



Agape

Early Learning Center

making a difference one child at a time

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of the Agape' Early Learning Center is to provide high quality, developmental and spiritual childcare services to all families. We provide a constructive educational experience as well as a social development experience through activities such as art, music, literature and physical activities. Every child needs the opportunity to grow, develop, and explore his/her environment through spiritual, social, creative, physical as well as intellectual experiences. Our goal is to provide such experiences for all children enrolled in our center.

Parent Orientation

Prior to the first day of enrollment, all parents and prospective students are encouraged to attend an orientation session or onsite visit with the director to review operating policies, to meet the staff and to allow the child an opportunity to observe the center before the first day of attendance.

Parents are required to provide the following information prior to the first day of enrollment:

1. A completed application
2. Immunization record
3. Social security card (Parent and child)
4. Birth Certificate
5. Proof of current health physical (within 6 months of enrollment)

Parents of children with special medical or developmental conditions are required to submit an annual physical report of any updates. If a child develops a condition after enrollment, a report from the child's physician informing the center of the condition and any special instructions that need to be followed to care for the child is required.

Parents are to keep the center informed of any changes or updates to these forms.

An annual Back to School Night is held at the beginning of each school year to inform parents of the educational curriculum and to highlight special events and projects.

We invite parent participation in the center's new **Parent Organization** effective May 2015.

Location

The Center is located inside of Ambassadors For Jesus Christ Church. The address is 4 Duncan Drive, Hampton, Virginia 23663. The contact number is (757) 723-5530. Our email address is agapeelc@gmail.com and our web address is agape-elc.com/. You may access our facebook from our web page. We do encourage you to visit often and to like us on facebook.

Hours of Operation

The facility is open from 6:00am until 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. The center is closed in observance of the following holidays: New Years Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Closure for all other holidays will be posted and are determined by the projected need for care.

Though staff members arrive at the center 15 minutes prior to their schedule, they are responsible for performing housekeeping duties. Parent conferences and Open House are held to provide opportunity for parents to speak with teachers concerning their child. Since the center does close promptly at 6:00pm, parents should allow themselves adequate time to talk with their child's teacher and/or assistant and gather their child's belongings before closing time. Parents arriving after closing time will be charged \$1 per minute Late Pick-Up Fee. **This fee is due when the child is picked up or before the child returns the next day.**

Tuition Policy

The tuition rates are firm and must be paid whether your child attends one day a week or five days unless you have enrolled them on a part-time basis. According to the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers in the Commonwealth of Virginia, we are required by law to have only a specific number of students per teacher. Therefore, we must reserve a space for your child to ensure that your child receives proper training.

Tuition is due prior to service and can be paid on Friday before 6 or Monday upon arrival. Tuition paid after 6pm on Monday will incur a \$10 late fee. This is charged each week until tuition is paid. If a child's tuition becomes more than two weeks behind, he child is subject to withdrawal until past due tuition is paid. Tuition may be paid by cash, check, money order or credit card. When paying by check, please write the child's name and the week the payment is for in the memo section of the check. Returned checks will be charged a returned check fee of \$35 and if the event occurs twice the use of checks will no longer be accepted as payment.

To assist you financially during times of vacation and sickness, we will charge 50% of your child's normal weekly rate for a complete week absence. You may use this 50% discount two times per school year. We ask that you give us written notification of vacation plans and call if using these weeks because of illness. Please note, social services do **not** pay for vacation. If you take your child out for vacation you will be responsible for half of regular tuition.

Staff Qualifications

Staff members are carefully screened during the selection process, and receive thorough orientation training before caring for children. They receive a Child Abuse Background Check by Virginia State Police and a national Agency Check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. They receive First Aid for Child Care Providers and Infant and Child CPR. Staff members also receive ongoing training in health screening, developmental assessments, curriculum development, child guidance techniques, and other topics relevant to the child care industry. Our staff also receives annual physicals to be capable of meeting the requirements for every aspect of their job as a caregiver of young children.

Curriculum

The center provides a developmentally appropriate approach to learning as all children learn differently. We currently use **Innovations**.

Meal Times

The center provides a well-balanced nutrition program for all children enrolled. Parents of infants provide breast milk, formula and/baby food. Once a child is old enough for table food the center will provide meals. Breakfast snack is from 8:00-8:30am. Lunch is served from 11:00-11:30 and afternoon snack is served when children get up from nap at 2:00pm. Parents who wish to have their children participate in the meals served at the center should have the children in their classroom by the scheduled mealtime. Any child arriving after the scheduled mealtime will need to be fed by the parent. Parents must notify the office if their child will be coming in late due to medical appt. etc. and need a meal held. If no notification is given the parent will be responsible for providing the meal.

Breastfeeding Policy

We support and encourage breastfeeding in our center. A private space is provided for breastfeeding moms should they care to nurse their infants at any time during the day. We provide literature for parents to take as well as materials to read. Our staff is trained on proper handling of breast milk as well as formula and receives additional training as provided. Additional information is available upon request.

Screen Time

The use of television in our center is limited to educational or biblical DVDs only. Children over the age of 2 are permitted no more than 30 minutes per week. Children are supervised during screen time and discussions are held with the children concerning what they are watching. Television is never used as a reward or withheld as punishment.

Physical Activity

Our center is equipped with a large multi-purpose area to provide lots of opportunity for gross motor activity. The children from walking age through age 12 have designated P.E. time to

include running, jumping, hopping, skipping, galloping and music and movement. The children also get outside time of 30-60 minutes a day weather permitting.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency such as an accident or illness, our center will notify the parent/guardian by preparing an incident report and if deemed necessary will also notify the parent/guardian by phone. In the case of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken immediately to Sentara CarePlex and the parent will be notified to meet the staff member and the child there.

Medication

Medication is only administered by a MAT certified staff member. Parents must provide a written request from the physician or medicine must be prescription. A written form is included in your enrollment packet and additional ones are available as needed.

Weather Alert

-As a general rule, we open and close with Hampton City Schools. However, after the first day of inclement weather if we can safely reach the center will open. Please provide us you email address and or cell number so that we might contact you with any changes. We also make every effort to have an updated message on the center phone that you may use to check if we're open.

Arrival and Departure

Parents are required to sign their child in upon arrival and sign their child out upon departure. Upon arrival, parents are responsible for the supervision of their child until the parent turns the child over to the teacher or teacher assistant in the multi-purpose room, classroom or playground. Upon departure, parents are responsible for supervision of their child after they notify the teacher or teacher assistant that they are there to pick up their child. It is not permissible for children to leave the building or playground without their parent, or left unsupervised in any area of the building. Staff members may not be asked to supervise children or siblings who are not enrolled in the center or who are not visiting for the purpose of enrollment if it negative affects the proper teacher/child ratio.

Release of Children to Friends or Relatives

Parents must notify the center in advance if someone other than the parent is going to pick up their child. Parents must give written permission on the child's registration form to allow certain named friends or relatives to pick up their child/children. Staff members will release a child only to individuals, other than parents who are at least 18 years old and who the child knows and appears comfortable leaving with. Staff members will also require that the individual verify their identity with a picture identification card.

Children will be released to either parent unless the center has on file official documentation regarding custody, which specify that a particular parent is not authorized to pick up a child.

The safety of the child while in attendance at the center is the mutual responsibility of both the center and the parents. It is the center's policy to deny parental or guardian access to a child if the parent or guardian appears to be either mentally or physically incapacitated when requesting release of the child. In the event that a parent is determined incapable of taking charge of his/her child, the following steps will be taken:

1. The other parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.
2. If the other parent or guardian cannot be reached, the designated emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.
3. If none of the above efforts are successful the local police will be called for assistance.

Field trips and Photo release

A field trip and activities as well as photo release form will be given at time of enrollment. This form will allow your child to participate in the centers sponsored activities and their pictures to be used in our center promoted brochures, newsletters and web page. You may receive individual permission slips during the year as well and you have the option of saying yes or no to whether your child will participate.

Withdrawal Procedures

Two weeks written notification from the parents to the center director/assistant director is required prior to the withdrawal of any child. You can also withdraw your child by paying the equivalent amount.

The center director may recommend or required the withdrawal of a child. Parents may be asked to withdraw their child if it is determined that their child is unable to adjust to the program in a positive manner, that their child's recurring-unmanageable behavior is placing the other children's safety or well-being at risk, or that the program offered at the center is unable to meet the special needs of their child.

We may also require that children be withdrawn if parents fail to comply with the operating policies of the center or fail to honor financial obligations to the center.

Whenever possible, the director will give the parent(s) two week notice when a child is required to be withdrawn. If a child's presence significantly endangers the safety or well being of other children in the center, the director may require immediate withdrawal.

Discipline and Child Guidance

Goals:

All discipline and child guidance techniques used by staff at the center will be of a positive, non-punitive nature. The goals of the disciplinary techniques will be:

1. To ensure that the classroom is a safe, secure environment for all the children.
2. To teach the children that our society has acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors
3. To teach self-respect and respect for the rights of others.
4. To teach the children to take responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their actions.
5. To teach the children self-control and inner discipline
6. To strengthen the children's self-esteem and feelings of self worth.

Staff members will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirecting the child to participate in another activity, anticipating and eliminating potential problems, providing reinforcement for appropriate behaviors, talking and providing reflective listening with the child, temporarily removing the child from a stressful situation, and limiting the child's participation in some activities until the child is able to cooperate and follow the rules associated with that particular activity. All techniques used will be age appropriate for the child and will be accompanied by a rational explanation of expectation of the child's level of understanding.

When necessary and with the parents' consent we will solicit outside help to support the child in his/her efforts to develop better social skills.

Management of biting behavior

The center's policy in regard to biting is established for the protection and health of all children in the program. A bite is considered dangerous if it leaves a red mark on the other victim's skin or breaks the victim's skin. When a child bites another child or staff member, the child will immediately be removed from the situation. He/She will be firmly told that biting hurts and that he/she cannot be allowed to hurt the other children. Infants will be isolated in a crib or high chair while care is given to the injured child. Toddlers and Preschoolers will be isolated in a chair while the injured child is being cared for. After the time period the child will be allowed to return to the group if they are willing to cooperate and agree to stop biting. Efforts will be made to have the biting child comfort the child that was bitten and mend any hurt feelings between them. Staff members will provide appropriate medical care to the bitten child and encourage parents to seek medical attention for their child if the skin was broken due to the bite.

Staff members will notify parents of both children of the incident. The parents of the biting child will be informed of the circumstances under which a child can be withdrawn for continued biting behavior. A conference can be arranged with the center director at the parent's request to discuss behavior modification strategies that the staff will be using at the center and ways in which the parents can facilitate the extinction of the behavior at home.

Staff members will diligently supervise children who are exhibiting biting behaviors and will actively discourage the reoccurrence of the behavior. In order to avoid reoccurrence of the biting behavior during very busy times of the day, children may be placed in their cribs or high chair for short periods of time if staff is unable to provide close individual supervision of the child.

Children biting more than twice in a day or three times in a week will have parents called and they will have to be removed until some mutual plan can be devised for the safety of the other children.

Safety and Medical Treatment

As employees at a childcare center, one of our greatest concerns is the safety of children. Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. The following guidelines are to help maintain this goal.

1. No child is alone or unsupervised.
2. When arriving at the center, children are to be signed in by parent/guardian and brought to the classroom or teacher. When picking up, the parent/guardian is to sign child out and accompany them to the vehicle. No child should be should be dropped off or picked up by persons under 18 years of age.
3. Fieldtrips will require written permission slips on file signed by parent/guardian.
4. Fire drills are conducted monthly. Each room has a posted evacuation plan by their door. We also conduct drills periodically for hurricanes and earthquakes.
5. Law requires car or booster seats for children under 8 or under 4ft.9in. tall.

Management of communicable Diseases

Children enrolled in the center are observed before entering their group so we can maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff. Our staff shall be responsible to see that each child is checked for the common signs of communicable diseases. The guidelines for recognizing illnesses are as follows:

1. Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit taken by auxiliary method.
2. Skin rash such as ringworm (must have doctor's note for readmission and must be covered)
3. Diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times in the same day
4. Evidence of lice infestation
5. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
6. A more comprehensive list is available in the office.

If a child shows any of the above mentioned complications, a staff member will call the child's parent immediately and place the child in an isolation area to wait for the parent to pick up the child. The child will not be re admitted to the center until symptoms are gone or a doctor's note states the child is no longer contagious. **A minimum of 24 hours is required for readmission if a child is running a fever. This is without medication.**

What to Bring from Home

Parents are responsible for furnishing the center with the following items from home on a daily basis:

A. Infant Program

1. Three (3) complete changes of labeled clothes and bibs
2. At least eight (8) labeled disposable diapers
3. Labeled diapering supplies (wipes, etc.)
4. Adequate supply of infant formula in labeled plastic bottles or equivalent formula to be prepared by teacher
5. Special blanket, activity box or mirror, infant crib mobile, crib toy (optional items)

B. Toddler Program

1. Two (2) complete changes of labeled clothes
2. At least six (6) labeled disposable diapers or pull-ups
3. Labeled diapering supplies if child is in diapers or being potty trained
4. Nap time blanket and twin sized sheet for cot

C. Preschool Program

1. One (1) complete change of labeled clothes
2. Nap time blanket and twin sized sheet for cot
3. Bookbag

All Children are asked to bring 2 boxes of facial tissues, 2 hand and face wipes and 2 hand and sanitizers per year. If you know your child is prone to colds or allergies please feel free to contribute more. Our little ones use a lot since they don't know how to blow their noses just yet. All other school supplies are provided by the center such as glue, crayons, markers, paper and other items usually requested by schools.

This handbook will be reviewed frequently and updates or changes may be made. You as the parent will be notified of any changes and a new handbook may be requested.