

2018-19 Parent/Student Handbook

Program Philosophy:

Orlando Early Learning Academy educational philosophy is based on the belief that young children build or “construct” their knowledge of the world — they are “active learners.” This means learning is not simply a process of adults giving information to children. Rather, children discover things through direct experience with people, objects, events, and ideas. They learn best from pursuing their own interests while being actively supported and challenged by adults. OELA’s teachers are as active and involved as children in the classroom. They thoughtfully provide materials, plan activities, and talk with children in ways that both support and challenge what children are experiencing and thinking. The goal of promoting active learning is reflected in every aspect of our High/Scope curriculum.

Active learning has five ingredients which must be present:

- **Materials:** Abundant supplies of interesting materials are readily available to children. Materials are appealing to all the senses and are open ended — that is, they lend themselves to being used in a variety of ways to expand children’s experiences and stimulate their thought.
- **Manipulation:** Children handle, examine, combine, and transform materials and ideas. They make discoveries through direct hands-on and “minds-on” contact with these resources.
- **Choice:** Children choose materials and play partners, change and build on their play ideas, and plan activities according to their interests and needs.
- **Child language and thought:** Children describe what they are doing and understanding. They communicate verbally and nonverbally as they think about their actions and modify their thinking to take new learning into account.
- **Adult scaffolding:** “Scaffolding” means adults both support children’s current level of thinking and challenge them. Adults encourage children’s efforts and help them extend or build on their work by talking with them about what they are doing, by joining in their play, and by helping them learn to solve problems that arise.

Licensing Information:

Orlando Early Learning Academy is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Our License Number is **C09OR0960**.

Presently OELA has four classrooms and is licensed by the State of Florida for a maximum of 68 children on site at any given time, based on the facility’s square footage. OELA voluntarily limits its enrollment, ratios and group sizes to aid in creating a quality environment for children.

Hours of Operation:

The center opens at 6:00 AM sharp and children will not be accepted into the building earlier. Closing of the center, at large, is at 6:00 PM, meaning, the center should be completely cleared by 6:00 PM. At the end of the day, please allow enough time to collect your child and belongings plus deal with any office matters before our time of lock up and closing. Please also remember that your child anticipates your arrival at the end of the day. A child can become worried and anxious if his

classmates have all been picked up and his parent has not yet arrived. We strongly advise parents to abide by the center's closing schedule – not doing so will result in late fees and eventual termination of child care services.

Enrollment Policy:

Enrollment is open to any child three (3) months through twelve (12) years old, as space is available. Orlando Early Learning Academy, Inc. accepts children without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed forms listed below and the payment of the application fee, supply fee and first week's tuition. The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration. The Orlando Early Learning Academy reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause. Continued enrollment at OELA is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of OELA as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Enrollment Application:

This form must be completed entirely. Of special importance are the contact phone numbers and emergency information.

Contact Information:

The names of all persons permitted to remove a child and emergency phone numbers must be on this sheet. **All individuals designated on the pick-up list must be at least 18 years of age. We will not release a child to anyone under 18. NO exceptions.** There may be times when parents are unable to pick up their child. A statement signed by the parent must be provided to the Center to authorize anyone other than a birth parent or legal guardian to remove a child from OELA. Phone authorization, text messages or emails will **not** be accepted under any circumstances. For this reason, OELA requests that parents list several people on the Contact Information form. Anyone picking up a child and who is unfamiliar to a staff member **MUST** show identification before the child can be released. Parents are requested to advise their emergency contacts or authorized pickups that they will need to show identification.

News Media & Photography/Video Consent:

Please read this form carefully and fill-it out appropriately.

Off-Site Childcare Waiver:

This form must be signed. It does not in any way endorse the use of OELA staff as babysitters.

Enrollment Agreement:

This form needs to be signed after reading your OELA Family Handbook and the DCF Know Your Child's Day Care Center.

Demographic Survey: The purpose of this form is to help OELA meet grant reporting requirements. Please help us by filling out all information. Getting to Know Your Child: This information is used to help the teachers better meet the needs of your child.

Child Care Food Program Application/Child participation Forms:

This is a two part form. One is the financial form used for proof of income and for our application to C. C.F.P. The other form is to document your child's attendance at OELA.

This federal program partially reimburses us for the meals we serve. All children must have a completed C.C.F.P. forms. For children with allergies or diet restrictions, there is a waiver form that must be completed and signed by a doctor which allows OELA to make modifications in the food served to your child. It is the parent's or legal guardian's responsibility at the time of enrollment to inform OELA of a child's allergies. If a child develops an allergy while enrolled, It is the parent's or legal guardian's responsibility to inform OELA **IMMEDIATELY**.

Physical and Immunization Records:

Your Florida doctor must sign DH Form 680 and DH form 3040 providing immunization and physical records due at the time of enrollment. These forms must be kept current. DH form 680 is valid until expiration date shown on the form, DH form 3040 is valid for two years from date of physical exam.

Ages and Stages/Ages and Stages-Social Emotional Questionnaires:

These questionnaires must be returned within 14 days. They are very important for us to plan a program that will best meet your child's needs.

School Readiness Funding:

Sponsors/Co-sponsors who pay our lowest fee, must apply to Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C) for school readiness subsidy. Proof of application must be given to OELA within 10 days of enrollment or whenever changes to your income are made. Proof of this application may be a letter from 4C or a printed copy of the confirmation page from the on-line application. Parents failing to provide OELA proof of application for subsidy will be moved to the next level on our fee scale.

Sign In and Out:

DCF requires us to have sponsors, co-sponsors or their designee sign each child in and out daily. Please check your child in/out using the computers each day at arrival and departure.

Parents are required to notify OELA immediately, should any of the Information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program.

Tuition:

All tuition is due **in advance of receiving services.** Payments that coincide with paydays (monthly, semi-monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly) must be made prior to receiving services. Your child may not attend after Monday if all fees are not paid. Failure to pay tuition is voluntary withdrawal from the program.

Application/Supply Fee

Families enrolling in Orlando Early Learning Academy are charged an application fee prior to receiving the handbook and application. This fee is to cover the cost of the paperwork and mat fee.

- This fee is non-refundable and cannot be applied to tuition.
- Students that withdrew from the program and return later will be required to pay the fee again.

Upon enrollment, parents are also required to pay their child's tuition for the first week and supply fee prior to the first day of attendance.

Paying Tuition

OELA recommends parents make their tuition payments and handle business matters at the Front Desk after dropping off their children in the morning or before going to retrieve their child from the classroom. Parents are responsible for supervising their children until they have handed the children over to a teacher in a classroom and after removing their child from a classroom.

Credit Card Charge Back:

When a family's credit/debit payment to OELA is charged back for any reason the parent will be charged a fee of \$10 per occurrence thru tuition express and a \$10 late fee.

- To maintain enrollment, it will be the parent's immediate responsibility to cover the amount due OELA in full, along with the fee of \$10.
- Two (2) charge backs will cause a family to lose credit/debit payment privileges.

Late Pick Up Fee:

Parents who pick up children after closing will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute. Late pick up times will be determined according to the wall clock in the office, not according to personal watches.

Any child who is not out of the center by 6:00 PM will be considered late.

- Parents experiencing any unexpected event causing them to pick up their children late MUST notify the center through a phone call.
- Payment is expected with regular tuition.

Subsidized Children:

Parents of a subsidized child (those on 4C or VPK) must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at OELA. Parents of subsidized children are also personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive child care subsidies. Any tuition that 4C does not pay because of excessive absences, the parent is responsible for..

Vacation/Illness Credits

Families are permitted one full week of "free time" per year, June 1st to July 31st, when the child may be absent. No fees will be charged and the child's slot will be held. For this to occur the parent must give the Daycare one week's notice in writing and your child must not have attended any portion of that week.

If your child becomes ill, and you have already used your "free" week, you can request an illness discount of 25% of your weekly fee. For you to receive this discount your child may not attend any

day during the week and the parent must provide OELA with a doctor's note stating the reason the child was absent. Regular fees must be paid on time.

Payment Methods

Tuition Express – Automatic Payment Processing Safe - Convenient – Easy

Tuition Express is an automated payment processing system that allows you to pay tuition and fees four ways.

- Online Payments
- POS/Credit Card Swipe
- Recurring credit card payments
- Recurring bank-to-bank transactions

Cash is always accepted as a valid form of payment. But, because there is potential for cash payments to go undocumented, we ask all parents take a few precaution when paying cash.

- All families presenting cash for tuition are solely responsible for making certain the payments is directly received by an OELA designated staff. Office staff cannot print a receipt therefore it will be later notated in the system.

Financial Issues

If you have any issues with your account, please see the Business Administrator.

Tax Statements

As a courtesy to our families, OELA will generate, at no cost, a year-end tax statement for every family to be available by January 31st of each year. These statements may be picked up at the front desk. There will be a charge of \$1 each additional statement.

Confidentiality:

Within Orlando Early Learning Academy, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of OELA who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as OELA strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with OELA.

Outside of OELA, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of OELA, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding disenrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of OELA are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Visitors and Volunteers:

OELA has an "open-door policy" for the program and welcomes both visitors and volunteers. As early childhood professionals, we believe all parents should have access to their children and participate at their convenience. Visitors other than parents or guardians of enrolled children are asked to sign the visitor's log and obtain a name badge at the office.

Orlando Early Learning Academy welcomes the contribution of volunteers, especially if they serve as a mentor in your child's life.

- Every volunteer receives a short orientation to our program. They are all required to present a photo ID (driver's license) and sign an Attestation of Good Moral Character.
- Volunteers donating 10 hours or more per month are required to have a criminal record check and background screening.
- It is OELA's strict policy not to leave volunteers alone with children or include them in any ratio counts.

Parking:

The parking lot at OELA is limited but has a maximum number of allowable spaces permitted. Parents are cautioned to park all vehicles with care and are reminded that OELA is not responsible for any damage done to personal vehicles. More importantly, parents are cautioned about the grave dangers associated with young children and moving vehicles. Please be extremely careful going to and from the car as you bring your child in and out of our building.

- Do not allow your child to exit the center door or run ahead of you while approaching your car.
- Do not leave your car running. This is an illegal and unsafe practice.
- Do not leave children of **any age** unattended in the car (This is considered child neglect and as mandated reporters, we have been instructed to call Child Protective Services if this occurs.)

We expect parents to use the safe practice of placing children in a car seat of the vehicle and buckle them in before you leave. Remember, it is the law! OELA will not, knowingly, release children to an adult arriving without a child restraint seat.

Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect:

Under the Florida Statutes (F.S.) s. 39.201, child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline. As mandated reporters, the staff of Orlando Early Learning Academy cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

"Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in s. 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions by a parent, adult household member, other

person responsible for the child's welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person. Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriated meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

The employees of Orlando Early Learning Academy are considered mandated reporters under this law. The employees of OELA are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at OELA take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. Florida Statutes (F.S.) s. 30.201 is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

Parent Code of Conduct:

Orlando Early Learning Academy requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of OELA is to provide the most appropriate environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of OELA but, is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding disenrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

- **SWEARING/CURSING:**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or a adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

- **THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN, OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH OELA:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society OELA cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities

and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not assume the risk of a second chance. *PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.*

- **PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT OELA:**

While OELA does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, we understand that some families use these methods. However, such acts are not permitted in the child care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Program Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or Program Director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Program Director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or other staff are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our agency have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

- **SMOKING:**

For the health of all OELA employees, children and associates, smoking tobacco products or e-cigarettes are prohibited anywhere on OELA property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of OELA. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

- **VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:**

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of OELA. Please be particularly mindful of OELA entrance. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Director.

- **CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF OELA:**

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of OELA or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and

respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

- **VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:**

OELA takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with OELA. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

PARENT'S RIGHTS:

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Orlando Early Learning Academy.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) OELA MUST be provided with a copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed.

In the absence of a court order on file with OELA, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. OELA cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, OELA suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access.

OELA staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise. Visitors are asked to sign-in at the front desk and are allowed in the child care facility only at the discretion of the Director.

OELA will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon agency property unless there is a court order related to custody. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, OELA cannot have a child at the agency when the child's parent is prohibited access. OELA will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

Withdraw Policy:

Two weeks paid, written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and deposit will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

Dismissal:

Orlando Early Learning Academy reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. It is not the goal of OELA to dismiss any child. However, sometimes circumstances make it a necessity. Some reasons that may result in termination of a child are as follows:

- Non-payment for childcare services or lack of following payment policies.
- Lack of parental cooperation in meeting the needs of the child in regard to parent conferences, teacher support, developmental screenings, referrals, etc.
- Aggressive behavior or verbal threats made by parents to staff or other parents on OELA property.
- Needs of the child that are beyond the ability of staff to meet.

An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to a collection agency.

The Center Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required immediately to leave the property in a calm and respectful manner.

OELA will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive or uncooperative while waiting on their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Center Director if they wish to return to agency property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Center Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the agency by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by OELA.

Arrival Procedures:

Upon arrival at Orlando Early Learning Academy, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility.

OELA discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. It is common for young children to exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. Some children will cry and may even try to leave with you. It usually takes two weeks to a month for these symptoms to disappear. OELA believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure.

The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of OELA are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

Arrival Time

Children arriving after 10:00 AM will be permitted.

- Bringing your child after 10:00 AM causes disruptions in the classroom, and distracts children from their fullest opportunity for classroom learning time.
- Parents are required to notify the office if their child will be arriving late and get approval for entrance after 10 AM.

Notice of Absence

Please contact the facility if your child will be absence for the day or week. If your child is absent and we did not get a call from the parent or guardians, we will contact the parent/guardian within one hour of the normal drop off time to verify the child's absence.

Parents are requested to inform the center by 9:00 a.m. if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day.

This will enable the center and classroom teacher to effectively plan for the day. If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared.

OELA will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your child's continued enrollment will not be based on your decision to share the reason for your child's absence from school.

Agency's Right to Refuse Admission

OELA reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
3. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at OELA if the child were to be present at the center.
4. Parents' failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
5. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.
6. Parents' failure to pay.

Parents **WILL NOT** be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

Back-up Childcare

OELA recommends that each family have back-up childcare available in case of emergency. Back-up care is necessary at times and for various reasons, including but not limited to the following: when your child is physically unable to participate in the program; OELA is not open due to holidays or teacher workdays; we cannot open due to emergencies; or other unavoidable family circumstances.

Pick-Up Procedures:

Parents or other authorized adults are required to sign their child out of care. Once a parent removes the child from a classroom, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on agency premises.

DCF requires that children be under the supervision of an adult at all times. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

OELA staff will step in if we feel a child is exhibiting an unsafe practice.

- Please do not allow your child to wander anywhere in the Center without you (classrooms, office, common area, etc).
- When entering and leaving the building, your child must remain with you at all times.
- Children should not run ahead to their classroom or run out the exit doors without you – this is teaching them an unsafe practice.
- Children should never be outside the building without adult supervision, this includes waiting in a parked car.

Parents should take home all papers in the child's cubby or school bag each day.

Parents or persons designated to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Staff Signing out Children

This organization does not permit its staff, under any circumstances, to sign-out non-relatives or to use their personal vehicles to transport children to or from the Center, regardless of whether the transportation occurs during or outside of OELA's hours of operation. Therefore, parents may not designate an OELA employee as someone authorized to take their child from the center at the end of the day unless that staff member is a relative of the child.

LATE PICK-UP

Any child who is not out of the center by 6:00 PM will be considered late. All measurements of time are to be according to the OELA's office clock located on the wall. A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged.

A child's service may be terminated should the child be picked-up late (15 minutes or more) on three occasions in one school year regardless of the reasons for the late pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

Emergency Policy in Case of Failure to Pick Up a Child

In the event a child is not picked up by 6:00 PM, staff shall use all contact information available on the child's enrollment forms in attempting to arrange for the earliest possible pick-up of any child remaining in the Center.

- If contact is not made with a parent, the Center will begin calling all contacts listed. If release of a child is made to one of the contacts, this information will be left on the parent's answering machine whenever possible and in a message on the Center's front door as staff leave.
 - In the event a child has not been picked up 45 minutes after Center closing time and all attempts to reach parents or persons on the pick-up list have been unsuccessful, staff shall call the police or sheriff for the area in which the child lives and request they assist in locating a responsible adult to pick up the child.
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- ❖ Police may help by going to the child's residence or whatever the responding officer deems appropriate.
 - ❖ If the police are unable to locate a responsible adult to pick up the child, then staff shall immediately call Child Protective Services and request to have Social Services pick up the child from the Center.

Staff shall carefully and fully document all efforts, including names and times of those contacted throughout this process and provide the documentation to the Executive Director the following workday.

PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT PICK-UP

The staff of OELA will contact local police, Child Protective Services and the other custodial parent, or next person on the pick-up list, should a parent appear to the staff of OELA to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, OELA staff will contact the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child, and appears to the staff of OELA to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of OELA will contact the child's parents to notify them of the situation.

EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP FORMS

At enrollment, parents will be presented with a Contact Information Form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from OELA. The persons listed on the Contact Information Form must have the right to act "In Loco Parentis."

In Loco Parentis status affords the pick-up person the right to discuss confidential information about the child's day, including but not limited to incident/accident reports and behavior issues.

Parents do not need to be listed on the Contact Information Form. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child.

In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached. Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for

their child to be picked up by someone on the list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program.

The persons on the Contact Information Form will be required to provide Government issued photo ID prior to the agency releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule. All changes and/or additions to the Contact Information Form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

OELA reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the Contact Information Form for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the Contact Information Form of the policies/procedures contained herein.

School Calendar:

Variations in holidays will occur from one year to the next, based on how the holiday actually falls on the calendar. Current year's holidays will be posted in the reception area. Generally, Orlando Early Learning Academy (OELA) is closed on the following 12 holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- President's Day
- Spring Break Days
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

VPK will follow the Orange County Public School Calendar.

Emergency Situations: Emergency Drills

Orlando Early Learning Academy runs drills for Fire, Storms, Lockdowns and other emergency situations so your child is familiar with these and will not be alarmed in case of a real emergency. Emergency exit paths and storm shelters are posted by in each classroom. This prepares us in case a need arises.

Closing/Inclement Weather Information

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing by a message on OELA's answering machine and a note on the front door.

Should OELA need to close in the middle of the day, the staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the Contact will be called.

Information Form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parent or emergency contact person at the time of the call, of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than three (3) school days. If the closure extends three (3) school days or more, parents will have their tuition reduced as per the following schedule, weekly tuition will be divided by 5 for the daily rate. The account will be charged the daily rate for the days OELA is open.

Lock-Down Policy

In the event of a threat to the children in our center, we may be forced to lock-down the building until local authorities tell us the situation is over. This means doors will be locked and children will be moved away from windows. OELA will not allow people, including family members, to enter the building during a Lock-Down situation.

Threatening examples include:

- ❖ A violent or enraged person attempting to enter the center by force;
- ❖ An unauthorized person attempting to pick up a child; or
- ❖ Instructions from local authorities advising us of a “just cause” for a lock-down.

First Aid and CPR Training

The vast majority of OELA staff is trained in First Aid and Pediatric CPR practices. Staff credentials are available for viewing upon request.

Injury

Children are very active by nature. Running and jumping are both part of their normal development. Therefore, children are always at risk of getting injured.

- If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first aid and notify you at the end of the day.
- Whenever injuries occur, an Incident/Accident report is prepared for documentation.
- Parents or person designated to pick-up the child must review, sign and return the report to our office before leaving and will be given a copy.
- Depending on the type of injury, parents may be called prior to picking up their child.

Serious Injury & Emergency Care

In the case of a serious injury or medical incident related to your child, we will make an immediate attempt to contact you. If necessary, we will call 911 and an ambulance will take your child to the hospital designated by the parents or the hospital the EMH personnel deem in the best interest of the health of your child. If parents or authorized individuals cannot be located in an emergency, OELA reserves the right to have your child treated at the medical center of the paramedic’s discretion. It is essential for parents to let us know:

1. How to reach you while your child is in attendance at the center
2. Your child’s physician’s name and phone number

3. Emergency contacts and phone numbers of others you trust and authorize to pick up and care for your child.

Documenting Observations of Unexplained Physical Condition

Teachers at OELA are extra attentive to the health and safety of our children and we want to keep communication open with parents to ensure the child's protection. When receiving children, teachers are required to do an immediate check of the child's body. Written Incident/Accident reports are required when teachers observe any marks, bruises, cuts, or other unexplained physical conditions on the child. This is necessary to document and inform the parent of what they may have overlooked.

Health Information: Hand Washing

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of illness. At OELA, parents are required to wash their children's hands with soap and running water upon arrival to the classroom. OELA also recommends that children's hands be washed before leaving the Center at pick-up as well. Parents, teachers and children are to always wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet or diapering. Parents, staff and volunteers are to wash their hands before joining children's activities.

Parent Guide

1. Is my child too sick to comfortably participate in OELA'S daily routine and activities, including outdoor play?
2. Does my child need extra care from OELA staff that will compromise the safety of the other children?
3. Does my child have a fever (not associated with teething or immunizations) that may signal an infection?
4. If my child was prescribed an antibiotic, has s/he been on the medication a period of 24 hours?

Need to Go Home or Stay Home

These guidelines from the Department of Children and Families establish a framework for both staff and families to determine if a child is well enough to be in group care. Children who are sick are not able to remain at the center. Our responsibilities for providing group child care include taking special care to limit the spread of illness. While we cannot prevent all illness, we can reduce its incidence and severity.

If a child becomes ill while at the center, the parents will be contacted by phone immediately. It is imperative to provide us with accurate contact information so we can locate you during the day. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact someone on the child's emergency list. We will sometimes call to notify you of a low grade temperature or an incident of vomiting, diarrhea or other concern.

If we determine your child is too ill to stay, parents are expected to pick up within one hour (sooner, for a child with a high fever.) If parents are called to pick up sick children, arrangements must be made to pick the child up within one (1) hour. After one hour, late fees will accrue at the same rate as pick up after 6:00 PM.

Any child, childcare personnel or other person in the child care facility suspected of having a communicable disease shall be placed in an isolation area until removed from the facility. Such person may not return until they are free from symptoms for 24 hours without medication or with

medical authorization stating they are not contagious or they have been on antibiotics for a full 24 hours.

Symptoms that require isolation and removal from the center include but are not limited to:

1. Severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
2. Difficult or rapid breathing;
3. Stiff neck;
4. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period);
5. Temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher;
6. Pink Eye;
7. Exposed, open skin lesions;
8. Unexplained rashes;
9. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
10. Yellowish skin or eyes;
11. Continuous running nose in color;
12. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness.

Please get the medical help that your child need.

Medications

Childcare facilities are not required to give medication.

Parents are asked to check with their child's physician to see if a dosage schedule for medication can be arranged that does not involve hours the child is in the care of OELA. In circumstances when it is not possible to medicate only at home, OELA will administer medications to children as a courtesy to families after lunch and before nap. Parents are welcomed to come to the center and administer medication to their own children anytime during the day; but, in this case, medicine may not be kept anywhere on the premises.

The following strict guidelines apply:

- All medicine must be turned into the office and a Medication Authorization Form completed and signed, giving written approval with clear instructions for administering the medication. The authorization must be filled out by the parent or legal guardian and must contain the child's name; the name of the medication to be dispensed; and the date, time and amount of dosage to be given. This record shall be initialed or signed by the facility personnel who gave the medication. No medicine will be administered unless the Medication Authorization is signed by the parent or guardian. Forms are available in the Office.
- The parent's written instructions for administering medication cannot conflict with the label directions as prescribed by the child's physician on prescription medications or with the product label directions on nonprescription medication containers.
- No parental consent to give medicine is effective for longer than 10 working days, except with written authorization from the child's physician.
- Medications need to be in their original container, clearly indicating the child's name, drug name, amount to be given, and the dosage instructions.
- Over-the-counter medications will only be given for three days. This type of medication must be in its original container with the child's name legibly added to the bottle or label. The parent

must fill-out a Medication Authorization Form. The directions on the Medication Authorization Form cannot conflict with the directions on the original container. If the child continues to feel ill after three days of using this medication, a visit to the doctor for prescribed medication is recommended.

- Fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, WILL NOT be administered by our staff and should not be given to a child to disguise the fever prior to attending the center. The only exception is with a doctor's note for febrile seizures. In those specific cases staff will administer according to the doctor's note and call the parents. Parents must come and pick up their child immediately.
- Cough drops may not be given at the Center because they are considered a choking hazard.
- In the event staff misses giving a dose around lunchtime, for any reason, parents may be contacted by phone to determine whether to give the medicine late or skip the dose altogether.
- It is the parent's responsibility to retrieve medication from the center. Any unused medicine left on the premises beyond three (3) days (or found to have an expired date) will be flushed and containers thrown away.
- Diaper rash ointment will be treated as a medication by OELA with the following exceptions:
 - It will be stored in the classroom with the medication form
 - It will be applied when diapers are changed

Sunscreen and Bug Repellent

Parents who would like bug repellent and/or sunscreen applied to their child are asked to bring the brand of their choice, in the original container, labeled with their child's name. A Medical Authorization form must be completed before the ointment, sunscreen and/or bug repellent can be applied.

Parents should administer ALL medicine to their children at home whenever possible.

Notice of Communicable Disease

Please notify the center if your child has a communicable illness such as chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, ringworm, etc., so we can post a note informing other parents of their child's exposure.

- If a child has a communicable disease, a notice outside the classroom door will be posted to inform parents of the type of disease and when their child may have been exposed.
- To protect the child's privacy and in accordance with state and federal regulations, the name of the ill child will not be disclosed.

Head Lice

OELA has a NO NIT policy. Nits (the eggs of head lice) are small, yellowish-white, oval-shaped eggs that are "glued" at an angle to the side of the hair shaft. As soon as a child is spotted with head lice, parents will be notified to pick the child up as soon as possible. The child may not return until s/he is nit-free. All other children in the center at the time of infection will be checked for nits to make sure no one else is infected. Parents should check every member of the family.

- The most common symptom of infestation is intense itching on the back of the head or neck
- Head lice are passed from one person to another by direct contact or from shared objects (combs, towels, etc.).
- Look for tiny white eggs (nits) on hair shaft near the scalp (especially at the nape of the neck) and behind the ears). Head lice themselves are small grayish-tan insects without wings.

To treat, follow the directions on over-the-counter lice shampoo. Remove all lice and nits by combing or picking them out one-by-one after treatment. Wash all bedding and clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Also clean combs and brushes in hot water (over 130 degrees) for 10 minutes. Items not machine washable must be dry cleaned or stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag for at least two weeks. Vacuum your mattresses, upholstered furniture, pillows, carpets, car seats, etc. Head lice cannot survive without a host. They cannot survive on family pets.

Sun Safety for the Prevention of Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common kind of cancer in the United States and occurs more often than all other cancers combined. Because OELA is geographically located in the South, we are concerned about sun exposure.

A child's skin, particularly before the age of 10, is especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays. Practicing sun safety needs to become a lifelong habit. According to the US Center for Disease Control, a young child or adolescent with blistering sunburn has nearly doubled their lifetime risk of melanoma.

Therefore, OELA strongly encourages parents to do the following:

1. Allow your child to wear long-sleeved shirts and pants (lightweight) as protective clothing rather than sleeveless tops.
2. Allow your child to wear a hat and sunglasses during outdoor play. Hat sharing is not a good idea. Sunglasses should block ultraviolet (UV) rays by 100%.
3. Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) thickly and generously and rub into child's skin to cover the whole body before coming to school.
4. Applying a lip balm of SPF 15 or higher is also recommended.

Curriculum Information:

Orlando Early Learning Academy has chosen to follow the Nemours Bright Start Curriculum for our 3 and 4 year olds and Baby Doll Circle Time for our infants and toddlers. Nemours Bright Start has track record of providing high-quality education for young children with outstanding positive results. The Nemours Bright Start approach to learning is based on the premise that all children are active, capable learners and do best when they have a part in planning and pursuing self-chosen tasks. Teachers and children are partners in these experiences; teachers offer guidance and support to children and build on learning experiences.

Adult-Child Interaction

In the Nemours Bright Start approach teachers and children are active partners in the learning process. This balanced approach to adult-child interaction – also called “intentional teaching” – is critical to the effectiveness of the program. It includes techniques for encouraging learning in specific content areas as well as strategies to help children resolve conflict.

Classroom arrangement, materials and equipment

The space and materials in a Nemours Bright Start setting are carefully arranged to promote active learning. The center is divided into interest areas organized around specific kinds of play.

Daily Routine

Nemours Bright Start teachers give preschoolers a sense of control over the day by planning a consistent daily routine that enables the children to anticipate what happens next. Central elements of the preschool daily routine include the plan-do-review sequence, small and large group times, greeting time and outside time.

Outdoor Time

Daily outdoor play is very important for children and all children in attendance at the center will be taken outdoors for play on a daily basis. The only exceptions are rainy days, summer days when the heat index is over 100 and winter days when the wind chill factor is below 25 degrees. Studies have consistently shown that children do not have lowered resistance to colds or other infections because of outdoor play, but are much healthier and have stronger resistance to illness with exercise outdoors.

Playgrounds are used according to daily schedules for all classrooms. Schedules are designed for two outdoor play periods each day, weather permitting. Children will not be excused from this portion of the program.

Children who are well enough to attend OELA must be well enough to participate in all parts of the daily routine including outdoor time.

Naptime

Young children have a unique need to rest and sleep during the day. We play hard all morning and when a child falls asleep during our nap time it is because the body is tired and needs the rest. All of our children rest after lunch and many of our children sleep at this time. It is our responsibility to provide a calm and quiet environment for the comfort of those napping.

We try to make naptime restful and comforting by reading to the children, rubbing backs, or rocking. Children who do not fall asleep rest for a brief period of time and then are allowed to look at a book or play quietly with a small toy on their cot until naptime is over.

We provide a mat for preschoolers or toddlers. You are welcome to send a light blanket for your child. Please take your child's blanket home once a week and return the following Monday.

Key Developmental Indicators

The curriculum is built around activities in five main curriculum content areas:

- approaches to learning;
- language, literacy, & communication;
- social and emotional development;
- physical development, health, and well-being; and
- arts and sciences.

Within these content areas are 58 Key Developmental Indicators that teachers use to plan learning experiences and interact with children. The Bright Start Developmental Indicators have been correlated with the Florida Early Learning Standards.

Building Blocks of the Toddler Curriculum

Toddler Care

Like all Toddlers' programs, Baby Doll Circle Time Curriculum is based on the principle that children learn best through direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events and ideas. During this active learning process, infants and toddlers are encouraged to discover the world around them by exploring and playing. Learning and development are anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers, who are close at hand to support the children as they play. Adults scaffold further learning as they interact with children throughout the day. In the infant rooms, Baby Doll Circle Time Curriculum allows for the individual interests and needs of the child to be met throughout the day. By the toddler age, most children in group care are eating and sleeping at about the same time, have exploratory play, outside time, and small and large group times.

Diapering

Toddlers learn through the interactions during daily routines such as diapering. Teachers in our toddler rooms will use this time to provide one-on-one conversation teach nursery rhymes and play short games like "peek-a-boo." Parents are responsible for providing the supplies needed for diapering.

- Parents must provide disposable diapers and wipes for each child they have enrolled.
- It is the parent's responsibility to check your child's supply and keep it well in stock.
- OELA will supply back-up diapers and wipes at a charge of \$1.50 per diaper for parents who fail to furnish them.
- At no time will diapers be "borrowed" from another child's personal supply.
- Until the child is toilet trained, parents will be required to continue providing disposable diapers or pull-ups and wipes, even in preschool classrooms.
- For Diaper Rash Ointments see OELA Medication Policy.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is part of the growing and learning process for toddlers. Toilet training for an individual occurs over a period of time that can range from a few weeks to several months and include several stages of development. Regressions are not unusual during the process, particularly if the child is affected by such things as illness, a move to a new home or child care center, or a new baby in the family. Accidents are to be expected and never met with disapproval. Daytime control may occur earlier than nighttime control. Girls tend to develop complete control earlier than boys. Children rarely have the physical control, understanding of the process or the emotional maturity to successfully and consistently use the toilet prior to reaching 18 months of age, and on average, not until the child is 2½ to 3½ years old.

Because of the complexity of a child's learning to successfully and consistently use the toilet and the emotional relationship between parents and their child, the Center will not initiate toilet learning. Staff will, however, inform parents of any signs of readiness observed at the Center. Parents should keep Center staff aware of their child's movement through the developmental stages (see below) and may request a formal conference when the switch from diapers to pants will be attempted. This will help ensure that staff is supportive and consistent with parental efforts. The stages of toilet training are:

1. Become aware of the process:

- a. Developing a vocabulary for the process.
 - b. Talking about being wet or having had a bowel movement.
 - c. Imitating others by sitting on the toilet.
 - d. Role playing with dolls about the process.
2. Communicating, (saying, "I'm wet," "Change my diaper," or, "I need to use the potty.")
 3. Developing sphincter muscle control (as evidenced by 2-3 hours of dryness)
 4. Wanting to use the toilet.

Center staff will support parental efforts to assist their child with toilet training and will never show disapproval when accidents occur. Success will be met with encouragement. After the switch from diapers has begun, parents are responsible for maintaining several pairs of underpants and changes of clothes in the child's cubby until the child can regularly make it through the day without an accident. Clothing should be easily removable, such as elastic waist pants. Because accidents occur and regression is possible, patience is necessary when a child learns to use the toilet. Remember that center staff is not responsible for washing children's clothing.

Pacifiers

Whether to allow pacifiers in childcare is a tricky question. Research shows gastrointestinal problems and yeast infections are more common in children who use pacifiers. Some caregivers believe that if a baby is used to a pacifier, or if a parent recommends letting their baby use one, it is fine to do so, especially given the latest research showing a pacifier may reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS.) Others discourage pacifier use because of the challenges related to ensuring each pacifier is clean, sanitized, and given to the right baby – a definite problem in group care when toddlers try to take pacifiers from their companions.

At OELA, we want to follow the parent's recommendation but we believe pacifiers have a downside and...

- may cause an increase in the risk of ear infections
- may cause a lisp or hinder the speech and language development of children
- may increase the child's dependence on the pacifier when used for comfort and stress relief
- may cause long-term damage to the development of teeth, most notably when used beyond the age of four

Teachers at OELA will only allow pacifiers at rest time, on the child's cot. This is to reduce the spread of germs.

Teachers will substitute techniques for self-soothing, by introducing the use of words to verbalize stress or frustration.

Key Experiences

The educational content of the toddler programs is built around 41 "key experiences" in 10 curriculum content areas. The key experiences are early childhood milestones that guide caregivers as they plan and assess learning experiences and interact with children to support learning. Each key experience

is a guideline that identifies an observable toddler behavior reflecting knowledge and skills in areas such as communication and language, social relations, exploring objects, and movement.

Teaching Practices:

Based on child development theory and experience with infants and toddlers, the curriculum has developed the following propositions that guide our work with very young children:

- Toddlers learn with their whole body and with all their senses.
- Toddlers learn because they want to.
- Toddlers communicate what they know.
- Toddlers learn within the context of trusting relationships.

Child-Staff Ratios

For quality control, OELA closely monitors and records group sizes and teacher-child ratios throughout the day, making adjustments in staff assignments or child placement whenever necessary. OELA attempts to keep at least one teacher on staff without a permanent classroom assignment to be available as a “floater.”

- At no time will OELA exceed required State licensing or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) standards.
- For children intermixed under 24 months, ratios will meet the standard for the age of the youngest child.
- For intermixed children 24 months and up, the ratio will be based on the majority age of the children in the group.

The following chart outlines DCF ratio requirements and the guidelines used at Orlando Early Learning Academy:

Age Group State Ratios Prevailing OELA Ratios

OELA Maximum Group Size

Infants (3 months-12 months) 1 teacher: 4 children

Ones (12 months-24 months) 1 teacher: 6 children

Twos (24months-36 months) 1 teacher: 11 children

Threes (36 months-48) 1 teacher: 15 children

Fours Year Olds – 1 teacher: 20 children

VPK Instructional Hours 1 teacher: 11 children

Class Assignments

Children are placed in classrooms based upon their age and the availability of space. OELA will not enroll children in a classroom above the maximum group size listed above.

Waiting List

Whenever classrooms are full, Orlando Early Learning Academy (OELA) maintains a waiting list for all children seeking a place in the program. Parents may opt to join this list by visiting OELA and

submitting a Wait List Application Form. As vacancies occur, children from the list will be called. Families with children currently enrolled at OELA will receive priority placement whenever possible; however, they must be on the wait list. Children of families who previously had used OELA and left in good standing will receive second priority. Again, to be eligible for priority placement a child must be on OELA's wait list. When an opening occurs, OELA staff will attempt to reach people on the wait list but it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that OELA has current contact information.

Biting

Young children are very egocentric. They want what they want when they want it! Biting can be a common behavior for toddlers and two-year-olds. It sometimes continues into the preschool years. One of the most common reasons for biting is the frustration that children feel when they are unable to use words. Young children have strong feelings and few words. They are prone to express their feelings with actions. It can be quite a shock to find your child has been the victim of biting, or, in fact, has bitten another child. Please understand that biting can and does happen in the best of families and in the best of child care programs.

To help reduce biting, we try to:

1. Model kindness, caring and gentleness so these behaviors may be imitated by the children
2. Redirect a behavior before biting happens.
3. Help children use their words to solve problems and work things out with other children
4. Give children opportunities to participate in stress-relieving activities such as outdoor play, music, and art.

In spite of our preventive efforts, sometimes a bite will happen. When a bite occurs, we attend to the injured child first. The injured child receives a large portion of comfort and kindness. We make it firmly clear to the biter that biting hurts and we do not bite people. In an effort to provide limited "reward" to the biter, the attention remains on providing comfort to the child who has been bitten.

When a child is bitten, teachers write an incident report to both families of the children involved (the child who did the biting and the child who was bitten.) OELA will not disclose the name of the biter for confidentiality reasons. If biting becomes a frequent behavior of a particular child, we will follow the Inappropriate Behaviors flow chart.

Developmental Screenings:

Screenings are to help ensure that any developmental delays can be discovered early and interventions started.

Each child then can enter kindergarten ready to learn.

- The primary purpose of screening is to obtain a broad sampling of a child's skills and behaviors in order to identify any child who should be referred for a more comprehensive evaluation and to assist the teacher in planning more individualized and appropriate learning experiences for this child.

- Teachers are trained to understand child development, screen children using several methods, and to use the results in creating learning activities that will improve the child's skills.
- Teachers also know the best methods of communicating screening results to families so that they understand their child's development and can work with the teachers to improve their child's skills.

The State of Florida has formed Early Learning Coalitions that set screening standards for children to increase their chance of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. School Readiness programs shall provide the elements necessary to achieve this goal, including appropriate educational programs, screenings and referrals as necessary. Orlando Early Learning Academy uses a variety of screening tools to ensure that we understand fully each child's development.

These screens identify student skills in five areas: language & literacy, motor ability, cognitive skills, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning. The teachers use the results of these tools to design lessons and create Individual Development Plans (IDP), with instructional objectives that target deficient skills when needed. Also teachers identify appropriate materials needed for specific skill instruction. The process repeats each year with more advanced skills being assessed, based on the child's age.

We ask sponsors to participate in the screening process by completing the Ages and Stages and Ages and Stages-Social Emotional questionnaires at enrollment and two times per year. The questionnaires will be handed out. Please complete it and return it within 15 days. Sponsors will receive a copy of the scored results from all screening tools during conferences and may be asked to help plan educational activities.

These screenings will allow us to understand where each child is functioning in order to help him/her get ready for kindergarten.

Parent-Teacher Communication:

We value our relationship and communication with parents, as we serve as partners in the care of their children. Children feel more comfortable at OELA when they know their parents and teachers communicate with one another. We encourage you to let us know anything that might help us in our work with your child –a move, developmental or medical needs, the birth of a baby, divorce or separation, death in the family, a new pet, etc. All are examples of information that can be helpful to us. Teachers will share information with you about your child on a regular basis. Although we want you to be aware of certain situations and behaviors your child may be exhibiting at the center, we don't expect you to 'fix' it or to punish your child. We will handle the situations that arise, but want parents to be aware of what we are doing in the classroom.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held two times a year to discuss your child's development and plan together for your child's continued learning at OELA. Parents are required to attend conferences during which time teachers will share completed screenings and other items with the parents. Parents are encouraged to request a conference at any other time they have a concern or wish to share something with the teachers. Daily communication is also encouraged.

Referral Policy:

Orlando Early Learning Academy is committed to giving each child the best and most appropriate care and education that it is capable of giving. We do however recognize that we are not capable of fully meeting the needs of all the children all the time. Whenever a child demonstrates behaviors or our screens reveal potential problems that are beyond our skills to modify, we recognize the need for outside intervention.

The purpose of this policy is to make sure that we treat all children equally and that we do not inadvertently ignore any child's needs. The goal of this policy is to make sure that all children in need of help receive that help.

This policy addresses two types of referrals: developmental delays such as in speech or social behaviors; and inappropriate behaviors that are dangerous, hurtful, aggressive and/or destructive to the child, other children and/or adults. Each policy is presented in the form of a flow chart, showing action, results and consequences.

The procedures that the flowcharts outline in no way negate the authority of the nursery to act swiftly to protect a child's safety.

Too often children with "problems" are kicked out of one childcare center after another. Many centers have a "three strikes and you're out" policy. Others "baby sit" the child without getting the appropriate outside services. OELA refuses to put them back in the revolving door. Instead, we will do our best to help them. This referral policy will help us realize that goal.

Non-aggressive / Non-dangerous Behavior

- Six weeks of teacher observations, BRIGANCE, Ages and Stages,
- Lap-D or other screen shows a need for intervention plan.
- First time only: Write internal IDP and conference with parents.
- No Improvement: Refer for outside services.
- Shows Improvement. Discuss improvement, and update plan. Review periodically. Repeat until no longer needed.

Sponsors accept referral and sign release for OELA to discuss with service provider. Parents provide OELA with a copy of the child's IEP/FSP or other therapy plan. Document progression and meet periodically to discuss. Sponsors refuse outside services: Continue internal strategies and meet periodically to reevaluate.

Problem is solved.

End Plan.

Shows improvement:

Continue as is, meeting as needed to monitor progress until problem is solved.

Shows no improvement.

No improvement and sponsor still refuses outside services. Advise parent to try different referral or specialized childcare.

Continue meeting as needed until problem solved.

Continue meeting as needed until problem solved or Ex. Dir. determine that the child's best interests are not being met at OELA.

Sponsor refuses. OELA will make two other recommendations.

Continued refusal to get help for a child can be a form of neglect, which is reportable to DCF.

If at any time child's behavior becomes dangerous or destructive, go to Behavior Flow Chart. Parent accepts and OELA will make first contact.

Inappropriate Behaviors

If at any time a child's behavior becomes a safety issue, his/her enrollment may be terminated immediately. Other than physical safety issues, to begin this process, the following must occur: teacher records at least three incident reports for same or similar behavior in a limited period of time; Program Director assesses severity of behavior using Devereux Childhood Assessment and/or Early Childhood Intervention and/or other appropriate tools; conference with parents is held, resulting in a Plan of Action. (POA)

Implement POA for 2 weeks; then confer with sponsors.

Problem solved.

End plan.

No substantive improvement.

OELA meet to determine severity of behavior based on observations and assessments.

Behavior improves.

Discuss improvement; reward child; praise sponsors. Continue POA.

Less Severe

Conference with parents; prepare another POA based on latest assessment for parent's agreement.

More Severe

Referral made to outside services/agencies that OELA recommends.

Child gets outside help. Sponsors sign release for OELA and outside service provider to share information and work together. OELA documents behavior. Date is set for next conference with sponsors. OELA makes referral recommendations. Sponsors have two weeks to move child. Behavior improves. Continue with services as long as needed.

Sponsor refuses to get outside services. Sponsors have one week to move child.

Problem is solved.

End Plan.

If there is no improvement by conference date, OELA will conference with sponsors and therapist to determine best course of action. If the Sponsor refuse to follow therapist's or OELA's recommendations, the Sponsors have one week to move child. Child needs specialized childcare setting. Continue with same service with periodic review. Refer to different service/agency.

Toys from Home:

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy. If the parents fail to enforce this policy with their children, the staff will remove the toy from the classroom and bring it to the office. Parents will need to talk with the Executive Director to get the toy returned to them.

Repeated failure to enforce this policy will result in OELA calling the parents and requiring that they come to the center and remove the toy.

Children are permitted to include with their bedding one small plush, non-musical toy with which to nap/rest.

This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

Back Packs and Diaper Bags:

To avoid the risk of items coming into OELA that may pose a danger to our children; book bags, back packs, diaper bags and other containers are not allowed. Each child has a cubby to hold their personal items. A change of clothing, provided by the parent, is to be kept at OELA in the child's cubby.

Dress Code:

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable clothing.

Parents are prohibited from dressing children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting.

Coats, jackets, hats, gloves, scarves and/or sweaters must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter clothing to school. The teachers will help the children put on appropriate clothing before they go outdoors. Daily outdoor play is very important for children and all children in attendance at the center will be taken outdoors for play on a daily basis. The only exceptions are rainy days, summer days when the heat index is over 100 and winter days when the wind chill factor is below 25 degrees. Please plan accordingly so that you child will have the appropriate clothing.

Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children ages 3 through 5 are required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age are required to have two

seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. Several changes are required when starting toilet training. A complete change of clothing includes shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes.

Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change. OELA is not responsible for washing children's clothing. When accidents occur, the teacher will attempt to quickly hand-rinse the item and then place it in a plastic bag for your removal from the center.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes, coats, jackets, hats, gloves, scarves, and sweaters. Orlando Early Learning Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Jewelry/Accessories:

Children should not wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child, may get broken or lost. OELA will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents' responsibility to enforce this policy with their children.

Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. can be worn by children. If for any reasons that the child takes them out of her hair then these accessories are considered to be safety hazards. The child will not be able to wear them again. When choosing accessories for your children be mindful of the potential safety issues they present not only for your child, but also for the older and younger children attending OELA.

OELA is not responsible for damage to or loss of any articles of clothing.

PARENTS CLOTHING:

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at Orlando Early Learning Academy, or involved in any OELA sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing would include, revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and/or see through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Field Trips:

Orlando Early Learning Academy sometimes supplements the in class curriculum with off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher. OELA provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend. Parents will not be permitted to transport any child, including their own, on an OELA sponsored trip.

Please be aware we do not require children to eat particular foods or withhold food as a punishment.

Parent Participation/Volunteers:

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at Orlando Early Learning Academy. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers may post other volunteer opportunities in their classrooms. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office. For these volunteer opportunities, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom will need to fill out the volunteer forms and be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

OELA reserves the right to make Volunteer assignments. OELA does not guarantee the volunteering parents will be assigned to locations where their child(ren) is present.

Food Program:

OELA provides breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks each day. These meet USDA Child Care Food Program (CCFP) standards. Meals are served to ALL children during the day. Whole milk is given to children 1 year old, 1% milk to children 2 years and older, and juice as indicated on the menu.

Menus are posted in advance on the Parent's bulletin boards. Meals are prepared to include all meal components (milk, vegetables and fruits, bread, meat, and any alternatives.) All food items from our planned menus are given to the child at the same time and discarded if left on the plate at the end of the meal period. Breakfast is served from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM. Lunch is from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon and snack time is from 2:00 to 3:00 PM.

Breakfast is over at 9:00 AM. If you arrive with your child after 9:00 AM, your child should have been fed at home.

- In an irregular and unusual situation where your child is arriving after 9:00 AM without eating breakfast, the kitchen may be able to supply you with cereal, milk and a fruit or fruit juice, however, you will be required to feed and supervise your child while s/he is eating in an area apart from the classroom.
- If you bring breakfast or any meal with you to OELA, you will also be required to feed and supervise your child in the dining room before entering the classroom.

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform OELA of any child allergies. OELA does not exclude any food item or food group; in other words OELA does on occasion serve nuts, including peanuts, strawberries and other common allergens. Please ensure that OELA is aware of any food allergies your child may have.

We are required by licensing and the CCFP to provide children enrolled in our program with every meal throughout the day. This means parents may NOT restrict their child's diet while they are at the center based on a child's dislikes or presumed allergies. However, food substitutes based on documented medical, personal, and religious reasons are allowed as explained below.

- Any child requiring a special diet due to medical reasons MUST fill out our form regarding food allergies and intolerances.
- OELA can substitute Soy milk with only the parent' signature on the form. For any other food substitution, the specific foods to be avoided must be listed on this form and it MUST be signed by a medical doctor. OELA will then provide an appropriate substitute for that food.
- Parents who do not want animal products served to their child due to religious reasons must provide documentation signed by a religious authority. OELA will provide a substitute or the family may bring an appropriate food substitute. In these situations, the animal product is the only food component that can be replaced by the parent.
- Failure to follow the guidelines above will result in your child being served all of our food components.

Parents must talk with the Office Staff and provide information in writing before any food substitute will be served. OELA will provide substitutes in most cases. All food substitutes provided by parents are subject to approval and must be similar to the food it is replacing -- substituting a protein for meat. Additionally, food substitutes provided by the parent must be brought in already prepared, ready to eat, and labeled with the child's name and date. We can refrigerate food and heat it in a microwave but cannot prepare anything beyond that. Please remember it is your responsibility as a parent to comply with these procedures if your child is to be served food other than what is on our menu. Remember, if you forget to bring a substitute food item, your child will be served our food.

Special Occasions

Children and parents should not bring food, gum, candy, drinks or cakes to OELA. Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays and OELA encourages "family" rituals for the celebration of special events. OELA will provide a birthday celebration with a special treat one time per month for all children who have a birthday during that month. You are also welcome to join your child during this celebration. If you do plan to send something special to the center please remember, no food. Other options include cards, stickers or hats. No small toys that may present a choking hazard. Also any balloons must be the Mylar types (shinny, not stretchable rubber). Please ask a teacher, in advance, for the number of children who will be in attendance.

If you wish to have a birthday party for your child, plan to do this somewhere separate from the child care center. If you intend to invite children from the center, we cannot provide you with names but will be happy to tell you the number of children in the class and distribute the cards to each child's parent. You may also distribute birthday invitations through the children's cubbies.

Discipline Policy:

Discipline at Orlando Early Learning Academy is intended to guide and teach children, to help them develop self-control and learn to manage their emotions. The emphasis is on teaching self-discipline to children in a realistic way, without demanding what children are not yet able to do. Appropriate expectations are well matched to children's interests and abilities.

Classroom expectations are explicitly taught. Children do not enter OELA knowing what we expect or how to behave. Keeping activities short, fun, active and age appropriate helps children learn the routine and be able to comply with our expectations.

The Department of Children and Families states that discipline may never be punitive, severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking, yelling, grabbing or any form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Non-punitive discipline methods used at OELA include:

- Giving Attention for good behavior: Children desire positive personal attention from adults.
- Redirection: Children can often be redirected or distracted by a teacher. When a child is observed not behaving appropriately, a teacher will suggest another activity or provide another toy for the child. This helps children learn what to do.
- Using Conflict Resolution: Young children, by their nature are self-centered. They have not yet developed the skills to solve conflicts with words. They frequently react physically to social situations. Teachers help children learn conflict resolution skills by using the six steps below.
 1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
 2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
 3. Gather information. (Ask "What happened?" and give all children involved a chance to speak.)
 4. Restate the problem.
 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.
 6. Be prepared to give follow up support.

OELA teachers work to build a class family, developing relationships with each child and keeping expectations realistic.

The following discipline techniques will be prohibited at OELA:

1. The use of corporal punishment/including, but not limited to:
 - a) Hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, squeezing, or biting;
 - b) Demanding excessive physical exercise, excessive rest, or strenuous or bizarre postures;
 - c) Compelling a child to eat or have in his/her mouth soap, food, spices, or foreign substances;
 - d) Exposing a child to extreme temperature;
 - e) Rough or harsh handling of children, including but not limited to: lifting or jerking by one or both arms; pushing; forcing or restricting movement; lifting or moving by grasping clothing; covering a child's head.
2. Isolating a child in an adjacent room, hallway, closet, darkened area, play area, or any other area where the child cannot be seen or supervised.
3. Binding, tying or restrict movement, or taping the mouth;
4. Using or withholding food or beverages as a punishment;
5. Toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliates a child;
6. Any form of emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, isolating, or corrupting a child;
7. Any abuse or maltreatment or a child;
8. Abusive, profane, or sarcastic languages or verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks in front of the child or about the child or child's family;
9. Placing a child in a crib/portable crib for a time-out or for disciplinary reasons.

Expulsion Policy:

Expulsion will be recommended if it becomes apparent that OELA will not be able to meet the needs of a child, or that child behavior is preventing classroom instruction. Expulsion may also be recommended for severe breach of conduct, or unresolved disciplinary probation. When expulsion is recommended, a date of withdrawal from the childcare facility will be set. Expulsion will require the approval of the Owner/Director. In the event of expulsion, the remainder of the tuition will not be refunded.

Drinking Water:

Clean, sanitary drinking water is readily accessible in indoor and outdoor areas, throughout the day.

Yearly Evaluation:

Once a year you will have the opportunity to formally evaluate Orlando Early Learning Academy. However, if you have a concern or a compliment, you do not need to wait until the evaluation. Please feel free to state a concern or complement at any time.

Grievance Procedure:

Although the Center makes every attempt to offer the highest quality care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations, or staff.

- In this event, parents are encouraged to talk to their child's direct caregiver or teacher as a first point of contact.
- If this has been tried without satisfactory results, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the Office and submit their concerns to the Executive or Program Director.
- The Office will then schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action.
- Parents will be informed, as appropriate within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of OELA's inquiry and action taken.
- If your concerns are still not being met, you may write a letter to the Orlando Early Learning Academy Owner and mail it to 6261 Old Winter Garden Rd, Orlando, Florida 32835.

Again, our goal is quality early childhood education and care. We encourage parents to bring their concerns to us so we can work together to ensure excellence in our service.

Thank you choosing Orlando Early Learning Academy as your child care provider.

Orlando Early Learning Academy

I/We _____ the parent(s)/legal guardian(s)
of _____, acknowledge the following:

1. I/We can access a copy of Orlando Early Learning Academy's Parent Handbook online and have been given an overview copy and have been given the opportunity to read the Handbook and ask questions about and understands the policies contained therein.
2. I/We have received a copy of the childcare facility's written Disciplinary and Expulsion Policies.
3. That I/We have received a copy of the childcare facility's Food and Nutrition Policies that includes language on food safety and food allergens.
4. That I/We received a copy of the brochure, CF/PI 175-70, Influenza Virus, Guide to Parents, which is incorporated by reference 65C-22.001(8)(n). F.A.C. during the month of August and September.
5. I/We give consent for the childcare personnel to have access to my child's records.
6. I/We acknowledge and understand that my/our child may be dismissed from OELA if I/we do not abide by the policies set forth in the manual.
7. I/We understand and agree to abide by the policies described in the Parent Handbook. I/We understand that the language does not create a contract between Orlando Early Learning Academy and the parents. Orlando Early Learning Academy reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.
8. I/We acknowledge that this Parent Handbook is the property of Orlando Early Learning Academy, and may not be copied, distributed, sold or altered.

Signature

Date