



*Children of Light Academy*



## **Welcome to Children of Light Academy!**

Questions and feelings of anticipation are quite common as you make the decision of where to send your child to school. Hopefully, this Parent Handbook can help you answer some of those questions as well as help you feel that you made the right choice for your child.

There are so many issues in childcare today. Children of Light Academy strive to eliminate as many of those as possible, making your child's learning environment nurturing, loving and full of positive energy.

Preschool is the beginning of what your child will define as "school". He or she will develop an attitude about school that could carry throughout the rest of his or her "school life".

The goal of Children of Light Academy is to form that attitude into a successful one, making Children of Light Academy one of the many positive aspects of your child's school years. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers to help you with any inquiries you may have.

The Children of Light Academy is committed to supporting individual differences and diversity throughout the academy.



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

*Proverbs 22:6*

## **What are the admission criteria?**

We accept children from 6 weeks of age through 5 years of age and after care program for children ages 5 through 12 years old. We want to meet with each parent and child before enrollment of the child. This allows the school and family to begin a long and life lasting relationship in the beginning years of your child's school.

## **What about Children of Light Academy Programs? How will I know what's going on in my child's classroom?**

Children of Light Academy has developed its own curriculum for the teachers to use and develop weekly lesson plans from. The activities are theme centered and are age appropriate for each group of children. Each family will receive "take home" suggestions you can do with your child at home that deal with the weekly lesson plan. Every classroom has a Family Center that will show you each week's lesson plans, as well as schedules, important happenings and it will have a Family Interests section for you to do at the center with your child. All of these things combined should keep you up to date on what is going on in your child's classroom but if you still have questions, you are always encouraged to ask your child's teacher or your director.

## **Will my child learn the ABC's or 123's?**

Every child develops in his or her own time. Since the goal of Children of Light Academy is to give every child a positive outlook on school, we let them do just that... develop on their own. Our responsibility is to provide the children with opportunities for all aspects of learning. How do we do that? We enrich our classrooms with letters, books, counting and sorting items, number games, sensory experiences, and lots of love. The children make the choices as to where they want to learn and play, and as we all know, children learn through play. When they choose to go to the library area to spend some "play time" they are choosing to look at books with print in them (letter recognition). In the math area they may choose to sort the colored bears in-groups (grouping is the start of mathematics). Your child may choose to play in the sensory area where he or she will measure and pour (here we go with those math skills again). We also offer computers in our older classroom for the children to use throughout each day. See all the things your child may learn just by having the opportunities to choose what they want to do? There isn't a teacher pushing them to memorize flash cards or read a story out loud. Children choose to learn on their own keeping that positive attitude about school.

## **What if my child chooses only to play in dramatic play or blocks?**

Every child develops at his or her own rate. If your child loves the blocks or can't stay out of dramatic play, your child is learning important social skills. How to deal with other children, how to ask instead of take. What to do when someone does something he or she doesn't like. Your child is learning and developing small and large motor skills by balancing blocks and buttoning the buttons on the "dress up" clothes. All these skills are just as important as ABC's and 123's. When your child is ready to practice writing or counting, it will be when he or she is ready and can have a positive attitude about it.

## **What if my child has a discipline problem?**

Listening skills are a big part of a child's development. It is important that all the children can follow directions and instructions. We will work, within our capacity, with every child that may be experiencing any discipline problems. This may include behavior modification programs, phone calls to the parent at work, daily notes home, and/or special rewards for positive behavior. We will be continuously working with the parents to try to improve any unacceptable behavior.

## **At what point during the day does the programming come in?**

Children of Light Academy staff are offering bits of programming all day. Throughout the morning and afternoon if the children are not in a large group setting, there are usually small- directed groups at a table or on the carpet participating in a focused small group activity. These activities could range from art projects to matching games and activities or even a cooking or sensory experience. This gives any child who wants to participate more teacher focused attention for that activity.

## **How are the teachers trained and screened?**

All Children of Light Academy staff must go through all the appropriate fingerprinting and criminal checks as stated by the Licensing Board. In addition to that, we use an extensive hiring process consisting of a double interview and an observation period. At the time of hire our staff has a day of orientation and a day of "fun" where he or she can really spend some free time in each classroom getting to know the teachers and children before becoming responsible for a classroom. The Children of Light Academy head teacher will be responsible for helping any new staff member learn Children of Light safety policies, curriculum, and schedules.

## **What precautions do children of Light Academy take about who picks up my child?**

Anyone picking up or dropping off your child must be on the emergency contacts form and must be at least 18 years of age or older.

If someone other than those listed on emergency contacts form is picking up your child, a note signed by the parent or guardian must be submitted. At no time we will release a child if this procedure is not followed. Text messages will be accepted but NOT phone calls; therefore, we recommend you list as many people possible on the form. All people removing a child from the center must have picture identification. Again, if these procedures are not followed, we will not release your child. This is for the safety of your child and one rule we will not bend at all. If you choose to add or delete a person from the Permission to Remove Form, you must do so in writing and submit it to the Director.

All unfamiliar persons will have picture identification checked. Even if the person is just visiting your child and not removing them from the center, picture identification will be requested. These people must all be listed on the Permission to remove form, under visitors only.

## **How and when do I pay my tuition?**

Tuition is due on the Monday after the week that your child attends Children of Light Academy. If we do not receive your tuition by the close of business day on Monday a \$15.00 late fee will be charged. We gladly accept checks, cash, and money orders.

## **What hours are you open?**

We will be open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (except for the days listed in the holiday section). You are welcome to bring your child anytime within those hours.

## **What if I cannot get to the center by 9:35 a.m.?**

Our school day begins at 9:30 A.M. sharp. Children must arrive by 9:35 A.M., so they can get ready for the day.

To maintain our daycare daily instructional routine, there will be late drop fees of \$1.00 for every minute after 9:35 A.M. Children who arrive after 10:00 A.M. will NOT be allowed to enter the daycare. Parents who EARLIER have called or notified the daycare personnel about doctor's appointments, prior commitments or provided reasonable reason for being late, will be exempted from the above late drop off policy. You can call us at (727) 940-5361

Parents who earlier called or notified us about prior commitments, will have to plan to bring their children in before 11:30 A.M. We will not accept any kids for any reasons after 11:30 A.M.

## **What if I cannot get to the center before 6:30 p.m.?**

Children of Light Academy closes at 6:30 p.m. Please be considerate, our teachers have families and plans to go home to, and they expect to leave on time. If you are running a few minutes late, please call to let us know. The late pick-up charge is \$5.00 per minute after 6:30 p.m.

For more information, please see our late drop off policy and late pick up policy Contained in your enrollment packet.

## **What types of registration fees are there?**

Children of Light Academy will charge you \$50.00 *registration* fees per family and it is nonrefundable. Adding to this, we will charge a yearly program fee for the supplies and necessities that go along with the curriculum. The program fee is \$100.00 per year, per child. It is due each year at the end of August. For more information, see Children of Light Academy accountant.

## **What about when I go on vacation, or my child is sick?**

You will always be required to pay the full amount of tuition whether your child attends Children of Light Academy or not. You will be given a voucher for one free vacation or sick week per year. This voucher is good from September 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. If you choose not to use it or your child has not been absent a full week there will not be any monies refunded to you for it nor will it be carried out to the next year. Your child must be absent the full week to receive the free week.

## **What about Holiday's?**

Please visit Children of Light Academy Website at <https://www.colacademy.org/events-2023-204>

If the Holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday Children of Light Academy will observe the Holiday the Friday before or the Monday after.

## **Is the tuition discounted during those weeks?**

Tuition will remain the same during Holiday weeks since one of Children of Light Academy benefits to their staff are paid holidays!!

## **When will my tuition increase?**

Each year as our employees receive an increase in pay, we will need to adjust our tuition. Tuition increase will go into effect each August. We will give a 2-week notice before the change takes effect. However, Children of Light Academy reserves the right to increase the tuition at any time even if that means more than once per year. There is some good news though, in certain age groups when your child moves there will be a tuition decrease!

## **Will my child be going on field trips?**

All kids starting age one to VPK might participate in a walk-trip within Children of light Academy premises. All field trips permission slip **MUST BE SIGNED** in order for your child to participate.

## **My child has a special toy that they like to bring to school. Is this, okay?**

We encourage children to bring a soft animal, toy or blanket that will fit in their cubby for rest time. However, with the magnitude of toys that Children of Light Academy is proud to offer to the children we ask that any other toys be left at home. Children of Light Academy cannot be responsible for any toys that are lost or broken.

## **My child is still in diapers, how often has he or she changed?**

At Children of Light Academy toddlers aged one (1) are checked every hour or more often if needed. In the two-year-old room's diapered children are checked every hour and a half to two (2) hours. Every child will be changed as needed if it is off of the scheduled time.

## **Diaper and Wipes Policy**

It is our policy to let our parents know when we are close to running out of diapers for your child. If we have run out of diaper and/or wipes for your child, we will use our own brand. Once a pack of diapers or wipes is opened and used for a child, it is theirs to keep, and we cannot use it for another child. A pack of diapers will be an **extra \$25 charge** on your account and a pack of wipes will be an **extra \$5 charge**. Please ensure to check your child's procure for important notifications.

## **What about potty training, when will my child be potty trained?**

Usually, potty training doesn't start until the age of two (2). There are many things that go into potty training. Your child must be interested, ready and willing. We do not want to push any child into potty training. This is one area where they have complete control and any negative feelings about this could prolong the process.

For more information, please see our potty-training policy contained in your enrollment packet.

## **Is there any video surveillance?**

Yes, we have cameras in each room that record each classroom 12 hours per day. You are welcome to stop in the office and view your child's classroom for a few minutes as long as the office door is open.

## **What if my child is sad or is crying a lot?**

We will always do our best to comfort your child anytime he or she is upset. If we feel that your child is sick or in pain, we may call you to either let you know your child is upset or ask you to come pick up depending on the circumstances. Children can have "bad" days just like us. Here at Children of Light Academy we do our best to make your child feel comfortable and happy. If he or she is crying or upset, we always try to take the time to figure out what is wrong and remedy the situation.

## **What if my child gets hurt or is bitten?**

If your child is hurt at Children of Light Academy, we will provide you with an accident report that explains what happened and what marks the accident may have made on your child. Likewise, if your child hurts another child, you will receive an incident report home. A management team member and the parent will sign these reports. The parents have the right to ask for a copy of the report to keep at home.

Biting is a common, unfortunate incident that can happen to groups of children. The most common ages for the occurrences are 1 and 2. Children that bite is often looked at as aggressive or mean but that stereotype is not true. There are many reasons children bite from teething to lack of communication skills. There are some things that we can do at Children of Light Academy to help. Although we can do some things to help decline biting, we cannot guarantee that your child will not be bitten. We are more than happy to call you if this happens to your child during the day just let us know that you would like us to do this for you.

## **What if my child is the biter?**

If your child bites another child, you will receive an incident report that day. If your child is consistently biting, we will try to work with you and your child during this time. However, if we cannot help curb or eliminate the biting, **we will be forced to ask you to find other care.**

## **When is rest time and what if my child doesn't sleep?**

Each classroom goes down for rest time at a different time. We ask that all the children rest and be

quiet for at least 45 minutes. After that if your child is not sleeping, he or she will be allowed to do quiet activities on his/ her cot or at the table.

## **My child gets thirsty and hungry during the day. Will he or she be allowed to drink and eat when he/she wants to?**

Although there are scheduled snack times if your child is thirsty, at other times during the day they will be allowed to get a drink at the water fountain. Our toddlers (ones) will have water and crackers on demand.

## **What about my child's snacks and lunch?**

Children of Light Academy will provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks throughout the school day.

## **What if I am in the area and I want to stop by to see my child?**

Children of Light Academy supports an Open Door Policy, meaning that you are welcome into the center ANYTIME! In fact, we encourage it! Please remember though that with younger children sometimes it can cause separation anxiety for them when you leave, especially when it is off of their normal schedule! We are great at hiding you so you can "spy" if you want to!

## **What can I do for my child's birthday?**

With the exception of homemade goodies, you are welcome to do anything you want to for your child's birthday. Some families will have the party here with cake and sometimes even a character! Other families will simply bring in cupcakes and the teacher can give them out as a snack with the Happy Birthday song. It's up to you to just let us know your plans so we can plan the day accordingly!

## **What should my child wear to school each day?**

Your child will be running, jumping, sitting on the floor, into paint and markers all day, every day. He or she needs to be comfortable. Please keep this in mind as you dress your child each day. The only restriction we have is that your child wears some type of sneakers or tie shoe. This helps protect their feet from other little feet and anything outside!

Shoes not to be worn are:

- Flip-flops
- Jellies
- Backless shoes
- Boots
- Dressy shoes

Also, be sure to provide an extra change of clothes (including socks and underwear) in case of accidents or spills. Please label the clothing and put them in a Ziploc bag to be kept in your child's cubby.

## **What if my child is sick or needs medicine?**

For more information, please see our medicine policy and sick policy Contained in your enrollment packet.

## **Do any of the teachers do any baby-sitting?**

Children of Light Academy recognize the need of families for care at times other than during Children of Light hours. However, we cannot recommend any of our teachers for outside care.

## **How do I enroll my child at the children of Light Academy?**

Enrolling and/or reserving a future space for your child is simple.

1. Contact us to schedule a time for you and your child to visit us in our pre-school. We will be happy to answer any questions that you may have. During your visit, you will have the opportunity to meet with us, learn more about what we have to offer, and meet some of the other children that we care for. This time spent gives all involved an opportunity to get to know one another and to make sure that all personalities mix well. This is important and helps to ensure that both parties are comfortable with their surroundings and expectations.
2. After which time the registration process may begin, consisting of parent handbook, parent/provider enrollment agreement, and various enrollment forms. Once they are read, completed, signed, and returned, and the deposit has been paid, your child's space has been reserved. The registration fee is \$50.00 - non refundable - and families will be charged on Fridays for each week of attendance.
3. And the final step is to simply decide on a start date. Please download and fill out the appropriate forms at our website at <https://www.colacademy.org/regist>.

## **What are the policies on enrolment fees, tuition, payment, discounts and refunds?**

Our enrollment registration fee is \$50.00 per family and it's nonrefundable and due before enrollment of the child and secures a spot at our school. **Tuition fees will be charged on Mondays of the week of attendance and payments will be applied on Fridays of the same week.** Tuition fees will be due by the close of business on Fridays and late tuition fees of \$15.00 will be applied after 6:30 p.m. and then \$5.00 per day. Any returned checks will be charged for \$25.00. Any refunds will be documented in writing and given within two weeks of documentation. We offer a 10% discount on the second sibling ONLY.

## **What are your policies for termination?**

The first two weeks will be regarded as a trial period, in which case either party may terminate the agreement without notice. After the first two weeks of enrollment, a two-week written notice from parent or provider is required to terminate the agreement, with exception of gross misconduct on part of the provider, parent, or child. This is the grounds for immediate discontinuation of service. In case of non-payment, legal action may be taken, and the parents will pay all legal fees incurred.



We hope that this handbook has helped you with any questions you may have had. We are excited to watch your child learn and grow with us. Please remember, we want your child to be happy here and we want you to feel confident in the environment that we provide for your family. If you ever have any questions, comments, or compliments we are always here to listen and help remedy anything that you may need.

*Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*



Like and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/childrenofthelightacademy>