

## **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PARENT HANDBOOK**

Information, Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

### **Purpose**

The Atlanta Academy provides a caring environment in which children can grow socially, emotionally, mentally, creatively and spiritually. In this environment children discover the inherent goodness in all that they are. It is an atmosphere in which children can learn to live effectively with themselves and others and also begin to acquire a sense of identity, while experiencing many chances for success. In a world that grows more competitive each day, the staff of the Atlanta Academy assists the children to experience happiness and success in a noncompetitive environment. By making material available in an interesting, exciting manner, children *can be children*; free to play, explore and imagine in the course of a child oriented day.

### ***From the Head of School ....***

Dear Parents:

As parents, you are the primary teachers of your children. As preschool educators, we also play a very important role in your children's lives. It is our goal to help prepare your children for formal education by providing them with a loving, caring, safe environment in which to learn. We also accept the responsibility to inform you periodically concerning the concepts and skills that your children are learning through play.

All children are unique and special. The staff at the Atlanta Academy strives to bring out the uniqueness in each of the children. We recognize that children whose basic emotional, social, spiritual and physical needs are met and nurtured through the preschool years will be ready and eager to learn the academics in elementary school. Consequently, we make age-appropriate materials available in such a way that inquiry is a way of life. The curriculum for each age level is based on thematic units developed so that every child can experience success, and children's self-initiated investigations are encouraged and supported.

The purpose of this handbook is to detail the philosophy, programs and general administrative policies of The Atlanta Academy's Preschool Program. Please read it carefully, and call if you have any questions.

Thank you for entrusting your children's very special years to us. I am looking forward to a wonderful year.

Sincerely,  
*Angela Naples*

## **Program Information**

The Atlanta Academy preschool programs will serve children in the Three, Four, and Five-year-old programs. Each class will be taught by a teacher and an assistant, and no class will exceed fourteen (14) children. Staff members have either a degree in Early Childhood education or previous experience in a preschool setting. All staff hold current certifications in first aid and CPR training and are expected to take continuing education classes each year. All of our programs offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum and each level builds on the previous one. Whether exploring the many facets of dinosaurs, traveling to Mexico, England, or the moon; play-acting famous fairy tales; collecting bugs, or experimenting with erupting volcanoes, our goal is to expose the children to a wide variety of wonderful units and provide an atmosphere of learning through play. Units are designed to develop readiness skills and they all provide developmentally appropriate activities directed toward that end. In addition to regular classroom activities and outdoor play, the children go to the Music Room for music and movement with our Music Teacher, Art Room for instruction with the Art Teachers, Spanish with the Lower School Spanish teacher, PE in the Gym with the physical education instructor and both Library and Technology instruction with the Media Specialist.

### **THREE YEAR OLD**

Our goal is to introduce our youngest students to preschool and teach them that school is a safe place to explore their world in many new and exciting ways. Our class combines independent play; large group, small group and individual instruction times; and various activities to support our phonics-based curriculum including: arts and crafts which introduce or reinforce fine motor skills; songs, chants and dances which reinforce pre-reading skills such as phonological awareness and letter recognition and the pre-math skills of identifying and repeating patterns or directions as well as working with gross motor movements; books, nursery rhymes and poems which encourage familiarity with print, letter recognition and the beginnings of phonemic awareness; and weekly cooking projects which introduce the pre-math skills of following multi-step instructions, counting and measuring. Science and Social Studies are introduced through activities on the Five Senses, the Seasons, Bugs and Butterflies, Families, Community Helpers, as well as many others.

### **FOUR YEAR OLD**

In our four-year-old program we encourage children to look for peer relationships; to play cooperatively with others, to share, contribute and interact with others in a group and to explore and to create! In addition, this program consists of a vast array of units and themes which concentrate on continuing to develop social skills while introducing Kindergarten readiness activities in a fun, exciting and developmentally appropriate way. In addition to social development the program focuses on letter recognition and sounds, handwriting, sight words, reading

readiness, simple math concepts, and exploring the world around us through science and social studies.

### **YOUNG FIVES**

This program organizes developmentally appropriate activities into many units and themes designed to accomplish readiness for Kindergarten as well as further strengthen the children's self-confidence and self-esteem. The luxury of five days affords the teacher the opportunity to more fully explore each unit with the children. Teachers encourage readiness to learn and question; utilization of the children's developing sense of responsibility; and their interest in pretend play, construction and simple games. This program offers a "kinder, gentler" approach for children who need an extra year to grow before entering a full day Kindergarten.

## **Admission Requirements**

### **ENTRANCE AGE\***

3 year old – 3 by October 1<sup>st</sup> \*

4 year old – 4 by October 1<sup>st</sup> \*

Young Fives –turning 5 from March 1<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup> \*\*

\* A copy of your child's birth certificate is required for our file.

\*\* The Head of School reserves the right to extend this cut-off date.

**NO EXCEPTIONS: All children MUST be toilet trained when school begins.**

**GOOD FAITH:** Children are accepted in good faith. Occasionally, however, it is necessary to remove a child from the program. The Head of School reserves the right to dismiss a child, if after a conference with the parents, she determines that it is in the best interest of the child and the School.

## **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

**APPLICATION DATES:** Application for admissions will be available beginning in December of each year

**PRIORITY** for enrolling children in The Atlanta Academy programs is given to children whose siblings are currently enrolled provided they register during the priority enrollment period.

**WITHDRAWAL:** If a child is withdrawn without thirty (30) days written notice, parents are obligated for an additional tuition payment.

**REGISTRATION FEE:** Unless your child is placed directly on a waiting list, payment **MUST** accompany the application.

**LATE PICK-UP FEE:** Parents will be charged for Extended School Care (ESP) in the event of late pick up.

**RETURN FEE –** Your account will be assessed a fee equal to the charge the Atlanta Academy pays for any returned payments.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School begins at 8:00 each morning, Monday through Friday, and ends at 12:30 for half day and 3:00 for the full day program. Please be prompt both in bringing your child to school and in picking him/her up. Center activities begin promptly each day and are disrupted by late arrivals.

**SCHOOL YEAR:** The school year runs from August to June. School holidays are listed on the school calendar.

**ABSENCES:** Please inform your child's teachers if your child will be absent. You may do this by calling the office. Voice mail operates 24 hours a day.

## **CALENDAR / WEATHER CLOSINGS**

The school is closed when Fulton County is closed due to adverse weather conditions.\* Fulton County announces school closings and delays on local radio and television stations.

The Head of School reserves the right to open/close the preschool even if Fulton County does not. In those cases, parents will be informed via local TV and radio stations. There will also be a message on the school phone.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**HEALTH & IMMUNIZATION RECORD:** An **UP TO DATE** medical form, including immunization records within twelve months of the beginning of school must be on file in the Atlanta Academy office before you drop your child off on his/her first day. Please send in an updated immunization forms when your child goes for his/her yearly check-up.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS and ALLERGIES *must* be brought to the attention of the director and teachers. If your child's food allergies are severe enough to warrant the use of an epi-pen if exposed to allergens, you must provide your own snack daily for your child. On special birthdays and holidays in the classroom, please remember to send a special treat for your child also.

HANDWASHING: Studies have shown that proper hand washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. So, in an effort to provide as germ free a learning environment as possible, the children are required to wash their hands when they arrive at school and often during the day. There are bathrooms and sinks both in the Atlanta Academy hallway and in the classrooms. MEDICATION: The staff will not administer any medications except for allergic reactions such as a bee sting and any prescribed medicine in a labeled prescription bottle describing name of medicine, dosage, and frequency. This will be limited to no more than 2 weeks, unless authorization by a physician is obtained. In addition, arrangements must be made by parents for pick-up and delivery of medications. All noticeable adverse reactions will be noted and the parent will be immediately alerted. Any medicine administered will be recorded in the school's Medical Log.

Forms for administering medication can be obtained from the Director.

OBSERVING ILLNESS AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: All staff members are responsible for observing children for any symptoms of illness or injury and report them to the Head of School. The following procedure is to be used if a child has a sore throat, inflammation of the eyes, fever, lice, ringworm of the scalp, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, or other illness or conditions having the potential to affect the health of other persons in the preschool:

1. The child shall be brought up to the school clinic
2. The child's parent, or an authorized emergency backup person when a parent cannot be reached, shall be contacted as soon as possible and arrangements made for the removal of the child from the preschool.

Parents will be notified within 24 hours if children have been exposed to a communicable disease. A child with a reportable communicable disease may not be admitted to or remain in the preschool during the period when the disease is communicable. The local public health officer and the other parents should be notified. A child may be allowed back when the parents provide a statement from the physician that claims the child is not contagious any longer, if required by the Department of Health.

ILLNESS: For the well being of all the children and the staff, your child should not be sent to school if any of the following conditions exist:

1. FEVER and/or VOMITING. In case of fever or vomiting, your child must be kept home for 24 hours AFTER his/her temperature is normal and/or vomiting has ceased.

2. FREQUENT and PRODUCTIVE COUGHING and SNEEZING.
3. RUNNY NOSE accompanied by GREEN DRAINAGE or RUNNY NOSES that require constant wiping.

NOTE: Sick children will be sent home. If your child arrives sick he/she will not be permitted to stay. Also, if your child becomes sick during the morning, you will be called and required to pick him/her up immediately.

#### INJURIES

A daily record of injuries to the children shall be kept in the center medications and injury log book. Records of injuries shall be reviewed by the Head of School with the staff at least twice each year in order to determine that all preventive measures are being taken. There shall be documentation in the log book that reviews have taken place.

#### EMERGENCY PLANS:

**Inclement Weather:** In case of tornado or any severe weather children will assemble in the indoor recreation area and will be monitored by faculty and staff until severe weather conditions subside.

**Fire:** In the event of fire students will exit building through nearest exit door according to previously established plan that has been practiced.

**Power Outage:** In the event of a power outage or any other loss of utilities, parents will be notified to come and collect their children. Faculty and staff will stay and monitor children until all have been picked-up.

**SERIOUS ILLNESS, INJURY OR DEATH:** In the event of a serious illness, injury or death, 911 will be called. Roswell City Paramedics will respond to all emergencies in this area, and children will be transported to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. We will supply parent contact information, medical authorization, and any medical history that we have on file. We will immediately contact the parents.

**LOST CHILD:** If a child goes missing from the Preschool or on an outing from the Preschool the police would be called immediately. A note would be made of all the circumstances surrounding the disappearance in order to help the police with their investigations. The authorities would then advise about informing the parents/guardians of the child and the next steps to be followed.

**EVACUATION/SCHOOL CLOSING:** If the National Homeland Security Council advises the closing of schools during the school day, we will immediately put the phone tree into effect. In addition, e-mails will be sent and a message will be recorded on the answering machine in case the phone line is busy. Children will be dismissed through the carpool line and all school activities will be cancelled. If we cannot reach you, a teacher or an administrator will supervise your child until you arrive.

**IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF BUILDING:** In the event of a bomb threat, fire, or other catastrophic event the children will follow the procedure practiced for fire drills. Teachers and administrators will use cell phones to contact homeroom parents to begin the phone tree.

**FIRE DRILLS / SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS /EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS:** Fire drills are conducted monthly. Severe weather and emergency evacuation drills are conducted monthly.

**EMERGENCIES:** If you need to reach the Atlanta Academy staff in an emergency, call the school office (678-461-6102).

**TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS:** Staff will not be transporting children; parent volunteers will be used to transport them. Any parent transporting children will be required to have a Georgia registered vehicle, a valid driver's license that has been in effect for at least one year, be at least 21 years of age and have proof of complete insurance on the vehicle. The school does not carry non-owned automobile insurance. The chaperone for each group on field trips will carry the following information for each of their children (there will be no more than 4 children assigned to a single adult):

1. A complete list of children in their care.
2. An address and phone number where a parent or other adult for each child can be reached in an emergency.
3. The name, address, and phone number of the child's physician or medical facility.
4. Written consent from the child's parent for emergency medical treatment.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENTS: ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN:** Safety and well-being are vital to the growth and development of children. Helping to ensure the safety and well being of the children in our care is part of our job as teachers, part of our duty as citizens and part of our partnership with parents. Children should be given every chance to live and grow, free from abuse and neglect. In accordance with Georgia Law, The Atlanta Academy staff members will report observations or suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services. By our institutional guidelines, suspicion that a minor has been abused or neglected will be reported to the Head of School. She has the duty to ensure that the allegation is reported to the Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Social Services. The Head of School will follow the guidance of the Child Protective Agency regarding notification of parents or legal guardians. Suspicions of child sexual abuse by a member of the Atlanta Academy staff, or volunteer, will be reported to the Head of School. A staff member, volunteer or employee who is accused of child sexual abuse will be suspended, reassigned, or given leave pending the investigation. Any staff member/volunteer who admits, is found guilty of, or pleads no contest to charges of child sexual abuse will be dismissed.

**DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:** For the safety and security of the children and staff, the following procedures have been established.

- 1) **CARPOOL AND PARKING:** Parents and others who bring children to or pick children up from the Atlanta Academy should use the established carpool procedure followed by the rest of the school. If your child is coming late and you need to park, please do so in the front or side lot of the school and bring your child into the school. It is important to park only in lined spaces, to follow directional signals and to use extra care when driving through the parking lot. Also, please hold your children by the hand as you walk to and from your car. Please refrain from cell phone use during this time. Please do the same when picking up children early or from ESP.
- 2) **ENTERING AND EXITING THE BUILDING:**  Parents and others who are dropping children off or picking up may use either the main courtyard (front) entrance or the side entrance if they arrive between 7:40 and 8:00; if they arrive after 8:00AM they will need to ring the bell.\*
- 3)  **VISITING WHEN CHILDREN ARE PRESENT:** Parents and other individuals should enter through the front doors, and, unless dropping off or picking up children, sign in and obtain a VISITOR badge at the office.
- 4) For security reasons, the school doors are locked from the outside after 8:00. Doors are not locked from the inside and are always available as EMERGENCY EXITS.
- 5) **NOTE:** Children will not be dismissed to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian without prior written permission and proper identification.

## **GENERAL NOTES**

**TOTE BAGS:** Each preschooler is given an Atlanta Academy tote bag at the beginning of the school year. It will be the required school bag. Please do not bring backpacks or other bags. Additional bags are available for purchase through the school store.

**TOYS FROM HOME:** Children should not bring books and toys from home unless it is a designated Show and Tell day. We cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items and sharing issues tend to arise with non-school items. Threes may bring a "lovie" for nap time but it must stay in their rest cubbie until nap time.

**REST:** It is important that small children go to bed early. School is not fun for children who are tired when they get there. The day is a burden instead of a pleasure when that happens. *Please be sure that your child gets enough rest and eats a well-balanced breakfast before coming to school.*

**OUTDOOR PLAY:** We believe that fresh air and sunshine is important to growing children and we will go outside every day unless it is raining or dangerously cold. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather and be sure to put sunscreen on him/her before coming to school.

**CLOTHING:** The Atlanta Academy uniform will be required for the children in the Young Fives Program. Fours and Threes should wear clothing that is both comfortable and washable. Children should wear closed-toe shoes with rubber soles. Sandals, crocs, flip-flops and leather-soled shoes pose a safety hazard when children play on equipment. In addition, *all strings must be removed from jackets and shirts (hoods and hems). They pose an immediate danger to children when they play on equipment.* All clothing should be suitable for outdoor play and easy to manage.

**LABELS:** All items your child brings to school should be marked with his/her *FIRST and LAST* names.

**POTTY OR MESSY ACCIDENTS:** Please have a change of clothes (top, bottoms, socks) in a labeled Ziploc bag in your child's tote bag at all times. Occasionally there will be multiple messes and your child may come home with clothes belonging to the school or one of their friends. Please launder and return by the next day any "borrowed" items.

**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:** Birthdays will be celebrated for each child. Please let your child's teacher know in advance when you would like to celebrate your child's special day. Mini cupcakes, cookie cakes and other small treats are appropriate to be shared during the lunch hour. Parents may choose to come or send in the treats. Summer birthdays may be recognized at the end of the school year. Please check with your child's teacher with regards to food allergies in the class.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**VOLUNTEER NETWORK:** Many activities depend on parents volunteering their time and talents. We invite you to play an important role in your child's early education. There will be various times during the year that we ask for help.

## **CONFERENCES AND EVALUATION**

Teachers communicate verbally and in writing with parents in an ongoing manner during the school year to convey information about the progress of their children. In addition, teachers will discuss children's abilities and interests during informal phone conferences with parents in late fall as well as at formal conferences in late winter or early spring. While only one formal conference is scheduled,

parents or teachers may request meetings at any time during the year. Parents who wish to discuss their child should make an appointment with their child's teacher. Please remember that morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up are not appropriate times for conferences.

## **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Some young children go through a stage of difficulty in separating from a parent in a new or unfamiliar environment. Many times as preschool educators we see this occur at the beginning of the school year, but it can occur at other times as well. Generally speaking, most children pass through this phase quickly and become comfortable with being at school and separate happily from parents. However, the way we address this issue is vitally important to the child, the parents, and the preschool classroom. Most often, staying in the classroom with a child who is having difficulty prolongs her/his anxiety. So, we generally encourage parents to drop their child off and leave the room. We work with parents to formulate a strategy for a happy drop-off and we comfort a child who is having difficulty in ways he/she is used to, and we always assure the child that either Mom or Dad will return soon.

## **BEHAVIOR**

Appropriate behavior is encouraged and praised. When undesirable behavior occurs, positive guidance and redirection of a child's attention is generally sufficient action to end it. In extreme situations, a child may be given time out to think about his/her actions in the classroom, or be removed from the classroom to give her/him a chance to think about and/or talk about their behavior. Physically aggressive behavior, such as biting, kicking, hitting, etc. cannot be tolerated. To protect all of the children and encourage acceptable behavior, staff will intervene immediately if a child becomes physically aggressive. The Atlanta Academy staff will make every effort while children are at school, and we will always work closely with parents, to help children cope successfully in the world around them. However, parents must understand that consistently aggressive or disruptive behavior is not acceptable and will result in dismissal from the program.

## **ADDRESS / PHONE NUMBER / E-MAIL CHANGES**

Please let the office know if your address, phone number, e-mail address or emergency information changes.

## **QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS**

Communication is crucial to the success of our program. Anything that is unclear should be addressed immediately. Questions or concerns about your child or classroom activities should be discussed first with your child's teacher. If your child's teacher is unable to satisfy your concerns, contact the Head of School. Questions, comments and concerns about the facilities, program, staff or policies should be referred to Mrs. Naples, our Head of School.

***How to reach the Atlanta Academy:***

2000 Holcomb Woods Pkwy

Roswell, GA 30076

Office Phone: 678-461-6102

FAX: 678-461-6105

Angela Naples [anaples@atlantaacademy.com](mailto:anaples@atlantaacademy.com)

Patty Hook, Administrative Assistant, [phook@atlantaacademy.com](mailto:phook@atlantaacademy.com)

Office Hours: 7:40A.M. until 4P.M. year round

Summer hours are by appointment