



**CREATIVE ACADEMY**  
EARLY LEARNING CENTER

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

**DIRECTOR:** Kasey Sander  
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**CHIEF OF OPERATIONS:** Brooke King, Med.  
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## **MISSION**

Creative Academy is a place where:

- Children are valued for their unique abilities, imagination, ability to learn through play and determination to accomplish goals.
- Families are valued for their love and commitment, culture and traditions, opinions and ideas, and dreams for their child.
- Teachers are valued for their knowledge and skills, patience, willingness to collaborate, and their overall love and dedication for children.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Creative Academy believes in providing a safe and inviting learning environment that promotes independence and self-confidence by offering high quality services to children with and without disabilities. Children need positive guidance, appropriate curriculum and caring knowledgeable teachers to promote development during a delicate time in their life in which they develop competency, independent thinking, and problem solving skills. Through individualized child goals, small class sizes and highly qualified teachers, we offer an early childhood program that meets the needs of all children.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Creative Academy is open from **6:30am-5:30pm** Monday thru Friday year round with the exception of holidays and teacher workdays. Children may attend up to **10 hours** per day.

## **AGES SERVED/RATIOS**

6 weeks to age 5.

## **CENTER CLOSINGS**

### **Holidays:**

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4<sup>th</sup> (if the 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, the center will close either the Friday before or the Monday after)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving and the following Friday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

The center will close early on designated days provided to families at enrolment for the current year.

## **ABSENCES**

In case of your child's absence, please notify your child's teacher or available center staff by 9:00am communicating via Pro Care App or calling the center phone at 919-580-0610. Classroom extensions are as follows:

**Infants:** 3803

**Toddlers:** 3808

**Preschool:** 3804

**Pre-K:** 3805

You are still responsible for tuition payment for these days and payment is due with your regularly scheduled payment.

- If a child is absent for 8 days or more in a month, they may be withdrawn from the center. Director must be notified of prolonged absenteeism.
- If a child is absent for 2 consecutive days, the parent must call to inform the staff when the child will return.
- If a child is out for 3 consecutive days due to illness, parent must provide a doctor's note upon the child returning.
- Parents must notify the staff if a child will be out for a week or more due to vacation.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment is open to children 6 weeks to 5 years of age. Prior to enrollment the parent/guardian of the child will be invited in for a center tour. The parent will then come in for a meeting with the director or assistant director to fill out an enrollment packet and review the parent handbook. To allow for a smooth transition, parents may also have their child visit the classroom to interact with already enrolled children and the teachers prior to their first day.

Parents must complete the application and enrollment packet prior to the child starting. A **non-refundable \$40 registration fee** and all required forms must be returned before a child can attend Creative Academy.

- Physical Form Signed by a Physician
- Child Immunization Record
- Safe and Arrival Departure Procedures
- Discipline Policy
- Receipt of Child Care Laws
- Parent Handbook Agreement

- Time Contract
- Activity Authorization
- Video Recording Acknowledgement
- Photo Permission
- Website/Facebook Permission
- Absence Policy
- Tuition Policy
- USDA/CACFP Enrollment and Eligibility Application
- Safe Sleep Policy (Infants Only)
- Feeding Schedule (Infants Only)
- Creative Curriculum Family Information Form (Infants/Toddlers Only)
- Child Specific Information (Preschool/Pre-K Only)
- Developmental Assessment Consent Form (Preschool/Pre-K Only)
- Field Trip Procedures (Preschool/Pre-K Only)
- Emergency Preparedness Response Plan

If a parent inquires for services Creative Academy is unable to provide, families will be given contact information for the Wayne County Partnership for Children, the local child care resource and referral agency.

Creative Academy is a full time care based center. Part time care may be offered if space is available. If at any time another family comes to enroll a child at full time, the parents of the last child enrolled as part time in that classroom must choose to switch to full time care or withdraw their child at that time. If the parent chooses to switch to full time, the new payment will begin the following week. If they choose to withdraw, they will be allowed to stay until the week's end of the current week and a termination of care form must be completed. Part time care will be offered as follows: 4 ½ hours per day (children are not permitted to arrive after 2pm) or 3 days per week full day (not to exceed 10 hours per day). **DSS ½ time and ¼ time care are not permitted.**

### **WAITING LIST**

If space is not available at time of inquiry, the parent may request to put their child on the waiting list. An application must be completed and turned in, in order for a child to be placed on the waiting list. A valid phone number must be provided. Waiting list applications will be held for 6 months. If a slot has not become available, the parent will be called to find out if they have found other care arrangements or if the parent wishes to keep their child on the waiting list for another 6 months. Families are notified by phone as soon as an opening is available.

### **INFANT SLOT HOLDING POLICY**

Slots for unborn infants may be held up to 4 months in advance and require a non-

refundable holding fee of \$250. **The first week of care will be credited from the \$250 holding fee. The \$40 enrollment fee must be paid by the child's start date.** The holding fee will be forfeited if the child does not enroll.

## **CHILD IMMUNIZATIONS AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

A physical form must be completed and signed by a licensed physician and immunization records must be current. Creative Academy will provide a blank physical form to present to the pediatrician if requested by the parent. Both the physical form and immunization record must be turned in before a child can attend Creative Academy.

Immunizations must be updated and given to the center when they occur.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### Closings/Delays

- For closing information, families will receive a ProCare notification via email or text. Notifications will occur by 10:00pm the night before a possible closing. If the closing is unable to be determined the night before, a ProCare notification will be sent out by 6:00am the morning of.

### Delays

If the center determines that a delay is necessary, parents will be notified via the ProCare App. Creative Academy will follow the delay time schedule below unless otherwise indicated in the ProCare message sent:

- The center will open at 8:30am for early care. These classrooms will be appropriately blended ages until 9:30am. Parents must call in or have your child arrive by 9:45am in order to receive lunch. Children must arrive by 10:30am to attend for the remainder of the day..

### Early Dismissal

- Parents will be notified by ProCare App or telephone to pick up their child up if Creative Academy closes during the day.

## **LICENSING**

The Creative Academy is licensed through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. We strive to exceed all of the licensing requirements and high standards as laid out by the State of North Carolina and currently hold a 5 Star Child Care License.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Creative Academy requires that all information about the children enrolled and other family information is kept confidential. We ask that any information of other children or staff obtained or gathered by the parent/guardian at the center be kept confidential.

Before any information is released by the center to an outside person, release form has to be signed by the parent/guardian.

## **INSURANCE**

Skill Creations, Inc. has professional, general and auto liability insurance. Insurance guidelines are available upon request.

## **CHANGE OF POLICY**

The child care facility reserves the right to change any policy if/when the need arises. Parents and staff will be notified in writing of any changes.

# **TUITION/FEE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **TUITION**

Preschool/Pre-K - \$190/week

Toddler- \$195/week

Waddler - \$200/week

Infant- \$205/week.

**Tuition payments are due no later than 5:30pm Tuesday of each week or 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month for families paying monthly/DSS.** Payments must be paid through the ProCare App either by credit card or bank draft. Payments may be paid in full for the month, bi-weekly or weekly. Cash payments must be received in person and there will be a \$15 service charge added to the child's bill at the end of the month for use of cash. Any payment received after 5:30pm on Tuesday will be considered late.

As we are prepared each day for your child and to assure that we provide the highest quality to your child, we must maintain our financial status each month. Therefore, tuition must be paid even if your child is absent.

Creative Academy will close early several days throughout the year to allow for teacher training/preparation and center cleaning. This allows Creative Academy to maintain the highest quality program for you child. Tuition is to be paid in full when these days occur.

## **FEES**

Initial Fee: \$40

Annual Technology Fee: \$40

Re-Enrollment Fee: \$100

Summer Holding Fee - \$100/week

Infant Holding Fee - \$250

## **DISCOUNTS**

Auto Pay Discount (APD) - \$20

ACH Account Discount - \$5

Sibling Discount - \$5

Late Tuition Fee –If your child is out for any reason on Monday or Tuesday, tuition must still be paid by Tuesday through ProCare. If tuition has not been paid by Friday of the current week, your child will not be able to return until tuition has been paid. If tuition is not paid by the next Friday, the child may be withdrawn from the program. *DSS – If the parent fee is not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child will not be able to return until payment has been paid.*

Late Pick-Up Fee - **\$2 per minute beyond child’s scheduled hours or \$5 at closing, 5:30pm.** Creative Academy will keep a log of child’s time spent beyond their regular scheduled hours and will give an invoice to the parent. The fee must be paid the day stated on the invoice. If the fee has not been paid by the due date, the child will not be able to return until payment is made. *If your child is not picked up within 1 ½ hours of regularly scheduled time/center closing without notification, Creative Academy may report concerns of neglect to the local DSS agency or contact the police department.*

Cash Payment Fee - All tuition payments must be paid through the ProCare App. If a parent chooses to pay cash, there will be a \$15 service charge applied to the child’s account at the end of the month. If cash is used as payment method for siblings, both siblings will be charged the \$15 fee, for a family total of \$30.

DSS Extended Day Prorated Fee - **\$9.00/half hour or \$90 per week.** If a child is picked up in between a half hour time frame, there will be a charge for the half hour in which it falls. Creative Academy must be notified prior to regularly scheduled pick-up time for DSS hours if a child needs extended care for the day or the fee will be **\$2 per minute.** The \$8.50 fee will only apply if the parent provides written documentation of needed extended care that coincides with the DSS voucher, otherwise the fee is \$2 per minute. Phone calls will not be accepted.

Private Pay Part-Time Care- **Infants - \$155/wk, Waddlers - \$150/wk, Toddler - \$145/wk, Preschool/Pre-K \$140/wk. This care is only offered if space is available.** If another family comes to enroll for a full time slot, the parent must choose to change to full time or withdraw their child at that time. DSS ½ time and ¼ time care are not permitted. Parents must pay the difference to Creative Academy if ½ or ¼ time is approved for DSS.

## **CONTRACT TIMES**

The center recommends that each child spend a minimum of 6 hours a day in care but not to exceed **10 hours.** The number of hours and time is recommended to ensure the children receive a substantial amount of time to learn and be successful with the pro-social skills that are taught. This also allows the center to appropriately schedule staff.



At enrollment and annual thereafter, you will be asked to complete a **Time Contract**. If your contract times need to be adjusted, please notify the director in writing or by phone at least 2 weeks in advance.

### **VACATION TIME**

Each family is allowed **one week** of vacation time per year (September-August) during which tuition will not be charged. Vacation can be taken anytime during the calendar year after 3 months of attendance and with a 2 week advance notice in writing. To request the use of your vacation time, please fill out the **Vacation Request Form** and return to the director or assistant director. If 2 weeks written notice is not given, you will be responsible for full payment unless permission from the center director is granted. Vacation must be used as one full week where a child is not in attendance. Vacation cannot be carried over to the next year if not used.

### **HOLIDAY CARE**

Holiday Care- During the weeks around Christmas and Easter, Creative Academy will operate on regular hours but Creative Academy will request the times each child will need care during this time frame to schedule staff accordingly.

### **PAYMENT SCHEDULES**

Child care tuition payments are due the first day of the week prior to services rendered. If a parent is paying monthly, payment is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month prior to services being rendered. Debit/Credit charges cannot be conducted on site. All payments must be completed through the ProCare App.

Late fees and extended day fees shall be paid according to the date on the invoice provided by the center after services have been rendered. Invoices appear in the child's ProCare App.

Weekly tuition is charged whether or not the child attends or if the center is closed due to weather, a teacher workday or holiday. Any questions about tuition payments should be addressed to the director.

We reserve the right to change our tuition and registration fees at any time. If this should occur, proper written notification will be given to you at least 30 days prior.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Creative Academy has the right to terminate the enrollment agreement with the Parent/Guardian and cancel child care arrangements without giving any notice in the event the financial terms and conditions are breached and/or payments are not made on time.

The child's enrollment may be terminated immediately if the child's behavior threatens the physical or emotional wellbeing of the children in the center or the staff. The child's enrollment may be terminated immediately if the parent/guardian is verbally or physically abusive or threatening to the staff.

The child's enrollment may be terminated if the parent/guardian or child continually disregards the programs general policies and procedures.

If you wish to withdraw your child from Creative Academy, please fill out the **Termination of Care Form** and return to the director or assistant director. We ask that a 2 week notice be given if possible. Once a Termination of Care form is turned in, payment for remainder of care must be paid prior to service. If payment is not made on time, the child will be unable to attend for the remaining days. The late fee policy will be omitted once a termination of care has been made for a child, therefore payment must be made for tuition before a child can re-enter the building.

Upon withdrawal, you will be unable to re-enroll your child for **60** days. There will be a **\$100** fee charged to re-enroll your child if you wish to return.

### **SUSPENSION OF CARE/RE-ENROLLMENT**

If a parent chooses to withdraw their child for any length of time (including the summer months) and plans to re-enroll the child at a later date, the following must be completed:

- Complete the Suspension of Care form.

Option 1:

- **Pay part time weekly rate and attend up to 3 full days. *This option is based on enrollment and may not be offered if enrollment is high.***

Option 2:

- **\$100 weekly holding fee and child will not attend.** \$100 re-enrollment fee will be charged upon return and a new enrollment packet must be completed. ***This option is based on enrollment and if the slots begin to fill up based on new enrollment, parent will be called to return child to care or their slot will be forfeited to another child and holding fees previously paid will not be returned to parent.***

Option 3

- Children who are withdrawn and plan to return at a later date without using the previous 2 options will not be guaranteed a slot and will have to pay a \$100 re-enrollment fee upon return.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## ILLNESS POLICY

According to NC Division of Child Development and Early Education in conjunction with the Health Department regulations, children will not be allowed to attend the center if they exhibit the following symptoms. Please make arrangements to keep your child home if they have a (n):

- **Fahrenheit temperature of 101 degrees or over, until 24 hours fever free (even with doctors note).**
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), fever free for 24 hours and symptoms improving.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has started.
- Two or more episodes of vomiting within a 12 hour period, for 24 hours from time of last episode.
- A red eye with white or yellow discharge until a doctor's note has been presented.
- Scabies or lice, until treatment. Must provide a doctor's note of treatment and date to return.
- Chicken pox or rash suggestive of chicken pox.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional states that the child is not infectious.
- Impetigo and Hand Foot Mouth, fever free for 24 hours and no open sores.
- Pertussis, until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment.
- Hepatitis A virus infection, until one week after onset of illness or jaundice.
- Sudden onset of diarrhea characterized by an increased number of bowel movements (**2 loose bowel movements**) compared to the child's normal pattern and with increased stool water, for 24 hours after last episode.
- When a physician or other health professional issues a written order that the child be separated from other children.

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, they must be symptom free for 24 hours before they can return to care. If your child has a fever, he/she may not return until they have been fever free for a full 24 hours without the aid of medication. If your child has been prescribed medication due to a contagious illness/virus, they may not return to childcare until 24 hours after their first dose.

No child shall be permitted to attend Creative Academy if there is evidence of an infectious or contagious illness. Refer to **Appendix A from Caring for Our Children** that was provided at enrollment. If a child has a contagious disease and is being treated by a doctor, the child may not return until Creative Academy has received a doctor's note of when a child may return. Please notify the center of any contagious illnesses as we will inform our parents and staff of the symptoms. In the event of your child's absence, please notify the center by 9:00am.

In the event of a contagious illness outbreak or a contagious illness that is prominent in the local community, temporary sick policy guidelines may be put in place. Classrooms with infected individuals may be shut down for 1 day for sanitizing if needed.

If your child exhibits any of the above symptoms while in our care, you will be called immediately so that you can make arrangements for your child to be picked up. Your child will be placed in the sick area set forth by the center staff to reduce any spread of illness among children. **Your child shall be picked up within 1 hour of receiving a phone call from the center. After 1 hour, there will be a \$5/minute charge.** If your child is not picked up within 1 ½ hours, Creative Academy may report concerns of neglect to the local DSS agency.

To return to the center after an illness, the fever must be gone for 24 hours (without medication); the confinement time for the disease must have passed. We reserve the right to deny a child care based on the safety of all other children in attendance. When a child is sick, parents need to be honest with the provider to avoid spreading germs to other children in care.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness/disease (chicken pox, etc.) while the child has been attending our center, information providing symptoms about the illness/disease will be posted at the sign-in table.

If your child has a life threatening emergency, 911 will be contacted, first aid will be initiated and you will be notified. If your child is transported by ambulance, Creative Academy staff will accompany your child until you arrive. If your child has an urgent but NOT life threatening emergency, first aid will be initiated and you will be contacted to transport your child for care.

A sick area is set up if a child becomes sick. Parents will be notified by telephone and the child shall be placed in this area while waiting for a parent to arrive.

## **MEDICATION**

Trained staff will administer medication with a signed medical release form providing the center with permission to administer medicine. Over the counter medications will not be permitted at Creative Academy unless instructed by a doctor for use at Creative Academy. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet with the exception of inhalers and other emergency medication. If a child refuses medication on a regular basis, Creative Academy will not be able to continue administering the medication. The Creative Academy director must be notified if a child has specific medical needs at enrollment to set up any nursing assistance that may be needed. If your child has a severe allergy, asthma, diabetes or seizures, please complete the appropriate action plan in case an episode occurs at Creative Academy. Please notify Creative Academy of any medication taken at home.

- Sunscreen/Lotion/Ointments – Containers must be labeled with the child's name and the Sunscreen/Lotion Medication Administration form must be completed and signed prior to administering medication. Permission is valid for 1 year. Spray sunscreens must be used for ages 1 or older. Creams may be used for infants.
- Chronic Conditions (asthma/allergies) – Containers must have the prescription label with the child's name, dosage and expiration date or in the original bottle with dosage directions and expiration date listed (i.e. – Benadryl for hives, inhaler for asthma, epi-pen for allergic reaction). A Chronic Medication Administration form must be completed and signed prior to administering medication. Permission is valid for 6 months
- Prescriptions – Containers must have the prescription label with the child's name, dosage and expiration date. A Prescription Medication Administration form must be completed and signed by the parent, and a Creative Academy Physician Authorization form must be signed by the physician. Both documents must be turned in to the director prior to medication administration. Faxed copies will not be accepted. Permission is valid for the dates listed on the prescription label.

## **INCIDENT REPORTS**

Shall be completed on each child that injures himself/herself while on the Creative Academy premises. Parents will be notified upon child's daily departure and shall sign the incident form. If an injury needs medical attention, the parent will be contacted immediately by phone and asked to sign the incident report upon arrival. If a child enters the building with a mark on his/her body or any marks of unknown origin appear during the course of the day, the teacher shall document the information on the Child Check Log.

## **USDA FOOD PROGRAM MEALS / NUTRITION**

The Creative Academy participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program ensuring that our children are receiving healthy, well-rounded meals.

All parents/guardians shall complete a Cape Fear Enrollment Form and Eligibility Application at enrollment.

The children are served all food choices offered on the menu but are not required to eat everything on their plates. Children will be encouraged to try new foods but will not be forced to eat them. If your child has a food allergy or medical need, we will work with the family to make sure nutrition and sanitation guidelines are being followed.

Creative Academy offers Parent's Choice Milk Based with Iron formula to infants and iron fortified cereal, fruits and vegetables and meats/meat alternates. Parents shall complete the Cape Fear Provision for Breast Milk or Formula and Baby Food form at

enrollment. Bottles prepared at home must be labeled by the parent with the child's name and date each day.

If you choose to opt out of the food provided by the center, an opt out form must be signed and dated at enrollment. Opting out means that the center will not provide any food or drink so long as the child's parent or guardian provides all meals, snacks, and drinks scheduled to be served at the center's designated times. All meals provided shall have the child's name and date. Please refer to the recommended meal patterns when preparing meals at home:

**Breakfast:** 1 grain, 1 fruit/vegetable, milk

**Lunch:** 1 grain, 1 meat, 1 fruit, 1 vegetable, milk

**Snack:** 1 grain and 1 fruit/vegetable OR 1 grain and milk

Breakfast, lunch and snack are prepared on site.

Menus are posted in the kitchen and in the main hallway. Copies will be sent home at parent's request.

Meals/drinks prepared at home and sent to school must be in a sealed container and labeled with the child's name and date.

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are served to all children in attendance. The schedule is as follows:

- Breakfast: Children must arrive by 8:15am. If your child will not arrive by that time, they need to be fed breakfast at home. Breakfast is served at 8:30am.
- Lunch: Children must arrive by 9:00am to be counted for lunch. If your child will be late, the center staff must be notified by 9:00am so the child may be counted for lunch.
- Snack: Snack is served at 2:30pm.

## **ALLERGIES/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS**

Creative Academy must be notified of any allergies at enrollment. An allergy action plan shall be completed and kept with the child's application and in the classroom.

If a child requires specific medication for allergy/asthma needs, please refer to the medication section of this handbook for instructions.

If a child has a specific dietary need and cannot consume certain foods provided through prepared meals, please notify the director so special accommodations can be made, if necessary. Parents must provide a substitute for any food item on the menu that a child may not consume. If the meal needs specific preparation at the center, this needs to be

specified at enrollment. A physician's note will be required for any dietary supplements given at Creative Academy (i.e. – milk products).

Creative Academy serves peanut butter as part of the lunch menu. If you prefer for your child not to receive this product or product containing peanuts, this shall be indicated to administration at enrollment and on the child's application.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

During the early years, children are still learning the expectations that adults have for them. We believe in taking the time to understand why a behavior has occurred and to teach children the appropriate choices they can make. Our teaching staff utilizes a guidance philosophy in which we use the methods of redirection, modeling, positive rewards and praise. We also guide children's appropriate behavior by using positive discipline language (i.e. – "Remember to use your walking feet" vs. "Don't run.") Punitive discipline is prohibited. Time-out is used when appropriate. Teachers use it as a teaching moment by allowing children to reflect on their behavior in a quiet area and then talking through solutions to the problem. Time out may be used for the number of minutes of the child's prospective age. Please refer to the Creative Academy Discipline and Behavior Management Policy for more specific information.

### **Biting**

- If a child bites another child 2 times in one day, the parent will be notified and the child will need to be picked up from school.
- If a child bites 3 times within a week, the parent will be contacted and the child will need to be picked up from school. Parents will be provided strategies for preventing biting behavior.
- If another child bites/a child is bitten, the teacher will document the incident on an incident report form for each child involved.
- If the skin is broken due to a human bite, an incident report will be completed on both children and parents shall be notified by phone.
- If a child is bitten 3 times within a month, the COO will be notified immediately by the teacher.

### **Scratching**

- All children entering Creative Academy shall have clipped fingernails.
- If teacher observes that a child's fingernails are not clipped upon arrival, the child will not be allowed to enter the classroom.

## **Aggressive Behaviors**

- If aggressive behavioral patterns emerge (i.e. – biting, hitting, scratching, pushing, pulling hair) that cause harm to other children and continue with no improvement for up to 2 weeks with behavioral intervention from teachers and Creative Academy administrative staff, then a parent teacher conference will be arranged between the parent, teachers and Creative Academy Director and a referral may be made to the Child Development Services Agency or the Wayne County Public Schools.
- If aggressive behaviors continue for up to 3 weeks with intervention, the child may be withdrawn from Creative Academy.

## **SUPERVISION**

### **Ratios By Age**

- 4-5 years is 1:13/Max class size is 19
- 3-4 years is 1:10/Max class size is 16.
- 2-3 years is 1:9/Max class size is 15.
- 1-2 years is 1:6/Max class size is 12.
- 0-12 months is 1:5/Max class size is 10.

Teachers shall have visual supervision of all children at all times. Teachers shall monitor the playground by walking around and visually supervising and interacting with children at all times. Ratios shall be maintained at all times. When a staff steps out of the classroom for a break, another staff shall step in to maintain the appropriate ratio at all times.

All Creative Academy classrooms are equipped with video surveillance cameras for use by administrators and teachers to aid in supervision and observation for teaching purposes. Video footage is not permitted to be viewed by any persons not employed by Creative Academy or Skill Creations, Inc.

### **Age Groups**

- Age groups may mix in the first hour and the last hour of the operating day.
- Ratios for the youngest child in the group shall be maintained.



## INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY

All infant room staff have participated in SIDS training and are certified in child/ infant CPR and First Aid.

- Babies sleep on their back for naps and at night.
- The back sleep position for babies pertains to all healthy babies unless medically warranted otherwise.
  - If a parent wishes for their baby to be placed on their tummy to sleep while at the center, a notice must be written and signed by a physician stating that it is medically necessary. Parent permission forms will not be accepted for any age infant.
- The crib provided is safety approved.
- Each baby has their own designated crib or mat.
- Each babies crib sheet is washed each day.
- The crib mattress is firm and 2 inches thick.
- Blankets, toys, stuffed animals, baby bags, pillows and excess bedding are removed from the crib/mat while a baby is asleep.
- Parents may provide a store bought Safe Sleep Sack to be used by the baby while sleeping. Sleep Sacks will not be provided by Creative Academy and no other blankets will be permitted.
- The infant room temperature is controlled by its own system and stays at a comfortable 68-72 degrees F.
- No secondhand cigarette, cigar or pipe tobacco smoke is allowed around babies. Creative Academy is a smoke free facility. Staff who smoke on breaks off-site shall wear a “smoke shirt” while smoking and remove before re-entering infant classroom.
- Sleeping babies are monitored while napping.
- Supervised “tummy time” is provided when the infant is awake.

## SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Each family shall receive the Safe Arrival and Departure Procedures statement. These procedures must be followed at all times for all children’s safety.

Children must be signed in and signed out of their classroom each day through the ProCare App or on touch screen in the foyer. **Children must arrive by 10:00am in order to attend the center for the remainder of the day.** Children may arrive late if attending a doctor’s appointment, but parent must call the center by **9am** to notify staff of the doctor’s appointment and time of arrival or the child will not be able to attend. Children taken out of care during the day must return no later than 2:30pm to be able to attend for the remainder of the day. **If returning after 2:30pm, Creative Academy staff must be notified and a doctor’s note must be presented upon return.**

Children will only be allowed to leave the premises with those specified as ones who may pick-up the child. Driver's license must be shown at time of pick-up to verify the person is on the pick-up list before a child may leave.

**For safety and liability reasons, all children under the age of 18 must not be left unattended in a car on Creative Academy property at any time.**

The front door will be unlocked between 8:00am-8:30am for drop-off and between 2:00 and 2:30 for pick-up. The side door should be used by parents for arrival and departure between the hours of 6:30am-8:00am and 2:30pm and 5:30pm. Each family will be given an access code for the Creative Academy side door to be granted entrance at any time. This code will also be used to sign the child in and out on the touch pad. This code is not to be shared with anyone except immediate family. All other persons dropping off or picking a child up must use the front entrance and the child will be signed out by Creative Academy staff.

## **TOILETING/DIAPERING**

Preschool/Pre-K and toddler children have access to a child sized bathroom throughout the day.

Creative Academy will work with families to help children become potty trained. If a child is not toilet trained, parents must provide pull-ups/diapers and baby wipes that are labeled with the child's name.

If a child is potty training, parents shall provide **side Velcro pull-ups** for easy disposal. This will allow the child to keep his clothes on and slide another pull-up on without calling attention from other children in the bathroom.

Parents will be informed of a child's diapering schedule on a daily basis. Their diapering will be charted on a diapering flow chart. Parents may view this record at any time.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

All early childhood and education professionals are mandatory reporters of abuse and, by law, required to report observations, conversations, suspicions, of any child maltreatment, any repeated signs of abuse or neglect, and any other information that leads to the belief that a child is being mistreated. Failure to report is illegal. All information must be recorded, dated, signed and reported to the Creative Academy Director. The Director will make the report to Wayne County Social Services.

Staff will be provided with child abuse and neglect as well as Shaken Baby Syndrome training and all staff will review the Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma policy.

No physical discipline from staff or parents is allowed on Creative Academy premises including: the child being left alone, pinched, punched, shaken, struck with any object, bitten, or spanked. Staff and parents shall not discipline children by denial of food, by forced napping, for a toileting accident, or with subjection to derogatory remarks about themselves or their family, abusive or profane language, yelling and screaming, or threats of physical punishment.

The consequences for parent/guardians using inappropriate discipline on Creative Academy premises are as follows:

- Any parent/guardian that uses physical punishment will be reported to Wayne County Department of Social Services.
- Any parent/guardian who uses other inappropriate discipline will have a conference with the Creative Academy director, who will discuss alternative techniques for disciplining their child and offer outside resources if necessary.

Parents are also obligated to report abuse or neglect if witnessed. The Wayne County Department of Social Services Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline is (919) 705-1774. For questions concerning child abuse prevention, please call 1-800-CHILDREN.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Every family has the right to express their opinions and concerns regarding all aspects of the program. We encourage parents to be open about their concerns as we are dedicated to providing a high quality of care. The following procedure is to be followed in addressing a concern or grievance by the parent/family:

- 1) Concerns regarding the program or services provided should first be discussed and resolution sought among the persons involved.
- 2) If not resolved, the concern should be brought to the attention of the Creative Academy Director. This may be done informally by phone (919) 735-5826 or in person or formally in a written statement.
- 3) The Creative Academy Director will respond to any concerns or grievances brought to her attention. The director shall respond to the parent that made the written complaint within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.

- 4) If the parent is not satisfied with the response given to them by the Creative Academy Director, the letter of complaint shall be sent to the Child Development Division COO of Skill Creations, Inc.
- 5) The COO shall respond to the parent within 24 hours of receiving the complaint.
- 6) If the parent is not satisfied with the response, they may send the written complaint to the CEO of Skill Creations, Inc.

NC Division of Child Development may be contacted if the issue is not resolved. If a complaint that is able to be resolved by Creative Academy or Skill Creations, Inc. is initiated by a parent to the NC Division of Child Development without following the steps listed above, the child may be withdrawn from the program. These types of complaints do not include possible abuse or neglect.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

If a child is being transported on the Creative Academy Bus, a signed Permission to Transport form must be on file and car seat provided by parent. Children under the age of 3 shall not be transported by Creative Academy at any time.

Wayne County Public Schools/Creative Academy contracted transportation for developmental day students (if offered during school year)

- Parents must sign the Permission to Transport Daily, Transportation Safe Arrival and Departure Procedures and Transportation Policies for Parents.
- Parent/guardian must accompany the child to the bus and be at the drop off site when the child returns. No child shall be left unattended at any time.
- If the parent/guardian is not at the drop-off site, the child will be taken back to the center. If it is an early release day, the \$1 per minute charge will begin at 2:30pm.
- The bus monitor will supervise children during transportation, sign them in and out, and accompany them to and from their classrooms. There will be 1 bus monitor for every 6 children being transported.
- The bus driver must have a clean driving record and must be on Skill Creations, Inc. approved driving list.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESPONSE PLAN**

Creative Academy has an emergency preparedness response plan in place for all emergencies that could possibly arise at the center. This plan is mandated and monitored by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education. The plan is provided and discussed with the parent at enrollment. As part of the plan, emergency lock down and shelter in place drills are conducted quarterly.

## EMERGENCY LOCK DOWN

A lock down may be initiated if:

- An on-site situation is deemed threatening by the Disaster Chief (director/assistant director), 911 will be called immediately.
- The center is notified of an off-site threatening situation that is located near the center.

Lock down procedure:

- A lock down shall be indicated by a verbal signal via intercom to all classrooms from the Disaster Chief: "Monkeys Huddle Close"
- Teachers shall immediately lock all of their doors, turn the lights off and close the blinds.
- Teachers shall move children to the corner of the room farthest away from the door and windows.
- After children are safely placed in the designated area, the teacher shall place a green or red card in the door window. Red designating distress, green designating all safe.
- Teachers and children shall stay in the safe place until the all clear is given by the Disaster Chief.
- **Parents shall not be permitted to pick up their child during a lock down.** Doors to the center shall be locked and no one is to enter or exit the building until the all clear has been given.

## SHELTER IN PLACE

A shelter in place may be initiated if:

- An on-site situation is deemed threatening by the Disaster Chief (director/assistant director), 911 will be called immediately.
- An on-site threatening situation that would place children in harm by staying in their designated classrooms.

Shelter in place procedure:

- A shelter in place shall be indicated by a verbal signal via phone or in person to all classrooms from the Disaster Chief (i.e. – director or assistant director): "Monkeys Move."
- Teachers shall collect the attendance check-off lists and move children to the designated area (i.e. – bathroom, kitchen)
- Doors shall be closed and clocked.
- If needed, place plastic bags around the seal of the door and tape with duct tape.
- Teachers and children shall remain in the safe place until the director or assistant director have given the all clear.
- **Parents shall not be permitted to pick up their child during a shelter in place.** Doors to the center shall be locked and no one is to enter or exit the building until the all clear has been given.

## **AQUATIC ACTIVITIES**

All aquatic activities shall be approved by the Director.

Aquatic activities include activities that take place in, on or around a body of water such as swimming pools, water parks and boats.

Signed consent for participating in aquatic activities must be in the child's file prior to the event.

### **Aquatic Supervision::**

- Staff/child ratio: 1/10 for ages 3-5.
- Children under the age of 3 shall not participate in aquatic activities.
- There must always be 2 staff members supervising an aquatic activity.
- Staff must provide adequate supervision during the aquatic activity. This is defined as half of the center staff required to meet ratio must be in the water and the other half out of the water.
- Staff must be positioned in areas that will enable them at all times to hear, see and respond quickly to children both in the water and out of the water.
- Children shall not enter the water until all staff are positioned in their pre-assigned area.
- There must be at least one lifeguard on duty for every 25 children who is certified by the Red Cross. Lifeguards are not counted in the staff/child ratio.
- Bathroom breaks will occur every 30 minutes. All children must be out of the water during this time.
- One staff may escort children to the bathroom while the other engages children in an out of water activity. Staff/child ratios must be maintained at all times.

### **Aquatic safety hazard prevention-swimming pool:**

- All children swimming in the pool must be wearing a floatation device that is securely placed on their body unless parent has provided written consent giving permission for their child to swim without a floatation device
- Children shall swim for no more than 30 minutes at a time without a break.
- Children shall not jump from the side of the pool. Stairs/ladders must be used to enter and exit the pool.
- Children shall not run around the pool area.
- Children shall not eat or drink in the pool.
- Sunscreen permission form must be completed and sunscreen applied as directed.

#### Aquatic safety hazard prevention-water park:

- Children shall not run around the water park where prohibited.
- Children shall ride slides one at a time, feet first. Slide must be designated age appropriate.
- Children shall not eat or drink while participating in the aquatic activity.
- Children shall participate for no more than 30 minutes at a time without a break.
- Children shall not carry objects in their hands while participating in the aquatic activity.
- Sunscreen permission form must be completed and sunscreen applied as directed.

#### Discipline:

- Staff shall follow the same discipline policy used at the center.
- Staff shall explain pool/park rules to the children prior to leaving for the aquatic activity and upon arrival at the aquatic activity facility.
- Children shall be removed from the pool/water park play area if rules are not followed.
- If a child exhibits a behavior that is harmful to other children, they shall be removed from the pool/water park play area.
- If a child is removed from the pool/water park play area, a staff member must sit with the child.

## **GENERAL CLASSROOM INFORMATION**

### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We believe our role is to work as partners with parents and the community. We also believe that parents are our children's first teachers and always should be. Our center is an "open door" environment. Parents are welcome to visit anytime. We ask that you sign in on the visitor log when visiting.

Parent involvement in our program is essential. We recognize that parents are the primary caregiver and most important influence in the child's life. Our goal is to work with the parents to facilitate consistency in every aspect of the development of your child. We encourage open communication between teacher and parent. Daily reports will be sent home to inform you of your child's daily activities. We also encourage families to attend special events or field trips and to share their cultures or traditions with their child's class.

We also encourage participation in regular parent/teacher conferences which are held for the fall (December) and spring (May). This is an opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to communicate about the progress your child has made as well as areas that are continuing to develop with your child. Parents may also request a parent-teacher conference at any time or a meeting with the director when concerns arise.

Birthdays – if a parent/family member would like to provide a birthday party, all food items must be store bought. We ask that families notify teachers at least one week ahead of time so they may prepare the children and classroom for the event. Food containing peanuts is prohibited, please check labels. Families must bring all items for parties (cups, napkins, plates, food and drinks).

Periodically, general information regarding early childhood education will be distributed to families. Creative Academy Newsletter and at home activity ideas will be sent to parents quarterly. Creative Academy may hold periodic parent meetings to address program needs and concerns.

## **DAILY COMMUNICATION**

Creative Academy uses the ProCare Connect Communication App to communicate daily with families. Families will be asked to grant permission for photos to be sent and to sign up to receive daily communication about their child's day at enrollment. Communication that will be provided during the day via app:

- Meals/Bottles
- Nap
- Diaper Changes/Bathroom
- Activities/Learning
- Behavior
- Incidents/Accidents
- Reminders
- Photos/Videos
- Teacher/Parent Messaging

## **WHAT TO BRING**

### Infants

- Change of clothing (weather appropriate), replace as needed.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Bottles labeled with the child's name and date.
- Pacifier labeled with the child's name ( if needed)
- 3-4 family pictures for the family wall.



## Toddlers

- Change of clothing (weather appropriate), replace as needed.
- Diapers and wipes. **Side Velcro pull-ups for potty training.**
- 3-4 family pictures for the family wall.
- Small blanket for nap time

## Preschool

- Change of clothing (weather appropriate), replace as needed.
- **Side Velcro pull-ups** and wipes for potty training (if needed).
- 3-4 family pictures for the family wall.
- Small blanket for nap time. *(Must fit in the designated classroom storage space).*

If a change of clothes is not provided and the child has soiled their clothes, parents will be notified to pick their child up from Creative Academy or bring an extra set of clothes.

**Outside toys and outside snacks are not permitted for children to bring to the classroom unless approved by the teacher or director.**

## **BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Birthdays and holidays are a special time for children. Birthday treats may be brought in for your child's birthday but all food items must be store bought. All items needed for this event must be provided by parent (cups, plates napkins, juice, food). We ask that families notify teachers at least one week ahead of time so they may prepare the children and classroom for the event. Food containing peanuts is prohibited, please check labels. We encourage you to bring healthy snacks.

## **NAPTIMES**

All children will be required to have a rest period each day. If they choose not to sleep, a quiet activity will be offered while others are resting. Parents are to provide their child with a naptime blanket. All toddler and preschool classroom linens will be washed weekly. All infant classroom linens will be washed daily. Blankets should be labeled with the child's name. Children will not be put to bed with a bottle or sippy cup. Creative Academy will provide a 2 inch rest mat for toddler and preschool aged children that will be labeled by number to individualize. Crib, mattress and sheets will be provided for infants. Each crib will be labeled with the child's name and the date they rolled over. Blankets are prohibited in cribs. Parents may provide a nap sack for their infant.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Creative Academy is an educational preschool setting that is designed to enhance each child's education and development. As we design lessons and activities to foster each child's developing skills, we also plan field trips to extend children's learning through hands-on experiences. This allows children to make connections between school and their surrounding environment, explore new places, and expand the "learning" process.

Creative Academy believes that field trips are an integral part of each child's education and values the fact that these experiences will open new avenues of learning that will carry throughout each child's life.

We would appreciate additional help on field trips to supervise children. Please sign up to volunteer to chaperone the field trips and accompany your child for these learning activities. If you plan to chaperone a field trip, please understand that the teachers need your help in supervision and guiding the children during the field trip. It is such a great experience to spend this special time and devote your attention to sharing learning experiences and memories with your child and their friends.

However, if you choose not to allow your child to participate in the field trip, then other care arrangements outside of the center must be made. We cannot place a child into a younger classroom, as it will interfere with our staff ratios and distract the children from their daily routine. Also, if your child has not reached the age of 3, Creative Academy will be unable to transport him/her. Therefore, the parent will need to drive the child to and from the field trip or find other care arrangements outside of the center.

The center staff reserves the right to deny a child field trip privileges based on behavior prior to the field trip or will return the child to the center if the child's behavior is uncontrollable during the outing– in which case the parent will be informed.

### **Field Trip Procedure**

- Teachers will send out a notice for the field trip at least 2 weeks prior to the field trip date. This will be located either in their cubby or mailbox.
- You will need to verify on the notice if your child will be participating in the field trip
- The notice and permission to transport must be turned back in to the teacher by the date listed on the notice.
- On the due date, if a parent has not returned the notice, the teacher will call you to verify that you have received the notice and your decision for your child's participation. If your child will be participating, you are still required to sign the permission form, which must be completed the day following the phone call.
- If you do not return or sign the field trip permission form by the due date or after the teacher has contacted you, then your child will not be able to participate in the field trip and other arrangements for your child's care for that day should be made.

- ✚ If we do not have a signed Permission to Transport, your child can not ride on the Creative Academy bus.
- ✚ If you choose for your child not to participate in the field trip, you will need to make arrangements for your child's care on that day.

## **TRANSITIONS**

Transitions are very delicate times in a child's development. Entering a new classroom or new school can be very scary for a child. To create smooth transitions and ease children from one classroom to another, Creative Academy follows these transition guidelines:

- For transition between classrooms, children will spend a few hours interacting with their new classmates each day before fully changing classrooms. One of their current teachers will accompany the child until the child is comfortable being left alone in the new environment.
- Parents are notified 2 weeks in advance if staff feels a child is developmentally ready to move to another classroom. .

Guidelines for transitioning children based on their age are as follow:

- Infants will move to the Waddler (One year Old Classroom) classroom at the age of 1. They may stay in the infant classroom up to age 15 months if needed.
- Waddlers will move to the Toddler (Two Year Old Classroom) classroom at the age of 2.
- Toddlers may move to the Preschool classroom at age 2 ½ if developmentally ready. They may stay in the toddler classroom until they are 35 months of age.
- Preschool children may move to the pre-k classroom at age 3 ½ if developmentally ready.

## **INCLUSION**

Creative Academy believes in providing an inviting learning environment that promotes independence and self-confidence by providing high quality services to children of all abilities. Birth-5 is the most important time in a child's life in which their values and beliefs are formed. By offering inclusion as a basis for our learning environment, we are providing a community for all children to learn together and embrace each other's differences. It creates a growing understanding of the differing abilities in our diverse society and promotes the acceptance of all individuals in the community. There are many benefits of inclusion for both children with and without disabilities and the community:

Children with Typical Development

- Show cognitive gains over children not in inclusive settings.
- Learn about differences in human growth and development.
- Become more accepting of others who are different as they learn to work and play with a wider range of children.
- Become more accepting of their own limitations.

- Learn how children with special needs can be models for perseverance and courage in spite of adversity.
- Learn how children with special needs are similar to all other children.
- Build self-esteem by modeling appropriate behaviors or sharing knowledge with peers with special needs.

#### Children with Special Needs

- Experience a more complex environment that stimulates developmental progress.
- Increase their social skill development and language through interaction with typically developing peers.
- Develop a better understanding of the real world.
- Be accepted better within the community by participating in a typical setting, thus growing up feeling included rather than excluded.

#### Community

- Understand that if the potential of all children is maximized, children with disabilities are helped to become productive members of society.
- Understand that providing interventions early in a child's life saves money in the long run, because disabilities can be corrected to varying degrees, enabling the children to be more independent.

Creative Academy provides a learning environment for children with and without disabilities to participate in early childhood activities and routines together. These opportunities are provided indoors and outdoors on a daily basis through group activities, free choice centers, routines, outdoor play time, and/or special events.

## CURRICULUM

At Creative Academy, the curriculum guides what the children are doing each day. We believe that children learn through play and that they are active learners that have curiosities that need to be fostered. Creative Academy utilizes the Creative Curriculum, a curriculum that believes learning happens best when children are allowed to make choices, given materials that encourage creative expression and exploration, have valued ideas, and are encouraged to use language skills, and encourage to take developmentally appropriate risks and solve problems.

The curriculum and classroom planning is based upon children's interests and developmental level. The teaching staff use daily observations of children and quarterly assessments to guide learning activities and planning.

The classrooms are divided into interest areas in which the children are allowed to move around freely in accordance to their interests. The materials in these areas are chosen to go along with current interests of the children and the activities that are being offered that week. Materials are used to encourage the development of skills in social/emotional, cognitive, physical (gross and fine motor) and language development.

Preschool teachers use the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Child Profile to chart a child's progress throughout the year. This helps guide lesson planning and targeted skill development. Preschool teachers also maintain a portfolio of children's classroom work to show individual child progress of development. In addition, each parent of a child ages 3-5 has the option of having their child receive a developmental screening, Ages and Stages Questionnaire within the first 30 days of enrollment. This screening is designed to help detect any area of concern in a child's development. Parents must sign the screening consent form before screening can take place. Parents will be provided resources for further assessment if needed.

Infant and toddler teachers use the Individual Child Care Plan to guide their plans for each child's routines/needs. They use daily observations and document on each child's weekly Child Planning Form to guide lesson planning. Teachers have a great focus in each child's language development, social skill development, and self-help skills that will prepare them for the preschool classroom. Teachers also provide new experiences and materials each week to enhance each child's cognitive and physical development. If developmental concerns arise, teachers will notify the director, and a parent teacher conference may be set up to discuss the referral process for early Intervention services.

## **LESSON PLANS**

Teaching staff prepare weekly lesson plans based upon the current interest and skill development of the children. The lesson plans are posted in each classroom. A copy may be sent home at a parent's request. Teachers may plan weekly take-home activities that will include the family in the child's learning.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

The Creative Academy uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire -3 (ASQ3). All children will be offered a developmental assessment to be conducted by the parent and provider. Parents will be provided a permission form at enrollment and must consent to screening prior to an assessment being conducted. After completion of the assessment, results will be presented to the parent, and information provided if further testing is necessary. Hearing and vision screenings may also be provided with parent permission.

## **CHILD INFORMATION**

All children must have an application on file with emergency contacts and a list of individuals who may pick the child up from the center. This information shall stay on file in the director's office and in the child's classroom.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

- Parent teacher conferences are offered 2 times per year to discuss the child's development. One is offered for the fall (December) and one is offered for the spring (May). Parents may request a parent teacher conference at any time.
- Classroom visits are welcomed by family members at any time.
- Families are invited to participate in special activities with their child throughout the year.
- Creative Academy has a Parent and Teacher Advisory Committee that meets quarterly to discuss fundraising, materials needed for the center, and any concerns or ideas to improve the classrooms. All parents are welcome to join. There is a box on the front table designated for comments by families. These comments can be anonymous and are discussed at the meetings.

## **CLASSROOM SCHEDULES**

Daily schedules are posted in each classroom. They include time for:

- Meals
- Outdoor/Gross Motor Play
- Rest
- Bathrooms
- Center Time/Free Play
- Group Activities

## **GRADUATION/END OF SCHOOL YEAR CELEBRATION**

**Graduation** – Pre-K graduation ceremony will begin at 6pm on a scheduled day at the end of the school year each year. The pre-k classroom will close at 1:30 pm for the staff to set up and prepare for the ceremony. Please prepare to make arrangements for your child during this time.

**End of School Year Celebration** – a celebration will be held on the last day of school each year. The celebration will be hosted from 9-12 at Creative Academy or at a specified location. Parents will receive information pertaining to this event one month prior to the date.



