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Welcome!

Apple Tree Academy wishes to welcome you and your child to our program. This booklet is designed to answer many of your questions about our program, policies, and procedures.

At *ATA* we are always glad to have parents or other observers drop by to view our program, and we encourage you to do so. We have special observation times so that the children's programs are not interrupted. Please call and schedule a time that is convenient for both our children and you.

ATA strives to be a valuable early care and education program for children of all ages. We assure you that the *ATA* program, personnel, content, and management excel in quality; our center exceeds licensure standards. Our team of professionals consistently works to attain *Missouri Accreditation Standards* within our learning environment, curriculum, and staff education.

Please keep this booklet or download a copy at **appletree4kids.com** for future reference.

History

ATA has been in existence since 1995 serving children from birth to 12 years of age. *ATA* is in compliance with all state regulations. *ATA* strives to maintain these standards and follow all codes of ethics of the *National Association of Young Children*. *ATA* is a member of the *NAEYC*. *ATA* is also an active member in the *Missouri Association of Childcare Providers*.

Description

ATA is a part of Kids & Company, L.L.C. and is governed by members within the Limited Liability Company who are interested and experienced in early childhood education. This company has been in the child-care business since 1995 and is the leading early care and education site in Jefferson City, Missouri. *ATA* has been awarded the Gold in *The Reader's Choice Awards* in our local community.

Kids & Company, L.L.C. is licensed with the *Missouri Secretary of State* under Tax ID Number 88-1085438.

Meeting State Licensing Requirements

- *ATA* is licensed by the *State Department of Health and Senior Services, Section of Childcare* which could allow *ATA* to care for up to ninety-nine (99) children at one time with overlap. *ATA* has one announced and one unannounced state inspection each year. *ATA* has annual health and fire inspections. *ATA's* renewal process is based upon a two-year cycle.

Non-Discrimination Regarding Children

ATA admits children of any race, color, religion, national origin, sex and qualified children with disabilities to all rights, privileges, programs and activities of the Center and does not discriminate on the basis of any of these factors in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, fee payments, food service program and other school administered programs.

Children with disabilities are also enrolled through ATA's regular enrollment process if we can adequately meet the child's special needs. In many cases the necessary special services are available through *First Steps* or the *Special Learning Center* if the child is under three.

If the child is older than three, the Public School System is responsible. If ATA is unable to meet a child's special needs because necessary facilities, services, or staff are not available, we will assist the family in finding a more appropriate placement.

Diversity*

ATA is very fortunate to have families who represent a variety of cultures. We welcome their sharing of activities and customs with the classrooms. Many different types of families are represented in the center as well. Children learn to recognize and accept this type and other types of diversity, through social interaction and planned learning activities in the classroom.

ATA does not want any child to feel different, left out, or discriminated against because of race, nationality, family type, disability, or religious preference/non-preference. ATA is a child's world where everyone is special and respected.

**To simplify the text in this handbook, the term "parent" is used to mean a child's primary care giver – in some cases that person is a foster parent, a grandparent, guardian or co-parent.*

Non-Sexist Environment

ATA supports the elimination of sex role stereotyping in all activities and encourages children to express emotions.

Confidentiality

ATA considers all information regarding enrolled children and families confidential. ATA will not discuss a child with anyone other than pertinent staff, regulating bodies, accrediting agencies, legal guardians, custodial parents, or with those persons or agencies authorized by the family with a signed, written release of information. ATA adheres to federal and state statutes concerning a child's information.

Center Descriptions

ATA

- Open year round/full day services.
- Serves eighty-six children ranging from birth-twelve years of age.
- Toddler Unit hours: 6:45 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Preschool and School Age programs: 6:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- State licensed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Section of Childcare.

Classroom Placement

Mixed-Age Classrooms

- Children are grouped into classes based on mixed-age grouping. The reason for mixed-age classes is simple: separating children by age denies them a whole range of social and intellectual stimuli.
- Children of various ages learn from one another; more experienced students present the knowledge they have acquired to their younger classmates which assigns them a socially responsible role and results in more successful learning for both parties.

ATA Teacher-Child Ratios

- Birth - two years/1:4, maximum group size: 8
- Two - four years/1:10, maximum group size: 20
- Five - fourteen years/1:16, maximum group size: 32

Notes

- Summertime ratios may be up to 1:16 for school age children.

Communication

- Sign-in/sign-out tablets are located at the entrance of each center. Parents must sign their child in/out daily and record the time of their arrival and departure.
- Journals and/or daily notes are provided for each child and used as a communication device between parents and teachers daily.
- Daily messages are also displayed throughout the entryway and classrooms describing the activities of the day.
- Should parents need to contact them, teachers are available during their scheduled hours. If a teacher is *not* available, program administrators are scheduled to be in the building at all times.
- Administrators may be throughout the building in the different classrooms and are available for questions about the center.
- Though time throughout the day to do daily journal entries is not always possible; please check journals regularly. Please look for daily messages or reminders posted on the entry bulletin board, classroom bulletin boards and/or sign-in/sign-out sheets in classrooms and through our e-mail list.

Information for Families

An important part of ATA's mission is to provide our families with information that makes the difficult job of parenting a little easier.

- ATA publishes a monthly newsletter containing reminders of important upcoming dates, deadlines, events, themes, and activities.
- Parents may join our e-mail list so that they can receive e-mail reminders concerning important deadlines and other ATA information.
- Notes, reminders and wish lists may also be found in cubbies throughout the school year.

Parking

Please keep everyone safe by driving slowly and carefully - there are many pedestrians (adults and children) as well as cars pulling in and out of spaces on both sides of our lots. Our requested speed limit is a maximum of 5 miles per hour.

Arrivals

Attendance

- If your child is unable to attend, please notify us by 9:00 a.m. to help us plan activities and allow teachers to go on walks or trips as planned without feeling “we should wait another ten minutes for...”
- *If your child is unable to attend due to illness, please describe his/her symptoms to help us stay aware of current health problems.*

Adjusting to school: Leaving Your Child

For children who are new to ATA, we suggest a brief visit before your child’s first day. We offer a half-day free of charge to help your child adjust to our program. After that, if your schedule allows plan to stay ten minutes the first day or so of enrollment and/or pick up your child early.

Helpful Tips:

- If you remain in the room, try to discourage lap sitting and attempt to get your child interested in a toy, the teacher, or a peer.
- Never suddenly disappear – this can be quite distressing for your child.
- Tell your child you are leaving, that you will return, exchange hugs and kisses, and leave quickly with a smile.
- It is important not to give your child mixed messages; be positive and happy as you leave. Forlorn or worried glances from parents convey to the children that this may not be a fun experience after all.
- Try not to feel guilty if you leave your child in tears; teachers are accustomed to this behavior and almost all children cease crying within a very short period.
- Please feel free to call ATA to check on how the day is going. Remember that it sometimes takes a week or two before a child feels comfortable and secure about coming to school. If it is taking longer for your child to adjust, we will begin a joint plan of action.
- Please keep the teachers informed of all changes or of any distress your child may be experiencing.

The Importance of Arrival Time for Your Child

- Please bring your child to the adult in charge and be certain the teacher or aide acknowledges you and your child’s presence before you leave.
- The person bringing the child should sign the child in (time and drop-off person’s initials) on the sign-in sheet in the child’s classroom and put all belongings in the child’s cubby.

- *Never drop your child off at the door or leave him or her in a classroom if there is no staff person present – if there is no staff person present, please check immediately with the office. This rule applies to school-age children as well as younger ones.*

Departures

- When you come for your child, make a point of saying good-bye to the adult in charge.
- *Check your child's cubby daily for messages, artwork, or written work.*
- Sign your child out.
- Please remember that all persons picking up a child from ATA should have identification with them in case the supervising adult has not previously met them. *ATA staff members are trained to never release a child to an unidentified person. Please keep your child with you at all times when leaving the classroom and the building.*

Authorized People to Pick Up Children

- Only people that you authorize on your child's enrollment form may pick up your child. If it becomes necessary for an unauthorized person to pick up your child, we will need to receive your approval in the form of a note or phone call from you stating that person's name and telephone number.
- This person will need to sign a special form in order to pick up your child from the premises. If the individual is unknown to ATA staff, we will need to see some form of personal identification. *We can only release your child to those persons you designate in writing and that person must be at least 14 years old.*

Child Custody

- Parents should keep staff current with the latest developments in custody disputes. We will then inform the rest of the staff of any changes.
- The staff is aware of which policy to follow when there is a problem concerning custody.
- *A copy of the latest court order is to be in the file in order for staff and police to compliant with the request.*
- In a threatening situation, or when the safety of others is at hand, the child may be released. *ATA will not be held liable if this type of situation should arise. We will not jeopardize other children and staff in this situation. Please keep your child at home if needed.*

Transportation

ATA's Bus:

The main purpose of having the bus is to transport school-age children. The bus is also used to transport children to and from a variety of activities including swimming and other field trips.

- *Car seats and boosters will be installed only at ATA.* This is due to the complex arrangement of seats, the safety skills of a trained installer, and the importance of teachers remaining in supervision while on a field trip.

Parent Permission

- A signed parent permission form is required for all trips that require bus transportation.
- A signed parent permission form gives *ATA* teachers permission to take children on walking field trips.
- If a parent forgets to sign for each separate trip, we will make every effort to contact the parent to get permission.
- If you do not wish your child to attend the field trip, you will be responsible for care until the class returns.
- No child will be transported in a private car without a staff member present unless you are the parent or guardian, or written permission is given by the parent/guardian.

Field Trip Supervision

- For all classrooms, there must be adequate adult coverage in order to leave the premises.
- When leaving the facility to go on field trips not in close proximity to *ATA* there must be two staff members present at the place of activity to assist with supervision, specifically a lead teacher, an assistant teacher, a part-time aide, administrator, a CIT, or a volunteer.
- In some instances, at the discretion of the administration, one teacher may be authorized to accompany children to specified locations.
- All trips away from the building must be pre-approved by the administration.

Emergency Preparedness during Transportation

- Teachers take a copy of enrollment forms, children's health records, and a first aid kit on all field trips.
- Our emergency treatment release form will be taken on all field trips and shall be taken to the emergency room or doctor's office with the child should the child require immediate medical attention.
- In the event a child must be transported to a doctor's office or hospital and the parents or other designated people on the emergency treatment card are not available, an ambulance will be called.
- In the event of an emergency, the emergency treatment release form gives *ATA* staff permission to call an ambulance for transportation to the hospital and for the hospital to administer emergency care.
- The ambulance and emergency personnel fees will be the responsibility of the parents. Should the child need the services of an ambulance and the parents cannot be reached, an *ATA* staff member will provide the completed child health assessment form to the emergency staff.

- When a staff member accompanies a child to a source of emergency care, he or she will remain with the child until a parent or parent's designer assumes responsibility for the child.
- Any serious injury requiring hospitalization shall be reported by the next working day to the administration.
- *ATA staff will not drive a sick or injured child to a doctor's office or hospital.*

Guidelines for Referrals and/or Termination of Care

If serious adjustment or behavior problems occur after a child is enrolled, a conference will be scheduled so that the teachers and director can talk with the child's parents about the situation.

A written action plan will then be developed outlining steps to be taken to solve the problem/s. The director may set a short-term trial period or enforce the following:

- **Program Referral** – *ATA* may recommend supplemental services for a child with developmental, psychological, or medical problems. Jefferson City Public School, or surrounding school districts, will provide a complete developmental screening free of charge for preschool-aged children who are referred to by parents or teachers. Areas tested include hearing, vision, speech/language, gross and fine motor skills, cognition (thinking and reasoning skills), and social development. If special services are needed, the staff of those facilities will provide them, or the child will be referred to other agencies or programs.
- **Childcare Termination** – If a parent or parents refuse the recommendation, or if these services are provided and the child's condition does not improve satisfactorily, or if continued enrollment of the child does not represent the best interest of the child, *ATA* administration reserves the right to give written notice to the parent or parents, indicating termination of all childcare services ending in fourteen days. If the child's behavior is physically or emotionally dangerous to other children or staff, immediate termination may be necessary. Child-care services may also be terminated immediately if the behavior of a parent or other primary caregiver is verbally or physically abusive or disrespectful to a staff person or other children or parents in the program.

Grievance Procedure

- If an *ATA* parent or guardian has a grievance or wishes to appeal an administrative decision, the first attempt to resolve the issue should be by the parties involved.
- If a solution is not reached, a formal grievance may be filed in writing with the executive members of *ATA* for the purpose of reaching a satisfactory solution for all concerned.
- A letter should be sent to the members stating reasons for the appeal and other pertinent information. The committee will examine the issue as quickly as possible and notify the parties involved of their decision.
- *ATA* members have final authority in deciding issues relating to center policies and procedures. Appeals to any other entities or outside entities will not be considered.

Parent Liability Statement

If a child under the age of eighteen injures a person or damages property maliciously or willfully, the person so injured can recover damages from the parent up to \$1,000 as is provided by Missouri State Law), unless it is found that the malicious or willful actions were the result of parental neglect, in which case there is no limit to the amount of liability. This law holds the parent, not the teacher or center, liable.

Emergency Closing Procedure

- The director will announce any changes in ATA 's hours of operation via the media – KWOS and KRCG, and ATA 's official Facebook.
- In the event there is an emergency affecting only ATA (no heat, water, etc.), we will be closed or will operate on reduced hours.
- If inclement weather necessitates canceling of the day's activities or if the weather is severe, ATA reserves the right to cancel services or alter hours if weather conditions are extremely dangerous.
- Because ATA incurs salary and other fixed costs when closed, we cannot refund fees for the rare days we must be closed.
- ATA does not follow the public-school closings.

Emergency Preparedness

- Fire drills are scheduled once a month throughout the year. Each classroom practices using different escape routes.
- Tornado drills are held monthly from March through September.
- Fire and tornado drill procedures are posted in each classroom and all staff is trained to know what to do in these kinds of emergency situations.
- Classrooms serving children with disabilities have special emergency plans assigning responsibility for the disabled child.

Emergency Security Plan

In response to the increasing number of security concerns brought about by school violence events in other areas, we felt it was necessary to develop an emergency plan to assure the safety of both children and staff in the center.

- We now have the ability to contact the local police or sheriff's office immediately for assistance in case a dangerous situation occurs in or near the center.
- There are also procedures in place to move all children and staff to the safest possible locations as quickly as possible.
- Drills will be held each semester so that children and staff can become accustomed to the procedures just as they do for our regular fire and tornado drills.
- *If a potentially dangerous situation exists at the facility outside of our building, we will follow our shelter-in-place procedures. All doors and windows will be locked and access to the building will be monitored closely. All children and staff will remain inside the building, but all other regular activities will go on normally.*

- We also have an evacuation plan in place in case there is a need to move all children and staff out of any of our buildings. *In situations like a suspected gas leak or bomb threat, staff will immediately move children to our designated evacuation site either in the Capitol Projects Building or the Seven-Up/Dr. Pepper plant – all of which are located on East McCarty Street - where they will remain until we know it is safe to return. Parents will be notified of the emergency by cell phone, the local media, and our website.*

Staffing

Professional and Support Staff

ATA’s Administrative Staff

- Executive Director
- Program Director
- Assistant Directors

Support Staff

- Kitchen Cook/and or Kitchen Assistants
- Coordinator of Units
- Classroom Teachers

Classroom Schedules

ATA’s schedule is designed to meet the needs of varying age levels and the needs of individual children.

Activities are also balanced between individual and group activities, quiet/listening oriented activities, and more action play periods. Our curriculum features cognitive development, fine and gross motor development, and social/emotional development through a variety of readiness skills, as well as arts and crafts. We have times when the children choose, along with planned teacher instruction. There is a rest time if appropriate. A sample pre-school schedule is below.

Time of Day	Routine	Possible Experience	Theme Activities: Nutrition
6:30-9:00	Arrival/Breakfast	Listening to stories, free choice activities	Reading stories about nutrition. Listing food groups and different exercises in the room. Painting with potatoes, collages with food. Planting seeds, making a vegetable garden. Using props such as farming tools, apron, gloves, etc. Seeing what happens when vinegar and baking soda mix. Singing songs like “Peanut Butter and Jelly”. Using computers, pen, pencils, envelopes, recipe cards. Sorting and counting bag of frozen vegetables. Using shovels, pie pans, rakes, wheel barrels, etc. Dancing to Music. Making vegetable stick people Pudding Play Singing songs like “Fried Ham” and “Brush Your Teeth”. Reading Books like “Grandma’s Cooking” Playing with the Farmer’s Market set.
9:00-9:15	Circle Time	Meeting/Discussion Organizing Data Personal Writing	
9:15-10:15	Learning Centers	Art Board/Card Games Construction Cooking Dramatic Play Planting Exercise Play Sand/Water Mud Pies	
10:15-11:00	Outdoor Play	Explore outdoor areas and outdoor activities	
11:00-12:00	Lunch		
12:00-12:45	Large Group	Listening to stories, free choice	
12:45-2:00	Nap		
2:00-3:00	Quiet Centers	Puzzles Books Listening Station Games Writing	

3:00-3:30	Snack/Large Group		
3:30-4:30	Centers	Cooking Sensory Music Personal Reading Personal Writing Block and Accessories	
4:30-5:30	Departure	Table Activities/Outdoor Play	

Curriculum

Creative Curriculum

ATA's Educational Program uses the *Creative Curriculum*, which is an approved curriculum by the State of Missouri, Department of Education. This is an approach to teaching that is based on what we know about how children learn. *Creative Curriculum* embraces teaching strategies and resources that are consistent with validated theories of learning and development. Through "hands-on, minds-on" experiences, students in *Creative Curriculum* classrooms attain deep understandings in the core content areas while they also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers and to be lifelong problem solvers.

This curriculum and assessment are research-based and is linked to the *Missouri Show Me Standards*. The program is designed to address the whole child including the following areas: social, moral, cognitive, representational, and physical development domains. Comprehensive, ongoing training supports implementation of *Creative Curriculum* and participant-centered professional development programs while *Creative Curriculum Institutes* provide staff with opportunities for teachers and administrators to invent practical strategies which support children's ways of thinking and challenge them to construct new knowledge.

Overall, our program fosters children's literacy and language development, helps children develop scientific and mathematical knowledge, use art, construction, music, movement, and play to promote learning. Lessons are planned with both the individual child and the group in mind.

Children in all ATA classrooms will experience a well-rounded curriculum which draws from many areas of development including the following:

- Language and Memory
- Large and Small Motor Skills,
- Dramatic Play
- Art and Sensory
- Health and Safety
- Pre-Literacy
- Pre-Math
- Pre-Science

As part of creative development, children will be allowed to use materials freely and to move with spontaneity. However, this freedom does not mean the child functions without direction. Teachers will encourage children to develop the habit of observing, questioning, and listening by modeling these behaviors themselves. They will help

children feel free to make choices, to experiment, to change, and to respect the feelings and rights of others.

Toddler Rooms

Toddler rooms also heavily focus all year long on self-help, independence, and social development. Children will gain experience and knowledge through both child-initiated and teacher-directed activities with a strong emphasis on curiosity, exploration, and fun! The teaching staff strive hard to maintain a very warm, comforting, and loving environment for our toddlers, as they are the youngest members of the ATA community. We work on sign language with the toddlers to help them express themselves.

Sample Toddler Room Daily Schedule

7:15 – 8:30 Arrival and Free Choice Areas - see lesson plans.

8:30 – 9:00 Breakfast and Clean-Up

9:00 – 10:00 Free Choice Areas - see lesson plans.

10:00 – 10:40 Outside Time or Indoor Large Motor Activity

10:40 – 10:45 Juice/Water Break

10:45 – 11:15 Art/Sensory Activity

11:15 – 11:30 Circle Time and Wash Hands

11:30 – 12:00 Lunch

11:45 – 12:30 Complete Diapering Rotation, Prepare for Nap

12:00 – Lights out for Nap.

2:45 – 3:30 Waking Up, Quiet Activities, Complete Diapering Rotation

3:15 – 3:30 Snack (start time depending on naps)

3:45 Afternoon Circle Time (if there is time)

4:00 – 4:45 Outside Time or Indoor Large Motor Activity

4:45 – 4:50 Juice/Water Break

4:50 – 5:30 Free Choice Areas (see lesson plans), Late Day Diapering

5:30 – 5:45 Children who are still here transfer to the Butterfly Room, the gathering room for the toddler wing.

Pre-K Rooms

Pre-K rooms are designed to offer a stimulating learning environment in preparation for school, while maintaining a play-based approach with developmentally appropriate activities. The teachers work hard to plan engaging projects and use innovative ideas that address the diverse needs of each group while promoting creativity and exploration. Additionally, our older preschool rooms have a more pronounced emphasis on handwriting, pre-reading, and pre-match skills as they approach the transition to kindergarten.

These rooms also continue to build on the toddler and preschool rooms' foundation of self-help skills, independence, and social development. There is a balance of child-initiated vs. teacher-directed activities and children have many chances to participate individually in small groups or as a large class. Children will also begin to do a great amount of choice making in the preschool classrooms, providing them with experience in controlling their own activities.

Summer Session

ATA Camp

Camp Apple Tree offers programs for ages five to twelve. These children participate in many field trips and outdoor activities during the summer. Some trips are by *ATA* van or bus while others by walking. If temperatures reach ninety-five degrees and the heat index is in the dangerous range, outdoor activities, including swimming, will be restricted. If possible, the *ATA* bus will be used to transport children to and from some field trip locations instead of having them walk during hot weather or if there is a sudden weather change.

Before/After School Programs

ATA offers a before and after-school program for kindergarten-sixth graders.

- We provide transportation from as many schools as possible, dependent upon enrollment and the closing times of the schools.
- School-age program teachers plan daily activities to meet the varied needs of young primary children.
- Care is also offered when the public schools are closed.
- During the summer, primary-age children may attend full days, part days, every other week, hourly or drop-ins. Preference is always given to applications for five-day enrollment.

Tablets for Classrooms/Internet Policy

Preschool and school age classrooms have computers for the children to use.

A variety of educational programs and games are available for children who choose to use the tablets.

School age children have access to the Internet after signing a usage agreement and the parent must sign a permission slip as well. If the child breaks the contract, they will be unable to use the Internet. Your child will only be allowed to visit sites which appear on a pre-approved list provided by *ATA*.

Classroom Procedures

Naps and Rest Time

Following lunch, a nap or rest period is provided for all children. Nap and/or rest time is scheduled from 12:30-2:30/3:00 with a great deal of variation from room to room.

Usually the younger the child, the more rest is needed. For older children who do not sleep, quiet activities are provided. You must supply a small blanket.

Toilet Training Requirements

We have excellent toilet training programs in the toddler and two-year-old rooms.

- Teachers and parents work together to determine when children are ready to begin training. Each child's readiness and needs are taken into consideration so that the training process is a positive one for the child.

- Parents who have children in the two-year-old rooms should work closely with the classroom teachers to ensure an effective training program, both at home and at *ATA*.
- Children accepted in the preschool program must be out of diapers and completely toilet trained, as some of these rooms are not set up for toilet training. We realize, however, that young three-year-olds, as well as some older children, may have occasional accidents, especially at the beginning of the fall semester. **Pull-ups without Velcro sides are not allowed.**
- Because of occasional accidents (and other possible “messy” incidents), parents are responsible for having a complete extra change of clothing in the child’s box. *ATA* cannot be responsible for providing an extra set of clothes for a child, although the staff tries to have extras on site in case of emergencies. (Matching appropriate clothes with the correct size and gender is very difficult.) If the child does have to wear such extras, it is important that the center’s clothes be returned the next day. In some cases, a parent might be called to bring in a set of clothes for the child.

Birthday Celebrations

Please DO NOT bring invitations for birthday parties held outside *ATA* unless all children in a classroom are invited, since the feelings of children not included can be easily hurt. Please be sensitive to ALL children’s feelings and find another way to distribute such invitations outside *ATA*. If your child would like to celebrate a birthday or other special occasion with classmates, treats may be brought to share, generally at snack time. No food can be brought into the center that is homemade. Individually wrapped items or other food items must come from an inspected kitchen. Many families bring sweets, but we also suggest and encourage nutritious snacks. If you wish to provide a drink, please provide 100% fruit juice only.

You and other family members are welcome to come and join the celebration or even plan games or activities. Please make arrangements with the classroom teachers so they can be prepared for the type of treat or celebration that will occur.

Television/Video Policy

Although videos and television are part of arrival and departure times, naptime, rainy days, and special activities, they are not regular parts of the daily curriculum schedule. If they are planned for occasional classroom use, they must be educational in nature. Any videos or movies proposed for use are first screened by the director or teachers and must be G-rated or family-oriented.

Observance of Holidays

ATA is very fortunate to serve families who represent a variety of cultures, faiths, and personal beliefs. Because we feel it is the parents’ responsibility or prerogative to determine the extent that religion should play in their children’s lives, we do not celebrate religious holidays at *ATA*.

However, throughout the year classrooms may learn about various holidays around the world and study them in relation to planned curriculum themes. Teachers who are trained to keep in mind the difference between *learning* about a holiday and *celebrating* it. While

many of our families celebrate various holidays, both commercially and spiritually, *ATA* does not attempt to recreate them. Instead, it is our goal to help children become aware of the many beliefs and celebrations which vary from their own.

We do plan some celebrations or projects around holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Families who do not wish their children to take part in holiday or birthday celebrations at *ATA* should discuss possible options with the classroom teachers and the executive director. Alternative activities may be provided in the office or in another classroom, or the family may choose to keep the child home when these activities are scheduled.

Cell Phone Policy

Our classrooms are "cell phone-free environments". This policy maximizes opportunities for parent-child and parent-teacher communication during drop-off and pick-up times. You are welcome to use your cell phone in building hallways, but not in our classrooms or cubby rooms. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

What to Bring to School/School Supplies

All children should bring.

- a complete change of labeled clothing, including underwear and socks and two or more complete changes for toddlers and two-year-olds.

Children in the toddler and two-year old rooms should also bring.

- at least a one-week supply of diapers *or* three pairs of cloth training pants *or* regular underwear if the child is toilet trained. Pull-ups without Velcro sides are not used at *ATA*.
- wipes and ointments with proper permission slip.

Cot Sheets

ATA provides cot sheets for each child. These are laundered weekly/more often if needed. Please take your child's blanket home at the end of each week for laundering.

Bringing Toys, Food, and Pacifiers to School

Because bringing toys, gum, or candy to school can frequently cause disagreements or misunderstandings among children, we prefer that these items remain at home. Teachers cannot be responsible for toys brought to school. *Friday Show and Share Time*, however, is an exception, when favorite toys maybe brought to share or to complement a specific classroom theme.

ATA encourages parents to monitor the toys a child brings, as we promote non-violent interactions among children. (*ATA* provides toys that do not promote or imply violent actions.) Make sure items are labeled and picked up after school. If your childcares to share a video or an animal, insect or some other "discovery", please make prior arrangements with the teacher.

Meals

Child and Adult Care Food Program

ATA participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program as administered by the Missouri Department of Health.

- *ATA's meals and snacks meet or exceed the daily requirements set forth by the Department.*
- *The Missouri Department of Health audits the Program each year.*
- *ATA requires that parents sign an annual enrollment/income eligibility form.*
- *All children receive the same food services regardless of income category.*
- *ATA provides a hot breakfast, hot lunch, and an afternoon snack. Infants are provided with formula, cereal, jar foods, etc.*
- *The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in this program are based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*
- *ATA fees automatically include breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all full day programs and breakfast and after school snacks for the before and after school program. (On full days when school is out, school-aged children receive breakfast, lunch, and snack). Please observe the scheduled serving times for your child's program. If your child arrives after serving time in his/her classroom, please provide breakfast or lunch at home before coming to ATA.*
- *Food or drinks from home should not be brought into the classroom unless it is something prearranged to be shared with the whole group for a meal or snack. If your child brings food with him/her on the way to school, please have him/her finish it before entering the classroom.*

Health Requirements

Medical and Dental Requirements

- *The Health Department requires a pre-entrance health assessment conducted by qualified medical personnel within six months prior to enrollment for all children attending a center. It is the parent's responsibility to fulfill this requirement on or before the child's first day of attendance or to have scheduled appointments by that first day.*
- *Parents who do not comply with the regulations will be asked to withdraw their children because they jeopardize ATA's licensing status. *The completed medical form is due within the first thirty days of the child's entrance into ATA.**

****Immunizations required by the Missouri Department of Health are as follows:***

By the time the child is:	Immunization(s)
----------------------------------	------------------------

3 months, he/she should have -	1 DTaP/DT, 1 Polio, 1 or 2 Hepatitis B, 1 Hib, 1 PCV
5 months, he/she should have -	2 DTaP/DT, 2 Polio, 2 Hepatitis B, 1 or more Hib, 2 PCV
7 months, he/she should have -	3 DTaP/DT, 2 Polio, 2 or 3+ Hepatitis B, 1 or more Hib, 3 PCV
19 months, he/she should have -	4+ DTaP/DTP/DT, 3+ Polio, 1 MMR, 1 or more Hib, 4 PCV after 12 months of age, 3+ Hepatitis B, 1 Varicella

*The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) allows a four-day grace period, so public, private, parochial day care centers, preschools, or nursery school attendees may receive immunizations up to four days before they are due.

These timelines are critical! The immunization record is due before a child begins attending.

Other Recommended Immunizations

Immunizations that are recommended, but not required for toddlers and preschool age children include.

- Hepatitis B Vaccine (HBV)
- Homophiles Influenza Type B (HIB)
- Varicella (VAR)
- Rotovirus (RV)
- Hepatitis A Vaccine

See schedules of vaccinations online with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Immunizations for Kindergarten Age Children

- Children entering kindergarten are required to have at least one dose of the DTP and one dose of the polio vaccine on or after their fourth birthday.
- A second MMR immunization, Varicella (chicken pox) and HBV (Hepatitis B Vaccine) are now required before a child enters kindergarten. A photocopy of the form you turn in to your child's public school is acceptable.
- The Cole County Health Department gives immunizations for a small fee, or you may make an appointment with your own physician.
- Special health forms are available from the Health Department or at *ATA Academy*.
- Yearly dental check-ups are recommended for children 2 years and older.

Illness Reminders

When to Keep Your Child(ren) Home

Parents should keep children at home and notify *ATA* whenever there are signs of illness, including:

- a temperature of 100 degrees under the arm.
- an upset stomach within the last 12 hours.
- any undiagnosed rash.

- sore, discharging eye, ears, or running nose.
- a fresh cold, accompanied by sneezing, coughing, and congestion.
- lack of appetite, listlessness, irritability, unusual fatigue.

Children must be fever free without medication for a full 24 hours before coming back to school. If your child is sent home with a fever of 100 degrees or higher, he/she will not be allowed to come back to ATA the next day.

This policy will be strictly enforced. If a child's temperature is in the 99 -100-degree range, we will take the temperature a second time (approximately 15-30 minutes later). If the second reading is again in the same range, the parents will be called. If the child has other significant symptoms or the temperature is over 100.0 degrees, the parent will be called immediately and asked to take the child home.

Illness Occurring at ATA

- Upon arrival each day, your child will be observed by an ATA staff member for symptoms of possible illness, fever, or contagious diseases and will be sent home immediately if such symptoms are present.
- If your child becomes ill and/or has a temperature of 100 degrees and/or has two episodes of vomiting or diarrhea, we will call you to take your child home. We cannot care for sick children, as we do not have the facilities or the extra staff.

Contagious Disease Exposure

- Please do not give your child medication to reduce fever before bringing him/her to school. This masks the problem, and your child could then infect others or become ill later in the day.
- If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease such as whooping cough, chicken pox, mumps, measles, diphtheria, or scarlet fever, please report it immediately to one of the teachers, administrators, or the office. If your child has one of these illnesses, we must report it to the Health Department.
- Children with chicken pox may return to school after an absence of five to seven days from the onset of illness but may return to school before the recommended time period has elapsed if he/she has a written permission slip from the physician.
- When a child has more than one incident of vomiting or diarrhea, he/she should be kept home at least 24 hours after the symptoms disappear. We strongly suggest that normal eating habits and normal bowel movements have resumed before returning to ATA, even if it has been twenty-four hours since the last episode.
- If a child has ringworm or impetigo, he/she can return to school when adequate treatment controls the spread. This is usually after being treated for at least twenty-four hours.
- Children with pink eye should be kept at home until twenty four hours of treatment with antibiotics have been completed.

Head Lice

- If your child has head lice, please use an effective shampoo, wash, and clean all bedding, furniture, rugs, toys, clothing, car seats, and call us.

- ATA's policy requires that all nits (eggs) be removed from the head before the child can return to school.
- A child will be sent home even if only a few nits remain. Please notify us if your child has been exposed to someone with head lice.

Healthy Practices

Hand Washing

Parents and teachers can help prevent the spread of disease by modeling frequent hand washing and by requiring children to wash their hands when arriving in the classroom, before eating, after going to the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/sneezing. Please practice these procedures at home; we will do the same at ATA.

Outdoor Play

ATA feels that it is far healthier for children to go outside every possible day rather than be confined indoors.

- When your child is not well enough to go outside, please do not send your child to school - we do not have the staff to have one teacher remain inside with one child. If a physician recommends it for a day or so, we will need a note in order to make arrangements with the office personnel while his/her class plays outdoors.
- Children in the toddler and two-year-old classrooms do not go outdoors if the temperature or wind chill is below twenty degrees. Children in other classrooms do not go out when the temperature or wind chill is below fifteen degrees.
- If the temperature or heat index is ninety-five degrees or higher, children do not go outdoors, and swimming trips may be altered.

Clothing for Indoor/Outdoor Play

- All ATA children should be dressed in comfortable clothes. Teachers are dressed informally to allow participation in all types of activities.
- For safe climbing and walking, tennis shoes are recommended, rather than slippery shoes, flip-flops, or cowboy boots.
- The children will be going outside almost every day, so please make sure your child is appropriately dressed. This includes mittens, hats, and boots so that he/she will enjoy playing for ten to thirty minutes in very cold weather. Fresh air and exercise are very important to your child's health and well-being, but in order to enjoy the outdoors, all children need appropriate clothes to help them feel more comfortable outside.
- Please avoid sending your child to school in expensive or special clothes that might be damaged during active or messy play.

Soiled Clothing

Please check your child's cubby or diaper cubby each day for soiled clothing.

- If a child has an accident or becomes wet for any reason and does not have extra clothing, we will call the parent to ask that either clothing be brought to school or that the child be taken home.

- ATA staff will not rinse out any soiled clothing due to health and sanitation guidelines. However, the staff will attempt to remove solid waste from the article of clothing as best as possible. The soiled clothing will then be wrapped in plastic and must be taken home by the family.

Sun Safety Policy

ATA wishes to encourage students to protect themselves from the sun.

Skin cancer is the most prevalent cancer in the United States, is linked to sun exposure in youth, and is preventable. ATA promotes practices that help protect children from the sun. Sunscreen is classified as an over-the-counter drug, with guidelines for safe and effective use. Because of risks such as stinging or irritation of the eyes or skin in applying it, we follow the policy below.

- Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for their child's health, including his/her need for sun protection.
- Children are not allowed to bring sunscreen to school. Sunscreen is not applied by ATA staff.
- Sunscreen is to be applied by parents before their child comes to school. One application (approximately enough to fill a shot glass) should be applied, even on cloudy days. Since in appropriate weather ATA begins the day outside, and since it takes approximately thirty minutes for sunscreen to take effect, it should be applied in a proper time frame before the child leaves home. Sunscreen used should be rated for eight hours of sun protection.
- Children should also protect themselves by covering up their skin with clothing, a hat, sun visor, or sunglasses, provided by parents. This applies to overcast days as well as sunny ones, since harmful UV rays can damage skin even when the sun is not visible. These practices could help children begin a healthful, life-long habit of skin protection.

Accidents/Incidents

The term "accident" refers to an undesirable or unfortunate happening that occurs unintentionally and usually results in harm, injury, damage, or loss. The term "incident" refers to an individual occurrence of an event, which is of seemingly minor importance, but relationships are strained and individuals may be sensitive. This can lead to serious consequences.

Accident, incident, observation, and report forms are filled out whenever such situations arise. Parents, staff, and the director sign these forms to be placed in the child's file. Accident prevention requires continuous awareness and implementation of safe practices. Teachers and parents must always consider the element of safety in everything they do with young children. This includes the environments they create, the selection of equipment, and individual activities.

All our teachers have had first aid training and are able to attend to minor injuries. In case of head bumps, it is routine procedure to attempt to notify you of the accident by phone and to give you the details. We watch these children for symptoms associated with concussions, such as dizziness, dilated eyes, and vomiting.

All precautions are taken to avoid accidents from occurring. However, "children will be children"; they can trip over their own feet, lose their balance, or put something into their

ear or nose, etc - these types of occurrences are not paid for by ATA. We do have an accident plan, which covers out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the guardian to be paid after his/her private insurance claim has been paid.

We will contact you if we think a physician should see an injured or ill child, and we will prepare him/her to be picked up. In case of a more severe emergency, we will call an ambulance and notify you immediately. For minor accidents, teachers will note the incident on an individual accident report sheet, while more serious injuries that may require medical treatment will result in a more detailed two-page accident report being filed.

All families are required to give us a *detailed* schedule of where each parent is at all times of the day, including university buildings and room numbers so we can find you in case of emergency.

- Please notify us immediately if your home or work phone number changes.
- All families must also have an additional contact person listed on their emergency treatment card.
- If at any time a doctor, hospital or ambulance care is needed, the parent will incur financial responsibility.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

Missouri Law *mandates* that all personnel working in a licensed childcare center *must* report suspected child abuse or neglect. In fact, there is a penalty for violation of this reporting law. This act protects the people reporting to Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) from any liability, civil or criminal.

- All records and reports concerning child abuse filed with SRS or the district court are confidential and will not be disclosed.
- All teachers at ATA are aware of their responsibilities regarding this act and will alert the executive director should they see any signs of abuse or neglect.
- The director will contact the SRS, reporting any suspected cases.
- An SRS representative may interview a child or staff member at the center; parents will be notified following the interview.

Child Sexual Abuse

Because the staff at ATA knows that every parent is concerned about child sexual abuse, we

- discuss child sexual abuse during staff orientation for teachers and aides,
- have several books on sexual abuse, some of which are suitable for reading to children which you may check out,
- comply with the Missouri law which states that the name, address, and birth date of every staff member and volunteer must be sent to the Missouri State Highway Patrol for felony and child abuse confirmation checks,
- urge parents to make unannounced visits to the center at any time.

Medications

Non-Prescription or PRN Medicine

Non-Prescription or PRN medicine will only be administered to children under the age of two, who are enrolled in full day programs. Such medication (as needed) will be limited to the following list of authorized medication.

- non-prescription lotion
- petroleum jelly
- diaper cream
- teething gel

Children will be on medication for at least twenty-four hours before staff administers dosage. Designated personnel are authorized to administer non-prescription medication according to a physician's instructions. These individuals will have received proper training.

Prescription medications will be administered only when there is no other reasonable alternative to the medical requirement for the child, i.e. EpiPen or an emergency inhaler. Written permission from the parent or guardian must be obtained before administering all medication. (Permission forms can be obtained from your child's teacher.)

No Blanket Medicine Forms!

A separate form must be filled out for each symptom for which medicine is to be used. *Staff are not permitted to make any exceptions to this policy.*

Emergency Only Medicine

- Emergency only prescription medications (EpiPens, emergency inhalers, etc.) are administered by designated personnel authorized to give such medications according to a physician's instructions. These individuals will have received prior training.
- Children will be on medication for at least twenty-four hours before personnel administer a dosage. Staff can administer only medications on the authorized medication list. The director must review medications not included on this listing.
- Medication must be in its original container with a childproof cap and the prescribed child's name labeled on the bottom of the bottle.
- Written permission from a parent or guardian must be obtained before administering such medication. Permission must be obtained using the Release of Liability to Administer Emergency Medication Form. This form must have specific directions, to be completed in full, and be signed by the health care provider/physician.

Medication Storage

- Medication must be stored according to instructions. All medications will be stored in a container inaccessible to children.
- Medication requiring refrigeration will be isolated within the refrigerator in a separate, secure container.

- Medication will be returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the specified time or upon termination of the child's attendance.

Medication Documentation

- All medication administered will be recorded using the "Record of Medication/Consent to Administer" form.
- Each medication to be administered will require a separate form. A new form must be filled out each time a medication needs to be given, even if the child has been on the medication on a previous occasion.
- Nonprescription medication or PRN medication will only be updated semi-annually. The form will be put in each child's file upon completion of the medication period.
- The time of each dosage and the initials of the person administering medication will be entered at the time the dosage is administered.
- Nebulae treatments will not be given unless an alternative solution cannot be found.

Special Diets, Restrictions, and Allergies

ATA participates in the Department of Health Child and Adult Care Food Program, which requires that a child be served milk two times daily and that certain food requirements are met daily.

If your child is allergic to an item on the menu or has a medical condition that restricts certain foods, we *must* have a physician's written statement with suggested alternatives. In some cases, ATA may not be able to provide the alternative and parents will need to bring the alternate food items.

If your child is on a restricted diet due to a religious preference, please give us a list of these foods with *suggested alternatives for each food item listed*. You will need to share this with your classroom teacher and the kitchen manager. We may not be able to accommodate certain requests due to cost or preparation time required.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's program and to actively participate in activities and functions at ATA. They are also encouraged to observe at any time and to become acquainted with the teachers.

ATA Online

Parents may also sign up for our e-mail list so that they can receive e-mail reminders concerning important deadlines and other ATA information. Please stop by the office to give us your e-mail address or notify us if your e-mail address changes.

We post weekly lesson plans for your convenience on our website (www.appletree4kids.com). This is a wonderful way to enforce educational material at home or start a conversation about your child's day.

ATA Happenings

News and notes of interest to *ATA* families, including information about community programs and resources, are posted in the front entry area. (Reminders about important fee payment and enrollment deadlines are posted in the central area.)

Open Houses and Parent Workshops

Open House is scheduled each fall so families can become familiar with the school, the teachers, and their child's classroom. Each year *ATA* tries to offer workshops for parents based on their interests. These workshops include speakers who discuss topics centered on early childhood education.

ATA Family Events

ATA encourages families to take part in a variety of center events, including our annual *Donuts for Dad, Muffins for Mom, Story Hour*, etc. along with classroom parties and field trips.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled at least twice a year to report your child's progress in many areas. A sign-up sheet will be posted in your child's classroom with time and date choices. A written copy of the conference report will be kept in your child's file.

In addition to two scheduled conferences per year, special conferences may also be arranged at any time during the year upon parent or staff request. Please contact the lead teacher or director if you would like to schedule a meeting should you have any concerns or problems so that we can work together to solve. We are always open to questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Possible Parent Groups

Parents may request and help organize any type of parent group that interests them. Please talk with an administrator if you wish to organize or participate in such a group. We welcome ideas and involvement of this kind!

Parental Visits

Parents are welcome to visit or have access to *ATA* at any given time and are encouraged to do so.

Family Evaluation

Family feedback information is an important part of the evaluation process for all staff. At least once a year you will be asked to fill out a parent evaluation form. This is your opportunity to provide input into your child's program, to praise the teacher's efforts, to provide constructive criticism, to evaluate the total program, etc. *ATA*'s teachers, administrators, and Board of Directors take these evaluations very seriously, so please, let us hear from you!

Parental Concerns

ATA is your center; we are here to give you and your child the best possible service. Please don't delay in voicing your concerns: small worries tend to grow if they are not addressed. Please stop by and talk to an administrator at any time – if one is not available, leave your name and phone number, someone will contact you. Teachers are also available to talk with you, either in the morning, afternoon, or during their planning periods. Parents are encouraged to give suggestions on the family feedback form, or they may drop them by the office at any time.

Parental Input Regarding Safety

If at any time you should observe a safety hazard in any of ATA's buildings, playgrounds, or during walks/field trips, please speak with the director immediately!

Babysitting by ATA Staff

ATA families looking for childcare away from the center (outside of center hours) should approach employees directly or post requests in our office. (ATA provides the opportunity to post babysitting requests with the understanding that the program has no responsibility for the actions or behavior of any staff when that person is away from the center.)

Employees who are interested in babysitting can then contact the family requesting care. It is the family's responsibility to make all arrangements with the staff person.

ATA staff are not allowed to solicit babysitting jobs by posting information about themselves in the center; we do not circulate a list of names and phone numbers.

Full-time teaching staff may provide in-home childcare as long as the family does not have a child currently enrolled in the teacher's classroom. The personal relationships that are formed when teachers baby-sit for families make it difficult for teachers to remain objective. Real or perceived favoritism can become a problem along with the differing roles of babysitter and teacher. It is hard for them to "share" the special person who comes to their home to play with and entertain them. Please do not put our full-time teachers in this difficult situation by asking them to care for a child enrolled in their classroom.

Financial Agreements and Center Liability

Make all checks payable to ATA.

To meet the goals listed earlier in this handbook, it is essential that ATA maintain financial integrity by establishing and following sound financial principles and practices (incomplete)

Application/Re-application Fees

Families may enroll or have their child placed on the waiting list accordingly. An initial registration fee is charged at the time of application for admittance is made. When a child is withdrawn from ATA and the parent re-applies at a later date, another application fee is required. This process is called re-application.

Security Deposit

A deposit of one week's childcare fee is required at the time an acceptance to *ATA* is received. This deposit guarantees the child's enrollment in the center for a specific starting date.

Withdrawal Notice

A written notice of withdrawal is required according to the following deadlines:

- a. A written notice of withdrawal is required at least twenty-one days prior to the withdrawal date; otherwise, the security deposit and any fees paid to date are forfeited.
- b. *ATA* will not accept a request to withdraw a child from the summer session after the session has begun. The person(s) signing the summer fee agreement are responsible for full payment of all fees listed on the agreement.
- c. Should the administration of *ATA* terminate a child's enrollment due to a child's adjustment problems or parent behavior, the security deposit will be refunded if all fees have been paid in full up to the date of termination and all additional charges incurred have been paid in full.

Fees

Fee Schedule

Fees are set by the Members of the Board and are based on the classroom age and the family fee level according to state subsidies based on family size and income.

Notice of Change in Fee Schedule

Families will be notified forty-five days in advance of any change in the fee schedule unless a change is necessitated by a substantial change in a major funding source or a catastrophic event.

Fee Agreements

A completed, signed fee agreement is due no later than the first day of enrollment for fall and summer sessions. A child may not attend *ATA* until a fee agreement is on file. The agreement is written according to the information provided at the time of enrollment starting date, as to payment plan, and determined fee level.

Optional Care Sessions

Optional care weeks and attendance dates need to be confirmed by your child's teacher or the director as to possibly available openings.

Changes in Enrollment during the School Year

A written request for a change in the days/times of a child's enrollment during the school year must be given at least fourteen days prior to the requested date of change. If the change can be granted, a revised fee agreement will be issued. Written withdrawal from the program must be received twenty-one days in advance.

Fee Payments

A fee schedule showing the payment amount due and the due date is provided in your family fee agreement. Please read your fee agreement carefully!

Fees may be paid by check, cash, or money order. Credit or debit cards are not accepted.

- Fees are payable in advance. Generally, fees for the first half of the month are due on the first and are considered late after the fifth of the month. Fees for the second half of the month are due on the sixteenth and are considered late after the twentieth of the month.
- However, for the months of August, December, January, and May, all fees are due in one payment. This is due to the shorter schedule for these months. All fees for August are due on the first day of enrollment.
- All fees for December and May are due on the first of the month. All fees for January are due on the sixteenth of the month. Parents may pay monthly or by the semester by adding together semi-monthly payments on their fee agreement.
- Families whose childcare is partially funded by the DFS must pay the family share on or before the fifth day of the month. Parents must notify ATA of any changes in their DFS plans.

Late Payment Fees

Late payment fees are assessed when the scheduled payment date plus the five-day grace period do not make a payment. If a payment is still unpaid two weeks after the due date, the family may no longer use ATA's services. A five-day grace period will be allowed to provide the family an opportunity to secure funds for payment during which time the child may not be present at ATA, but fees will continue to accrue. If payment has not been received by the end of the five-day grace period, your child is considered to have been withdrawn and becomes ineligible for future enrollment. As soon as fees are paid in full – but no later than the fifth day of the grace period, the child may return to ATA. Thereafter, the next time fees are in arrears by the payment due date, services are immediately discontinued. In extenuating circumstances, appeals may be made to the Board.

Late Payment fees are as follow:

- First time each year* - \$15.00
- Second time each year* - \$15.00
- Third time each year* - \$30.00
- Fourth time each year - \$40.00
- Fifth time each year* – discussion with the Executive Director and Finance Director regarding enrollment of the child.

**A year is September 1-August 31.*

Unpaid Fees

ATA will take action to recoup unpaid fees through the Small Claims Court or by a collections agency.

Returned Check Charge

There is a charge each time a check is returned for non-payment. Currently the amount is \$30.00 per incident. This charge is set by the bank and the fees associated with bank service charges. The check must be redeemed in cash or money order within five (5) days of notice of returned check. Notice is placed in your child's cubby. If a pattern of returned checks continues, the family will be notified that they may no longer use *ATA's Academy's* services. The security deposit is forfeited at time of notice.

Late Pick Up Fee

There is a late pick-up charge if a child is picked up after 5:30 p.m. The amount is \$5.00 for being late and \$1.00 a minute thereafter. Please do not expect or make staff feel guilty as they ask you to sign the late fee form. They are only doing what is expected of them. Also, please don't arrive at 5:30 p.m. and linger within the facility. The staff deserves respect and have other obligations after their shift ends.

Receipts for Payments

Receipts will be emailed.

When making payments, drop the payment off in the gray payment box in the front area. If payment is made in cash, you must give it to a staff member for a cash receipt. Later you will receive a permanent receipt.

Forms for cafeteria plan reimbursement of dependant care expenses should be turned in at the front desk or have your child's teacher sign the form. The director/teacher will review the dates and amounts of the claim, sign the form, and place it in the child's cubby. Additional receipts will not be issued unless specifically requested.

Supply/Activity Fee

There is a supply/activity fee charged per semester during the fall and spring semesters and per month during the summer program.

Emergency Closing Policy

Because *ATA* incurs salary and other fixed costs even when closed, *ATA* cannot refund fees for those rare days when *ATA* must be closed due to emergencies.

Holidays

Because *ATA* incurs salary and other fixed costs even when closed, *ATA* families are charged for holidays when *ATA* is closed. The included holidays are:

- New Year's Day,
- Memorial Day,
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day,
- Labor Day,
- Thanksgiving and the day after,
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

- 2 In-service Days-One in the spring and one in the fall. (Will be announced annually.)

If these days fall on the weekend, they will be observed on the closest working weekday.

End of Year Statements

Statements of receipts for the calendar year are available from your child's teacher after January thirty-first. If you have left ATA, you will need to call or come by to pick up your year-end tax receipt.

Liability/Insurance Policy

Student Accident Coverage provides enrolled students full excess medical and dental coverage for accidental injuries obtained during school-sponsored activities. Coverage includes field trips and auto coverage for fifteen-passenger vans.

Any injuries on ATA premises should be brought to the attention of the Director or immediate teacher for assistance.

All charges should be submitted to your primary medical or dental provider.

Withdrawal

Canceling Enrollment Prior to Beginning a Semester*:

- Fall semester – notice required by June fifteenth
- Spring semester – notice required by November fifteenth
- Summer semester – notice required by April fifteenth

**If the date falls upon a national holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, the date of notice is due the next working day.*

- After fall or spring semester has begun, but before the deadline as listed above, a written notice of withdrawal is required twenty-one days in advance of the date of withdrawal in order to have the security deposit refunded (see Financial Policy section).
- A request to withdraw a child from the summer session will not be accepted after the session has begun.
- There will be no refund of deposit on withdrawals of enrollments received after June fourteenth for the fall semester, after November fifteenth for the spring semester, or after April fifteenth for the summer session.

Re-Admittance After Withdrawal

If a parent withdraws a child from ATA and later wishes to re-enroll the child, a new application for admission must be completed and the application fee paid. The child is placed on the waiting list according to ATA admittance priorities. The date of the new application is the date used for placement in the waiting list.

A child currently enrolled in the center who is withdrawn from the next semester and then applies for readmission the *semester immediately following the non-enrolled semester* shall have enrollment priority after children with continuous enrollment.

The child is placed on the waiting list with priority after children who are enrolled continuously (i.e., children who are new and attend ATA in the summer have priority for enrollment in the fall over those who have withdrawn for the summer.)

Parents will be notified of placement or non-placement immediately after July first, December first, or May first. This policy does not apply to those who complete the withdrawal/re-application process after June fifteenth for fall semester, after November fifteenth for spring semester, or after April fifteenth for the summer session.

Discipline

Positive Discipline

ATA implements Conscious Discipline (CD) which believes all behavior is a form of communication. By implementing the seven skills and seven powers of CD, ATA staff can help children and families learn self-regulation tools and achieve our program objectives.

Conscious Discipline Overview: CD uses a multidisciplinary brain model for discipline and identifies three brain states (Survival, Emotional, Executive), which guide our own internal states enabling us to teach appropriate social skills and conflict resolution strategies.

- Children are guided through choices, given self-empowerment, self-direction, and use of “Brain Smart” routines.
- By strengthening relationships/connections, power struggles can turn into conflict resolutions.
- Overall, with practice, CD teaches skills to transform difficult moments into life lessons.

Seven Skills of Conscious Discipline include:

1. Composure, 2. Encouragement, 3. Assertiveness, 4. Choices, 5. Empathy, 6. Positive Intent and 7. Consequences.

Seven Powers of Conscious Discipline:

1. Perception: No one can make you angry without your permission
2. Attention: What you focus on you get more of
3. Unity: We are all in this together
4. Free Will: The only person you can make change is yourself.
5. Acceptance: This moment is as it is
6. Love: See the best in others
7. Intention: Mistakes are opportunities to learn

1. Teacher implement CD strategies: Examples include but are not limited to; offer child two positive choices, re-direction, model different behavior, practice behavior with the child.
2. Teacher will ask co-worker or director for help.
3. Director will implement CD strategies: Examples include but not limited to; offer child two positive choices, re direction, model different behavior, practice behavior with the child.
 - If/when needed, the child will be removed from the group to take a brain break with the director.
 - If the behaviors continue, the director will email or call parent to try a “support call” and have child and parent talk.
 - After the phone call, director and teacher will follow up with calming strategies.
4. Director will follow up with parent at the time of pick in the same day.
5. Additional support may also be provided to teacher, such as: creating social stories, picture books, phone calls home mid-day, extra “helper” jobs, etc.
6. Discharge from the program may occur if the above strategies are not successful and the child continues to have hurtful behaviors.

Biting

“Bite” is a word that brings to mind all forms of fears and worries. We try to catch the deeds before they happen, but, unfortunately, it is not always possible. Children, especially toddlers and some preschool-age children, are not always very verbal, they cannot verbalize feelings and often show their feelings physically. With our help and guidance, they will learn to replace biting with appropriate responses.

Handling Biting Incidents*

1. Attend first to the child who is hurt. Comfort the child and strengthen the concept that you care and will keep him/her safe.
2. As much as possible have the “biter” stay with you so he/she may observe and assist with attending to and comforting the hurt child.
3. Attend to the bite as needed. A cool cloth or ice pack will usually soothe the bite. If the skin has been broken, first aid steps must be followed.
4. Remove the child from the play area for a brief period. The child has lost his/her privilege to be with the other children. Explain and simply reason with the child the basis for your actions, “When you bite it hurts people. “Biting hurts”.
5. Remain calm and firm. Speak in your natural voice and with authority. Convey to the child that you will not let children be hurt. The child must also know that you still like him/her but you do not like biting.
6. Be consistent with your interventions. The child will learn to count on the same behavior from you, which will aid the child in gaining self-control.
7. Report biting incidents to the parents of the children involved.
8. Reinforce the child as soon as possible for positive interaction with his/her peers.
9. Information about the biter and bite are confidential. We will not share this information with other parents.
10. The director or a member of management will be notified when biting incidents occur.

**If a child bites twice in one day, the parent of the biter will be called to pick their child up from the center. This will allow protection of the children in the classroom. We appreciate everyone's cooperation as we are ensuring the safety of all children.*

Disciplinary Action and Dismissal*

A serious “discipline problem” is defined as one in which a child is hampering the smooth flow of the program by either requiring constant one-on-one attention, is continually inflicting physical or emotional harm on other children or themselves, is physically abusing staff, or is otherwise unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the program.

When conflicts and inappropriate behaviors occur which disagree with ATA's goals and have not been resolved through positive techniques, it is then ATA's aim to work further with individual children. We strive to listen and learn more of what each child has to say, thereby hoping to resolve the conflict through effective communication.

If conflict remains, or a request to conform to a rule is ignored, possible actions include:

- A child will not be allowed to participate in a particular activity for a short period of time, or the child will be asked to sit quietly until he/she is ready to resolve the conflict and return to the class. Field trips may be taken away with no reimbursement from the school. For younger children from two to four years of age, ignoring and redirection will also be used. A child's particular stage of development is always taken into consideration.
- If there is still an unresolved conflict, parents will be asked for ideas and teachers will give suggestions to resolve the conflict through an individualized plan or the child.
- If the problem still exists, parents may be asked to pick up their child and keep him/her home for a few days until the child is ready to cooperate.
- If conflict continues, it will be determined to be a “discipline problem” by the teachers and the supervisor and/or the director. Parents will then be asked to seek an outside resource, such as family counseling, to help all involved work through the conflict. Parents will be given two weeks to secure help. During this time, the child may or may not attend school, depending on the assessment by the Supervisor and/or Director and teachers based on the nature and seriousness of the situation. If parents reject the above-described process, they will be expected to remove their child from ATA.
- The State of Missouri adheres to and allows ATA the right to discharge a child from the facility after attempts have been made to meet a child's individual needs.

Any child who demonstrates an inability to benefit from the care offered by the childcare provider or whose presence is detrimental to other children. Care of a child may be discontinued if the provider and the parent(s) cannot establish a mutually satisfactory working relationship.

- ATA encourages parents to talk to their children about the kinds of play, behavior, and touching that are appropriate for their level of development.
- ATA appreciates everyone's cooperation as we are ensuring the safety of all children.

**No refunds will be offered for these days.*