider), and this situation will be tested at one time or another to see if the rules still apply. We will remind your child if inappropriate behaviors are being displayed. Please be prepared to back us up. If your rules or desires are being tested, we are ready to back you up as well.

Children of all ages adjust to transitions differently. Most do not like to be too rushed, or to wait too long once they are ready to depart. This is especially true during the colder months, when children may get uncomfortably warm

once dressed in a coat, mittens and a hat. When leaving, please DO NOT ALLOW CHILDREN TO RUN OUT TO YOUR CAR WHILE YOU ARE STILL INSIDE! Our safety rule is "No one outside without a parent or guardian with them." There may be other cars on the street and a serious incident could occur. If you bring other children with you when you drop off or pick up please keep them by your side. When other children enter the facility that are not here on a regular basis it disrupts the children's environment.

### **Children's Schedules/Signing child in and out**

It is important for parents to stay within the hours they have scheduled as closely as possible because staffing is based on children's schedules. Please sign your child in and out daily by their name and time daily, see the front desk if you do not understand the proper procedure. Early drop off or late pick up can jeopardize the center's caregiver/child ratios.

Occasionally parents temporarily need to change the hours their children are scheduled at the Center. When this happens, parents are asked to first check with the office to make sure the change can be accommodated and then fill out a "Change of Schedule" form and turn it in at the front desk. If the parents need to change their child's schedule permanently, they should note that this is a permanent change on the "Change of Schedule" form.

### **Reporting Children's Absences**

Since caregivers plan their day's activities based on the number of children expected for the days and hours children are scheduled, we ask that parents notify the Center if their child is going to be absent, late for any reason, or if they plan to pick up the child especially early.

### **TUITION AND HOURS OF CARE:**

Our services will be available Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 6:30pm. Please discuss needs for care outside these times and we will try to accommodate reasonable requests at a possible additional fee.

A deposit of one week tuition will be charged at the time of enrollment for your child. This will ensure space for your child. This will be held until proper notice is given to discontinue childcare and will be applied to the final week of care. Your deposit will be forfeited if you decide to cancel before your start date.

### **TUITION RATES ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

\*prices are subjected to change without notice

**Registration fee: \$55.00 per child (non-refundable)**

**Supply Fee: \$30.00 per child (September 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year)**

#### **Fulltime:**

Infants (until one year of age)	\$190 per week
Toddlers (1-until age 2)	\$170 per week
Two	\$160 per week
Three (3 and potty trained)	\$135 per week
Preschool (4 and up)	\$135 per week
School age Summer Care	\$125 per week

#### **Before and After School Care**

\$100 per week

We have a dedicated homework time each day so that your child may work on homework taking the pressure off of you each evening.

If your child's school is delayed, (more than 30 minutes) has an early dismissal (more than 30 minutes) either scheduled or unscheduled, school is cancelled or has a scheduled day off, you will not be charged an additional fee.

**Kindergarten Care (Private and Public Schools)** - \$100 per week

**Part-time** \$45 per day, per child

**Miscellaneous** In an effort to maintain the professional status of our staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by Academy staff is discouraged. However, should you hire any Academy staff, it must be outside the Academy premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services are solely between you and the staff member. The arrangements are not sanctioned by the Center, Client, or by Brownsburg Academy, and you agree to hold Brownsburg Academy harmless from any such arrangement. In addition, if you hire an employee (or someone who was an employee within the prior six months of hire) to work for you on a permanent basis, you agree to pay a placement fee of \$2,500.00.

Fees due in order to reserve your place at the Brownsburg Academy:

- Registration fee
- Security Deposit (one weeks tuition)

Charges for the next week's care will be due on Friday morning prior to your child's start date.

There will be a **late pick-up charge of \$1.00 per minute, per child, if you arrive after 6:30 p.m.** We realize job pressures, traffic, and weather conditions occasionally affect your ability to arrive on time. However, since a habit of arriving late does affect our family life, we will need to charge late fees. Please do not try to negotiate this policy.

#### **PAYMENT TERMS:**

Charges for the next week's care will be due on Friday morning. This will enable us to purchase food and supplies over the weekend for the coming week. We also require a credit card number on file. Your credit card will be charged on Friday if we have not received payment by 12:00 p.m. There will be a \$25.00 late fee if payment is not made by 12:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the following week's care.

Payment is preferred in cash, however, money orders, credit cards (with a processing fee), and personal checks will be accepted when drawn on a local bank. We can also charge your credit card weekly. In the unlikely event of a returned check, I will require a \$25 service charge in addition to the repayment of any extra bank charges I may incur as a result of the inconvenience. Subsequent payments will need to be made in cash or money order. Checks should be made out to the **Brownsburg Academy**.

If you prefer, you may pay once per month, at the beginning of the current month. The monthly payment would be at the same weekly tuition rate, multiplied by 52 weeks per year and divided by 12 months. We cannot offer any discounts for days your child is not in our care, days when your child is ill, or other days when you choose not to bring your child.

Although we realize school tuition is a major expense for most working parents, we also rely on this business to help support our families as well. **Since we will be holding your child's space for you to use at will, we need to charge for fulltime care whether you use it or not, please do not try to negotiate this policy.**

#### **Wait List**

Once the program reaches capacity enrollment, a waiting list is maintained. Parents interested in being a part of the wait list should contact one of the Center's Directors and expect the following procedures once a Registration Form and Parent Agreement is completed and a registration fee is turned in:

1. Your child will be placed on the age-appropriate wait list according to the date on the application.
2. Periodically parents on the wait list will receive e-mail confirmation of their position on the wait list.
3. At that time parents need to respond to this confirmation via e-mail for documentation purposes.
4. When a space becomes available we will first offer it to families who are currently enrolled. Then we will call parents who are wait listed according to the date that the application was submitted.
5. We must receive a verbal response to our call within 48 hours. Please keep your voice mail up to date or notify us directly regarding dates you will be away so that we can be flexible and allow additional time for you to respond.
6. If you accept the position, we can hold it up to 2 weeks from your date of acceptance. You must at this time come in and complete the enrollment process to secure your position. Paying all the fees.
7. If you decline the position, we will offer the space to the next parent on the wait list.
8. If a space is declined on or after the date care is requested, you will be removed from the wait list.

Parents who are adopting may apply for a position on the wait list at the time they are approved as adoptive parents and may request a date for needed care as much as 24 months in advance. All parents on the wait list have the opportunity to change the date that care is needed for their children, one time, as long as their original request date has not passed. The date requested may be no longer than 24 months from the original date indicated that care was needed.

### **Security Deposit**

Once a start date is confirmed on the Registration Form and is signed by a Center Director, you need to complete the enrollment process, thereby having secured a date on the registration form, the equivalent of one-week security deposit of the child's anticipated weekly tuition will be required for each child. Security Deposits will be refunded upon final use of the program provided that two weeks notice has been given. Every effort will be made to make arrangements for this deposit.

### **HOLIDAYS, VACATION AND SICK-DAYS:**

Although we will do our very best to be available every business day, we will be closed on the following holidays. The following is our paid holiday schedule:

Memorial Day

July 4<sup>th</sup>

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

New Year's Eve and New Years Day

Full tuition is expected for both full and part-time children during these holidays. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday prior. If a holiday falls on Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday.

### **Vacation**

Tuition is payable each week whether your child is in attendance or not.

Each family is welcome to one week of vacation time with no charge AFTER your child has been attending for 6 consecutive months. This week can be taken before your child's anniversary starting date, but AFTER being enrolled for 6 months. The FREE WEEK can not be accumulated. Your child may not attend the academy during any part of the free week. If not taken, it is forfeited. You receive another free week AFTER each anniversary starting date.

Two weeks notice must be given prior to this time to avoid a charge for regular attendance. This notice is given on a "Change of Schedule Form" and turned into the office. Additional time will require continued payment to hold the child's position in the Brownsburg Academy.

### **Medical Policies**

Although we are not trained medical professionals, we will attempt to alert you at the first sign of any illness. In order to protect the health of all children in our care, we will call you at work and request that you pick up your child within one hour if he or she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- excessive diarrhea for 2 consecutive diapers or toilettings
- vomiting in excess of typical infant spit-ups
- conjunctivitis ("pink eye")
- persistent complaints of ear or stomach pain
- bleeding other than minor cuts and scrapes
- excessive greenish nasal discharge, indicating possible infection
- head lice
- excessive coughing that disrupts the child's behavior or other nap time.

In the event your child is sent home due to one of the above conditions, he or she will not be allowed to return until they have been symptom-free for a full 24 hours, or until accompanied by a signed note from your child's doctor. This policy is intended to help prevent the unnecessary infection of the other children in our care.

Although it may seem inconvenient when your child is sent home, you will appreciate knowing your child's exposure is minimized when other children become ill. We will not send a child home with a common cold, unless accompanied by a fever or other severe symptoms.

However, many times when young children are ill, they may not exhibit "classic" signs of the illness (fever, vomiting, etc.) but will be excessively fussy and/or require constant cuddling and attention. While we believe in providing as much cuddling as desired, if a child is ill and requires my undivided attention this distracts from our ability to provide quality care to all the children in the group. Therefore, if your child reaches a point when he/she requires constant attention, will not play, cries continuously, whines and wants to be help constantly, etc., then your child will need to stay home.

You should expect that any time a new child is introduced to the group, colds and other minor illnesses are likely to occur until everyone's immune systems have adjusted to the new exposures. Also, advise me whenever a member of your family has an illness so that I can be alert to the possibility of symptoms developing in the childcare group.

Costs incurred from the treatment of any injury or illness occurring to your child within the program is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINES/Health Exam:**

All children are required to have a pre-entrance health exam, current on immunizations, and a current TB Test. Since we not licensed medical professionals, we will not administer any type of medication, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, without a signed consent form.

In order to ensure that children receive the medications needed, parents must follow the procedures listed below. Parents may discuss the policy and clarify questions with the child's caregiver or a member of the administrative staff. Medications are administered at 8am, noon, and 4pm.

1. Parents may give the child's medication to the child's caregiver as long as a completed "Medication Permission Form" accompanies it.
  - a. If the medication is an "over the counter" medicine, then a physician's signature, along with the recommended dosage, must be in your child's classroom file. This form is valid for one year. **This medicine must also be brought to the center in an unopened container (so that we may insure tamper proof).**
  - b. If medicine is prescribed, then the prescription label, along with the permission form, will suffice.
  - c. The medication permission form (provided at the check in/out station in each room) will be valid for a period of one week and is required for ALL medications.
  - d. Topical ointments used for prevention will only require a parent signature (Desitin, sunscreen, etc). These will be documented on monthly forms indicating parent signature and dates ointments were applied. Topical ointments used for treatment of a condition will require all of the procedures for "over the counter" medications.
  - e. If your child's teacher/caregiver is not here at the time of arrival, then you may present the medication to the caregiver who, at that time, is responsible for the children in that classroom or to a member of management.
  - f. A staff member **MUST** receive the medication. At no time should medication be left unattended.
2. All medicine must be labeled with your child's first and last name and will be stored in locked storage in the classroom (except refrigerated medication).
3. All medicine requiring refrigeration will be kept in a locked box located in the Sick Bay's refrigerator. Medicine for infants requiring refrigeration will be stored in the infant rooms in a separate locked container.
4. A method for dispensing the medication must be provided with the medication (Dropper, medication, spoon, or cup).
5. Expired medication will be returned to parents for disposal.
6. **Medication will NOT be administered without parent signature (Medication Permission Form) and physician's signature (Medication Order Form or prescription label).**

Although we are trained in infant and child CPR, and basic first aid, and universal precautions, we do not pretend to be a doctor, and will not under any circumstances provide any medications, including vitamins. You must provide any and all medications for your child.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS:**

We will provide all meals and snacks, with the exception of baby food, infant formula or breast milk. You are welcome to provide your child's favorite wholesome foods, but please plan to bring enough to share with all of the children. Also, please notify us a day or two ahead of when you intend to bring foods, so that we can plan the day's menu accordingly. Whenever you bring foods, please inform us of any ingredients such as nuts or citrus fruits which may cause allergic reactions. Please refrain from sending "junk foods" (like cakes, cupcakes, candy, chips, sugary cereals, cookies, etc.) except for truly special occasions such as your child's birthday, since these are not typically served in our academy. Home baked items cannot be accepted. All food must be prepackaged (i.e., muffins, fruit, juice boxes, cupcakes, etc.) and unopened.

The meal schedule I follow is listed below. Children who are here during those times will be served. Children who choose not to eat during these times will not be served again until the next scheduled mealtime. (with the exception of infants, who we believe in feeding on demand.) If your child will be arriving after a scheduled mealtime, please arrange to feed him/her prior to arrival. This allows me more time to focus on the other daily activities, and eliminates problems caused by children arriving with "Happy Meals" in hand.

Our Meal Schedule: (for ages two and older)

Breakfast: 7:30 to 8:00am

Morning Snack: 10:00 to 10:30am

Lunch: 12:00 to 1:00pm

Afternoon Snack: 2:15 to 3:30pm

Please feel free to discuss your child's need for food outside these times, such as for medical reasons. As detailed in the supplies section of this handbook, you are responsible for providing your infant's formula or breast milk. If you have questions or concerns about the menu, please feel free to discuss them with me.

All juice products will be 100% juice with no artificial ingredients. Infant and toddler juice is diluted. All foods will be cut into safe-size pieces and served in child-sized portions. Children are expected to try one bite of any food served, unless the child has an allergy or sensitivity to that food. If, after trying a bite, the child does not like that food, he/she will not be forced to eat any more of it at that meal. We have found that children often like foods they did not initially want to try, once they have been exposed a few times. Children may have second helpings of any or all foods upon request, after they have finished all foods on their plate. No child will be required to eat more than one bite of anything. It is our experience that children will eat when they are hungry, and will get all of the nutrients they need when consistently presented with a variety of healthy choices. **Due to children's allergies we do not serve any foods that contain peanuts.**

### **FOOD ALLERGIES:**

To avoid triggering allergic reactions, we will not serve the following foods to children under 12 months of age, unless you specifically approve them for your child:

- citrus fruits and juices
- tomato products
- nuts, including peanut butter
- soy products, including tofu
- eggs
- honey
- dairy products

Please alert us to any suspected food sensitivities or allergies so that we may attempt to accommodate your child's dietary needs. Also, if you avoid any foods or combinations of foods for religious, cultural, or health concerns, please let us know your needs and we will attempt to accommodate your requests for your child. An additional fee may apply if your child's dietary needs require me to purchase special food or beverage items.

**NAPS:**

We will offer infants a morning nap, generally between the hours of 10:00am and noon, or as needed. All children will be offered an afternoon nap shortly after lunch, generally between the hours of 1:00pm and 3:00pm.

All children will be expected to sleep or rest quietly during this time, so that the children who need to sleep can do so. Nap times will start with a story time and/or quiet songs to encourage children to fall asleep. Children under the age of three who get upset during nap time will be comforted until resting comfortably.

Each child will have their own regular sleeping space such as a crib, toddler bed, cot, or mat and each child's linens need to be washed each weekend, or as needed.

Please do not request that your child be exempt from naptime. In a group care situation, this would not be in your child's best interest. As a courtesy to other children in our care we request that children are not picked up during naptime.

**POTTY TRAINING:**

The decision of when to assist your child with potty training is a personal one, and should be made based on your child's signs of emotional and physical readiness. Please do not request that we begin training your child until he/she has experienced prolonged toileting success in your own home.

Your child will need to remain in diapers or "Pull-Ups" during school hours until he/she has shown the ability to remain accident-free in your home for a period of at least two weeks. This is for several reasons: children often appear to be trained in a (calmer, quieter) home situation, but are not yet able to "listen" to their body's signals when presented with the distractions of a group care environment. Asking us to allow your child to go without diapers before he or she is truly ready would cause unnecessary stress on your child.

**SUPPLIES:**

## Infants

- Supply of diapers. All diapers must arrive in the center in unopened boxes.
- Unopened box of wipes.
- Formula and bottles of choice. All formula must be premixed and brought to the center in unopened containers or have a medical slip from your doctor to use powder formula (doctor must list medical reason listed on slip such as – allergies, digestion, etc.)
- If nursing, please see breast milk procedures.
- Baby food and cereal. Must be in unopened containers.
- Labeled blanket.
- Labeled extra clothing to be stored in child's cubby.
- Pictures of child and family to put on crib/cubby.
- Sipper cups will be provided by the center.
- Sunscreen (renewed annually)
- 2" 3-ring binder for child's portfolio.

## Toddlers and Twos

- Supply of diapers in unopened boxes, if used.
- Unopened box of wipes.
- Labeled blanket.
- Labeled extra sets of clothing to be stored in child's cubby. Several sets if toilet learning.
- Labeled comfort item, if desired.
- Pictures of child and family to put on cubby/classroom album.
- Sunscreen (renewed annually)
- 2" 3-ring binder for child's portfolio.

## Preschoolers

- Labeled blanket.
- Labeled extra sets of clothing to be stored in child's cubby.

- Labeled comfort item, if desired.
- Pictures of child and family to put on cubby/classroom album.
- Share and tell items (i.e. toys from home) should be brought only on scheduled days.
- Sunscreen (renewed annually)
- 2" 3-ring binder for child's portfolio.

All other food and supplies will be provided by us. Also, please refer to the section on weapons and firearms for restrictions on what items can be brought into our school.

### **FIELD TRIPS (ages 4 years and up):**

Admission fees for field trips are in addition to your child's tuition. Children enjoy going to the Zoo, and other children's attractions, so these are favorite destinations. We will also attempt to arrange for trips to local museums, businesses, parks, library, bookstores, playgrounds, a pumpkin patch, local farms, pet shops, and others. We will also be taking trips to our neighborhood swimming pool and nature trails. Children are not required to participate in field trips if this is something you are uncomfortable with. Please discuss your situation with the Director.

We will always welcome your assistance and participation during field trips or other special fun events, though this will be purely voluntary.

### **VISITS AND PHONE CALLS DURING REGULAR CARE HOURS:**

Parents or guardians are welcome to drop by unannounced at any time during the hours their children are in care.

Since teachers are frequently very busy attending to the children's needs, it may be difficult for them to answer the phone during regular school hours. We do have an answering machine and will check it periodically for messages.

### **PICK-UP BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE CHILD'S PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN:**

We will not under any circumstances release your child into the custody of anyone other than his or her parent or legal guardian, as indicated by the signatures on the contract. If you wish to have anyone else pick up your child, you will need to provide a signed consent form in advance, listing the dates on which this person may pick-up your child. In the event of an emergency, we will attempt to contact you and/or your spouse, or the child's other legal guardian, or other adult listed on your emergency contact form for approval. In any case, if we are not familiar with the person, we will require a valid photo ID card from an authorized government agency (such as a driver's license) as proof of identification before we will release the child into their custody.

Please advise anyone who may pick-up your child not to take offense at this policy. It is simply the only way we can assure the protection of you, your child, and all other parties involved. Anyone picking up a child must have an appropriate car seat in their vehicle or we will refuse to release the child to their care. We simply cannot allow a child to travel without a proper safety restraint. Also, if your family is experiencing a divorce or other legal situation which would affect who is allowed to pick up your child, please let us know immediately. You will also need to provide court orders or other proper legal documents indicating who is no longer allowed custody of your child. Unless these papers are provided, we will have no choice but to release your child into the custody of anyone currently on your list.

### **GUIDANCE POLICY**

We do not believe in spanking, slapping, smacking, yelling or hitting of any kind. This type of discipline will not be used in our facility. We prefer the following discipline methods to handle any dangerous or hurtful offenses:

For children under the age of about 18 months, I find it most effective to remove the child from the situation, and redirect their attention elsewhere. Although we will most likely explain to the child that the offending behavior was inappropriate, children of this age are rarely able to fully understand what they have done. Fortunately, at this age their attention span is also usually shorter than with older children, so simply showing them a different toy or activity usually does the job.

For children of age 3 and over, we will alert the child to the offense by saying firmly "Please don't do ... (the offending behavior)", explaining why the behavior is unacceptable, and offering the child the choice to behave. If the child continues, we will correct their behavior again. If the child chooses not to behave appropriately, we will first explain to the child why their behavior is not acceptable, then we will remove the child from the situation for a period of about 1 minute per year of age. This is not intended to be negative for the child, rather a time to "cool off" and regroup so the child does not continue to become frustrated at the moment.

At the end of the regrouping period, we will ask the child if he or she understands why they had to take time away from the activities, ask if they understand why they shouldn't do that behavior, then ask if they are ready to play nicely again. We will also encourage children to apologize to the other child(ren) involved, when developmentally appropriate. This method not only stops the offending behavior, but also teaches the child consequence, responsibility, and empathy in a positive manner.

Dangerous and hurtful offenses include hitting, biting, kicking, pushing, hair pulling, throwing objects at someone, climbing on an inappropriate structure, willful destruction of property, tantrum throwing, and not following reasonable requests. These relatively minor offenses will be handled as described above, depending upon the child's age and developmental stage.

To a point, kids will be kids - but only as long as the emotional and physical safety of all of the children in my care is protected. In the rare instance that we feel any child in our care has a serious discipline problem we will request a conference with the parent(s). If an understanding cannot be reached, we reserve the right to terminate our contract with as much notice as possible in order to guarantee the comfort and safety of the other children in our care.

We rarely have incidents that are not corrected by simply redirecting the child to another activity.

### **Biting Policy**

We wanted to make all parents aware of the biting policy. Biting is a developmentally appropriate action for children ages 1 year through 18 months, however, because of the infectious nature of a bite, the Brownsburg Academy can not tolerate biting. All necessary corrective action will be taken in order to reduce the incidents of biting among toddlers. If a child is biting excessively, the parents will be called to pick up the child and a meeting will be scheduled to determine what measures can be done to decrease the biting. If the child continues to bite, dismissal from the program may occur. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS:**

Please feel free to bring a special treat to share with all of the children in our care on your child's birthday, but this is certainly not necessary. You may also, if you wish, plan to attend lunch with us on this special day in order to celebrate with your child. However, please give us at least one week's notice of your plans so that we may prepare the children to expect a disruption to the usual routine. Your child will no doubt enjoy this special day regardless of a celebration (or lack thereof) at school, so please do not feel obligated to plan anything elaborate.

As for other festivities, including religious holidays, we will always give you plenty of notice prior to the celebration of any cultural or religious occasions. We personally do not practice or teach any particular religion with the children in our care unless they have enrolled in our religion program. However, we welcome the opportunity to include your family's favorite holiday traditions in our lesson plans, but would appreciate as much advance notice as possible so that we can thoroughly prepare. Also, we will attempt to notify you of the related lesson plans so that you may choose to discuss them with your child from your own perspective.

The families we care for come from many different cultural and religious backgrounds and beliefs, so we would prefer to refer your child's questions on these subjects to your authority. Please feel free to discuss with me any preferences you have in my handling of these topics where your children are concerned.

### **GIFT EXCHANGES:**

Due to different religious and cultural practices, gifts will only be exchanged if all of the families we serve would like to participate. This would be on a per classroom basis.

We also enjoy giving each child a birthday gift. However, we discourage a general exchange among the children at birthdays since there could be many birthdays each year. In addition, children often have birthday parties at their

home, so the exchange of presents during school hours is not really necessary. If parents would like to provide a special treat for the group on their child's birthday, that would be more appropriate.

#### **SMOKING AND ALCOHOL USAGE:**

Smoking will not be allowed at our school at any time. Teachers are not allowed to smoke in or near the property. We require that you refrain from smoking while visiting our school.

Also, alcoholic beverages will not be served or consumed by our staff or anyone else in our school during regular school hours.

If at any time a parent or guardian attempts to pick up a child from school while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, we will attempt to arrange alternate transportation for your child to your home. If this is not possible, we are legally bound to release the child to your custody and alert the police of the situation.

#### **WEAPONS AND FIREARMS:**

At no time will we allow any weapons or firearms of any kind in school. This includes, but is not limited to: guns, knives, pocket-knives, swords, stun-guns, pepper spray, mace, num-chucks or other martial arts accessories, lassos or hand-cuffs, smoke bombs, etc. This policy also includes all toy guns and other toy weapons such as plastic swords. We do not have a gun on the premises and will not tolerate any of the families we serve bringing a gun or other weapon into our school at any time. If your child is found to have a gun, any weapon, or dangerous substance in his or her possession while at school, you will receive an immediate call from us informing you that you need to pick up your child immediately. We will require written assurance from you that your child will not ever bring any guns or other weapons to school before we will be able to accept your child for care again. If this is not provided, the terms of this contract will be voided immediately, and you will forfeit any deposits.

If your child arrives with an inappropriate toy, it will be stored in their cubby until the end of the day, and returned with a note asking you not to send it with your child in the future. Toy guns and swords may be fine for pretend play at home, but they are not suitable for a group care environment.

#### **CHILD ABUSE:**

Unfortunately, this is a topic that must be addressed in today's society. It should go without saying that we will not knowingly allow any form of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse of any child in my care at any time. This includes the time that the child is in their own home. On the surface, this may sound like an invasion of privacy, but we cannot ethically turn a blind eye toward such abuse. If we notice any signs of abuse at any time, we will alert that child's parent(s) immediately both verbally and in writing, along with a full description of the symptoms. (bruising, sores, sudden extreme behavioral changes, etc.) we will document this same information for the school and if necessary, alert the proper authorities after first attempting to handle the situation discretely. You may get notes about your child having bruises or scrapes without needing to fear that we suspect you of abusing your child. Be assured, if we think your child has been abused, we will let you know! The notes we send home are just to alert you in general of any instances that may come up, and also to protect us from mistaken accusations of abuse.

We would prefer not to have to deal with this issue, but we think it is best that we handle it openly and honestly to avoid any possible misunderstandings. We want what is best for our children. Please feel free to discuss this or any other issues with me at any time.

#### **TERMINATION OF CARE:**

The first five days of care are probationary for provider, parent, and child. This agreement may be terminated at any time during that period. Otherwise two weeks' notice is required if the child is to be permanently removed from our care.

Our contract may be terminated at any time for any reason, by either party with proper notice. According to the contract, proper notice will consist of written or verbal notice to the provider not less than two weeks prior to the child's last day of care. If you choose to terminate care with less than proper notice, you agree to forfeit the entire deposit.

In addition to the deposit, regular tuition charges will apply for the remaining time your child is in care, and will be prorated for the number of days your child remains. If at any time, after consultation with the parent or guardian, we feel that you or your child pose a safety risk to or staff or any of the children in our care, we will give you as much written notice as possible that care is terminated. This action will be reserved for extreme cases only, and we will

first attempt to resolve any issues with you before resorting to termination of care. Under these conditions, forfeiture of the deposit will be at my discretion.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to building a relationship with your family.

**Confidentiality Policy:**

All information pertaining to admission, health, family or discharge of a child is confidential. All staff records are confidential.