

# PARENT HANDBOOK

**Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

**Proverbs 22:6**





## **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**

### **General Information & Registration**

**[gatesandbridges1@gmail.com](mailto:gatesandbridges1@gmail.com)**

**(813) 573-8765**

**Director: Michelle Amons**

**Administrative: Keilah Davis**

**Curriculum:**

**Absences:**

*Text your child's Absence: (813)573-8765 (text messages only) or email: [gatesandbridges1@gmail.com](mailto:gatesandbridges1@gmail.com)*

***Hours of Operation 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.***

*Lic#52512827442*

*Address: 2332 Dr MLK Jr Street South St. Petersburg, FL. 33705*

## **Mission Statement**

To Bring inspiration and innovation to every child we can serve in our network. We want to give children and families the most compelling learning experiences possible we work hard every day to make G.B.L.A. the most respected learning center.

### **MOTTO**

*Every child holds a brick to complete the bridge that leads to our future.*

### **Standards**

Gates and Bridges Learning Academy is licensed by Pinellas County Child Care Licensing and visited by a representative to verify compliance prior to our license being renewed. We are also inspected by the fire Marshall's office and health department before our license can be renewed or reissued. The county audits our VPK student's attendance each month. We meet or exceed all requirements set forth by all these organizations.

## **Admissions Policy**

Gates and Bridges Learning Academy admits students of any race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

### **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy STAFF**

At **G.B.L.A** we strive to provide nurturing, quality care in a highly interactive learning environment. Our friendly qualified staff are an integral part of providing this environment. Our current staff has had

- A detailed interview and screening process.
- Approval by the state of Florida through a background analysis that cross references state and federal criminal records as well as child abuse reporting records to ensure that each employee has a background that is clear.
- State CPR and first aid requirements fulfilled

We believe firmly in training and continued education for all our employees and staff. Each has qualified themselves to work with your children by attending specific training classes and often college level courses to learn about early education and the needs of children. We emphasize training and encourage all our employees to exceed the state minimum number of clock hours of training required to be qualified to continue to work in an early education setting.

## **STATEMENT OF SERVICES:**

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** is a year-round program that offers all childcare services for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Our daily activities and program consist of a flexible schedule that has been created to provide diversity and challenge for children in all age groups. We offer a structured program for children of all ages that includes a year-round curriculum. Our activities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, music, outdoor play, and story time. We offer a Full-Time contract, which is for children present at the center over 6 hours per day, and we offer a Part Time contract, which is for children present at the center for less than 6 hours per day.

## CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We desire to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file. Whenever we deem it appropriate to the needs of the child to have a child with special needs in our center, the entire staff must follow the reasonable accommodations we have made for that child. Any questions about the accommodations of the child should be referred to the Director.

## STATE LICENSING

We understand the importance of keeping strict compliance with the state licensing regulations in order to ensure a quality environment for your children. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** complies with the applicable state licensing regulations and policies. These requirements cover staff qualifications, facility, playground, health and safety guidelines, and child/staff ratios.

# ATTENDANCE

## SCHOOL HOURS

Gates and Bridges Learning Academy is open year around and regular hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 5:30pm. All children are to arrive at the center no later than 9:00am to avoid interruption of daily activities. If a child will be late the parents are to notify the center so that the child can be counted in the daily count.

**Infant Room regular hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:00am to 4:00pm no exceptions.**

## ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Each day your child comes into the center, they must be checked in and out by the parent. The computer at the front desk will be used for checking children in and out. Each parent assigns themselves a code to access the computer. **Please do not give this code to anyone.** The access code allows parents to access account balances, notes/messages from staff, etc.

All children must be escorted into their classroom by an adult. Never leave your child at the front door. Your child's arrival must be acknowledged by the classroom teacher before you can leave your child.

Only the parent or legal guardian may go straight to the classroom to pick up children. All authorized alternate persons on file such as family members, grandparents, aunts/uncles, friends, etc. **MUST** first check in at the front desk. A picture ID or driver's license will be required. The adult picking up the child must always supervise the child after leaving the classroom, both inside and outside the building and in the parking area.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

The center takes into consideration several factors when making a judgment as to whether we will open late or close early due to inclement weather. When weather conditions are questionable tune in to the local news station or weather station and please follow the school closing for **Pinellas County**. If unsure if the center will be closed, please call center or watch television for announcements.

## HOLIDAY

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will be closed on all major holidays. This includes New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, ½ Day Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the Day after Christmas. There will be no reduction in tuition for these holidays. A notice will be posted prior to each holiday to remind the parents.

# ADMISSION

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Enrollment in our program is open to all families of our community. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin. Only the child(ren)'s parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**. All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parents are required to update all emergency data as needed, including address, home, cell, and work numbers and individuals authorized to pick up your child. Current immunization information must be submitted to the center upon enrollment, and all immunizations must be current. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child(ren)'s file. Parents will be required to comply with all state regulations and center rules as set forth in this Parent Handbook.

To be admitted to **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**, a child must be at least 2 Months of age on the date of admission and no older than 12 years of age.

The following forms must be completed and on file in the center's office before a child may be admitted:

- \* Enrollment Form
- \* Child Care Agreement
- \*Health Statement
- \*Transportation agreement
- \* Physicians Statement-signed by physician
- \* Copy of current immunization records
- \* USDA Food Program form (if applicable)

\*Copy of enrolling parents ID/DL

\*Infant Information form (If applicable)

## **ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Parents wishing to enroll their children in the center are encouraged to set up an appointment with the center office to come and tour the center and meet the director and their children's teacher. Tours are scheduled at the parent's convenience, however, due to rest time and other challenges in our schedule we encourage tours to be scheduled between 9:00a-11:00 am or 2:30p-4:30p Monday through Friday. The purpose of the tour is for you to visit the center, learn more about our program and to answer any questions you might have concerning our policies and procedures. At this time, we will give you a copy of the parent handbook and any forms necessary to enroll your child(ren) in the center. All children shall be considered continuously enrolled from the time of enrollment until they are formally withdrawn according to the procedure outlined in this handbook.

## **PAPERWORK, FORMS and ANNUAL RENEWALL:**

We are required by the state to have current and updated information on each child in our center. This is also for your safety. As **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**. Also, each year in August we will have you renew and update all forms. There will be a deadline given for compliance to this requirement. Failure to renew and update paperwork does not constitute withdrawal from the program and fees will continue to accrue according to the newest published rates. This includes all late payment convenience fees, annual registration fees and annual material fees will also be added each year at this same time.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

Families are responsible for initiating the child withdrawal process. Families will need to give the Director a two week notice before withdrawal. Full tuition is due during this time whether your child attends or not. No adjustments will be made to tuition during this time.

In extreme circumstances, withdrawal of a child may occur at the request of the center. In such a case, the Director shall determine the time of withdrawal after a conference with the parents.

## DISMISSALS

The staff will work with each child to meet the needs of that child and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. However, the school reserves the right to ask families to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met or the child has not adjusted to the care provided by the center. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the center, the child may be suspended up to termination.

If you, the parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow any **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** policy or procedure, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from our center.

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

### REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS FEES

Registration fees are assessed for new and returning students, are payable upon registration and are non-refundable. The registration fee and materials fee are due prior to the child's first day at **Gates and Bridges**

**Learning Academy.** These fees are due annually upon re-enrollment annually each August. These fees shall suffice for that “School Year’s” materials fee provided the child remains continuously enrolled in the program. Children who pull out of the program for a specified or un-specified length of time will be required to pay a re-registration fee as well as an additional materials fee upon returning. The exception to this will be children who physically pull out of the program but whose parents continue to pay their full weekly fees in order to retain the spot in our program.

## **WEEKLY TUITION FEES**

It is our philosophy that clients are paying for the spot their child will take in our center. This is not based upon attendance but rather on a set weekly or monthly fee that is due regardless of the number of days your child attends. Our fee structure is based upon a weekly fee that is set by the contract which is signed by the parent’s upon enrolling the child(ren) in the program. These contracts may be adjusted from time to time as needed with two weeks’ notice of intent to change services. This to be allowed at the discretion of the management based on space availability. Since the weekly set fees remain the same, no bill will be given to remind you of these fees. Add on fees may occur such as in the case of School aged children who are in need of additional services due to an irregularity in the school schedule such as an early dismissal, school’s out day

or school break. In the case of summer break, a new contract will be entered into by the parent's specifying the charges for this period.

## STATE PAID TUITION

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** is authorized to receive payments from **Early Learning Coalition Pinellas** childcare assistance program. **Early Learning Coalition** clients may also have a Weekly, or monthly co-payment that is set by **Early Learning Coalition**. This is based upon family income. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** requires that all co-payments be made in full on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each month. Failure to make co-payment amounts will void your contract with **Early Learning Coalition** whether you stay at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** or move on to another center.

## PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Weekly fees are due in advance on Monday. There will be a \$50.00 late payment convenience fee added if the account is not paid by 12 Noon. Failure to pay on time may result in termination of services. No account will ever be allowed to carry a balance unless arrangements have been approved by the Director. There will be a \$35.00 fee added on all returned checks. After two NSF checks are received by the center, payment will be required by cashier's check or money order. Fees for two weeks will be added if a two-week written notice is not given prior to your child leaving the center. Clients may pay by cashier's check, credit card or Money Order. All payments will be **payable to: Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**.

**Payments may be given directly to the director or may be placed in the payment box located outside the office. No Cash payments will be accepted.** All tuition is non-refundable except for prepaid tuition that is over-and-above any additional charges, including the two weeks' notice. All clients will pay the last weeks fees in advance. Registration fees are non-refundable. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** may seek collection of fees due and clients may be required to pay a two-week termination fee, and any collection costs and attorney's fees incurred by **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** to collect this amount. If **Gates and**

**Bridges Learning Academy** elects, it may immediately terminate all services provided by it including but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the children from its facility.

## **DISCOUNTS**

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** is pleased to offer the following discounts: 1) 3% discount for accounts that pay for the entire month in advance by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. 2) 10% sibling discount off the oldest child's tuition 3) 10% off for educators (must show proof)

## **VACATION**

After one year of continuous enrollment parents are eligible for 2 weeks' vacation that they may use. When taking a vacation week, you must pay  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your weekly tuition rate to hold your child's space and your child must be out the entire week. Please give a 2 weeks' notice to guarantee use of the vacation week. Please inform the director as soon as possible if your child will be absent for an extended period of time.

## **REFUNDS**

We do not issue refunds. In the event you have over-paid the credit will be applied to your next week's tuition. In the event you have a balance after your child's last day, all applicable fees including the two weeks' notice required will be subtracted from any balance prior to a final refund being issued. Checks for this are cut monthly and will be mailed according to our monthly bill payment schedule.

## **LATE PICK UP**

Parents are expected to be on time when picking their child up at the end of the day. If you will be late arriving to the school for pick up, please call and notify the administration. There will be an additional late charge of \$20 for the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 minutes and \$2 per minute thereafter. The late fee policy is per child and applies to any time after 5:30p. If a parent is more than one hour past 5:30pm and no one on the authorized pick up list can be reached local law enforcement will be contacted.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## GENERAL SAFETY STATEMENT

All of the policies, rules and regulations presented in this handbook are designed to make the time your child spends at our school safe and rewarding. We have taken a number of steps to promote the safety and protection of your child while in our care. They are as follows:

- \*Classrooms have glass windows for easy viewing.
- \*Frequent observations of the classrooms are performed by the administration.
- \*Common areas are viewed via closed circuit camera system.
- \*Both entrances pass the receptionist remain locked and only accessible by computer code entry.
- \*Emergency evacuation drills are held regularly without notice

\*Emergency exit plans are posted in every classroom

\*All staff is first aid/CPR certified

\*Daily health checks are conducted upon arrival

## ACCIDENTS

Staff uses every measure possible to prevent accidents. Your child will be well supervised by caring and trained staff. Unfortunately, an accident can occur even with the best supervision. If an accident occurs that is serious the parent will be notified immediately. If medical attention is needed they will be contacted first. All accidents are documented in a report and a copy is kept in the child's file and a copy is given to the parent at pickup. If an accident is caused by or involves another child, the child's name cannot be given out and will not appear on the report. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will not be responsible for any medical payments due to any accidents at the center. We recommend that all families have their own private medical insurance when possible.

## CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

The State of Florida requires that Gates and Bridges Learning Academy and all members of childcare institutions be on the lookout for, and report to the State and appropriate authorities any and all suspected cases of abuse to a child.

At Gates and Bridges Learning Academy our center and staff are mandatory reporters of Child Abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents will be turned over directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that clients make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment. To report child abuse, call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.

## ALLERGIES

We must be aware of any known allergies that affect your child. If your child has any known allergies, you will need to fill out an “Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement”. This allows us to alert all of our staff to be on guard of their allergy. The Allergy/Food Exemption Statement must be turned into our office as soon as this allergy has been identified. This form must be updated annually. You will also need to fill out a “Authorization to give Medication” form if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

## ILLNESS AND CONTINUED HEALTH:

The health of our children at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** is the upmost importance to us. That is why we request that if a child is ill, they must remain at home. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will contact you immediately. In order to prevent the exposure to the other children it may be necessary to remove your child away from the other children until a parent or release contact arrives. The child must be picked up no later than 1 hour after notification.

Your child must be well enough to participate in all group activities, both indoors and outdoors. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, they will be sent home immediately:

- Fever over 100.4 degrees (99.4 degrees under the arm)
- Diarrhea episodes of more than 2 in a day
- Vomiting episodes of more than 2 days
- Pink eye or symptoms similar to those of pink eye
- Any Sore, Strep throat symptoms that are suspected
- Head lice are found
- Yellowish or green discharge from nose
- Mouth sores
- Skin rashes that are not diagnosed by a physician's note

- Respiratory problems including uneven breathing or severe coughing and wheezing
- Any symptoms of communicable disease
- Chicken pox or measles sores are suspected
- Appearance or behavior is unusual and the teachers agree that the child is not feeling well
- Unusual color is noticed in the child such as jaundiced eyes or skin, pale in the face, stool or urine is an unusual color. All of these conditions will require 24-hour exclusion from care or a doctor's note for the child to resume their normal attendance schedule. Children must be completely fever- free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to school.

## **HEALTH**

The center is required to have a physician's statement on file verifying overall good health and required immunizations. All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date or provide an exemption affidavit. The child's immunization record must be provided by the parent and all information must be current. The parent shall also provide proof of this with a form signed by a health care provider. This form will state that the child has received all current, age-appropriate immunizations. Parent's wishing to take

a religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure for providing an affidavit of such a religious opposition. Children four and older are also required to have a vision and screening on file.

## **MEDICATION**

All medication to be given to children must be in the original bottle with the instructions clearly printed on it as provided by the doctor's prescription or by the pharmaceutical company. All medicine including scripted and un-scripted medications must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be expired. All prescription medication must have that child's name on the bottle. All non-prescription medicine must have a permanent sticker with the child's name and the date the medication was left at the center. A "Permission to give Medication" form needs to be filled out prior to the administration of any medication.

All medications must be dropped off and picked up at the front desk, each day. These medications will be stored in a secure area inaccessible to children. Medication may not be transported to the classroom by families. NO MEDICATION MAY BE PLACED IN THE CHILDS BAG OR TAKEN INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR ANY REASON.

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** reserves the right to request a doctor's consent via handwritten prescription for any non-prescription medications. A copy of the "Authorization to Give Medication" form along with the medication bottle and any remaining medication will be given returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication.

Exceptions to this rule are life-saving medications such as breathing treatments and Epi-Pens. Any child needing these types of medications administered it will be on an as needed basis. A Medical Authorization Form will need to be completed.

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** staff will apply insect repellant & sunscreen to your child as requested. All sunscreen & insect repellant must be in spray form.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE

If a child or staff member is diagnosed with infectious or communicable disease, you will be notified by a sign on your child's classroom door. The sign will contain the name of the disease, the date diagnosed, and any symptoms that would alert you to the presence of the disease. It is your responsibility to report to the school any infectious or communicable disease for which your child is diagnosed. The student with the communicable disease must be cleared by a doctor before returning to the school. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If an emergency such as severe weather, fire, physical problems with the building, or power failure, the children's safety is our first concern. Evacuation route diagrams are posted throughout the facility. The center is equipped with a fire alarm system, fire extinguishers in each room, carbon monoxide detectors, and a weather alert radio.

Fire drills are performed on a monthly basis and all staff members are instructed on proper procedures if a natural disaster may occur. The families will be notified as soon as possible to pick up their child. If the family cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

In the event of an emergency situation that requires an evacuation of **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**, one of the following plans shall be implemented. In all situations, the caregiver in charge when evacuating shall:

Take an accurate attendee list, account for all children and staff as they board/depart vehicles, bring necessary medications/supplies and emergency records, and take a cellular phone if available to be used for emergency notifications

1. If the emergency environment is confined to the immediate area of the center, i.e. fire, or toxic fumes and the children cannot stay on the premises the children will be taken **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified of

the situation and arrangements are made for either the transporting home or care taking for the remainder of the day.

2. In the event of a major environmental hazard that necessitates larger area of evacuation such as neighborhoods, a city/town or geographical area, due to large non-confined hazard, i.e. a nuclear incident, earthquake, hurricane, etc. children will be transported to the nearest Red Cross Shelter where they will remain accompanied by caregivers while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified and arrangements are made for their pick up.

**Staff will remain with and care for the children at all times during an event.** Attendance will be checked wherever children are moved. Staff will bring any necessary medications, supplies, and emergency records.

# CHILD CONDUCT

## DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE POLICY

At Gates and Bridges Learning Academy we believe in positive discipline and redirection to teach children boundaries and proper behavior in a group setting. In older groups, a “cool down time” may be necessary to take the child out of the situation, so that they can calm down and think about their behavior. We expect our teachers to model the behavior that they expect from the children. Children learn best from positive adult role models, so our teachers will treat each child with respect and patience. Positive statements will act as reinforcement for positive behaviors. Discipline will be appropriate to each child and their developmental level.

Any demeaning, humiliating, or abusive language toward a child will not be accepted. No physical abuse, corporal punishment, or threats of corporal punishment will be allowed. Discipline may not consist of leaving the child alone in a room, taking away food, drink, or bathroom, or making the child stay silent for an unreasonable length of time. Recurrent discipline problems may result in a parent meeting with the teacher

and the director. Together we will try and reach a solution to try and improve the behavior situation. If no solution can be reached or inappropriate behavior continues despite the resolution, the director reserves the right to remove a child from the center or take an alternate action including but not limited to suspension.

## **BITING**

The center understands occasional displays of aggression, like biting, are typical in young children and are part of normal childhood development. We understand that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. Repeated incidents of biting will not be tolerated. Our objective is to ensure that our center maintains the highest level of safety within our environment and our staff members respond appropriately to aggressive behaviors.

## **FAMILY COOPERATION**

A positive and constructive working relationship between the school and its families is essential to the fulfillment of the school's educational purpose. The school reserves the right to not extend the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment to a child if the school reasonably believes that the actions of the child's family make such a positive relationship impossible. The school also reserves the right to expel a child at any time if, in the judgment of the Director or Owner, conduct of anyone directly associated with the child, is not keeping with the school's standards. There will be no refund of tuition where such enforced withdrawal occurs.

## OTHER GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### MEALS AND SNACKS

At Gates and Bridges Learning Academy, all meals will be served family style in your child's classroom. Meals will be relaxed and unhurried. All of the meals at Gates and Bridges Learning Academy will be nutritional and surpass the state guidelines for nutrition. A menu will be posted in each classroom as well as on the parent bulletin board in the lobby. You may provide a labeled sack lunch or snack for your child if there is a particular food, he/she does not prefer. This food will only be allowed to be eaten at designated mealtimes. We cannot refrigerate or heat children's sack lunches, so for safety please plan accordingly. Breakfast will be served from 7:45am to 8:45am. Lunch will be served between 11:00am to 12:00pm. Snack time is at 3:00pm. A snack will be provided for the after-school program when they arrive at the center.

**\*\*Parents of infants are to provide all jar food, cereal, formula, and snacks\*\*** If what the center provides is not what your child eats.

## **DIAPERING**

Children are checked at scheduled intervals throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left wet or soiled clothing. For children who wear diapers or toilet training pants, each family must provide ample supply of diapers/wipes for each week. All items must be labeled with the child's first and last name. You can bring a package of diapers to leave at the center. You will be notified when your child is running low on diapers. If you run out of diapers, we will provide them to you automatically for a fee of \$2 per diaper. If you have any questions, please check with the office.

## **INFANT SAFE SLEEP**

We follow the licensing guidelines on infant safe sleep practices. This includes

- 1) Infants up to twelve months of age should be placed for sleep on their back for every nap or sleep time unless an infant's primary health care provider has completed a signed waiver indicating that the child requires an alternate sleep position;

- 2) Infants should not nap or sleep in a car safety seat, bean bag chair, bouncy seat, infant seat, swing, jumping chair, play pen or play yard, highchair, chair, futon, sofa/couch, or any other type of furniture/equipment that is not a safety-approved crib
- 3) If an infant fall asleep in any place that is not a safe sleep environment, staff should immediately move the infant and place them in the supine position in their crib;
- 4) Soft or loose bedding should be kept away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments. These include, but are not limited to bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sleep positioning devices, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, bibs, etc. Also, blankets/items should not be hung on the sides of cribs.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

Potty training for children under 2 years of age while your child is enrolled at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will take communication and consistency, but it can be managed effectively if you and your child's teacher become partners. Together you and your child's teacher will discuss and agree on the potty-training process. Using the same method and key phrases at home and at the childcare center will minimize confusion and will simplify the process. During the training process your child should start with pull-ups and move into training pants as they progress. Your child will need several changes of clothes each day during this time.

Please bring clothes that are easy on and easy off (No overalls and body suits). Each child will begin at a different time and progress at a different rate. The staff will provide documentation of your child's progress each day. The director and staff are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training progress at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**. An additional fee weekly will be enforced for a child 3 years and older of \$5 per day, \$25 per week.

## **BREAST FEEDING**

Children at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** who require to be breastfeed will be provided comfortable accommodations.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from the center. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will provide transportation for school aged children to and from school at the locations that this service is offered. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will provide transportation for field trips as the opportunities arise. Parents will be notified about field trips in advance and written permission will be obtained. The center complies with all State laws that pertain to motor vehicles as well as transporting children who are enrolled in a licensed childcare center.

If your child is participating in our transportation program, you must notify the Director of any schedule changes before the bus run begins. This policy ensures the safety of your child and lessens confusion at pick up time from school. If we are not notified that your child does not need transportation from school to **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** in the afternoon before the bus leaves our facility, a \$5 fee will be charged. Please have your child at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** by 6:30a.m. for the morning bus run.

## FIELD TRIPS

During the summer months and on occasions **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will take the children (ages 4 and up) on off premise field trips. Parents are required to sign a written permission slip for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be posted on the child's classroom door in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. The field trip permission slip must be signed, and all trip costs must be paid in advance (if applicable) in order for your child to attend. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will provide all required supervision for all field trips. Due to availability of space on the bus, parent attendance is not available.

## PARKING POLICY:

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** has a drop-off area by the doors to each building. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate you will be in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come into drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We request that unless your child is requested to bring something for a class activity that all personal toys stay at home. The only personal belongings that are accepted are a small blanket and one comfort object. These items will be kept in a cubby until naptime, and then returned to the cubby after nap until the child is picked up. We will not be held responsible for personal items, as personal items often become lost, broken, or the subject of arguments. These items must be labeled and must fit in the designated cubbies. **No oversized blanket or pillows will be allowed.** We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

## DRESS CODE

Children should dress in school uniform Monday-Thursday and dress casual Friday's and suitable for the weather. Children will be participating in messy activities (i.e. painting) occasionally and will also be playing outdoors as the weather permits. Please send your child with an extra set of clothing (labeled) that can be left at the center in case of an accident.

Please have weather/temperature appropriate clothing for your child. We will still be taking the children outside to play on chilly days, so a jacket or coat will be required. This includes closed- toe shoes only. **No open-toe shoes – flip flops, CROCS or sandals – or pajamas will be allowed at school.**

## NAPTIME

We provide a quiet rest/nap time for all full-time children. Some children may need sleep and others may only rest. We try to accommodate each child's sleep needs. We provide a mat for each child. Children who cannot

go to sleep but have shown us that they can rest quietly may be given a small bag of “nap toys” or books to keep them occupied while others are sleeping.

## **CURRICULUM**

Children learn by doing. They learn through play, experimentation, exploration, and testing. Learning should be a joyful, natural experience. We have chosen a curriculum based on the developmental needs of the children each the room and to foster individual growth through opportunities for exploration. 90% of brain growth occurs from zero to 5 years old. Each class’s lesson plans and your child’s class flexible schedule are posted on the parent’s board in your child’s room. We incorporate current trends in Early Childhood and School Age Education and then structure this curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of the children in the group. Our curriculum, although it will vary depending on age, is guided by the following underlying principles:

- Children learn through dynamic investigation

- Children instigate their own learning
- Learning comes from open-ended experiences
- Adults are facilitators of children's learning

## **INFANT CURRICULUM**

We will keep your child on his/her daily schedule as much as possible. During the day, we will do activities with your child to help them develop their social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical skills. These activities may include, playing with toys, art, pretending, enjoying stories and books, discovering sand and water, music, and exploring outdoors.

## TRANSITION PLAN

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** will create an individualized TRANSITION PLAN to help children are about to transition from one class to the next. This is to help the children become familiar with the new program, teachers and children. It also allows the new teachers to get to know the individual needs of each child prior to the transition of an entire class group or several children together. The plan allows flexibility in order for us to best meet the needs of each child. Each child's individual need is different therefore the TRANSITION PLAN may vary quite a bit from child to child. Your child's teacher or the director will provide more details about transitioning when your child will move to another classroom.

## BABY-SITTING

**Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** expects parents and employees to avoid activities that create a conflict of interest to the company. If you decide to arrange off – premises care with a staff member, the staff member undertakes such service on his/her own behalf- not as a staff member of **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy**. **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** offers no assurance of the fitness of its staff members for performing these services, and none should be implied or inferred under any circumstances. **Gates and**

**Bridges Learning Academy** employees are prohibited from transporting children to and from the center that do not belong to them.

## **VISITING THE CENTER**

You are welcome to visit your child at the center at any time. We do ask that you check in with the office or sign-in desk before going to your child's room. It is the responsibility of each employee to make sure any visitor for a child or employee has checked in with the office. If you are coming to eat lunch with your child, please let us know in advance. Persons not listed on the "Pick-Up Permission" form, will not be allowed to visit your child. In a custody situation, please note that the same procedure will be followed as listed in the Pick-Up section. Parents are encouraged to pre-arrange opportunities to share lunch with their child or visit the class. Extended family members such as grandparents and aunts are also welcomed to visit in certain pre-arranged situations. The custody challenges of our current society demand that we follow strict guidelines in this regard. Feel free to contact a member of the management team if you wish to set up a "visit" from an extended family member.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Any parent wishing to help chaperone an event must go through our screening process. Volunteers are also welcome in our center. Anyone visiting or volunteering for more than one day per semester must go through a screening process. Our screening process includes, but is not limited to, 1) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have had a conviction of any law in any state, or any record of founded child or dependent abuse in any state; 2) a signed statement indicating whether or not they have a communicable disease or other health concern that could pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the children; 3) undergoing a fingerprinting and background check 4) a signed statement regarding child abuse 5) going through New Teacher Orientation. Any “visitor” who spends extended periods of time in the center will be considered a volunteer and be required to go through the screening and training listed above.

## **INTRUDERS**

The safety of the children is our first concern. Although we have an open-door policy and welcome parents to visit their children, we also have a commitment to the parents of the other children in the program. Since we cannot attest to the background of anyone that has not gone through our screening process, we also cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without requiring them to fulfill certain screening and training requirements. These are set by state law and our policies. Any individual who does not submit to our safety policies concerning “Visitors” and “Volunteers” must be considered an intruder and steps will be taken according to the “Intruder” portion of our “Safety and Evacuation” policies.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Every child’s birthday calls for a special celebration. We encourage making children feel extra special on their special day. We welcome you to bring a special snack to share with your child’s class. All food must be

commercially made and have an ingredient label. Holiday parties will take place in the classroom throughout the year. Generally, a note is posted to notify families of an upcoming party and many times families are asked to volunteer to bring food or drink. Notify us as soon as possible if your child cannot attend for religious or other reasons so we can make arrangements to care for your child during that time.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

The success of our program is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. Open and frequent communication will help your child have a positive early learning experience. We will endeavor to keep you informed concerning your child's day and overall development through several written means.

- Monthly parent newsletters to keep you informed as to the overall program.
- Parent Board – updated with current information about **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** and curriculum

- Daily written communication in the form of “Daily Report” forms, “Incident/ouch” forms, and classroom memos will be place in the child’s “cubby” from time to time.
- Parent/Teacher meetings twice each year
- Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child’s development.

## **VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Our staff wants to work with you to make sure we are providing the best childcare experience possible for you and your child. We need communication and support of our parents in order to do this. We will endeavor to be communicative during drop-off and pick-up times. However, this is not a good time for extended conversations since the staff members/teachers have responsibilities for all the children in the group. Furthermore, the person caring for your child at the pick-up time may not be the individual who has spent the majority of the day with your child. This is due to the fact that many children spend 10 hours a day the center and most of our employees only work 6-8 hours. Since children learn best in the morning, we schedule the

teachers who are responsible for the majority of the classroom development for the earlier hours and the majority of the day. We suggest that you go to your child's "lead" or "primary" teacher to obtain detailed information on your child's general growth and development. You can call to see how your child's day is going or to speak to your child's teacher for more detailed conversation. The best time to call and speak to your child's teacher is during naptime. There is always a member of management available for you to talk to in person or on the phone. You may also use the Payment/Suggestion box to leave information for Management, or you can email us at [gatesandbridges1@gmail.com](mailto:gatesandbridges1@gmail.com)

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We encourage all parents and or guardians to be involved in the activities. We believe that parental participation is key to any successful childcare program. At **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy, we strive to fill the gap created during early separation and educational opportunities** and when parents are not available. We welcome parental visits. We have an open-door policy that allows parents access to the center during operating hours. We have enclosed a sample list of some of the opportunities for involvement in our center. Parents are in no way limited to the involvement listed below. Any parent wishing to be involved in another area is strongly encouraged to contact the **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** office with their suggestion.

1. Parent Meetings (Usually 2-3 times per year)
2. Fall Open House
3. 2 individual conferences/year
4. Programs and Special activities, such as the Christmas Program
5. Special parent's involvement activities such as THANKSGIVING FEAST
6. Party Day Volunteer
7. Come and eat lunch with your child
8. Classroom Volunteer
9. Send special treats for snack or meals (please notify the teacher a day or two in advance)
10. Help with center Fund Raiser
11. Participation in a parent's group
12. Reverse Field trips (When we bring a "field trip" type activity to our property)

## **PORTRAITS AND PICTURES:**

We offer school pictures two times a year, in the spring and fall. In addition, we may take pictures of the children playing or for use on their cubbies or for use with a project or we may need pictures of children for promotional use on our website, Facebook, or Instagram pages. There is a "Photo Release Statement" in your enrollment paperwork giving us permission to take/use your child's photos.

## **GANG FREE ZONE**

Our campus, as well as any area within 1000 feet of our campus, is a gang- free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

## **MINIMUM STANDARDS/LICENSING INSPECTION REPORT**

A copy of Childcare Licensing Minimum Standards is kept at **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** at all times. If a parent wishes to review the minimum standards, they may ask the Director for the copy to review. The most recent copy of the licensing inspection report is posted on the parent bulletin board in the lobby.

## IN CONCLUSION

We hope you have found this handbook helpful in understanding our guidelines and procedures. If **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** changes any of its policies, they will be printed and handed out to each family to read, sign and return. ***Policies are subject to change at any time.*** Please speak to our director if you have any questions regarding our policies and procedures.

# Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ parent of \_\_\_\_\_  
acknowledge that I have been provided a copy of the **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** Parent Handbook.  
This Parent Handbook outlines all the policies and procedures for the center. By signing this form, I am  
agreeing to abide by the policies set forth by the center.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this page and return to **Gates and Bridges Learning Academy** staff.