

# Oak Park Early Learning Academy

Loving To Learn . . . For A Lifetime



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*Growing exceptional learners for social and academic success today -- and tomorrow!*

## Parent Handbook 2018

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# Director's Greeting

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Welcome to Oak Park Early Learning Academy! Our registered child care ministry is a fun, nurturing and secure environment that builds every child's spiritual, emotional, social, cognitive and physical skills, preparing them with the skills needed for long-term success in school and in life.

Our goal is to instill within each child a love to learn for a lifetime. We believe that this goal is possible when children are placed within a positive emotional environment where laughter is cherished . . . friendships blossom . . . and Christian values are practiced daily. Another important factor is a "Yes" environment, where children are free to explore, to touch, to manipulate and to move high-quality educational toys, books and equipment. Our exploration and play is supported by an individualized research-based curriculum that provides learning and development.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has a professional and highly qualified team of early childhood educators that strengthen our program. Our staff has been selected for their knowledge of child development skills as well as their strong interpersonal skills. When visiting the program, please take the time to look, listen, and observe this exceptional group and the supportive learning environment they are creating for children.

It is my role and the role of my staff to facilitate the development of children, as well as to collaborate with parents to extend the learning environment beyond our facility. We want you to not only feel welcomed to our center, but to feel an integral part of our community.

Blessings,

Dani M. Arthur,  
Oak Park Early Learning Academy Director



# Mission Statement

The Oak Park Early Learning Academy uses a developmental approach to caring and teaching young children. Our program offers opportunities every day for your child to explore through physical movement, to make discoveries, and to use his/her senses to observe the world around them. Through hands-on activities, children learn and develop at their own pace, while our teachers utilize research-based curriculum that provides intentional support for that learning and development. Our registered childcare ministry recognizes each child as an individual, expanding where they are and promoting positive learning outcomes that further them along.

Our mission is to offer the opportunities for children to develop intellectually, socially, mentally and spiritually; to develop respect for themselves, others and their environment; to grow in the ability to relate to others peacefully; and to enjoy the rich diversity of people around them. This is accomplished in a comfortable, safe, fun yet challenging environment.

We foster an understanding of diversity among people by expecting and modeling behavior based on mutual and unconditional respect for self and others. We pursue every available opportunity to celebrate and explore individual and cultural differences. All children are accepted without regard for race, color, religion, sex, creed, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical challenges. While we are affiliated with Oak Park Church, we respect each child's right to observe his/her faith.

# Our Operations

Oak Park Early Learning Academy's operating hours are Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The major holidays that we will be closed are as follows:

New Year's Day	Independence Day	Christmas Day
President's Day	Labor Day	
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving	

We are a registered childcare ministry operating under the Indiana Division of Family and Social Services. We voluntarily adhere to the highest state teacher to child ratios:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Staff:Child Ratio</b>		<b>Class</b>	<b>Staff:Child Ratio</b>
Infants	1:4		3 Years	1:10
Toddlers (12 – 30 Months)	1:5		4 Years	1:12
30 - 36 Months	1:7		5 Years	1:15
			6 - 12 Years	1:20

Should there be a time that a classroom has too many children to meet these ratios, a member of our Administration team or another staff member will step in to correct the ratio at the earliest moment possible.

## Our Staff

Our child care staff are experienced, trained professionals chosen for their warmth, creativity, experience with children, and commitment to excellence. We employ people who are nurturing, who understand child development, and who respect each child as an individual. We seek employees who value working as a team with parents, colleagues, and volunteers.

Our staff environment encourages mutual respect for each individual's personal characteristics and teaching style, opportunities for shared leadership, and provision for providing professional growth. We voluntarily adhere to state licensure standards that state each lead teacher has or is in the process of obtaining a CDA credential or higher degree in Early Childhood Education.

Each staff member has on file two or more written references. We require a Criminal History Check, physical examination, drug screening and annual TB skin test. Our staff is annually trained in Infant, Child and Adult CPR and Universal Precautions. Pediatric First Aid (including management of a blocked airway and rescue breathing for infants and children) is recertified every two years. All childcare staff receives training in child abuse awareness recognition and prevention, nutrition and sanitization in regard to safe food handling and teaching children with special needs.

Continuing education is an important part of working at Oak Park Early Learning Academy. All staff is required to participate in a minimum of 20 in-service hours per year. We also are a participant of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Indiana enabling employees who work 30 or more hours a week to earn a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) and/or an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

## Our Early Childhood Programs

### (6 Weeks to Age 5)

Our curriculum includes activities based on the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from birth to age 5. Our curriculum has a different theme each month in which the classroom teacher rotates and adds materials frequently to maintain and extend the children's interests. Often our teachers create their own games and materials to offer extra challenges.

The Foundations address the following content areas: English/Language Arts, Math, Social Emotional, Approaches to Play and Learning, Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts, and Physical Health and Growth. The Foundations are also aligned with the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten in a developmentally-appropriate way which reflects the type of experiences early learners need in order to be ready for kindergarten.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy also utilizes a developmentally-appropriate and cutting-edge touch-screen computer system designed exclusively for the preschool classroom to effectively introduce young learners to technology and prepare them with kindergarten readiness skills.

## Our School-Age Programs

### (Kindergarten through Age 12)

#### **Oak Park Kids' Clubhouse:**

Children are transported to and from Richmond Community Schools to Oak Park Early Learning Academy. Children are served a healthy snack upon their arrival after school. There's also a scheduled time to focus on school homework daily. Children have opportunities to join in a variety of experiences, including our Reading Club, Stay Fit! Club, Brain Challengers' Club, Club-opoly and the Arts & Crafts Club. They gather in a safe environment that focuses on making friends, building relationships, staying active and exercising both decision-making and leadership skills.

#### **Oak Park Kids' Holiday Camps**

When school's out for holidays and summer break, there's more to experience than cartoons and video games. Designed for children entering first grade through age 12, our youth camps will have the opportunity to develop socially and have learning experiences that encourage a natural curiosity to explore the world around them and have fun in the process. Weekly activities are planned around a theme. Activities may include art, music, science experiments, outdoor play and field trips.

## Assessment for Young Children

Assessment for young children is the process of gathering information from several sources of evidence and using information to monitor the children's development and learning; to guide planning and decision making to create positive learning environments; to provide direction for further lesson planning; and to provide accountability that our program is accomplishing its goals. Assessment is the process of observing, recording and documenting what children do and how they do it. It can also be in the form of photos and children's work; it is not a single occurrence but an on-going process.

Children are assessed both formally and informally while in our care. Our child care center uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire as an assessment screening tool appropriate for children ages 1 month to 66 months. This questionnaire is also completed by the child's family on various aspects of their development. The questionnaire can be completed every 3 to 6 months depending on the child's age. The information is discussed during parent-teacher conference times, (September, January, May) or if needed other times during the course of the year.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy believes it is essential for families and teachers to work together to promote children's development. Assessment records are kept in the child's portfolio and are only available to the child's lead teacher and administrative staff. The goal of documentation and assessment is to better understand and support children's learning and

development. Teachers use the information from the assessments to set individual and classroom goals to meet the needs of children as well as the overall program improvements that may need to be made.

Our assessment tools also include *ISTAR-KR (Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness)* to measure skills in children from infancy to kindergarten. This assessment tool provides the structural guideline to ensure our children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

Assessment is also essential for identifying children who may benefit from special services. If it is determined that your child may need additional assistance for a potential problem, your child's teacher will meet and assist you with the referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated. Assessments are positive tools used to ensure our children are provided the tools to successfully continue with their education.

Parent-teacher conferences will be held two times a year to discuss each child's progress. During these meetings, both teachers and parents will set goals for the child's progress.

## Parent Involvement & Responsibility

Parents are always welcome into our center as they see necessary. Throughout the year, we encourage parents to participate in special days and activities. Parents are welcome to come and share any special talent or activity with the children.

Parents may contact the staff for an appointment to discuss their child's needs and progress or exchange information regarding their child or family/culture. It is not possible to share lengthy information during his/her class time or in front of the child.

In accepting the privilege of attending Oak Park Early Learning Academy, parents must also accept the responsibility to follow the policies stated in this handbook. Failure to follow the standards listed may result in the loss of attendance at our registered childcare ministry. Oak Park Early Learning Center has the responsibility for the safety and care of all the children in attendance and cannot compromise that responsibility to accommodate those who do not meet their obligations. It is the parents' responsibility to:

1. Follow all the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.
2. Keep the teacher informed of any important changes in the home situation, including (but not limited to) address changes, phone numbers, emergency contact persons and their phone numbers and custodial rights.
3. Support the policies and objectives of our childcare ministry program by:
  - Helping your child to get sufficient sleep, to feel rested and ready to participate.
  - Safeguarding your child's health in order to insure regular attendance and protect the other children.

4. Do not discuss observations or information acquired through your child(ren) or other parents. Any information about a child/family is treated confidentially. Concerns should be discussed with the Director.
5. Inform our Oak Park Early Learning Academy's Director of any type of virus or illness contracted by your child that may be contagious.
6. Discuss concerns and/or observations regarding your child(ren) with appropriate staff in a timely manner. After discussing the issue with the teacher and the issue is not resolved, then the parent may bring the issue to the attention of the Child Care Director.
7. Treat the Oak Park Early Learning Academy staff and families with respect.
8. Do not display hostile behavior in front of staff members, parents, or children. Parents should remove themselves to the Director's office, with the appropriate staff joining after the care of the children in that classroom is covered by another staff member.

Parents who fail to meet these outlined responsibilities will be counseled on an individual basis. Those parents who consistently fail to meet outlined responsibilities will be suspended or required to remove their child(ren) from our childcare ministry.

### **Smoke-Free Property Policy**

Smoking is prohibited on the premises, including but not limited to, in the parking lot and in personal vehicles while on the property of Oak Park Church.

### **Persons Appearing to Be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up**

The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the center from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent appears to be impaired. However, the staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the director, other parent, and if necessary the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child, and appears to the staff to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff will contact the child's parents, and if necessary local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

### **What to Bring From Home**

#### **Infants:**

- Disposable diapers – Unopened package
- Diaper wipes – Unopened package
- Bottles – 4 or more, including caps (drop-ins, if applicable)
- Pacifier – If needed
- Medicated diaper rash ointment and other medications – Unopened packages must be accompanied with medication order form with doctor's signature. (Form can be obtained at receptionist desk.)
- Extra clothes – 2 outfits and 2 socks in zip-lock bag with child's name
- Bibs – 5 to remain at center
- Formula – Unopened (If not accepting infant food program)
- Baby food – Unopened (If not accepting infant food program)

- Photos of child and family
- All personal items and clothing must be labeled clearly.

### **Toddlers:**

- Disposable diapers – Unopened package
- Diaper wipes – Unopened package
- Medicated diaper rash ointment and other medications – Unopened packages must be accompanied with medication order form with doctor's signature. (Form can be obtained at receptionist desk.)
- Pacifier – If needed (For health reasons, we encourage to only use their pacifier during nap time.)
- Blanket and small pillow labeled with child's name
- Small stuffed animal for nap time
- Extra clothes – 2 outfits and 2 socks in zip-lock bag with child's name
- Photos of child and family
- Permission and instructions (frequency and conditions) for use of sunscreen and insect repellent
- Tooth brush and cover
- Sippy Cups: Due to health and sanitation reasons, sippy cups will be permitted only for children under 18 months old. For children under 18 months of age; **a clean, sanitized, empty** sippy cup must be brought **daily**. We do not have the capability to properly wash/sanitize cups. We will also begin training this age group to use straws. Sippy cups will be used for drinking water **only**. All children older than 18 months will be transitioned to using straws in milk cartons and juice containers. Disposable cups will be provided for each child for drinking water to help keep the children hydrated throughout the day.

### **Preschoolers:**

- Small soft naptime comfort item
- Blanket and small pillow for naptime labeled with child's name
- Extra change of clothes in a zip-lock bag labeled with child's name
- Photos of child and family
- Permission and instructions (frequency and conditions) for use of sunscreen and insect repellent
- Tooth brush, tooth brush cover and tooth paste

### **What Not to Bring From Home**

- Toys of violence (guns, swords, weapons, Power Rangers, etc.)
- Candy
- Food in the mornings at drop-off
- Chewing gum
- Sandals or flip-flops
- Anything unlabeled

# Enrollment Process

Parents are welcome to first tour the child care facility with the Director and meet the child's prospective assigned teacher. Following, parents should review the Parent Handbook and all the policy and procedures forms included in the Student Application Packet.

All paperwork is reviewed, completed by parent and returned prior to enrollment. A non-refundable registration fee of \$45 must be included with the completed application.

Additional documentation required prior to enrollment to our child care ministry:

- Physical examination done within last year and updated annually until after age 2;
- Up-to-date immunization records (unless using religious exemption).

**Medical forms must be turned into the receptionist within 30 days from day of enrollment.** If a child is overdue for any routine health services, parent/guardian must provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program.

Your child's enrollment file is kept confidential. It is made available to administrators and teaching staff as deemed necessary by the Director, as well as regulatory agencies on request.

Health information may be discussed with persons listed as emergency contacts on your child's emergency card if an emergency arises. Due to HIPAA laws, our staff will never request or discuss a child's medical issues without parent written permission for such discussions.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy does not discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or financial status. Our childcare ministry will accept only children who will benefit from its program, and for whose age level the center is staffed and equipped to provide quality group care.

If your child has an IFSP or IEP, this document is required at enrollment and as it is updated. We encourage staff participation in any IFSP and IEP case conference to better enable us to help your child.

# Payment Procedures

Child care fees are reviewed and, if needed, adjusted annually, as our rates are based upon both competitive local pricing and our costs. Parents will receive a month's notice when child care rates are to be adjusted.

1. All child care tuition payments are due and payable by 6:00 p.m. the Friday preceding care. Payment may be dropped off at the front desk between 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
2. Tuition paid after Monday at 12:00 noon will be charged a \$20.00 late fee.
3. Care will not be provided, and possibly terminated, if not paid by Wednesday.

4. There is a \$45 non-refundable registration fee required each year for each child enrolled in the center payable on the enrollment anniversary date.
5. Child care fees are due on a continuous basis even if your child is ill, absent, or on vacation. Late fees will be charged if payment is not made on time even though your child is not in attendance.
6. Oak Park Early Learning Academy will be closed five national holidays, as listed on page 4 of this handbook. Tuition is still remitted for these holiday closures.
7. All departures from our child care ministry must be by 6:00 p.m. or a late pick-up charge of \$15 is required for each 10-minute interval after 6:05 p.m. This fee will be charged to the next week's payment. The fee is a deterrent to pick up late to avoid overtime pay for staff. Late pick up charges are as follows:
 

6:00 p.m. – 6:05 p.m.	\$1 per minute
6:06 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.	\$15
6:16 p.m. – 6:25 p.m.	\$30
6:26 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.	\$45
9. A drop-off time is agreed upon within the Child Care Contract. Dropping off *before that time* must be arranged beforehand, or it will be subject to the same fee schedule as late pick charges.
9. A \$25 insufficient funds returned check fee will be charged to the next week's payment.
10. Termination Policy: A two-week advance written notice is required when withdrawing your child(ren). This gives us an opportunity to fill the vacancy. This notice must be given to the director. If notice is not given, two (2) regular schedule weeks' tuition fees will be charged. This will include late penalties, as stated in the policy, from due date to date paid, plus legal fees if applicable.
11. Our child care ministry will be participating in the federal Child Care Development Fund program to assist low-income families in obtaining child care so they can work or attend school. The vouchers must be submitted weekly or you risk be financially responsible for the entire tuition payments.

## **Discounts**

### **Sibling Discounts**

After enrolling one child, Oak Park Early Learning Academy offers a \$5/week discount for each subsequent sibling enrolled from the same family and household.

### **CCDF Recipients' Financial Responsibility**

Oak Park Early Learning Academy participates in the Children's Bureau Child Care Development Fund program to assist low-income families in obtaining child care so they can work or attend school.

Oak Park Early Learning requires families to swipe their Hoosier Works card on a daily basis. Every Monday at 12:00 noon, our staff verifies that parents completely swiped for attendance the previous week, and/or recorded any used personal day(s). CCDF families are liable for a Late Swipe Fee of \$20 per child/per week for any missed attendance swipes. The fee will be invoiced that day, and payable by Friday of that week.

Due to CCDF policy changes, parents who do not approve late payment days in a timely period will be subject to paying for the outstanding tuition balance. Failure to comply with CCDF responsibility and Oak Park Early Learning Academy's policies and procedures can lead to termination of child care services.

# Health & Nutrition

Our center operates for well children only. Children who are mildly ill (i.e. minor cold symptoms) may remain at the childcare center with an administrator's approval.

## Outdoor Play

Children should be able to fully participate in all activities, including outdoor play. We will not go outside during heat and smog alerts. Parents should provide appropriate changes of clothing so children do not become either chilled or overheated. Warm, layered clothing is needed for chilly outdoor play. Snow pants, boots, gloves and hat are needed for snowy days.

Sunscreen and bug spray may be applied by staff, with the written permission of the parent.

## Childhood Illnesses

Children with symptoms of illness will remain with a staff member until the parent or designated emergency contact arrives for the child. We make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but if there is no verbal contact within 1 hour, we will notify the emergency contacts indicated by the parents on the enrollment forms. **All emergency contacts are authorized to remove child from our facility.**

Parents must have a back-up plan in place, in the event of your child's illness or the facility's inability to care for children.

In case of an illness, a child may rest on a cot in the Director's office, or in an area away from the other children but in sight and sound of an adult. The child will be continuously supervised until a parent arrives.

We will not serve children with:

- A fever of 100° F or higher, axillary;
- A fever of 99° F or higher, axillary, if combined with another sign of illness or if a known illness is occurring in the center;
- A skin rash that has not been identified by a phone call or in written form from a physician who has seen the rash;
- Infected skin patches;
- Evidence of infection;
- Diarrhea and/or vomit;
- Evidence of head lice, nits, scabies, or another parasite;
- Severe coughing;
- Rapid or difficulty breathing;
- Yellowish skin or eyes;
- Conjunctivitis, a cold in the eye, pink eye or other eye infection;
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool;
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing;
- Stiff neck;
- Pain of which child complains and interferes with normal activity;
- Excessive fatigue;
- A moist or open cold sore.

Children may be readmitted:

- With a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable disease and that returning poses no risk to the child or staff.
- Or, is visibly free from communicable disease, fever free without fever reducing medications for 24 hours and free of vomiting/diarrhea for 24 hours while on a normal diet.
- For head lice, children shall only be readmitted after they have had the proper treatment and are free from nits and live bugs. A second treatment must be completed after two weeks. Upon returning to the center, the child will be checked by our staff during their morning wellness check.

### **Site-Wide Staff and Child Illness Policy**

Oak Park Early Learning Academy makes every endeavor to provide a healthy environment for our staff members and children. We utilize the following policies and procedures to safeguard staff health:

1. Staff members must complete universal precautions, handwashing, and safe food handling training;
2. Staff members are required to clean and sanitize tables prior to every meal;
3. Staff members are required to sanitize toys and cots on a daily basis;
4. Staff members are required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and to wash children's hands regularly throughout the day.
5. Staff members may be provided with a face mask to wear if they are experiencing a cold or mild cough.

Parents are part of the overall health of our child care program. It is extremely important to keep sick children at home. Bringing your child to Oak Park Early Learning when they are sick leads to a serious spreading of the illness; bringing your child back after an illness before they are ready, increases their chances of becoming ill again.

Unfortunately, severe flu seasons can negatively impact the overall health of our child care. If sitewide, Oak Park Early Learning Academy sustains 30% absentee rates of staff members and/or enrolled children from a similar illness on a given day, then Oak Park Early Learning Academy will close its child care for one day in order to fully sanitize and deep clean its facility and allow its staff members to recover. This child care closer will be announced via Brightwheel, as well as on our Facebook site.

This policy is set in place in order to protect the overall health of both our staff members and families and seek to reduce the number of sick days children repeatedly face.

Again, Oak Park Early Learning Academy requires that all families have a back-up plan in place for sickness. And, Oak Park will always endeavor to provide a healthy environment for all of our children.

## **Medication Administration**

1. Medication is given only if the medication label specifies an exact time during the working day that it must be administered. If the medication label generally states, for example, one time daily or twice daily, then Oak Park Early Learning Academy will NOT administer the medication. The medication will need to be administered by parents at home.
2. Prescribed medication will only be administered at Oak Park Early Learning Academy if a parent signs a medication administration permission form.
3. Dosage shall not exceed the appropriate amount for the child's age and weight as stated on the label.
4. Prescription medication must have a prescription label with the child's name, exact dosage, specific number of daily dosages, the route of administration, and current date on it. The label must be attached to the original container.
5. Medications with the instructions "to be given as needed" will not be administered by Oak Park Early Learning Academy's staff unless it is a medication that aligns to a Medical Action Plan for serious illnesses, such as life-threatening allergies and asthma.
6. Any over-the-counter medicine requires a "Record of Medication Order" form to be completely filled out by a physician or dentist. This form must be completed for each instance need and must include clear instructions when and how the medication is to be administered and must be child specific. Children within the same household will not be able to share medication on our premises.
7. No medication will be given if it is past the written expiration date on the container.
8. Non-medicated Chap Stick, sun screen and bug spray do not require a physician's signature but do need a parent's written instructions and permission. Such items must be labeled and given to the office staff.
9. The "Medication Record" form will be signed by the staff member administering medication and kept on file for a minimum of one year.
10. All emergency medications that must be readily available (EpiPen, Benadryl for allergic reactions, and asthma medications) will be kept in the child's classroom out of reach of children in a locked cabinet or carried by the staff member during classroom outings.

## **Medical and Dental Emergencies**

First aid bags are kept in each classroom. They are also available in the staff lounge, child care front desk, and on our van. Emergency numbers are filed in the child care front office, administrative offices, as well as in each classroom. All staff is trained in Pediatric First Aid, Infant, Child and Adult CPR, and Universal Precautions.

In the event of an emergency, one teacher will remain with the child. A second teacher will remove the other children to another area. The Director will be notified immediately. First Aid will be administered, a parent notified, and transportation arranged, if necessary. In the event we cannot reach either parent, the next person listed on the student enrollment form shall be contacted. If immediate transportation is required, emergency medical services will be called and the child will be transported to Reid Health.

***Enrollment in the child care ministry gives permission for emergency transportation to be provided. We will not accept any children whose parents or guardians refuse to grant permission for emergency transportation.*** All of the child's records will be taken with the child. A staff member will remain with the child until a parent arrives. The attending staff member will prepare an incident report, a copy given to the parent and a copy kept on file at the center.

If the child presents any of the following medical illnesses, the parents/guardians will be called first. If the parent can be reached, they must come right away and take the child to the doctor. If the parent cannot be reached, the director/receptionist will contact emergency medical personnel to transport the child to Reid Hospital, if a medical emergency exists. The director/receptionist will contact the designated emergency contacts to meet designated staff member at Reid Hospital, and the emergency contact will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

- Fevers: A baby less than 4 months of age with auxiliary temperature of 100 degrees F, or higher, or a child of any age, a temperature of 105 degrees F, or higher.
- For infants under 4 months, forceful vomiting more than once.
- Looking or acting very ill or getting worse quickly.
- Neck pain when the child's head is moved or touched.
- A stiff neck or severe headache and looking very sick.
- Unequal pupils (black centers of the eyes)
- A blood-red or purple rash made up of pinhead-sized spots or bruises that are not associated with injury.
- A rash of hives or welts that appears and spreads quickly.
- Stools that are black or have blood mixed through them.
- Not urinating at least once in 8 hours, a dry mouth, no tears or sunken eyes.
- Sore throat with drooling, difficulty breathing or swallowing.

**We will call EMS first if:**

If the child presents any of the following medical illnesses/injuries, the director will first contact emergency medical personnel to transport the seriously ill/injured child to Reid Hospital, if a medical emergency exists. Immediately following, the director/receptionist will contact the parents/guardians informing them of their child's medical situation and our decision to transport their child to Reid Hospital. A designated staff member will travel to the hospital with the child. If the parent cannot be reached, the director/receptionist will contact the designated emergency persons to meet our designated staff member at Reid Hospital, and the emergency contact will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives.

- the child is unconscious, semi-conscious or unusually confused.
- the child's airway is blocked.
- the child is not breathing.
- the child is having difficulty breathing, shortness of breath or is choking.
- the child has severe coughing or a high-pitched whistling sound, redness or blueness in the face
- the child is breathing so fast or so hard that the child cannot play, talk, cry or drink.
- the child has no pulse.
- the child has bleeding that won't stop.
- the child is coughing up or vomiting blood.
- the child has been poisoned.
- the child has a seizure for the first time, a seizure that lasts more than 5 minutes, or an atypical seizure.
- the child has injuries to the head, neck or back.
- the child has sudden, severe pain anywhere in the body.
- the child has a severe stomachache without vomiting or diarrhea after a recent injury, blow to the abdomen, or hard fall.

- the child has continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head.
- the child's condition is limb-threatening (for example, severe eye injuries, amputations or other injuries that may leave the child permanently disabled unless he/she receives immediate care.)
- the child's condition could worsen or become life-threatening on the way to the hospital if not transported by EMS.
- moving the child could cause further injury.
- the child needs the skills or equipment of paramedics or emergency medical technicians.
- distance or traffic conditions would cause a delay in getting the child to the hospital.

### **Nutrition**

We provide nutritionally balanced snacks, meals and cooking activities. Menus are posted in our hallway. We encourage children to have a "hello" bite, that is – to try a taste of everything.

We limit sugars and prefer birthday celebrations sent by parents to be fruits, yogurt, crackers and cheese, or other nutritious alternatives to cake and ice cream. Any food items brought to the daycare must be store bought and in its original container.

Meal times include a breakfast served at 8:00 a.m. and lunch at 11 a.m., as well as a snack at 3:00 p.m. Our menus meet the guidelines provided by the Indiana State Board of Health and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

**Food is not to be brought to the facility in the morning. Upon arrival, teachers will kindly direct any child to discard their food and eat at our next meal served.**

If a child's diet must be modified for health reasons, such as allergies, a physician's written explanation is required. If a child's diet is modified for cultural or religious reasons, the parent is asked to put the request in writing. And, the parent may be asked to help provide supplemental foods.

We provide two-thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs. Seconds are offered to the children. Adults eat seated with the children. Mealtimes are relaxed times, rich with conversation and fellowship. Every meal begins with a prayer of thanksgiving. Parents are free to bring a lunch and join their child anytime.

## Discipline

We recognize that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of a child's self-esteem. Oak Park Early Learning Academy wants to create the best learning environment possible for every child. In order to promote excellence in education, we foster cooperation, self-discipline and instructive guidance. It is our goal to help children learn to make good choices about their actions and behavior so that everyone enjoys a safe, fun, enriching experience.

The Oak Park Early Learning Academy's discipline policy serves as a guideline for interactions between staff and children. The purpose of any discipline is to help the child become more responsible and to see options for correcting his/her behavior. Therefore, each child is treated as an individual.

Our child care ministry does not allow the use of physical punishment by caregivers. Our staff is trained to employ positive discipline techniques, which include praising, calling attention to appropriate behavior and acting as good role models. Children who have conflicts or problems with others while at our center will be encouraged to verbalize their angers and concerns. Our staff members guide rather than punish.

Classroom teachers are responsible for the discipline in their classrooms. Discipline is not used for a child's failure to sleep or eat or for toileting accidents. Techniques of discipline are not intended to humiliate, shame or frighten a child.

When our usual guidance techniques are not effective and inappropriate behavior continues, the following steps will be taken:

1. Student behavior will be documented by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will schedule a conference with the parents to develop a more individualized behavior plan. If the behavior continues or does not improve to an acceptable standard over the following two weeks, Step 2 will occur.
2. Habitual Behavior: A conference will be set with the classroom teacher, director and parents to analyze the behaviors. We will discuss why the behaviors keep occurring and the team participants will work out a plan to help correct this behavior and break the pattern of inappropriate actions. A two-week conference will be set at that time to follow-up on student progress.
3. Severe Behavior: Severe behavior is when a child bodily hurts another, defaces property, uses foul language or gestures, threatens, bullies another (physically or verbally), fights, or is the cause of harassment in any way. "Bullying" is defined as inflicting injury, causing another student to inflict injury, or behaving in any way that could cause physical injury or mental anguish to another student, teacher or other child care personnel. Sexual innuendos and references will be considered a major misbehavior resulting in parent notification on the first offense. Behavior includes lifting/looking under clothing, inappropriate touch, artwork, language, jokes or conversations. A parent conference including the classroom teacher and director will take place. At that time a 30-day probationary period will take place during which the child will be sent home for the day if they engage in severe behavior offense. At the end of the probationary period, a conference will be set to re-assess the child's behavior. If no improvement has been made, and after consulting the director, the child will be given a two-week notice of disenrollment.
4. For very serious incidents where the safety of the child, other children or childcare personnel is at stake, the child may be disenrolled without notice by the center director.

## Safety

No child is ever left alone or unsupervised. We ask that parents closely supervise their children in the parking lot, lobby and hallways when dropping off and picking up. It is recommended that children exit from cars and be offered a hand to hold. When departing from the child care, please resist having the children run to the car while the parent signs them out.

Please do not park against the curb at the child care entrance. This ensures that visibility is clear of oncoming cars for safe crossing. When going to the classroom, families are asked to stay together; do not allow your child(ren) to run down the halls. Parents are responsible for handing their children off to the child's teacher ensuring the teacher is aware of his/her presence.

Children must be signed in and out daily at the kiosk across from the receptionist desk. This is extremely important since the list is used to check attendance during emergency drills or events. Children are released only to persons for whom the staff has written permission from the parents. We will ask for photo identification for all unknown pick ups to match the name on permission slip. Please ensure the teacher is aware of the departure of your child.

### **Individuals Authorized to Remove Children**

Oak Park Early Learning Academy requires that parents provide at least three individuals to be listed whom are authorized to remove children from our premises. We require that all legal guardians mutually agree and authorize the individuals listed by signature and dated initials beside each name.

Any new individual added to this list, or an individual removed from this list, must be made in writing to Oak Park Early Learning Academy and acknowledged by all parents and legal guardians. Oak Park Early Learning Academy will not allow a child to be released to an individual without this documentation and necessary signatures on file.

Authorized individuals must be able to show proof of photo I.D. in order for children to be released into their care.

### **Safe Conditions Policy**

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while at Oak Park Early Learning Academy.

Children will be actively supervised with the number of qualified adults (adults who have completed a comprehensive criminal history check, drug screen and negative TB test and have completed all required trainings).

Our registered child care ministry will not care for children in areas that are being remodeled, repaired, or painted. The director is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces including walls, floors, ceilings, indoor and outdoor playground equipment, toys, furnishings and cribs, in a safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy will take the following steps to maintain the registered child care ministry:

1. Clean the child care facility daily.
2. Keep the child care facility in a sanitary condition at all times.
3. Sanitize toys, furniture and other equipment including outdoor playground equipment used by children, weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
4. Wash all soiled items prior to sanitation.

### **Fire & Disaster Drills**

Monthly fire and disaster drills will be held at varying times during the year at a minimum of one fire drill per month. The director will maintain a record of fire and disaster drills.

A fire alert and weather emergency plan, including evacuation routes, is posted in each classroom. In case of emergency evacuation, the center will use the back playground until re-entry to our building is possible or all children are picked up. In case of severe weather, the staff and children

will proceed to interior rooms on the first floor of Oak Park Church, which is accessible through indoor hallways.

### **Incidents and Accidents**

A report will be filed when an accident or injury occurs at the daycare ministry. The incident/accident form will be given and explained to the parent. It will be signed by the parent. One copy will remain in the child's enrollment file.

Immediate access to a telephone (for emergency use) is available in every area of the childcare ministry.

Aerosol sprays are not used when children are present. Smoking is not permitted on Oak Park Church property.

Child care staff is required to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to Wayne County Division of Family Resources' Child Protective Services at 765-935-0078 or the Indiana Department of Child Services' Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-800-5556.

### **Field Trip Safety**

Oak Park Early Learning Academy will always notify parents in advance of all field trips requiring transportation and/or any fees. A signed permission form from the parent is required before transporting a child to and from the child care ministry for any reason.

The Field Trip Permission form will include the child's name, destination, date of trip and departure/arrival time, parent signature and contact phone number for date of trip, and date permission was signed.

If needed, parents may volunteer to be drivers for field trips. Private vehicles will only be used for transporting children if Oak Park Early Learning Academy has a copy of the vehicle registration and current insurance information on file.

A first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and a cell phone for emergencies shall be available on each field trip. A person trained in first aid will be available on each field trip. Each child on the field trip shall have identification attached to him/herself containing the daycare ministry's name and phone number. Each child's emergency card will be taken on every trip. All children transported on trips are accounted for before, during, and after transport by the designated staff member.

On the day of field trips, parents will be asked to provide a proper child safety car seat. Please have the child's name clearly labeled on the seat.

We will always ensure that the child to staff ratio is met to ensure the highest level of supervision.

### **Transportation To/From School**

A signed Consent for Transportation to/from School form is required before transporting a school-aged child between our child care ministry and a Richmond Community public school or private school. This signed consent form permits Oak Park Early Learning Academy to provide transportation for the school year.

### **Transportation Safety Policy**

Only qualified adults that are licensed drivers with a clean driving record will transport children. Drivers will follow all pertinent Indiana laws and will not use cell phones at any time while in the vehicle. Children will always be restrained in proper seats and seat belts and at no time will a vehicle exceed the recommended capacity. Children will not be left unattended. Upon returning from each trip, the van will be inspected to ensure that no children are still on board.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has automobile insurance that covers transportation of children for our child care ministry. All vehicles used for transportation will be maintained in a clean, safe and mechanically sound condition.

### **Safe Sleep Policy**

Providing infants with a safe environment in which to grow and learn is of extreme importance to us. Therefore, our child care ministry has implemented policies and procedures to create a safe sleep environment for infants. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Safety Commission for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is “the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history.

Our procedures include:

- Infants less than 12 months of age shall be placed on their backs on a firm, tight-fitting mattress for sleep in a crib.
- All pillows, quilts, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft products are removed from the crib.
- Blankets are not used in the crib; sleep sacks are used in place of blankets.
- Infant’s heads shall have no covering during sleep.
- Unless the child has a written note from a physician specifying otherwise, infants shall be placed on their back for sleeping.
- When infants can easily turn over from their back to side or stomach, they shall be put down to sleep on their back, but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.
- Unless a doctor specifies the need for a positioning device that restricts movement within the child’s crib, such devices shall not be used.
- Infants will not share a crib with other children.
- Infants will remain lightly clothed and comfortable while sleeping.
- Supervised “tummy time’ will be observed while infant is awake.
- All staff will receive annual training on safe sleep practices before caring for infants.

### **Open Door Policy**

Oak Park Early Learning Academy has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome and encouraged to stop by the childcare ministry to visit their children at any time without prior notification.

### **Court Orders**

If a court order exists preventing a particular individual from having contact with a child, Oak Park Early Learning Academy shall comply with the order. There must be a copy of the court order in the child’s file.

# Emergencies

## **Stormy Weather Emergencies**

In the event of a tornado warning, meaning that a tornado is occurring or is imminent, we will move the staff and children to our tornado shelter per the evacuation plan posted in each classroom.

## **Winter Weather Emergencies**

***School Cancellation:*** When Richmond Community Schools cancel classes for the day due to bad weather our facility will remain open and provide services to our enrolled school-age children.

***Richmond Community Schools' 2 hour delays:*** If Richmond Community Schools announce a two-hour delay, enrolled school-age children will have care and transportation available to them until school begins.

***Richmond Community Schools' Early Dismissal:*** If Richmond Community Schools have an early dismissal, Oak Park Early Learning Academy will run as normal. If severe road conditions are developing, then we will cancel our program. In the unlikely event that the child care ministry would close early, parents will be called and asked for a timely pick up.

## **Snow Emergency Policy:**

The Oak Park Early Learning Academy will remain open for business unless a severe winter storm is imminent with hazardous, blizzard conditions. The Director will decide whether the conditions require the facility to delay opening or close for the day.

The Director will post any delayed openings or closures on the Oak Park Early Learning Academy's website and Facebook pages. Our program will reopen for business, pending road conditions are safe for our teachers and families.

## **Fire Emergencies**

The person noting the fire sounds the alarm and calls the fire department (911). Staff members calmly escort children to the nearest safe exit and congregate in the rear playground, furthest from the building. The infants are placed in a single crib and wheeled outdoors. The staff takes attendance, which is compared to the daily sign-in sheets.

The Administrative team checks the restrooms, cots, classrooms and hallways to ensure everyone has evacuated the premise.

Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

## **Staff Injury or Death**

In the event of the serious injury or death of an Oak Park Early Learning Academy staff member while children are in our care, we will do our best to keep the events of the day as routine as possible. The following action plan will be taken:

1. Children will immediately be removed from the room.
2. Both the director and the receptionist are certified and have the proper training to immediately step in for continued care.

3. A substitute will be called to provide continued care for that day, or for as long as needed. We will have on file records that the substitute has had all of the proper training and met all of the requirements to care for the children.
4. Parents will be called and notified of the situation and will be given the option to pick children up early or to leave them at our facility.

### **Substitute Teachers/Teacher Changes**

In the event a classroom teacher is sick, absent, or on vacation, Oak Park Early Learning Academy will provide a substitute teacher in your child's classroom. Our substitute teachers have completed the same employment screenings, background check and trainings as our full-time staff members.

If a substitute teacher/teacher change occurs in your child's classroom, our receptionist will let parents know verbally of the staff change during the drop-off/sign-in procedures. If a staff member will be absent for a lengthy period and/or a permanent teacher change occurs, then parents will be informed through a written note placed in your child's cubby.

## Confidentiality Policy

All information pertaining to admission, health, family, or discharge of a child is confidential.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy requires signed and dated permission from parents to include photographs of your child on our website, social media sites and promotional materials.

## Children are our business!

If you have any questions about our child care center or any information contained in this Parent Handbook, please contact us. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Oak Park Early Learning Academy is striving to grow exceptional learners for social and academic success today – and tomorrow! We confident your child's experience will be priceless!

Oak Park Early Learning Academy retains the right to make changes to pricing and discounts at any given moment, and will strive to inform parents of these changes at the earliest opportunity.

### **Contact Information:**

#### **Oak Park Early Learning Academy**

1920 Chester Boulevard

Richmond, IN 47374

Phone Number: 765-488-2626

Website: [www.OakParkKids.com](http://www.OakParkKids.com)