

BLUE JAY ACADEMY 4 KIDZ PARENT'S HANDBOOK

BLUE JAY ACADEMY 4 KIDZ MISSION STATEMENT:

Blue Jay was established to provide more than a “Childcare” for children and seeks to offer children an opportunity to develop skills early in life that will prepare them to become global citizens. We are committed to providing children and their families with the highest quality environment to prepare them for the 21st Century.

Our goal is for each student to discover incredible adventures on their way to becoming responsible, respectful citizens of the community. We understand that all children have different interests, abilities, and learning styles, so our approach to education considers each child’s individuality. Our teachers are trained to help children develop emotional skills, encourage engagement and promote individual curiosity. We are result-oriented and focused on ensuring all children are properly prepared for their next phase in their social development.

Our state-of-the-art facilities are staffed by experienced, dedicated individuals, teachers and tireless support staff, who foster a love of learning and exploring in every child. Their goal is to ensure your child’s well-being and guide them on their educational journey every day.

STATEMENT OF SERVICES:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is a year-round program that offers all day care for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years. 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.

HOURS AND DAYS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is open from 7AM to 6PM, Monday through Friday. We are closed New Year Eve & New Year Day, Martin Luther Kings, Good Friday, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day. If holidays fall on a weekend day the weekday closest to that day will be observed as the holiday. (i.e. Christmas Eve falls on Sunday and Christmas falls on Monday – Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz will be closed on Monday and Tuesday) These days will be decided in January of each year and will be posted for your convenience. All holidays will be charged at the regular rate.

OTHER CLOSURES:

Due to state training requirements Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz will be closed a minimum of 2 days during the year for teacher in-service training. This will be in the form of one day in the spring and one day in the fall. These days will be decided in January of each year and will be posted for your convenience. You will be charged at the regular rate for the weeks these days fall.

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. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz complies with the applicable state licensing regulations and policies. These requirements cover staff qualifications, facility, playground, health and safety guidelines, and child/staff ratios.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Enrollment in our program is open to all families in 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) (Proof of custody may be required). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. 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. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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's Handbook.

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 Lead 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 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday). The purpose of the informal tour is to answer any questions you might have concerning our policies and procedures and make you aware of the flexible schedule of your child(ren)s average day. At this time, we will give you a copy of the parent's 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 the section "VACATIONS, ABSENCES, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CENTER" on page E16.

GUARANTEED START DATE:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz works on a "Guaranteed Start Date" rather than a "Waiting List". Upon deciding that Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is the place for your child(ren), you will be asked to fill out a "Guaranteed Start Date Agreement" and pay a non-refundable deposit. This deposit consists of the \$75 registration fee, the \$50 annual materials fee which are due each year, and the first and last week's fees (fees through Friday of the first week in attendance and fees equal to one week's tuition at the current rate to be held for the last week your child(ren) attend or owe fees). At this time, you and the center will agree, upon the date your child(ren) will start. Prior to your first day you must bring your child's(ren's) enrollment packet(s) (one for each child) along with the following for verification: Birth certificate and shot records. Parents are required to notify the center prior to their child(ren) withdrawing including withdrawing from being on the guaranteed start list. For more information see the "VACATIONS, ABSENCES, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CENTER" section on page E-16 for more details.

PAPERWORK, FORMS and ANNUAL RENEWAL:

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 mentioned above, we require all forms to be filled out on each child prior to their initial attendance at Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. Also, each year in June, we will have you renew and refresh all your paperwork and all forms. There will be a deadline given for compliance with this requirement and a fine may be charged if the new paperwork is not turned in on time. Failure to renew and refresh paperwork does not constitute withdrawal from the program and fees will continue to accrue according to the newest published rates including all late payment convenience fees and all other fees due. Annual registration fees and annual material fees will also be added each year at this same time. If Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is penalized or fined for incomplete information on one of our admissions forms or for failure/renew this information due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

DROP-OFF:

Parents must accompany their child(ren) into the Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz area every morning and clock their child(ren) in immediately after dropping their child(ren) off in the appropriate room. Children will not be permitted in the building prior to opening hours. New families will be given a code to use to clock each child in. The clock in/out system is located across

from the office. The children are not allowed to come into the Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz area alone or to sign themselves in unless prior written permission has been given by the parent and approved by the Director. This is for their protection in case of a fire or other emergency. We require that all children have direct contact with a person upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. If any of these things are determined, the child must go home immediately.

PICK-UP:

All children must be picked up and clocked out by an adult and/or person approved by the parent and the center. All children must be clocked out before being picked up from their classroom. Anyone, including all parents, who are to be allowed to pick the child up, *must* be listed on the Pick-up Permission form or be approved in writing by a parent. In an emergency, parents may call the center and give verbal approval of an alternate individual. However, this is strongly discouraged. The center reserves the right to not allow any individual onto Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. In the event anyone out of the ordinary is to pick-up the child, please alert the office prior to that time. This is in addition to them being on the Pick-up Permission form or approval as stated above. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on this form whenever necessary. This form is re-done annually.

PARKING POLICY:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 in to drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM:

All persons authorized to pick a child up from the center must be listed on the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. To avoid confusion, it is the responsibility of the parent signing the child into our center to properly fill out all forms. In a custody situation the parent signing the child into our center takes full responsibility to ensure that this is in accordance with their specific court agreement, which must be attached to the enrollment forms if any limitation of rights is suggested by the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM. If a parent who is not listed, or who believes the information given to us was inaccurate, contests the authorization details they must first offer proof that they are indeed the legal parent or guardian and have legal rights to pick the child up. We then will require lawyers for both sides to be contacted and both attorneys will be requested to give us documentation as to the individuals approved for pick-up. The center reserves the right to not allow any individual onto our property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONSENT FORM:

This form will give us your consent to call an ambulance or your child's doctor or dentist if he/she needs emergency care. Please list your child's doctor, dentist and the hospital you would prefer. Also, please list phone numbers, addresses, and additional emergency numbers of contacts. It is strongly suggested that all emergency contacts all be listed on your Pick-up Permission form. If your child has any allergies or is on any medications, please include this information on the form as well as filling out one of the food or non food allergy forms. All of these forms will be re-done annually. Immunization cards need to be presented on or before the first day the child attends the center. A photo copy of these will be kept on file. When your child receives additional immunizations, you are required to bring your immunization card back in for us to take a current photo copy of it so that we can up-date your file. Whenever any information on this card changes – it is your responsibility to notify us and up-date or re-do this form.

INFORMATION CHANGE

Parents are to notify the center of any change in home or work phone numbers and addresses. This is for your safety so that we may reach you in an emergency. The center requires that someone listed on the Pick-Up Permission form of each child

be available within thirty (30) minutes notice to come and pick up a sick child or a child that Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz has determined needs to go home. It is required that all changes of phone numbers, places of employment, residence changes or changes in pick-up information be turned into the office immediately. Please give the Director written notice of the change as soon as possible.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:

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, ageappropriate immunizations. Parents 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. If Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is penalized or fined for non-compliance of immunization cards due to a parent's neglect, that fine will be passed on to the client responsible including an additional \$50 administration fee.

MEDICATION: AT THIS TIME, WE DO NOT ADMINISTER MEDICINE IN OUR CENTER TILL FURTHER NOTICE.

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 unscripted medications, must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be out-dated or past-dated. All prescription medications must have that child's name on the script. 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 medicines must be personally handed to the teacher in charge at the time of arrival along with the "Permission to give Medication" form (Filled out). Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 (example on page Z-23) along with the medication bottle and any remaining medication will be given returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication.

ALLERGIES:

We must be aware of any food or other known allergies that affect your child. If your child has any known food allergies, you will need to fill out an "Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement" (form on page Z-21). This allows us to alert all our staff to be on guard of their allergies. 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. We also need to be aware of any Non-Food allergies that can affect your child. If your child has any Non-food allergies you will need to fill out a "Non-Food Allergy Medical Statement" (form on page Z-22) which 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 (Example on page Z23) if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

ILLNESS AND CONTINUED HEALTH:

These guidelines are for the welfare of all our children. In order to provide a safe and healthy we rely on our parents to monitor their children with these guidelines in mind. Outdoor play is essential to your child's development. We feel that if your child is too sick to play outdoors then they are too sick for group care. A child that is ill or has a temperature of 101 degrees or above should be kept at home. All children shall have direct contact with a staff member upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior, see the Drop-Off section above. A child that is too ill to remain in the center shall be supervised and cared for until the child can be cared for elsewhere. The child will be sent home if he/she is running a temperature of over 101 degrees, if he/she is vomiting or has diarrhea, or if it is suspected that he/she has a contagious disease. In the event you are called to come pick up an ill child, you must pick your child up within 30 minutes, or overtime rates will apply. If a child needs to be sent home and their parents are unreachable, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the Pick-up Permission form. If no one is available by contact after 30 minutes the overtime rate will apply. The center reserves the right to request the child to see a physician or have a

physician's note prior to returning. For further clarification refer to the F-Section of this manual for our full "First Aid/Medication Policy" and our "Guidelines: When A Child Can Return."

ACCIDENT REPORTS:

Safety is a top priority of Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. Yet, there are times when a child will have an accident/ incident between your child and another child. If the accident/incident requires "more than a hug and a kiss", our teachers will complete a report for you detailing what happened and the nature of the injuries. If any first aid is administered, the treatment will be described to you. A copy of this accident report, signed by the teacher in charge at the time of the accident, will be provided to you and a copy filed with the Director's office. We ask that you sign the copy provided to you and return it to the Director's office to confirm that you were notified of your child's injury. This system is aimed at ensuring communication at all levels and can be a very good way to be certain little things that are not forgotten in a hasty departure. If your child happens to be injured by another child, we ask you to please respect the child's privacy by not asking us to reveal the name of the child. It not only puts our staff in an awkward situation but could cause confrontation between our families. We will handle all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

DISCIPLINE:

At Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz the staff are trained in using positive reinforcement as a means of discipline. Our goal is to find solutions and to provide the very best environment for your child. We have a detailed Discipline policy including an early intervention system which we call our Behavior Intervention Policy. These policies begin on page E-18.

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is best accomplished with the cooperation of teachers, parents and children. Children learn toileting skills through consistent positive encouragement from adults and home and at the center.

Toilet Training usually begins around 2 years of age. When a child shows an interest in toilet training, the parents and teachers should complete a Potty-Training Contract that describes how they will cooperate to encourage toilet training. This form is available from the director. This plan is a commitment to work with the child in a consistent manner; it is not a timeline for completing toilet training. This contract will be kept on file.

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 Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. Several complete changes of clothes should be kept on-center during this process.

TOYS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz has a wide variety of toys, games and other resources to offer children during center time. Preschool classes will have show and tell related to the week's lesson. Personal toys are not permitted in the center, as they can cause disputes and can be broken or lost. The exception to this is show-and-tell or sleep-toys which should be labeled with the child's name. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing.

Do not bring toy guns, war toys or other toys of destruction.

UNIFORMS POLICY

To maintain a consistent and professional environment, Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz requires all students to adhere to the following uniform policy:

1. **Mandatory Uniforms:** Uniforms must be worn Monday through Friday. Uniforms should be clean, neat, and properly fitting.
2. **Change of Clothes:** Parents must provide an additional set of clothes to be kept at the center in case of accidents or emergencies. Ensure that the spare clothes are also labeled with the child's name.

3. Footwear: Closed-toe shoes are mandatory for all students to ensure safety during outdoor activities and physical play. Sandals, flip-flops, or any other open-toed footwear are not allowed.
4. Girls' Attire: Girls wearing skirts or dresses must wear shorts underneath for added comfort and modesty during active play.

At Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz, uniforms represent more than just a dress code. They reflect the values and high standards we uphold as an academy center. Uniforms promote:

- Unity: A shared dress code fosters a sense of belonging and community among students, creating a positive and inclusive environment.
- Focus: By minimizing distractions related to clothing, uniforms allow children to concentrate on learning and development.
- Representation: Uniforms symbolize the professionalism and excellence we strive to provide daily. They showcase the pride and dedication we have in supporting your child's growth and education.

Because our program is based on play and exploration, your child WILL get dirty!! Children will have opportunities for outdoor play twice a day weather permitting. Children will go outside if the temperature is above 32 degrees or below 100 degrees with the wind chill and heat index taken into consideration

DIAPERS:

Please provide diapers, wipes and diaper ointment (if needed) for your non-potty-trained children. 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.

SUPPLIES:

Each child will be provided with all the instructional supplies necessary here at Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. An annual materials fee of \$75 will be added each June. Children who enter the center after June or prior to June of the following year will pay an initial supply fee upon registering and an additional supply fee added on June 1. No pro-rations will be given on this fee. *Please mark all items clearly with your child's name.* Additional personal items which are needed include:

- 1) A small blanket for rest time
- 2) A two-inch-thick mat which may be purchased at the center
- 3) A crib sheet for the mat
- 4) If your child prefers a small pillow and/or a stuffed animal/doll for resting. Please be sure to provide one daily or leave one in the child's cubby at school.

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 in each 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 most 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.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM:

The preschool curriculum will cover the following areas:

- Movement and Coordination Physical attention and relaxation
- Gross motor skills
- Autonomy and Social Skills
- Sense of self and personal responsibility
- Working in group setting
- Work Habits
- Memory Skills/ Following directions
- Task persistence and completion
- Language
- Oral language
- Nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays/songs
- Emerging literacy skills
- Mathematics
- Patters and classifications
 - Geometry
 - Measurement
- Numbers and numbers sense

DAILY SCHEDULE:

- Basic Addition and subtraction
- Money
- Orientation in time and space
 - Vocabulary
 - Measure of time
 - Passage of time (past, present, future)
- Actual and represented space
- Simple maps
- Basic geographical concepts
- Science
- Human, animal, and plant characteristics
- Physical elements (water, air, and light) tools
- Music
- Attend to different sounds
- Imitate and produce sounds
- Listen and sing
- Listen and move
- Visual arts Attend to visual detail Creating art Looking at and talking about art

Although your child's schedule varies somewhat day to day, a typical flow of a day's activities is below.

Activity Time: Activities specific to the weekly themes are presented along with basic activities such as puzzles, table manipulatives, dramatic play, blocks, etc.

Group Time: Group times are child-centered participative sessions. The planned group activities include reading, music, movement, finger plays, discussion, dramatization, games, and experience stories.

Outdoor time: The playground is an extension of the classroom. Children can participate in an activity of their own choosing. Inclement weather, special events, or celebrations will occasionally affect the scheduling of outdoor time.

Snacks and Meal Time: Staff sit with children while they are eating, encouraging and participating in quiet conversation.

Rest Time: Children are given the opportunity to nap or rest each day.

Specific activities vary based on age; all are posted weekly in each room.

ACCREDITATION:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz has distinguished itself as one of the top childcare centers in the City of Apopka. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz was awarded The 2024 Business 5 star rating, came in number #1 child care center in Apopka out of 18 center.

CLASS DIVISIONS AND CLASS SIZE:

We endeavor to have a challenging and appropriate atmosphere for children of all ages. Homeroom class divisions are based upon three issues. These are: the individual developmental needs of each child, state set student to teacher ratios, and the overall enrolment management plan of the center. Children not yet in school are generally divided into classes by age since this usually keeps them with children in their own developmental level and keeps our age-based student to teacher ratios easy to calculate. In most cases it is our target to have children together with the children with whom they will be attending Kindergarten.

STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS:

Student to teacher ratios is based upon guidelines set by STATE law. The following chart shows the maximum ratios that we observe.

Age of children	Number of Students	Per teacher	Group Max
Infants	4	1	8
Toddlers 12-30 months	6	1	12
2-Year-Olds	7	1	14
3-Year-Olds	9	1	18
4-Year-Olds	13	1	20
3-5's	13	1	22
5-Year-Olds not School Aged	16	1	20
4 & 5's	16	1	24
School-Age Children	20	1	No max

In addition to the teacher to child ratios each group also has a group maximum. We always meet or beat these ratios and minimums.

MIXED-AGE GROUPING

Our program encourages times for mix-age grouping of children to provide a rich learning environment that recognizes that all children are unique and develop at their own pace and according to their individual interests and abilities. In times of the day where mixed-age grouping is implemented, children who are at least one year apart in age are sometimes placed in the same classroom. Our teachers and staff are educated in mixed-age grouping to help ensure it is implemented with the utmost focus on the child's development and safety. Mixed-age grouping is an effective tool in child development providing many benefits including:

- Older children learn to be helpful, patient and tolerant, while developing increased confidence in their own skills and abilities.
- Younger children have the opportunity to learn more advanced cognitive and socialization skills from the older children.
- Individual differences in development are better accommodated.
- Children are challenged to think about problems in a more creative and flexible way as they observe children of different ages approaching problems differently than they do.

TRANSITION PLAN

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 for us to best meet the needs of each child. Each child's individual needs are 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 moves to another classroom.

SUMMER CAMP

A summer camp program is offered during the summer months for children 7-10 years of age. The camp is built around weekly themes. Activities include various art projects, music, water fun, sports, stories, cooking, theatre and field trips. A separate summer program fee is generally charged to help cover transportation costs, and a summer camp T-shirt.

OUR STAFF:

At Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 STATE 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 their 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.

STAFF AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz considers it inappropriate for parents and clients to solicit our staff to work for them either in their business or homes. We are not legally or financially liable for our employees or any of their actions when they are off the clock or no longer employed by Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. All employees have signed a statement saying that they will not engage in "care for hire" or any employment by or for any past or current client family of Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz while currently employed by Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz or for eighteen (18) months after their last day of employment. An employee who violates this policy has violated their employment agreement and is subject to possible termination. It is inappropriate for a client or parent to solicit any employee for any type of work. Clients who violate this policy may be subject to termination of services.

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 Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz and curriculum
- Daily written communication in the form of "Daily Report" , "Incident/ouch", and classroom memos will always be in our Brightwheel portal.
- Parent/Teacher meets twice each year
- Parents always have the option of requesting specific parent/teacher interaction to aid in the child's development.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

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 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 e-mail us through our web center at Bluejay4kidz@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 child care program. Children should be raised by parents. At Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz, 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 Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 snacks 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)

We also expect parental involvement in discipline and behavior intervention as outlined in these policies.

POLICY FOR PARENTS WHO CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL EVENTS:

In the event that a parent feels like they would like to be more involved in the center but cannot be due to their work schedule, or due to other conflicts, we will help them find a project or area which they can do on their own time. A member of the leadership staff will meet with the parents to find their area of interest. We will offer suggestions to them based on their interests and time. For example, if the parent likes to sew, we may offer to have them make doll clothes or repair mat sheets.

CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz, please make early arrangements with your child's teacher. Hard or chewy candy and balloons are not permitted because they pose a choking risk. (See "Bringing Food from Home" on the following page for more specifics concerning food snacks brought for parties or to celebrate a child's birthday)

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 welcome 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.

CLASSIFICATIONS:

Due to strict licensing guidelines and safety issues, we require that all individuals on our property be categorized as one of the following:

- 1) A scheduled employee during the regular course of their work day
- 2) A Child who is in our care (all paperwork has been filled-out)
- 3) Parents or others during the course of regular drop-off or pick-up (This to be approximately fifteen (15) minutes)
- 4) Delivery personnel – From a regular or expected company delivering items to the center (should be in eye sight of an employee at all times and arriving at an expected time)
- 5) Visitor's – Must be approved by the office and should be accompanied by an employee at all times not to exceed once per month and limited to a maximum of 2 hours
- 6) Volunteers – Anyone who is helping with a class party or in any other capacity or anyone who has been a "visitor" for more than once a month or for over 2 hours.
- 7) An Intruder – Action will be taken by the staff to notify the proper authorities

Therefore, anyone who is in the building or on the property for an extended period of time must be considered either a "visitor" a "volunteer" or an "intruder" including parents and employees who are off the clock.

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 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.

MEALS AND SNACKS:

Our meal and snack service consists of breakfast, morning snack, a hot lunch, and a PM snack. All food served will be nutritious and healthy. Each child will be encouraged to eat what is prepared and to try new items as introduced. Please alert our staff of any food allergies or food restrictions as we want to accommodate and respect individual preferences.

FOOD FOR INFANTS AND CRAWLERS:

Parents must provide food/ formula/ liquid/ milk for children in the Infant and Crawler rooms. The Infant and Crawler rooms are equipped with crock pots and refrigerators. All bottles are required to have a sticker with the child's name and the date the bottle was made. Please be certain to inform staff in the classroom of the type of formula your child is using, and any other facts regarding diet. Do not bring open baby food jars - Licensing requirements restrict us from serving prepared baby food from previously opened jars. Any unused baby food will be sent home or thrown away each evening. Breast milk must be handled in a manner consistent with universal precautions. Please clearly identify all breast milk.

BRINGING FOOD FROM HOME:

Breakfast and lunch can be brought from home without prior approval. The center will provide meals for the children. To ensure that the children are eating safe food, the following guidelines will be met. 1) Food may only be brought from home if a specific need warrants it, and arrangements have been made in advance with the management. 2) This food is considered a supplement to what we serve and should meet nutritional guidelines. 3) Perishable food brought from home should be contained to avoid contamination. 4) Prepackaged snacks may be brought from home for birthdays and parties that do not meet nutritional guidelines. (Please notify the child's teacher prior to bringing special treats.)

PORTRAITS AND PICTURES:

We offer school pictures two times a year, in the spring and fall. The fall photos usually include two sittings per child and should be delivered in time for use as holiday gifts. The spring portraits include one sitting and a complete class portrait. You will receive proofs before purchasing. 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. There is a "Photo Release form" (page Z-14) with your paperwork giving us permission to take your child's picture or include them in short video footage.

REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS FEES:

As stated in the *Guaranteed Start Date* section of this policy, there is a registration fee and **materials fee** that are due prior to the child's first day at Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz. These fees are due upon initial enrollment annually each June. 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. Children who attend in a "Drop In" fashion who pay the "Drop In" rate will be considered as continuously enrolled for that school year and will only be required to pay one registration and one material fee provided, they continue to fit the definition of this 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 attendance habits of the child who has the spot. 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. Contracts are re-done annually prior to the first of June. Since the weekly set fees remain the same, no bill will be given to remind you of these

fees. A monthly statement of activity will be sent out usually prior to the 15th of each month. 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, schools 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.

PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Weekly fees are due **in advance** on Friday for the Upcoming week. There will be a \$50.00 late payment convenience fee added if the account is not paid by the close of business on Monday. An additional \$5 maintenance and collection fee will be added each day the account is not paid in full. 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 \$50.00 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: BLUE JAY ACADEMY 4 KIDZ.**

Payments may be given directly to Director or may be paid directly in our Brightwheel system. 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 week's fees in advance. This will also be adjusted annually as the contracted rates change. See the REFUNDS policy below. Registration fees are non-refundable. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz to collect this amount. If Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz elects, it may immediately terminate all services provided by it including but not limited to the immediate dismissal of the children from it's facility.

DES/ STATE PAID TUITON CLIENTS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is authorized to receive payments from DES and other Federal/State daycare assistance programs. If you qualify for free or reduced meals at a public school you might be eligible to receive help through DES. Our participation in this program in no way limits our freedom or right to set and enforce the policies listed in this handbook. Clients wishing to use DES assistance must make these arrangements on their own and list us as their DES Childcare provider. You may enroll in the program as a DES client once the office has received a letter of authorization from DES or a phone call from the Des case worker, establishing your eligibility in our program. Clients wishing to transfer from a private pay client to a DES client must come to the office and dill out a DES Start Agreement. The annual registration fee and material fee is generally the responsibility of the client and not that of DES. All DES clients are also required to pay the last weeks fees in advance. A payment plan may be arranged to help facilitate collection of this fee at the discretion of the director.

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz also requires that all DES clients pay for any absence above 2 per month. DES clients will be allowed to be absent for one vacation week each year (September through August) without being charged the weekly fee provided that it is pro-approved through the office at least one week prior. DES clients may also be required to pay the difference between our private pay rates and the rates that DES has established. Refer to the DES Start Agreement for clarification concerning these issues.

DES clients may also have a daily co-payment that is set by DES. This is based upon family income. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz requires that all DES co-payments be made weekly on Monday in advance of service. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz does the book keeping on DES accounts once per month after the service has occurred. All PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES listed above for self billed clients will also apply to DES clients. It is the responsibility of each DES Client to insure that they have no balance when the previous months fees and co-payments are added on the account. Failure to do so will result in a late payment fee. Failure to make co-payment amounts will void your contract with DES whether you stay at Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz or move on to another center.

DISCOUNTS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz is pleased to offer the following discounts: 1) 2% discount for accounts that pay for the entire month in advance by the 3rd of each month. 2.) \$5.00 per week discount for each additional sibling currently enrolled full time in the program and are being charged weekly fees.

REFUNDS:

We do not issue refunds. In the event you have overpaid a 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.

RECIPTS AND STATEMENTS:

Receipts are available upon request. Annual statements for tax and accounting purposes are available upon request for all accounts with a zero balance.

LATE PICK-UP FEE:

There will be a \$5.00 fee added per minute if pick-up takes place after closing. This fee is non-negotiable and is the responsibility of all clients. Parents, or those picking the children up, are required to call ahead if they feel they are going to be more than 5 minutes late. Parents notified that a child is ill and needs to leave the center for the day a "reasonable period of time" to pick-up the child or the above "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. If no parent or emergency contact can be located within 30 minutes of trying to contact the parent, the "Late Pick-up Fee" will also apply. An attempt will be made to contact individuals on the emergency contact list after children have been left 15 minutes past closing. Children left at the center later than 60 minutes past closing will be considered abandoned and Child Protective Services will be informed.

VACATIONS, ABSENCES AND LEAVING THE CENTER:

Vacations and illnesses will be charged at the regular weekly rate. We request that all absences be reported to the Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz office prior to or the day of absence. We require a two-week written notice prior to your child leaving the center or a change in your child's contract. Fees for two weeks will be added if a two-week written notice is not given prior to your child leaving the center. Failure to notify the center will cause all fees to continue until written notification is given. When the notification is finally given, two additional weeks will be added. This handbook includes a form to use when giving a two-week written notice of leaving the center (page Z-27) or Vacation Request (page Z-26). The center reserves the right to require the disenrollment of a child according to our "Discipline Policy" and or the "Behavior Intervention Policy". The center also reserves the right to require the dis-enrollment of any child whose parent and or guardian has become a problem at the center or who has developed and un-cooperative, aggressive, dissatisfied, or angry demeanor towards the center, its policies or its staff.

Vacation Request:

Each child is given one week of vacation with no tuition charge. If your request for vacation is for more than one week, you must remit 50% of your child's current tuition to hold your child's space that week off. After 2nd week vacation request Tuition will be charge at regular rate. Weekly rates are not based on attendance but rather reserving your child's spot. If at the end of your vacation time you have not returned to the center, you will forfeit your tuition.

Other Time Off:

Time off for reasons other than illness or vacation will result in weekly tuition being due. This is not based upon attendance but rather on a weekly or monthly fee that is due regardless of the attendance habits of the child who has the spot. 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. In case of a family emergency, please notify the center director and these situations will be considered individually at the director's discretion.

QUIET TIME:

It is our philosophy that children under 5 years of age need adequate quiet time and rest, as a part of their daily routine. Since all the children are constantly engaged in stimulating activity, we require that everyone rest on mats after lunch. Realizing each child's rest needs are different, we try to offer alternative ways of resting by providing soft music, stories, etc. for those who choose not to sleep. Infants' individual schedules will determine when they nap. According to "American Baby" the following chart is a guideline as to the sleep needs of children under 15 years of age:

Age	Suggested Hours of Sleep	Number of Naps Suggested
One Month	15.50 hours	3
Three Months	15.00 hours	3
Six Months	14.25 hours	2
Nine Months	14.00 hours	2
One Year	13.75 hours	2
Eighteen Months	13.50 hours	1
Two Years	13.00 hours	1
Three Years	12.00 hours	1
Four Years	11.50 hours	0-1
Five to Nine Years	10-11 hours	0
Ten to Fifteen Years	9-10 hours	0

We believe that children need a balance of activities that include large motor and active play as well as structured quiet time. Our program includes a quiet time for all children Kindergarten and younger. All children from 1 year of age through pre-K will receive a quiet time each day for a specified length of time. This will be established by their flexible schedule posted in that respective classroom.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY:

The State of STATE requires that Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz and all members of child care 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 Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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.

The following steps are to be taken if a staff member is suspected of child abuse:

- A staff member who has a situation or investigation pending should immediately notify the Director or most senior leadership staff member in the building.
- The person who suspects abuse should bring it to the attention of the Director or most senior leadership staff member in the building.
- The supervisor will check on the complaint and if they agree that there may be abuse, the supervisor will report the incident to Child Protective Services and our State licensing authority.
- We will then follow their advice regarding whether or not to suspend the staff member

If a staff member is found in a case of child abuse, we will take the following steps:

- We will allow the staff members to appeal the decision
- The Director or an appointed member of the leadership staff will meet with the individual to go over the incident and form an opinion as to its validity and/or consequences to the Center and the individual.

- Based on the advice of our licensing agent, we will either suspend the staff member or allow them to continue their job until the appeal is completed.
- The staff members will meet with the Director or an assigned member of the leadership staff during this time and steps will be taken to ensure that there won't be any problems.

If after the appeal the decision is still founded, we will take one of the following steps based on the advice of our licensing agent:

- The staff member will be terminated from their position at the Center, or
- We will inform the parents that we have a staff member who has a founded child abuse on record. We will also let the parents know what the charge was.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY:

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to the center and for arranging their own car pools. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz will provide transportation for school aged children to and from school at the locations that this service is offered. Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz 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 child care center. The transportation policy in its entirety is found in section K of this Handbook. Parents will also need to fill out the form on Page Z-13. This form should be re-done annually.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz complies with the minimum insurance coverage as suggested by our independent agent. For more information concerning policies and liability see management.

ADDITIONS AND CHANGES:

Blue Jay Academy 4 Kidz reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this handbook as the needs arise. The center will make all changes and additions available at the time these changes are made. Clients and customers will be notified of these changes through the normal written communication system of the center at the time they are made effective.