Parent Handbook



Playtime Learning Academy 4701 Ehrlich Road Tampa, FL 33624 (813)969-2888 - Academy Office (813) 319-0704 - Fax www.PlaytimeLearningAcademy.com



Learning Academy

Welcome to Playtime Learning Academy in Tampa, Florida! You have taken a big step in choosing quality care and academics for your child. We would like to share some information with you about our center and the classroom your child will attend.

Julie Banks & Emily Brushwood
Co-owners / Directors



*TABLE OF CONTENTS *

Contact information & Hours of operationpage 3
Vacation policypage 3
Mission & Philosophypage 4
Social interactionpage 4
Open door policypage 6
Withdraw/termination policypage 6
Field trips & Outdoor playpage 6
Volunteer policy & Parent involvementpage 8
Parent communicationpage 10
Enrollment procedurespage 12
Non discrimination policypage 12
Arrival/dismissal policypage 12
Attendance policypage 14
Transportationpage 14
Emergency information/ enrollment formspage 14
Nutritionpage 16
Tuition paymentspage 16
Termination of servicespage 17
Holiday closures/ vacation timepage 17
Accident or incident at schoolpage 17
Sick policy & Medicationpage 18
TV/video usepage 18
Reporting abusepage 19
Behavior issues & Disciplinepage 7, 19-20
Emergency procedurespage 21-22
Curriculum & Parent connectionspage 23
Classroom ratiospage 23
Supply listspage 24
Class descriptionspage 24-25
Child information questionnairepage 27

* Contact Information *

Playtime Learning Academy

4701 Ehrlich Road

Tampa, FL 33624

Main Office Phone: (813)969-2888

Early Learning Center Phone: (813)969-2277

Fax: (813)319-0704

Emergency Contact of Owners: Julie Banks (813)505-4451 or Emily Brushwood (813)240-6311

Website: www.playtimelearningacademy.com

E-Mail: playtimelearningacademy@yahoo.com or playtimelearningacademy@gmail.com

Facebook: Julie Banks / playtimelearningacademy@yahoo.com

(Playtime Learning Academy has interactive pages on Yelp and Facebook.)

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 6:00am-6:00pm

Saturdays CLOSED

Sundays CLOSED

Playtime Learning Academy closes approximately eight days during each calendar year. These dates coincide with major holidays and may vary from year to year. A schedule will be posted outside of the main office. The holiday closings include: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Vacation Day Policy: Please note that there is no change in tuition from week to week, regardless of holiday closings. However, each family is entitled to one week of vacation, free from tuition, in the first half of the year and one week of vacation, free from tuition, in the second half of the year.

In order to use this vacation week tuition credit:

- * The child must have been enrolled in a full time program for at least six months prior to vacation week.
- * The vacation week must be requested at least one week in advance of the first absence date.
- * The child must be absent five consecutive days.



* Mission *

At Playtime Learning Academy we believe that all children deserve the very best that we can offer every day. Our very best includes no less than the following: highly trained professional teachers; creative, age appropriate curriculum; a bright stimulating environment; ample supply of books, manipulatives, toys, and resources for exploration and discovery. We will provide quality care and exciting programs that cater to the needs of the "whole" child, both developmentally and emotionally. Children will learn in an environment rich with creativity, free from prejudice, and safe for all.

* Philosophy *

The owners of Playtime Learning Academy chose this name for the child care business for very specific reasons which are reflected in the choices made for the curriculum, the environment, and the quality of daily education. The word "playtime" represents that learning should be fun. Young children learn through their play and play is an essential part of any children's program. Exciting development occurs as children play and this play becomes the foundation for learning. "Learning" takes place as children discover and work actively to acquire knowledge. We must strive to engage their natural creativity and allow for choices in their daily lessons that reflect the world around them. The word "academy" dating back to the times of Plato, has always been a word associated with higher levels of quality in education. The owners of Playtime Learning Academy expect teachers to strive for the highest level of quality in everything that they do for children and parents. In return, the owners will strive to provide the materials and reinforcement that reflect quality as a priority. So when it comes to our philosophy... it's all in our name.

* Social Interaction *

CHILD TO CHILD - Children use social interaction as a means of understanding people's identities and gaining a sense of competency. Most children's interactions with others are peer based. The teacher's role is to facilitate this communication and help children use their oral language to express their needs and build appropriate relationships with their classmates.

TEACHER TO CHILD—In every action and word, a teacher is an example to the children around him/ her. Teachers should use proximity over volume to show dissatisfaction. When a child is being corrected, the teacher should get down to the child's level and in a calm, but firm voice, correct the child's behavior. Consistent, simple directions and clear expression of ideas is essential to the child's comprehension of the adult's directions. Typical interactions between teachers and students should be in a friendly and caring tone of voice in order to maintain a calm environment in the classroom. Rude language and improper grammar is not representative of a quality center and will not be tolerated.

TEACHER TO PARENT—Each parent that enters Playtime Learning Academy will be greeted in a friendly manner. A parent is the foremost authority on the needs of his or her child and should always be given the opportunity to express concerns, opinions, and ask questions. It is the teacher's responsibility to actively listen to each parent and provide appropriate feedback that is free from prejudice and anger. If a teacher is uncomfortable with his/her ability to provide answers to questions, unable to diffuse parental concerns, or unable to act upon a request of a parent, the director on duty should be contacted immediately. Parents need to be involved in the education of their child. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide daily, monthly, and semi-annual information to parents concerning their child's needs and progress.

SMARTCARE

Smartcare is the system that Playtime Learning Academy uses for billing, attendance, and communication. Upon enrolling at Playtime, each parent or guardian will receive an email to set up and verify his or her personal Smartcare account. A phone app for parents is also available for download. The phone app is compatible with our attendance kiosks at the office window and in each classroom. It is a quick and easy way for parents to sign in and out each day. Each teacher has a tablet in the classroom that is connected to the Smartcare system. Through the tablets, teachers can take pictures and create messages to share daily student progress with parents. It is important that each parent or guardian setup his or her account to participate in this program.



Playtime Learning Academy Spotlight on Business

Since its opening year, Playtime Learning Academy has offered beautiful picture portraits of students, to parents, twice a year created by photographer, Jen Bailey. She never fails to get the best out of each and every child. We highly recommend her and her studio, Picture Perfect Images, for all your family portrait needs.

Picture Perfect Images (813)884-3040



5537 Sheldon Road., Suite L Tampa, FL 33615 www.picperfectimages.com



* Student/Parent Orientation *

Playtime Learning Academy offers tours to new families daily with no appointment required. These tours will give parents a one on one opportunity to visit the classroom with a director who will explain the curriculum, the school policies, and typical daily routines. In addition to this open-ended question/answer opportunity, Playtime conducts an open house event each year in August and in December. Children participate in an orientation transition period for one week prior to moving up into new classrooms. During this time, students will visit and participate in select activities in the new classroom with the guidance of their current teacher. The Smartcare System is also very helpful in helping ease school to home transitions for new families.

- * Open Door Policy * Parents are not only welcome, they are encouraged to observe and participate in their child's exploration and discovery as their children play and learn at Playtime Learning Academy. Parents are not required to set appointments or give advance notice of their visits. However, if a teacher feels it is in the best interest of the class or a particular child, she may request that the parent observe certain activities via the surveillance monitors in the main office. The open door policy does not extend to strangers or members outside of the immediate family. Visitors may explore the center only if accompanied by a director and not for extended time periods. Extended family must have a written request from a parent to visit a child's class.
- *Withdraw/Termination Policy * In the event that a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw his or her child from Playtime Learning Academy, the office staff must be notified in writing one week prior to termination date. Failure to give notice of termination will result in continued tuition charges and fees. Furthermore, if the presence of a child or adult poses a threat to the physical, emotional, or mental health and well-being of other children and/or adults, a suspension or termination may be imposed by the school administration. Additional resources or support may also be recommended.
- * Field Trips * Children in VPK classrooms, after school programs, and summer camp programs will have the opportunity to take field trips to various local attractions of interest. All field trips will be well-supervised by Playtime Learning Academy staff and possible parent volunteers. Parents will be informed of upcoming field trips one week or more in advance via written letter and permission slip. Children without a signed permission slip will not be able to attend. Attendance of each student is at the discretion of the staff and administration of Playtime Learning Academy. If a child poses a safety threat to himself or classmates, alternate care arrangements will be made for the child at the center during the scheduled field trip time. Transportation to and from field trips will be done by Playtime Learning Academy bus or staff vehicle.
- * Outdoor Play * Playtime Learning Academy curriculum requires children to have outdoor play experiences twice per day, weather permitting. Please bring your child prepared for such play. In the winter, children should have warm clothes and jackets. In the summer, children should have sunscreen. All year long, children should have shoes that fit comfortably and do not pose a safety risk when running or jumping. (For example, flip flop sandals should not be worn to school.) A child who is too sick to play outside, is too sick to attend school. Please do not bring your child to school on days when illness prevents him or her from participating in daily activities.

Toddler room teachers most commonly asked question is "How do I get rid of the baby bottle and pacifier?"

The answer they give is:

If your toddler is going through a lot of changes such as a family move, wait to ween your child off of security objects such as the pacifier or baby bottle. When the environment is consistent and comforting, set up the school environment to be the place where these objects are no longer used. Simply announce to your child, "we don't use that in school" and the child will quickly make an association with the new behavior and the new environment. Once the new behavior has been accepted at school it will be easier to extend the behavior to home routines. Teachers will be very helpful in creating new routines through consistent responses and rewards.





DISCIPLINE and the "3 B's" at Playtime Learning Academy Be Friendly! Be Safe! Be a worker!

The Playtime Learning Academy "3 Bs" expectations are based on a school-wide system of support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school climate. Children are expected to be supportive of each other and can expect to be supported by peers and adults in a positive, safe, learning environment.

The "3 Bs" program emphasizes positive behavioral support for all students, in all classrooms and non-classroom settings (hallways, playground, restrooms, etc.). Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important component of Playtime's curriculum and behavioral expectations. The purpose of the "3 Bs" is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. You will see your child coming home with visual rewards to recognize his or her positive behaviors. Please discuss this recognition with your child and continue the positive support from school to home.

Our success in discipline comes from a proactive, positive support methodology. Behavioral guidance is respectful, appropriate, and not tied to food or toileting. Guidance policies take into consideration the needs of the whole child and his or her current developmental stage. Corporal punishment is never an option and is not tolerated under any circumstances.



- *Volunteer Policy * As a volunteer, you should become familiar with school and classroom policies and practices. Working with the teaching staff requires flexibility and a willingness to follow directions. Please do not disrupt instructional time in the class. Please allow the teachers to discipline the children. If there is an incident of misbehavior, it is the teacher's responsibility to handle it. Respect confidentiality standards. To make sure that students, staff, and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. There are many times that children may want to share a story with you. It is not acceptable to repeat stories about children and their families. Younger siblings may accompany you in the teacher work room, but to prevent disruptions and maintain safety, please refrain from bringing them into the classrooms. If there is a fire drill or emergency exercise, please follow the class and do as the teacher instructs. Please feel free to wear comfortable clothing, however remember that our school does have a dress code and dress should reflect a professional work environment. Personal bags, or purses are not allowed in the classroom. Parents are welcome to join children for breakfast, lunch, or afternoon snacks; but we do not allow fast food, soda, or junk food in the classrooms. Please turn off cell phones (or place them in silent mode) while in the classroom. We sincerely appreciate you for contributing your time and talent to your child's learning environment. Your involvement will greatly enhance our program and your child's experience in that program.
- * Parent Involvement * Playtime Learning Academy believes that a strong connection between home and school will increase a child's level of success at the school. Therefore, all lead teachers are required to plan at least two "parent involved" activities per school year and two "parent connection" activities per year. A parent involvement activity is a lesson that invites parents to participate in the classroom as part of the lesson. The annual "Around the World" tour in December would be a "parent involved" activity. A parent connection activity is a lesson that invites the parents to extend the classroom lesson with a teacher-provided activity at home that is returned to the classroom. Additionally, all lead teachers are required to have at least two planned conferences per school year. The purpose of these conferences shall be to share recorded observations and student work within a portfolio evaluation that has been collected over time. Parent conferences will be held in early January and May. Each teacher is required to fill out a Parent-Teacher Conference form and have the parent sign the form during the conference. The parent will also need to sign in on the conference log to prove their attendance at the conference.

Parent Contributions Parents may contribute food items for a class party, afternoon snack, or special celebration. We prefer that all items be store bought to ensure compliance with Hillsborough County food safety guidelines. No foods brought to school should contain peanuts. Toys and classroom materials may be donated from home to school but must be brought to office first for safety inspection. Playtime can not provide any type of tax form receipt for such donations since it is not a 501c charity. Playtime does two to three annual community events for charity that may request parent donations. Other than that, we avoid requesting money from parents since tuition is paid weekly.

Two's room teachers most commonly asked question is "How do I potty train my two year old?"

The answer they give is:

Consistency is key. They recommend putting your child in underwear when you are ready to train and not going back and forth between diapers and "big kid pants." Consider "pull-ups" to be the same thing as diapers because your child will. Being in school helps the training process by providing lots of good examples of kids, out of diapers, being praised for using the bathroom. Motivation is a big factor to success. A child who is ready to learn must also want to learn. Rewards help, but avoid using foods as a reward. Rely on positive feedback and praise as your primary motivators. And, like we do at school, set regular times to use the bathroom frequently throughout the day. If a child resists strongly, give up and try again later. Don't turn it into a battle of wills.

Coaching Model to Promote Quality

Did you know that Playtime has coaches that work very closely with our teachers to support best practices in your child's classroom?

Coaching is a more proactive approach than monitoring classrooms for compliance. Specially trained coaching administrators are in the classrooms, with the teachers, working with the students, and helping the teachers grow in their profession.

The overall aim of the coaching model at Playtime is to improve professional practice and thereby increase the quality of early childhood education for young children and their families.

Playtime is a learning organization where open communication and idea development flow freely! Our coaching model encourages each teacher to always set goals to improve in a positive, supportive environment.



- *Parent Communication* Suggestions and feedback at Playtime Learning Academy, we strive to do the very best to meet the needs of each individual child and family. One of the most helpful tools to achieving this goal is the feedback and suggestions that we receive from families. Your positive comments and praise are greatly appreciated. In fact, our staff works toward goals to receive positive feedback and earns rewards based upon frequency. Negative feedback is also appreciated because without it, we cannot improve. A negative comment or complaint may became the genesis for a new program, policy or curriculum goal. Therefore, negative feedback can lead to positive feedback. So whatever comments you may have for us; please feel free to share through one of the following methods;
- * The mailbox in the downstairs hallway can be used as a suggestion box for your written notes from home. This box is labeled "Positive Solutions" as that is always our goal at Playtime.
 - * An e-mail message can be sent directly to the owners via: playtimelearningacademy@yahoo.com
 - * An online message can also be sent by going to the "Feedback" tab on the business website at: www.playtimelearningacademy.com
 - * A message can be sent via the "message" option on our Facebook page. (Facebook page can be found by searching for Playtime Learning Academy or searching the e-mail address, playtimelearningacademy@yahoo.com while on the Facebook.com website).
 - * Surveys are distributed twice per year in December and May to ask for your specific feedback on the quality of care you receive. Please complete your survey when it is received as this information is used each year to make any needed changes for the upcoming semester. All surveys remain anonymous.
 - * Playtime Learning Academy owners, Julie Banks and Emily Brushwood, can be found daily in the main office from 6:30-2:30 pm Monday through Friday. A Playtime administrative director can be found daily in the main office from 12:00-6:00pm.

Pre-K3 room teachers most commonly asked question is "How do I motivate better behaviors for my preschooler?"

The answer they give is:

Preschool children respond very well to a consistent behavior and rewards pattern. Set up a goals chart and allow your child to work toward rewards. We always say the best rewards are activity based. Here are some great examples of rewards you can use at home when your child meets goals:

- a trip to the park * a special bedtime story * feeding a pet
- make a band with pots and pans
 * helping plan the day's activities
- playing with play dough
 * a bike ride with mom or dad
- a picnic lunch or dinner * a trip to the library * a zoo trip
- staying up late * a piggy-back ride * choosing a family movie
- a phone call to grandparents
 * help making dinner
- coloring
 * choosing the night's menu
 * feeding the baby
- decorating their room * planting a garden * puzzle or craft time



The Importance of Gross Motor Play

Playtime Learning Academy focuses on the development of the "whole" child! Therefore, we value gross motor development and work to create an environment in which children are encouraged to run, hop, throw, catch, skip, and balance. Playtime meets the gross motor development goals in two distinct and important ways. First, we have a designated gross motor activity each day on the grassy area of the playground space. This activity focuses on different large muscle groups and rotates throughout the week, so children are excited to engage with the variety of materials. We also have the Big Body Playroom for our 3-5 year old students that encourages gross motor play indoors with several soft toys for throwing and catching, a punching bag, and a climbing wall. When children are given the opportunity to use their bodies in different ways, many children are better able to engage and focus in other areas of the classroom. The need for physical activity is met in many creative ways throughout your child's day at Playtime Learning Academy.



- * Enrollment Procedures * Prior to enrollment, perspective students and their families are encouraged to tour the facility and meet the teachers in the classrooms. The visit does not have to be scheduled in advance; drop in tours are welcome. At the conclusion of the tour, the parents will be given information regarding open spaces and fees. A non-refundable enrollment fee will be collected at the time that a parent wishes to hold a space for future enrollment. An open space may be held for up to one week with a paid enrollment fee or 24 hours without a paid fee. This fee is treated as a non-refundable deposit. Before a child may stay at the facility, without his or her parents present, all enrollment form paperwork and medical records must be complete in the office.
- * Non Discrimination Policy * We will treat all children and adults equally regardless of sex, age, religion, life choice, or social standing. There is no tolerance for preferential treatment or lesser standards as a result of any of these personal issues. Furthermore, no person shall be restricted from hire and no child restricted from enrollment on the basis of sex, age, religion, life choice, or social standing.
- Arrival / Dismissal Policy * Playtime Learning Academy is open daily from 6am-6pm. Children are to be brought in to the classroom by an adult who can sign them in for the day. Upon arriving each child must wash his or her hands. Children are to be picked up no later than 6:00pm (or end of class time for part time schedules) by a parent, guardian, or adult listed on the enrollment form. (Any unknown adult will be asked for identification prior to the release of a child.) A late fee of \$1.00 per minute is charged after 6pm. (For part time students, the late fee applies after the official end time of class.) Since our teachers are dismissed at 6pm, late fees are to be paid directly to the teacher who stays with your child, not to the center. Signing your child in and out is done in the individual classrooms or office area. It is important to log in and out daily, as this is not just a preference but a DCF requirement for safety.
- Teachers will also have an additional folder in the classroom with work to go home and/or behavior reports. Check with your child's teacher for classroom communication policies. If your child will be arriving after 10:00am, absent, or leaving earlier than usual; please call the office to notify the teacher. If a child is absent for more than two consecutive days, without any notification, a director will attempt to contact the family by phone to check the status of the child's health and possible return date. If a director is unable to make contact with the family, after five days, it will be assumed that the family no longer wishes to remain enrolled at Playtime Learning Academy.
- When dropping off or picking up your child, please practice safe driving habits. Observe the stop sign and watch carefully for children. Avoid parking along fence line as it may interfere with general traffic flow. Overflow parking at the county racquetball court next to the center, on Ehrlich Road, may be useful to parents dropping off at peak rush hour times.

VPK preschool teachers most commonly asked question is "What is the most important skill to develop for Kindergarten?"

The answer they give is:

Independence. It's time for your baby to grow up and learn some important self-help skills. Preschool parents expect their child to learn academic skills and work hard to help their child achieve those skills; but they often forget the importance of self-confidence and independence at this age. To get your child ready for school, let them open their own juice. Allow them to carry their own bag and put away their own things. Encourage them to dress themselves, including tying shoes and buttoning pants. Give them time to figure things out and make mistakes, even if it means starting the process of getting ready to leave the house earlier. Kids need time to practice these new skills and to establish the confident routines that go along with an "I can do it" attitude.



Wonders Never Cease by Jacqueline M. Sinkes

There are tiny little fingers pressed against my cheek, and the palm of the hand that holds all my dreams.

There is a careful little grimace directed right at me, and the expression of innocence that grabs me every time.

There is a pair of big brown eyes that light up in the dark, and the window to a soul that knows only truth.

There are clumsy little legs dancing to a tune, and a chubby little bottom to break their every fall.

There is a babble and some laughter coming from my room, and the sounds of heaven right here in my home.

There is chaos in the kitchen, and toys all down the hall, a reminder to us all that time is so precious.

There are cookie crumbs on the table, and milk spilled on the carpet, but an image of simplicity and joy came with the mess.

There are car keys in the toilet and the unmistakable sense my life is full.

There are two boys fast asleep, just in the other room, and a mother who's convinced that wonders never cease.



- *Attendance Policy* Each teacher has a sign in/out kiosk tablet located in her classroom. Parents are required to sign in and out each day with the same procedure. Also, each teacher has a clipboard with her class roster for the week. This attendance log is maintained throughout the day by the teacher of the class. The attendance clipboard is required to be with the teacher at all times. If the class goes outside or to another room, the attendance log accompanies the class and teacher. It is by this meticulous attention to the log that each teacher is able to accurately track the daily attendance and movement of each child throughout the day. Your participation in this process helps us to keep your child safe each day. Children may only be released to a parent or authorized adult listed on the child's enrollment packet. Adults who are not recognized by staff will be required to provide photo identification in order to sign out a child. All adults must pass through two security code checkpoints or the main office before being allowed into a classroom.
- *Transportation * Occasionally preschool age children may have the opportunity to ride the Playtime Learning Academy bus for a field trip during the day. School age children will have the opportunity to ride the Playtime Learning Academy bus regularly to and from school and on various field trips throughout the year. This opportunity is a privilege and as such, can be suspended if safety rules are ignored. Dangerous behaviors such as removing a seatbelt, throwing objects, or standing up while the bus is in motion will not be tolerated. A first offense will result in a written warning. Second and third offenses will result in a suspension from the bus for a period of I-5 days. Repeated problems beyond that will result in expulsion from the bus. Transportation rules and consequences are strictly enforced for the safety of all children. Playtime Learning Academy bus drivers must hold a valid commercial driving license from the state of Florida that is free from any major infractions. Additionally, bus drivers must be 21 years of age or older and submit an annual report of physical health including hearing and vision results. Parents will not be permitted to transport children, other than their own, without the written consent from a custodial parent or guardian. Any parent who presents him or herself to transport a child (even his or her own) will not be allowed to do so if he or she appears intoxicated or in any way impaired. If a teacher and a director feel that a parent is unfit to safely transport a child home, they will require that alternate transportation be provided. The child will stay in Playtime Learning Academy's care until such transportation arrives at the center. Any late fees that result because of this delay will be the responsibility of the custodial parent or guardian. For the safety of the child, a child will not be released to a parent that appears intoxicated or impaired.

* Emergency Information / Enrollment Forms *

Upon enrollment at Playtime Learning Academy, each family will complete an enrollment form with important emergency information. In addition, your child's online Smartcare account will have information for you to complete. Maintaining this information correctly is of utmost importance. It is your responsibility to inform Playtime Learning Academy of any changes in address, phone numbers, or health information. Remember to also keep all of your emergency contact numbers up to date in case you can not be reached. "Gold and blue" medical forms (health & immunization) are also required to be turned in and updated as needed. You will be notified when either of these two medical forms expires and needs to be replaced with updated information. Please respond promptly to these requests.

Afterschool teachers most commonly asked question is "How can I get my picky eater to eat more healthy?" The answer they give is:

Often times kids will reject any new food the first few times they see it. Don't give up. It can take an average of seven tries with a new food to establish it as "normal" or "acceptable" in the eyes of a child. Continue to expose them to new things and praise their willingness to try any new food.

Make it fun and let kids join in on creating fun snacks to grab and go. You can roll out white bread with a rolling pin, spread with peanut butter or hummus and then roll it up like a log. When you slice the log into round slices, the kids will see swirl designs that are fun to eat. Tortillas can also be fun to roll up a sandwich wrap with something new and different like banana slices and cream cheese. Surprisingly, we find one of the kids' favorite snacks at school is cut veggies with ranch dip. Somehow dipping sauces seem to make everything tolerable to kids, even veggies. Experiment with dipping sauces alongside new foods to make them more appealing to kids.

Kids Say The Funniest Things...

During the school's "Holidays Around the World" unit a class was learning about the country of India. A special guest speaker from India came to the class wearing full Indian attire and told the class that in her country, India, people do not eat meat, especially cows who are considered sacred. With a big smile on his face, a child responded, "I know what you mean, that's why I always go to Chick-Filet.!" Several years ago, during an election year, our preschool children learned about choosing a candidate for President - his job, responsibilities, how long in office, etc... When asked, "Who remembers how long the president is in office?"

One child's response was "He runs away for four years!"





- * Nutrition* Playtime Learning Academy provides an option for two snacks and one lunch meal daily. Breakfast snack is between 8:15 and 8:45 am. A breakfast snack consists of two nutritious items such as milk and cereal or juice and muffins. Children who arrive after 8:45am should eat breakfast before coming to school. Lunch is served between 11:15 and 11:45 and consists of no less than: one protein (such as chicken), one starch (such as pasta), one fruit (such as peaches), one vegetable (such as carrots), and one serving of milk. Meals are prepared onsite and served fresh daily in "family style" mode. A menu for the current month is posted on our website and on the classroom bulletin board. An afternoon snack is served daily at approximately 3:00. The afternoon snack consist of two items (such as pretzels and juice). On Fridays, fresh fruit snacks are usually provided by volunteer parents in order to add some diversity to the regular snack schedule. Your child's teacher will have a snack schedule. If you would like to volunteer to provide a snack during the year for your child's class or if you pack your child's personal food to bring each day, please follow the same healthy guidelines that our meal and snack menu exemplifies. Our kitchen staff puts a great deal of time and effort into offering attractive, low sugar, balanced snacks and meals for your children. We are able to offer alternate menu plans to suit most allergies or health needs. If your child has any special dietary needs, please indicate so on your family enrollment form and bring it to the attention of your classroom teacher. All children are expected to participate in snack and lunch time routines, as valuable health and social lessons are taught during this daily routine.
- * Tuition Payments * Tuition for the current week will post to your Smartcare account on Thursday and is due each Monday. A two day grace period is allowed for payment. Any payments, for the current week's tuition, not received in full by the end of Wednesday will result in a \$25 late fee added to your account. If tuition is not received by the Friday after a late fee, your child may not return to class until tuition is paid in full. Payments should be made online (or via phone app) with the "Smartcare" system. Each parent has a log in and password to pay online via credit card or ACH transfer. If your form of payment is returned, you will be required to pay the face amount of the charge and a \$35 NSF charge. Payments may also be made in person by cash or card in the Playtime office.

Playtime Learning Academy charges a non-refundable enrollment fee for each child upon enrollment plus a pro-rated annual supply fee for each child. This supply fee goes toward the funding of some of the necessities and all of the extra needs and special requests of our teachers throughout the school year. For specific fee amounts, please see the Playtime Learning Academy brochure or website.



* Termination of Services *

If you are no longer needing full time care from Playtime Learning Academy, we must receive notice of termination in writing no later than Wednesday of your last week in attendance. Failure to properly notify the office of your termination will result in a continuation of weekly charges and late fees for the first week of your absence. After a full week of absences and no communication from a family, the enrollment will be terminated automatically. Any unpaid balances will then be sent to a collection agency which may incur additional processing fees. If you wish to re-enroll at a later date, please note there will be a \$50 re-enrollment fee plus any outstanding fees/balances that were incurred during previous enrollment.

* Holiday Closures / Vacation Time *

Playtime Learning Academy is open 6am to 6pm Monday through Friday and will only be closed in observance of the following holidays: New Year's day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2 days), and Christmas (2 days). Please make alternate arrangements for care on these days. Playtime will charge full weekly tuition for all weeks regardless of closures. All children enrolled in Playtime Learning Academy for six consecutive months will be granted one unpaid vacation week January 1st through June 30th and one week July 1st through December 31st. Additional absences will not result in tuition waivers or discounts. The VPK program may have additional days off corresponding to the Hillsborough Public Schools calendar. A detailed VPK calendar will be distributed to each VPK class at the start of the school year.

* Accident or Incident at School *

If your child is injured at school, you will receive a written report with details of how the injury occurred, how it was treated, and any other important details. An injury can be the result of an "accident" such as a trip or fall, or an injury may be the result of an "incident" such as a bite. Playtime Learning Academy staff is trained to minimize the occurrence of such accidents or incidents. We wish we could promise you that your child would never have any accidents or incidents while in our care, but short of placing each child in a bubble, such a promise would only be in vain. When the occasional mishap does occur, we treat each situation with care and notify parents by phone of any concerns. Minor accidents or incidents that do not result in an observable injury will be discussed with parents, but not written up formally. All other minor or major accidents or incidents will be documented and that document will require a parent signature. If an accident or incident results in the need for professional medical attention, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital via Playtime transportation or paramedic response. Your signed enrollment package will indicate your agreement with this policy. If your child arrives to school with any injuries or strange marks on his or her body, please notify the teacher upon arrival.



- * Sick Policy * Our goal is to keep Playtime Learning Academy a healthy, safe place for all children and teachers. We need your cooperation in assisting us to control the spread of germs and communicable illnesses. We will call you if your child becomes ill during their time at the center. A child who is too ill to participate in care, will be removed from the classroom and brought to the office to rest until a parent can arrive. You are expected to arrange for your child to be picked up immediately after receiving our call. Our office is not equipped or staffed to care for a sick child for extended periods of time. The most helpful thing a parent can do to keep the classroom healthy is to keep a sick child at home. Do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present: vomit, diarrhea, fever, sore red throat, persistent coughing or sneezing, red/watery eyes, unexplained rash, excessive earache or drainage from ear, or excessive mucus from nose (particularly greenish mucus). Your child may return when the symptoms subside. If your child is sent home, you will need a doctor's note or copy of prescription to return to class. If a child exhibits uncharacteristic behavior or shows signs of minor cold-like symptoms, a phone call will be made to parents. This type of phone call is meant to gather further information that may be helpful in making good choices for all children as well as to inform parents of any impending illness or concerns. If two or more children in a classroom exhibit signs of a contagious illness, all parents in that classroom will be informed, in writing, of the possible health threat to their family,
- * Medication * Medication may be dispensed by Playtime Learning Academy supervisors with a parent or guardian's written consent. A medication permission form must be filled out by a parent or guardian prior to the administration of any medications (includes: prescription, over-the-counter medication, suntan lotion, diaper rash cream, insect repellant, etc.). In addition, all medication must be labeled with your child's name and in its original container. Prescription medication must be in a properly labeled prescription bottle that clearly states the name of the child, doctor, medication, and dosage. We will not administer medication in excess of label directions. Please minimize the number of doses that need to be administered by giving morning and evening doses at home. Authorizations for medication must be updated weekly even if medication is consistent and ongoing over a long period of time. All medications are stored in a secure box, out of the reach of children. There are three such boxes on campus, under the authority of the floor supervisors.
- *TV / Video Use * Our school policy strictly prohibits the use of TV or video as a substitute for teacher supervision and interaction. Teachers may use TV time only in the afterschool classroom and only if it is educational and relevant to the lessons of the day. VPK classrooms may use the computers in their classrooms to reinforce lesson themes or introduce a concept. Screen time, even under these guidelines, may not exceed 20 minutes per day.

All of Playtime Learning Academy classrooms and outdoor areas are equipped with video monitoring cameras. The cameras record 24 hours a day, 7 days a week onto one of two DVR's located in the main office. These cameras are meant to provide additional safety and security to the facility as well as aid in teacher evaluations and classroom observations. No video is available online.



- * Reporting Abuse; It's the Law * Chapter 39, Florida Statutes protects children from abuse and neglect. Section 39.201 provides for a central abuse registry to receive reports of misuse and/or neglect. Child care providers are among the professionals who are considered "mandated reporters." As such, Playtime Learning Academy staff members are required, by law, to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect. Failing to report suspected abuse is a second degree misdemeanor and may be prosecuted under Chapter 39 F.S. Anyone making a report in good faith is specifically immune from civil or criminal charges that might result. The reporter's name is confidential and will not be released. Professionals in daily contact with children are the first line of defense against neglect and abuse. If a teacher or administrator at Playtime Learning Academy suspects abuse or neglect of a child, it will be reported.
- * Behavior Issues * We understand that the early years are the time when children are learning to communicate their feelings and understand their boundaries. Breaking the rules, tantrums, and aggressive behavior are often typical of this formative period. Playtime Learning Academy staff is trained in principles of positive reinforcement and behaviorism theory in order to guide children toward greater self-discipline while furthering learning goals. Redirection, verbal warnings, and positive behavior support are typical procedures to minimize misbehavior. Excessive aggression or misbehavior that is beyond normal levels will result in a parent-teacher conference. A director may be present at this conference. The goal of such a conference is to help parents work with teachers to move toward a positive solution. In rare instances, when all attempts to curb aggressive behavior are futile, a child will be expelled from the center. A proactive approach to behavior issues, including Playtime's "3 B's" guidelines will stop many behavior issues before they develop. Playtime teachers work collaboratively with parents to problem solve solutions for behavior concerns.
- * Discipline * If a child is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her behaviors: he or she will be directed to another play area which may prevent escalation of the problem. If a problem continues to exist, the child will be removed from the play area and given time away from the group to regain control and reflect on behavior. The time limits for this reflection time are determined by the child's needs as shown by their change in attitude/behavior as well as discussion with teacher. If continued unacceptable behavior occurs, the parents will be notified to discuss a team approach action plan using Positive Behavior Support (PBS) guidelines. Behavior logs are kept by teachers and conferences are scheduled regularly throughout the year. The "TERRIFIC" social emotional component of our curriculum identifies the "Great 8 Traits" that are taught and reinforced daily to encourage a greater understanding of one's feelings and expectations of the community. (Trustworthy, Empathetic, Respectful, Responsible, Independent, Fair, Imaginative, Courteous)



* Discipline * (continued)

Discipline is not about punishment. It's about teaching a child how to respect limits and follow rules. Discipline helps a child to: stay safe, learn right from wrong, develop values, respect others, build self esteem, develop self-control, understand consequences, and be successful in school. Discipline is an ongoing process. It begins in the infant toddler stages with parents and changes as a child matures and enters school. The goal of discipline is to develop valuable skills through patience, determination, and consistency.

* The first level of discipline is to be a proactive role-model for children. Teachers will communicate openly the thought process involved to make good choices and praise positive outcomes. Children learn by watching. Positive attention makes them feel good about themselves and motivate them to continue positive behaviors. For example: "I like the way Johnny chose to share that toy with a friend. It made his friend so happy." Or "Mary, would you like to take turns on the swing or choose another play area?" Teachers will model positive values and respect for children in the way they speak to children and other adults.

* The second level of discipline is to provide consistent and appropriate responses to misbehavior. If a child is experiencing difficulty controlling his or her behavior:

- I) He or she will be redirected to another play area which may prevent escalation of the problem or the teacher will help the child problem solve a solution to stay in place.
- 2) If a problem still exists, the child will be removed from the play area and given time away from the group to regain control. The time limits for this personal time are determined by the child. He or she may return to the group when ready.
- 3) If continued unacceptable behavior occurs, the parent will be notified to discuss a team approach to remedy the problem.

* The third and final level of discipline is to provide a united front in which school and home work cooperatively. Information regarding discipline should be shared with parents including: observed behaviors, responses, and goals. For best results, the responses at home and school should reflect the same patterns.

NOTE It is <u>never</u> acceptable to use food, rest, or bathroom privileges as part of a discipline plan. Corporal punishment is <u>not</u> tolerated or considered acceptable in any form at home or school. Any evidence of corporal punishment, or withholding basic needs, will be reported as a case of abuse.



- * Fire and Safety Procedures * Playtime Learning Academy practices its fire drill procedures with the children on a monthly basis to ensure familiarity with the safest way to make a quick exit from the building in the event of a fire. Teachers are instructed to take all children out to a designated place outside and to bring their attendance roster and parent emergency information with them. If you are at the center during a fire drill, please be aware that you will not be permitted to drive in or out of the parking lot area until the fire drill is complete. In the event of an actual emergency, once outside, teachers would first ensure that all children are present. The teacher would then begin using the emergency information on file to contact parents to apprise them of the situation so that children can be picked up promptly in the event that we are unable to return to the building. It is important that you update emergency details if your phone numbers change. For more details on this procedure, please see the emergency exit plan posted in your child's classroom. Playtime Learning Academy is not located in an area that would generally be affected by a nearby brush fire, but if air quality is poor due to nearby smoke, parents would be contacted to pick children up from the center.
- * Severe Weather * Since current weather technology allows for the advance warning of severe weather conditions such as hurricane, tropical storm, or tornado; it is likely that Playtime Learning Academy would handle such an event by closing early or not opening at all. Playtime Learning Academy generally takes its lead from the Hillsborough Public Schools. If the school board meets and determines that schools will close early or not open on a particular day, then Playtime will follow suit and do the same. However, in the case that schools are closed in order to act as shelters but general weather conditions around Playtime Learning Academy are safe, then we may remain open. The best way to determine if the facility is closed is to call the main office. If a change has been made to our operating schedule; the voice mail message will detail exactly what has been decided. If the voice mail message has not changed from the standard greeting, then Playtime Learning Academy is open for business as usual. In the event that it is necessary to close early, each parent will be contacted by phone to pick up his or her child by the designated time. It is imperative that we have up to date phone numbers for family members and emergency contacts at all times. In the event of a severe weather alert while children are in attendance, it is our policy to move all children to one of three designated interior rooms without windows until the threat has passed.
- * Lockdown * If a dangerous person is warned to be in the area, we will enact a "lockdown" procedure at the facility. This simply means that all outside doors and gates will be locked and no classes will be allowed outside until the threat has passed. Teachers will be notified by a director if a lockdown is necessary and when the lockdown is over.



- * **Electrical Outage** * Electricity is essential to the care of all children in order to maintain suitable temperature levels. If a loss of electricity creates conditions that affect our ability to provide proper care for children, parents will be notified to pick up their children. If we believe that the electricity can be restored quickly enough to not affect the quality of care that the children receive, then parents will be notified for information purposes only, but will not be required to pick up. The majority of activities that the children do at the center do not require electricity.
- * Stranger Danger * Enrollment forms, filled out by parents or guardians, will specify who (other than parents) is allowed to pick up their children from Playtime Learning Academy. The enrollment form also specifies that if a parent is not recognized as a parent or other listed adult, then he or she will be required to provide a form of photo identification. Without the proper identification, an unrecognized adult is a stranger and as such, may not remove any child from our care under any circumstances. In the case of divorce or changes in custody, the custodial parents is responsible for updating enrollment forms and provided court documents for file. It is important to note that if a parent is listed on the enrollment form, we can not keep that parent away from his or her child without court documentation.
- *Toxic Products * Toxic Products are secured safely and out of reach or sight of children. Cleaning products in current use (floor cleaner, sanitizer, and glass cleaner) are stored in one of three mop sink closets located in the child care center. The mop sink closets are outside of the classroom areas and have a high shelf on the back wall for storage of cleaners. Playtime Learning Academy uses a twist and lock cleaning system in which the individual bottles do not open. The rectangular bottles are attached directly to the water supply and mix automatically with a twist of the properly placed bottle. Additional cleaning supplies are located in locked cabinets of the kitchen and laundry room. These cabinets are secured with child safety locks even though children should never have access to these rooms. Every classroom has a combination locked metal wall cabinet in the classroom to safely store any products not safe for children. Teachers are instructed and trained on the proper use and storage of toxic products and the center practices a zero tolerance rule for any deviations from the safety standards.





- * Curriculum * Playtime Learning Academy offers a balanced curriculum based on thematic units and research based developmentally appropriate practices for young children. We are proud to have written and developed our Great Eight Traits social-emotional curriculum in-house with our professional staff. Many of our staff members and directors have Bachelor's degree and/or Master's degree level education in early childhood education, curriculum development, reading and language arts, and program administration. In our state approved professional academic curriculum, an emphasis on basic skills is extended through well developed lessons in literacy, science, music, art, and physical education. The curriculum is theme based and provides opportunities for children to reinforce circle time and small group lessons through discovery play and props in various independent learning centers throughout the room. Daily routines and lesson plans are meticulously planned and carried out each day for children ages 2-5. Children have personalized lesson goals with special attention to developmental milestones and social interaction. School age programs focus on academic tutoring and enrichment activities. You may view your child's weekly lesson plans and daily schedule in his or her classroom.
- * Parent Connections * At Playtime Learning Academy, we believe that informed parents are happy parents and children whose parents are involved in their education from a very young age will ultimately achieve greater success in school and beyond. It is because of these beliefs that our teachers go out of their way to involve parents in their classroom activities and provide information daily. You will receive feedback about your child's progress each day at the center. Teachers are also available for planned conferences by phone or in person. Teachers post their calendars and lesson plans in the classroom so that you can keep up to date with current curriculum goals and themes. Toddlers are sent home with daily "toddler grams." A "toddler gram" is a detailed note about what your child did during the day. Preschool children have daily notes in their folders at the front of each classroom. Volunteers are welcome in the classroom and teachers will have special themed opportunities for parents to participate in the classroom each month.
- * Classroom Ratios * Playtime Learning Academy maintains ratios as recommended by APPLE gold seal accreditation procedures or better. This is a higher standard than the minimum requirements of Hillsborough County's Department of Children and Families. The following ratios currently apply to Playtime classrooms: Two year old toddlers have one teacher for every seven children. Three year old preschool classes maintain the standard of one teacher for every nine children. Four year old preschool classes maintain the standard of one teacher for every ten children. Our afterschool program classes (ages 5-11) maintain the standard of one teacher for every twelve children. In addition, we have "floater" teachers in the center to go to the classrooms where extra help is needed.



Supply Lists * Your child's teacher will set up a classroom cubby labeled with your child's name and picture in the classroom for personal items. Please check the cubby or designated area each day for any class work to be taken home and any notes from the teacher about your child's day. Your child's teacher will inform you when additional supplies are needed. Two Year Old Room: diaper wipes, diapers (if used), 2 changes of clothes/underwear (more if potty training), and blanket for nap. Preschool 3's, 4's, and VPK: one change of clothes, blanket for nap time, and a backpack. (Remember to bring home your child's blanket from naptime every Friday to be washed and returned by Monday.) Teachers will request specific donation items or wish list items throughout the year based on themes and activities. For example, teachers might ask for: rocks, shells, magazines, boxes, or treasure box items. Most general supply needs are covered by your paid supply fee at the start of school year and summer.

*Class Area Descriptions *

The Outdoor Science Area is located in the small fenced in area outdoors, adjacent to the Clubhouse building. This area has wooden sand and water tables, activity tables, and class gardens. The storage cabinet in the outdoor science class has many activities for teachers to use when extending the indoor lessons to outside adventure.

The Library Area is located in back of the main office. Every class a reading area for their students as well as books in each learning center. The office library area is organized by theme and allows teachers to rotate books through their class reading centers to keep literacy dynamic and focused. The center boasts well over 3000 books and counting, so the library, which is organized by theme areas, is a very important asset to the facility.

"The Clubhouse" for After School Care & Summer Camp Playtime Learning Academy provides transportation to and from several local schools. (See a director for complete list.) Our teachers assist the children with homework and provide planned enrichment activities that are thought provoking; but fun. The Clubhouse building includes: The Owl's Nest (quiet reading area), The Game Room, The Art Studio, The Construction Zone, The Science Center, The Tech Deck, and The Backstage Area for dramatic play. The rooms of the Clubhouse keep our children in grades K-5 busily engaged after school and during non-school days that we are open. They also love outside play, where the children can choose from hockey, basketball, dodgeball, kickball, or just running and climbing. On school vacation days these kids spend full days at the center, often on special field trips or involved in specially planned activities with their three Clubhouse teachers.



Class Descriptions (continued)

The Toddler Twos Room has a capacity of twenty one full time children and it has three teachers in the room. This classroom is one of the largest classrooms in the center with ample room to explore and play. This class is the first step to preschool and operates on an academic school year schedule. The children will enter as young two years old and turn three at some point during the school year. This is a class of transitions and a very important year. These children enter as babies in diapers and leave as young preschoolers. They will learn the social aspects of being part of a classroom and the etiquette and rules that are expected in that environment. They will learn to use the bathroom and practice good hygiene throughout the day. They will begin readiness skills with colors, numbers, letters, shapes, discovery science, and basic literacy skills. They grow tremendously as they learn through their play with songs, imaginary play, and art work.

The Preschool Threes are two years away from going to kindergarten. Next year they will move upstairs to the VPK programs; but this year they will enjoy one of two exciting preschool adventure rooms. Each of the threes classes has a capacity for eighteen full time children. There are always two teachers assigned to each of these classes. The rooms are divided into centers that include: music, blocks, dramatic play, puzzles, art, reading, writing, science, and math manipulatives. The rooms are brightly decorated and very inviting for discovery based learning. These children are ready to begin mastering kindergarten concepts that they will perfect next year in VPK. Concepts include: social skills, problem solving, writing, fine motor control, phonemic awareness, basic geometry, math concepts, and physical coordination.

The VPK (Preschool Fours) classrooms are located upstairs in our larger building. Parents can choose a class schedule that best meets their needs. These beautiful and modern classrooms are the pride of the center with wonderful things around every corner. The rooms are full of art, inviting pictures, letters, numbers, shapes, and literacy that can unfold a story in every direction. The rooms are divided into centers very similar to the PreK3 classrooms, but with many new items for the children to explore and manipulate. The rooms feature comfy library corners with student made books, listening centers, computers, and well-equipped writing and art centers. The curriculum includes bilingual components, reading readiness, math, social skills, and critical thinking lessons to prepare children to become independent, confident kindergarten students.

NOTE: Playtime Learning Academy VPK Graduation Ceremony takes place at Sickles High School on Gunn Highway in Tampa. Graduation ceremony is held each year during the last week of the VPK school year.

Internet Resources For Parents

<u>Myflorida.com</u> This is a useful site to look up the latest news in child care law as well as to see specific inspection reports done on area childcare centers.

<u>Scholastic.com/bookclubs</u>—This web site is what we use to order books for the center. Families can go online and order books for home which and we earn FREE books for our classrooms! Please use our class activation code: GRQBR

http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/offender/homepage.do— A state web site that allows you to check your local area for sexual offenders and/ or predators registered with the state of Florida.

http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/- Kindergarten around the corner? Find out which school you are zoned for and when to register your child.

http://www.elchc.org/vpk_parent.html— Find out information about VPK and how to register for your VPK certificate.



Partnership- Author Unknown

I dreamed that I stood in a studio and watched two sculptors there. The clay they used was a young child's mind and they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher; the tools she used were books, music and art; One was a parent; with a guiding gentle hand; and a gentle, loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled, with touch that was deft and sure. While the parent labored by her side and polished and smooth it o'er

And when at last their task was done, they were proud of what they had wrought.

For the things they had molded into the child could neither be sold nor bought.

And each agreed they would have failed if they had worked alone. For behind the parent stood the school, and behind the teacher, the home.





Please return this portion of the handbook to the main office for your family file.

Child Information Questionnaire

Nar	me of Child:	Date:	_Date of Birth:
1. V	Vhat are your child's play interests (prefe	erence for creative,	dramatic or constructive?
2. F	low would you describe your child's pers	sonality?	
	s there anything else about your child your child your child's needs (for example, toileting i		
4. H	las your child had previous preschool or		
	Who lives in the home with your child? Th	e ages of siblings?	
6. V	What are your expectations for the school	?	
7. V	Vhat are your expectations for your child'	s teachers?	
8.	Does your child have any particular medi		
9. [Does your child have any unusual fears?		ss anger or react to frustration?
10. I	How does your child comfort himself/hers	self?	
Par	ent/Guardian Signature:		Date [.]



Playtime Learning Academy 4701 Ehrlich Road Tampa, FL 33624 (813)969-2888 - Academy Office (813)969-2277 - Early Learning Center (813) 319-0704 - Fax Www.PlaytimeLearningAcademy.com

Welcome! It is our goal to provide an excellent early childhood education to all of our children. We hope that this book will be useful to you as you familiarize yourself with all the wonderful programs and people at Playtime Learning Academy. We look forward to sharing, with you, the beginning of your children's lifelong journey in learning. We appreciate the trust you have placed in us.

Julie Banks & Emily Brushwood

Please return this page of the handbook to the main office for your family file.

The parent handbook is provided to all parents upon enrollment. Additional updates, if needed, will be collected and distributed each January. Please sign below to indicate your receipt of the Playtime Learning Academy Parent Handbook.

Parent Signature	Date
Child's Name	Class



Learning Academy