

Oak Park Early Learning Academy

Loving to Learn ... For a Lifetime

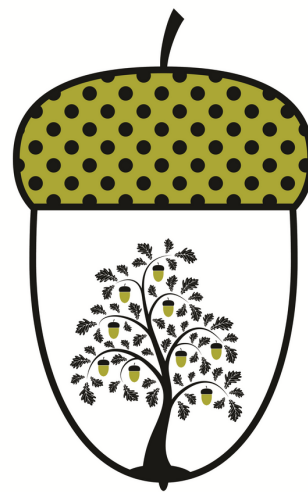


Growing exceptional learners for social and academic success today -- and tomorrow!

Parent Handbook 2023

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Director's Greeting

Welcome to Oak Park Early Learning Academy! Our registered child care ministry is a fun, nurturing and secure environment that builds every child's spiritual, emotional, social, cognitive and physical skills, preparing them with the skills needed for long-term success in school and in life.

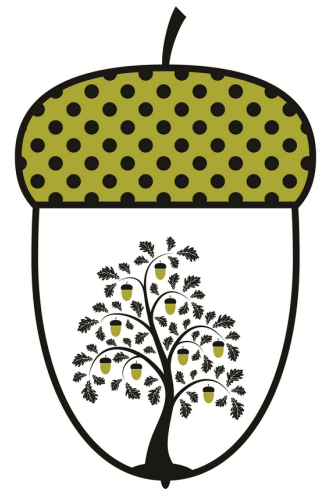
Our goal is to instill within each child a love to learn for a lifetime. We believe that this goal is possible when children are placed within a positive emotional environment where laughter is cherished . . . friendships blossom . . . and Christian values are practiced daily. Another important factor is a "Yes" environment, where children are free to explore, to touch, to manipulate and to move high-quality educational toys, books and equipment. Our exploration and play is supported by an individualized research-based curriculum that provides learning and development.

Blessings,

Lynn Loring, Director
Dani Arthur, Executive Director

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has a professional and highly qualified team of early childhood educators that strengthen our program. Our staff has been selected for their knowledge of child development skills as well as their strong interpersonal skills. When visiting the program, please take the time to look, listen, and observe this exceptional group and the supportive learning environment they are creating for children.

It is my role and the role of my staff to facilitate the development of children, as well as to collaborate with parents to extend the learning environment beyond our facility. We want you to not only feel welcomed to our center, but to feel an integral part of our community.



Mission Statement

Our Mission

The Oak Park Early Learning Academy uses a developmental approach to caring and teaching young children. Our program offers opportunities every day for your child to explore through physical movement, to make discoveries, and to use his/her senses to observe the world around them. Through hands-on activities, children learn and develop at their own pace, while our teachers utilize research-based curriculum that provides intentional support for that learning and development. Our registered childcare ministry recognizes each child as an individual, expanding where they are and promoting positive learning outcomes that further them along.

Our mission is to offer the opportunities for children to develop intellectually, socially, mentally and spiritually; to develop respect for themselves, others and their environment; to grow in the ability to relate to others peacefully; and to enjoy the rich diversity of people around them. This is accomplished in a comfortable, safe, fun yet challenging environment.

We foster an understanding of diversity among people by expecting and modeling behavior based on mutual and unconditional respect for self and others. We pursue every available opportunity to celebrate and explore individual and cultural differences.

All children are accepted without regard for race, color, religion, sex, creed, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical challenges. While we are affiliated with Oak Park Church, we respect each child's right to observe his/her faith.

Vision Statement

Oak Park Early Learning Academy's goal is to grow exceptional learners for social and academic success today -- and tomorrow!

Only 27%
of Wayne County's
infant, toddler &
preschool children
are enrolled in
high-quality early
childhood
programs.

Program Goals

Emotional Goals

- To become independent and learn to be in control of their emotions;
- To be able to express and deal with their emotions;
- To learn how others express and deal with emotions;
- To develop empathy for others.

Social Goals

- To be able to interact effectively and positively with others;
- To be able to respect others and the property of others;
- To be able to function well in a group setting;
- To be able to understand why cooperation is important;
- To be able to develop meaningful friendships.

Physical Goals

- To develop large and small motor skills;
- To learn the importance of good nutrition, exercise, and hygiene;
- To develop lifelong, healthy habits.

Intellectual Goals

- To develop a lifetime love of learning;
- To learn observation, listening and discussion skills;
- To build a love for reading, writing, math and science;
- To build upon natural curiosity;
- To develop the foundation needed to advance in the primary grades.

Spiritual Goals

- To understand their thoughts and beliefs;
- To understand how they are connected to self, to others, and to God;
- To create an environment where love, kindness is experienced and learned to be given;
- To develop positive connections with others;
- To develop character, confidence, competency, caring and compassion.

As self-awareness, mindfulness and interpersonal attachments develop, children will gain long-term growth academically, socially-emotionally, and in life.

Our Operations

Oak Park Early Learning Academy's operating hours are Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The major holidays that we will be closed are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Independence Day
- Christmas Day
- President's Day
- Labor Day
- Memorial Day
- Thanksgiving

If the above holidays fall on a weekend, we will be closed on the nationally recognized day for that specific holiday.

We are a registered childcare ministry operating under the Indiana Division of Family and Social Services. We voluntarily adhere to the highest state teacher to child ratios:

Infants 1:4

Threes 1:10

School-Age (6-12) 1:20

Toddlers 1:5

Fours & Fives 1:12

Twos (30-36 months) 1:7

Kindergarteners 1:15

Should there be a time that a classroom has too many children to meet these ratios, a member of our Administration team or another staff member will step in to correct the ratio at the earliest moment possible. These incidents may occur if a teacher calls out due to sickness, or more parents drop off earlier than anticipated. **If our staff experiences a severe shortage due to sickness, classrooms may have to be closed as a temporary measure.**

Our Staff

Our childcare staff are professionals chosen for their warmth, creativity, experience with children, and commitment to excellence. We employ people who are nurturing, who understand child development, and who respect each child as an individual. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents, colleagues, and volunteers.

Our staff environment encourages mutual respect for each individual's personal characteristics and teaching style, opportunities for shared leadership, and provision for providing professional growth. We voluntarily adhere to state licensure standards that state each lead teacher has or is in the process of obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or higher degree in Early Childhood Education.

We require a Criminal History Check, physical examination, drug screening and TB skin test. Our staff is trained in Infant, Child and Adult CPR and Universal Precautions. Pediatric First Aid, as well as Safe Sleep Training. All childcare staff receives training in child abuse awareness recognition and prevention, nutrition, and sanitization in regard to safe food handling and teaching children with special needs. Continuing education is an important part of working at Oak Park Early Learning Academy. All staff is required to participate in a minimum of 20 in-service hours per year.

Our Curriculum & Program

Early Childhood Programs Ages 6 weeks – 5 years old

Our research-based early childhood curriculum, Pinnacle, is based on the works of Piaget, Gardner, and Erikson. The lessons provide our teachers with lessons that engage children in developmentally appropriate activities. Each lesson aligns to Indiana's Early Learning Foundations, the academic standards for young children from birth to age 5.

Our curriculum has a different theme each week in which the classroom teacher rotates and adds materials frequently to maintain and extend the children's interests. Often our teachers create their own games and materials to offer extra challenges.

School-Age Programs Ages 5 – 12 years old

Children are *transported to and from Richmond Community Schools to Oak Park Early Learning Academy. Children are served a healthy snack upon their arrival after school. There's also a scheduled time to focus on school homework daily.

Children have opportunities to join in a variety of experiences in our fun, educationally equipped learning centers. Our school-age room is equipped with a Reading center, Writing center, Art center, Math center, Science & Sensory center, Building & Transportation center, Dramatic Play center and Music center. They also have opportunities to Get Fit in our gymnasium and outdoor playground.

The Foundations address the following content areas: English/Language Arts, Math, Social Emotional, Approaches to Play and Learning, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts, and Physical Health and Growth.

The Foundations are also aligned with the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten in a developmentally appropriate way which reflects the type of experiences early learners need in order to be ready for kindergarten.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy also utilizes a Brightwheel, a cutting-edge childcare management software app. Brightwheel allows our teachers to share daily care reports, incident reports, weekly lesson plans, and provide an easy tool for communicating directly with parents.

They gather in a safe environment that focuses on making friends, building relationships, staying active and exercising both decision-making and leadership skills.

Holiday Camps

When school's out for holidays and summer break, there's more to experience than cartoons and video games. Designed for children in kindergarten through age 12, our youth camps provide the opportunity to develop socially and have learning experiences that encourage a natural curiosity to explore the world around them and have fun in the process. Weekly activities are planned around a theme. Activities may include art, music, science experiments, outdoor play and field trips.

**Transportation is offered based on current staffing and demand.*

Special Needs Policy

Childcare programs provide public accommodation and therefore must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Childcare programs should be committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities.

As the numbers of children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes increases, as well as the number of children with emotional or behavioral issues, the ability of programs to plan for and include all children is critical.

Inclusion of children with special needs has been shown to enrich the childcare experience for all staff, and children and families of enrolled children.

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

1. Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs and/or differences.
3. Oak Park Early Learning Academy will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.
4. Oak Park Early Learning Academy will ensure that when a child with a special need is identified on the Child Care Application Form, the family will be given a Special Health Care Plan and Emergency Information Form to be filled out by the family and health care provider collaboratively, and then discussed thoroughly with Oak Park Early Learning's management and classroom teachers.
5. Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, our childcare program may consult with agencies, organizations, public schools as needed, provided parental permission is granted through a signed Authorization for Release of Information form. Inclusion of program staff on IFSP and IEP case conferences is desired to ensure the childcare program provides the most supportive environment possible.
6. All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classrooms may need.
7. The individual written plan of care for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. Parents are responsible for making sure the plan is updated annually, at a minimum.

Assessments & Conferences

Assessment for young children is the process of gathering information from several sources of evidence and using information to monitor the children's development and learning; to guide planning and decision making to create positive learning environments; to provide direction for further lesson planning; and to provide accountability that our program is accomplishing its goals. Assessment is the process of observing, recording, and documenting what children do and how they do it. It can also be in the form of photos and children's work; it is not a single occurrence but an on-going process.

Children are assessed both formally and informally while in our care. Our childcare facility uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire as an assessment screening tool appropriate for children ages 1 month to 66 months. This questionnaire is also completed by the child's family on various aspects of their development. The questionnaire can be completed every 3 to 6 months depending on the child's age. The information is discussed during parent-teacher conference times, (September, January, May) or if needed other times during the course of the year.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy believes it is essential for families and teachers to work together to promote children's development.

Assessment records are kept in the child's portfolio and are only available to the child's lead teacher and administrative staff. The goal of documentation and assessment is to better understand and support children's learning and development. Teachers use the information from the assessments to set individual and classroom goals to meet the needs of children as well as the overall program improvements that may need to be made.

Assessments and child portfolios work to ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

Assessment is also essential for identifying children who may benefit from special services. If it is determined that your child may need additional assistance for a potential problem, your child's teacher or administration will meet and assist you with the referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. Assessments are positive tools used to ensure our children are provided the tools to successfully continue with their education.

Parent-teacher conferences will be held two times a year to discuss each child's progress. During these meetings, both teachers and parents will set goals for the child's progress. *If you ever want to speak with your teacher or the administration, we encourage you to contact us!*

Parent Responsibility

Parents are always welcome to visit our program as they see necessary. Throughout the year, we encourage parents to participate in special days and activities. Parents are welcome to come and share any special talent or activity with the children.

Parents may contact the staff for an appointment to discuss their child's needs and progress or exchange information regarding their child or family/culture. It is not possible to share lengthy information during his/her class time or in front of the child.

In accepting the privilege of attending Oak Park Early Learning Academy, parents must also accept the responsibility to follow the policies stated in this handbook. Failure to follow the standards listed may result in the loss of enrollment at our registered childcare ministry. Oak Park Early Learning has the responsibility for the safety and care of all the children in attendance and cannot compromise that responsibility to accommodate those who do not meet their obligations. It is the parents' responsibility to:

GUIDELINE

Follow all the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

Support the policies and objectives of our program by helping your child get enough sleep, to feel rested and ready to participate.

Do not discuss observations or information acquired through your child(ren) or other parents. Any information about a child/family is treated confidentially. Concerns should be discussed with the Director.

Discuss concerns and/or observations regarding your child(ren) with appropriate staff in a timely manner. If after discussing the issue with the teacher and the issue is not resolved, then the parent may bring the issue to the attention of the Director.

If a court order exists preventing an individual from having contact with a child, parents must provide us with a copy of the court order.

GUIDELINE

Keep administration informed of any important changes in the home, including (but not limited to) address changes, phone numbers, emergency contact persons and custodial rights.

Support the policies and objectives of our program by safeguarding your child's health in order to ensure regular attendance and protect the other children.

Inform our Oak Park Early Learning Academy's Director of any type of virus or illness contracted by your child that may be contagious.

Treat the Oak Park Early Learning staff and families with respect. Do not display hostile behavior in front of staff members, parents, or children. Parents should remove themselves to the privacy of the Director's office for sensitive conversations.

Smoke- & Alcohol-free Campus

Smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages are prohibited on the premises, including but not limited to, in the parking lot and in personal vehicles while on the property of Oak Park Church.

Persons Appearing to Be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up

The parent's right to immediate access does not permit Oak Park Early Learning from denying a custodial parent access to their child. However, if the parent appears to be impaired and/or demonstrates unsafe behaviors, Oak Park Early Learning staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the director, other parent, and if necessary the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child, and appears to the staff to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff will contact the child's parents, and if necessary local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

Parents/guardians demonstrating unsafe, belligerent behaviors will NOT be allowed access to our program for the safety of all children.

PARENTS WHO FAIL TO MEET THESE OUTLINED RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE COUNSELED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. THOSE PARENTS WHO CONSISTENTLY FAIL TO MEET OUTLINED RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE DISENROLLED FROM OUR CHILDCARE MINISTRY.

THANK YOU FOR ASSISTING US IN PROVIDING A SAFE, NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES!

What To Bring

FOR INFANTS:

Disposable diapers – Unopened package and labeled with child's first and last name

Diaper wipes – Unopened package and labeled with child's first and last name

Diaper rash ointment or natural protective skin barrier product – Medicated ointments must be unopened, unexpired, and MUST have a **Record of Medication Order** form completed. Obtain at front desk.

Pacifier – If needed. Pacifiers may be used with a string to clip to clothing. Pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are NOT permitted due to state health regulations.

Bottles – Parents must provide enough sanitized and prepared bottles for the entire day's use. Bottles must have caps, and be labeled with: Child's first and last name, date and time prepared.

IF parent is accepting the CACFP-provided formula, they must still provide sufficient clean, sanitized bottles for the day's use. Bottles must have caps, and be labeled with: child's first/last name and date.

Extra clothes – 2 outfits and 2 pairs of socks in Ziploc bag with child's name. All outfits should be clearly labeled with child's first and last name on inside tag.

Treat the Oak Park Early Learning staff and families with respect. Do not display hostile behavior in front of staff members, parents, or children. Parents should remove themselves to the privacy of the Director's office for sensitive conversations.

Pictures of your child and family

WHAT NOT TO BRING OR LEAVE AT FACILITY

Blankets, diaper bags, personal toys

All over-the-counter (OTC) and prescribed medications must have a completed Medication Order Form on file at the front desk. All medications are stored at and administered by the director, office manager or receptionist.

What To Bring

FOR TODDLERS:

Disposable diapers/pull-ups – Unopened package and labeled with child's first and last name

Diaper wipes – Unopened package and labeled with child's first and last name

Diaper rash ointment or natural protective skin barrier product – Medicated ointments must be unopened, unexpired, and MUST have a **Record of Medication Order** form completed. Obtain at front desk.

Pacifier – If needed. Pacifiers may be used with a string to clip to clothing. Pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are NOT permitted due to state health regulations.

Blanket and small pillow – Labeled with child's first and last name. Blankets and pillows are sent home EVERY Friday for laundering.

Small stuffed animal for nap time. All other personal toys MUST remain at home. This prevents both the loss and damage of personal toys, and avoids child conflicts over sharing.

Extra clothes – 2 outfits and 2 pairs of socks in Ziploc bag with child's name. All outfits should be clearly labeled with child's first and last name on inside tag.

Pictures of your child and family for our Family Boards or classroom books.

WHAT NOT TO BRING OR LEAVE AT FACILITY

Personal toys of any kind, food in the mornings at drop-off, candy, soft drinks, chewing gum, flip-flops.

Unlabeled personal items: Everything MUST be labeled with a child's first and last names, including jackets, sweaters, clothing, shoes, blankets, pillows, etc. Many parents dress their children in identical articles of clothing, and it becomes extremely challenging keeping unlabeled personal items with the correct child.

All home-prepared lunches must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines: a protein, a fruit, a vegetable, a grain, a milk (or milk-substitute) beverages. Parents should NOT provide chips, candy, desserts, soft drinks or Kool-Aid beverages.

All over-the-counter (OTC) and prescribed medications must have a completed Medication Order Form on file at the front desk. All medications are stored at and administered by the director, office manager or receptionist.

What To Bring

FOR PRESCHOOLERS:

Multiple pairs of underwear – Labeled with child's first and last name

Diaper wipes – Unopened package and labeled with child's first and last name

Extra clothes – 2 outfits and 2 pairs of socks in Ziploc bag with child's name. All outfits should be clearly labeled with child's first and last name on inside tag.

Blanket and small pillow – Labeled with child's first and last name. Blankets and pillows are sent home EVERY Friday for laundering.

Small stuffed animal for nap time. All other personal toys MUST remain at home. This prevents both the loss and damage of personal toys, and avoids child conflicts over sharing.

Pictures of your child and family for our Family Boards or classroom books.

WHAT NOT TO BRING OR LEAVE AT FACILITY

Personal toys of any kind, food in the mornings at drop-off, candy, soft drinks, chewing gum, flip-flops.

Unlabeled personal items: Everything MUST be labeled with a child's first and last names, including jackets, sweaters, clothing, shoes, blankets, pillows, etc. Many parents dress their children in identical articles of clothing, and it becomes extremely challenging keeping unlabeled personal items with the correct child.

All home-prepared lunches must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines: a protein, a fruit, a vegetable, a grain, a milk (or milk-substitute) beverages. Parents should NOT provide chips, candy, desserts, soft drinks or Kool-Aid beverages.

All over-the-counter (OTC) and prescribed medications must have a completed Medication Order Form on file at the front desk. All medications are stored at and administered by the director, office manager or receptionist.

Enrollment

Parents are welcome to first tour the childcare facility with the Director and meet the child's prospective assigned teacher. Following, parents should review the Parent Handbook and all the policy and procedures forms included in the Student Application Packet.

All paperwork must be completed and returned prior to begin enrollment. A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 must be included with the completed application.

Additional documentation required prior to enrollment to our childcare ministry:

- Physical examination done within last year and updated annually;
- Up-to-date immunization records (unless using religious exemption).

Medical forms must be turned into the receptionist within 10 days from day of enrollment. If a child is overdue for any routine health services, parent/guardian must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program.

Your child's enrollment file is kept confidential. It is made available to administrators and teaching staff as deemed necessary by the Director, as well as regulatory agencies on request.

Health information may be discussed with persons listed as emergency contacts on your child's emergency card if an emergency arises. Due to HIPAA laws, our staff will never request or discuss a child's medical issues without parent written permission for such discussions.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy does not discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, disability, or financial status. Our childcare ministry will accept all children who will benefit from its program, and for whose age level and health conditions the program is staffed and equipped to provide quality group care.

If your child has an IFSP or IEP, this document is required at enrollment and as it is updated. We encourage staff participation in any IFSP and IEP case conference to better enable us to help your child.

Open Door Policy

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome and encouraged to stop by the childcare ministry to visit their children at any time without prior notification.

Payment Process

Childcare fees are reviewed and, if needed, adjusted annually, as our rates are based upon both competitive local pricing and costs. Parents will receive a month's notice when childcare rates are to be adjusted.

- All childcare tuition payments are due and payable by 6:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding care. Payment may be dropped off at the front desk between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Tuition paid **after** Monday at 12:00 noon will be charged a \$20.00 late fee.
- Child care will not be provided, and possibly terminated, if not paid by Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.
- There is a \$50 non-refundable enrollment fee required for each child enrolled in the program.
- An annual registration fee of \$50 is assessed **every August** to cover consumable school supplies for the year.
- Childcare fees are due on a continuous basis **even if** your child is ill, absent, or on vacation. Late fees will be charged if payment is not made on time even though your child is not in attendance.
- Payment plans are set-up and sent out every Thursday via Brightwheel. Parents may elect a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly payment plan.
- Payments may be made with: cash, checks, credit/debit cards, automatic debit.
- Oak Park Early Learning Academy will be closed on national holidays, as listed earlier in this handbook. Tuition is still remitted for these holiday closures.
- All departures from our childcare ministry must be by 6:00 p.m. or a late pick-up charge will be assessed. The fee is a deterrent to late pick up as to avoid overtime pay for staff. Late pick up charges are as follows:
 - 6:00 p.m. – 6:10 p.m. \$10.00
 - 6:11 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. \$60.00
- A drop-off time is agreed upon within the Child Care Contract. Dropping off before that time must be arranged beforehand, or it will be subject to the same fee schedule as late pick charges.
- A \$25 insufficient funds returned check fee will be charged to the next week's payment.
- **Termination Policy:** A **two-week advance written notice** is required when withdrawing your child(ren). This gives us an opportunity to fill the vacancy. This notice must be given to the office manager. If notice is not given, two (2) regular schedule weeks' tuition fees will be charged. This will include late penalties, as stated in the policy, from due date to date paid, plus legal fees if applicable.

CCDF Responsibility

Childcare fees are reviewed and, if needed, adjusted annually, as our rates are based upon both competitive local pricing and costs. Parents will receive a month's notice when childcare rates are to be adjusted.

- CCDF parents will be assessed the difference between Oak Park Early Learning Academy's current tuition schedule and the amount provided by CCDF.
- All overage tuition payments are due and payable by 6:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding care. Payment may be dropped off at the front desk between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Tuition paid **after** Monday at 12:00 noon will be charged a \$20.00 late fee.
- Child care will not be provided, and possibly terminated, if not paid by Tuesday at 6:00 p.m.
- CCDF parents **MUST** swipe for their child's care on a **DAILY BASIS**. While Oak Park will permit parents/guardians to swipe weekly, all swipes **MUST** be completed by Mondays at 12:00 noon.
- Parents will be assessed a \$20.00 Late Swipe Fee if parents do not complete their weekly swipes by this deadline. This is a per child late swipe fee.
- There is a \$50 non-refundable enrollment fee required for each child enrolled in the program.
- An annual registration fee of \$50 is assessed **every August** to cover consumable school supplies for the year.
- A \$25 insufficient funds returned check fee will be charged to the next week's payment.
- Childcare fees are due on a continuous basis even if your child is ill, absent, or on vacation. Late fees will be charged if payment is not made on time even though your child is not in attendance. CCDF parents **MUST** claim personal days when they are not in attendance.
- Payment plans are set-up and sent out every Thursday via Brightwheel. Parents may elect a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly payment plan.
- Payments may be made with: cash, checks, credit/debit cards, automatic debit.
- All departures from our childcare ministry must be by 6:00 p.m. or a late pick-up charge will be assessed. The fee is a deterrent to late pick up as to avoid overtime pay for staff. Late pick up charges are as follows:
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Health

Our facility operates for **well children only**.

Outdoor Play

Children should be able to fully participate in all activities, including outdoor play. We will not go outside during excessive heat and cold temperatures. Parents should provide appropriate changes of clothing so children do not become either overheated or chilled.

- Warm, layered clothing is needed for chilly outdoor play.
- Snow pants, boots, gloves and hat are needed for snowy days.
- Swimsuits may be requested for sprinkler play.

Sunscreen and bug spray may be applied by staff, with the written permission of the parent.

Childhood Illnesses

Parents are part of the overall health of our childcare program. It is extremely important to keep sick children at home. Bringing your child to childcare when they are sick leads to a serious spreading of the illness; bringing your child back after an illness before they are ready, increases their chances of becoming ill again. Parents must have a back-up plan in the event of your child's illness. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment where isolation and/or quarantines are necessary. Please understand your employer's policies for requesting time off for sick children.

Children that develop symptoms while in our care will remain with a staff member until the parent or emergency contact arrives for the child. We make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but if there is no verbal contact within 1 hour, we will notify the emergency contacts indicated by the parents on the enrollment forms. All emergency contacts are authorized to remove the child from our facility.

In case of an illness, a child may rest on a cot in the Director's office, or in an area away from the other children but in sight and sound of an adult. The child will be continuously supervised until a parent arrives.

We will not serve children with:

- A fever of 100° F or higher, axillary;
- A fever of 99° F or higher, axillary, if combined with another sign of illness or if a known illness is occurring in the center;
- COVID-19 symptoms: cold and cough symptoms, fever;
- Have come in direct contact with a positive COVID-19 case;
- A skin rash that has not been identified by a phone call or in written form from a physician who has seen the rash;
- Infected skin patches;
- Evidence of infection;
- Diarrhea and/or vomit;
- Evidence of head lice, nits, scabies, or another parasite;
- Severe coughing;
- Rapid or difficulty breathing;
- Yellowish skin or eyes;
- Conjunctivitis, a cold in the eye, pink eye or other eye infection;
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing;
- Stiff neck;
- Pain of which child complains and interferes with normal activity;
- Excessive fatigue;
- A moist or open cold sore.

Children may be readmitted:

- With a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable disease and that returning poses no risk to the child or staff.
- Or, is visibly free from communicable disease, fever free without fever reducing medications for 24 hours and free of vomiting/diarrhea for 24 hours while on a normal diet.
- For head lice, children shall only be readmitted after they have had the proper treatment and are free from nits and live bugs. A second treatment must be completed after two weeks. Upon returning, the child will be checked by our staff during their morning wellness check.

Medication Administration

Oak Park Early Learning Academy makes every effort to provide a healthy environment for our staff members and children. We utilize the following policies and procedures to safeguard staff health:

1. Staff members must complete universal precautions, handwashing, and safe food handling training;
2. Staff members are required to clean and sanitize tables prior to every meal;
3. Staff members are required to sanitize toys and cots on a daily basis;
4. Staff members are required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and to wash children's hands regularly throughout the day.
5. Staff members will be provided with a face mask to wear if they are experiencing a cold or mild cough.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 and severe flu seasons can negatively impact the overall health of our childcare. If a teacher or child tests positive for COVID-19, then Oak Park will adhere to the CDC's guidelines for isolation, quarantines, and deep cleaning. This may dictate that our program temporarily close an impacted classroom for a short period of time.

If Oak Park Early Learning Academy sustains 30% absentee rates of staff members and/or enrolled children from a similar illness on a given day, then we will close in order to fully sanitize and deep clean its facility and allow its staff members to recover. This childcare closure will be announced via Brightwheel.

If our program must close a classroom for more than one (1) day, then parents will be credited for paid tuition already paid.

Medication Administration

- Prescription medication is given *only if* the medication label specifies an exact time during the working day to be administered.
- Prescribed medication will only be administered with a signed medication administration permission form.
- Prescription medication must have a prescription label with the child's name, exact dosage, specific number of daily dosages, the route of administration, and current date on it. The label must be attached to the original container.
- Medications with the instructions "to be given as needed" will not be administered by our staff unless it is a medication that aligns to a Medical Action Plan for serious illnesses, such as life-threatening allergies and asthma.
- Any over-the-counter medicine requires a "Record of Medication Order" form to be completely filled out by a physician or dentist. This form must include clear instructions when and how the medication is to be administered and must be child specific. Children within the same household will not be able to share medication on our premises.
- No medication will be given if it is past the written expiration date on the container.
- The "Medication Record" form will be signed by the staff member administering medication and kept on file for a minimum of one year.
- All emergency medications that must be readily available (EpiPen, Benadryl for allergic reactions, and asthma medications) will be kept in the child's classroom out of reach of children in a locked cabinet or carried by the staff member during classroom outings.

Emergencies

First aid bags are kept in each classroom, staff lounge, and front desk. Emergency numbers are posted beside all phones. All staff is trained in Pediatric First Aid, Infant, Child and Adult CPR, and Universal Precautions.

In the event of an emergency, a teacher will remain with, and if able, remove the child to another area. The Director will be notified immediately. First Aid will be administered, a parent notified, and transportation arranged, **if necessary**. In the event we cannot reach either parent, the next person listed on the student enrollment form shall be contacted. If immediate transportation is required, emergency medical services will be called and the child will be transported to Reid Health.

Enrollment in the childcare ministry gives permission for emergency transportation to be provided. We will not accept any children whose parents or guardians refuse to grant permission for emergency transportation. All of the child's records will be taken with the child. A staff member will remain with the child until a parent arrives. The attending staff member will prepare an incident report, a copy given to the parent and a copy kept on file at the childcare program.

If the child presents symptoms of a medical illnesses, the parents/guardians will be called first. If the parent can be reached, they must come right away and take the child to the doctor. If the parent cannot be reached, the director/receptionist will contact emergency contact to pick up the child.

We will call EMS first if:

If the child presents any of the following medical illnesses/injuries, the director will first contact emergency medical personnel to transport the seriously ill/injured child to Reid Health, if a medical emergency exists.

Immediately following, administration will contact parents/guardians informing them of their child's medical situation and our decision to transport their child to Reid Hospital. A designated staff member will travel to the hospital with the child. If the parent cannot be reached, administration will contact the designated emergency persons to meet our staff member at Reid Health, and the emergency contact will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

- the child is unconscious, semi-conscious or unusually confused.
- the child's airway is blocked.
- the child is not breathing.
- the child is having difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or is choking.
- the child has severe coughing or a high-pitched whistling sound, redness or blueness in the face
- the child is breathing so fast or so hard that the child cannot play, talk, cry or drink.
- the child has no pulse.
- the child has bleeding that won't stop.
- the child is coughing up or vomiting blood.
- the child has been poisoned.
- the child has a seizure for the first time, a seizure that lasts more than 5 minutes, or an atypical seizure.
- the child has injuries to the head, neck or back.
- the child has sudden, severe pain anywhere in the body.
- the child has a severe stomachache without vomiting or diarrhea after a recent injury, blow to the abdomen, or hard fall.
- the child has continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head.
- the child's condition is limb-threatening (for example, severe eye injuries, amputations or other injuries that may leave the child permanently disabled unless he/she receives immediate care.)
- the child's condition could worsen or become life-threatening on the way to the hospital if not transported by EMS.
- moving the child could cause further injury.
- the child needs the skills or equipment of paramedics or emergency medical technicians.
- distance or traffic conditions would cause a delay in getting the child to the hospital.

Nutrition

Oak Park Early Learning Academy is a participant in the Department of Education's Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP). All families will be required to complete a CACFP application and enrollment form regardless of household income. We provide nutritionally balanced snacks, meals and cooking activities. Menus are posted in our stairwell nearest the front desk. We encourage children to have a "hello" bite, that is – to try a taste of everything.

Mealtimes include:

Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Lunch: 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Snack: 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Our menus meet the guidelines provided by the Department of Education's Child and Adult Care Food Program. **Open food is not to be brought to the facility in the morning.** Upon arrival, teachers will kindly direct any child to discard their food and eat at our next meal served. This is due to the fact that many children lay food down, and we are dealing with health/sanitation regulations as well as food allergies if inadvertently shared.

If parents decide to provide their own meals and snacks, the meals must match the CACFP's meal guidelines. Our staff will not be responsible for heating any foods. Breakfast must include: a whole grain, fruit, and milk or milk substitute. Lunches must include: a protein, a fruit, a vegetable, a whole grain, and milk or milk substitute. Snacks must include 2 healthy choices: protein, fruit, vegetable or whole grain. Parents should NOT send in chips, desserts, Kool-Aid type beverages, sodas or candy.

We limit sugars and prefer birthday celebrations sent by parents to be fruits, yogurt, crackers and cheese, or other nutritious alternatives to cake and ice cream. Any food items brought to the daycare must be store bought and in its original container.

Our nutritious, well-balanced meals are included in your child's weekly tuition.

Safety

We ask that parents also closely supervise their children in the parking lot, lobby and hallways when dropping off and picking up. When going to the classroom, families are asked to stay together; do not allow your child(ren) to run down the halls. Parents are responsible for handing their children off to the child's teacher ensuring the teacher is aware of his/her presence.

Children must be signed in and out daily at the kiosk across from the receptionist desk. This is extremely important since the list is used to check attendance during emergency drills or events.

Children are released only to persons for whom the staff has written permission from the parents. Parents are invited to update their emergency contacts via their Brightwheel account or at the front desk. Authorized individuals must be able to show proof of photo I.D. in order for children to be released into their care.

Please ensure the teacher is aware of the departure of your child.

Emergency Contacts

Oak Park Early Learning requires that parents provide at least two emergency contact individuals. These individuals are authorized to remove children from our premises. **We require that all legal parents/guardians mutually agree and authorize the individuals listed as emergency contacts by signature and dated initials beside each name.** Any new individual added to or removed from this list must be made in writing to Oak Park Early Learning and acknowledged by all parents and legal guardians.

Safe Conditions Policy

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while at Oak Park Early Learning:

- Children will be actively supervised with the number of qualified adults (adults who have completed a comprehensive criminal history check, drug screen and negative TB test and have completed all required trainings).
- Our program will not care for children in areas that are being remodeled, repaired, or painted. We remain responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces including walls, floors, ceilings, indoor and outdoor playground equipment, toys, furnishings, and cribs, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances.

- Clean the childcare facility daily.
- Keep the childcare facility in a sanitary condition at all times.
- Sanitize toys, furniture and other equipment including outdoor playground equipment used by children, weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
- Doors remain locked at all times.

Fire & Disaster Drills

Monthly fire and disaster drills will be held at varying times during the year at a minimum of one fire drill per month. The director will maintain a record of fire and disaster drills.

A fire alert and weather emergency plan, including evacuation routes, is posted in each classroom. In case of emergency evacuation, the center will use the back playground until re-entry to our building is possible or all children are picked up. In case of severe weather, the staff and children will proceed to interior rooms on the first floor of Oak Park Church, which is accessible through indoor hallways.

Safe Sleep Policy

Providing infants with a safe environment in which to grow and learn is of extreme importance to us. Therefore, we follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Safety Commission for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Our procedures include:

- Infants less than 12 months of age shall be placed on their backs on a firm, tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib.
- Pillows, quilts, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft products are not used in the crib; sleep sacks are used in place of blankets.
- Infant's heads shall have no covering during sleep.
- Unless the child has a written note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants shall be placed on their back for sleeping.
- When infants can easily turn over from their back to side or stomach, they shall be put down to sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- Unless a doctor specifies the need for a positioning device that restricts movement within the child's crib, such devices shall not be used.
- Infants will not share a crib with other children.
- Infants will remain lightly clothed and comfortable while sleeping.
- Supervised "tummy time" will be observed while infant is awake.
- All staff will receive annual training on safe sleep practices before caring for infants.

Weather Emergencies

Stormy Weather Emergencies

In the event of a tornado warning, meaning that a tornado is occurring or is imminent, we will move the staff and children to our tornado shelter per the evacuation plan posted in each classroom.

Winter Weather Emergencies

School Cancellation: When Richmond Community Schools cancel classes for the day due to bad weather our facility will remain open and provide services to our enrolled school-age children IF our administration determines that the road conditions are safe for our staff and families.

Richmond Community Schools' 2 hour delays:

If Richmond Community Schools announce a two-hour delay, enrolled school-age children will have care available to them until school begins. Transportation to their public school will only be available if we have the staff to provide this service.

Richmond Community Schools' Early

Dismissal: If Richmond Community Schools have an early dismissal, Oak Park Early Learning Academy will run as normal. If severe road conditions are developing, then we will cancel our program. In the unlikely event that the child care ministry would close early, parents will be called and asked for a timely pick up.

Snow Emergency Policy:

Oak Park Early Learning Academy will remain open for business *unless a severe winter storm* is imminent with hazardous, blizzard conditions that endanger our staff. The Director will decide whether the conditions require the facility to delay opening or close for the day.

The Director will post any delayed openings or closures via Brightwheel. Our program will reopen for business when road conditions are declared safe for our teachers and families.

As we endeavor to remain open, parents WILL NOT be provided with a tuition credit for program closures due to severe weather.

Fire Emergencies

The person noting the fire sounds the alarm and calls the fire department (911). Staff members calmly escort children to the nearest safe exit and congregate in the rear playground, furthest from the building. The infants are placed in a single crib and wheeled outdoors. The staff takes attendance, which is compared to Brightwheel.

The Administrative team checks the restrooms, cots, classrooms and hallways to ensure everyone has evacuated the premise.

Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

Transportation

Field Trip Safety

Oak Park Early Learning will always notify parents in advance of all field trips requiring transportation and/or any fees. A signed permission form from the parent is required before transporting a child to and from the childcare ministry for any reason.

The Field Trip Permission form will include the child's name, destination, date of trip and departure/arrival time, parent signature and contact phone number for date of trip, and date permission was signed.

If needed, parents may volunteer to be drivers for field trips. Private vehicles will only be used for transporting children if Oak Park Early Learning has a copy of the vehicle registration and current insurance information on file.

A first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and a cell phone for emergencies shall be available on each field trip. A person trained in first aid will be available on each field trip. Each child on the field trip shall have identification attached to him/herself containing the daycare ministry's name and phone number. Each child's emergency card will be taken on every trip. All children transported on trips are accounted for before, during, and after transport by the designated staff member.

On the day of field trips, parents will be asked to provide a proper child safety car seat. Please have the child's name clearly labeled on the seat.

We will always ensure that the child to staff ratio is met to ensure the highest level of supervision.

Transportation To/From School

A signed Consent for Transportation to/from School form is required before transporting a school-aged child between our childcare ministry and a Richmond Community public school or private school. This signed consent form permits Oak Park Early Learning Academy to provide transportation for the school year.

Transportation Safety Policy

Only qualified adults that are licensed drivers with a clean driving record will transport children. Drivers will follow all pertinent Indiana laws and will not use cell phones at any time while in the vehicle. Children will always be restrained in proper seats and seat belts and at no time will a vehicle exceed the recommended capacity. Children will not be left unattended. Upon returning from each trip, the van will be inspected to ensure that no children are still on board.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has automobile insurance that covers transportation of children for our childcare ministry. All vehicles used for transportation will be maintained in a clean, safe and mechanically sound condition.

Discipline

We recognize that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of a child's self-esteem. Oak Park Early Learning seeks to create the best learning environment possible for every child. In order to promote excellence in education, we foster cooperation, self-discipline and instructive guidance. It is our goal to help children learn to make good choices about their actions and behavior so that everyone enjoys a safe, fun, enriching experience.

Our discipline policy serves as a guideline for interactions between staff and children. The purpose of any discipline is to help the child become more responsible and to see options for correcting his/her behavior. Therefore, each child is treated as an individual.

Our childcare ministry does not allow the use of physical punishment by caregivers. Our staff is trained to employ positive discipline techniques, which include praising, calling attention to appropriate behavior and acting as good role models. Children who have conflicts or problems with others will be encouraged to verbalize their angers and concerns. Our staff members guide rather than punish.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the discipline in their classrooms. Discipline is not used for a child's failure to sleep or eat or for toileting accidents. Techniques of discipline are not intended to humiliate, shame or frighten a child.

When our usual guidance techniques are not effective and inappropriate behavior continues, the following steps will be taken:

1. Student behavior will be documented by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will schedule a conference with the parents to develop a more individualized behavior plan. If the behavior continues or does not improve to an acceptable standard over the following two weeks, Step 2 will occur.

2. Habitual Behavior: A conference will be set with the classroom teacher, director and parents to analyze the behaviors. We will discuss why the behaviors keep occurring and the team participants will work out a plan to help correct this behavior and break the pattern of inappropriate actions. A two-week conference will be set at that time to follow-up on student progress. If behavior continues, Step 3 will follow.

3. Severe Behavior: Severe behavior is when a child's behavior exceeds Steps 1 and 2, OR a child bodily hurts another, defaces property, uses foul language or gestures, threatens, bullies another (physically or verbally), fights, or is the cause of harassment in any way. "Bullying" is defined as inflicting injury, causing another student to inflict injury, or behaving in any way that could cause physical injury or mental anguish to another student, teacher or other child care personnel. Sexual innuendos and references will be considered a major misbehavior resulting in parent notification on the first offense. Behavior includes lifting/looking under clothing, inappropriate touch, artwork, language, jokes or conversations.

A parent conference including the classroom teacher and director will take place. At that time a 30-day probationary period will take place during which the child will be sent home for the day if they engage in severe behavior offense. At the end of the probationary period, a conference will be set to re-assess the child's behavior. If no improvement has been made, and after consulting the director, the child will be given a two-week notice of disenrollment.

4. For very serious incidents where the safety of the child, other children or childcare personnel is at stake, the child may be disenrolled without notice by the program director.

Teacher Changes

In the event a classroom teacher is sick, absent, or on vacation, Oak Park Early Learning will employ the following procedures for your child's care:

1) Our administration will endeavor to provide a substitute teacher in your child's classroom. Our substitute teachers have completed the same employment screenings, background check and trainings as our full-time staff members.

2) If a substitute teacher is unavailable, then our administration will determine whether we have the support staff available to provide care in your child's classroom.

3) If there are no support staff to replace your child's teacher, then administration will seek to serve children in classrooms nearest to their own age level.

4) The COVID-19 pandemic and highly infectious illnesses have created extensive staff shortages in the childcare industry. If a teacher faces a multi-day illness or quarantine period, then our administration may be required to temporarily close your child's classroom. In these incidents, then your child's paid tuition will be credited *for the closure period*.

5) Substitute teachers/teacher changes will be communicated via Brightwheel. If a staff member will be absent for a lengthy period and/or a permanent teacher change occurs, then parents will be informed through Brightwheel.

Children are our business!

If you have any questions about our childcare program or any information in this Parent Handbook, please contact us. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

(Rev. 2-2022) Oak Park Early Learning Academy retains the right to make changes to pricing and discounts at any given moment, and will strive to inform parents of these changes at the earliest opportunity.

Contact Information:

Oak Park Early Learning Academy
1920 Chester Boulevard
Richmond, IN 47374

Phone Number: 765-488-2626

Fax Number: 765-488-2619

Website : www.OakParkKids.com



Oak Park Early Learning Academy

Loving To Learn . . . For A Lifetime

1920 Chester Boulevard, Richmond IN 47374 | 765-488-2626

Parent Handbook

Oak Park Early Learning Academy's Parent Handbook is located online at:

<http://www.oak-park-kids.com/support-files/parent-handbook.pdf>

Scan the Parent Handbook QR code below:



For future reference of the Parent Handbook, we recommend that you:

- 1) Download a copy;
- 2) Request a copy from the front office;
- 3) Bookmark it on your computer.



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Parent Acknowledgement Form

I have downloaded, bookmarked and/or received a copy of Oak Park Early Learning Academy's Parent Handbook. I acknowledge that I have read the Parent Handbook. I expect to be guided by the rules and policies contained therein. I further understand and agree that my child's/children's enrollment at Oak Park Early Learning Academy may be terminated by the director of Oak Park Early Learning Academy at any time for any reason and without reason. I understand that any or all of the provisions contained in the Parent Handbook may be modified, amended, or eliminated by Oak Park Early Learning Academy at any time with or without notice.

Parent Printed Name

Parent Signature

Date

Director Printed Name

Director Signature

Date