



# *Buford Children's Academy*

## Family Handbook

**"Where Life-Long Learning Begins"**

Revised January 2024



## WELCOME

Dear Family,

Our goal is to make your child's transition into school a smooth and successful one. Let us know what we can do to make that transition easy for you and your little one.

We believe that Preschool and Pre K is a great way to begin building the foundation of a child's future! Here at Buford Children's Academy, we strive to make a difference in the lives of young children by providing excellence in early care and education and serving with a commitment to helping each child achieve their full potential.

Thank you for choosing **Buford Children's Academy**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Center Director  
4440 Commerce Dr  
Buford, GA 30518  
(678) 765-7870  
**Buford Children's Academy**



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## **ABOUT US**

### ***Philosophy***

*Buford Children's Academy – providing excellence in care and education while making a difference for children, parents, families, and the community. Buford Children's Academy provides cutting edge child care and preschool for working parents. It is a privately owned and family operated children's learning center for children 6 weeks to 12 years of age. We are committed to serving each child and family with personal and specialized attention. We committed to providing a staff of nurturing teachers who recognize the individual developmental levels and skills of each child and will guide them towards their full potential.*

### ***Mission***

At Buford Children's Academy, we strive to make a difference in the lives of young children by providing excellence in early care and education and serving with a commitment to helping each child achieve their full potential.

### ***Hours of Operation***

Buford Children's Academy is open year-round except for stated holidays. Our hours are Monday - Friday 6:30am - 6:30pm offering full-time childcare services.

Starting in August 2016, we offer a Georgia Pre-K program from 8:30 am to 3 pm. For Georgia Pre-K students, we offer before school care from 6:30 am - 8:00 am and after school care from 3:00 to 6:30 pm.

For children ages 5 to 12, we offer before and after school care; our before school hours are from 6:30am - 7:30am, and our after school hours are 2:45pm - 6:30pm. Buford Children's Academy's premiere summer program for school-aged children, Summerland, will be offered from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

### ***Holidays***

Buford Children's Academy will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day



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\*When the holiday falls on a Saturday Buford Children's Academy will be closed the Friday before. If the holiday falls on a Sunday Buford Children's Academy will be closed on the following Monday.\*

If Gwinnett County Public Schools are closed due to ***inclement weather***, we will also be closed.

### ***Definition of Family***

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

### ***Admission & Enrollment***

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

An enrollment fee of \$99 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable and due every January.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 6-weeks to 12 years of age.

Our process for introducing children to our program is having a trial period of two hours from 10 am to 12 pm. During this time, new students will be able to engage in classroom activities, spend some quality time outside getting to know their new friends, and enjoy a freshly prepared lunch. It is our belief that this trial period can be incredibly beneficial for both students and their families in process of starting a new school. We hope to facilitate a smooth transition for children into their new classroom environment and routine.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

If your child has an identified special need, we will work with the family in order to provide the most developmentally appropriate, individualized solution for the child. Consistent communication between parents, teachers, and administration will be extremely vital in facilitating a strong plan of care. We will make reasonable modifications for the student as long as it does not interfere with the care of other children in the classroom or would constitute a fundamental alteration.

### ***Inclusion***

***Buford Children's Academy*** believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At ***Buford Children's Academy*** equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made



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unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Family Activities***

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Teachers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). However, any arrangement between families and our teachers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by ***Buford Children's Academy***.

### ***Child to Staff Ratios***

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

<b>Age</b>	<b>Child to Staff</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
0-12 months	<u>6 to 1</u>	<u>10</u>
1 year olds	<u>8 to 1</u>	<u>14</u>
2 year olds	<u>10 to 1</u>	<u>12</u>
3 year olds	<u>15 to 1</u>	<u>20</u>
4-5 year olds	<u>18 to 1</u>	<u>22</u>
6-8 year olds	<u>20 to 1</u>	<u>22</u>
9-12 year olds	<u>25 to 1</u>	<u>22</u>



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### **Communication & Family Partnership**

**Daily Communications.** Daily notes from center staff for ages 6 weeks - 2 years will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Children ages 3 and 4 will receive progress reports at the end of each week. Our daily sheets and weekly reports will be distributed to parents upon pickup. In the event that our teachers are busy teaching upon your arrival for pickup, please kindly remind them to give you your child's report.

**Email.** We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences can be scheduled when needed. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

### **Open Door Policy**

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse or feed their infants.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked at all times.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

### **Publicity**

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity. All families will be asked to sign a media authorization form detailing how Buford Children's Academy may use the likeness of their child. We will keep the signed document in the child's confidential folder.

## **CURRICULA & LEARNING**

### **Learning Environment**

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-





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on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

### ***Curricula & Assessment***

Partnering with a team of experienced early childhood education professionals and having experience in the development and operation of child care centers; we have created a daily program that offers the best in educational curriculum. Enrichment activities that boost self-esteem will help young learners to build a foundation that sets the stage for educational success. We use **Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)** to stimulate emerging skills in a developmentally appropriate fashion. Our teachers use regular observation and assessment to insure that each child grows and develops at their own pace. Believing that language and math skills set the stage for learning and problem-solving, we begin stimulating both areas in a developmentally appropriate way, beginning with our youngest children. From story time to center time, math and language are integrated throughout our children's day.

Children need boundaries and routines. Our Daily schedules include blocks of time for large group participation, small group interaction, independent learning in learning centers, and outside exploration and play. In addition, each classroom has scheduled mealtimes, snack times and rest times. Daily schedules are posted in each classroom.

### ***Outings & Field Trips***

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. **Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child. During cold weather, please provide an appropriate jacket for the temperature.**

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

### ***Transition***

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

#### ***Transition from home to center***

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. Your child will also be able to step



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inside the classroom during your visit. They will also be able to have a trial period of two hours from 10 am to 12 pm on a day of your choosing. During this time, new students will be able to engage in classroom activities, spend some quality time outside getting to know their new friends, and enjoy a freshly prepared lunch. It is our belief that this trial period can be incredibly beneficial for both students and their families in process of starting a new school. We hope to facilitate a smooth transition for children into their new classroom environment and routine.

### ***Transition between learning programs***

Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability.

### ***Electronic Media***

Electronic Media are limited to 20 minutes or less per day per child. Internet sites and software are pre-screened to contain non-violence and high-quality educational content.

### ***Multiculturalism***

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

### ***Celebrations***

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff and community.

### ***Rest Time***

Infants sleep according to their own schedule and are put to sleep on their backs unless a physician's written statement authorizing another sleep position for that infant is provided.

- Cribs will be placed a minimum of 1 foot apart on all sides.
- Cribs shall be in compliance with CPCS and ASTM safety standards. They will be maintained in good repair and free from hazards.
- No objects will be placed in or on the crib with an infant. This includes, but is not limited to, covers, blankets, toys, pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items.
- No objects will be attached to a crib with a sleeping infant, such as, but not limited to, crib gyms, toys, mirrors and mobiles.
- Only sleepers, sleep sacks and wearable blankets provided by the parent/guardian and that fit according to the commercial manufacturer's guidelines and will not slip up around the infant's face may be worn for the comfort of the sleeping infant.



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- Individual crib bedding will be changed daily, or more often as needed, according to the rules. Bedding for cots/mats will be laundered daily or marked for individual use. If marked for individual use, the sheets/covers must be laundered weekly or more frequently if needed.
- Infants who arrive at the center asleep or fall asleep in other equipment, on the floor or elsewhere, will be moved to a safety-approved crib for sleep.
- Swaddling will not be permitted, unless a physician's written statement authorizing it for a particular infant is provided. The written statement must include instructions and a time frame for swaddling the infant.
- Wedges, other infant positioning devices and monitors will not be permitted unless a physician's written statement authorizing its use for a particular infant is provided. The written statement must include instructions on how to use the device and a time frame for using it.

After lunch, all children less than 6 years of age participate in a quiet rest time. Naptime is a quiet time for children, during which time the lights will be off and the blinds closed. Soft instrumental music or lullabies may be played quietly during this time. Mats will be placed a minimum of 1 foot apart on all sides. For non-sleeping children a quiet activity will be offered following 30 minutes of gentle encouragement to rest.

Children will be placed head to toe so that they are not facing each other. All mats, cribs, sheets and blankets will be clearly numbered with a list readily available to outline each child's assigned number. Children will rest on the same mat/crib/sheet/blanket each day. Sheets and blankets will be removed daily and stored in individualized area. The mat list, along with a diagram of the routine sleeping arrangements, will be posted in plain view for reference.

School age children, although not required, shall be provided an opportunity for a regular rest period if the child desires. For children who do not want to rest, a space and time for quiet play will be made available.

### ***Toilet Training***

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a positive manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

An outline of the steps required for diaper changes are posted in all diaper rooms. These procedures MUST be followed with each and every diaper change. Employees working with diaper age groups are



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asked to place all “dirty” diapers in a small plastic bag before placing it in the trashcan. Wet diapers may be disposed of by placing directly into the trashcan.

Employees must be sure to have any supplies they may need for changing each child readily accessible on the changing table prior to placing the child on the changing area. Staff will NEVER turn away from or leave a child on the changing area for any reason.

Prior to diapering children, staff will wash hands with warm running water and liquid soap. After children are diapered, staff will adequately clean and disinfect the changing table area and then re-wash hands again. Diapering facilities will be maintained safe and sanitary at all times. If parents choose to use diaper ointment a medication form must be filled out.

Potty training can be a long process with daily “accidents” while occasional “accidents” may continue throughout their pre-school years. Children will **never** be punished, humiliated or reprimanded for bathroom accidents. Staff will assist with the clean up and with changing clothes whenever needed, regardless of their age. Soiled clothing should be sealed tightly in a plastic bag and placed in that child’s personal bag to take home for laundering.

Each and every child must wash their hands with soap and running water IMMEDIATELY following a diaper change or using the bathroom.

### **GUIDANCE**

#### ***General Procedure***

**Buford Children's Academy** is committed to each student’s success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

#### ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness.

Each student at Buford Children's Academy has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of caring adults



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When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director.

### ***Physical Restraint***

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

### ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### ***Payment***

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due every **Friday** as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement* for the upcoming week of childcare services.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

We are conveniently open from 6:30am until 6:30pm, daily Monday through Friday to accommodate all of our client's schedules.

**If a parent/guardian or other authorized person picks up a child after 6:30, there will be an automatic fee of \$35.00 charged. There is an additional fee of \$1 for each minute past 6:35pm.**

If a parent or authorized pick up person has not contacted us and a child is still at the center one hour after closing, the person in charge is authorized to notify the local authorities who will then assume custody of the child until the parent can be found.



### ***Special Activity Fees***

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, the **Friday** before the upcoming week of childcare services, a late fee of \$25 will be added the following Monday, or the start of that week of childcare. For each day that payment is late afterwards, another \$10 per day will be added onto the account. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may be discharged from the program. All tuition and fees for the past week and upcoming week must be paid in full before children will be accepted for the next week of childcare.

If payment is more than 10 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee up to the maximum amount allowed by law. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

### ***Additional Fees Credits***

- **Vacation** - to retain your child's spot during vacation, 50% of your regular tuition is due. Vacation days can be used if written notice is given in advance for the days the child will not be in attendance. Tuition must be paid prior to going on vacation. These fees are non-refundable if you choose not to return.
- **Withdrawals** - if a child is suddenly withdrawn from the program without a 2 week written notice of withdrawal, a 2 week tuition fee may be applied. Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

## **ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL**

### ***Absence***

Children that are absent from Buford Children's Academy for any reasons or children that are on vacation are still required to pay full tuition fees on Friday in advance for the upcoming week of childcare services. Tuition is based on enrollment NOT attendance. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for paying full tuition per child/ children to guarantee childcare services. Children that attend Buford Children's Academy for six months continuously, whose account is current and in good standing, will be eligible for vacation with reduced pay.



### ***Vacation***

Vacation days only apply if your child is normally scheduled to attend on those days. Each child is given 5 vacation days each calendar year. Please refer to "Vacation" under Additional Fees Credits.

### ***Withdrawals***

A written notice, 2 weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

### ***Transfer of Records***

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

### ***Closing Due to Extreme Weather***

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local radio and television stations.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### ***General Procedure***

We open at 6:30 AM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children into the building and sign them in. **The state requires that all parents/guardians/authorized persons must personally sign-in their child upon arrival.** During this time, you may make your weekly payment and drop-off your child's belongings (diapers, wipes, change of clothing, etc.) with your child's teacher.

We close at 6:30 PM. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time. **The state requires that all parents/guardians/authorized persons must personally sign-in their child for departure.** During this time, you are able to pick up your child's daily sheet or weekly report from the afternoon teachers.

### ***Cell Phone Usage***

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. In order to make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at anytime while visiting the center.



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### **Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up**

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as a Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing or by fax. You must include the following in your letter/fax:

1. Name of child
2. The date and time of pick up
3. The name of the person authorized to pick up
4. A copy of your I.D.
5. Your Signature
6. Statement authorizing one-time pickup " I [parent name] authorize [name of authorized person] to pick up [name of child] one-time only on [date & time] "

Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

### ***Right to Refuse Child Release***

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

#### ***What to Bring***

- **Infants:** enough clean bottles for a day's use or already made bottles that are labeled w/date and ounces, a week's worth of diapers, wipes, bibs, burp cloths, pacifiers (if needed) and at least 2 changes of clothes per day
- **Toddlers:** a Sippy cup for mealtimes, a week's worth of diapers, wipes, and at least two changes of clothes per day, blanket for naptime, closed toed shoes
- **Younger Preschoolers:** a week's supply of diapers/pull-ups, wipes, sippy cups for mealtimes (if needed), at least two changes of clothes or more (including socks), underwear if needed, blanket for naptime, closed toed shoes
- **Older Preschoolers:** pull-ups and wipes (if needed), at least one change of clothes including underwear, socks and shoes, blanket for naptime
- **Kindergarteners:** at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.





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- **After School Care Children:** books for homework, appropriate play clothes

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. **We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.** All personal belongings will be removed from children's bags and kept in either cubbies or diapering stations.

In the event that your child is missing the proper amount of diapers/pull-ups for the day and we must provide diapers/pull-ups for your child, a fee of \$2 per diaper and \$3 per pull-up will be added to your account.

### ***Cubbies***

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and photo. We ask that all families provide our teachers with one photo that we may use on their assigned cubby. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

### ***Lost & Found***

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the upstairs office. Ask for assistance if your child is missing personal belongings. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### ***Toys from Home***

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity OR they are for naptime use ONLY. We will allow each child one plush toy that **cannot** fit through a toilet paper tube for use during naptime. This toy will be kept in the child's

assigned cubby during class time. We ask that all other toys be left at home as to not create distractions within the classroom environment.

## **NUTRITION**

### ***Foods Brought from Home***

Food brought from home is permitted if your child has special needs and under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.



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Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
½ turkey sandwich Celery sticks Raisins Milk/water	Chicken strips Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk/water
Peanut butter on graham crackers Apple slices Carrot sticks Milk/water	Yogurt Crackers Sugar snap peas Milk/water

### ***Food Prepared for or at the Center***

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

### ***Food Allergies***

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions, accompanied by a note from your physician, and must be updated at least once a year.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

### ***Meal Time***

Our food is prepared fresh daily. We serve our students a variety of healthy, appropriately portioned meals and snacks. We encourage even the pickiest of eaters to at least try our provided meals. We have 5 weekly menus that are rotated out each week and posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

### ***Infant Feedings***

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Bottle-fed infants are fed while being held or sitting up.
- Infants are fed “on demand” to the extent possible (at least every 3 hours and usually not more than hourly).



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- Breastfeeding is supported and nursing mothers are able to use the infant classroom to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. Fresh breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months.
- Formula must be brought to the premises in a factory-sealed container in a ready-to-feed strength or powder or concentrate. Formula will be diluted at the child care site according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer or from the child's health provider, using water from a source approved by the local health department. Formula brought from home must be labeled with the child's name.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child's family.

### ***Toddler Feedings***

- Children are encouraged to self-feed with utensils to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Students use Sippy cups during meal and snack times, and when they are developmentally able to, we will work with them to use an actual disposable cup.

### ***School Aged Participants***

- Before and after school child care participants will be offered a light snack at each session. These snacks are not a meal. If your child will be arriving before 7:05 am arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please make sure your child has had breakfast before arriving at child care and is supplied with an adequate lunch if required for school.

## **HEALTH**

### ***Immunizations***

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org), and must be in converted to a 3231 form to be accepted by the center. Every year, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed and an affidavit must be filled out and notarized. Please see the front desk for this form. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department. Please see attached Georgia Department of Public Health Form 3300 for additional information on vaccinations.

### ***Vision, Dental, Hearing, and Nutrition Screening***

**ALL** families with four year old children enrolled are required to submit vision, dental, hearing and nutrition screenings within 90 days of enrollment or 90 days of the child's fourth birthday.



### **Physicals**

Routine physicals are required for GA Pre K and school age children according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

### **Illness**

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive. Parents should arrive no later than 2 hours after you have been notified of your child's illness.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth, above 101°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
  - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious
  - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
- If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.



### **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter from your child's physician detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

### **Medications**

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed. Medications will be administered only if the medication authorization form is filled out in its entirety. We will only administer medication prescribed by a physician. Medication must be left at the front office to be stored appropriately. Medication may not be stored in the classroom. All medications must be taken home each night. Medications will not be administered if all requirements are not met. If a child experiences an adverse reaction to administered medication, it will be documented and parents/guardians will be notified by phone immediately. Medication will only be administered twice daily by the center director-- at 12:00 PM and 4:00 PM.

**\*\*\*We do not and will not administer over the counter medicine\*\*\***

- **Prescription medications** require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. Such authorization should include date; full name of the child; name of the medication; dosage; the dates to be given; the time of day to be dispensed; prescription number, and signature of parent. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.
- **Non-prescription medications** require a note signed by the physician. Such authorization should include date; full name of the child; name of the medication; dosage; the dates to be given; the time of day to be dispensed; and signature of parent. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 2 week period.
- **Non-prescription topical ointments** (e.g., diaper cream) require a form to be filled out by the parent. All diaper creams, baby power, sunscreen, and insect repellent must be provided by the parent and placed in a clear plastic bag with child's name written on the front. The form is available at the front desk. specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

### **Communicable Diseases**

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:



- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

## **SAFETY**

### ***Clothing***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

**Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Closed toed shoes ONLY!!**

### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 90 °F or less than 37 °F with a wind-chill of 5 mph . Additionally, outdoor play will be cancelled if the air quality rating is 50 or below.

### ***Communal Water-Play***

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

### ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive a **Boo Boo report** outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a mini first aid



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kit meeting the state regulations. There is a complete first aid kit in kept in the front office and on the bus.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

### ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once and is difficult to predict when a bite will occur.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

### ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

### ***Prohibited Substances***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

### ***Dangerous Weapons***

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.



### ***Child Custody***

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### ***Suspected Child Abuse***

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### ***Lost or Missing Child***

In the unlikely even that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

### ***Fire Safety***

Our center is fully equipped with alarms, lights, and rolling cribs etc.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis. We have a center-wide fire drill each month. Our center-wide evacuation plans and emergency procedures are posted in every classroom.

### ***Emergency Transportation***

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## **CENTER POLICIES**

Our center policies in this handbook are reviewed quarterly and updated as needed.





*Buford Children's Academy*

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Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **Buford Children's Academy Family Handbook**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of the **Buford Children's Academy** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the **Buford Children's Academy Family Handbook** that I do not understand.

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Recipient Signature

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Date

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Center Staff Signature

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Date



*Buford Children's Academy*

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