



River Academy

Preschool & Learning Center

Family Handbook

2018-2019

Mission Statement

River Academy Preschool and Learning Center was created in response to the need in our community for high quality Early Childhood Education for young children. We want to ensure the best possible educational experience for your children while maintaining an environment of stability, safety, care, exploration and fun. We believe these to be essential elements in encouraging developmental growth educationally, cognitively, physically, mentally and emotionally as we address each learner individually and holistically.

River Academy will operate Monday through Friday, 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. The lobby of the building will be set up with a full-time receptionist and computer program that will only give the parent or primary caregiver access to the locked building with the right credentials, ensuring utmost safety for each child.

Philosophy

River Academy Preschool and Learning Center believes that each child is a unique and capable learner. Our educational programs exist to scaffold and build upon each child's growth and development through observation, assessment, documentation and interaction. We believe that the first five years of a child's life are precious and an invaluable time to nurture, promote and encourage social-emotional, cognitive, and character learning and competencies. We accomplish this through creating authentic and dynamic learning environments that promote curiosity, caring relationships and connections through developmentally appropriate individualized instruction.

The interactions the child has during this period of life are of utmost importance to us. Because of this, we encourage parent engagement and individualized curriculum based on child and family needs. We also train our educators to inquire, interact and introduce new knowledge and learning opportunities in a fun, creative, educationally stimulating way. We believe each day and experience offers a learning opportunity and outcome.

Curriculum

At River Academy, we believe that every child is capable of limitless possibilities. Independence, confidence and the 'Love of Learning' is our mission for all our students. The teachers of River Academy share a common goal...Learning is Fun. Through hands on, individualized learning groups, we help

inspire these young brilliant minds to connect and grow with fun interactive lessons. By individualizing our teaching styles, we have eliminated the outdated expectations that every child learns the same way. Our team is trained to assess every student to determine their V.A.R.K style. Your child may be a Visual, Auditory, Read & Write or Kinetic learner. However, they receive information...it is our goal to provide it to them in a fun, safe, nurturing environment. Allowing students to access information in terms they are comfortable with will increase their academic confidence. But it doesn't stop at academics. Compassion and respect is the foundation our lesson plans are built upon. Socialization skills are just as important to our youth as learning to read and write. Our doors are always open for parents who would like to experience the outrageous fun educational groups we provide to our students daily.

Goals

Emotional:

- To become independent and learn to be in control of their emotions
- To be able to express and deal with the emotions they have
- To learn how others express and deal with emotions
- To develop empathy towards others

Social:

- To be able to effectively interact with others
- To be able to respect others and the property of others
- To be able to function well in group settings
- To be able to understand why they should cooperate with others
- To be able to develop meaningful friendships
- To accept and know limits within certain settings
- To re-train senses when needed to accommodate dynamic stimuli and surroundings to enable multiple learning outcomes for all children
- To develop sensitivity and personal space of others
- To be open and accept new ideas

Physical:

- To develop small and large motor skills
- To learn the importance of good nutrition and self-care
- To develop lifelong, healthy habits

Intellectual:

- To develop a lifetime love of learning
- To learn observation and discussion skills
- To build upon natural curiosity

Creativity and Curiosity Competencies:

- To think, move, question, explore, touch, understand, infer, elaborate upon, pretend with, investigate, and invent
- To use and demonstrate multiple languages
- To understand patterns, similarities, and differences
- To develop grit and know how to persevere through challenges or obstacles
- To use, manipulate, identify, and construct with resources

- To sense, evaluate, and display confidence and curiosity
- To reflect and articulate findings

Self-Knowledge and Awareness:

- To become self-reliant and able to express needs, wants, and awareness's
- To develop habits of self-maintenance and choice
- To develop decision making skills
- To understand consequences of actions
- To problem solve
- To engage in new activities comfortably and construct meaningful conversation and deliberation when not comfortable
- To make self-adjustments
- To have and express emotion and feelings and know multiple ways of being able to express them in healthy ways and allow others the same privilege

Hours of Operation

Child care services are provided from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. If your child is at the River Academy past 6:00 PM you will be charged \$1 per minute on your next bill.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children anywhere from six weeks to five years of age.

Registration Fees

There is a registration fee due at the time of enrollment. Registration fees are \$100 for one child and \$150 for two or more, plus a monthly materials fee of \$10.

Immunization Records

The state of Idaho requires that we keep current immunization records on file for all children attending our facility. Therefore, we ask that you provide us with such documentation on your child's first day of attendance. As your child receives new immunizations, we ask that you bring in updated copies so we can keep our records current.

Any child whose parent has submitted to us a certificate signed by a physician licensed by the State Board of Medicine, stating the physical condition of the child is such that all or any of the required immunizations would endanger the life or health of the child, shall be exempt from this requirement.

Immunization Policy

Please do not bring children back to school until the NEXT day after they get their immunizations. It does not have to be 24 hours after getting immunized, we just ask that you please do not bring them back to the River Academy on the same day of receiving their immunizations or flu shot.

Illness Policy

When a child becomes ill while still in our care, but does not require medical attention, we must determine whether exclusion from the center is necessary. We understand that parents depend on us to provide care for their children, but on the other hand managing illness in a preschool and child care setting is extremely difficult.

There are three things to consider when determining if a child needs to be excluded from care:

- Illness prevents child from participating in normal daily classroom routine and activities
- Illness requires a level of care that is greater than we can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children
- Illness poses a risk to others

If any of these criteria are met, the child will be excluded from the center, regardless of the type of illness. The parents will be called, and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible.

Temporary Exclusion

Temporary removal from child care is recommended when the child has any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher taken axillary (armpit). An unexplained temperature above 100 degrees in a child younger than 4 months should be medically evaluated. Student shall remain out of center for 24 hours after fever breaks.
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting more than two times in the last 24 hours, unless it is determined to be caused by a non-communicable condition, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Blood in stool not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other symptoms.
- Mouth sores with drooling.
- Severe coughs, rapid or difficult breathing, or wheezing.
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes.
- Pink eye
- Tuberculosis, until the child's physician or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
- Impetigo, children may not return until sores are dried and healing and antibiotics have been used for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Strep throat, or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after treatment has been started.
- Head lice or nits, until after the first treatment, and no live lice or visible eggs (nits) are present.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Chicken pox, until all lesions have dried and begun to heal.

If your child misses a day due to illness, please notify the center by 10:00 AM that day.

Medication Policy

From time to time it may be necessary to bring medication for your child while they are attending the center. The administration of medicines at River Academy shall be limited to:

- Prescribed medications prescribed by a health care provider, with written permission from the parents or legal guardian.
- Over-the-counter medications recommended by a healthcare provider, with written permission from the parents or legal guardian.

Before we assume responsibility for administering medicine, we must have clear, accurate instruction and medical confirmation of the child's need for medication while in the facility.

For prescription medications, the parent or legal guardian shall provide the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with:

1. Child's name
2. Name/Strength of medication
3. Date the prescription was filled
4. Name of health care provider who wrote prescription
5. Expiration date
6. Administration, storage, and disposal instructions

For OTC medications, the parent or legal guardian shall provide the medication in the original, child-resistant container. The medication must be labeled with the child's first and last name, as well as legible instructions on container for administration. We will also need the name and contact number for the healthcare professional who recommended the medication for the child. **WE CANNOT GIVE MEDICATION TO CHILD IF THE LABEL INDICATES THE CHILD'S AGE OR WEIGHT IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR THAT MEDICATION.**

Allergies

Due to peanut and nut allergies, River Academy is a peanut free school. Please do not bring any food to share that contains nuts or peanuts. Our peanut policy focuses attention on peanuts because it is the most prevalent of allergens. Our food allergy policy is not a guarantee that a student never experience an allergy related event at school. Our goal is to decrease the risk and provide safety for all children.

Nap Time / Quiet Rest

It is the policy of the school and state licensing requirements that all children five years of age and younger have a minimum of 20 minutes of rest if they are in care for more than three hours. Children will rest on mats. Parents will need to provide a crib sized sheet to cover the mat as well as a small blanket. Napping material will be sent home each Friday for parents to launder and return Monday.

Mandated Reporting

All staff and administration are mandated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual. Neglect is the failure, refusal, or inability, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, shelter or medical care. Staff that reports abuse or neglect in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability. Staff that fails to report suspicion are subject to fines or imprisonment under the law.

Our facility is committed to supporting and helping families prevent child abuse and neglect. Some strategies we use to do so are as follows:

- Train staff to avoid one-staff-one-child situations if possible. If scheduling requires one adult to be alone with one child, the parent is always informed at pick-up or drop-off.
- All staff has up-to-date background check
- Interactions between children and staff are always observed
- Uses proper names for body parts
- Never forces children to give affection
- Let the children know that if they have questions about someone's behavior, the best thing they can do is ask about it
- Explain that secrets can be harmful
- Is attentive to signs of stress in parents and struggles in the parent-child interaction
- Communicates regularly with parents concerning a child's progress
- Provides an atmosphere for parents to share their experiences and develop support systems

Holidays and Other Closings

From time to time, the center may be closed for a holiday observance or because of an emergency.

Holidays:

- New Year's Eve closing at 4pm, New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Non-Discrimination

River Academy adheres to the policy that no person be excluded from participating on the grounds of race, creed, sex, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation or income.

Special Rights/Needs Policy

River Academy strives to include all children. We will assess and provide all reasonable services and educational options/strategies upon interview and intake to meet each family's unique needs. If, however, our services do not extend to the needs, it is our desire to cooperate with the family and refer

to an alternative program in our community. We will make every effort with staff and training to work effectively with each individual need. It is our desire to serve all children, and we acknowledge there may exist more effective programs for severe needs already established in the valley.

Non-Religious Policy

River Academy values each individual human being and strives to see great value in uniqueness. We are a non-denominational organization and do not use religion for instructional time. Periodically, however, we will expose children to multicultural experiences that may have religious tones. Children are never required to participate in these activities and they are meant only to provide education and a multicultural experience.

Parents/Primary Caregivers are encouraged to partner with the educator in their child's classroom to provide points of interest from their unique family and culture. We strive to have diverse and dynamic cooperative environments.

Anti-Bias Environment

River Academy provides a safe learning environment for all learners. Our anti-bias environment encourages and promotes a celebratory attitude regarding diversity. We will seek to educate and instruct positive and healthy responses if prejudice, stereotyping or biases are produced within our safe classrooms. Our anti-bias attitude values differences among genders, races, lifestyles, cultures, learning differences, physical abilities and religions.

Discipline Policy

At River Academy, our goal when disciplining children in our care is to give them the tools and support they need to make more appropriate choices throughout their life. We use a series of preventative steps to help avoid behavior problems before they arise. These steps have been put into place to help build trusting relationships between the children and the staff so that they will feel more comfortable overcoming difficulties and becoming better decision makers. If our behavior guidance methods are proving to be unsuccessful, a caring and positive approach will be taken regarding behavior management and discipline. The teachers will focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. Our goal is to help the children develop self-control and responsibility for their actions.

Withdrawals

Parents who desire to withdraw their child from River Academy must present to the educator and the Director written two weeks' notice of intention to withdraw. Failure to provide this documentation to both parties will result in liability for all fees, tuition or other outstanding bills.

Dismissal

River Academy reserves the right to dismiss a child (in our sole discretion) if the child's educational, medical or other needs or issues cannot be met or are impeding upon other student learning. If this

occurs, the family will not be required to submit the two-week notice and will not be charged after the day of dismissal (this does not include fees pending/owed).

Staff

River Academy Educators and Caregivers of Distinction:

Our philosophy of teaching and instruction is based upon building relationships and believing each child has abilities, intelligences and gifts.

Our approach is to observe, document, encourage, and facilitate dynamic and diverse learning opportunities for each unique child.

Our Educators:

- Encourage a thriving, creative and curious learner in self-expressiveness and exploration of their environment.
- Believes that the family is the child's primary source of care and understanding and cooperates in a manner that serves the family's needs holistically. There is utmost importance placed on parent engagement and home and school collaboration.
- Conducts classroom and care based on the belief that each child comes as a competent human being with something to contribute and gain from cooperative and collaborative discovery based learning, settings and stimuli.
- Maintains a belief that uninhibited free play is natural and necessary for growth, development and language acquisition.
- Facilitates unstructured time for observation of child's creative tendencies and abilities to create and structure curriculum around their natural curiosities.
- Implements various forms of documentation to capture the ways children learn, see, experience, and communicate their learning process and make available curriculum, resources and learning opportunities accordingly.
- Encourages different points of view and "out of the box" thinking by employing inquiry and project based instruction, listening and documentation techniques.
- Have a great love for each child and the learning process of each and every human being.

Infants

Infant care is offered for ages six weeks through fifteen months, or until desired milestones are met. All infants develop at different rates, which means some may transition into our toddler program as early as the child's first birthday, while others may benefit from more time in the infant room.

This program provides essential bonding, nurturing, feeding, daily interactions, relationship building, and safe, developmentally appropriate stimuli exploration.

Targeted Milestones:

- Manipulating objects
- Has begun some communication and comprehension
- Walking
- Engaging in some level of self-feeding

- Parent Engagement:
- Hold, cradle, sing to, read to, and play on floor with.
- Listen to, imitate sounds, talk during daily activities.
- Place on tummy, encourage muscle development and crawling.
- Assist pulling up and support standing.
- Make multi-textured toys, rattles, and safe stimuli available for handling and fine motor manipulation.
- Teach simple commands and communication through sign language and verbal prompting, (i.e.: bye-bye, hungry, more, etc.).

What to bring for your child:

- Bottles
- Breast Milk/Formula
- Baby foods (River Academy offers breakfast, lunch and snacks to those eating table food)
- Diapers and wipes
- In the event of soiled clothing, spare clothes may be needed, please be sure that they are size and weather appropriate
- Any necessary medication such as; rash ointment and fever/pain reliever

Toddlers

Depending on the child's development and the parent's comfort level, our toddler programs are offered to children twelve to fifteen months and continues until three years of age.

These programs provide a nurturing and educational classroom setting and assists children in reaching necessary developmental milestones, social interactions and investigation and exploration of the environment.

Targeted Milestones:

- Feeds self
- Walks up steps using alternate feet
- Begins using toilet daily
- Has developed daily hygiene and nutritional patterns and habits
- Attempts to put on shoes and socks
- Uses 3-5 word sentences
- Engages with adults and peers
- Sorts things, capable of manipulating toys with parts, plays make believe
- Expresses self, can turn pages and pretend to read, has begun reaching fine and gross motor competencies
- Has developed social skills and can follow simple instructions

Parent Engagement:

- Name colors, animals, shapes, numbers, etc.
- Provide toys for bathtub time, interaction, and engagement.
- Encourage drawing, art, block building, reading, make believe play, etc.
- Spend time exploring outside together, name what you see.
- Let child help in daily developmentally appropriate chores.
- Help child build language, "What's that?", and "What would you like to eat?"

What to bring for your child:

- Diapers and wipes
- Crib sheet for nap cot, and a blanket
- In the event of soiled clothing, spare clothes may be needed, please be sure that they are size and weather appropriate
- Any necessary medication such as; rash ointment and fever/pain reliever

Preschool & Pre-Kindergarten

River Academy's preschool program begins at the age of three and continues until the child is Kindergarten ready.

These programs introduce children to early literacy/language, reading, mathematical and scientific concepts, music and the arts, continued social and emotional growth, and character development. Our programs offer a rich environment for students to explore and master. Once this occurs, the student is encouraged to enroll in Kindergarten programs.

Targeted Milestones:

- Balance on one foot, jumps, engages with activity stimuli (throwing, kicking, catching)
- Letter, color, object recognition, counting, time, etc.
- Bathes, dresses and undresses self with minimal assistance
- Washes hands, brushes teeth, maintains hygiene and toilet habits
- Engages in group games
- Asks questions
- Knows and can recognize first and last name
- Takes turns and understands the concept of sharing and personal space of self and others
- Spoken and attempted written language, reading exposure

Parent Engagement:

- Point out letters in child's name in resources.
- Encourage art, music, technology, and various stimuli to the senses.
- Facilitate the counting of objects.
- Encourage songs, poems, stories about environment, colors, shapes and educational materials (i.e. maps, time, routines)
- Provide outside time and interactions with adults and peers, introduce group games and cooperative learning.
- Encourage daily chores, hygiene and responsibility.
- Encourage character development including sharing, taking turns, asking questions, seeking to understand and clarify.
- Provide craft materials for book making, nature gathering and documenting, making necklaces and creating environments for insects.
- Encourage make believe and inventive play.
- Make scientific exploration available through magnets, sink and float, etc.

What to bring for your child:

- Crib sheet for nap cot, and a blanket

- In the event of soiled clothing, spare clothes may be needed, please be sure that they are size and weather appropriate
- Any necessary medication such as; rash ointment and fever/pain reliever
- Diapers and wipes (if applicable)

Children enrolled in the prekindergarten program must be completely potty trained.

All children are expected to bring weather appropriate clothing for outside time. Recesses take place all year long and is an important part of each day.