



Parent Handbook

Welcome to First Years Academy!

You have chosen a state of the art facility, which will provide the highest quality care and education for your child in their early years. This handbook will provide you with information regarding our program.

PURPOSE

First Years Academy is early childhood learning Center providing quality care for all families. First Years Academy encourages you and our children to be active and creative, to explore their own ideas and to express their own thoughts. Classrooms are made safe, motivational, nurturing, and choices are given that will allow them to succeed. We thrive to foster self-esteem, teach self-help skills and assist children to become self-confident, independent and inquisitive learners.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At First Years Academy, we believe that a child's early learning experiences will be the most important in fostering an enthusiastic learner. We thrive to foster self-esteem, teach self-help skills and support children to become self-confident, independent, inquisitive learners. We are committed to educate children in their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. Curriculum and daily experiences are planned with the age, ability and interests of each child in mind. All learning activities are chosen with the goal of preparing children for the next step of learning and building a strong base to foster a life long learner. Our academy's motto is "Give your child the advantage where it counts...The Future!" Please keep this in mind as you teach our little learners.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- *For all children and staff to feel safe and comfortable at our facility.
- *Children will be encouraged through positive reinforcement .
- *We will encourage all children to treat their friends and our school with respect.
- *We will commit to provide a daily structured program with an emphasis on process, not product.
- *The program offers daily crafts, songs, stories, circle time and so much more.

NON-DISCRIMINATIONAL STATEMENT

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, national origin, disabilities or marital status, political beliefs in dealing with either the children or the parents.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If the public schools (Narragansett Regional) have a delay or cancel school, please call the center and there will be a recorded message at **978-630-0010**. Should it become necessary to close early due to severe weather or unsafe condition (ie: power or water failure), we will contact parents/guardians to arrange for children to be picked up early. No tuition credits will be given during weather situations. The final decision concerning school attendance will rest with the individual parent.

OPEN DOOR POLICY / PARENT COMMUNICATION

First Years Academy has an “open door” policy. We permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and their child’s classroom while their child is present.

Parent teacher conferences are held every 6 months, after progress reports. Children with special needs have a progress report done every 3 months. Conferences are also available at parental requests.

We will conduct a yearly parent meeting at which time parents will be allowed to input developmental ideas for our program and it’s policies.

ENROLLMENT

All enrollment forms must be completed before your child can start.

Immunization records and a date of last physical is also required for enrollment.

Parents will be provided with the Health Care Policy, fee schedule, behavior management policy and nutritious lunch ideas at enrollment.

WITHDRAWAL

If for some reason you decide to stop bringing your child to First Years Academy, a two-week written notice is required. You will be required to pay toward your account, in full, for any early termination.

CHILDREN’S RECORDS

You have the right to add information, comments, data or any other material relevant to your child’s record. You may also request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child’s record. All information is confidential. Written request from the parent/guardian is required to copy their child’s records. A notification will be given to the parent/guardian if their child’s records are subpoenaed. A log will be kept indicating to whom information was released to. Charge for copies will be in the amount of \$.15 per copy.

Research and Experimentation: Unusual treatment, research or experimentation involving your child, will not be conducted without the written, informed consent, of the affected child’s parent/guardian, for each occurrence. If an observation is being conducted, permission will be required prior to the observation. There will be no interaction between child and observer and no identification of individual child. In no case shall the licensee allow a child to be harmed during research, experimentation or unusual treatment.

CHANGING YOUR CHILD’S SCHEDULE

If your child is attending part time or full time, and you want to cut down on the amount of days your child is attending, we will need a 2 week notice. You will be required to pay for the spots your child has reserved until the two weeks is done if the change is made before a notice is given.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

You must have a specific arrival and departure time. Should you drop off your child prior to your specified arrival time, a charge of \$10 per 15 minutes must be assessed to your account. If the staff to teacher ratio is disrupted, you will be turned away until your specific arrival time. You should hold your child's hand upon entering and leaving the school. Please do not let your child run wild in the parking lot. For their safety, no children are to be left in any vehicle in the First Years Academy parking lot.

LATE PICK UP

Overtime starts at your specified pick up time. Late fees will be assessed at \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes late, and \$5 for every 5 minutes late after the first 15 minutes. If pick up becomes a problem, termination of services may result. The provider is under no obligation to provide an extension of time if such extension conflicts with the provider's own plans or the staff to teacher ratio. Late arrival does not justify late departure. Should you not contact our facility if you will be late and one hour passes, we will contact your emergency pick up person. If we cannot contact your designated pick up person, we will contact our local authorities to determine your whereabouts and/or arrange for your child to be picked up by the police department.

SICK/ABSENT

Parents are required to call us at **978-630-0010** if your child is not coming to our facility because they are ill. If your child is going to be late, please call. You are still responsible for payment even if the child does not attend.

HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS

The following is a list of holidays that we are closed every year:

- Thanksgiving -November (Thur & Fri)
- Christmas Eve-December
- Christmas Day-December
- New Year's Eve close at 3:00-January
- New Year's Day-January
- Labor Day-September
- Independence Day (July 4th Week)-July**
- Memorial Day-May**
- Colombus Day-October; no childcare, teacher training day
- Presidents Day-February; no childcare, teacher training day

If a holiday lands on a Saturday, the center will be closed on the Friday before the holiday.

If a holiday lands on a Sunday, the center will be closed on the Monday after the holiday.

Tuition will still be charged for all holidays. We **will** be shut down, the entire week of the 4th of July. Parents will be given a free week of care to off set the July 4th shut down. This free week of care cannot be used the July 4th week, and only two families may sign up per week throughout the year. (The administrative staff will authorize this, as a sign up sheet will be provided)

NON-GAURDIAN PICK UPS

We can't allow any child to leave with any one except the designated people on your child's pick up authorization form. If someone else is going to be picking up your child, we will then need it in writing with a copy of their drivers licence or state issued photo identification. The person picking up must have a photo ID and their address you give must match. If your family has legal arrangements regarding visitation we need court documentation.

DRESS CODE

Please send your child dressed ready for play. We will be working with messy materials and spend a lot of time outside. Children need to have appropriate footwear to be able to climb and run. Make sure to include hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather. A spare outfit will need to remain at school. All clothes should be labeled with your child's name.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

- *Children will be allowed to use the bathroom as the need arises.
- *Children will be supervised by staff while in the bathroom and assisted as needed, but still allowed privacy.
- *No child shall be punished, verbally abused or humiliated for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

- *Staff and children will use soap for hand washing and individual paper towels to dry hands. Hands will be washed after toileting and before snacks and meals.
- *Protective gloves will be worn to prevent contact with bodily fluids. Clothing soiled by feces and/or urine, vomit or blood will be double bagged and placed in your child's cubby to be laundered at home.
- *Please provide 2 extra sets of clothing while your child is in the potty training stage. Any borrowed clothing must be laundered then returned to the center.
- *Individualized toileting procedures will be determined as deemed necessary for any child with a disability. A written copy of the procedure will be entered into the child's file and reviewed with staff. Toilet training will be done in accordance with requests of the parent/guardian and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional ability.

Children in diapers will be changed every three hours or more often if needed, or to their parent's specification. Parents will provide the necessary supplies and diapers for changing. Documented times and status of the diaper will be posted in the changing area daily. All staff will wear protective gloves while diapering. After each diaper change, staff will wash their hands and assist children in washing their hands. Diapering surface will be sprayed with disinfectant and cleaner after each diaper change. All diapers will be double bagged and disposed of.

A child will never remain in soiled clothing or forced to sit or remain sitting on the toilet, or any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

TOYS

We prefer that children DO NOT bring toys from home as this usually causes fights over the toy. Unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e. books, videos, etc.). Toy weapons (guns, knives, swords, squirt guns, etc.) are not permitted and will be turned away at the door.

QUIET / NAP TIME

All children will have a rest period everyday. No child is forced to sleep; however they must rest quietly. If your child has a favorite nap time toy and you would like to bring it, please do so, and your child can use it at nap time. Any articles of clothing, toys or other items should be labeled with your child's name.

FOOD POLICY AND MEALS

All children will bring breakfast (or eat before arriving) and bring lunch. First Years Academy will provide AM and PM snacks to all children. If your child is scheduled to attend longer than 10 hours, you must provide an additional meal to accomodate our E.E.C. Regulations.

We never force a child to eat, but we do encourage a well balanced diet. No child will be denied a meal or snacks for any reason other than written directions from a parent/guardian and/or physician.

Under no circumstances is CANDY, GUM OR NUT PRODUCTS ALLOWED!

SICK CHILDREN

Sick children will not be accepted into our facility . If a child is sent home because they are sick, they cannot return until they are symptom free for 24 hours. A note from a physican stating your child is not contagious (ie ear infection, sinus infection etc.) will be accepted for your child to return before 24 hours.

Examples of associated symptoms include, but are not limited to:

1. Fever (100.5 F. Or higher)
2. Vomiting, one episode
3. Diarrhea: 2 loose stools within 2 hours.
4. Pronounced or persistant coughing
5. Children unable to participate in daily activities.

All sick children will be brought to the Directors office with quiet activities and a rest mat until a parent arrives to bring them home.

Health care policy available upon request.

MEDICATION POLICY

If prescription medication needs to be taken while your child is in school, the medicine must be in the original container and labeled with the pharmacy prescription label on it. No administration of medication contrary to label will be allowed without written physician authorization. Non-prescription medications need a physicians authorization in order to be administered at school. A medication form with a parent/ guardian signature will need to be filled out for all medications. If your child refuses to take medication from the administrator, They will not be forced to take it, and you will recieve a phone call. Do not leave medicine in cubbies or diaper bags. Please make sure all medicine is handed to a staff member for safe storage in the office or locked box in the refridgerator.

INJURIES/ INCIDENTS

Minor injuries suffered while in care will receive the following:

1. An injury report explaining what happened and the first aid received.
2. A phone call to parents if it is a face/head injury or a bite.

If a serious accident should occur you would be contacted for instructions, we will take necessary steps (call the hospital, doctor, poison control, etc.) if you cannot be reached. All injuries will be documented and sent to EEC. You will be asked to sign all injury reports. A full health care policy is given at enrollment.

FIRE

In the event of a fire, we will evacuate the school immediately, and gather together outside at the far corner of the parking lot or playground. Fire drills will be practiced once a month so the children are familiar with what to do.

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

The rules and regulations set up at First Years Academy are to insure a healthy and happy atmosphere for all the children. For this reason these rules will be followed consistently by all staff members at all times. It is the responsibility of the staff to instruct all children in correct use of manners in regard to their peers and teachers. Teachers will set reasonable and positive expectations, offering choices and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourages children to develop self-control through understanding. Children will also have table manners, bathroom hygiene and proper hand washing role modeled by teachers. Children will be asked for input on rules, some additional ideas, during circle time activities.

Teachers will always try to redirect a child that is having a difficult day. The teachers will then follow the Discipline Policy.

*When the need to discipline a child arises, they will be spoken to in a normal tone of voice at their level.

*The child will be redirected, by the teacher, to another area of play. The teacher will keep contact with the child until the child is calm.

*If it becomes evident that the child will not respect the teacher's request of redirection, then the child will be asked to move away from the group (i.e.: sit with a book, puzzles etc)

*If the child becomes upset and is a danger to another child or teacher, the child will be sent to the director's office with some quiet activities until the child is calm enough to return to the group.

*If the child persists in the office, the incident will be documented and placed in the child's file and the parent will sign and receive a copy of the incident.

*The child's parent/ guardian will be asked to come in after 3 incident reports and discuss them. At which time that conversation will also be documented and placed in the child's file.

*The conference with the child's parent/guardian will be to discuss any ways in which we as a joint effort can help to prevent future incidents.

*If the behavior continues after two conferences with the parent/guardian, care may be suspended or to maintain the safety of the other children and staff.

*Referral information will be available at all times to parents/ guardians.

First Years Academy prohibits any spanking or other corporal punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment. Children are never deprived of meals or snacks, or force fed and never disciplined for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. Full referral policy will be given upon request and if conferences are required.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES/ POLICY

We may terminate or suspend care if the terms of the child care contract and the child care policies in our hand book are not followed.

Some are examples are below (but not limited to):

*Fees/ tuition not paid.

*Forms not complete.

*Constantly late pick up.

*It has been determined our services cannot meet the child's needs

*A child is putting the staff, other children, or themselves in danger continuously, Inappropriate behavior of the parent and or child. When any child is terminated from the program, initiated by the program or the parent/guardian the center will prepare the child for termination from the program in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.

UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

Written consent will be required for any activities not related to childcare; fund raising, publicity, including media interviews, and photographs.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect:

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General law C119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child he/she must notify the director and file a report with the Department of Social Services.

The following steps will be followed carefully:

1)A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document her observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information. The staff member will notify the director or designated adult.

2)The director or staff member with the assistance of the director will make a verbal report to DSS, to be followed by a required written report (51A) within 48 hours.

3)If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DSS and the director disagrees, the staff member may report to DSS directly.

4)Although it is not mandatory, it will be decided by the director as to whether or not the parent/guardian will be informed of the report and it is the responsibility of the director or designated adult to do so. As a program, we will try to inform the parent/ guardian of the 51A, unless it is deemed in the best interest of the child to allow DSS to contact the family first.

Procedures for identifying and reporting child abuse or neglect while in the care of the center:

Any report or suspected abuse or neglect of a child in care will be immediately reported to the Department of Social Services and the EEC. A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform her/him of the filed report. The staff member in question will be immediately suspended from the program with pay pending the outcome of DSS and EEC investigations. If the report is screened out by DSS, the director and owner has the option of having the staff member return to work.. This decision will be made by the director and owner and will be based on the seriousness of the allegations and facts available.

DSS # 978-466-1500, 1-800-792-5200 (24hr hotline)

EEC # 413-788-8401 Karen Burns Licenser