



*"Where Kids Come First"*

## **4 OUR KIDS LEARNING ACADEMY KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

4 Our Kids Learning Academy puts children's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive needs first. Our staff embraces the view that each child is unique with an individual pattern and timing of social/emotional, physical, and intellectual development. Children are encouraged to use critical thinking and problem solving skills in their daily experiences. This approach is designed to foster creativity and expanded self-expression. The classroom environment is designed to reflect the children's interests and to foster positive self-image and independence. Each child contributes to the Academy community through his/her diverse cultural background and home life. A parent is a child's first teacher, so we work in partnership with them to create the foundation for a socially aware child with aspirations for continued personal growth and achievement.

### **GOALS**

Our goal for Kindergarten is to help every student reach their full potential and maximize their learning abilities. As we work alongside Goose Creek Independent School District, we want our Kindergarteners to be prepared for a smooth transition into 1<sup>st</sup> grade both academically and socially. We will adhere to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) set forth by the state of Texas to ensure a well rounded education for your child. A copy of the TEKS can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>. As an Academy we aim:

To provide a safe and healthy environment for the children served.

To encourage the development of a positive self-image and foster independence in each child enrolled in the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy.

We seek to encourage respect for self as well as for others - understanding that one must first have self-respect before she/he is able to respect others.

To help the child form positive relationships with adults.

To help the child develop good health habits.

To promote healthy growth and development of physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills in the children enrolled in the program.

To enhance the care giving abilities of practicum students and afford them an opportunity to learn through hands-on experience in our program.

## **GREETINGS!**

Welcome to 4 Our Kids Learning Academy where a child's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive needs come first. Here at the Academy we emphasize learning using a hands-on approach and we foster creativity and expanded self-expression using the Starfall Reading Mastery™ curriculum and the McGraw Hill Mathematics™ curriculum.

A parent is a child's first teacher, so we work in partnership with them to create the foundation for a socially aware child with aspirations for continued personal growth and achievement. 4 Our Kids Learning Academy has a full open door policy, but we do not give access to the Kinder class without prior notification. For the safety of all children, we do request that you make your presence known to the person in charge and that you cooperate in not disturbing any on-going programs. Parents are encouraged to eat breakfast or lunch with their child in our cafeteria.

4 Our Kids Private Kinder is open to all students who are 5 years of age by October 30th. Upon enrollment a copy of your child's birth certificate, immunization records, and social security card will be required. 4 Our Kids does not discriminate on the basis of political affiliation, religion, race, color, sex, mental or physical disabilities.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

We encourage parent participation; therefore we hold special events throughout the year. All parents and family members are welcome. If you would like to bring food, please contact the Director first, as there may be children in the classroom with specific allergies. Also, there are many items that we ask you do not bring, such as glass or ceramic, rings, balloons, or small items that a child could swallow.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

The Kindergarten class will go on a monthly trip to the Sterling Municipal Library. Two curriculum corresponding field trips will be taken over the course of the year. One will be to Old McDonald Farm in the Fall and the other will be to the Houston Zoo in the Spring. Field trip permission forms must be signed and dated for each field trip. All children are required to wear their 4 Our Kids t-shirt for easy identification.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

If at any time, you feel a need to meet with a teacher to discuss your child, please schedule a personal conference time. This way the teacher will be able to give you her utmost attention in addressing any of your concerns. If requested, the Director is also available. The teacher will set up a conference with each parent throughout the year to discuss their child's progress.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All policies and procedures can be discussed with the Director at any time. Our doors are always open for parents to come and discuss their needs, ask questions, and give suggestions and comments. We will hold semi-annual Parent-Teacher Forums to discuss any ideas we would like to implement, updates to the curriculum, and/or programs. We encourage all parents to participate and assist us with making the decisions that will affect your children.

## FEES/TUITION

Please understand that the standard we have set for the care and education of our children makes it vitally important that parents have a clear understanding of what our policies are regarding the payment of tuition fees. Not unlike your family's own personal budget, our school also operates on a budget that is based on payments of tuition. If you have any questions about our policies regarding tuition fees, please do not hesitate to ask.

Tuition is paid monthly in advance and drafted out of your account or on your credit card on the day listed below. Any account changes must be requested **in writing**, at least **3 business days before** the change is to take place.

All fees and/or payments are NON-REFUNDABLE. Tuition is NEVER pro-rated or discounted for Kinder.

- ✗ A 2-week notice is required upon dis-enrolling your child(ren) from the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy. Tuition will be deducted for the month even if your child does not attend. You will not receive your tax information without this payment.
- ✗ Tuition that remains unpaid by the opening of the school day (5:59am) on the day listed below is considered late and will incur a late charge of \$75. Account balances that remain after 2 calendar days after the late payment date below will incur an additional \$100 late fee. If left unpaid, your child will be dismissed.
- ✗ Late and return payment fees will not be reversed for any circumstance.
- ✗ All returned payments will incur a \$40 fee.
- ✗ After the Academy's licensed closing time, the parent will be charged a \$10.00 fee for each minute after 6:30 p.m. for the first 10 minutes and an additional \$15.00 fee for each minute after 6:40 p.m.
- ✗ One day's attendance constitutes a full month.
- ✗ A \$110 registration fee will be paid upon enrollment, annually, AND upon each child's re-enrollment throughout the year.
- ✗ Fall Camp (October), Winter Camp (December), Spring Camp (March), and Before/After-school are included in your tuition rate, even if you do not use these services.

*4 Our Kids Learning Academy reserves the right to change or revise any policies, procedures, or tuitions/ fee schedules when deemed necessary. Written notification will be provided to parents.*

✕ WatchMeGrow is free of charge. It is not guaranteed.

**Your payment schedule for Kinder is below:**

Amount Due	Due Date	Date Late Payment Added
\$150	8/24/2012	8/27/2012
\$600	8/31/2012	9/4/2012
\$600	9/28/2012	10/1/2012
\$600	10/29/2012	10/31/2012
\$600	11/29/2012	12/3/2012
\$600	12/27/2012	12/31/2012
\$600	1/28/2013	1/30/2013
\$600	2/25/2013	2/27/2013
\$600	3/27/2013	3/29/2013
\$600	4/26/2013	4/30/2013
\$150	5/27/2013	5/29/2013

## FORMS

Upon enrollment, your child will need all 4 Our Kids forms completed in a timely manner. All forms will be provided by the Director at the time of enrollment. For your child's safety, we will periodically ask parents to update their child's information. If a form is not available on our website, please contact the Director for a copy.

## INTERNET ACCESS

Each parent has access to their child's classroom through the WatchMeGrow program. Parents can give permission to up to 2 other users. We do offer more users and additional rooms at an additional cost. Access is password protected. By enrolling your child, you consent to having your child's image displayed and viewed by other persons with passwords. We reserve the right to cancel your membership at any time.

## BALANCED NUTRITION

All menus will be written and approved by a Nutritionist. Meals are prepared at the Academy by trained staff. Due to the potential risks associated with allergies in young children, we ask that foods purchased or from home, not be brought into the classroom, with the exception of classroom events.

A nutritious breakfast, lunch, morning, and afternoon snack are provided by the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy. The menu is also posted at the front desk and in your child's classroom. You are welcome to bring your own lunch or snack if your child has allergies or specific dietary needs. Please see the Director for information regarding special diets and allergies.

## ATTENDANCE / TARDY POLICY

Attendance is a very important part of your child's academic success in school. Your child's school day begins at 7:45am and ends at 3:00pm. Regular attendance and punctuality are extremely important for your child's academic success and are required of every student. It is imperative that your child attend school regularly and be on time. It is the obligation of the parent, guardian, or custodian to report the child's absence or tardy each day. The child will be considered tardy by 8am. Nine days tardy will equal to a full day of absence. Because the state of Texas requires students to attend 90% of the instructional school days, 18 absences will result in failure to complete kindergarten.

Should a student miss a day of instruction, the parent should phone the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day the student is absent; and upon the child's return to school, send a written note within two(2) days to explain the nature of the absence. If a note is not received within the 2 day period, the absence will be considered unexcused. Parents are requested to check their report cards to verify the accuracy of the attendance reported on the card. Parents have one week after the report cards are issued to contact the school to make any corrections or changes to their attendance.

Students that accumulate unexcused absences will be referred to the Director to assist with truancy prevention options. **A mandatory parent conference shall be held after the third unexcused absence with a school administrator.**

## DISMISSAL POLICY

The staff will work with each child to fulfill the needs of that child, and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. Special needs will be accommodated when possible. 4 Our Kids Learning Academy reserves the right to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to group care provided by the Academy. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or becomes a problem that poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the classroom, alternative arrangements will be required.

If you, as a parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or local regulations, or fail to follow any 4 Our Kids Policies or Procedures, it may be necessary to dismiss your child(ren) from the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy.

A 2-week notice is required upon disenrolling your child(ren) from the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy.

## ILLNESS POLICY

If a child becomes sick, the Director will contact the parent(s). The child will be taken to the "T.L.C." room and supervised until the child is taken home. If the illness is critical, the child's physician will also be contacted. First Aid/CPR will be administered if necessary. A Licensing *Incident/Illness Report* form must be completed by the teacher. A signed copy goes to the parent

when the child is picked up and the original is kept in the child's file. The parent must sign the original along with the Director's signature.

The following list reflects some common signs of illnesses, which require a parent's immediate notification:

- × Head lice
- × Vomiting
- × Diarrhea
- × Pink eye
- × Rash
- × Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or more

A child may return to class once the child is no longer contagious. Children must be free of abnormal temperatures for a minimum of 24 hours, without the administration of fever reducing medications and show no signs of illness returning to the Academy. A certification from the child's physician may be required before re-admittance. In the event of an occurrence of a communicable disease as outlined by the Department of Health, written notification will be posted on the classroom door within 24 hours or the next business day.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS**

All parents must complete and sign a Medication Authorization form for each medication that is to be dispensed to your child before the medication can be dispensed. All medications (prescription and non-prescription) must be in the original containers, labeled with the child's name, current date, dosage, instructions, times to be given, and the expiration date. The form will include any possible symptoms or adverse reactions and storage instructions. All non-prescription medication requires a note from the child's physician before it can be dispensed. Please give the form and the medication to the Director or Assistant Director each day. In case of an adverse reaction, parent(s) and the child's physician will be notified immediately.

Medications cannot be shared among family members. A child is not allowed to self-administer prescription and/or non-prescription medication. Medication will only be administered by a designated staff member as instructed by the physician. Only one medication per child will be administered per day. Special circumstances can be discussed with the Director.

Please take all medication home at the end of each day.

## **IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

A copy of your child's immunization records, must be completed by your child's first day of school, as required by law. Any child, who is not immunized due to religious convictions, must provide a signed affidavit against such immunizations.

Parents are required to provide the school with a current certificate of immunization prior to the expiration of the current certificate.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY POLICY**

If a child becomes ill, injured, or has an adverse reaction to prescribed medication while at the Academy, the parent(s) or emergency contact person will be notified immediately (by phone). If it is necessary to seek immediate medical attention for a child, the child will be transported to San Jacinto Methodist Hospital (4401 Garth Road, Baytown, Texas 77521), unless told differently. The child's vehicle and emergency medical permission forms, as well as the health information file, will accompany the child.

## **EVACUATION / INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

If an emergency situation develops, such as severe weather, fire, physical damage to the building, or any other situation that poses a threat, we will evacuate the facility for the safety of your child and our staff. Parents will be notified to make arrangements for an early pick-up.

4 Our Kids Learning Academy is equipped with a weather band radio, fire alarm sprinkler system, and fire extinguishers. Fire and severe weather drills are conducted every 30 days. If an emergency situation develops, and it is determined that the building or premises are unsafe, your child will be transported across the street to Victoria Walker Elementary. If that location is unsafe, parents will be notified of the other location while we are in route. Parents will be notified (by phone) of the situation and you will be required to pick-up your child as soon as possible.

When local school systems are closed due to inclement weather, 4 Our Kids Learning Academy is closed. Tune to the designated radio or television station for further information if in doubt as to whether or not the facility will be open.

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY**

Abuse (emotional, physically, or psychological) and/or neglect will not be tolerated. All 4 Our Kids employees are required to report all suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate local and state authorities. If you need to report child abuse, please contact the Texas Child Abuse line at 1-800-252-5400 or <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

## **FIREARMS, ALCOHOL, DRUGS, GANG AND TOBACCO POLICY**

In our effort to provide a safe, healthy environment for each child to grow and develop, we maintain a facility free of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco use. The use or presence of firearms, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco is prohibited in the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy building or anywhere on the grounds by 4 Our Kids Learning Academy staff, volunteers, parents, or visitors. The use or presence of firearms, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco is prohibited during any outing or field trip, as well as, on any vehicle used by 4 Our Kids Learning Academy to transport your child. No gangs, gang-themes, or gang related items are allowed within 25 feet of the 4 Our Kids Learning Academy PARKING LOT.



## LICENSING

The Minimum Standards Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers is available online at [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child\\_Care/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child_Care/). Hard copies can be found in each classroom, including the front desk. All local and state permits can be found in the lobby for your review, along with our latest Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing inspection report. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services can be contacted at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us> or at (713) 940-5100.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

### CURRICULUM

4 Our Kids Learning Academy believes in providing hands-on, center-based activities that promote the development of emerging skills, which is why we use the Starfall Reading Mastery™ curriculum and the McGraw Hill Mathematics™ curriculum. Starfall Reading uses six main areas of focus to teach children how to read including: phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. Using a multi-sensory approach, this curriculum accommodates children with varied learning styles. Teachers benefit daily from the exposure to early childhood development knowledge through this curriculum. Our children delight in the interesting and interactive activities that help them develop a love for learning while they are growing, playing, and having fun!

### SUPPLIES

- ◆ **1 plastic storage box**
- ◆ 1 red plastic folder (3 brackets/2 pockets/no design)
- ◆ 1 yellow plastic folder (3 brackets/2 pockets/no design)
- ◆ 4 large glue sticks (.77 oz)
- ◆ 2 (4 oz) bottles of school glue
- ◆ 2 boxes of 24 crayons
- ◆ 1 Fiskars safety scissors (5" with blunt tip)
- ◆ 1 pkg. of primary pencils with erasers (non-mechanical)
- ◆ 2 pink pearl erasers
- ◆ **1 pencil sharpener with receptacle**
- ◆ 1 box of thin-lined washable markers (Classic colors -box of 8)
- ◆ 1 pkg. multi colored thin lined dry-erase markers
- ◆ **1 ruler with inches and centimeters**
- ◆ 2 large boxes of facial tissue
- ◆ 1 hand sanitizer
- ◆ 1 box of baby wipes
- ◆ 1 variety pack of construction paper
- ◆ **3 wide-ruled/one subject spiral notebooks**
- ◆ 3 packs of plain white copy paper (500 sheets)
- ◆ 1 box of sandwich sized zip-lock bags



## REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

4 Our Kids recognizes the importance of cooperation between the home and school, and its responsibility in keeping parents informed of the progress of students in school. Pupil grading and progress reporting procedures are intended to reflect student competency in the mastery of learning objectives, student growth over the course of a school year (including citizenship and effort), and student achievement – what the student knows or can do.

Grading and progress reporting procedures shall provide guidance to teachers in evaluating student competency, growth, and achievement. Grading and reporting procedures shall also allow for flexibility in providing for individual needs and differences of students. Evaluation in terms of competency (mastery) and achievement shall not ignore individual differences among students nor shall evaluation in terms of effort mean that high standards have been ignored. Teachers are encouraged to emphasize competency and achievement in grading, but with the individual student in mind. Grading and reporting procedures shall apply to all learning situations within the school setting.

Grading and reporting procedures will be explained to parents either through direct parent contact or be sent home to parents. Grading procedures will be based upon the assumption that students will respond to clear and accurate reporting of competence, growth, and achievement as positive opportunities for success rather than threats of failure. Criteria used to measure competence, growth, and achievement shall be designed to be as objective as possible and appropriate to the age and maturity of students.

Student competency, growth, and achievement will be reported in six 6 week grading periods. A report card will be sent to parents the Friday following the end of each grading period. Parents should be consulted if, in the teacher's judgment, the child's academic situation warrants parental contact.

The following shall serve as the basis of assigning grades:

- A) Mastery of Objectives: Mastery shall be determined through a variety of assessments such as tests, quizzes, projects, and classroom activities.
- B) Other Criteria: Other criteria shall be used as a portion of the grade such as homework, daily class work, class participation.
- C) Greater emphasis shall be placed upon mastery of objectives in the assignment of grades.

## DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

At 4 Our Kids Learning Academy we use a method of ‘redirection’ to guide your child toward appropriate behavior. If a child is engaged in behavior not conducive to a safe and happy learning environment, the teacher will ‘redirect’ the child toward appropriate behavior. The use of physical abuse, humiliation, bribery, verbal intimidation, threaten attitudes, or harsh language towards children is prohibited.

The color stick will serve as a representation as to the kind of day your child had in class regarding behavior. The colors be represented by the following:

<b>Blue</b>	<b>Good Day</b>
<b>Green</b>	<b>Warning</b>
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>5 minutes time out</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>Note home</b>
<b>Purple</b>	<b>Great day</b>

Aside from discipline, we also like to use an incentive program. Kids need to be rewarded for unsolicited good behavior. Students will be given a star when they are seen being on task, kind, helpful, respectful, and generous on their own accord. Incentives will be rewarded as follows:

<b>1 star</b>	<b>Great Day Award</b>
<b>2 stars</b>	<b>Five extra minutes in your favorite center!</b>
<b>3 stars</b>	<b>You get to work in the comfy seat!</b>
<b>4 stars</b>	<b>Line leader for the day!</b>
<b>5 stars</b>	<b>Trip to the Treasure Box!!</b>

## THE PARENT'S ROLE

The relationship between parents and the Academy staff is vital to the success of a child’s experience. A partnership must be formed the first day, with open communication and understanding that the development and growth of the child is our top priority.

Parents can assist and help ensure a smooth transition by doing the following:

- × Sign children in and out at the front desk and then escort them to their designated class.
- × Have all forms completed promptly.
- × Update forms, as needed, when changes occur (i.e. new phone number, address, etc.).
- × Keep staff informed of special needs or changes that might affect your child’s behavior.
- × Notify us if your child is ill.

- × Please keep all sick children at home. Notify the Academy if your child will be absent for any reason.
- × Notify the Academy if you will be later than usual picking up your child.
- × Provide a change of clothes marked with your child's name (we are not responsible for lost or damaged clothing).
- × Children should be dressed properly for the weather and play.
- × Do not allow children to bring toys.
- × Participate in the Academy's special activities.
- × Attend scheduled parent meetings and conferences.
- × Ask questions and address concerns as they arise.

### **Important Dates:**

<b>2012-2013 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE</b>	<b>Report Card Distribution Dates:</b>
September 3 - Labor Day	<b>Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup></b>
November 22 - Thanksgiving Day	<b>Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup></b>
November 23 - Day after Thanksgiving Day	<b>Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup></b>
December 24 - CLOSE AT NOON	<b>Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup></b>
December 25 - Christmas	<b>Friday April 26<sup>th</sup></b>
December 31 - CLOSE AT NOON	<b>Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup></b>
January 1 - New Year's Day	
May 27 - Memorial Day	