

Parent Handbook



*A great place for your child to grow,
learn and succeed!*

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Dear Family,

Thank you for choosing ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Center for your family. As a mother of two children, I truly understand the worry when seeking a child care program. My desire to ensure that my children were attending a safe, high quality program filled with loving teachers and caregivers led to the opening of ABC Academy. I truly understand the importance of trusting a provider to care for your child. As parents, we want to ensure that our child is safe and nurtured. This is absolutely the peace of mind you will receive with your son or daughter enrolled in our program. At ABC Academy, your child will be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment of learning that enables children to grow through fun, intentional, and developmentally-appropriate activities. I am proud of the remarkable and dedicated teachers that work for our company, as many of them have been a part of our family for years. I understand you, the parents, count on our center to have teachers who are loyal, educated, and caring, and I assure you that's just what we have.

Our program is designed with families in mind. We seek to form a partnership with you that promotes the learning and healthy development of your child. You are welcome in the center at any time during the day to join your child for lunch, to observe your child in the classroom, or to meet with the teachers, center directors, or other families.

Enrolling in a new center is a big change for your child — and for you. We recognize that adjustment periods will vary depending on the age of your child and prior experiences in a classroom setting. Our teachers and center administrators are very experienced in welcoming new families and will work with you to make the process as seamless as possible. The following are some suggestions for easing the transition for you and your child:

- Visit the center with your child before his or her first day. On one of those visits, let your child explore his or her new classroom while you step out for 15 to 20 minutes. This time will allow your child to associate your departure with a return, and it will allow you to observe your child at play with other children.
- Establish a routine of reading a story or playing a game together in the classroom before you leave. The routine will tell your child that you feel the classroom is a good place to be, not a place from which you want to hurry away.
- Bring a family photograph for your child to look at during the day.
- Say goodbye to your child rather than slipping out. Your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will be back.

As we build our partnership together, please feel free to share new ideas and suggestions. We value the need for close communication between families and teachers. We look forward to getting to know you and to offering you and your child a safe, caring, and joyful educational environment.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hoszkiw
Owner



Table of Contents

About Us	2	Medical Records	18
Mission Statement	2	Child Illness.....	19
Our Philosophy	3	Infection Control	19
Our Goals.....	3	Allergy Prevention	20
Our Guarantee.....	3	Diapering	20
Our Centers	4	Toilet Learning.....	21
Our Staff	4	Injury Prevention.....	21
Our Programs	5	Biting.....	22
Our Curriculum.....	7	Children Injuries	23
Classroom Routine	8	Infant Sleep Positions and Crib Furnishings	24
School Calendar.....	8	Reporting Abuse and Neglect.....	24
Family Involvement	9	Policies and Procedures	25
Family-Teacher Partnerships.....	10	Registration Procedure – Tuition Base Program.....	26
A Community of Caring	10	Registration Procedure – Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP).....	26
Primary Caregiving	11	Enrollment Procedure	26
Family Communication.....	11	Enrollment Forms – Both Tuition Base & GSRP.....	27
Letters from Home	12	Enrollment Contracts	27
ASQ and COR Family Report.....	12	Hours & Days of Operation	27
Parent Teacher Conferences	12	Great Start Readiness Program Schedule	28
Grievance Policy	13	Public School Vacations, Report Days	28
Family Referral Program	13	Emergency Closings.....	28
Program Standards	14	General Attendance Policies	29
Transitions.....	14	Attendance – Great Start Readiness Program.....	29
Program Quality Standards	15	Tuition Investment/Fees	30
Positive Guidance	15		
Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children’s Aggressive Behavior	16		
We Care: Health and Safety.....	18		
Health and Safety Practices.....	18		

Payment Schedule	30	Breastfeeding	40
Tuition Subsidies	30	Meals and Snacks	41
Schedule Changes.....	31	Rest.....	41
Drop-Off and Pick-Up	31	Clothing Suggestions/Items Needed	41
Withdrawal Procedure	31	Photographs, Publicity & Video	
Child Custody.....	32	Surveillance	43
Transportation To/From the Center	32	Book Orders.....	43
Late Pick-Up.....	32	Special Celebrations	44
Emergency and Back-Up Care	32	Field Trips	44
Program Placement.....	32	Television and Electronics	44
Non-Discrimination/Confidentiality	33	Center Safety.....	44
Children’s Records.....	33	Parking Lot Safety.....	44
Regulatory Agencies.....	33	Anti-Bullying Policy.....	45
Program Measurement	34	Tornado	45
Classroom Observation	34	Fire.....	45
Research Conducted in the Center .	34	Smoking	45
Unrelated Activities.....	35	Integrated Pest Management	
Babysitting by Center Staff.....	35	Program	45
Child Illness Policy	35	Process of Suspending a Child’s	
Illness Chart	37	Enrollment (Tuition Base).....	46
Medication Policies	38	Process of Disenrolling a Family	
Infant Feeding: Bottles and Food	40	(Tuition Base Program).....	46
		Family Behavior	47

1

About Us

Excellent education and care replicates many of the aspects of a good and loving home, where caring adults nurture children and help them to learn and grow.



Our role is to supplement, but not take the place of, the primary role of families in providing care for their children. By establishing and maintaining open and ongoing communication with families, we are able to strengthen the ties that connect the home with our center and enhance the individual development of the children in our care. When families entrust their children to us, we are challenged to have a significant and positive influence by providing a program of the highest quality designed to help give children the foundation they need to build self-esteem, develop school readiness, and reach their full potential in learning.

Mission Statement

The mission of ABC Academy is to be a leader in child education, inspiring lifelong learning by providing a quality program that benefits the child, the parent, the staff, and the community.

Our Philosophy

ABC Academy strives to provide a quality Early Childhood Education Program filled with carefully chosen staff members, filled with love and compassion for children. We believe that children are our most important resource and that their early childhood experiences are crucial in the development of their future. Each staff member strives to offer an environment that is high in quality and stimulates the child's senses and where warmth and friendship are abundant, to meet the needs of the total development of your child. The program we pursue is geared toward helping your child develop habits of observation, questioning and listening while building a positive self-esteem. Our staff members are partners with our parents working together to meet both the needs of the children and their families.

Our Goals

ABC Academy strives to provide an educational program to every child enrolled while offering a network of support to each family as a whole.

Our teachers work in partnership with each family to identify individual goals and plans for the children. The curriculum we implement provides a comprehensive program for children of all ages, including our youngest infants and toddlers. Teachers and parents of children 2 ½ weeks through 3 years, work toward development in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, and personal-social.

As children 3, 4, and 5 years-old transition into our preschool program, their goals focus on developing approaches to learning, social and emotional development, physical development and health, language, literacy, and communication, mathematics, creative arts, science and technology, and social studies. Progress occurs when adults scaffold the children's learning. Teachers support children at their current skill levels as well as provide opportunities for them to advance toward the next level of development.

Program success requires a strong partnership with each family. Teachers, administrators, and parents work together to utilize a variety of resources within the program as well as the community, to ensure that all members of the family receive the support they need and/or desire.

Our Guarantee

We believe you and your child will love ABC Academy so much that we're willing to take the risk through our ABC Guarantee. After you enroll, if you become dissatisfied with our service for any reason, we will refund up to one month's tuition, no questions asked.



Our Centers

ABC Academy, Inc. provides licensed child care and preschool for children 2 ½ weeks to 12 years of age. Programs are operated at six Jackson area locations, 800 Laurence Ave., 3210 Lansing Ave., 2111 Emmons Rd. on Jackson College Campus. Concord Elementary School, Hunt Elementary School, and Dibble Elementary School. Each center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and participates in the Quality Rating System. ABC Academy, Inc. was established in 1984 and is family owned and operated.

Our Staff

Meet our Administrative Team:

Center Directors



Lori Jonas
Lansing Ave.



Mel Cass
Laurence Ave.



Becca Huffman
Laurence Ave.



Natalie Guy-Hazard
Jackson College Campus



Cody Blair
Concord Elementary



Kim Kloack
Hunt Elementary



Tammy Cushard
Dibble Elementary

Executive Team



Jolene Crawford
Executive Director
Curriculum Coach



Mariann Gladstone
Executive Director
Curriculum Coach



Andrea McCabe
Quality Improvement
Specialist

The ABC Academy teaching team consists of educated and experienced early learning and care professionals. Lead Teachers possess degrees in the fields of education and child development, and teacher assistants and aides have completed college level training

as well. Each staff member strives to create a warm and loving environment filled with experiences that will foster intrinsic motivation for children to enjoy school and learn.

We are dedicated to providing continued growth and educational opportunities for our team members. In addition to employing two on-site trainers, providing ongoing coaching for our teaching team, in-service training and professional development is continually provided by ABC Academy to all teaching staff in the areas of early childhood education, child development, American Sign Language, S.T.E.M (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and the HighScope philosophy and strategies.

All staff members maintain certification in first aid along with infant/child and adult CPR. Annual training in the areas of infant safe sleep, prevention of shaken baby syndrome, medication administration, child abuse and neglect mandated reporting, and blood borne pathogens and universal precautions is provided as well as continuous reviews of all of our health and safety policies.

ABC Academy employees are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children, the Jackson Association for the Education of Young Children, the Jackson Area Great Start Collaborative, and the HighScope Membership Association. Each organization offers a variety of informational articles in early childhood development along with a variety of in-service training programs and workshops for our staff.

Our Programs

Infant Programs: The first year of life is a critical time for brain development as well as social and emotional development. Our infant program teachers have specialized training to ensure that they are not only providing excellent child care but are also beginning the learning process that will allow each baby to begin to observe his/her surroundings, to retain information he/she gains from his/her experiences, and to form attachments with others. The teachers plan activities for each individual child based on the continuous assessment process that is in place. They also work in partnership with each infant's family to set goals for him/her and to continuously evaluate progress toward these goals.



Infant classrooms are staffed to ensure a ratio of 4 children to 1 adult. At the time of enrollment, each infant is assigned to a primary caregiver. Primary caregiving provides continuity of care and allows each baby to develop a secure relationship with someone special in the program. Each infant is on his/her own feeding and sleeping schedule depending on his/her own demands, and each infant develops differently. Primary caregivers are responsible for managing the blend of the basic caregiving needs with the educational needs of each individual child. They work diligently to provide a well-rounded experience for each family in the infant program.

Children may be enrolled in our infant classrooms as young as 2 ½ weeks old and typically begin the transition to the toddler program approximately 15-18 months old. The decision to make this transition is made cooperatively between each child's parents and teachers and is based upon each individual child's skills and needs.

Toddler Programs: The toddler age group is a diverse one, and each child is different. We recognize and encourage these differences, and our toddler teaching team's practice

a variety of strategies that allow for each child to begin defining his/her own sense of independence while dependent on the adults caring for and teaching him/her. We maintain a 4 child to 1 adult ratio in our younger toddler classrooms and an 8 child to 1 adult ratio in our older toddler classrooms. Each toddler is assigned an individual teaching team member as his/her primary caregiver.

Our toddler classrooms follow a daily routine that is consistent yet flexible. The children quickly learn to anticipate what will come next in their day and begin to demonstrate initiative. A typical day includes Greeting Time, Choice Time, Group Time, and Outside Time. The teaching teams plan their lessons daily to ensure that they are supporting the children's current interests and developmental progress. Observation and assessment provide key insight into the needs of the individual children and serve as a foundation for goal setting and lesson planning. Toilet training is also incorporated into the daily routine for the older toddlers who demonstrate interest and developmental readiness. Teachers and parents work in partnership to develop a toilet training plan for their child that is consistent between home and school. Our toddler program provides a solid stepping stone into our preschool.

Toddlers typically begin their transition to preschool between 33 and 36 months old. At that time the child has many opportunities to visit his/her new classroom for short periods of time to become acclimated with the larger class size and the preschool routine. Once the child is feeling comfortable in his/her new setting, the teachers and parents agree upon a date for the child to move into the preschool program.

Preschool Programs: Preschool is the beginning of a very exciting time in the life of a young child. Our days are filled with a variety of learning opportunities that become the building blocks for each child's preparation for kindergarten. We focus on developing social skills and developing a desire for learning in each child. While it feels like "we play all day", we are very strategic in our planning to ensure that our expectations are appropriate for the current group of children we are working with. Through play the children learn problem solving skills, develop initiative, and practice math, science, reading, and writing throughout every part of the day. Our individualized assessment and planning strategies provide a comprehensive preschool program that blends into our pre-kindergarten program with a smooth transition.



Our preschool classrooms follow a ratio of 10 children per 1 adult, and each student is assigned to a small group teacher who is responsible for the planning and assessment of that child.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs & Great Start Readiness Programs: Our pre-kindergarten program serves children who will be entering kindergarten the following fall and are 4 years of age. We maintain a ratio of no more than 12 children per adult, and the goals set for these children are based upon the *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten* defined by the Michigan State Board of Education.

In addition to our tuition-based prekindergarten program, we also offer the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) at each of our locations. GSRP is a state-funded preschool for 4 year olds who qualify. This program operates from late September thru early June each school year and classes meet Monday thru Thursday on a "school-day" schedule at no cost or minimal cost to the families. Our GSRP classrooms follow a ratio of 8 children per 1 adult, and each student is assigned to a small group teacher who is responsible for planning and assessment for each child in his/her group. An additional Preschool

Questionnaire and enrollment meeting are required to determine eligibility for this program.

The pre-kindergarten curriculum we implement provides for individualized instruction and assessment and focuses not only on academics, but also problem solving and social skills. We enjoy special events, parties, and field trips throughout the school year and conclude with a graduation ceremony. Pre-kindergarten is a year of tremendous growth and development as the four-year olds turn five and become kindergarteners. The children transition from our program prepared for success in their school years to come.

School-Age Programs: We offer two programs for school-age children, 5 to 12 years old. Our latch-key program offers care before and after school as well as on days school is not in session including, holiday breaks, snow days, early release days and ½ days. Time for relaxing with friends and planned activities are both provided for the students.

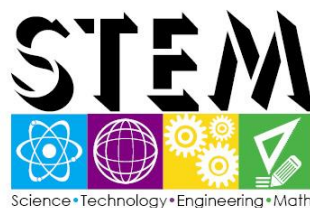
During summer vacation, our day camp is filled with activities. Highlights include field trips, swimming, talent shows, art, sports, and the end of the summer “camp-out”. Our teachers also incorporate math, science, social studies, and language arts into their plans so that the students’ learning continues throughout the summer...usually without them even realizing it. Community service projects and mentoring for our preschool children are additional opportunities we provide to the school-age students. A maximum of 18 children with 1 teacher is scheduled for each school-age group.



Our Curriculum

We use the HighScope curriculum at ABC Academy. We know that children construct their understanding of the world from their active involvement with people, materials, and ideas. Children gain knowledge and develop by exploring the world around them. Allowing them to explore, make choices, manipulate objects, transform items, and experiment is what ABC Academy’s curriculum is all about.

Our teaching staff are also trained in American Sign Language (ASL) and the GetSmart S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Curriculum. The teaching teams incorporate components of each of these programs throughout activities planned for your child each day.



Classroom Routine

Following a consistent daily routine each day helps to build the children's sense of security and independence to make choices and takes risks, leading to exciting learning opportunities. Each classroom decides on the daily routine that works best for its settings, schedule, and children enrolled in the classroom. The following are components that are always include in the routine. The length and order or the segments may vary for each classroom.

- A **Plan Do Review Time** allows children to plan what they would like to do during their free choice time. They have the opportunity to do it, and then return back to their small groups to talk about their experiences that they had during their free choice time
- A **Large Group Time** each day with children and their teachers. This is a time for group sharing, singing, finger plays, group games, stories, etc.
- A **Small Group Time** with children and the teachers. Small Group Time provides children with opportunities to use materials, experiment with these materials, talk about their discoveries, and solve problems that they encounter. Small Group Time builds on the strengths of the children, introduces children to materials and experiences that they might otherwise miss, and provides adults with an intimate setting that they can observe and learn about individual children on a daily basis.
- **Outside Time** – Large motor activities are planned inside and OUTSIDE everyday (unless the wind chill or temperature is below zero degrees for our preschool and school-age groups and below 20 degrees for the toddler groups or above 100 degrees F in the summer months.)
- **Transition Times** – Transitions are the minutes between other blocks of the day, as well as arrival and departure times. Teachers plan meaningful learning experiences for these times, which keeps children engaged.
- **Eating and Resting Times** – Meals and snacks allow children to enjoy eating healthy food in a supportive social setting. Rest if for napping or quiet, solitary activities.

The activities scheduled throughout the day that balance quiet and active play along with opportunities for self-expression in both art and dramatic plan.

School Calendar

A school calendar is provided with your enrollment packet. It will provide you with the schedule of center events and dates that the program is open. A monthly calendar is also provided with the center monthly newsletter providing further specific information about activities, events, conferences, and center closings.

2

Family Involvement

The center partners with you, the family, to ensure your child's success in school and in life.

Family involvement, family satisfaction, and shared decision making about your child's experience are essential to the ABC Academy program. We believe the center forms a caring and learning community in which families, staff, and children can interact and grow. We actively work to support family life and create ways to involve families in our program. Family involvement is an all-purpose term that encompasses family partnership groups and committees, volunteering, family education, and special events. We believe the key to family involvement is giving families a variety of ways to be involved, if they are able, in the life of the center.



Family-Teacher Partnerships

The family-teacher partnership at ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Centers helps children build a positive attitude toward themselves, toward language, literacy, and all other areas of the curriculum. Together, we can provide a stronger program for your child to foster a lifelong love of learning. The best teacher and family partnerships are based on frequent opportunities to share information. You can strengthen your family's role as your child's first and most important teacher and share in learning by participating in activities at home as well as at the center.

The following are some of the many ways you can be involved:

- The center's open-door policy welcomes and encourages you to call or visit at any time.
- Family resources are available so that you can find books, articles, and other helpful materials on parenting, child development, health and nutrition, and general work/life and family topics.
- You and your child can grow with us by visiting our blog postings on ABC Academy's website: www.abccademyjackson.com/blog; a resource area for families filled with information about early literacy, science, and getting your child "Ready for School."
- A Family Partnership Group provides a forum to discuss center-wide activities and promote collaboration.
- Parenting workshops, curriculum nights, special events, family breakfasts, and potluck dinners may be held throughout the year.
- Twice per year surveys allow you to rate and comment on all aspects of the program.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly formal and informal communication takes place through vehicles such as morning and afternoon greetings, Tadpoles Electronic Communication System, classroom bulletin boards, center calendars, posted lesson plans, newsletters, documentation of your child's learning, and conferences.
- We encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with center management and staff at any time.
- You are invited to come into your child's classroom and may choose to share a special activity or project.
- You are welcome to join your child for lunch or participate in any part of their day any time you wish.

A Community of Caring

Each ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Center becomes a community of caring, with policies and practices that reflect the community ideas and values of the families served, while respecting the diversity of families and individual differences. ABC Academy provides a strong vision of quality, appropriate educational practice, and the fundamental

characteristics of the community. The partnership between families and centers consists of the continual exchange of communication. In this process, families learn a lot about child development and curriculum, and the center learns what parents/guardians feel is important for their children to grow up to be the kind of people they expect them to be. We encourage dialogues with parents/guardians about curriculum, caregiving practices, guidance, cultural events, and celebrations of holidays. The goal of full family partnerships is to build a community and recognize and respect the differences of families and children.

Primary Caregiving

At ABC Academy we believe in the practice of primary caregiving. Each child at ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Center is assigned a teacher as the primary caregiver who assumes special responsibility for that child and for communication with his or her parents/guardians, especially during conferences. Primary caregiving strengthens the link between families, children, and teachers. By assigning a primary caregiver to your child, we are encouraging you to establish a relationship with a particular staff member who will be especially focused on your child's needs and development as well as your concerns. At the same time, education is a team responsibility; all teachers on your child's team will interact with and provide learning experiences for every child in the classroom.

Family Communication

We are committed to creating a strong home and center connection by developing a process of open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and experience at the center. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and the center staff and management.

Tadpoles Electronic Communication: It is important that everyone who cares for your child has a sense of his or her daily experience, both at home and in the center. Staggered scheduling of staff makes the Tadpoles Electronic Communication System a critical communication link. The emails will give you a sense of your child's day and keep you informed about his or her experiences and may also include a picture of your child in action. Parents may also send messages to your child's teacher before arriving at the center to share information about your child's morning to help with drop off time, making it easier for you to head off to work.

Postings: Bulletin boards are located throughout the center (in the foyer, hallways, and classroom entrances) to communicate news, daily events, staff notes, holiday closing dates, center visitors, etc.

Lockers: When center management or teachers have information to share with all families, this information could be left in your child's locker for you, e-mailed to you via the center or classroom distribution list, or left on the check-in/out station screen. Check with your center to find out where your mailbox is and please make sure to check it daily.

Partnership Groups: Family Partnership Groups provide an opportunity for you to be part of a forum in your center to discuss center-wide activities, family education, center updates, and much more. Ask center management for more information about the Family Partnership Group and other ways you can become involved.

Letters from Home

Everyone loves to receive letters in the mail. ABC Academy has our own in-house mail delivery system that allows parents to write a letter to their child by writing a note and dropping it off in the blue mailbox designated for children's letters near the office area. Mail is "delivered" to the children on Wednesday's and Thursday's of each week.

ASQ and COR Family Report

We begin documenting your child's developmental journey at the initial enrollment. Parents are asked to complete an Ages and Stages (ASQ) Questionnaire at the time of registration. This form will provide your child's teacher with insight into your child's current skill level. Documentation of your child's developmental journey continues through daily communication, observations, recording learning experiences, and assessing your child's development.

Child Observation Record (COR) is the tool used by teachers to create a portfolio of your child, which includes a collection of observations, and documentation of experiences and accomplishments in all developmental areas.

Individualized Learning

Individualized Learning consists of:

- Documenting your child's learning experiences.
- Planning based on your child's individual needs, interests, and skills.
- Tracking your child's developmental progress in all learning areas through the online assessment tool, Child Observation Record (COR).
- Communicating your child's learning experiences on an ongoing basis.



Parent Teacher Conferences

ABC Academy hosts a Curriculum Night in the fall and conducts parent conferences several times each year. During the conference you will review a portfolio of your child's development along with a written assessment from your child's teacher. This is also an opportunity to speak with the teacher about any concerns that you may have. Interim conferences are always available at the parent's request. If screening results reflect an area of development that additional support would benefit your child's development, the teachers and director will provide a list of the resources available and assistance with referral process. Transition conferences are held during the preparations for your child to move to each new classroom and provide the opportunity for you to talk with your child's new teacher.

Grievance Policy

In any community, and in the routine and regular process of daily living, there are inevitable situations or conflicts that are potentially negative for individuals or for the community. It is critical that long before conflict arises, an environment already exists that fosters mutual respect, tolerance, and clear, honest communication. The emotional health of a center is determined not by the absence of conflict, but by its quick and intelligent resolution. ABC Academy is committed to responding to all family grievances within a 24-hour period and to resolving those grievances as quickly as possible. Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed within the center. If a specific classroom concern arises, you should discuss the issue with the appropriate teacher. We encourage you to discuss more general center concerns with center management, who will involve staff members as needed. If you feel that your problem is not yet resolved, you may then wish to speak with the owner, Kathy Hoszkiw, 517 784-9161, kathy@abccademyjackson.com to pursue the matter further.

Family Referral Program

Satisfied ABC Academy families are always our best ambassadors. We are thankful when a family who is satisfied with their child's experience tells another family. To reward families for their consideration, we have designed the ABC Academy Family Referral Program. Through the Family Referral Program, you are eligible to earn unlimited tuition credits. When an enrolled family refers a new family to ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Center, and the new family enrolls, the referring family receives a tuition credit after the new family has been enrolled for 30 days. To learn more, please see your center management for details and availability.

3

Program Standards

We recognize how important new beginnings are to each child and to each child's family.

Transitions

At ABC Academy, we recognize how important new beginnings are in each child's development and to each child's family. We call these new beginnings transitions. We take great effort to make transitions as special and as smooth as possible for children and their families. This is done by slowly integrating children into a new program and by customizing care and communication throughout the transition period.

Initial Transition from Home to Center: The first transition families experience is from the home to the center. We realize that this can often be a difficult period for families as everyone adjusts to new routines and new people. During the transition from home to center, you will receive general information on the program and a daily schedule, meet with your child's teachers, tour the classroom, and meet the other children in the classroom. You are encouraged to discuss the communication methods that work best for you with your child's teachers. Please mention any adjustment problems you anticipate, and, together, we will work to foster the best possible transition. We also recommend that you visit the center several times prior to your child's first day, if possible. By gradually increasing the amount of time your child spends at the center and by leaving your child at the center for longer periods of time, your child will adjust to this new situation.

Transitioning to a New Classroom: As children grow and develop, they need new challenges and social interactions with other children in their peer group. Children will make a transition to the next program based on their age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. There is no set formula. This allows for greater flexibility so that each classroom can change to fit the developmental characteristics of the children enrolled. During the transition from one program to another, current and future teachers meet with you, and your child is then gently integrated into the new environment through a series of visits to the new classroom. We encourage you to visit the new classroom as often as you can so that you too can become accustomed to the environment and bond with your child's new primary caregiver. Special attention is given to your family to support you through these changes. You are encouraged to discuss communication methods that work best for you in order to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout your child's transition.

Taking the Next Big Step: Transitioning to elementary school ABC Academy assists families in the transition from the center to elementary school. Teachers will provide you with information on local schools, help you with ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school, and provide information on what to expect. Transition activities are integrated into the preschool and pre-kindergarten curricula. Children may take a field trip to a local school. Parent meetings on "READY for SCHOOL" will be hosted and kindergarten teachers will be invited to participate and share what you can expect as your child transitions to elementary school. You may also ask your center management for information on advocating for your children as they enter and transition to elementary school.

Program Quality Standards

We believe that quality is a goal to work toward every day. That is why we have made ongoing self-assessment an integral part of our programs. In addition, our centers participate in a voluntary accreditation process through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the state quality rating and improvement system, QRIS. NAEYC has developed standards to define and recognize quality early education programs. To become accredited, a program must go through a rigorous process of self-study involving children, families, and staff. A variety of strict criteria related to providing a developmentally appropriate program must be met. These criteria include having a well-qualified and trained staff, good staff-child ratios and group sizes, and a comprehensive curriculum, as well as meeting stringent health and safety standards. In addition, the program must provide meaningful opportunities for family involvement. At ABC Academy, our centers strive to meet NAEYC accreditation standards and the state quality standards.

Positive Guidance

ABC Academy consistently emphasizes basic respect for the individual child. Young children are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting, and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, and appropriate assertiveness. Children learn self-control and how the world works in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the child's struggle toward independence. Children are accepted as they are — development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways. When children are verbally, emotionally, or physically abusive, we take the following steps until the problem is solved.



Six Steps of Conflict Resolution

1. The teacher will approach calmly, stopping any hurtful action.
2. The teacher will acknowledge the children's feelings.
3. The teacher will gather information.
4. The teacher will restate the problem as described by the children.
5. The teacher will ask for ideas for solutions to the problem and they will choose one together.
6. The teacher will be prepared to give follow-up support.

In our approach:

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the child, and they are clarified for children so they understand what is expected of them.
- A “yes” environment is created, which enhances and encourages children’s positive behavior.
- Teachers model appropriate behavior.
- Teachers encourage children’s efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- Children are given alternatives, which enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving are encouraged.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval.
- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a child is a “bad” girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Using bribes, false threats, or false choices.
- Withholding of food or drink, outdoor time, or unrelated activities (e.g., special events) as punishments.
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children’s Aggressive Behavior

In social settings where young children are just beginning to explore and experiment with ways of interacting effectively with their peers, it is not unusual for incidences of aggression to occur. At certain stages in early childhood development, children’s desire to communicate their feelings and the need to assert themselves as individuals may often be expressed in non-constructive ways. Children at this stage in their development may sometimes express themselves by hitting another child, grabbing toys, or even biting. As an organization committed to the education and development of young children, ABC Academy understands the developmental context in which these behaviors may occur, and we provide an environment where children can develop and grow as individuals as they learn more constructive ways of interacting with their peers. When incidences of aggression do occur, parents/guardians of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (e.g., the time and the place, preceding and subsequent events, the specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt and, more generally, to handle the situation). Plans are developed to teach more

appropriate interactions and to prevent the recurrence of the aggressive behavior, and are shared with parents/guardians. However, the identity of the child who engaged in aggressive behavior is not disclosed.

Our policies are designed to promote respect for every child and family we serve. Each child's record is confidential. Consequently, we will not reveal the identity of a child who has engaged in an aggressive act against another, even at the request of the parent/guardian whose child has been the target of that aggressive incident. Knowledge of the aggressor's identity is not necessary to parents'/guardians' understanding of an incident of aggression, or of the actions taken by the center staff to ensure the well-being of their own child. In fact, such knowledge may serve only to stigmatize the other child unnecessarily (and inappropriately, given the developmental context of such behaviors). It may even add to the stress of this child's parents/guardians, who already find themselves in the midst of a difficult situation. The interfamily conflicts that could also result add nothing constructive to the situation and may hinder its speedy and natural resolution. Therefore, it is in the best interests of all involved parties to maintain a policy of confidentiality in such cases. This policy is consistent with standards for excellence in early childhood education, and it is one practiced consistently by other high-quality child care organizations. If, in our judgment, any child's behavior places the well-being of others at risk of injury, we will act quickly and decisively to resolve the situation (e.g., through closer supervision, redirection to more appropriate activities, removal from tense situations, firm and consistent limit-setting, and/or provision of alternative outlets for the expression of feelings). If the aggressive behavior continues after exhausting our resources, we may conclude it is in the best interest of the program to suspend a child's enrollment from our tuition base program until appropriate outside resources are identified and implemented to both support the child in our program and to reduce the opportunity for injury to others. Through the additional support systems available to families enrolled in the Great Start Readiness Program enrollment in the program will be maintained to allow continued collective support to meet the needs of each individual child in the program. Children are not excluded or expelled from ABC Academy because of the need for additional developmental, medical support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions. Our commitment is to provide a quality group-learning environment for every child.

4

We Care: Health and Safety

We Care: ABC Academy's Program for Health and Safety is an umbrella for our policies and practices that nurture children and keep them healthy and safe.

Health and Safety Practices

ABC Academy maintains stringent health and safety practices. Our health and safety policies and practices are based on the Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education; Third Edition, a joint collaborative project of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

Staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including an ABC Academy background check and state-required background check. Staff members who are certified in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogens (infection control) are present in the center at all times. Comprehensive health and safety checklists are completed and routine fire and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis. In addition, each center has an individual emergency response plan in place which has been developed under that guidance of the Secured Educational Security agency. If an emergency requires the center to evacuate and leave the premises, families can call an emergency hotline number to receive information about the safety and location of their children.

Families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day; however, this "open door" policy may not be used to supplement a custody or visitation schedule. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on the center grounds, ABC Academy provides its own security keypad system and secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow others to "piggyback" on your entrance or enter the center upon your departure. Center management will review the center's security program with you upon enrollment.

Medical Records

In order to protect the health of all children and to satisfy child care regulations, current medical information for each child is required prior to enrollment. These records need to be updated annually, or as required by state licensing if more often, and when new immunizations are given to younger children.

Child Illness

On average, babies experience eight to ten illnesses a year and preschoolers experience almost as many. If a child in care is ill, it may be more difficult for families, staff, and children to balance their respective needs. For example, it may be inconvenient for the family member who has to leave work or school or difficult for staff who are trying to care for a sick child despite other demands of the day. Although everyone shares a concern for the child's well-being, it is easy to get frustrated under the circumstances. We are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these circumstances.

Child's Wellness Check: If your child appears to be ill when brought to the center and he or she cannot be made comfortable, you will be asked to take your child home. If we feel that your child is well enough to attend the center but may be becoming ill, we will monitor your child and update you as necessary.

Reportable Communicable Diseases: When ABC Academy is notified that a child enrolled in one of our centers or an employee has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures. ABC Academy will give serious consideration to all recommendations made by the public health agencies in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventive treatment if available.

Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza (invasive)
- Hepatitis A
- Measles (including suspected)
- Meningococcal infection (invasive)
- Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspected)
- Tetanus (including suspected)
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

Please refer to your local Public Health Department for the additional requirements in your state, or ask center management for a complete listing.

Infection Control

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, safe food handling, and diapering and toileting procedures (procedures are posted in each classroom). Adults are encouraged to sanitize their hands when entering classrooms and other common areas as an additional precaution to prevent the spread of germs. Teachers will also engage children in learning activities designed to teach healthy habits.

To prevent the spread of infections and viruses, equipment and toys used by the infants and toddlers will be disinfected daily. Equipment and toys used by the preschoolers and school-age children will be disinfected at least once a week. In addition to disinfecting toys and equipment, ABC Academy's staff uses the **ZONO** system for sanitizing. This

additional step aides us in the fight to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses. The **ZONO** system uses ozone (ozone is a gas made of just one thing: oxygen) and a small amount of water to kill 99.99% of common bacteria and viruses on materials placed inside its refrigerator-sized cabinet.

The following duties are performed on a regular basis:

- Cribs and infant toys are washed and sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed.
- Crib sheets, crib blankets, and machine-washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis or more often if needed.
- Blankets and washable toys that belong to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.
- Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces are cleaned and sanitized before and after each use, including tables and high chair trays.
- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled papers, water tables and water play equipment, play tables, and smooth nonporous floors are cleaned and disinfected daily or whenever there is visible contamination.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify the center regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the center with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's physician, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medication (See Medication Policies). A list of children's allergies with their pictures is posted in all the classrooms throughout the center, including the kitchen. Staff members are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. Contact with peanuts, or products containing traces of peanuts or peanut oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe peanut allergy. **ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Centers have taken a proactive approach to create a "nut free" environment** or will do so in the event a child in the program develops such an allergy or a child with this allergy is newly enrolled in the program. In these programs, all families and staff are asked to carefully monitor all food ingredients to avoid tree nuts and tree nut products. Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of the allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Similarly, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the center by a family member or child, despite our best efforts to educate families and raise awareness. Ultimately, parents/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.

Diapering

Children's diapers will be checked at least every two hours and upon awakening and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet. We understand that as part of the diaper-changing process, you may request that we use baby powder. However, it is ABC Academy's policy not to use baby powder. While using baby powder, it can get into the baby's lungs, causing swelling and irritation, and could lead to breathing problems. It can

also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children when exposed to the broken skin of a diaper rash. A better choice for reducing rubbing and preventing diaper rash is cornstarch, which is coarser and safer than powder. (See the Medication Policies for information regarding the use of diaper cream.)

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is of no small concern to all the adults in a child's life—at home and at the center. In our environment, a family-teacher partnership that supports the child is the most important factor in making this experience successful and as low-stress as possible. There are different views on the when and how of toilet learning, and every culture approaches it differently. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Thus, toilet learning is generally most successful when it is started around that age or later. Most positive toilet learning will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. ABC Academy's toilet learning procedures follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and state regulations. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.



The following guidelines will be followed:

- Children will be supervised during toilet learning, and will be encouraged for their efforts and accomplishments.
- Toilet learning will not be coerced. The individual developmental abilities of each child will be considered. Children will not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- Families will provide sufficient extra clothing for their children to change into in the event of a toileting accident. Any extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day.

Injury Prevention

Teachers for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury. Small toy pieces or other objects that could pose a choking hazard to infants and toddlers will not be allowed in areas designated for children under age three. For the same reason, children's personal items such as barrettes, hair ties, earrings, necklaces, and beaded jewelry are also strongly discouraged in these areas. When visiting your child's classroom, please ensure that purses, briefcases, or backpacks are not left within the reach of children.

Balloons: Broken balloon pieces can be ingested and cause an obstruction of a child's airway. This is possible whether a balloon is inflated or not, as children may bite the balloon or suck it in while attempting to inflate it. As a result, latex balloons are not allowed in ABC Academy's centers. If you wish to send something special in for your child's birthday or for another celebration, other items could be used such as birthday hats, beach balls, or streamers. Check with center management to find out what is allowed in your center and is appropriate for your child's age group.

Clothing Hazards: Playground safety is a major concern in child care. One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment and creates a hazard that might lead to strangulation or other serious harm. Parents/guardians should be aware of the potential strangulation hazards of drawstrings on clothing. To prevent injuries from strangulation, children will not be permitted to wear any shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry, or articles that are tied around the neck or waist, including scarves and mittens or gloves secured with a string through the sleeves of a jacket. Please check your child's clothing carefully and remove all drawstrings.

Footwear: Footwear (e.g., sneakers and sandals with backs) that is appropriate for active, outdoor play such as climbing, running, and jumping on various surfaces is strongly recommended. Closed-back shoes are always preferred.

Bibs and Pacifiers: Bibs will not be left on babies when they are placed in cribs or while mobile due to the potential strangulation hazard. If your child uses a pacifier, you will need to provide staff with at least two pacifiers and instructions for use. Infants will not be forced to take a pacifier for any reason; should the pacifier fall out of the infant's mouth, it does not need to be reinserted. Pacifiers attached to strings or ribbons cannot be placed around infants' necks or attached to infants' clothing at any time, including activity time and while in their crib, due to the risk of strangulation. Pacifiers should be labeled using only a non-toxic marker. Tape, adhesive labels, or similar products may become loose over time, becoming a choking hazard.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants and toddlers, and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that almost all young children will try at least once. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families, or teachers. Still, when it happens, it's scary, frustrating, and very stressful for everyone involved. Brief episodes of biting do not mean that a child is having a social or emotional problem. Nor does it mean the family is to blame. It simply indicates that your child is going through that particular stage in his or her development. As with developmental stages, biting soon ends. In all cases of biting, our response will be to care for the child who was bitten, to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior, and to examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs. Our focus will not be on punishment but rather on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. We encourage you to talk to your child about this behavior, but we also caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, will not be understood by the child.



Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Oral exploration
- Teething
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
- Frustration, anxiety, or stress
- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- Mimicking behavior
- A way of showing affection
- Exploring cause-and-effect relationships
- Exploring holding on and letting go of relationships
- Making an impact
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement and overstimulation

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- Teething
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- Fatigue
- Lack of awareness that biting hurts
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- Inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- Mimicking behavior
- A way of showing affection
- Exploring cause-and-effect relationships
- Exploring holding on and letting go of relationships
- Making an impact
- Impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- Excitement and overstimulation

Children Injuries

If your child sustains a minor injury while at the center (e.g., scraped knee), you will receive an Accident Report outlining the incident and course of action taken by the staff member. Minor wounds, such as cuts, scrapes, or bites, will be washed with liquid soap and cool, running water followed by rinsing. A dry bandage or dressing may be applied as appropriate. You will be contacted immediately if the injury produces any type of swelling, is on the face or head, or needs medical attention. If a serious medical emergency occurs, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, and a staff member will contact you (or a designated emergency contact if you cannot be reached).

Infant Sleep Positions and Crib Furnishings

At ABC Academy, your child's health is our primary concern. The First Candle/SIDS Alliance, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs strongly recommends that infants be put to sleep on their backs in a crib on a firm mattress to reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). At first, some babies do not like sleeping on their backs, but most quickly get used to it, and this is the best sleep position for your baby. At all ABC Academy centers, infants will be put to sleep on their backs. Where allowed by state regulations, parents/guardians who choose to have their child put to sleep on his or her side or stomach (or any other variation other than to sleep on their back) must sign a release authorizing ABC Academy to make an exception to its policy and to release ABC Academy from any liability. This release must also be signed by the child's physician. Infants who fall asleep, in any position, in the activity area, on a chair, boppy, or any other type of furniture or equipment that is not a safety-approved crib, will be gently picked up and placed in a crib on their back for the duration of the nap time. In keeping with our safe sleep practices, if your infant arrives at the center asleep in a car seat, he/she should immediately be removed and placed in their assigned crib on their back. The standard practice at ABC Academy is to not allow soft items (such as stuffed animals and blankets) in the crib as recommended by the First Candle/SIDS Alliance and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Exceptions to this practice should be requested in writing and may depend on the licensing regulations in your state. Some states may require a physician's note as well, or may disallow the practice completely.

If requested, infants may be swaddled with signed, written permission from the parents/guardians and the child's physician. Swaddling is for nap time only and will be stopped when any of the following occur:

- The child begins to roll over
- Swaddling begins to limit the child's movements
- The child becomes overheated

Parents/guardians will demonstrate the proper way to swaddle their infant. The use of one-piece blanket sleepers and sleep sacks are permitted.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to make a report to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect. All staff members receive training in identifying and reporting suspected abuse or neglect. The particular state child protective service agency involved will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. ABC Academy will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.

5

Policies and Procedures

ABC Academy views each child as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs.



Registration Procedure – Tuition Base Program

An ABC Academy contract form must be completed and returned to center management along with the registration fee (where applicable). Upon receipt of the contract and ½ month contract fee, your child will be registered based on availability. If current space is not available to meet your needs, your family's name will be placed on a waiting list. We cannot guarantee that a space will be available for your child on the day you desire. Enrollment is based on availability and may be subject to priority enrollment rules of the center. Families may choose to be on the wait list at all ABC Academy Child Care and Preschool Centers with payment of a single registration fee, where permitted. When a space becomes available, the center will invite you to visit with your child to discuss the enrollment process. The visit will give your child an opportunity to spend time in his or her classroom and be introduced to the children and staff. During the visit, you will have an opportunity to observe your child in the classroom, meet with center management to schedule a start date, and review the enrollment procedure. Registration is required annually.

Registration Procedure – Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Joint Recruitment for the GSRP classrooms offered at ABC Academy is facilitated by the Great Start Collaborative of Jackson and the Intermediate School District to ensure that each child is placed in the program that is most appropriate for them. GSRP Family Interest forms are available on the Great Start Collaborative website www.greatstartjackson.org.

Parents who inquire about GSRP at ABC Academy are directed to the Great Start Collaborative website to complete an interest form. Families who are income eligible for Head Start are referred to the Community Action Agency (Jackson County Head Start Grantee). A list of qualifying children is compiled. Prioritization will occur based on income and the number of additional qualifying risk factors. A representative from the Great Start Collaborative will contact you to discuss eligibility. Eligible families who have identified ABC Academy as their preferred location will be contacted by ABC Academy's GSRP enrollment personnel to schedule an interview appointment to review income verification documentation and further assist with the application process. At this time, families will also tour the facility and meet the teaching staff.

Enrollment Procedure

In order to secure appropriate staffing levels at all times of the day, we will ask you to provide the specific hours of care needed for your child, recognizing that you may need to change these periodically. Prior to your child's start date, please feel free to schedule as many visits as necessary to help familiarize you and your child with the center. This is an excellent way to help your child feel comfortable in his or her classroom. During the enrollment process, you must complete forms regarding your child's health and development. These forms include family information, a medical authorization and consent form, and a developmental history. An updated physical and immunization record is required for your child prior to enrollment. You are also expected to read and sign an enrollment contract that outlines the program's policies. All forms in your child's file must be updated annually. Please remember to provide the center with additional updates as needed (e.g., phone numbers, work information, change of emergency contact or medical information, including allergies).

Enrollment Forms – Both Tuition Base & GSRP

Your enrollment will be complete when the following forms are on file in our office:

1. **Health Appraisal** (for non-school age children) Section I is to be completed by the parent and the remaining Sections II thru IV must be completed by a Licensed Physician. Note: the dental exam is not required for enrollment. This form must be updated annually for all children 2 ½ weeks to 5 years of age. The immunization record must show that the child has received age appropriate prophylaxis; this must include immunizations against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, hepatitis B, varicella, (chicken pox), rubella and hemophilia influenza type b
Health Statement (for school age children) This form must be completed annually by the parent.
2. **Child Information Form (completed annually)**
3. **Medication Permission Form**
4. **Field Trip Permission Slip (completed annually)**
5. **Photography/Video Tape Permission Form**
6. **Consent for Child Record Access**
7. **Child Care Contract**
8. **ACH Payment Authorization Form**
9. **Emergency Information Form (required for children with Special Needs)**
10. **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)**
11. **A Copy of your Child's Birth Certificate (GSRP Group Only)**

Space will not be reserved for a child until all forms have been returned to the center and all fees are paid.

Enrollment Contracts

Our contract year extends from September 1 through August 31 of each year. A contract may be arranged by the parent for any portion or for the full contract period. Contracts will be updated at the end of each year, August 31. In the event you find that you need to discontinue services prior to the end date of the contract one month written notice must be provided. Your monthly fee will be adjusted from the start of the contract to the new ending date. Parents requesting to cancel contracts to modify days in attendance may do so once during the contract year by providing a one month written notice. Additional requests will be honored by the center after receiving payment of the \$100 contract cancellation fee. Contracts must be signed by all parties responsible for payments. If parents elect to arrange payments from multiple responsible individuals, separate signed contracts will be required for all parties the agency is asked to bill for services.

Hours & Days of Operation

The center is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The center will be closed on the following days: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Winter Break – Christmas Eve Day through New Year's Day, returning January 2.

Great Start Readiness Program Schedule

The Great Start Readiness Program (state-funded 4-year-old preschool) operates on a school-year schedule late September thru June each year. These classes operate on a calendar that includes days off due to conferences, winter and spring breaks, and professional development days for the staff. Children participating in this program may enroll for child care before and after classes as well as for days that class is not in session, by completing a contract with the Center Director.

Children participating in GSRP at ABC Academy may also enroll in wrap-around child care. Wrap-around child care includes the time before and after class as well as Fridays and other “non-GSRP” days that children attend in addition to GSRP class hours.

A contract is required for wrap-around child care. The contract period begins the first scheduled day of the GSRP session, late September, and ends the last day of the session, early June. Holidays, breaks, and other scheduled “non-GSRP” days are not included in the contract. Families that need care during these times must make arrangements at least two weeks in advance with the Center Director. Payment for care will be collected through Tuition Express prior to receiving services.

Public School Vacations, Report Days

Any child enrolled for regular care at ABC Academy is eligible to attend the center any day there is no public school and the center is open. Children must register for these extra days in advance on the sign-up sheets provided. Extra days will be charged and due at the time of attendance. Care will not be guaranteed for children who **do not sign up**. Children who sign up and do not attend **will be charged for the time they requested additional care**. Cancellation may be made one week prior to care.

Emergency Closings

If the center must close due to an emergency, we will put a message on the voice mail system and send email messages. If you have questions before you bring your child to school, please call 517 784-9161 for the Lansing Ave. Center, 517 783-3040 for the Laurence Ave. Center or 517 768-9323 for the Emmons Rd. Center located on the Jackson College Campus and listen to the message. Emergency closings for our locations in Concord Elementary, Dibble Elementary, and Hunt Elementary will follow the emergency school district notification systems in place.

Closings due to weather will be noted on the local television channel. Email messages will also be sent to parents with notification of the closing. A decision of any closings will be made by 5:30 a.m.

When weather is bad, the Lansing Ave. Great Start Readiness Program will follow the Northwest School District procedures. The Hunt Elementary, Dibble Elementary, Laurence Ave. and Emmons Rd. Great Start Readiness Programs will follow the Jackson Public School District procedures. Concord Elementary Program will follow the Concord School District procedures.

Please watch your local television channel for a listing of school closings and delays. Child care will be available for parents that need care for their children, in the event classes are cancelled or delayed due to weather. Parents will need to contact the center prior to 7:30 a.m. to schedule care during those times and discuss payment arrangements.

If the center must close due to weather during the centers regular hours of operation, parents will be notified and will need to make arrangements for their child to be picked up. Staff will stay with the children until all children have been picked up.

If ABC Academy must close due to a power outage, gas leak or any other event that may create an unsafe situation for the children during ABC Academy's regular hours of operation, the parents will be notified and will need to make arrangements for their child to be picked up as soon as possible. The staff will stay with the children until they have been picked up. If an event like this happens during the regular business hours, we will make every attempt to contact families before their normal arrival time to the center.

There is no tuition refund for emergency closings.

General Attendance Policies

Children should not come to ABC Academy for preschool or child care if they are sick. Please refer to the illness policy section in this handbook for full details about symptoms and illnesses that require children to be excluded from the program. If your child is going to be absent due to illness, please call ABC Academy by 9:00 a.m. that morning to let your child's teachers know.

Center policies provide for strict safety measures regarding the arrival of students who ride the bus to ABC Academy from school. Parents must ensure that the office is aware of schedule changes and alert the center when their child will not be riding the bus after school as planned

It is also very important that each child be correctly checked in and out on the time clock each day. Please be sure that all adults who come to pick-up your child have their own code and use the time clock to ensure that your child's times are logged accurately.

Attendance – Great Start Readiness Program

In order for the children to have the most successful pre-school experience, attendance in the Great Start Readiness Programs is required daily when class is in session.

ABC Academy's GSRP class sessions are Monday thru Thursday from either 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. or 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. pending the classroom your child has been assigned. Children should arrive promptly at the start of the scheduled class. We ask that children are not dropped off before 5 minutes prior to the start of class time, unless they are enrolled in early morning wrap-around child care, as we are not prepared to meet required adult to child ratios until that time. It is very important that the children be picked up by the end of the class session unless they are enrolled in wrap-around child care.

If your child is going to be absent due to vacations or appointments, please let your child's teachers know in advance. If repeated absences occur the Center Director will meet with you to help develop a plan to improve attendance. Funding is based on the outcomes of all children enrolled in the program. Please help us to ensure that this program remains available to families by ensuring your child's regular participation in the program.

Tuition Investment/Fees

Tuition is due in advance with no deductions for any absences, holidays, illness, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond ABC Academy's control. If tuition is not paid on the day that it is due, a late fee will be added to the tuition for each day that it is late until it is paid in full. When a payment is delinquent for one week or more, care may be suspended until the balance is current and your child's space will not be reserved. Tuition is due regardless of a child's absence from the program for any reason, and is required to hold a child's space. A fee will be charged for a check returned for insufficient funds. If this occurs, ABC Academy will have the option to refuse any future checks or Tuition Express. There may be additional fees associated with special summer activities or field trips for the children. When you withdraw your child, you must give one month's notice prior to withdrawal, in writing, to center management.

Payment Schedule

Payments are due, as per your contract, regardless of a child's absence for any reason. These include a child's illness, family illness, vacations, doctor appointments, parent's days off work, etc.

Please check with the center for the present fee schedule. At the time of registration, parents of children who receive child care services may choose two payment options;

OPTION A: Payment is due in full on the first of each month, for the current month. After the 5th of each month, a \$25.00 late fee will be added to the amount due for each child with an outstanding balance.

OPTION B: One half of the monthly tuition is due on the first of the month and the 15th of the month. **There is no grace period for this option.** A \$25.00 late fee will be charged if payment is made after the first and/or the 15th of the month.

Children attending for just the 2 ½ hour preschool session may only select Option A.

Payment for additional services received outside of the contracted hours are due at the time services are provided.

If tuition is delinquent for a period of ten (10) days, the child will be suspended from the center. At that time, the parent must then make payment arrangements for the outstanding balance. Parents may re-instate their enrollment by making appropriate payment arrangements with the Center Director. Accounts left unpaid accumulate late fees and if necessary are sent to a collection agency.

Tuition Subsidies

Parents who receive assistance for child care from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or other agencies, must have proof of current authorization, showing the amount to be received for assistance each week, prior to registration. If a child starts prior to authorization approval, or if there is a lapse time between approvals, the parent is responsible for 100% of the tuition payments until the center receives notice of authorization. Any funds received from the parent during this time will be held until final payment is received from the State of Michigan for the child's attendance. The parent is liable for any of the tuition that is not covered by the payments received from the assistance program.

*Note: DHHS requires that parents sign in and out recording the times in the classroom in addition to clocking in and out at our security entrance computer. Parents must also note any absences on the classroom attendance sheet with the reason for the absence from our program. Parents who fail to log their hours or absence on the classroom attendance sheets will be responsible for the amount normally billed to DHHS by the center.

Schedule Changes

In order to provide sufficient supervision and to appropriately schedule staff, families are asked to carefully adhere to the schedule they choose for their child. We ask that schedule changes be made in writing to center management at least one month in advance. If you have an emergency and need to alter your child's schedule, please do not hesitate to contact the center.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

To ensure each child's safety and to encourage daily communication between families and staff, parents/guardians are responsible for physically checking their child in and out of the center each day. Teachers ensure safety throughout the day with roll-calls, head counts, and checking children in and out whenever a child leaves or enters a classroom using the Tadpoles Attendance Tracking System. Parents/guardians must accompany each child into the classroom and confirm that their child is under adult supervision before leaving the premises. Families are required to re-enter the center when picking up children at the end of the day. Please note: children must be under direct adult supervision at all times while on the premises and parents or guardians are responsible for children once they are checked out. Children will be released only to parents, legal guardians, or persons whose names are listed on the Child Release form. Authorized persons picking up children will be required to show photo ID. For the safety and trust of the children in our care, we will not release children to a person they do not know. On occasion, you may wish to allow friends, coworkers, or family to visit your child(ren) at the center. The names of those permitted to visit must be specified in writing. All visitors will be asked to present a photo ID and sign the Visitor's Log.

Withdrawal Procedure

Parents may withdraw their child from the program at any time. **A one month written notice is required.** Parents who withdraw their child without providing a one-month notice will be liable for an additional month of tuition. Withdrawal and subsequent re-enrollment is subject to space availability and will entail an additional registration fee and contracted rates based on the rate schedule at the time the new contract goes into effect. A child must be absent a minimum of one month, with a written advance notice given to the Center Director, to be considered withdrawn from the program. Children absent for less than thirty (30) days, or failure to submit a written notice, will be billed at their regular contract rate. The center is unable to guarantee that space will be available for withdrawn children unless full payment is made during their absence. Children who are asked to leave the center due to an outstanding tuition balance will be required to pay all outstanding tuition, late fees, registration fees, a one-month tuition security deposit and pay the first ½ month's tuition in advance to return to the center, space permitting. If ABC Academy finds it necessary to discontinue services once again for non-payment the family will be unable to resume services at any of the ABC Academy locations. The center has final determination on refusing a child's attendance at ABC Academy, for any reason including but not limited to behavioral concerns that compromise the safety of the other children in the program.

Child Custody

So that all parents/guardians feel equally welcome at the center, ABC Academy strives to remain neutral in all custody disputes. Legally, unless there is an active restraining order, court order, or court ordered visitation schedule on file at the center that designates otherwise, the center cannot deny a parent or guardian access to his or her child. We require all families to resolve their differences or unsettled court orders through legal channels. Ultimately, ABC Academy's primary concern is the safety of all children and staff at the center. For that reason, the center cannot be used as a place for scheduled visitations, nor can we be responsible for supervising parent or guardian visits.

Transportation To/From the Center

Parents/guardians and other authorized persons are responsible for transporting children to and from the center in an appropriate child restraint system. If someone other than yourself will be picking your child up from the center, please ensure adequate child restraints either by leaving your child's car seat with us or confirming that the individual picking up has an appropriate child safety seat.

Late Pick-Up

Children should be picked up at their scheduled time. Because it can be distressing for a child to be left in the care of others after hours, late pick-up should be considered an unusual occurrence. Please allow enough time to arrive at the center, pick up your child, and leave the center by closing time. We do, however, understand that special circumstances arise. If, in the case of an emergency, you cannot pick up your child on time or send one of your emergency contacts, please notify the center immediately. Children left in our care after hours will be supervised for as long as possible. In the absence of contact from a parent/guardian, we will call all the numbers listed on the Child Release form; please make sure these numbers are up to date. Child Protective Services will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after two hours. A late fee will be charged (where applicable) if a child is picked up after the center's closing time.

Emergency and Back-Up Care

Sometimes a child needs care for a few days because a regular caregiver is ill, school is canceled due to bad weather, or there is a school vacation day scheduled when a parent/guardian must be at work. In situations like these, ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care may be able to provide back-up child care. Each child must be pre-registered before using back-up care. To preregister, families need to fill out a registration form at the ABC Academy Center where care will be used. When care is needed, call the center to reserve a space. Reservations for back-up care are filled on a space-available, first-come, first-served basis.

Program Placement

Children are placed in programs based upon a combination of their developmental and chronological age, as well as space availability. State regulations classify the specific age range and the number of children that may be enrolled in each program/classroom.

Non-Discrimination/Confidentiality

ABC Academy's programs are designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn. ABC Academy views each child as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities we serve, it is necessary for us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs. Our hope is to build programs that are responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs in our classrooms — programs that truly celebrate and value the individuality of each child. ABC Academy provides full-day and part-day programs for children between the ages of infancy and 12 years without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian political beliefs, parent/guardian sexual orientation, disability or special needs, child's toileting ability, medical condition, HIV status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The law covers children with disabilities seeking reasonable accommodations in a child care setting, as well as the parents/guardians served. ABC Academy will conduct an individualized assessment of the particular needs of a child and family and engage in an interactive dialogue with parents/guardians, caregivers, and medical professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and to safely integrate the child into the program, given each individual's capabilities, and to give the family full access to and participation in our programs to the extent feasible. Any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with center management or staff will be held in the strictest confidence.

Children's Records

Confidentiality and Distribution of Records: The information in your child's record is considered privileged and confidential. Only those persons directly related to the care of your child, center management, or regulatory agencies will have access to the record unless your written permission is given. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's records within a reasonable time upon your request. Upon withdrawal of your child from the center, files will be retained for four years. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to add information, comments, data, or other relevant material to your child's record. You also have the right to request, in writing, deletion or amendment of any information contained in the record. When your child leaves the center, center management will provide a copy of your child's record to you within a reasonable time of your written request.

Regulatory Agencies

Regulatory agencies may review your child's record in order to ensure the center has followed its requirements. All information in the record is kept confidential. ABC Academy is required to have a copy of all state regulations available at every center. These regulations are available to all parents/guardians.

Program Measurement

ABC Academy is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family,
- Observe children in the classroom,
- Measure what children about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

If you have further questions, please contact:

- ABC Academy, 517 784-9161
- The MDE Office of Great Start, Early Childhood Education and Family Services, at: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov, 517 373-8483, or 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 3008, Lansing, MI 48909

Classroom Observation

As part of the center's activities, outside child care professionals not employed by ABC Academy may observe children in their classroom from time to time. If this occurs in your center, families will be notified, and the confidentiality of child information will be maintained. In addition, teacher candidates may spend supervised time in the classroom with our regular staff as part of our hiring process.

Research Conducted in the Center

Occasionally, ABC Academy will authorize research at centers. This increases our collective knowledge about children and their development and/or trains professionals in careers in early childhood education or related fields.

ABC Academy requires the written informed consent of parents/guardians if research will be conducted in a classroom. The following information will be included in the consent form:

- The identities, positions, and qualifications of the individuals conducting the research.
- The nature and purpose of the research.
- The duration of the research and the frequency of contact between the child and the researcher.
- The specific location where the research is to occur.
- An ethics statement regarding research at the center.

Unrelated Activities

ABC Academy will not authorize any activities unrelated to the direct care of children or allow any third parties to contact you without your written, informed consent. ABC Academy does not share customer information, for any reason, without your consent. “activities” include, but are not limited to, publicity or media events, taking of photographs or videos, media, and participation in surveys (other than those carried out by ABC Academy).

Babysitting by Center Staff

In an effort to maintain the professional status of ABC Academy’s staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, babysitting by center staff is strongly discouraged by ABC Academy. However, if a center staff member elects to babysit for a family, all such activities must occur outside center premises and with the understanding that such arrangements and payment for services is solely between the staff member and the child’s family and that ABC Academy is in no way responsible for the child’s care in connection with these activities. The arrangements are not sanctioned by the center, by the corporate sponsor, or by ABC Academy. Babysitting should not interfere with the staff member’s center schedule. If a babysitting arrangement should be made between a staff member and a family, the family is required to complete a Babysitting Release form, which can be supplied by center management.

Child Illness Policy

Our Child Illness Policy is based upon the standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. ABC Academy understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. Mild illnesses are common among children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from the child care setting for the following reasons:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading harmful disease to others.
- Fever (100° axillary (armpit), 101° orally, 102° aural/ear)* and behavior change or other signs and symptoms such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, irritability, constant crying, or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea — more watery stools or decreased form of stool that is not associated with change of diet. Exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper, and toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing “accidents.” Diapered children with diarrhea will be excluded if the stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for that child.
- Blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools, and/ or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet. Special circumstances that require specific exclusion criteria include the following:
 - Toxin-producing E. coli or Shigella infection, until the diarrhea resolves and the test results of two stool cultures are negative for these organisms.
 - Salmonella serotype Typhi

infection, until diarrhea resolves. In children younger than 5 years with Salmonella serotype Typhi, three negative stool cultures are required.

- Vomiting more than two times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Mouth sores with drooling unless the child's medical provider or local health department authority states that the child is noninfectious
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever, dehydration, or other signs of illness.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, until a medical provider has determined it is not a communicable disease.

We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children be picked up within 1.5 hours of notification. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms.

Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program. This means that the child needs to remain out of the center for the remainder of the day he/she is sent home and the following day (if a child is sent home on Friday, he/she may return on Monday), unless the center receives a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is not contagious and may return to the center. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease, rash, or continuing symptoms, a note from the child's medical provider may be required before returning.

**Infants less than 4 months of age will be excluded if they have a fever of 100° axillary (armpit) or 100.4° aural (ear) and should receive medical attention as soon as possible.*

**Any child with a fever of 104° will be excluded and should receive medical attention as soon as possible. Any infant younger than 2 months with a fever should get urgent medical attention.*

Children who have been excluded may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a full 24 hours. – Readmission after diarrhea can occur when diapered children have their stool contained by the diaper (even if stools remain loose) and when toilet-trained children do not have toileting “accidents.”
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's medical provider signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious.
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child is excluded because of a reportable communicable disease, a note from the child's medical provider stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return is required. The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program due to illness will be made by the child care center.



Illness Chart

Illness	Suggested Home Stay Periods
Chicken Pox	When all blisters have scabs (usually 6 days after start of rash)
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24 hours after start of treatment (if specifically drainage and excessive tearing have stopped)
Coxsackie viruses (Hand, foot and mouth disease)	72 hours after onset of lesions
Croup	After illness has subsided
Diarrhea-Gastro Enteritis	24 hours after last loose stool or after 1 normal bowel movement
Rubella	At least 7 days after the onset of the rash
Hepatitis A	At least 7 days after onset of illness
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment has started, lesions must be covered
Fever	24 hours after temperature is normal
Influenza	24 hours after symptoms have subsided
Measles	At least 2 weeks after onset of the rash
Lice	24 hours after treatments has begun and child is nit free
Whooping Cough	At least 7 days after therapy has started
Pin Worms	After treatment is completed
Ring Worm	Once treatment is started
Roseola	After illness has subsided
Scabies	24 hours after start of treatment
Strep Throat	48 hours after start of treatment
Poison Ivy	After lesions have dried up
Pneumonia or Epiglottitis	Written note from physician (if due to H-Flu, Health Dept. must give order)
Bacterial (Spinal) Meningitis	When Health Dept. gives OK
Mumps	When Health Dept. gives OK
Scarlet Fever	With doctor's approval

A written statement by a physician, physician's assistant or nurse practitioner may be required for certain conditions stating that the child is able to return to school.

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services

Medication Policies

Every child has an occasional need for medication. We encourage you to discuss with your child's medical provider dosing schedules or once-a-day regimens that can be administered at home. You are also welcome to come to the center to administer medication to your child during the day, but we ask that you do so away from the other children. When such options are impractical, the center can be authorized to administer medications to your child. Such occasions are governed by specific rules and can often vary by state regulations.

All medications (including non-prescription acetaminophen and antihistamines, as well as all ointments, lotions, sunscreens, insect repellants, and remedies for diaper-rash) will require a parent's or guardian's signed Authorization for Administration of Medication form (available from center management).

- Non-prescription medication necessary for more than three days will also require a written order from the child's medical provider or nurse practitioner/physician's assistant, if allowed by the state licensing agency.
- The current prescription label from the pharmacy with complete information and instructions will suffice as the medical provider's authorization for prescription medication. If the label does not include all necessary information, a signed Authorization for Administration of Medication form will be required from the medical provider.

Unfortunately, ABC Academy cannot accept signed doctors' orders from physician parents/guardians

Doses will be tracked on an Administration of Medication log; all unused medications will be returned to parents/guardians. We ask that the first dose of any new medication be given at home to note any side effects. Please note that we are unable to administer expired medications of any kind.

Designated staff members will administer medication according to the Six Rights of Medication:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Right Child; | 4) Right Dose: |
| 2) Right Medication; | 5) Right Time: |
| 3) Right Dose; | 6) Right Documentation |

Other general medication rules:

- All medication—prescription and nonprescription—must be brought to the center in the original container and labeled with the child's full name, instructions (precise dosage, time to be administered), current date, and name and telephone number of physician, where necessary. Medication spoons and other dosage implements must be provided and be labeled with the child's name (medication cannot be given without this).
- Medication cannot be administered in a child's bottle without specific orders from the child's medical provider.
- All medications must be handed directly to center management. Please do not leave medication—including ointments, lotions, and lip balms—in lunch bags, backpacks, or a child's cubby.

Changes in medication/dosage require a new Authorization for Administration of Medication form and, where pertinent, an updated prescription or note from the child's medical provider.

Note: Non-prescription medications (antihistamines and acetaminophen, as well as all over-the-counter ointments and creams including sunscreens, insect repellants, lip balms, and diaper-rash remedies) require written authorization from the child's medical provider if the medication is not designated for the age of the child, if the instructions specify "consult a physician" for the age of the child, if the request is for a higher dosage than what is prescribed on the label, or if it is to be used for more than three days.

Medication for Chronic Conditions: Children with chronic illnesses such as severe allergies or asthma, or those children with special circumstances such as monitors or catheters, must have an individualized health care plan on file from the child's medical provider. Professional training for staff caring for the child will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. New medications, those not included on the child's individualized care plan, or changes to doses or instructions for existing medications are subject to the general medication rules (above). Information must be updated annually.

As-Needed Medications: As-needed medications are non-prescription, over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or antihistamines. These are given to a child for a specific reason when the child presents with mild symptoms. These medications are not usually needed on a continuous basis, but are administered as the need arises.

As-needed medications will require:

- Written authorization (Authorization for Administration of Medication form) from the child's medical provider.
- List the reason to give the medication (e.g., teething, fever over 100°).
- List the dosage.
- Be given according to the instructions on the medication label or instructions provided by the child's medical provider, in writing, on the Authorization for Administration of Medication form.
- Have a start date and an end date, and be written for no longer than six months.

The parent/guardian will be notified each time the medication is given.



Note:

- **Fevers:** Fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen cannot be administered by staff or parents/guardians so that a child can remain at the center. Such medications can only be administered to reduce a fever while a child awaits pick-up, and only for children with signed "as needed" instructions on file. Children can return after being fever free for 24 hours with no other symptoms.
- **Orajel:** Due to the recommendation of the FDA and the AAP, benzocaine products, such as Orajel, can only be administered to children less than two years of age with a medical provider's written permission, and not for more than 7 days.

Non-Prescription Topical Ointments: Before center staff can administer any non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream, sunscreen, Vaseline, lip balm, and other ointments free from antibiotic, antifungal, or steroidal components) to a child, ABC Academy requires written authorization signed by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian should provide a completed Authorization for Administration of Medication form and instructions (precise dosage, times to be administered). Duration of

administration cannot exceed one year. If the child has open and/or oozing sores, the ointment can be applied for three consecutive days with written authorization and instructions from the parent/guardian. Written authorization from a medical provider will be required after the three days or any time within the three-day period if it appears the sores are worsening.

Note:

Diaper Rash Prevention: Diaper cream may be applied to a child as a protective measure after diapering to help prevent diaper rash or to a child with a mild diaper rash. Duration of administration cannot exceed one year. If a child has diaper rash that persists and/or has a rash that is red, irritated, and has open, oozing areas, the child should be seen by a medical provider.

Homeopathic/Herbal Medications: Before center staff can administer any form of homeopathic or herbal medications, ABC Academy requires written authorization signed by the parent/guardian and the child's medical provider. The parent/guardian should provide a completed Authorization for Administration of Medication form along with instructions (precise dosage, times to be administered, start date and end date, method), and the medication in the original container, labeled with the child's full name.

Infant Feeding: Bottles and Food

In order to maintain consistency from home to the center, and to meet the individual needs of children, babies will eat according to their own schedule. Fresh formula or breast milk (refer to breastfeeding procedures below) and baby food will need to be supplied to the center daily. All bottles should be capped and labeled with your child's full name. Each infant will be assigned a color code that will be placed on all bottles and food containers. A color coding chart will be kept in the classroom. Staff also use a verbal double check procedure to be certain all infants receive the correct bottles. Microwave ovens are not used to heat infants' bottles or food due to uneven heating and placing the children at risk of burns. It is ABC Academy's policy that all leftover contents of a bottle shall be discarded after 60 minutes to avoid contamination. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. For older infants, the center will supply all snacks (e.g., crackers, fruit, etc.).



Note: Solid food and cereal will not be fed in a bottle unless the child has specific written instructions from their medical provider. Solid food in a bottle is not only a choking hazard, it also teaches the child to eat solid foods incorrectly. Additionally, please note that medications should not be put in a child's bottle. If your child is not feeling well and does not complete the bottle, he/she may not get the full dosage of the medication. See the Medication Policy for further information.

Breastfeeding

A meaningful benefit of having child care near your work site is the opportunity for a new mother to breastfeed throughout the day. If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at any time. If the center is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. All breast milk bottles will

be marked with a red band for identification purposes in addition to the child's first and last name and color code. We can store a frozen supply for you up to one month from the date expressed, or you may provide milk daily.

Note: Although some literature suggests that breast milk may be frozen for a longer period, given the types of freezers in our centers and the frequency with which they are opened, it is recommended that breast milk be kept frozen no longer than one month.

Meals and Snacks

ABC Academy believes that meals and snacks are critical to a child's health and development. They are also an important part of the center's curriculum. Breakfast and snacks are provided by ABC Academy. Parents with children attending the tuition base program are asked to provide lunch for their child when in attendance during scheduled lunch period. Lunch is provided by ABC Academy for children enrolled in the GSRP classroom. Meals that are provided by the center are carefully planned to provide children with the necessary nutritional content. Every effort is made to ensure that mealtime is enjoyable for children. When providing lunch from home, we offer the following suggestions. All food should be cut into bite-size pieces that are easy to swallow. Please make sure all lunch boxes, bags, and containers are labeled with your child's full name. Additionally, we strongly recommend avoiding foods that are high in fat or sugar in your child's lunch and using the USDA's MyPlate recommendations to ensure your child's meal is well-balanced. Providing a healthy lunch will ensure your child has the energy and stamina to get the most out of their day and fully participate in all of the fun learning experiences. You should provide infant formula, breast milk, and food until your child is old enough to eat table food; however, it is up to you to introduce your infant to solid foods, usually around the age of 6 months, and let us know when it is appropriate to begin to offer our snacks. Menus with snacks and meals served are posted on the parent information board. If your child has special dietary needs or food allergies, please work with center management to find suitable accommodations (See Allergy Prevention).



Rest

In order to maintain consistency from home to the center, and to meet the individual needs of children, babies will sleep according to their own schedule. At ABC Academy Preschool and Child Care Center, infants will be put to sleep on their backs unless parents request otherwise (See Infant Sleep Positions), and where allowed by state licensing with a release form signed by parents/guardians and a physician. Following lunch, toddlers and older children will have an afternoon quiet period of at least 60 minutes or longer.

Clothing Suggestions/Items Needed

Proper dress is an important part of the ABC Academy's experience. Durable clothing that can withstand the energetic activity of young children—digging in dirt, exploring sand, experimenting with water, or painting, among other activities—is best. We consider our playground to be an extension of our classroom and we conduct programs outside whenever weather permits. That makes it important for your child to dress for the elements—rain gear including boots for wet weather; jackets/snowsuits, hats, mittens, and boots during the winter and snow.



Though we limit outdoor time in winter, if the weather is extremely cold, it's also a good idea to send an extra warm clothing.

When buying indoor or outdoor clothing for school, make sure older children can put it on themselves. If you are using boots as shoes, please send slippers or sneakers so that your child will not have to keep his/her boots on indoors. Each child attending the program must have a complete change of clothing labeled with his or her name. Clothing will be kept in each child's cubby and used as needed. ABC Academy provide cots, cribs, and sheets. Check with center management for other items that may be needed. The center is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. We will take all precautionary methods to be certain that your child's belongings are well cared for; please keep in mind, clothes that look a little less clean at the end of the day are a sign that your child was actively engaged in learning.

The following page is a list of items to bring to the center to help your child be comfortable. **Please label every item.** We will do our best to keep track of everything that you bring, but just like home, things do get misplaced and we cannot be responsible for replacing items. Parents are responsible for laundering their child's extra naptime bedding and extra change of clothes when used, these will be sent home regularly. We encourage you to provide a family photo prior to your child's first day of school. The photo will be attached to your child's cubby area to identify his/her personal space and to help your child with transitioning into our program by having a picture of their loved ones nearby.

Infants

- Prepared bottles (please label each bottle with your child's name, contents of the bottle and the date)
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Special sleeping sack (optional)
- Two pacifiers (optional)
- Disposable diapers and wipe
- Cereal and baby food
- Suction cup bottom bowl (optional)
- Bibs (optional)
- Family Photo

Toddlers

- Training cup (optional)
- Training underwear (several pairs)
- Rubber pants that fit over training underwear (several pairs)
- Two complete changes of clothes
- Special blanket (optional)
- Disposable diapers and wipes
- Bibs (optional)
- Lunch labeled with your child's name and the date
- Seasonal clothes for outdoors
- Family Photo

Preschool & Pre- Kindergarteners

- Complete change of clothes
- Lunch labeled with your child's name and the date
- Special blanket (optional)
- Seasonal clothes for outdoors
- Family Photo

School-Agers

- Lunch labeled with your child's name and the date
- Seasonal clothes for outdoors
- Family Photo

Seasonal Items

- **Fall:** Warm jacket (no strings)
- **Winter:** Winter coat (no strings), hat (no strings), snow pants, boots, mittens (without strings that run through jacket; multiple pairs optional)
- **Spring:** Light jacket (no strings), boots or rain boots
- **Summer:** Swimsuit, towel, swim shoes or sandals, bug repellent (no aerosol spray), sunscreen (no aerosol spray)

Photographs, Publicity & Video Surveillance



ABC Academy takes photographs and videos of children enrolled at its centers on a regular basis for its business purposes. ABC Academy takes care that any use, display, or dissemination of photographs or videos of children, whether at a particular center where the child attends or for its general business purposes, is accomplished in a thoughtful, safe, and secure manner appropriate under the particular circumstances. For example, at your center, these materials may be used to better communicate with families and to

illustrate the daily curriculum, to chronicle a child's development, or to document center activities. Photos may be shared with you and other families on a secure Tadpoles system, by e-mail, posted in the center, or in a parent newsletter.

Book Orders

Each month an order form will be placed in your child's cubby. Book Orders are due in the Director's office by the 15th of each month. Please make out a separate check payable to the book club and turn it in to the office. We hope you will participate in this important program. Reading to your child is a beneficial experience, and we encourage you to read daily to your child.

Special Celebrations

Parents are welcome to send a special treat to school to share with their children's friends on birthdays or special occasions. For the safety of the children with food allergies we ask that treats are limited to foods that are labeled with the ingredients or other non-edible treats. Please let your child's teacher know in advance that you will bring in a treat.

Field Trips

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically to nearby places. The center contracts with the public school districts for transporting the children on field trips and provide the same responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance at the center. Parents are welcome to join us and may be asked to help supervise some of the children. Please consult the bulletin board or calendar for information on field trips. To help fund our Summer Youth Camp field trips and special activities, an activity fee will be billed and due for each child at the time the summer contract is completed. Fees charged are based on the cost of admission and transportation for the events scheduled on the dates that your child is contracted to attend. Additional fees will be charged if additional days are added outside of the contracted schedule. Due to deposits required to reserve events, the activity fee is nonrefundable in the event your child is unable to attend for whatever reason, including cancelation of your contract.

Television and Electronics

Television will NOT be available to children at the center. A children's movie DVD may be played on an occasional special day. During the warmer months, this is not a part of our program. All videos shown are rated "G". Use of media will not be used with children under 2 years of age. Please check with your child's teacher prior to sending in a video to share with the class.

Our school-age classrooms are "media free" zones. By limiting screen time and offering educational media and non-electronic formats such as books, newspapers and board games we can guide the media experience of the children while attending our program. We ask parents to support our efforts by not sending electronic games and/or cell phones to the center.

Center Safety

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment for young children, firearms, explosive devices, and other weapons are not permitted on ABC Academy's premises. If required, family members and anyone dropping off or picking up a child is asked to secure any weapons before entering the center, regardless of a valid permit to carry such weapon.

Parking Lot Safety

Our parking lot can be a busy place at certain times of the day. Please help us in maintaining a safe environment. We offer the following tips and ask for your cooperation.

- Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot.
- Please make sure your child doesn't run ahead of or behind you upon arrival or during pick-up.

- Please walk your child to their classroom. Let the teacher know you are dropping your child off or picking them up. Help your child with their personal items.
- Please do not leave your car running in the parking lot while unattended.
- Please park in the designated parking areas.
- Please drive slowly in our parking lot.

Anti-Bullying Policy

ABC Academy recognizes that a center that is physically and emotionally safe and secure for all children promotes good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement and supports academic achievement. To protect the rights of all children enrolled for a safe and secure learning environment, ABC Academy prohibits acts of bullying, harassment and other forms of aggression and violence. Bullying or harassment, like other forms of aggressive and violent behaviors, interfere with both a school's ability to educate its students and the student's ability to learn. All staff and parents, volunteers and students are expected to refuse to tolerate bullying and harassment and also demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil.

Tornado

During a tornado warning, the children will move to small interior rooms in the building away from exterior doors and windows. Children and staff will remain there until an all clear has been sounded by the city sirens or over the radio or when city officials notify us. We practice tornado drills regularly during the tornado season.

Fire

Fire drills are practiced regularly with all staff and children. All children are evacuated from the building and directed to the farthest location of the playground. Attendance is taken by the staff once outdoors. The center is equipped with a smoke and fire alarm system along with carbon monoxide detectors.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed during field trips or anytime in the presence of children while they are in the care of ABC Academy. Our entire facility is a smoke free environment including the parking lot. For the health and safety of our children, we appreciate your cooperation.

Integrated Pest Management Program

ABC Academy maintains a contract for monthly inspections to be conducted by a licensed pest control company. The building is examined on the 4th of each month and non-chemical traps are placed as needed. In the event that a chemical/pesticide becomes necessary, it will be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions and scheduled for a Friday evening to allow time for the chemicals to subside before the building is occupied by adults and children. Liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications will not be performed in the center unless the building will be unoccupied for a minimum of 4 hours following the application. An ABC Academy administrator will be present during such applications to guide the exterminator away from surfaces that children touch. Parents will be notified 24-48 hours prior to the date of the scheduled application. Notice will contain information about the pesticide, including the target pest and/or purpose, approximate location, date of the application, contact information at the center for questions, and a toll-free number for a national pesticide information center recognized by the Michigan

Department of Agriculture. In the event that a pesticide application is scheduled, ABC Academy will notify parents by posting a notice on the front door and providing detailed information in each child's cubby to go home 24-48 hours prior to the application date. Questions about our pest management program should be directed to your Center Director.

Process of Suspending a Child's Enrollment (Tuition Base)

Our child care programs are centered on the children for whom we care. We seek to provide programs designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn as individuals with unique learning styles and ways of responding to the world. Given the diversity of families and communities we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs. Our hope is to build a program that is responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs in our classrooms, one that truly celebrates and values the individuality of each child.

Our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences; however, on occasion a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child cannot participate safely in our program or appears to be a danger to him or herself or others, despite our best efforts to reasonably reduce the risk of harm or injury.
- Medical, psychological, school district, or social service personnel working with the center or child determine that continued care at the center could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of, the child.
- Any other situation in which the accommodations needed for the child's success in the program conflict with the fundamental nature of our group environment, or when a different environment is in the best interest of the child or the center.

At any point that a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern to a teacher or administrator, written documentation and family/teacher communication will begin as the first steps to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Process of Disenrolling a Family (Tuition Base Program)

Our programs are based on developing partnerships and supporting families; however, despite our best efforts, on rare occasions a parents'/guardians' actions or requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child. Examples of such instances include:

- The parent/guardian fails to abide by the center policies or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children's families and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive to center staff, children, or anyone else at the center, including any communications they may have posted on any social media sites.

Family Behavior

If ABC Academy has reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking a child up is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way and may endanger the child, we may refuse to release the child to that person. If this occurs, we will request that another adult (parent/ guardian or someone listed on the Child Release form) pick up the child or we will call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. This will be done for the protection of your child.

*ABC Academy . . . a great place for your child
to grow, learn, and succeed!*



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