

Storybook Academy

Parent Handbook



8301 Centreville Road
Manassas, VA 20111
571.225.4689
hello@storybookacademyva.com

Welcome/Philosophy

Welcome to Storybook Academy This handbook covers our childcare philosophies, business policies and expectations. Our Academy is committed to creating a safe, warm, and loving environment for children where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace. We want to help your child increase their confidence and self-esteem by treating them as unique individuals and allowing them to express themselves in a variety of facets. We strive to make your child's time at our academy the best experience it can be for them as well as you, the parents.

We are committed to support families by maintaining open communication. Our objective is to care for your child the same way you would.

In programming activities for children, we follow a play-based learning philosophy. We develop activities centered on:

Language arts: Early literacy skills (auditory and visual memory and discrimination, letter recognition), basic reading skills, fine motor development for pre-writing skills, listening and verbal communication skills.

Science: Observation, comparison and exploration of living things and environment

Math: Developmental experiences in pre-number concepts, size and shape relationships, number concepts and activity with numbers

Art: Creative process that allow for choice, exploration and imagination using a wide variety of materials

Music/Drama: Role-playing, dance, story dramatization and music activities

Health and Safety: Body awareness, nutritional health habits and safety habits

Social and Emotional: Participating in group routines, relating with peers and adults, and learning to solve problems.

Technology: Activities to introduce children to today's technology

Developmentally appropriate curriculum

Storybook Academy offers developmentally appropriate, education-based childcare programs to promote each child's intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth.

Infant program: Our teachers work individually with each child, accommodating each child's physical, cognitive, and psychosocial stages of development. During the initial stages of development, we provide infants with toys and materials to stimulate fine motor skills. Once infants master early skills, we introduce them to new challenges and foster skills at the next level.

Toddler program: This program promotes social, emotional, physical and language development. We provide fun and educational materials to encourage children to explore, experiment and gain an understanding of the world around them. We include individualized and group activities in the program. Children are encouraged to speak in full sentences, listen to short stories, identify shapes and colors, and begin to recognize individual letters.

Preschool program: this program focuses on the development of pre-reading and writing skills. We continuously develop motor skills through indoor and outdoor activities and place an emphasis on each child's readiness for school. We emphasize recognizing upper- and lower-case letters, developing phonetic awareness and identifying letters by their sounds. The program includes activities in arts and crafts, science and discovery, dramatic play, and constructive building.

Preparing for the first day

It is normal for children to feel anxious when they enter a new situation. As a parent, you can help tremendously to make this transition go as smoothly as possible. Look at some of these helpful tips we have complied with to help your child adjust to a pristine environment.

Talking in advance to your child about going to childcare can help make his or her first day go smoothly. Talk about all the fun that will take place during the day and about the new friends he or she will make.

We understand that leaving your child in the care of someone else may be hard for you. You may worry about your child's behavior and whether your child will be liked by other children. You may wonder how much attention and stimulation your child will get throughout the day. We understand that each child has unique needs; by sharing with us in advance as much as possible about your child, we can best attend to these individual needs. Tell us your child's habits regarding napping, eating, bathroom, likes and dislikes and information about your child's general development. That way, we can take into consideration these characteristics as we help your child adjust to this new situation.

Always make sure that your child knows when you are leaving. Say goodbye and offer a hug and a kiss but do not make the farewell too long. Also, be sure to state that you will be back later in the day. Tears at departure time are normal and, in most cases, stop shortly after parents leave. Be on time when you pick up your child. This will help build your child's trust and understanding regarding childcare; it will also help ease the separation when you leave each day. When you arrive to pick up at the end of the day, locate and say hello to your child first before talking to the teacher about how the day has gone. This shows how happy you are to see your child.

Expect a reasonable amount of adjustment time. Recognize that every child adjusts to new situations at different rates. Some children will adjust to a new childcare situation almost immediately. Others will take longer. Some will seem to adjust to the situation quickly, but then experience setbacks a few weeks or a month later. Watch for signs of adjustment and be

prepared to offer your child extra support and encouragement whenever needed. Please know that we are always available to work with you and your family to make your child feel welcome. Never hesitate to discuss your child's needs with us.

Enrollment Requirements

Before your child can be officially enrolled in Storybook Academy you must read, complete, sign and return the following documents:

- Child Registration form
- Immunization Certificate and Physical Exam
- Authorization form for non-prescription over-the-counter skin products
- Administration of medication form (skin products)
- Photo waiver
- Pre-enrollment application
- Signed Enrollment agreement.
- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Personal Childhood history-this gives us background information on your child, including family life, special interests, likes and dislikes, physical abilities, and social behavior. It also gives us insight into your child's eating, sleeping and bathroom habits.

Signing in and out/Attendance Record Policy

When bringing your child into the academy you must transfer the child to a classroom staff member. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE. Children are signed in and out by staff members upon arrival and departure.

We ask that if your child is not going to attend care or be late that you inform the academy in advance. This will help us plan activities for the day. Dropping off your child later would disturb the other children from their routine. If we go to the playground, we will leave a note for parents who are late. If the child does not attend an academy because of health issues, please call us at (571) 225-4689 to let us know the reason-if it is a communicable illness, we are required to record this in case other cases break out. If no one answers the phone, please leave a brief message.

Also, upon arrival and preparing your child for the day please help them or direct them to wash their hands before beginning to play with toys, to prevent the spread of germs.

If someone else will be picking up your child, please let staff know upon arrival. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child as well if the staff member is not familiar with that person. Please let any individuals other than parents who may pick up the children be asked for a picture ID to ensure the safety of all children.

Children WILL NOT be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child and staff are not aware of it, we will have to track you down to confirm that this is permitted, as well as seeing a picture ID of that individual to verify their identity. Storybook Academy legally cannot deny access to or release of a child to either parent/guardian, unless there is an active restraining order, a specific schedule of court-ordered visitation rights, or other court order in place. If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes after closing hours or in case of emergency such as inclement weather and parents or authorized people are unavailable, our staff will contact CPS.

Snack and Mealtimes

Our academy provides nutritionally balanced meals (breakfast, lunch) and snacks for your child. Throughout the day water and drinks are available for the children as needed. If your child arrives after a meal or snack has been served, he/she will wait until the next meal/snack time to eat.

Except infant formulas, it is NOT allowed to bring food or drink with your child without prior approval through the provider. Please provide us with freshly prepared bottles and food daily, until your child is ready to begin eating our menu items. Always label bottles and food containers with your child's name and date.

At all times while drinking and eating, children are required to be seated and not engaged in any play activity. This is to ensure safety (to avoid choking) and to promote healthy eating/drinking habits. Children are encouraged to use their mealtimes to share their experiences with each other.

Manners are taught and practiced during this time as well.

Please list in the medical report any food allergies, dietary restrictions, and sensitivities a child may have. We substitute food items in the menu for those children who are allergic. If your child needs a special diet, the parent must provide these foods. Due to the substantial number of children with peanut allergies, we do not serve peanut products. We are a PEANUT FREE facility.

Birthdays

Birthdays are important for any child. Celebrations at daycares need to be simple. Teachers might provide a birthday crown or hat to help make the birthday child feel extra special.

We do allow for a special treat during our regular classroom snack. Please let the teachers know in advance that you will be bringing it to class so we can share it with the other kids after naptime. All food items must arrive unopened as packaged by the manufacturer and listing all ingredients or will not be accepted. Homemade treats are not permitted. And as always, no nuts and birthday candles are allowed.

Clothing Code

Children engage in a lot of active indoor and outdoor play at Storybook Academy. For comfort every day, please dress your child in clothing that is functional, practical, comfortable, and kid friendly. Choose play clothes that are easy to put on, encourage mobility for running and play times, allow independence in the bathroom, and permit your child the freedom to draw, paint and engage in activities. Please refrain from dressing your child in expensive clothing or bringing fragile personal items to the academy. We cannot accept responsibility for damage to clothing or personal items. Please note that we require children to wear secure closed-toed footwear year-round to prevent injury from running, jumping, and climbing. We do not permit sandals or flip flops. Socks and tennis shoes are the best footwear for kids on the go for both comfort and safety. We also permit Velcro or slip-on style shoes.

Change of clothes/Personal Belongings

Accidents happen. Please pack a seasonally appropriate change of clothes (including socks and underwear) and place it in your child's cubby or give it to the teacher.

We will need at least two complete sets of clothing for those potty-training age. Be sure to replace this extra set of clothes as the seasons change and your child grows. During summer make sure your child has sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat.

Children younger than 18 months (about 1 and a half years) should have:

1. Diapers 1 full package. They will be stored in your child's cubby and the teachers will notify you when the supply is low.
2. 1 box of baby wipes
3. 1 marked bottle and 1 pacifier in a plastic case with your child's name on it
4. 2 changes of clothing. Careful attention must be paid to maintaining the current sizes left here. We will notify you when more are needed.
5. Any diaper cream or powder that you wish us to use.

Toys

Please DO NOT send any toys, candy, or jewelry from home with your child to avoid any conflicts among the other children. If your child needs a special toy or item for sleeping, it will be allowed, but it will remain in the cubby until rest time. Our academy assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen or broken toys from home.

Potty Training Policies

We strive to support your efforts of potty training at home right through the day here at the academy. However, there are some key signs to look for before we can help you train your child at the academy. The key signs of readiness for potty training include:

- The child can pull down and up their pants and underwear/pull-ups on their own with little or no assistance
- The child can communicate with you when they need to go to the bathroom

- The child's diaper is dry after nap times and for prolonged periods during the day
- The child can hold their bowels and bladder until they get too potty once they realize that they need to go.

If these signs are not present, your child is NOT READY to potty train at the academy. As we cannot have a potty in each room for them to use it. It is our academy's policy to leave it up to our teacher's discretion and parents' permission whether the child is fully potty trained. Every child without signs of readiness will wear a diaper during the outdoor play. An accident on a playground can disturb the other kids' play time because the teacher will have to return to the academy for change with more than one child to comply with the proper child-teacher ratio.

Our responsibilities to get kids ready to train:

- We start reading potty books and talking about going potty in the big girl or big boy potty during changing.
- We have them sit on a toilet during natural transition times (before and after meals, before and after naps and after diaper changes)
- We practice with them getting their pants up and down on their own and hand washing
- We keep close communication with the parents about any indicators suggesting the child is ready. We encourage some support from home:

1. Praise the child for success in every step of the process but do not overdo it. A "thumbs up" or a big smile will let them know you are proud.
2. We keep close communication with the parents about any indicators suggesting the child is ready. We encourage some support from home:
3. Praise the child for success in every step of the process but do not overdo it. A "thumbs up" or a big smile will let them know you are proud.
4. Use stickers or small treats (gummies, jellybeans) only after potty success.
5. No punishments for accidents. Just talk to them about them needing to ask

to go to the potty next time.

6. If you see them midway trying to poop or pee scurry them off to the potty to finish

7. Give your child three or four minutes to get the job done. It should not take more than a few minutes.

8. Do not encourage any toys or books during the training time. Potty time will quickly turn into play time for the child.

9. We train boys sitting down first. We switch them to standing up when they are tall enough to reach over the seat.

10. Sometimes parents feel that if their child can pee on a potty at home when the parent places them on the potty that this is the sign, they are ready to train.

From our experience this is not necessarily a sign. We always say that potty training is:

5% ability to get their clothes on and off

5% to go to the potty

90% being able to identify when they must go and tell the adult before they must go.

Outdoor play

- Outdoor play is an important part of a child's physical development and provides learning opportunities different from the indoor environment.

- The playground is securely shielded from the street and passers-by with a fence. No harsh chemicals or pesticides are used in or around the playground. Our goal in creating our outdoor environment is to provide opportunities for creative play alongside the natural environment to promote the development of large motor skills. Weather permitting, we take our groups outside two times each day.

- To ensure safety outdoors, we ask that your children come prepared each day to play outside

with appropriate weather clothing for protection. We apply sunscreen and bug repellent when needed by parental permitting written in accordance with the package directions to use and parents' instructions. All over-the-counter sunscreen and bug repellent will be kept in its original labeled container and will be labeled with the child's first and last name. We provide plenty of fresh water and monitor children to make sure they are safe and comfortable.

Spring/Summer

As the shift to warmer weather happens, the children will spend more time outside to a maximum of two hours. From about June 1 to August 15, the children will move to the "Summer schedule". Teachers will check the outside temperature daily, and children will not be outside during the hottest hours.

Fall/Winter

The children will move back into the regular outside schedule on August 15. As the colder weather becomes more prominent, the outside play time will shorten accordingly, to a maximum of 1 hour. Our teachers will check the weather temperature and wind chill factor daily from about November 15 - March 15, or as needed.

Although the staff will use these guidelines, the decision will be made daily considering the weather at the time the children will be outside.

Nap Time

- All children at our academy will have a rest period. No child is forced to sleep; however, they should remain quiet. Older children and those who wake early will participate in a quiet activity until nap time is over. Please, try not to schedule pickups or visits during this time to lessen disturbance to the resting children. All children will rest on their mats with individual linens, sleeping bags, and blankets.
- Sleep is important for young children. It helps them learn better and stimulates their memory. During rest time antibodies and growth hormones are stimulated, protecting our children against diseases, and allowing them to grow healthy.

- We need to understand that there is a difference between a day at home and a day at daycare. At home, we take the time to wake up, the pace is slower, and the noise is limited. During daycare, the day often starts with an accelerated routine, surrounded by other children, indoor and outdoor activities. Daycare is exhausting! The child needs to rest to take a break from all these stimuli. It is possible for a child who does not nap during the day to fall asleep very quickly at night, because being exhausted he is not fighting sleep. On the other hand, his mood will be unstable and less pleasant in the late afternoon, a time when you would like to spend time with your family.
- And when a child is exhausted, bedtime could just as well turn into a tantrum. As for sleeping at night, it is important to establish a stable and predictable routine for the child and ensure that the last 30 to 45 minutes before bedtime take place in a quiet environment--no television or noisy games-to prepare his body for sleep.

Sick Child

Developing Illness Policy - if a child BECOMES ILL DURING THE DAY at the academy, to the point where he is not capable of participating in regular activities, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and be required to come pick the child up. If the parents/guardians cannot be reached the alternate emergency contact person will be called to come pick up the child. Common cold symptoms as well as non-communicable diseases do not require that the child be excluded from care.

If any of the following conditions are present, it is required that children be excluded from care:

- pain-any unexplained or undiagnosed pain.
- difficulty in breathing-wheezing or persistent cough
- fever (100 degrees F or higher)-child must be free from fever (without being medicated) for 24 hours before returning to care at the facility.
- sore throat or trouble swallowing
- -infected skin or eyes (mucus/pus draining) or an undiagnosed rash
- -severe body or scalp itching
- -vomiting (two or more times), may return to care after 24 hours without vomiting
- -diarrhea (two or more times), may return to care after 24 hours without loose stool

A child may return to care when he is free of symptoms or is approved to return by a medical doctor.

To maintain the healthiest environment for all children, we ask that parents please be respectful of the other attendees and staff members and REFRAIN FROM

BRINGING CHILDREN to the academy when a child exhibits any of the following:

- communicable disease (If it is difficult to recognize whether it is communicable disease, the academy's staff is responsible for contacting the health department)
- fever greater than or equal to 100 degrees F
- excessive drainage (clear or discolored) from the mouth, nose, eyes, and ears.
- red discoloration to the whites of the eyes
- skin rashes are difficult to diagnose unless seen by a physician.
- severe abdominal pain, vomiting or diarrhea.
- a deep, hacking cough
- difficulty breathing or untreated wheezing.
- yellow discharge from the eyes
- an unusual yellow coloring of the skin or eyes
- cuts or openings on the skin that are pus-filled or oozing -lice or nits.

Children should NEVER be medicated and then sent to the academy (i.e., given Tylenol to break fever). If your child will not be attending daycare due to illness or any other reason, please let us know as soon as possible. This will prevent activities from being delayed. If you are notified that your child is ill, you must pick up your child within 90 minutes.

Medications

No child will be given any medication, prescription or over the counter. Sunscreen lotion, diapering products and insect repellents may be applied with written and signed parental permission and instructions. All over-the-counter topical ointments, sunscreen and insect repellants will be labeled with a child's first and last name.

Injuries/Bites/First aid

It is common for children to receive bumps and scratches on occasion. The staff will use basic first aid procedures to care. If more care is needed for the injury, we will ask that you follow up with a physician's visit. Childcare experts agree that biting is common among

young children, primarily because of their lack of communication skills. Children who engage in this behavior usually stop through the guidance and direction of family and teachers. Our staff handles biting incidents by redirecting children from the situation. If another child is bitten, we immediately wash the site with soap and water. We maintain a completely always stocked first aid kit in the academy. All staff members attend training on health and safety issues. Qualified, registered individuals instruct the training sessions. In addition, we require staff members to be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for children and adults. Records for each child will include incident reports, medical and injury reports.

Abuse/Neglect

Storybook Academy is mandated by law to report any suspected child abuse and neglect. Child Protective Services (CPS) will investigate and determine if abuse/neglect is taking place. All investigations are confidential; therefore, staff members are not at liberty to discuss them, even with parents. Our staff attend training classes to become more aware of indicators of abuse or neglect. Staff members should call CPS IMMEDIATELY if they have ANY suspicion or if they see or hear the following:

1. The child disclosure of abuse
2. Repeated or unexplained bruises, welts, or burns.
3. A child showing extreme behavior.
4. A child that often does not have appropriate clothing for the weather.
5. A child who is often hungry, tired or seems neglected or not getting medical treatment as needed.
6. A child who shows signs of sexual abuse or who talks about or exhibits inappropriate sexual behavior.

Classroom Transitions

Our goal at Storybook Academy is to keep all children comfortable and stressless in their respective classrooms. We consider children's development progress prior to making the

decision of moving them on to the next level. Set guidelines have been established for each classroom, including chronological age and the development of social and self-help skills.

Always remember that our children do not develop at the same rate. Your child may be ahead in some areas and slightly behind the others. If you are worried about delays, talk to your child's health care provider.

Photography

We like to take lots of pictures at the academy to share with the children and the parents how much fun we have. We also request that you complete, sign, and return a photo release in advance. This allows us to photograph your child and permits us to use any photographs to highlight the academy's activities. If you have questions or concerns about the use of photography, please contact the director for further information.

Communication

Parent-Academy communications: If you have any specific questions about your child in care or want to discuss any child's needs, contact your child's classroom teacher directly. If the problem is not resolved, contact the academy's director.

If you need to contact the academy for any reason, please feel free to call (571) 225-4689. If we do not answer, we are out or busy with the children and unable to get to the phone at that moment.

Please leave a message, and we will return your call as soon as we get a chance. We would prefer it if you do not call us during nap time (12:30-3 pm). That will disrupt the children's quiet time.

Discipline policy

Storybook Academy is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment for all children in our care. Our discipline policy aims to promote positive behavior while

discouraging inappropriate conduct.

Acceptable Discipline Measures

1. Positive Reinforcement

Encouraging and acknowledging good behavior through verbal praise, stickers, or other positive reinforcement methods.

2. Redirection

Diverting a child's attention to a different, more appropriate activity or behavior.

3. Communication

Open and constructive communication with children about their actions, helping them understand the impact of their behavior on themselves and others.

Unacceptable Discipline Measures

1. Physical Punishment

Any form of physical discipline, including hitting, spanking, or any action that causes harm, is strictly prohibited.

2. Verbal Abuse

The use of derogatory language, yelling, or any form of verbal abuse towards a child is unacceptable.

3. Withholding Food or Rest

Children will not be denied meals, snacks, or rest as a form of punishment.

4. Humiliation or Shame

Actions that humiliate or shame a child, such as public reprimands or forced apology, are not allowed.

Discipline Process

1. First Incident

Staff will address the behavior using positive reinforcement and communication. Parents will be informed.

2. Repeated Incidents

If the behavior persists, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to discuss the issue and develop a collaborative plan for improvement.

3. Severe or Continued Misbehavior

In extreme cases or if the behavior continues, Storybook Academy reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment after careful consideration and attempts to address the issues.

Appeals Process

Parents have the right to appeal against any discipline decision within a specified timeframe.

Appeals will be reviewed by the academy's management.

This discipline policy is designed to maintain a supportive environment that fosters the well-being and development of each child at Storybook Academy.

Termination

Storybook Academy's Termination Policy

This policy outlines the circumstances under which the academy may terminate its contract with parents:

1. Non-Payment

If parents fail to make timely payments for childcare services, the daycare reserves the right to terminate the contract after providing written notice.

2.Repeated Violation of Policies

Parents are expected to adhere to all daycare policies. Repeated violations that compromise the well-being or safety of children or staff may lead to contract termination.

3.Failure to Provide Required Information

Parents must provide accurate and updated information about their child's health, emergency contacts, and other essential details. Failure to do so may result in contract termination.

4.Disruptive Behavior

If a child consistently exhibits disruptive behavior that poses a threat to the well-being of other children and staff, the daycare may terminate the contract after appropriate warnings and interventions.

5.Non-Cooperation

Parents are expected to cooperate with daycare staff and address concerns raised about their child's behavior or needs. Failure to cooperate may lead to contract termination.

Termination Process

- The daycare will provide a written notice specifying the reason for termination.
- If applicable, parents will be given a reasonable period to address and rectify the issue.
- In cases of immediate termination, the notice will include the effective date of termination.
- Parents have the right to appeal the decision within a specified timeframe.

This termination policy aims to ensure a safe and harmonious environment for all children and staff within the academy facility.

Inclement Weather Policy

When there is severe weather, please listen to the local news reports or the television or radio that relates to school closing. Storybook Academy follows the same schedule as Prince William County Public Schools. You will receive a text or call to alert you of the school closing or delay:

- If Prince William County Public Schools are closed, Storybook Academy will be closed.
- If Prince William County Public Schools open two hours late, Storybook Academy will be open two hours late.
- If Prince William County Public Schools close 2 hours late, Storybook Academy will close 2 hours late.

Parents must pick their children up as indicated.

Emergencies

- If your child becomes ill, we will call you on the phone numbers provided. You will be required to come to the school immediately to pick up your child or arrange for an authorized adult to pick your child up.

- Please report any changes in address, phone numbers or emergency contact people.

It is very important that we can always reach you.

- When choosing individuals to add to the emergency contact, please take into consideration the following information:

- They have access to a car and can drive to pick up the child from the academy
- They can pick up your child soon after the call is made
- They should be familiar adults to your child
- They are accessible by phone during school hours

- An emergency is a sudden, urgent, usually unexpected occurrence that requires an immediate response. Emergencies can be natural (such as an earthquake) or human-caused (such as fire).

Storybook Academy is prepared for many diverse types of emergencies.

- Staff and children practice different drills to learn what to do and how to act when an emergency occurs. We have all necessary emergency supplies such as water, food,

diapers, and communication devices.

- Communication is especially important before, during and after an emergency. Once the emergency is brought under control, parents will be immediately notified.

