



# **PARENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

# ***WELCOME TO AZALEA PARK LEARNING CENTER***

## **...WHERE WE INSPIRE LIFE LONG LEARNING**

**We would like to personally welcome you to Azalea Park Learning Center. We are pleased that you have chosen our school and we want you to know that you have joined a family that strongly believes in making the early care and education experience a rewarding one.**

**Our mission at Azalea Park Learning Center is to meet the children's individual needs and focus on self-directed, developmentally appropriate learning activities that encourage children to explore and learn about their world in a loving, secure environment. Our ultimate goal is to give the gift to each child to become life long learners.**

**Our doors are always open to your comments and suggestions on ways we can work together to change and improve our mission.**

**This handbook has been developed as a guideline of the expectations we have for all new and existing families. Please read through the policies and procedures carefully.**

**We look forward to working together as a team to support and nurture your children.**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO PROVIDING A SAFE, SECURE AND ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD.**

## **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

At Azalea Park Learning Center, we believe “education” and/or “teaching” is “to draw from within”. Our center is full of hands-on opportunities for children to experience and discover their world in a loving, peaceful and consistent environment that encourages them to explore and play. A teacher must plan activities and respond to children’s ever-changing needs through a responsive curriculum designed to build their thinking skills.

Our goal is for children to gain independence, to understand order, to make their own decisions, to feel confident about themselves and become life long learners. We focus on the developmental approach to learning with much social interaction.

## **HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION**

We pledge ourselves to:

Meeting the individual needs of each child.

Our teachers will demonstrate warmth, sensitivity and respect for the children.

Teachers will be aware of social and cultural differences.

We will focus on self-directed, developmentally appropriate learning activities that encourage children to learn and explore.

We will provide a loving, safe and secure environment for children.

## HOURS OF OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

Azalea Park Learning Center is open from 6:30 am until 6:30 pm., Monday to Friday.

The school is owned by Alan and Alison Petrie.

The Corporation name is Azalea Park Child Care Inc.

Federal tax ID #: 47-1254704

School address: 940 South Semoran Blvd., Orlando, Florida 32807

Phone: 407-277-9011

Fax: 407-277-9954

Email address: [info@azaleaparklearningcenter.org](mailto:info@azaleaparklearningcenter.org)

[www.azaleaparklearningcenter.org](http://www.azaleaparklearningcenter.org)

## NEW STUDENT / PARENT ORIENTATION TO THE SCHOOL

In order to familiarize your child with their new school, please bring your child to the center at the time of enrollment. All children need time to adjust to their new surroundings. Consequently, it takes time to ease them into the center.

## ENROLLMENT POLICY

Azalea Park Learning Center will admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin and grant rights, privileges, programs and activities to all students of Azalea Park Learning Center. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of our educational and admission policies and procedures.

Our preschool recognizes the special needs of students with disabilities. While Azalea Park Learning Center may not be equipped to provide for those needs in all cases, we collaborate with the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County to accommodate as much as possible. Child enrollment and termination policies protect children's rights as outlined in the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Parents/guardians should review, complete, sign and return the Enrollment Packet to the center.

## LICENSING INFORMATION

- **Governmental Licensing Information:** DCF (Department of Children and Families) licensing agency requires our staff to meet the state standards for Childcare Employment that is in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code 405-C. DCF will have three inspections of the program each year. Inspectors will arrive unannounced and conduct a thorough inspection of the entire program.

**Accreditation Information:** Our school is presently nationally accredited through the Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM) APPLE program. Accreditation of schools was established to assist us in providing

quality enhancements for children, professional development opportunities for staff, and effective management skills for administrators and owners. Parent questionnaires are a very important component and it is mandatory that you complete this questionnaire for us on an annual basis.

## TUITION POLICY

- **Tuition Payment:** TUITION IS DUE EACH FRIDAY FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK. There is a \$10 late fee for all payments from Tuesday. If payment is not rendered by the end of the week, your child will not be allowed to return until full payment is received. Payments not received by School Readiness funded children will be reported to the Coalition.
- **Payment Disputes:** If Azalea Park Child Care Inc. is required to take legal action for non-payment, the parent/guardian will be responsible for any legal/attorney fees incurred by the center.
- **Subsidized Care:** We will accept vouchers from state and federal offices for subsidized child care providing we are eligible to be a provider for these agencies. We will consider each voucher on an individual basis. Payment by the Coalition is based on the number of days per week your child attends the center. If your child is absent for more days than the monthly limit set by the Coalition, the Coalition payments stop and you are responsible for full payment of the tuition. All families or guardians of children must understand that full payment of tuition must be met and paid in a timely manner at the end of each week for the following week. Our tuition rate must be met through a combination of payment from the Coalition office and your parent fee. By signing our contract, you agree that if for any reason the Coalition office does not forward payment to us, you will be responsible for the balance.
- **Family Discounts:** The oldest child in a family receives 10% off the weekly tuition rate. Family discounts are only offered to full time students.
- **Full Time Regulations:** Full time care is for up to 11 hours per day, 5 days per week. Children that are enrolled on a full time basis cannot switch to drop in care or part time care without prior arrangements. After 11 hours have been met, the hourly drop in rate will be charged. This rate is charged in whole hours only. (Please refer to our "Rate Sheet" for more information.)

Our school closes at 6:30 pm. The late pick up fee of \$5.00 per minute, per child, will be charged and it is due at the time of pick up.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The use of corporal punishment is never permitted at Azalea Park Learning Center. Guidance will be appropriate, respectful, not tied to food or toileting and within appropriate developmental expectations. At Azalea Park Learning Center, we are committed to building children's social and emotional development through the implementation of positive guidance and discipline strategies. Our approach is based on research and developmentally appropriate practices. Refer to separate Discipline Policy in Enrollment Packet.

## **EXPULSION POLICY**

Sometimes there are reasons we have to ask a family to leave our program, either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following examples illustrate reasons we may have to expel a child from our school.

### **IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or to him/herself.
- Parent/guardian causes disruption by threatening physical or intimidating actions toward their own child, other enrolled families and staff members.
- Parent/guardian exhibits verbal abuse toward families and staff.

### **PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION**

- Failure to pay tuition fees and/or habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to follow school policies.
- Failure to complete required school forms and/or submit physical and immunization forms.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up child.

### **CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION**

Any challenging behavior that causes disruption in the classroom routine provides the potential for expulsion. Prior to expulsion, parents/guardians will be informed daily of the behavior we are observing. If necessary, the family will be given a referral to local specialists. The specialists will advise us if our school setting is the best environment for the child.

If we decide that we can no longer accommodate the child, the parent/guardian will be asked to immediately remove him/her.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

All families and employees must adhere to the confidentiality policy of the program. Under no circumstance will families and any employee be allowed to discuss matters pertaining to other families and their children as well as other employees. Open discussions of private matters will result in immediate dismissal from our school. Private matters concerning children include behavior incidents, home situations, health issues, developmental issues, and domestic disputes. Private matters concerning families and employees include grievances, complaints, reprimands, home situations, health issues and other sensitive issues. Private matters concerning families include discussing another child in the classroom, discussions about other families, and discussions about employees that are hurtful and could potentially damage the reputation of the program. Student records are confidential and will not be read by anyone but the family of the student and school staff. Families have the right to request anything in the file to be removed or corrected. These records will not be sent to another agency or school without family permission. Any negative discussions about the Azalea Park Learning Center owners, center Director, or coworkers will not be tolerated, as this is harmful to the center.

## **MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Under Florida Statutes (39.201) all child care employees and teachers are among those professions legally obligated to report child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. It is our policy at Azalea Park Learning Center to follow up on every incident, which is in any way suspected.

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

We have established the following rules to protect our children and staff. We ask you to refrain from all actions/or behaviors that may cause disruption to our program, including but not limited to the following:

- Swearing/cursing;
- Threatening of staff, parents, or children;
- Physical/verbal punishment of your children or other children;
- Smoking, including e-cigarettes, inside the building, on the grounds and parking lots;
- Abusing our safety policies;
- Quarreling with other parents or staff;
- Violating the confidentiality policy;
- Not following our dress code;
- Narcotics, alcohol or other impairing drugs present on the premises or in vehicles used by the facility.



## OPEN DOOR POLICY, PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERS

We have an open door policy. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the school anytime. We request that you please sign in and out through the front office.

- **Volunteer Parent Aid:** We always appreciate the cooperation and help we receive each year from our parents, both in the classroom and during special events. We ask that when you are assisting in these areas, you follow the teacher's dress code and do not wear inappropriate clothing. Informal parent participation in the center is always welcome.
- **Child's Classroom Work:** Each classroom has a designated area for you to find items to take home. This can include activities that your child is currently working on (cutting, writing, language activities, etc.). Please review these activities with your child so that you may understand what a wonderful day of learning he/she has experienced. If your child is enrolled in the one and two year old rooms, you will be given a daily report of your child's day as well as any communications regarding items we need from you (diapers, change of clothes, etc.)
- **Monthly Newsletter:** There will be a monthly APLC News newsletter. Look for a copy at our reception area. It will include information about activities. It may also include messages or requests for families. Reminders and important information will be posted in our reception area.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Telephone conferences are scheduled at any time a teacher believes it is important, or a parent wishes to have one. If you wish to talk to a teacher, please call the office and leave a message. If a telephone call cannot resolve the situation, the teacher will schedule a conference. Please follow the above procedure and do not engage with teachers in discussion before, during, or after class, when attention needs to be with the students. In addition, twice per year, conferences will be scheduled to review children's progress.

## DISMISSAL POLICY

The center reserves the right to dismiss any child for any reason at any time deemed necessary, such as behavioral issues that may affect the safety of other children, non-payment for services and non compliance with administrative policies. We expect children to conduct themselves appropriately and abide by the discipline policy. Termination would occur only as a last resort.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A minimum of two weeks written notice is required prior to disenrollment. You are responsible for payments for those two weeks whether your child attends school or not. Accrued vacation time cannot be used for withdrawal notice.

## COURT ORDERS AFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN

If you have a court order, which will affect us caring for your child in any way, it is advisable to share these court decisions with us. We would require a copy of the order to be kept in your child's file so that referral can be made at the appropriate time. If a change is made to the order, please remember to update our files. We will discuss the court order with all parties involved so that we are clear about our obligations.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY/HOLIDAYS/VACATION

Each day is a unique teaching/learning experience. Attendance is compulsory unless unavoidable by illness. For Full Time enrollment only, one week of vacation will be given after six months of continuous attendance, and for each six month period of enrollment thereafter (total of two weeks annually from enrollment start date). The date of enrollment at the center will be considered your anniversary date. These weeks cannot be carried over to the following year. If your child did not attend the school due to sickness, a half week of tuition will be charged if a Doctor's note is submitted to the school office. A maximum of two weeks on this half tuition during your one-year anniversary will be allowed. Please remember that vacation time cannot be used toward the two-week withdrawal notice. **Please also remember that none of the benefits mentioned above apply to Part Time enrolled families.**

Azalea Park Learning Center will be closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>), Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The center will close at 6:00 pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the center will close on the prior Friday. If a holiday falls on Sunday, the center will be closed on the following Monday. There is no reduction in tuition for these holidays or other days on which the facility does not operate or opens late.

## EMERGENCY AND INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event of severe weather, such as a hurricane, we will follow the course taken by the Orange County Public Schools. Please listen to your local radio or television broadcast for school closure. Also check our Facebook page for notifications. There is no reduction in tuition for emergency and inclement weather closings.

**Fire and Tornado Drills:** Azalea Park Learning Center will conduct monthly fire drills and at least two tornado drills per year to ensure students' quick, safe exit from the building in case of fire or other hazard. The continuous ringing of the fire alarm signals the drill. Teachers will have instructed their students in proper procedures. Students should follow these quickly and quietly. Fire drill/tornado routes as well as alternative routes are posted in every room. In the event that we need to evacuate the property, all children will be transported to Englewood Elementary School. If after 4:00 PM, children will be transported to Kid's Prep School. Please see Crisis/Disaster Response Handbook.

## TRANSPORTATION

We offer before and after school transportation to local elementary schools. Our before and after school programs are for children up to 10 years of age. We will also offer transportation for field trips during our school camps. Children being transported must adhere to strict behavior rules in order to keep them safe. If your child does not follow these rules, we will ask you to find alternate transportation arrangements. If there is a day your child does not need transportation, we ask you to call us in advance.

## CURRICULUM AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

- **Hours of Operation:** Azalea Park Learning Center is open from 6:30 am until 6:30 pm. To avoid disruption of routine in the classroom, we do not permit children to be dropped off between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm.
- **Daily Schedule of Activities:** Our classroom schedule will be posted in each classroom. We will make every attempt to follow the schedule, depending on the needs and moods of the children.
- **Class Assignments:** Lesson plans for each age group will be posted in each classroom. These lesson plans are changed each week and reflect the curriculum and individual goals of the children. Teachers are permitted to make changes to reflect current events.
- **Curriculum:** Azalea Park Learning Center has chosen to use **Frog Street Curriculum** as a basis to provide rich, well planned and organized play opportunities for the children. This curriculum matches our philosophy that children learn best through hands-on activities that address the needs of the whole child. In our search for an effective, developmentally appropriate curriculum, we looked for one that would keep children active and engaged, would have measurable goals shared by all, would be research based and the content would be learned through play, investigation, and focused intentional teaching. Themes are used to introduce information and learning takes place as a child explores and manipulates real objects. We also firmly believe that a child's life is the best window of opportunity for laying the foundations for character development. In addition, we use Scholastic character development books that feature stories for very young children with a message about elements of character development such as responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship and respect. These elements of character are believed to be relevant for all individuals, regardless of race, creed, ethnic group, gender, politics or wealth.

## GENERAL POLICIES

- **Parking Lot Safety**  
In order to be safe in our school parking lot we expect you to adhere to the following rules while on school property:

- Parents/guardians may not leave other children unattended in the vehicle while coming in to pick up the child that attends the school.
  - **You must Power Off and lock your vehicle before entering the school. This is a State Law (Florida Statutes 316.1975)**
  - Parents/guardians must hold their child's hand while walking through the parking lot.
  - Parents/guardians will maintain a speed of 5 mph in the parking lot. Parents/guardians will indemnify and hold harmless Azalea Park Learning Center if they fail to adhere to these rules.
- 
- **Nap time:** All children will have a designated time for resting, which is called Nap Time. All children will be provided with cots. Cots are placed at least 18 inches apart. This is a State Regulation for Child Care Centers. Parents are asked to bring a crib sized sheet as well as a small blanket. Sheets and blankets will be taken home on Friday to be washed and returned on Monday.
  - **Change of Clothes:** Each student should have a change of clothes in a gallon size zip lock bag, placed in their cubby. If a student has an accident at school, the teacher will assist them in changing and place the soiled clothes in the zip lock bag. Please be sure another set of clothes is put back in your child's cubby. If a student has an accident and does not have clothes to change into, the parent will be notified to bring them clothes.
  - **Birthday Celebrations:** Birthdays are a special occasion for young children. We encourage and welcome parents to send in treats that are nutritional. In accordance with the Health Department regulations, we are not allowed to serve homemade foods. The students will share these treats with their class during snack time. Please notify the teacher in advance if you would like to send in special treats. Invitations to parties outside the school may be handed out at school if every child in the class is invited. Otherwise, invitations should be handled by mail to prevent hurt feelings.
  - **Television, Video and and Other Visual Recordings:** Our staff provides a high quality program for children based on children's needs and interests. Therefore, television, video and other visual recordings at the center will be limited to cases of extreme weather conditions, linking to the program and special occasions. Media is not offered in place of free play or learning activities. Azalea Park Learning Center makes responsible choices about the media offered to children.
  - **Toys And Jewelry From Home:** It is very disappointing when a special toy or jewelry is broken or lost; therefore, please instruct your child to leave these items at home. Occasionally, the teacher will have a special Show and Tell day and will inform you what the students are allowed to bring from home. Please do not allow your child to bring any type of sword, gun or any other type of sharp object or weapon to school, even for Show and Tell.
  - **Incident/Accident Reports:** You can be assured that protecting the safety of your child is our most important goal. However, if an incident or accident does occur, you will receive a written report from the classroom teacher and a

phone call from our school office if a head injury, bleeding or other more severe injury occurs.

- **Lost and Found:** Please label all of your child's jackets, shirts, pants, shorts, sheets and blankets, etc. This will help us in returning them if misplaced. Articles not claimed within 30 days will be given to a charitable organization.
- **Photo Gallery Policy:** Student pictures will be set up through a professional photographer at least once a year. On occasion, we may film or take a picture of your child(ren) in a group setting and/or with their artwork during a special event or evaluation. The reproduction of the aforementioned video, photographs, or voice recordings, may be used, at the center's discretion, for the purposes of education and/or promotion of the school, in advertising materials or posted to the school website for your enjoyment and for the enjoyment of those viewing the website materials. Should this be a problem, you must notify the center's management in writing.
- **Grievance Policy:** At Azalea Park Learning Center, we strive to keep harmonious relationships with parents, students and staff. Should you have any concerns pertaining to our facility or staff, please notify the Director. The Director will discuss the situation with you and make arrangements to set up a conference with the necessary staff to resolve the situation.
- **Assessments:** We utilize a system known as Portfolio Assessment on each child. The Coalition also requires assessments for School Readiness Funded children. The observation tools will enable us to monitor your child's growth and development. This information is strictly confidential, and will only be shared with you, the Coalition, the Director and the teacher. By signing the Parent Handbook Disclaimer, you are giving us permission for your child to be assessed.
- **Tax Statements:** Annual tax statements will be provided upon request, as long as you have a zero balance, and we require 48 hours to produce the report. Our corporation name is: **Azalea Park Child Care Inc.** Our tax ID # is: 47-1254704.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- **Health and Immunization Forms Requirements:** In accordance with Florida State Law, parents must present the following current state forms within 10 days of enrollment (excludes school age children) and /or replace the forms on the date they expire:
  - **DH Form 3040 – Student Health Examination**
  - **DH Form 680 – Florida Certification of Immunization, Part 1-A, B or C.**
- Immunization and physical forms must be current and original copies. We will make you a copy for your records, if you desire. If forms are

not received within the time frames aforementioned, your child will no longer be enrolled until the forms are received.

NOTE: Due to the enrollment process or religious exemptions, some children in our care may not have current immunizations.

- **Allergies:**  
Azalea Park Learning Center is a peanut-free environment. Parents of children with food allergies and diet restrictions should work directly with the staff to accommodate their child's specific dietary restriction(s). Please complete the allergy form and return it to the office.
- **Health and Developmental Concerns:**  
If you have any concerns about your child's health and development, please advise the Director during orientation. We will share this information with the classroom teacher and if necessary, arrange a group meeting with you to discuss any issues.
- **Illness Policy:** Azalea Park Learning Center reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to the facility for reasons of obvious or perceived illness, or to request early departure should symptoms become apparent during the course of the day, for well being of all children at the center. Children with temperatures of 101degrees F, vomiting, with rashes, eye drainage, excessive cough, nasal drainage or having diarrhea at home should not be brought to school. **If an episode occurs at school, they will not be allowed to remain at school.** We gently request your full cooperation by picking up a sick child within one hour when you are called to do so. Students should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school or you may present a note from your doctor's office stating they may return to school.
- **Communicable Disease:** Azalea Park Learning Center will notify parents if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease that has been introduced into the center. In the event that your child has a communicable disease, a release form from a medical source may be required before your child re-enters the center. You will be notified if your child has been exposed to blood and potentially infectious fluids. Children with head lice or nits will not be allowed to return to the center until there are no nits present.
- **Dispensing of Medication:** Azalea Park Learning Center staff will not dispense prescription or store bought medication at any time. However, you are welcome to come into the school at your convenience to give medication to your child. If anyone, other than parents, want to dispense medication, written permission must be given in advance to the school. This includes sunscreen and insect repellent, Diaper cream, if brought in by the parent/guardian, will be administered after every diaper change. Non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbs will not be given. For diaper cream,, we will require parents to complete an

Authorization to Dispense Diaper Cream form. Please be advised that we reserve the right to refuse to administer diaper cream.

- **Medical Emergency:** I hereby authorize any needed medical care, recommended by a medical professional, in the event of an emergency involving my child. Azalea Park Learning Center intervention will be limited to First Aid and/or CPR, for which our staff have been certified. If Azalea Park Learning Center cannot contact me, I further agree to be fully responsible for all medical expense incurred during the treatment of my child by medical professionals, and to hold harmless and release Azalea Park Learning Center from all liability.
- **Biting:** There are many reasons why a child bites, evoking strong emotions from all those involved. When the injury breaks the skin, you will be called immediately. Our experienced teaching staff will take steps to help the child with this behavior and protect the other children in the program. We will observe the child to find a reason and solution to the situation. We will also work with the parents and if needed have the child referred to a behavior specialist for further help.

## FOODS POLICY

Our school contracts through the Florida Department of Health Child Care Food Program to serve nutritious meals to our enrolled children.

We serve three meals per day:

Breakfast 7:00 – 9:00 am

Snack 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Lunch from 11:00 am

The menu is posted in the lobby on the “Parent Board”. We rotate four menus, approved for quality and nutrition by the USDA Food Program. If any change is made to the menu, it will be posted for your information. Under this Federal food program, we are not allowed to accept meals from home. Children with specific food allergies must have a physician’s note with recommendations for alternate foods on file.

Milk must be served with every breakfast, lunch and snack. Between a child’s first and second birthday, serving whole milk is strongly recommended by the Department. After the child’s second birthday, it is required that low-fat or fat-free milk be served. To encourage adequate calcium intake, low-fat flavored milk can be served.

Our kitchen is inspected quarterly by the Department of Children and Families to verify compliance with food storage and safety regulations. The USDA Food Program also regularly inspects our food preparation and storage areas. In addition, our cook attends an annual class on food handling.

## **BABY SITTING**

We do not permit employees to take enrolled children from Azalea Park Learning Center premises for any reason. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to include employees' names on pick up lists.

## **SIGN IN/OUT**

Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a staff member, who will escort your child(ren) to their classroom. Please sign your child in on the attendance sheet and on the computer at the front desk.

Before your child can leave the program, an adult must sign him/her out and provide picture identification. Only those listed on the registration form and over the age of 18 will be allowed to pick up your child. Please list everyone that may possibly pick up your child. Additions and deletions to the list must be made in person at the school and can only be made by the person who registered the child.

ID is required for everyone until faces become familiar to the staff. After this time, ID will be required in the event of a different person picking up the child or a substitute staff at the school.

Anyone arriving to pick up a child in an incapacitated condition (i.e., under the influence of alcohol, drugs) presents a risk to a child. The staff in charge will advise the parent that they feel another person should transport the child home. This could be the other parent or another person listed on the child's emergency contact list.