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PARENT HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY

At Uncle Sam's Academy, we believe each child is a unique individual. We strive to provide a loving, nurturing, and creative environment for children. We are sensitive to their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. Our program strives to be developmentally appropriate, meeting the needs of each child within the group setting. Furthermore, our program is presented to children within an anti-biased and multicultural context. A nonsexist, anti-biased approach to learning helps children experience, understand and appreciate the value of differences. We emphasize multiculturalism to help children acquire a sense of global awareness and responsibility, as they develop their own self-concept.

Additionally, we believe in providing a physical environment that is safe, clean, healthy, and child friendly. Classrooms are arranged to offer challenging play and learning choices at a range of developmental levels. Learning centers allow children the opportunity to explore, to experience, and most importantly...to succeed.

The strength of our program is the experience, educational expertise, and dedication of our staff. We support our credentialed teachers with education, training, resources, and the freedom to create a unique learning environment. We provide many opportunities for the teachers to share ideas and grow professionally. Our teachers create a caring and nurturing atmosphere that fosters each child's creativity and positive self-image.

We practice positive methods of discipline. We establish consistent and appropriate limits to help children function in their world. Our classrooms are designed to develop in children a sense of independence and responsibility. We strive to strengthen each child's own cultural identity, while instilling a respect for others.

Families are the most significant adults in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between parents and teachers - a partnership for the benefit of the child. We encourage daily communication between parents and center staff. Our doors are open to families at all times.

Our Center values people: the children in our care, their families, and our employees. We continually work to earn the trust placed in us. We strive each day to provide the best early childhood educational services possible.

ABOUT OUR CENTER

Our Center has been in operation since 1994. We are a non-profit, licensed, 5 Star QRS and NAEYC accredited center. We are located in the Dole Court House but the government does not directly subsidize us. We provide quality early childhood education at an affordable price. We are under the direction of the General Services Administration and have a guidance board comprised of representatives from the various agencies in the building.

UPON ENTERING THE CENTER:

Our center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6 PM. It is best to schedule your child's time so they arrive in the morning in time to participate in the planned circle time. We ask that your child arrives by 9:30am. Please call if you plan to arrive after 9:30. **Your child will not be accepted after 9:30 am without prior notification.**

When you arrive at the door of the center you will need an access code. When your child is enrolled on a full time basis you will provide us with the code. The code is changed two times a year or when needed. On the wall by the office you will clock your child in for the day. Our license requires that you clock in every day. When you leave for the day, you will then time your child out both on the classroom clipboard as well as the time clock. This provides documentation of when your child is in our care.

In the morning, when leaving your child in his/her room, our motto is "the shorter the goodbye the shorter the cry." We know from experience that after your child has been here a few times, the "fuss will be less, if at all". Children have a unique capacity to make new friends quickly. If you wish to stay and observe through a window, please do so.

WHO MAY ENROLL:

The center is open to all children regardless of race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We require all prospective families, including the child(ren), to tour our facility as part of the enrollment process. The children enrolled have varying home values, beliefs, experiences, and languages. Caregivers are expected to responsibly attend to and sensitively respond to children in light of such differences.

While the center is open to the community, preference is given to Federal families. Because of the limited amount of children that the center can accommodate, it may be impossible to appropriately serve the needs of all children. We reserve the right to request professional evaluations and if necessary, counsel families to seek alternative placements that can appropriately serve the child's needs in a complete and professional manner

OPEN DOOR POLICY:

Any parent has the right to inspect the Center at any time. We have observation windows in some of our rooms so that a parent may see the classroom without the child or teacher knowing they are watching. Parents may also go right into the room to be with their child at any time. We encourage parents to visit. Parents may join their children for lunch or breakfast. They are welcome to bring their own lunch or they may eat with the children. The parent may also check the child out if they want to take their child out to lunch.

While we encourage family involvement, we ask that parents respect the coveted learning time between the hours of 8:30 and 11:15 and limit visitation time in the classroom. As your child matures he/she will be able to

adjust to your visits in and out of the classroom. Initially this will take time and at first, cause your child's concentration on the present activity to be disrupted. Your child may cry when you leave or not want to rejoin the group when it is time for you to depart because s/he thinks it is time to go home. Young children's understanding of time is very concrete and based on events not the actual clock. Children are so busy learning that the whole day passes without the child's notice. Please help your child establish an event time line by maintaining a regular drop off and pick up routine. Your child's teacher can help you determine the best plan of action for your child.

CURRICULUM INFORMATION:

Our curriculum is designed in to meet the State of Kansas' and the State of Missouri's Early Childhood standards and benchmarks. In accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), we utilize developmentally appropriate practices in all classrooms. Our goal is to foster growth in all areas of the WHOLE child: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social. This growth is observed both formally and informally. We provide developmentally appropriate programs that focus on the process of learning while also helping them to enjoy many other successful experiences. We encourage not just learning, but also the love of learning.

To ensure our classrooms met NAEYC criteria, the classroom environments are scored annually using the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R), and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Environment (ECERS-E). Additionally, our facility uses the following assessments to provide on going documentation of your child's development: The Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire, The Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP), The Early Language and Literacy checklist including the Oral Language assessments, our Skills Packet and The Bracken Basic Concept Skills. We will review this information with you during your parent teacher conference. An individual portfolio is also maintained and moved to each room throughout the child's duration in the center. To accomplish the goals you set with your child's teacher we intermingle stimulating teacher and child directed activities within an organized, structured, yet flexible environment. Ample opportunities are provided for children to actively participate in the learning process to achieve developmental success. Should your child fail to make adequate progress or fall behind his/her peers, our administrator will meet with you to discuss outside community resources for assisting your child with special educational services.

Our Infant Program is full of security, warmth, and love with a strong emphasis placed upon communication between the caregiver and parent. Daily charts completed by our staff, serve as the primary means of verbal and written communication. These individualize charts document nutrition information, nap times, diaper and toileting information, and provide space for parents to list any special instructions for the day as well as for the caregiver to highlight the events of the day. Following GSA guidelines, our center uses the RIE (Respectful Infant Environments) philosophy towards infant environments. You will find mats and lots of floor space for children to develop gross motor skills. You will not find exersaucers, swings, jump-ups, or other contraptions that confine small children. During feeding your child may be placed in a bouncy seat temporarily to aid with

bottle holding and feeding. Your child will not be left in this seat after meal time. On occasion a child may fall asleep in a bouncer. If this occurs the child will be placed in his/her crib. If the child wakes easily then the bouncer and child will be placed in the crib. The later will occur only until the child becomes accustomed to sleeping in a crib. In our program all children sleep in a crib on their backs. Only when a child can roll independently will s/he be allowed to fall asleep on his/her stomach. You can help your child adjust quicker to our center by placing your child on a firm surface on his/her back for sleeping and allowing your child to spend as much “tummy time” on the floor as possible at home.

Our Toddler Program strives to meet the needs of individual children in a group setting. We introduce daily routine components from the HELP, a nationally recognized curriculum for children 0-3. Routines such as diapering, toileting, eating, and napping are important to the learning process as young children develop self-regulating skills. For his reason, the teachers place an emphasis on conversation and meaningful interaction especially during these times. The role of the adult is to support the child in his/her attempts at self-regulation and to extend activities along logical and creative lines. Learning activities are planned weekly, with a balance of teacher and child directed activities, to challenge the child's current developmental level and foster further growth.

Verbal and written communication between caregivers and families is emphasized as parents and caregivers are encouraged to converse at drop off and pick up times and visits to the center throughout the day. Written communication includes an individual daily note documenting meals, activities, naptime, and diapering.

The Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers is incorporated into all of the daily routines and enriched with activities planned by the teachers based on each child's level of development encouraging exploration, experimentation, and discovery. Each week the teachers plan activities that foster growth in one or more of the developmental milestones which include: interest in others, self-awareness, eye-hand coordination, language development, physical awareness, purposeful action of tools, and expression of feelings. This curriculum and our weekly lesson plans are in accordance with the criteria for practices as described by NAEYC.

Our Young Preschool Program strives to prepare our young preschoolers for our more rigorous preschool program. We continue daily routine components from the ELL curriculum and the HELP, nationally recognized curriculums for young children. The curriculums guide teachers to integrate key areas of content including literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and arts, health and safety, social studies, and personal independence. This tool also highlights individual activities and learning experiences.

Verbal and written communication between caregivers and families is emphasized as parents and caregivers are encouraged to converse at drop off and pick up times and visits to the center throughout the day. Written communication includes an individual note documenting toilet training attempts and activities planned for the week.

Our Locally Recognized Preschool Program, in accordance with NAEYC principles presents children with stimulating activities within an organized, structured, yet flexible environment. We follow the daily routine components from the ELL curriculum a locally developed, nationally reviewed curriculum which focuses on developing the language and literacy skills of preschoolers. We also use the Pre-K mathematics curriculum a well-researched math program from Houghton Mifflin.

Small and large group activities are planned around literacy based themes that are tailored to meet the needs of individual children and classrooms. Children and teachers take an active role in the development and direction of the theme through meaningful interactions and conversation. These conversations and interactions provide a balance of teacher and child directed activities that foster the growth in literacy, math, science, technology, creative expression & arts, health & safety, social studies and personal responsibility. Lesson plans take into account individual interest, skill development, and classroom focus; posted for viewing in each classroom. Each child's growth is observed and documented on the skills checklist.

TOILET TRAINING:

Toilet training will begin when the parent(s) and the caregiver(s) agree that the child is both physically and emotionally ready for the experience. Parent-Provider communication is essential so that consistency in training will occur in the center and the home. Parents are kindly requested to provide the center with an adequate supply of clothing so that a child may remain dry over the course of an entire day. Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that increases the likelihood of self-help skill achievement. A child is considered toilet trained in our program when he/she is in underwear at all times (nap times exceptions allowed), independently goes to the restroom or requests to use the restroom without teacher intervention and has no more than 2 urine or bowel accidents during a 2 week period.

TRANSITIONS:

Our facility supports NAEYC's position statement on continuity of care. However, due to space challenges and the high demand for infant care, children must move from one age grouping to the next. This entails moving from classroom to classroom. As your child develops he/she will be recommended for transition based on three factors: 1) room availability, 2) the child's present level of development and 3) the child's age. While parent requests are taken under advisement, Uncle Sam's reserves sole right to assign children to new classrooms. When it is apparent that your child is ready to begin transitioning into a new classroom the sending teacher and/or director will meet with you to discuss this recommendation. Depending on your child's temperament, your child may or may not visit the next classroom for any amount of time prior to the agreed upon move date. Parents however, will have the opportunity to meet the receiving classroom staff prior to finalizing the decision to move the child.

DISCIPLINE:

One of our goals is to help your child develop a positive self-image. We recognize that children need clearly defined limits set in a non-threatening yet firm manner. We encourage children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control. In order to achieve these goals, we apply principles that build individual esteem and avoid any shaming practices. As such, we accomplish order and thus discipline through close supervision, gentle guidance, and redirection. When all else fails, we will utilize a brief "thinking time". This practice is rarely employed and never overused. We do not condone or employ corporal punishment as a means of discipline. At no time will a child at Uncle Sam's be subjected to physical punishment (i.e., shaking, hitting, biting, pinching, etc.) or be humiliated, frightened, or verbally abused by the staff. Children will never be disciplined for sleep habits, toilet accidents, food consumption or lack of participation in scheduled activities. At all times, a child's age, emotional state, and past experiences will be considered in discipline matters. Any violation of the school's discipline policy should be brought to the Director's attention immediately.

Aggressive physical behavior (i.e., fighting, hitting, biting, etc.) by a child toward another child or staff member is unacceptable. Staff members will intervene immediately should this type of situation occur. Children will be

shown positive alternatives rather than just being told "no." Parents will be informed if any such incident occurs, and a conference may be requested at any time to discuss an acceptable behavioral plan for the child. If at the discretion of Uncle Sam's staff, a child's behavior is determined to be uncontrollable, extremely disruptive, and/or harmful to him/herself or others, the parent will be called to come and remove the child from school for the day. Parents will be required to make arrangements for the child to be picked up within 45 minutes from the call. Failure to do so may result in termination of services. Uncle Sam's reserves the right to terminate enrollment of children who exhibit behavioral patterns that are deemed to be harmful to themselves or others. The determination of what is harmful and/or inappropriate is at the sole discretion of our staff.

BITING:

Children under the age of 27 months who bite and who are not disabled will be dealt with on an individual basis. Depending on the circumstance, our facility: 1) may ask to meet with the parents of the biter, 2) may request an evaluation from the local infant/toddler program, 3) may initiate a behavior intervention plan to address the biting, 4) may dismiss the biter, or 5) all the above.

Children between 28 and 36 months who are not disabled and who bite more than two times in four months will be dismissed.

Children over 36 months who are not disabled and who bite more than once within three months will be dismissed.

WITHDRAWAL:

Uncle Sam's reserves the right to terminate the services of any child, without notice, for any reason, so long as the determination is not based in whole or part on the race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, national origin, or disability of the child or child's parents. If a parent's conduct is reported by FPS or the manager on duty to be unacceptable or inappropriate, the parent will be barred from entering the facility for the safety and well being of the other children and/or staff. Due to laws requiring parents to have immediate access to their child, the parent's child/children will have their services terminated. Once services are terminated, both the child and parent(s) are prohibited from entering the childcare facility.

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS:

Each child has a cubby where they can store a change of clothing, their coat and book bag. Please do not bring food, medication or toys that are to be kept in the cubby.

CLOTHING:

Because of the wide range of activities it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. We encourage children to engage in active, hands-on play, which at times can be very messy, but a whole lot of fun!!!! Plastic aprons are provided by the center for art and water activities. If you would like your child to have an apron for mealtime, please provide one to be kept in their cubby. Children in our care must have closed toed shoes when on the playground. Jellies, sandals, slippers, crocs, flip flops are not allowed.

Water activities, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra set of clothing be kept in the child's cubby at all times. Parents must provide the center with an additional set of clothing (including

socks and underwear) at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name. The center will not be held responsible for lost or damaged clothing if the clothing was damaged during normal activities with children (i.e. art, meal times, etc.).

Families with children in diapers must provide their own disposable diapers, a box of wipes monthly and any powder or cream for their child.

TOYS AND CANDY:

Center classrooms are adequately supplied with equipment and materials of special interest to your child(ren). We ask that all personal candy, gum, tapes, CD's, DVDs, storybooks and toys, with the exception of sleeping toys, be left at home. **PLEASE NOTE:** 1) Toy weapons of any kind (i.e., sword, gun, knife, etc.) are not allowed in the facility; 2) all toys brought into the center must be age-appropriate and safe, as deemed by Center personnel.

MEALS:

While your child is in attendance, the center will meet the child's nutritional needs by providing breakfast from **8-8:30**, lunch from **11:10-11:40**, afternoon snack from **2:20-2:50**, and a **5:15** lunch, afternoon snack, and a 5:15 late, late snack. State licensing and the Child and Adult Care Food Program have approved all of our menus as appropriate for children from 4 months to 12 years. Our infant meals are prepared on site and are served in pureed or diced form depending on the age of the child. State licensing **requires a doctor's statement for all food allergies** or food substitutions. The doctor's note must list the reason the child cannot have the specific liquid/food item and state an acceptable substitution. Additionally, if a child requires calories to be added to our meal components the doctor must list the acceptable additives. ***We will be unable to restrict or substitute any foods or liquids without the expressed doctor's statement.*** This statement must be updated at the following age intervals: 0-1 years, 1-2 years and at 3 years or older. For infants, if the family chooses to decline the center provided formula, we ask that you leave a can of formula in the facility at all times as we feed on demand. If the child is on baby food and the family declines our baby food, the parent must provide enough food to meet the CACFP meal component requirements for all three meals per day or for the time the child will be in our care. Please see the director for all religious food restrictions.

Additionally, we use food items in our art, sensory and tactile centers. Please notify us if your child has sensitivity to any specific item.

REST PERIODS:

As required by licensing, there will be a rest period each day and the children will be required to rest. If they do not need a nap, they may look at a book or listen to music while on their cot. A cot or crib will be provided for each. The center will provide a clean sheet for each child that must be stored separately each day in the child's cubby. The center is responsible for washing your child's sheet weekly or more often if needed. In support of the "Back to Sleep" campaign, children under one year of age sleep in secured cribs on their backs until they can roll over independently. If your infant needs special sleeping accommodations please have his/her doctor list this information on your child's physical form.

OUTDOOR POLICY:

The state of Kansas requires that **all** children be taken outside for at least 1 hour daily providing it is not colder than 32 degrees, hotter than 90 degrees, or raining. Our playground is one the east end of the building and is completely shaded in the afternoon. Please remember that children are taken outdoors daily (weather permitting) and should be dressed accordingly. **ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE MARKED.** The center will not be held responsible for lost clothing. If your child cannot go outside for any reason we **must have a signed doctor's statement** to this effect otherwise we are out of compliance with state licensing and your child will be taken outside.

ILLNESS:

All children get sick from time to time. If you observe the following at home, please keep your child at home to allow him/her time to recover. If the following are observed at the Center, staff will call child's parent, so that the child may be picked up. Depending on the child's symptoms, a doctor's statement may be required for the child to return.

A child will be excluded from the Center when:

1. his/her temperature exceeds 101 degrees F.
2. his/her temperature exceeds 100 degrees F and is accompanied by symptoms of illness as described in items 3-7.
3. he/she has a rash of any kind, until diagnosed, treated or declared non-contagious by a health care professional.
4. he/she has diarrhea—defined by either 2 consecutive loose stools within 1 hour or 3 loose stools within 2 hours.
5. he/she vomits—more than the usual spit up.
6. he/she complains of pain, general malaise, unusual listlessness, unusual drowsiness, constant crying or unusual fussiness.
7. he/she has symptoms suggesting an acute infection, including, frequent coughing, purulent drainage from the nose, eyes, ears or mouth, and/or child's complaints of a sore throat.
8. he/she has symptoms suggesting and/or confirm the presence of head lice. Hair must be free of ALL nits prior to return to the Center.

We are a Center for healthy children. A child who is ill does not benefit from our program and can adversely affect the health of other children. If you have doubts about your child's health, please keep your child at home and contact your child's health care provider.

In the event your child becomes ill while at the Center, the parent will be promptly contacted. We expect that any necessary arrangements be made at this time. This may include arranging schedules so that someone can remain home with your child until he/she recovers. **If your child goes home with a fever, he/she is expected to remain home for at least 24 hours unless your child's physician has provided a note that states he/she is free of contagion.**

Remember, your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to the Center if your physician has not examined your child. When an illness call is made, we expect the child to be picked up from the Center as quickly as possible. An illness update will be reviewed with the parent at the time of pickup.

Please keep the attached Illness Chart in a handy place, so that it may be referred to quickly when your child is ill. Remember, many illnesses require that the child return to the Center with a doctor's statement. For example, your child's rash may be a side effect of a medication. This would require a doctor's statement prior to his/her return to the Center.

ILLNESS CHART*

| Illness: | May Return: |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Bronchitis | With doctor's statement |
| Chicken Pox | 24 hours after lesions have crusted |
| Conjunctivitis (pink eye) | 24 hours after start of treatment (if specifically drainage and tearing have stopped) |
| Croup | After illness has subsided |
| Diarrhea-Gastro Enteritis | 24 hours after last loose stool or after 1 normal bowel movement |
| Fever | 24 hours after temperature is normal |
| Hand/Foot/Mouth | With doctor's statement |
| Hepatitis A | At least 7 days after onset of jaundice |
| Impetigo | 24 hours after treatment has started |
| Influenza | 24 hours after symptoms have subsided |
| Lice | 24 hours after treatment has begun |
| Measles | At least 4 days after onset of rash |
| Mumps | 14 days after swelling begins |
| Pneumonia or Epiglottitis | Written note from physician (if due to H-Flu, Health Dept. must give order) |
| Pin Worms | After treatment is completed |
| Poison Ivy | After lesions have dried up |
| Rubella | At least 7 days and 24 hours after symptoms end |
| Roseola | After illness has subsided |
| Scabies | 24 hours after start of treatment |
| Step Throat | 48 hours after start of treatment |
| Bacterial (Spinal) Meningitis | When Health Dept. gives OK |
| Thrush | 24 hours after start of treatment |
| Whooping Cough | At least 7 days after therapy has started |

*Source: US Dept. of Health & Human Services

ADDITIONALLY: If your child experiences a side affect from his/her medication, we must have a doctor's note to this effect prior to your child returning to school.

MEDICATION POLICY:

Prescription Medicine:

- 1) Please hand prescription medicine to be given your child to either your child's teacher or the Director on duty. Please give instructions on how it should be stored (refrigerated or room temperature etc.).
- 2) Fill out the necessary information on the medicine form provided by the staff. The medication must be labeled with: child's name, prescription number, doctor's name and dosage information. All medication must be in its original container. Be sure to indicate if the medication requires refrigeration.
- 3) Each child must have his/her own prescription medication. You may not share medication with siblings, relatives or friends.

Over-the-counter medication:

Authorization from the child's physician is required in order for Uncle Sam's to dispense over-the-counter medicine. Please see the sample form attached. This policy is in place to ensure your child receives the proper medication and dosage.

- 4) Submit the Medication Authorization form to your child's doctor.
- 5) Please give the medication to your child's teacher or the Director on duty.
- 6) Fill out the necessary information on the medicine form provided by the staff. The medication must be labeled with: child's name, prescription number, doctor's name and dosage information. All medication must be in its original container with the child's name on the bottle and box. Be sure to indicate if the medication requires refrigeration.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

In the event of a medical emergency or of an accident, we shall contact the parents and the doctor of the child. If it is impossible to reach either and should emergency treatments be required, the child will be taken to the nearest medical center. Your authorization for the Center to contact your family physician and to take whatever emergency medical measures are deemed necessary is part of this agreement.

SECURITY

While we do have an open door policy for our parents, visitors are escorted at all times while in our facility and are not allowed into our center without identification. We also require our parents and staff to carry identification with them at all times. Only staff and enrolled families of Uncle Sam's Academy are given our entry codes. The door code is not to be shared with others outside the immediate family. Uncle Sam's periodically re-sets the door code as deemed necessary.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Each room has an emergency evacuation plan posted near the door showing two exit paths from the room.

FIRE

Uncle Sam's Academy will have a fire drill every month at various times of the day. They are viewed seriously, as if there were an actual fire, and all children are exited quickly from the building. We re-locate to our "safe zone" at the YWCA.

TORNADO

Uncle Sam's Academy will practice tornado drills each year. In the event of a tornado warning in which taking cover is advised, the Director will announce the alert.

EVACUATION OFF SITE

Uncle Sam's Academy will have two practice evacuation drills each year. In the event of emergency evacuation, the center will follow the directions of the Federal Emergency Plan. The Director will inform the staff if she is notified of a planned evacuation. Emergency personnel will supervise evacuation. If possible, parents will be called. Children will be released only to persons authorized for pickup under normal school operations. Children will be signed out on a record sheet when they are picked up. Children will be re-located to our "safe zone" at the YWCA

SHELTER IN PLACE

Uncle Sam's Academy will have two practice evacuation drills each year. We retreat to a high floor within the building that is known and has been authorized by DHS, GSA and the director as our shelter in place. In the event of emergency, the center will follow the directions of the Federal Emergency Plan. The Director will inform the staff if she is notified of a planned shelter in place exercise. Emergency personnel will supervise the relocation.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Uncle Sam's Academy will follow the directions of the Fire Department as to whether we need to evacuate and relocate.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

Uncle Sam's Academy is committed to working with families. We strongly encourage them to participate in every aspect of their child's program. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time. Our main focus is your child. If you have any concerns or questions, please immediately contact the Director. It is vitally important that you as parents/guardians communicate your needs and desires regarding your child's development openly and honestly with your child's teachers. You are encouraged to discuss any developmental milestones you have encountered and share any other information that may be appropriate. We in turn will keep you apprised of your child's developmental progress through our use of the Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP), the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire, the Early Language and Literacy checklist, oral language assessments, our skills packet, and the Bracken Basic Concept Skills.

Again, families are welcome at school. Parents are encouraged to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, favorite recipes, etc. Any involvement is valued and therefore encouraged. Families should feel free to come and eat lunch or spend time with their child.

Family Conferences - Parents are asked to come in every 4 months for a conference with their child's teacher. The center will close two times per year at 12:30 for preschoolers and 1:30 for infant toddlers in order to conduct confidential parent teacher conferences with the classroom staff. Information concerning this will be on the parents' bulletin board and in a letter from the classroom teacher. In the event your child's skills are not within typically developing norms, Uncle Sam's Academy reserves the right to ask for additional evaluations from outside agencies.

Home/School - Parents need to communicate pertinent information with the school. This should include such things as illnesses, change in sleeping, eating, teething, and so forth.

The Parent Information Area acts as our "communications center" for all parents enrolled. It is used to display menus, newspaper and magazine articles, certificates, messages, parenting classes, and information

directed to the parents. We offer a **parent resource** carousel where families can access information about support services in the community as well. Additionally, we have videos available for loan on a variety of subjects. Please talk with your child's teacher if you would like more information.

Family Mailboxes are assigned to each family at the time they enroll. Please check it regularly as we often put important announcements and information in them.

Information Sheets will be placed in your child's cubby on a daily basis for children under two and periodically for children two and over. It will let you know what activities took place and give any important reminders.

Center Newsletter Every two months the center will put out an informational newsletter. Newsletters will be available in the parent information area.

Concerns and Questions: If you have a concern or question please ask your child's teacher. If she is unable to answer your questions please see the Director. We welcome any comments and want to know if you have any concerns. Please feel free to call the Director at any time or to schedule an appointment with the teacher or directors. Your child is very important to us and we want you to feel good about the care we are providing.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Information relating to your child is confidential and will not be released unless a parent or legal guardian provides written authorization. An exception will be made in the event of suspected child abuse. Any such suspicion will be reported to the Director for immediate investigation and action with the appropriate authorities.

CONFLICT PROCEEDURE:

If a conflict should arise between you and your child's teacher, please try to resolve the matter with the teacher. If the matter needs further discussion and has not been resolved, please see the Director on duty to rectify the situation. If you feel the Director does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, feel free to contact the Director of Operations at 816-694-7485 to set up an appointment to review the matter. If you feel that the matter has still not been resolved, then you may contact our Child Care Licensing representative. (The name and number can be found on the Parent Information Board located by the front door.) Hopefully working as partners, we will be able to resolve any conflicts.

FEES:

Fees for your child are established by N2 Kids, Inc. along with the GSA Child Care Coordinator and 601 Federal Complex Child Care Board. You are asked to pay in advance. If tuition is more than two weeks behind you will be asked to remove your child from the center. Please talk with the directors if you experience financial difficulties or family emergencies. We do offer emergency assistance and tuition assistance two times a year. Parents are required to pay for all holidays, in-service days and absences.

Our center accepts credit/debit cards, money orders or cash weekly. Checks are accepted on a monthly basis only. Additionally, families who pay a month in advance by the first Monday of the month are entitled to a discount from the monthly tuition if paying by check and a smaller discount if paying monthly by credit/debit card. Uncle Sam's Academy does offer a multiple child discount for three or more enrolled children. Please refer to your tuition agreement for more specific information regarding our fees and discounts.

One week of vacation credit at 75% the regular rate per child per year is available to all toilet trained preschoolers. All vacation credit must be submitted in writing at least three weeks in advance of the proposed vacation in order to receive credit. Toilet trained preschool families who choose to take vacation from the second week in June through the third week in August can receive a full week of vacation credit if taken during this time period. Vacation credit is not available for infants, toddlers or non toilet trained preschoolers. Vacation credit will not be given after the fact.

Our facility reserves the right to increase our tuition yearly.

ADDITIONAL FEES:

Uncle Sam's charges the following additional fees:

- Enrollment and book fees - \$27 for one child \$35 for two or more children
- Yearly activity fee - \$20 for infants and toddlers \$40 for children 2 and
- Tuition received after Tuesday of the current week - \$20
- Extra diapers- \$2 each Wipes- \$5 a box
- Care given after 6pm - \$1 for every minute
- Returned checks - \$35
- Outstanding accounts carried over to the next calendar year - \$50

FACILITY CLOSINGS:

Uncle Sam's Academy observes the following holidays during the year:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

All of our staff are required to obtain 24 hours of in-service training per year. New employees are required to have 45 hours of training within the first year of employment. Uncle Sam's reserves the right to close at least **two days per year** for staff training and in-service. Parents are required to pay for this day. The center will give a three-month notice prior to this date. We close at 5:30 for the month of July, the day before Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. We reserve the right to close early the day after Thanksgiving. We also reserve the right to close 45 minutes early once a month for staff meetings. A complete list of all closings and early dismissals is provided in the month of December for the following year.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips and nature walks are considered an important part of the educational program and will be taken periodically to nearby places. The Center will provide the same adequate responsible adult supervision for these excursions as is provided children while in attendance at the Center. Your permission for your child to participate in such excursions is part of the agreement.

You will be asked to sign an additional permission slip for all field trips requiring transportation to and from the Center. Parents are always welcome to come along on any field trip.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND PUBLICITY:

Photographs of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child to be used without compensation is part of this agreement.

BABYSITTING OR CHILDCARE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

Uncle Sam's Academy is aware that some of the teachers have part time occupations away from the school. In particular, some teachers provide babysitting or childcare during evenings or weekends off school premises. Uncle Sam's Academy neither authorizes, approves or sanctions teachers who babysitting or provide childcare outside of the center. Uncle Sam's Academy does not encourage or discourage babysitting or childcare activities away from the school and accepts no responsibility or liability for such services.

Accordingly, teachers of Uncle Sam's Academy are **expressly prohibited from transporting children from Uncle Sam's Academy** to their homes, or any other destination, for babysitting, childcare or any other reason **without the express written consent of the child's parents.**

The consent must state permission for the following:

- 1) Said teacher has permission to take said child with him/her
- 2) The parent understands that the teacher is not on work time
- 3) The parent accepts full responsibility for this activity and holds Uncle Sam's Academy harmless for any accident or injury to the child or staff person.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Our state requires that all members of childcare institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the State, any and all cases of abuse. The Center is, therefore, obligated to report to the State any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. A copy of the state childcare licensing rules and regulations is available in the Director's office for your review. If you would like to see a copy please ask the director or assistant director.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

All staff employed by Uncle Sam's Academy have passed a thorough local, state, and federal background check. This includes a child abuse and neglect background screening. Our staff are highly trained, qualified individuals with experience and education in the field of early childhood development. They are required to attend training on the following topics as part of their employment with our company: child abuse and neglect, CPR/first aid, appropriate discipline for children, signs and symptoms of illness, SIDS, using assessments, cultural sensitivity, work place safety, and conferencing with families. All staff are required to have at least 24 hours in early childhood education. Lead teachers must hold at least an associates degree in the field of early childhood education. The center director has a bachelor in the early childhood field and the Director of Operations holds a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education.

PRIOR TO ATTENDANCE

State regulations require us to maintain a medical record on each child at the Center. Your child will need to have the following documents on or before the child's first day of attendance in our program. In addition, a yearly physical examination will be required for each child.

Physical (first) and each year thereafter

Shot Record annually

Enrollment forms completed including Tuition Agreement and consents

Enrollment fee paid

Within the child's first year in our program you will also be required to provide the following reports:

Dental exam *

Eye exam *

Hearing exam *

*If needed, we can assist families with funding resources

CONCLUSION:

This parent handbook has been made available to inform you of the policies and procedures of Uncle Sam's Academy. It is your responsibility to read and act in compliance with the procedures, as outlined herein. Any suggestions, concerns, or comments are greatly appreciated by the administration.

In closing, it is our belief that by staying abreast of current development in the field of early childhood education, as well as meeting the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Kansas Quality Rating System criteria, we will be able to maintain our commitment to excellence with regards to quality early education services for you and your child.