



# The Playhouse Academy

Parent Handbook



## Mission Statement

The Playhouse Academy is dedicated to helping children begin a lifelong process of learning. At The Playhouse Academy, children are encouraged to develop a positive self-image. Our teachers will stimulate their natural curiosity, enabling them to confidently explore the world around them. The Playhouse Academy recognizes and values the uniqueness of each child. Our purpose is to nurture young children so that they may learn as individuals as they develop academic, emotional and social skills in the classroom.

It is our philosophy to encourage parents to participate in the classroom, meet with teachers, and become involved in the life and activities of The Playhouse Academy.

Cynthia Labovitz  
President

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Director

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The Playhouse Academy does not discriminate based on gender, age, race, creed, color, disability, religion, political belief, or national origin.

## School Policies

The school is open to ages 2 months through 5 years of age. The Playhouse Academy school year is from August to May with summer camp in June and July.

Each teacher completes yearly continuing education in educational studies pertaining to their age classes. Staff members are certified in CPR and first aid.

Our goal at the Playhouse Academy is to build a strong academic basis for your child so that they are kindergarten ready upon completing our program.

We expect parents to read the operating policies in the handbook and in supplemental notes and calendars that we send home. Parents will receive a copy of the Parent Handbook, which contains the operational policies and must complete admissions forms for each child. Please feel free to be an active part of this program offering suggestions, comments, and constructive criticisms.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Our day begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 1:30 p.m. Parents (or designated other) must walk their children into their rooms. Teachers use the time prior to 9:25 a.m. to set up classrooms. Early arrivals prevent them from giving children the attention they deserve. If you do arrive early, please wait in the large activity room. **Late arrivals are disruptive to the entire class, especially the child who is late. Please be on time arriving to school. If you arrive after 10:00am your child will not be able to come to school that day, unless you have cleared it with the director beforehand.** All children should be picked up at 1:30 p.m. There will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute after 1:35 p.m. Parents will receive an invoice documenting the charge. Consistent lateness after 1:30 p.m. or failure to pay late charges will be cause to ask you to withdraw your child from the program. All children under the age of 2 years are to be picked up in their room. All other children will be dismissed to their parents from a carpool line. If you would like to have a conversation with friends, please move out of line so that carpool can continue smoothly. Teachers are unable to visit during carpool. If you have a question for teachers, please schedule a time to meet with them outside of the carpool line. As a courtesy to your child and for safety reasons, **please do not be on cell phones when picking them up** – they are excited to see you.

Children in our four year old and pre-k classes are expected to arrive at 9:30 a.m. Teaching of curriculum begins at this time. We are preparing your child for kindergarten, so please help with this important responsibility and be on time.

**State law requires children be signed into the classroom each day.** Each classroom has a sign in/out sheet that needs to be completed, along with a contact number. Please write down who will pick up your child.

## Pre and After Care Program

We offer an early care program from 8:00- 9:30 a.m., at a cost of \$12.00 per day and an extended day program from 1:30 –3:30 p.m. at a cost of \$15.00 per day. Please sign up in advance if you know the days you will need. Children who are not regularly

scheduled will be accommodated on a first-come first-serve basis. Advance notice is required to assure the correct staff-child ratio.

**A 24 hour cancellation notice is required or you will still be charged.** Teachers will be present daily, for pre and extended care, to carefully supervise your child. During extended care, children will be served a nutritious snack, have a quiet time, art experience, and outside and inside games. **After care ends at 3:30pm every day. Please be on time picking up your child. Starting at 3:35pm there is a \$1.00 per minute charge for late pick up.**

## Security

For security reasons the building will be locked at all times. Cameras are mounted at each designated entrance and exit doors. You will receive two admittance cards that will enable you to enter the building. Please contact the office if your card is lost or stolen. There will be a **\$25** replacement fee per card. If your card is not turned in when your time at Playhouse has ended your card on file will be charged a \$25 fee per card that was not turned in.

## What We Learn

We strive to create competent and caring individuals. Toward this goal, our curriculum mirrors the developmental stages of young children to facilitate their growth.

Serious emphasis is placed on learning the skills necessary to socialize in a group without a parent. Such skills include developing a longer attention span, encouraging sharing, verbalizing feelings, desires and frustrations, and cultivating negotiating skills. Self-help skills, such as hand washing, toileting, and dressing are also emphasized.

Opportunities for children to grow in cognitive development are abundant: sorting games, matching and counting, story dictation and illustration, puzzles, prediction skills, cause and effect activities. Language development is continually emphasized. Children are offered both fine and gross motor skills on a daily basis. Through careful planning of developmentally appropriate activities, we address the needs of the whole child as he/she relates to the world around him/herself.

## Enrichment Programs

As part of your child's learning experience at the Playhouse Academy, we offer three enrichment programs: gymnastics, music and Spanish.

Children will participate in gymnastics once a week. The class is held in the Big Room by a trained instructor, who is safety certified.

Music class is held one day a week by a music teacher. The students sing songs, dance and are taught beats, rhythms and dynamics.

Spanish is taught to the children one day a week. Children ages 2 and older participate in this program, lead by a Spanish teacher.

## Snacks & Lunch

Children will be served a nutritious snack provided by the school. A list of snacks is available in the office. Children need to bring a lunch and drink on the days they attend school. Parents will be notified if a school event includes lunch.

## Gradual Beginnings: Starting School

Young children struggle with issues of separation. Separation is a process, a lifelong process for most of us. Issues of separation appear in different forms in each of our children at different times. From the standpoint of curriculum, it is an underlying theme. Teachers are always mindful of this process and available to help parents and children successfully navigate their way.

## Learning Self-Control

The teacher needs to ensure a safe environment. A child will not be allowed to hurt himself, another child, the teacher or school property. Biting is not an acceptable behavior and will be dealt with on an individual basis. The state regulates that no names are to be given out involving an incident. If your child has been hurt, we will notify you of the situation but not the other child's name who was involved. We try to anticipate and minimize situations that may result in discipline problems. We use positive language and reinforce appropriate behaviors. Whenever possible, children are given choices and alternatives which diminish the need for further action. Natural consequences are used when the situation allows a teacher to do so. When a child is no longer responsive to redirection and verbal negotiation, a "timeout," (child sitting quietly to calm down) will be used. Should this occur regularly, parents will be contacted.

## What We Wear

Children should come to school dressed for play. Dress your child in comfortable clothing that can get dirty and that are easy for young hands to fasten and take on and off. Many school activities are messy. Please leave dressy clothes with tight buttons and complicated belts for other times. All clothing must be clearly labeled. **No boots, sandals, shoes without socks, capes or inappropriate T-shirts should be worn. Children who come to school in sandals or clogs will not be able to participate in outdoor activities.** Tennis shoes and socks are the best choice for safety and comfort. Children wearing Crocs need socks when they are playing on the playground.

We play outdoors throughout the year unless there is precipitation or temperatures below 40 degrees. During winter months, children should bring (or wear) sweaters and hats. Your child must leave a sweater or sweatshirt at school at all times. All children attending Playhouse Academy, from infants through pre-k, must have an extra complete change of clothes in their backpack. Infants and toddlers need disposable diapers, wipes and bibs. In addition, please send labeled bottles with their names, pacifiers with their initials, and a blanket if they are attached to a particular one.

**Children must bring a LARGE school bag/backpack each day; one that can easily be opened and closed, for transporting letters, notices and schoolwork.** Please place your child's name on the outside of the bag, large enough to be easily read.

## Happy Birthdays

Birthdays are very special events for the young child. Parents are invited to share this day with their child's class. Classroom celebrations can be made by consulting with your child's teacher in advance. Cookies, donut holes and cupcakes are a great hit! If your child's birthday falls in the summer please plan a half birthday celebration at school.

Parents want to plan home birthday celebrations with the best interest of their child in mind. Please consider **inviting the entire class** if the majority would be invited. This avoids the possibility of hurt feelings among the few not included. No invitations will be given out at school unless the whole class is included. Unfortunately, young children have not yet developed an adult sense of etiquette. They offer and rescind invitations freely based on their playmates and feelings of the moment. To insure the safe arrival of written invitations, mail them rather than distributing them at school.

## Communications

Parents and teachers have two in-school conferences during the year. Pre-K classes will have one conference in the middle of the year. The days and hours of conference times will be posted in your child's classroom. Additional meetings or telephone conferences can take place whenever a parent, teacher or the director requires additional information or assistance. While formal conferences are important, ongoing communication between school and home is our goal. Your child will bring home a monthly newsletter highlighting the month's activities and noting any calendar updates. A monthly calendar of individual room activities will be sent home at the beginning of each month.

The director is available upon request by a parent to discuss any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of Playhouse Academy. Parents can visit the school at any time during the school hours of operation to observe their child, our operation, and program activities, without having to secure prior approval.

## Staying Healthy

A medical report must be on file when your child is admitted, performed within the last year of enrollment and **signed by the examining physician**. An immunization record must be on file for all children. If your child turns 4 by September 1, there must be a hearing and vision exam included with their medical health form.

Inform the school of any allergies or conditions requiring special care during school hours. It is extremely important that the director and teacher know the severity of your child's allergy. If a child needs medicine administered during school, please contact the director regarding policies.

If your child is ill, please keep him/her at home. Notify the school office about absence and reason. Communicable diseases must be reported to other parents and in some instances, the Department of Public Health. **A child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.**

You will be notified and asked to pick up your child who becomes ill at school. Please have your child picked up **immediately** to avoid further exposure to children and staff. If you are unavailable, the person you listed for emergencies will be called.

In the event of an emergency, the school will call you and/or the paramedics. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital of your choice, if required.

If your child has lice, they must not attend school until treated and all active lice have been eliminated and removed. The director must examine your child before returning to school. If a second incident occurs, you must have a doctor's note stating that lice has been treated and gone before returning to school.

## **Tuition**

The total tuition schedule is listed on a form in the registration information. This represents the total academic year, August through May. A \$250, non-refundable deposit is required with your registration.

Tuition is due on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the billing month. There will be a \$5 late charge after the 3<sup>rd</sup>. A \$10 late charge will be issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month. After the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month your child is subject to removal upon non-payment of tuition.

There will be a \$35 returned check fee.

Tuition that has been pre-paid with less than 30 calendar days of notice of withdrawal will not be refunded. Pre-paid tuition in excess of 30 calendar days will be refunded at the rate of \$36/day for each remaining paid school day to be returned to you by no later than March 1st of that school year.

## **Add-a-Day**

Parents may add an extra day of school for their child, when needed. You must first speak with the director in advance for availability. The cost to add a day is **\$60.00.**

## **Weather**

When public schools are closed for inclement weather, we will also close. If you are in doubt, please call before leaving home. Our closing will be posted on KXAS-Channel 5.

## **Potty Training**

We will assist our children with potty training once the process has begun at home. Send your child in simple clothing during this time—no belts please. **Please pack an extra set of dry clothes, socks, and shoes.** Children must be potty trained before entering the three year old class.

## **School Family**

Parents, please take the time to introduce yourselves to one another. We take pride in the fact that our families are very close knit. We continue to grow with the help of your referrals. Please continue to spread the good word about our school. We have an active PTO program in the school. Members of the PTO are involved in many activities

at the school and some outside of school. There are many opportunities to become involved in the PTO program.

### **Enrollment Procedure & Policies**

Your child will be enrolled in Playhouse Academy, based on availability in the appropriate classroom. It is required to pay the registration fee and turn in all required paperwork for the child's file. Parents will receive a copy of this Parent's Handbook and sign a form stating you have received it. This handbook contains the policies and procedures of Playhouse Academy and you will be notified in writing of any changes.

The enrollment form contains a section regarding permission from the parents concerning transportation, water activities, and field trips, if applicable. Written notice and permissions slips will be given when planning these activities.

If you would like to review a copy of the minimum standards and our most recent Licensing inspection report, please contact the director.

The contact information for our local licensing office is: 1501 Circle Dr. #310, Fort Worth, TX 76119, (817) 321-8604. The child abuse hotline # is (800) 252-5400.

Website:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

# Infant Program (4:1 Ratio)

## Sitting Up. Crawling. Exploring.

This is an amazing time in your child's life. Every day brings a new gift – a smile, a new word, a new tooth. At The Playhouse Academy, we attend to your infant's every need and we listen carefully to you – the parent – so that your needs are met as well. The schedule is determined by your child, not by us. We encourage you to talk with your child's teacher about a typical day in your house. Since an infant's day is "on demand", there's no set schedule in our infant room.

Our curriculum addresses an infant's growth and development by creating strong bonds and learning through play. An understanding of infant related milestones helps our teachers shape the day's activities to best support your child's development. We believe hands on, tactile activities best support your child's growing mind. We try to incorporate your child's ever growing curiosity of the world he or she is beginning to discover. Finger painting, coloring with extra larger crayons and markers, and an introduction to simple shapes and primary colors are a small part of our infant curriculum.

Every child is special and unique. The Playhouse Academy infant room understands that babies have a strong bond with their parents and fully expect separation issues. We want to work with you to make this hard transition to school a little bit easier for you and your little angel. We know that leaving your little one isn't easy and we take to heart that you put your child's care in our hands.

The changes you see throughout the year in your infant are wonderful and exciting. We work every day to prepare them for what's ahead. When he or she leaves this class, the exciting toddler program will be ready to shape his or her continuously growing mind.

# **18 Month Program (6:1 Ratio)**

## **Running. Dancing. Talking.**

Everything about your child's life is suddenly changing. Now that your little one is able to explore with ease and communicate using speech, he or she sees the world in a whole new light! This makes language development and related milestones an important part of our toddler program.

Using a varied curriculum, and socialization with peers, our program will not only foster language development, it will nurture and stimulate your toddlers ever expanding mind and body. Learning colors and shapes is something we work on every day. Fine and Gross motor development are a very important part of your child's educational base and will help them get ready to write and play games.

Your toddler will be exposed to many different educational experiences here at the Playhouse Academy that include, but are not limited to, finger painting, crayons and markers, tearing paper, gluing, thematic units which incorporate the alphabet, developing the pincer grasp through the use of tweezers, and more. We also work on skills that will be needed throughout life such as following directions, standing in line, sitting at the table for lunch, and learning to respect friends.

At The Playhouse Academy we believe hands on, tactile, experiences will help your child learn and grow. Pre-School is a place to get messy and have fun while learning. We know every child is special, and always address individual needs, as well as group socialization and play. The toddler program will nurture your child's ever growing mind.

## **2 Year Old Program (7:1 Ratio)**

### **Independence. Friendships. Exploration.**

Big kid cups, learning to share, and the not so “terrible twos” are all a part of this wonderful but sometimes challenging period in your child’s life. Here at The Playhouse Academy, our two year old program promotes independence and helps to develop your child’s emerging awareness of social behavior. We help your two year old discover life beyond his or her own little world. Your child is a person now, well past the infant stage, and our varied curriculum reflects that. Although your child’s favorite word might now be “No!” it will soon be replaced with “Why?” Language development is crucial during this time in your child’s life and our teacher’s fully understand this.

Your child’s strong will and need to assert his or her independence is not only understood but expected at this age. Our program works on channeling this natural desire to figure out the environment with learning activities. Problem solving and learning to share with friends is something we work on every day. Learning to have patience and take turns isn’t easy, but with continued practice it can be accomplished.

Fine motor skills will continue to develop through the use of crayons, markers, paint brushes, stringing beads, finger painting, tearing, gluing, using tweezers to develop hand strength, and learning to use scissors. Thematic units will help develop language as well as an understanding of our world. The uppercase alphabet will also be introduced along with the numbers one through five. We work on oral counting to 15 as well as name recognition, colors, shapes, sorting, and more.

When your 2 year old leaves this program he or she will not only recognize his or her name, but will also be ready to trace letters, cut lines, and learn the alphabet.

# Three Year Old Program (7:1 ratio)

## Learning letters. Using scissors. Asking questions.

Your three-year-old is quickly becoming an inquisitive little person. The baby you once had is now ready to sit and learn. Now that educational learning experiences make up a greater part of the school day, we gear our curriculum to be hands on and fun, never losing sight of the fact that play is still a very important part of every child's life. Your three year old is quickly assuming many personal responsibilities at home, and we continue to foster this at school as well. Your child is now ready to take responsibility for his or her belongings, such as packing and unpacking his or her own backpack, taking care of his or her own pencil box, opening his or her own lunch, and more.

The three year old program at The Playhouse Academy continues with a varied curriculum that will nurture and foster your child's ever growing mind and body. Hands on, tactile experiences help promote learning. The uppercase alphabet is something we focus strongly on this year. A foundation in phonics is a key to development at this age. This is something we at The Playhouse Academy feel is very important and work on daily. We also continue sorting by color, shape and size, counting to 20, as well as number recognition to 10. Your three year old will also work on rhyming, patterning, opposites, tracing letters, and cutting on lines.

Fine motor development will continue with the use of crayons, markers, paint brushes, stringing beads, and more. Gross motor skills continue to develop through outdoor play, games, and gymnastics class. Spanish class is something new that your three year old will have this year. We think it is important to have a wide variety of learning experiences at The Playhouse Academy.

When your three-year-old leaves this program, not only will he or she be writing his or her name, but he or she will also start recognizing the names of friends as well. When your child completes this program, he or she will be fully prepared for our Bridge or Pre-K class.

## **Pre-K Program (8:1 ratio)**

### **Writing letters. Counting to 100. Measuring and cooking.**

With Kindergarten around the corner, your four year old is getting ready for the big time!!! The pre-k curriculum at the Playhouse Academy advances learning objectives to meet your child's developing mind and body. However, we never lose sight of the fact that your four-year-old is still a preschooler, and we shape our curriculum and expectations with that in mind.

By continuing with hands-on activities, we will help your child make great strides during this pivotal year. Your child will be exposed to both the upper and lowercase alphabet, number recognition to 20, season and holiday understanding, estimation, patterning, and more. Fine motor skills will be perfected through the use of scissors, painting, and a kindergarten ready pencil grip. Counting to 100 is something we work on everyday along with counting by twos, fives, and tens. Your child will be exposed to cooking and measurement as we make something special with every new letter we learn.

We think it is also very important to have a wide variety of teaching experiences. In addition to hands on classroom learning, your child will have Spanish and music class every week. Gross motor skills will continue to develop through outdoor play, games, and our special weekly gymnastics class.

Our Pre-K program also insures that upon graduation your child will not only know how to write his or her first and last name, he or she will also know his or her address, phone number, and birthday. We believe when your child graduates from The Playhouse Academy he or she will be fully prepared for kindergarten.

## **Bridge Program (8:1 ratio)**

### **Writing Letters. Using Scissors. Counting to 100.**

Ever wonder what to do with your young 4 year old?? His Birthday is in the Summer and you just don't know if he will be ready for Kindergarten. He may be mature enough, but not ready for the full day of sitting and working, or He may be ready for the work load, but socially needs more time to mature. At The Playhouse Academy we have created a program specifically for children with birthdays falling during the late spring and early summer months! We call it our Bridge Class and it's designed for those children who may or may not be ready to go to Kindergarten and need that extra year of Preschool.

The curriculum in this room covers everything your child will need to know should you decide he or she is ready to go to Kindergarten instead of Pre-K. We continue using hands on activities to help your child master our learning objectives. Bridge students review all uppercase letters and will start learning lowercase as well. They work on counting to 100 and number recognition to 20. They continue working on writing their first and last names. They will be cutting out their own work, lacing, sorting by color, shape, size, and other categories. Our Bridge program continues to work on rhyming, patterning, opposites, and more. While your child will be sitting for longer periods of time and doing more table work, we still leave time for play! We know that play is an important part of learning and we make sure it is part of the daily routine.

At The Playhouse Academy we feel it is important to bridge children before Pre-K instead of after. Our Pre-K curriculum is rigorous and we feel it isn't fair to put a younger child through the stress, should he or she need another year of preschool to mature and get ready for Kindergarten.