

Growing Minds

Learning Academy

**Parent Handbook**

Welcome!

This Parent Handbook will get you acquainted with our mission, philosophy, policies and curriculum. We hope to give you a clear picture of what Growing Minds Learning Academy can offer and what you and your children can expect while in our care.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Our *Parent Handbook* has been written to describe our program, philosophy, policies, and all the daily activities and details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. Please carefully read this handbook and keep it for future reference. Growing Minds Learning Center will be opening its doors in the fall of 2021 and will consist of just three main classrooms: infants, toddlers and pre-school. We will also offer before and after care, weekend and overnight care.

**OUR PHILOSOPHY**

***We believe...*** That children are precious and must receive care from adults who are capable and caring, whose values enable them to be excellent role models. Children should experience positive learning milestones, leading to an increased sense of competence and independence. Free play is extremely vital to healthy physical development, acceptable social skills, and cognitive growth. Our teachers at GMLA have training and experience and will create an appropriate educational environment which carefully guides children from one developmental level to another. We believe that parents contribute to and enhance the quality of care that we practice at Growing Minds Learning Academy.

**GUIDANCE AND SOCIALIZATION (DISCIPLINE)**

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment of any kind be used in at Growing Minds Learning Academy. Nor will an adult voice ever be raised in anger at a child.

It is the policy of GMLA to focus on positive guidance. Positive guidance is the practice of looking at each situation through the lens of child development and guiding children’s behavior. This practice reframes the situation, so we move beyond a reaction and towards a more effective response.

Rather than using punishment that is punitive and harsh, positive guidance considers children’s developmental needs, these are associated with, but not identical to age because each child develops differently. This approach includes considering developmental needs and:

- Offering opportunities to explore and learn
- Establishing routines and roles that help children know what to expect
- Setting clear boundaries and limits
- Offering choices
- Be proactive in knowing how to prevent stress or anxiety—such as transitions, from the daily drop-off and pick-up, to changing teachers or classes

**DIVERSITY**

Diversity may include different gender roles, faiths, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity it is not limited to just these areas. We believe that diversity also includes the different physical, cognitive, and social abilities that one possesses. Each Classroom will create a developmentally appropriate environment that not only reflects each child’s unique abilities but also reflect their home culture and experiences as well.

One of the most important things that we can do to teach our children about diversity is through role modeling that **all people** are treated with kindness and respect. Our child enrollment form encourages families to share their home traditions with us. Our teachers also incorporate props and materials into the different learning environments that reflect diversity with our children.

**RATIOS**

At Growing Minds Learning Academy, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios at all times in our classrooms:

**Age of Children Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children**

6 weeks to 2 years 1 staff for every 4 children
2 years 1 staff for every 5 children
3 years 1 staff for every 6 children 4 years 1 staff for every 10 children 5 years to 10 years

 1 staff for every 15 children

**ENROLLMENT AND TUITION**

Children between the ages 6 weeks and twelve years are eligible for enrollment at Growing Minds Learning Academy. Children may attend the center for a 12-hour block between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekend, evening may go until 1am.

Documents to be completed and returned before enrollment are:

* *Child enrollment forms*
* *Child Information Records*
* *Health Form*
* *Policy Contract*
* *Non-Prescription Release*

A registration fee of $50 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a one-time, non- refundable charge. If a child is withdrawn then re- enrolls at a later date, a second enrollment fee will be expected.

Tuition/ copay for full or part time childcare is based on one of the two following options:

• Monthly Payment-due the 1st day of each month. Late after the 2nd day.

• Weekly Payment-due by 6 p.m. **EVERY MONDAY!**

*If tuition is not paid by the 2nd of the month, then tuition will be considered late and a $10 late fee will be applied to the balance.*

Any child who is in our care for more than 10 hours in one day will be charged an additional $20 fee for each day.

Two-week notice required for any schedule change. The first schedule or payment change is free. Additional changes will require a $15 **Schedule Change Fee**.

Growing Minds Learning Academy closes at 6:00PM, Monday through Friday. Parents will be charged ***$1.00 for every minute*** a child is present after 6:00PM or over their scheduled pickup time if your child is enrolled in evening care. If there is a late pick-up fee, parents will receive a written notice from the Director stating the amount of the late pick-up fee. The fee will be added to your payment the following week.

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday. If a child is enrolled in full-time childcare (4 or more days per week), families will be charged the current full-time rate each week. If a child is enrolled in part-time childcare\* (3 or fewer days per week), families will be charged a daily rate Each week.

**WITHDRAWAL & DISMISSAL POLICY**

**A TWO-WEEK NOTICE IS REQUIRED BEFORE WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM OUR ACADEMY. ACCOUNT MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE WITHDRAWING INCLUDING YOUR CHILD'S TUITION FOR THAT TWO-WEEK PERIOD. ANY ACCOUNT PAST DUE WILL RESALT IN A LATE FEE.**

The director at Growing Minds Learning Academy reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

• Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.

•Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent agreement.

• Child has special needs that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.

• Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.

• Expired or non-immunizations and/or physical

**General Tuition Information**

**Registration** is $50 for the first child and $25 for each additional sibling. The registration fee is non-refundable and is due at the time of enrollment.

**Tuition** is paid on a weekly basis and is due on the first Monday of the week. A $10 late fee per day will be applied to the weekly tuition if weekly payment is tardy.

**School Closing and Child absences.** Full tuition is due regardless of holidays, absences or emergency closing.

**Full Day Tuition Rates**

 **Full time Part time**

**Days**

Infant Room $275 Weekly $225weekly

(0-12 Months)

Young Toddler 1-2 $270 weekly $215weekly

Older Toddlers 2-3 $260 weekly $210 weekly

Preschool 3-5 $250 weekly $205 weekly

School age- 13 $150 weekly $100 weekly

Summer Camp Rates

**Registration** is $50 for the first child and $25 for each additional sibling. The registration fee is non-refundable and is due at the time of enrollment.

**Tuition** is paid on a weekly basis and is due on the first Monday of the week. A $10 late fee per day will be applied to the weekly tuition if weekly payment is tardy.

**School Closing and Child absences.** Full tuition is due regardless of holidays, absences or emergency closing.

School Age- 13 $250 Weekly ( NOT including trips or other activities )

**COMMUNICATION**

Proper communication between our parents and the teachers and staff of GMLA is extremely important. Teachers will be sending home information on a regular basis. Infant and toddler parents will receive daily reports. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher, even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the center director. Each child is provided with a cubby. Please check these daily for notes, newsletters and daily reports.

Remember to communicate in writing any changes in your child's schedule. **We must be informed, in writing, regarding any changes in the person picking up your child**. You may add or delete names of authorized adults allowed to pick-up your child on the *Child Information Record*.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Each family has the right to confidentiality. GMLA keeps certain information on file regarding children and families that may be considered personal in nature. We maintain this information in confidence and do not discuss or release it to persons outside of GMLA unless written permission has been obtained from the parent(s).

**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

***DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP POLICIES***

Parents are expected to accompany their child into the front area of the center ***ONLY***. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however, will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care. You are welcome to stay for a short while and assist your child through this transition. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave, and the teacher will assist.

**ONLY THE INDIVIDUALS LISTED ON THE *CHILD INFORMATION RECORD,* OR ON A WRITTEN PERMISSION NOTE FROM THE PARENT, WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITH A CHILD. THE STAFF IS EXPECTED TO REQUEST A PICTURE I.D. FROM ANY UNFAMILIAR PERSON (INCLUDING GRAND- PARENTS). IF THERE IS ANY CONCERN, THE STAFF OF GMLA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY A PERSON'S REQUEST TO PICK-UP A CHILD.**

Your child’s classroom teacher may be available at pick-up time for short questions. For longer discussions or particular concerns please schedule an appointment.

Parents are expected to assume full responsibility of their child once they enter the Center.

Your child has waited all day to see you and is excited when you walk in the door. At pick up please ***put away your cell phone*** and give your full attention to your child.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY…**

Photographs of the children in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in news- papers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials, social media and/or educational trainings. Your permission for photographs of your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement.

Your child’s photo will also be displayed on their classroom’s Shutterfly site.

**BOTTLES, BLANKETS, CUPS AND PACIFIERS**

You may send extra bottles (infant room), a small security blanket and/or a pacifier or a cup for your child. Staff will make every effort to keep track of these items but will not be held responsible if lost. When you are ready to wean your child, please communicate with your child's teacher so a consistent strategy between home and our center may be established.

**MEALS AND MEALTIMES**

Growing Minds Learning Academy promotes healthy food in children by not serving processed, or sugary foods with meals. Such foods are only permitted on very special occasions. **NO PEANUTS OF ANY KIND WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING.**

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically. GMLA will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance here. Your permission for your child to participate in *walking* excursions is part of this agreement. You will be notified of all field trips.

We will occasionally take classroom field trips to museums, parks, apple orchards, and other community places. Families will be notified prior to any trips involving transportation. A permission slip must be signed and returned including emergency phone numbers for that day. Parent volunteers are welcome to assist with field trips (and other special events). A child may be excluded from participation in a field trip for safety, health, or disciplinary reasons.

**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Parents are welcome to send in a treat to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Some classrooms have strict allergy guidelines. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing. This is for the safety of all of the children. Ask your child’s teacher for suggestions. Parents are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration.

**COVID-19**

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, our Health Check & Illness Policy (both COVID and Non-COVID provisions) applies to all staff, children and their household members. The final decision on whether to exclude an individual from the program due to illness will be made by GMLA. For your child's comfort, and to reduce the risk of contagion, children must be picked up within 1 hour of notification of illness. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms.

**DAILY HEALTH CHECK**

All staff, families, children and their household members must conduct a check before coming into the center. Should you or any household member have any of the following COVID-19-like symptoms during the preceding 72 hours, we ask you to remain out of the center and notify the center.

* Cough
* Sore Throat
* Muscle Aches
* Difficulty Breathing
* New Loss of Taste or Smell
* Fever at or above the threshold temperature of **100.4° F** (or would have, but for the use of fever-reducers). *The threshold temperature is****100.4° F****.*

**SYMPTOMS—RETURNING AFTER EXCLUSION**

Consistent with our COVID-19 Policy, a symptomatic household will be required to remain out of the center for at least 10 days. There are, however, two options for a household to return earlier following an exclusion due to symptoms:

*Early Return Confirmation:*A symptomatic individual who tests negative with a molecular (PCR) test and has been out of the center at least two full days will be able to return by providing a signed

*Early Return Confirmation* form indicating symptoms are improving, there have been no new symptoms since testing, and the individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

*Clearance to Return:*If a medical provider assesses the symptomatic individual and provides acceptable clearance to return, then the individual will be cleared to return, the ten (10) day exclusion period will not apply. Clearance to return will be acceptable if a medical provider confirms in writing that: a) the individual has tested negative and can return when fever-free for at least 24 hours (without use of fever-reducers) and symptoms are resolving, b) there is an alternate diagnosis causing the COVID-like symptoms and the individual has tested positive for a confirmed non-COVID microbiological diagnosis, or negative for COVID-19 using a molecular or antigen test for SARS- CoV-2, or c) there is an alternate diagnosis causing the COVID-like symptoms.  Patients presenting with symptoms of an upper respiratory illness, or ear, nose or throat infection, must provide clearance to return pursuant to options a or b above, and option c will not be sufficient. Any unspecified diagnosis is presumed to be COVID-19 and the exclusion will continue.  Clearance to return cannot be provided by a family member, can only be provided to clear an exclusion for symptoms and is not sufficient to clear an exclusion for exposure.   All Clearances to return must be reviewed and approved by GMLA director.

Early return requirements may change, from time to time, based on current conditions.

**REPORTING SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASE IN HOUSEHOLD**

Notify us immediately if you become aware of any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your household occurring within **14 days prior to or 48 hours after** any member of your household has been in present at the center.

**TRAVEL**

If you or anyone in your household has traveled internationally within the last 10 days, your household may not attend GMLA. The traveler must remain out of the center even if the traveler is fully vaccinated.

**Illness/Sick**

If a child is not feeling well before entering the building, we ask that you keep them home. Examples are:

* Fever over 100
* Infected eyes or skin.
* Any type of contagious or communicable disease such as flu, measles, mumps, rubella, or chicken pox.
* Immediately report to staff any contagious or communicable disease.
* Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps.
* An acute cold with fever, runny nose and eyes, a “croupy” cough or congested to the point that he/she has heavy breathing.

If child develops symptoms while in our care a staff member will call and ask for the child to be picked up. We ask that you see a physician and receive a doctor’s note before returning to GMLA.

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

The daycare will operate Monday to Friday from 6am to 6pm but offers 24hour care for families that needs evening, overnight and/or weekend care. Hours of operation will be determined by the needs of the parents. Summer hours will be available based on the needs of young parents. Activities within the program will be monitored and adjusted accordingly, in consultation with parents, daycare staff and other involved professionals to promote ongoing development. GMLA will follow school district snow days unless otherwise.

**VACATION/CLOSER DAYS**

Growing Minds Learning Academy is closed for all holidays listed (NO fee decreases for holidays.) GMLA will be closed for the following holidays:

* New Year’s Day
* Easter Monday
* Eid
* Memorial Day
* Independence Day(4th of July)
* Labor Day
* Thanksgiving
* Christmas Day



**Growing Minds Learning Academy
Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form**

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of Growing Minds Learning Academy's Employee Handbook. I understand that it contains important information about GMLA's policies, I am expected to read the Handbook and familiarize myself with its contents, and that the policies in the Handbook apply to me and my child’s care at GMLA. GMLA may change the policies in the Handbook at any time.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I understand and agree to the terms and policy. I understand that I have the right to remove my child at any time (with notice) and for any reason. All tuition and copy’s must be paid in full before removing Child from care. GMLA has the right to part ways with a family if anything in this handbook is dishonored. I acknowledge that neither GMLA nor I have entered into an agreement for a specified period of time and Nothing in this Handbook constitutes a contract or promise of continued care.

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Whatness Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

*Whatness Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*