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PARENT HANDBOOK

WELCOME WE ARE SO GLAD THAT YOU DECIDED TO JOIN US!

Dear Parents:

The Academy for Learning and Character Development (ALCD) is not just a day care center; it is a unique educational experience. It is our goal to impart some new information while making every day a little more interesting and a whole lot more fun. On behalf of the preschool staff, it is my pleasure to welcome you.

In choosing ALCD you have decided to entrust the education and care of your most loved one(s), your child (ren.) We accept this responsibility as an honor and promise to provide the most hospitable and friendly service, the best quality care, high educational standards and expectations for success, a balanced curriculum, and many pleasurable activities.

Our staff is ready and willing to see that your experience with ALCD is a pleasurable one. Call or visit at your convenience. We strive to be the best preschool in the southern United States, therefore we acknowledge, with pleasure, the help and advice given by parents and by our cherished visitors. We are happy to share our preschool experience with your family. Our wish is that you will become a friend of this very special place, which is ALCD. Thank you for picking us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sylvia Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Sylvia Collins, Ph.D.
Executive Director**

PRESCHOOL

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

ALCD's philosophy of childcare is that we have a "Child Rearing Environment." Our educational philosophy is based on a belief in the importance of developing the total child and providing a continuous support to the parents. Our religious philosophy is based on recognizing the good in all individuals. ALCD advances the lives of students through life enhancing skills such as honesty, esteem, integrity, cooperation and compromise.

Our curriculum reflects activities, which allow a child to develop social, and language skills, physical coordination, and intellectual competence. We believe all skills a child learns are a necessity for living. We realize that children grow in all developmental areas, but each child develops at a different rate in each area. Each child is helped to gain self-confidence and to achieve a sense of security and success.

Our center has all day, year-round program, which encourages and supports the involvement of parents. As caregivers (parents and teachers) we talk with each other daily so that our values and methods for child rearing are consistent.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

1. The methods to implement our goals are as follows:

- a. **SELF CONFIDENCE**
The self-confidence of a child will be enhanced through consistent and honest praise and encouragement providing physical and/or emotional support and assuring successful experiences.
- b. **INDEPENDENCE**
We encourage children to help themselves and others; we praise the initiation of independent activities, and allow for the mistakes of children when showing independence.
- c. **CREATIVITY AND PROBLEM SOLVING**
Children are being creative when they solve problems in their own unique way, through the free exploration of available materials and space. We strive to have supportive adults who help children verbalize their solutions and stretch their imaginations.
- d. **UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS**
We help children become aware of and accept their feelings and the feelings of other people.
- e. **SELF-DISCIPLINE**
We provide appropriate expectations and limits for young children, coupled with consistent and fair follow-through by adults; we hope to increase the child's self-control.
- f. **RESPONSIBILITY**
Encourage children to care for and respect equipment, materials, and their larger environment. We allow children the opportunity to assist in simple cleaning tasks; in developing self-help skills Children's sense of responsibility is enhanced when he/she participates in the maintenance of the environment.
- g. **INCREASING BASIC SKILLS**
We provide each child with stimulating opportunities for learning. A variety of concrete experiences help children to compare, organize, classify, and deal with problem solving. Our activity-centered programs have sound educational content, allowing children to explore, discover and learn.

PARENTS' GUIDE BOOK

1. **WHAT TO BRING/HOW TO DRESS**

Children should be dressed in play clothes; parents can bring dress clothes for changing at departure. Each child must, at all times, have a complete change of clothing (for infants), a flat bed sheet (for toddlers and preschoolers) and blanket (2 nap covers.) Fresh bedding should be brought in each Monday morning; soiled bedding must be taken home each Friday afternoon. All clothing and linens should be labeled with the child's first and last names.

Parents of infants and toddlers must have **disposable diapers, **wet wipes, Q-tips, **disposable gloves, one roll of paper towel, one box of facial tissues, and nose suction. All children under 2 1/2 years old should have two complete sets of clothing. Including socks. All items should be labeled with the child's name. (**Denotes as needed.)

Attention should be given to the style of clothes children wear. Avoid clothes that having hanging strings and other ornamentation that could be potentially dangerous. Select clothes that are easy for children to handle when toileting. Avoid clothing that requires multiple operations such as buckles, buttons, zippers and snaps that are difficult for the child's coordination skills. **PLEASE AVOID USING BELTS.**

We go outside all year round unless the weather is inclement. Temperature must be at least 40 degrees to take children outside. Warm clothing is required in the winter months including boots, leggings, mittens, hats and scarves. Loose, light clothing is recommended for the spring and summer months. **All clothing and bedding (jackets, coats, caps, mittens, boots, etc.) are to be labeled with the child's first and last name.**

Children should be dressed in washable play-clothes. Our intent is to value the play experience over the clothing. If the child has an important event to attend following preschool, please plan ahead by bringing dress-up clothing for the child to change into at the end of the day.

2. **PARKING**

Parking spaces are reserved in the parking lot (near the gate) with easy access to the entrance of the main doors of the preschool.

3. **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The preschool will open Monday-Friday at 6:30 a.m. and close at 5:30 p.m. **Children's schedules cannot exceed 9 hours per day.**

4. **PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

All fees are due in advance regardless of absence due to illness, holidays, vacation or weather. Recognized holidays include, but are not limited to: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, MLK, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day Christmas Day (expect a slight variation each year.) All fees must be paid by check or money order **(NO CASH WILL BE ACCEPTED.) THERE IS A RETURNED CHECK FEE OF \$35.00.** Fees may be paid weekly, BI-weekly, monthly in advance with Friday as the beginning charge for the new week. Tuition is due on Fridays for the upcoming week. There is a one-day grace period on Monday. **A**

late payment fee of \$20.00 will be charged to all accounts that are not paid by Monday. A daily late penalty of \$3.00 will be applied until the account is paid in full. A partial payment is considered as a late payment and late fees will apply. Delinquent Accounts which require legal action for collection will incur an interest expense of 8% per annum starting on the delinquent date, In addition to attorney and collection fees incurred in accordance with Alabama State Law. Parents must maintain record of payment by checking account statements money order, cancelled checks or other duplicate receipts.

Children may be withdrawn from the program if payment is not received within 7 days of the due date. In the event of the employment of an attorney and/or the intervention of the court(s) for the purpose of collecting tuition, parents will be assessed fees. This also true in the event that “certified mail” is necessary to send billing statements for past due accounts. **FEES ARE NONREFUNDABLE AND THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.** Department of Human Resources payment is available for those families who are eligible through the Child Care Management Agency.

5. **TOYS AND TREATS**

Toys and treats, which cannot be shared with whole class, are discouraged. **Toys of violence (guns and super heroes that depict violence) are strictly prohibited.** Record and books, which can be enjoyed with the entire class, are encouraged (Please label). Treats for the entire class, especially for holiday celebrations are welcomed.

6. **ILLNESS**

No child who appears to be ill will be admitted to the preschool. Notify preschool of all contagious illnesses (chickenpox, measles, etc.) so that whatever precautions necessary can be taken without delay. Following a communicable disease, children must have a doctor’s release to be readmitted.

The normal child is ill an average of approximately ten days per year **(NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN FOR ABSENCES.)** When a child has a fever, chills, aches, and/or diarrhea due to cold, flu, virus, or teething, undetermined rash or spots, headaches, upset stomach, or other symptoms of illness keep him/her home. Keep the children at home 24 hours following any diseases with the child’s temperature reached 101 degrees. He/she would be more comfortable in his/her bedroom relaxing and recuperating.

If the child becomes ill while at the preschool, the child will be isolated and the parent will be notified to pick the child up immediately. If the parent has not arrived within 30 minutes, the person listed as the emergency contact person will be notified. If authorized persons are unavailable, DHR Crisis Center will be contacted. In serious medical emergencies, emergency medical services will be contacted. Parents must keep the preschool abreast of changes in medical information such as, insurance carrier, new diagnosis, change in pediatrician, etc.

Staff is allowed to dispense prescription medicine with the parent’s signature on the Authorization for Administering Medication Form. All medicine must be in its original container clearly labeled with name, dosage and has a current date. There is a sheet in each classroom for parents to sign telling name of medication, dosage, and times to be administered. **NO OVER THE COUNTER DRUGS WILL BE ADMINISTERED.**

- a. Staff shall observe each child daily for signs and symptoms of illness and shall report to the parent observed changes in the child's health.
- b. If a communicable disease occurs, each staff member shall be immediately notified and parents of exposed children shall be notified as soon as possible by the center so that children may be observed for symptoms of disease.

7. **ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

Parents must sign-in at arrival and out at departure when dropping off and picking up their children daily. Parents must indicate the times of arrival and departure and always alert the staff person of their intent/action. **IF ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PERSONS DESIGNATED ON YOUR APPLICATION ARE TO PICK-UP YOUR CHILD YOU MUST NOTIFY THE STAFF IN ADVANCE OR THE CHILD WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO THAT INDIVIDUAL.** The staff cannot be responsible for the child's safety if this policy is not adhered to.

8. **LATE FEES**

The preschool operates from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday-Friday and from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sat. and Sun. **Late fees will apply to any family that exceeds the 9-hour limit for childcare. In addition, a \$10.00 late fee will be charged to parents who arrive after closing. A late fee will be accessed the first fifteen minutes after the preschool closed or any portion thereof. An additional \$2.50 late fee will be charged every fifteen minutes thereafter (or portion thereof).**

An additional \$1.00 fee will be charged to any consecutive late arrival within a ten-day period. When you are late while picking-up your child, please call the director to inform her of this. If you have made arrangements for someone else to pick-up your child, please call or tell the director the person's name (even if the person is authorized to pick up your child.) Please inform this person of the sign/out procedure and alert the person in advance that will check for identification.

9. **LAUNDRY FEE**

There is a fee of \$5.00 per week for laundry service. This fee is assessed when parents fail to provide the required bedding for naptime.

10. **PARTIES**

Birthday parties may be given in the school for your child's class. The parents provide a cake, ice cream, party favors, decorations, disposables, or any other treats. You should notify the director of the date, time, and type of party you are planning. You can obtain an accurate number of children from the teacher. Parties are usually given just after rest time around 3:30 p.m. The birthday child's parents, relatives, and non-school guests are encouraged to attend. Party treats may be left at the center on the morning of the party.

11. **DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN**

Staff follows a three-step approach to assisting children in developing self-control. First, talk and explain the importance of displaying the desired behavior. Second, discuss the consequences of persisting with undesirable behavior. And finally, observe the behavior to determine how the child's needs can be met with the assistance of parents. **The use of**

physical or mental punishment is strictly prohibited. Staff and parents shall discuss discipline to determine appropriate action consistent with the disciplinary practices above.

12. **ADMISSION AND TERMINATION REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for admission parents must complete all admission documents, attend a pre-admission interview with their child, and pay a \$65.00 registration fee. The preschool reserves the right to drop any child from enrollment, if the staff determines that the program is not meeting the needs of the parent and/or child. Every admission is probationary. The staff will observe the student's performance and make a determination if the program and/or philosophy are suited to the child's needs. If the child's presence poses a threat to him/herself or to the welfare of others the matter will be discussed with the parent and the enrollment will be terminated in the child's best interest.

Parents are free to withdraw children, however, no portion of tuition/fees are refundable.

Parents must give the preschool director a 14-day notice (in writing) of the intent to withdraw from the preschool. If notice is not provided as outlined above, parents will be charged for two weeks of tuition.

Parents must notify the director (in writing) when a change of contact information (home or work) occurs immediately.

13. **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

First, the staff welcomes any suggestions to involve service delivery and will entertain special request. Parents are welcome to visit the preschool anytime to observe and make recommendations. Suggestions will be accepted directly or in writing. All suggestions will be reviewed and given the utmost consideration. In the event of a complaint, the parent should discuss their concern first, with the party who is directly involved. Most problems result from inadequate communications- lack of sufficient agreement or some misunderstanding – it may be that the problem can best be resolved by frank talk with the director. Call the director, explain your concern. Such a discussion often will eliminate or solve the problem. If the concern cannot be satisfied at that level the director, the executive director should be contacted. If satisfaction is not attained at this level the executive director reserves the right to convene a grievance board to hear the matter.

14. **FOOD SERVICE**

Nutritious lunch and snacks will be served. The meal plan consists of two snacks, provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Parents of infants and toddlers must supply the following: formula, unbreakable bottles, baby or junior food, disposable gloves, one roll of paper towel, and one box of facial tissues. THESE ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED.

15. **EMERGENCY PLAN**

In case of a medical emergency, an attempt will be made to notify the parent(s) immediately. If parents cannot be reached or if the situation warrants, an attempt to contact the child's doctor will be made and the child may be transported to Huntsville Hospital's Pediatric Emergency Room and an emergency medical vehicle may transport the child.

The local fire department and/or preschool staff conduct routine fire drills periodically. In the event of an actual fire, drill procedures will be followed.

When watches or warnings are issued by the National Weather Service for tornadoes, severe thunder storms, etc., or in the event evacuation from the center becomes necessary for reasons other than fire, procedures outlined by the County Coordinator for Civil Defense for the preschool will be followed.

If power, heat, or water is temporarily not available the preschool will endeavor to remain open if at all possible. If the power outage is deemed to pose a threat to the safety of the children then parents will be notified to pick them up earlier than usual.

16. **PRESCHOOL CONTACT PERSON**

Parents or guardian(s) can contact, the director at 256-533-3300 with inquiries regarding children.