



PARENT HANDBOOK

Updated January 2019

Hello Parents!

Thank you for choosing Discovery Time Learning Academy. We are looking forward to getting to know you and your family.

This parent handbook should serve as a guide for your family as we work together to ensure a positive early childhood experience. This parent handbook is updated each year in January and is included in our online parent resource area but may be updated with additional information or changes at any time if deemed necessary in order to offer the best quality program to our children and families.

Feel free to contact the Center Administrator with any questions or comments.

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Preparing for your First Day

Children react differently to the separation from their parents when coming to school in the mornings. Some children are full of confidence and are excited to be with other children while other children are frightened or angry. If it is your child's first away from you, please be sure to make every effort to spend additional time in the beginning to help your child become comfortable in his/her new environment. Here are some tips:

1. Start talking about going to a new school as early as possible and consider visiting the school with your child prior to the first day of school.
2. Consider a shorter day during the first week if possible.
3. Quickly slide into your routine. Be consistent with who brings the child to school & pick-up/drop-off times.
4. Take your child to the classroom, give a big hug and kiss, let them know you will be returning and leave the room. If your child is upset when you leave the classroom, take it in stride, they have usually calmed down by the time you make it to your car.
5. Remember to label all food and drinks sent from home with your child's full first and last name and the date daily. Tops to bottles and food containers should also include the child's first and last name and current date.
6. Remember to bring a cot bedroll for all children who sleep on cots daily.

Remember - You may call and check on your child at any time.

We Appreciate Feedback

If at any time you have questions or concerns about the care of your child, please inform your child's teacher and/or the program director. We also love to share compliments with teachers who are going above and beyond to provide the highest quality care so please share those as well. Anonymous feedback is also welcome via a link to a family feedback survey included in each newsletter.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to *support* families, *guide* discoveries, and *empower* children to be their very best!

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Owner and Administrator Stephanie Harris holds a BBA in Business Management and a Masters Degree in Special Education. Ms. Stephanie founded the center in April 2014 with over 10 years of experience in education.

All prospective employees are screened on a broad range of background information including a review of both their education and experience. The personnel selection process includes a thorough reference check and background checks required by VA State Licensing standards including a review for criminal history and a child abuse clearance. Ongoing training in Early Childhood Education is required for all staff regardless of education level at hire.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Discovery Time Learning Center we believe in child-centered, play-based education. Our early childhood programs are built upon five general principles: every child's learning is different, environment shapes learning, strong teacher - child relationships make a difference, parents are partners and play is essential.

This philosophy is designed to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment that supports the families, respects the child, builds character, and encourages individual development so that children may explore, learn, and develop at their own pace with the guidance of trained and experienced staff.

At Discovery Time we believe that children learn best when they are engaged, motivated, intrinsically curious, and having fun. Our program emphasizes learning and development using the discovery approach which encourages children to learn through discovery as they play and interact with age-appropriate activities and equipment. In this environment, our early childhood educators nurture **and** educate your child by serving as facilitators of learning rather than distributors of knowledge. Furthermore, we understand that no two children are the same and thus provide a child-centered which emphasizes the process rather than the product as we aim to foster a sense of accomplishment and pride in children that allows them to develop at their own pace.

Discovery Time values and promotes the active involvement of parents in our program. We welcome you to share your insights, talents and interests so that learning becomes a shared experience that will continue throughout your child's educational process.

OUR PROGRAM

Discovery Time Learning Center is licensed to care for children 6 weeks to 12 years old and admits children regardless of sex, race, color, or creed. Families submit an application along with a \$100 registration fee to enroll into our program and admissions is granted based on current availability. Once a family accepts an offer for enrollment, first week's tuition is required as a non-refundable deposit. All welcome forms as well as the immunization record and a copy of the birth certificate must be submitted to start care. In addition, any special requirements for a child shall be clearly defined in writing before enrollment.

Our program operates Monday - Friday between the hours of 7 AM - 6 PM, unless a modified schedule has been noted. Parents are not permitted to enter the building prior to the opening

time even if staff are present in the building.

OUR CURRICULUM

We use a blended theme-based curriculum model inspired by Highscope's plan-do-review sequence and Creative Curriculum. Our curriculum gives each individual child the opportunity to move through discovery centers at their own level of interest and ability. The curriculum focuses on learning basic concepts and skills through hands-on experiences and activities. Some centers are designed to develop large and small motor skills while others are more academically oriented. Through our program, each child is given the tools needed to encourage the growth of the whole child that guides children towards developmental milestones through 'play' rather than pressure. Lesson plans are posted in your child's classroom.

Discovery Centers: In each area of our classrooms, your child will find a variety of materials to manipulate, explore, play with, and share. The room is organized to encourage your child's natural curiosity and desire to learn about the world while building on each domain of child development. In addition, centers feature theme and skill based materials designed to guide individual discoveries.

- **Creative Arts:** Here are the raw materials for creativity. A variety of supplies are provided to stimulate each child's imagination. In addition to building fine motor skills, art aids in the expression of feelings and ideas.
- **Language and Literacy:** Our literacy area includes our classroom library, writing area, and word wall organized to promote pre-reading and prewriting skills, understanding of print concepts, and oral language development.
- **Block Building:** Blocks of different sizes and shapes are arranged on shelves along with small cars and an assortment of "little people" to encourage children to build replicas of their world and creations of their imaginations. They are developing an understanding of the relationships between size and shape while working alongside friends.
- **Dramatic Play:** Children experiment with different roles as they explore the familiar and the unknown through pretend play. This area is filled with props and dress-up clothes to encourage imagination. Dramatic play promotes sharing, compromising, verbal skills and an understanding of symbolic representation.
- **Manipulative Play:** Children develop fine motor skills, hand/eye coordination, and practice problem-solving skills while stringing beads, putting together a puzzle, building legos or using their fingers and hands in other creative ways.
- **Math and Science:** For young children, daily life IS science. Children make hands-on contact with materials and then take time to investigate and manipulate those materials to form conclusions. During manipulation, children are motivated to explore mathematical concepts such as sorting, classifying, comparing, and understanding of size, shapes, and patterns.
- **Sensory Play:** Our ever changing sensory center is designed to ignite a powerful sense of curiosity. Children use their 5 senses to make new discoveries and build on prior knowledge. Sensory play can offer a means of excitement on a cold or rainy day, a distraction for a nervous newcomer, or even a comforting option for a child needing some slow paced fun. Some activities may include food.

DAILY ROUTINE

Family Schedules

To minimize traffic congestion for both pickup and drop off, all families using a vehicle will be

assigned a 10 minute window for both drop off and pickup at enrollment. Schedule adjustments should be made in writing and will be approved as capacity allows. Schedules are not required for families who walk or bike to school but all families must follow the arrival and departure policy regardless to method of transportation.

Infant Schedule

Discovery Time personalizes care for each infant based on his or her unique schedule, nutritional guidelines, and any other special attention required. Your infant's primary caregivers learn to respond appropriately to his/her unique temperament, needs and interests by being the one who almost always diapers, feeds, and puts him/her to sleep. Your caregiver will provide a daily report detailing the amount of time the infant slept, the amount of food consumed and the time, diaper changes at school, developmental milestones, and for infants, who are awake and cannot turn over by themselves, the amount of time spent on their stomachs.

Toddlers - PreK Schedule

Following a consistent routine each day gives children the sense of security they need to make choices and take risks, which opens the door to exciting discoveries and learning opportunities. Each classroom's schedule is posted and includes the following:

- **Small Group Time** During this time, a small group of children meet with an adult to experiment with materials, try out new skills, and solve problems. Adults develop a small-group activity based on children's interests and particular skills that suit children's developmental learning needs. Though the adult plans the activity and sets it in motion, children are encouraged to freely make choices about how to use the materials. During this time, teachers also join students in centers and complete observational assessments.
- **Large Group Time** Large group time builds a sense of community. Up to 20 children come together for movement and music activities, interactive storytelling, and other shared experiences. Large-group time provides an opportunity for listening, developing attention span, promoting oral communication, and learning new concepts and skills.
- **Outdoor Play** Children sixteen weeks and older spent 60 minutes outside each day, weather permitting. Outside children participate in active play, promoting physical development through gross motor activities.
- **Transition Times** Transitions are the minutes between other blocks of the day. Children engage in singing, chanting, and hand-clapping as they move from one activity to another.
- **Napping** All children at Discovery Time are required to rest in the afternoon for at least 30 minutes. Teachers will assist those who are having difficulty relaxing by patting or rubbing their backs. Should your child not nap after 30 minutes, quiet books and activities may be provided for them. Nap/rest time is between the hours of 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Naps may start or end early due to special activities. Infants sleep on their backs unless they can rollover on their own.
- **Toileting** Children who are beginning to potty train or who are potty trained use the bathroom on a regular schedule. Potty training usually begins once your child enters the two year old classroom upon parent's request.

Field Trip Policy

Teachers are responsible for arranging field trips for their classrooms. They are required to inform the director and/or program supervisor of what the field trip involves. They are required to notify the director or program supervisor two weeks in advance for field trips requiring bus transportation. The director and/or program supervisor are verbally notified of field trips in the neighborhood on the day of the event as long as it is within walking distance. Any field trips out

of the neighborhood require parent consent via a written permission slip. There will be admission fees on occasional field trips and/or fees for public transportation by bus. All field trips will be age appropriate for children who are invited to participate. Parent chaperones are always welcome to join us for field trips by signing up with teachers in advance. Chaperones should adhere to all policies and will assume full responsibility for their child while participating in field trips. Chaperones will be responsible for the associated cost of field trips and should bring their own lunch when required.

PARENT - TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parent-Teacher Conferences as well as daily communication with your child's teacher are essential to your child's development. If you have specific questions or concerns about your child, the classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up or drop-off. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held a minimum of two times per year.

CLASSROOM ORIENTATION AND TRANSITIONS

Children who are new to our center or to a classroom may participate in a room tour and positive social activities to help orient them to the new environment. Families may contact the school at anytime to check in on their child's day. As children progress through our program, Discovery Time Learning Center makes every effort to ensure that children's developmental needs are met. Children in our infant and toddler program will transition to the next classroom when they are developmentally ready and when space is available. Children in our two year old and preschool program will generally transition with their class based on their birthday using guidelines from the public school system unless an exception has been made by the Program Director.

TRANSITIONING TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Our program assists families in the transition from the center to elementary school. Teachers will provide you with information on local schools, help you with ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school, and provide information on what to expect. Transition activities are integrated into the preK curriculum. Children will participate in graduation and may take a field trip to a local school or create a goodbye book to commemorate special friends and times while at Discovery Time.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

At Discovery Time we believe that many problems are avoided by keeping children engaged in activities that are appropriately challenging and interesting and maintaining a predictable routine. Each classroom has clearly established rules for appropriate behavior that are consistently reinforced. These rules are intended to ensure the child's safety and the safety of others, as well as promote appropriate social development and relationships with peers and adults. At no time is physical punishment, punishment related to food, naps, or the use of the bathroom allowed nor should children be subjected to harsh or cruel treatment, humiliation, abusive language.

We are committed to using positive discipline techniques designed to empower children to learn to be responsible for their own behavior. Such techniques include offering choices, positive

reinforcement, redirection, and verbal reminders of behavioral expectations. In some instances, a calming time may be necessary in order to help a child regain control of him/herself when other methods have failed. During this period, the child is seated in a designated area within sight and sound of staff for no longer than five minutes.

If persistent behavioral problems occur, a parent-teacher conference will be requested by the program director and/or teacher, and parent/guardian to discuss concerns and appropriate interventions. There are extreme situations when the services of the center may be terminated immediately, such as when a child's behavior poses a risk to their well-being of other children. In practice, immediate termination due to behavior is an unusual occurrence.

DRESS CODE

School Uniform

Children should be fully dressed when they arrive at school. Uniform shirts are required for children in our toddler, twos, preschool and preK classrooms. Bottoms should be practical and comfortable to allow for active and messy play. Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes. All clothing must be labeled with the child's full name. Discovery Time is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing. In addition, failure to meet dress code including the required uniform shirt are grounds for immediate termination of care.

Please do not dress children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting. Additionally, children are not permitted to wear beaded jewelry of any kind as it poses a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program.

FOOD POLICIES

Discovery Time provides breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack to all children who are able to eat table food in our toddler - preK classroom following the USDA standards for nutrition. If your child is not yet eating table food or has an allergy that cannot be accommodated by our catering company, you are responsible for providing food each day.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Additionally, parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions on the child's registration form. Communication regarding allergies and dietary restrictions must always be providing in writing via an update to the registration form to ensure that all staff are made aware of your child's health and safety requirements. In some instances, classroom teachers may use food in cooking or sensory activities. Restrictions for your child regarding such activities should also be provided in writing via an update to the registration form. An alternate activity will be provided in such instances.

Infant Feeding

We will feed your child according to the instructions that you provide or on demand. Parents must bring a full day's supply of prepared bottles and jarred food for your child each day. All bottles, jars, cereal, etc. should be labeled with your child's full name (first and last) and the

date. Contaminated, spoiled or incorrectly labeled food will not be served to children. In the case that adequate food is not sent from home or is incorrectly labeled, immediate pick-up may be required or parents may be required to return to school to label containers or supply additional food. Infants who can not hold their bottles or spoon feed on their own are assisted by a teacher. Children do not feed on the floor or boppy pillows. Children are either held or placed in a highchair. Each family is responsible for providing a burping cloth for their infant.

Food Brought From Home for Toddlers - PreK

Morning snack, hot lunch, and afternoon snack, will be served daily. (School age children will bring their own lunch.) Meals are served at the times posted on the classroom daily schedule although special events may cause us to make adjustments to these times periodically. Monthly menus will be provided by Discovery Time. Please see the Director about meal concerns and obtain approval prior to bringing in a meal alternative. Children under 4 years of age should not be sent in with food that are a choking hazard. Examples of these foods are hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), hard candy, raw peas, and chunks of meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Please do not send your child to the center with any of these foods. Please also adhere to the classroom allergy notice and note that we are a nut free facility.

Nut Policy

Discovery Time monitors for nut products and families may not bring foods or products with nuts into the center. Due to the risk of extreme allergic reactions to peanut butter and any nut products, Discovery Time prohibits foods containing such ingredients.

Celebratory Meals and Snacks:

We celebrate many cultural, family and patriotic holidays within the school including Birthdays. We believe that sharing different cultural backgrounds through special events develops both the child's healthy self-awareness and a positive awareness of others. Items to be consumed by children other than your own must be store bought in a sealed package. Additionally, parents are required to note on your child's registration form if you would not like your child to eat meals or snacks provided during these occasions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Immunization and Physical Requirements: An updated immunization record that is signed and dated by your child's physician is required every six months for children under the age of two. As a best practice, please provide the updated immunization record following each immunization visit. A physical that is signed and dated by your child's physician is also required within 30 calendar days of your first day of care. Children who do not have a current or properly signed and dated immunization or physical on file with our program may be excluded from care.

Medication Administration: The center is under no obligation to administer medication of any kind and may refuse to give medication if staff feels that is not appropriate. All medication must be in the original container with label. Medications will be given following the direct order from both the medication label and instructions on the medication administration sheet signed by the parent. A doctor's note is required for any medication to be given 10 days or more as well as medication that is not over-the-counter or requires a physician to be consulted per the original instructions. Please deliver all medication directly to the Director as it can not be left in classrooms. Medication will be stored and locked out of reach of children.

Medicine and Illness

To ensure that your child receives the best possible care, sick children are not permitted to

attend our center. Should your child become ill at school, you will be called for immediate pick-up of your child. Emergency contacts may be contacted if you can not be reached. Children who exhibit any of the following symptoms may not be brought into the center: temperature of 100 degrees or higher, skin rashes that have not been treated by a physician, diarrhea and/or vomiting, conjunctivitis (pink eye), presence of head or body lice, yellowish skin or eyes, symptoms recognized in the VA Health Department's current communicable disease chart.

Children who are sent home **MAY NOT** return until free from symptoms for at least 24 hours or until they are on medication prescribed from a physician for 24 hours. Children who are receiving fever-reducing medicine are not cons

Virginia law requires that parents be notified if their child is exposed to a communicable disease. As soon as we are aware of such exposure, we will post a notice in the center. If anyone in your home has a reportable communicable disease you are required to tell the center director. If your child is exposed to a communicable disease or is infected with a communicable disease, please let us know immediately.

Use of Health Consultants and Health Education

The qualifications of a health consultant may include pediatrician, pediatric nurse practitioner, or an LPN or R.N. or Ph.D. experienced in childcare health. Our health consultant is available to review updates to health policies and serves in an advisory role for our program. Additionally, staff receive training in child development including child health and safety annually.

Periodically, our program may provide resources in the areas of health education and safety to families.

Infant Sleeping Policy

Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. When, in the opinion of the infant's licensed health care provider, an infant requires alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements, the provider must have on file at the facility written instructions, signed by the infant's licensed health care provider, detailing the alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements. Caregivers will put the infant to sleep as specified in the written instructions. 2. When infants can easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be initially placed on their backs, but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants are placed on their back to sleep, but when infants can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they may adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.

Infant Suite Policy

Socks and booties must be worn at all times while in the infant suite. Siblings or older children may not enter the infant suite for the safety of all babies unless permission is granted by staff.

Smoking and Prohibited Substances and Items

Tobacco use and prohibited substances and items including firearms are forbidden on center property.

Animal Policy

Presence and care of pets or any other animals are not permitted on the premises, except if a classroom pet has been approved by the Program Director. In this instance children will wash hands after contact with the pet or the pet's materials.

Authorized Pick-up Persons

Authorized pick-up persons may be requested to present photo ID for release of any child at Discovery Time Learning Center.

Staffing

Discovery Time is committed to maintaining classroom ratios. In some extremely rare circumstances such as medical emergencies, drop offs may be halted or delayed until appropriate staffing levels have been reached. All Discovery Time staff are counted in the State ratio except for unpaid volunteers. Additionally, staff accompany children who participate in enrichment activities to ensure continuous supervision of children by qualified Discovery Time Learning Center staff.

Sanitation and Hygiene

Staff will attend promptly to the child's personal hygiene needs including diaper checks every two to three hours and more frequently as needed. Staff ensure their hands and the children's hands are washed at all appropriate times. Toys and other items that are in contact with children's mouths are washed and sanitized after each child's use. Toys are cleaned throughout the day as needed such as when coming into contact with bodily fluids.

If your child's clothing has become soiled, please check your class sanitation bin and take home soiled clothes immediately. Any clothing left in the sanitation bin for more than 7 days will be disposed of and will not be replaced by Discovery Time Learning Center.

Transportation & Safety Policy

The center does not provide daily transportation to and from the center. Transportation for field trips will be provided by third parties. Before a child is signed-in, after a child is signed-out, and any time a parent/guardian is on center property, the parent/guardian assumes full responsibility for the child. The center does not assume responsibility for the child while in the care of the parent/guardian. Please practice extra caution in the parking lots and while close to the street. Always hold your child's hand and be aware of children and families while in the parking facility.

Accidents, Injuries and Medical Emergencies

If your child is injured while at Discovery Time, appropriate first-aid care will be provided. In addition, an accident report will be filled out and provided to you. If treatment by a doctor or hospital is required, we will make every effort to contact you. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact 911 and follow the guidance of the medical professionals while continuing to try to contact you. Plans for emergency medical care or threatening incidents can be found on the back of registration forms.

Emergency Procedures

We will routinely carry out emergency evacuation and shelter in place drills. Reports of these drills will be kept on file in the office and are available for Parent Review. We have developed an emergency evacuation and shelter in place plan designed to meet the needs of our location that is available for your review. In the unlikely event of an emergency that requires extended absence from the school, all children will be evacuated to an emergency shelter where they will await your arrival. Should such an emergency occur, we will make every effort to contact you immediately and a notice will be posted at the center with information about the shelter. In all emergency situations including inclement weather or a natural disaster, Discovery Time will attempt to contact the parent. Emergency contacts will be notified and asked to arrange pick-up in the case that either parent can not be reached. Appropriate authorities will be contacted in the event that a child is not picked up within 60 minutes of center closing. Evacuation procedures are available upon request, to ensure safety and security of all children.

Child Abuse and Neglect

We are required by law to report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect. In some cases, we are directed not to notify the parents of such a report. If a child is in immediate danger, teachers are directed to call 911 for assistance.

Confidentiality

Records and all matters discussed are confidential. Information is not disclosed unless there is a written consent.

Inclement Weather Policy

To ensure the safety of our families and staff we follow the Alexandria City Public School System's inclement weather policy for delayed opening, early closings and full closure of the center. However, we reserve the right to close at the discretion of the center administrator. In the instance that Discovery Time is able to open when Alexandria City Public Schools is delayed or closed, an electronic message will be sent to currently enrolled families.

GENERAL POLICIES

Admissions Procedures & Fees

Admission is open to all children. We are licensed to accept children between the ages of six weeks to twelve years of age. Acceptance is based on a space available in the classroom serving the age group of the child and the current make up of classrooms. A family interview may be required before a space is secure. An immunization record and a birth certificate are required before a child may attend school. *Note: There is a \$100 non-refundable **annual program fee**, separate of the initial application fee. No part of this fee is refundable, including for families who do not complete a full year with our program. This fee will be processed for families who enroll after the annual fee has been billed at a *prorated amount* based on the start date of their child.*

Third Party Payments

Third party payments will be reimbursed to families via a company check unless received in proper time to apply to your Tuition Express account.

Open Door Policy

Custodial parents or legal guardians have the right to be admitted to the center during our normal business hours.

Parent Involvement

Discovery Time believes that parents are the most significant adults in a child's life and we encourage and look forward to active parent participation. We ask that parents cultivate a communicative relationship with your child's teacher. We also welcome you to participate in special occasions as well as daily activities as a classroom or center volunteer if your schedule permits. Periodically, parent education workshops are held. Recommendations for topics can be submitted via email and participation is voluntary.

Parent Council

We welcome parents to join our **Parent Support Committee** to help support matters of the school. The Parent Support Committee also helps to review curriculum and includes at least one lead teacher who implements curriculum as part of their regular duties. The Parent Support Committee meets at least once per quarter.

Conflict Resolution

In any community including educational programs, there are inevitable situations or conflicts that are potentially negative for individuals or for the community. Our program will make every effort to respond to all family grievances as quickly as possible. Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed within the center or with the classroom lead teacher. If a specific classroom concern arises, you should discuss the issue with the appropriate teacher. We encourage you to discuss more general center concerns with center management, who will involve staff members as needed. A meeting should be requested in writing via email. In the case that conflict cannot be resolved in a healthy manner or if it is deemed that the program is not able to meet the needs of the child or family in care, our program will follow policies as outlined in our parent handbook and client center agreement.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due at the beginning of each week if you pay weekly and the beginning of each month if you pay monthly unless other arrangements have been made. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for each day tuition is late. There will be a \$50.00 returned ACH / insufficient funds fee to be paid to the center in addition to the original childcare fee. Tuition is **non-refundable** for any reason including unused care. Generally, tuition is billed weekly until a child’s first full month of care. If children transition early, tuition remains the same until that child reaches the age requirement for his/her new classroom **and** is assigned to this classroom.

Drop-In Care: Offered on a space available basis for a maximum of 8 hours/day and 3 concurrent days unless a special exception has been made by the director.

Part-Time Care: Offered on a space available basis for children 24 months and older unless a special exception has been made by the director.

Late Fee Policy: The center charges a fee of \$10 for any part of the first 10 minutes late and \$2 per minute for every minute after. This fee will be withdrawn via a Tuition Express deduction. Frequent late pick-ups may result in termination of care. Please contact the center if you will be late. If the center has not made contact with the parent/guardian, emergency contacts will be called. After 30 minutes, if nobody has come to pick-up your child, appropriate authorities will be notified. Late fees are based on the time that a family exits the building, even in the case that a family enters the building prior to closing.

Holidays and School Closings

Regular tuition payments are expected for observed holidays & center closings for full-time & part-time children with no deduction in tuition for child absences of any kind or center closings of any kind. We reserve the right to close the Friday before or the Monday following if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday. **Please see the school calendar each year for specific dates including any changes or adjustments.**

<p>Holidays and Closings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Martin Luther King's Birthday ● President's Day ● Easter Monday ● Memorial Day ● Independence Day ● Last Weekday before Labor Day ● Labor Day ● Columbus Day ● Veterans Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thanksgiving Day ● Friday after Thanksgiving ● Christmas Eve ● Christmas Day ● Day After Christmas ● New Years Eve ● New Years Day <p>Early Release:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● *The Day Before Thanksgiving: Center closes at 4 PM ● *Graduation Day: Center closes at 1 PM
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Absences and Vacation Policy

All tuition fees must be paid in full when your child is absent due to illness, vacation, exclusion from care, holidays, or other closings in order to hold a spot for your child. Please notify the center director via e-mail if your child will be absent. You may also notify teachers of absence via BrightWheel.

Arrival and Departure

Each child enrolled in the center's program must be escorted into their classroom by the parent/guardian and signed-in and signed-out daily. It is the center's policy to do a general inspection of the children for any noticeable symptoms of illness or related problems. Please bring children in with a clean face and clean diaper for Daily Health Observations (DHO). The center is required by law to report any *suspicion of child abuse* to the appropriate authorities.

All children must arrive by 9:30 a.m. Children must arrive by 9:00 for breakfast. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments before 10:00 a.m. so that your child's day can go as routinely as possible. Late arrivals between 9:30 and 11:00 with written permission from director will be granted on case by case basis. **Under no circumstances will a child be admitted into the program after 11:00 AM including mid-morning pick-ups for appointments. Children may not be brought back after 11:00 AM even with medical appointments.**

During evening pick-up, teachers may provide a brief overview of the day. Parents are asked to prohibit their children from playing with resources in unoccupied classrooms in the evening that may have been already shut down and sanitized for the day.

The parent/guardian assumes full responsibility for the child anytime the parent is on the premises of the center. The center does not assume responsibility for the child while in the care of the parent/guardian.

Communication

Families are encouraged to participate in program activities and provide input on a regular basis. Parent bulletin boards should be viewed daily for lesson plan information, class schedules, food menus, and any special notices. The center provides a newsletter at least once a month.

We welcome all calls and e-mails from parents and want everyone to feel welcomed calling for any reason. We need to be contacted as soon as possible if any of the following occur:

- If your child is going to be absent.
- If someone other than a parent or guardian is going to be picking up your child.
- If information on your enrollment form changes
- If your child has contracted something that is highly contagious (strep throat, head lice, pinkeye, etc...)

Request for forms and receipts should be made three business days in advance. Door reset requests in writing via email. We make every effort to answer the phone all times although please keep in mind that your child's care is our top priority and we are not always able to answer the phone, please leave a message or send us an e-mail and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Photo and Media Release

Discovery Time Learning Center produces a variety of print and electronic media to document, promote and celebrate the accomplishments of students. In addition, Discovery Time permits families to document daily learning and accomplishments with their own photo and video

devices in classrooms as well as during special events, celebrations, and performances. Documented print and electronic media may be posted by Discovery Time including to the Discovery Time website, social media, BrightWheel application, and other electronic and print media.

Classroom Cameras

Discovery Time Learning Center provides camera access through a secure third party. All families at Discovery Time Learning Center are provided access to classroom cameras unless the WatchMeGrow terms of service are violated.

Items from Home

Our center does not assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions or clothing children bring to the center. We ask that all toys, dolls, purses, jewelry, valuables, and sweets, be left at home. If your child has a security item that they sleep with these items may be brought every day. However, these items must remain in your child's cubby until rest time when teachers and child may retrieve the item from your child's cubby.

Items for infant to send in include: 4 - 5 pre-made bottles with appropriate labels, baby food for your child's individual diet with appropriate labels, over the counter diaper ointment if required labeled with your child's first and last name as well as diapers and wipes. A pacifier with holder may be sent in but no stuffed animals may be attached to it. Outdoor items including sun block, jacket, hat, gloves, etc. should be sent in as necessary for daily outdoor buggy rides.

Items for toddlers - preK to send in include: Diapers and wipes, over the counter diaper ointment if required labeled with your child's first and last name, sippy or trainer cups labeled with your child's first and last name if needed, an appropriate blanket for nap time, and outdoor items including sun block, jacket, hat, gloves, etc.

Staff Organization

The program director will be responsible for day-to-day operations and will supervise all lead teachers and teacher's aides. Lead teachers are responsible for supervising aide's to their classroom. If you have any concerns that cannot or are not appropriately addressed by your child's teacher, please bring them to the attention of the director. In the director's absence, a site manager or lead teacher will be appointed to manage the center.

Staff Hired by Parents

We strongly discourage our employees from making independent child care arrangements with families who are enrolled at Discovery Time. Any such agreement is made as a private citizen and not as an employee of Discovery Time. Discovery Time assumes no responsibility for our employees away from school, outside their working hours, and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property. If you enter into an independent child care arrangement with a Discovery Time employee during your child's enrollment period at Discovery Time or within 6 months thereafter, and this arrangement results in our employee leaving our company, you will be billed a \$2,500 procurement fee (finder's fee).

Employee Separation

In some instances, employees may be voluntarily or involuntarily separated from our program. In order to honor the privacy of employees, Discovery Time does not discuss personnel matters with families. Staff members are also prohibited from discussing certain employment matters with families under the confidentiality clause of VA licensing standards. In order to promote harmony amongst our team, please do not approach staff members to probe for information related to the separation of former employees.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Discovery Time Learning Center adheres to a strict non-discrimination policy in its employment practices and in the provision of services to its clients. Our program will not refuse, withhold, or limit the provision of any services to any present or prospective client, or make any employment decision regarding any current or prospective employee, based on that individual's race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, veteran status, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or citizenship status or other protected status pursuant to law.

Communication

Families are encouraged to participate in program activities and provide input on a regular basis. Parent bulletin boards should be viewed daily for lesson plan information, class schedules, food menus, and any special notices. The center provides a newsletter at least once a month.

We welcome all calls and e-mails from parents and want everyone to feel welcomed calling for any reason. We need to be contacted as soon as possible if any of the following occur:

- If your child is going to be absent.
- If someone other than a parent or guardian is going to be picking up your child.
- If information on your enrollment form changes
- If your child has contracted something that is highly contagious (strep throat, head lice, pinkeye, etc...)

NOTE: Email is the preferred method of contact for notifying Discovery Time Learning Center of the information listed above.

We make every effort to answer the phone all times although please keep in mind that your child's care is our top priority and we are not always able to answer the phone. Please leave a message or send us an Email and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Exclusion of Care

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Director to decide to temporarily exclude a child from care. Circumstances include a child's health, behavior, or outstanding medical forms as well as discourteous behavior demonstrated by parents or parent's failure to provide required documents or tuition payments. Additionally frequent late pick-ups or a single late pick-up on a school day in which we are operating on a modified schedule.

Termination of Care

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Administrator to decide to discontinue a child's attendance. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made. Termination of enrollment may be the result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff or property
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior including biting
- The center's inability to meet the child's needs
- The center's inability to meet the parent's needs
- Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner
- Consistent late pick-ups
- Absence of 2 weeks or more without notice
- Disruption to the Discovery Time learning environment by parent(s), including electronic communication
- Behaviors by parents that are reported as making staff uncomfortable or are reported as discourteous or uncooperative by any staff member

- Hiring a current or former staff member as a babysitter or nanny. In any case, Discovery Time Learning Center is not responsible for injuries or harm of any type sustained while a staff member is hired by a parent for any reason. Additionally, staff are prohibited from signing children out and transporting them from the center to another location if requested by parents.
- Parent's failure to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this handbook

In the case of termination of services, parents will be provided the reason for termination in writing. In most cases, termination of care is immediate. No refunds will be provided for used or unused tuition in the case of termination of care.

Withdrawal Procedures

Parents must give a minimum of 30 days notice in writing to the director when withdrawing from the program. When a child is withdrawn without 30 days notice, families are responsible for payment of 30 days of care beyond the child's last day. Discovery Time will make every effort to process any remaining tuition and fees prior to the child's last day of care which means that your final tuition payment may not be your regular processing date. In the event that Discovery Time needs to pursue collection of tuition, the family will be responsible for costs associated with collections including court costs.

---With time, many of the facts I learned were forgotten, but I never forgot the excitement of discovery.

Client-Center Agreement

1. Our center is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm for children between the ages 6 weeks to 5 years old. Our staff welcomes you and looks forward to working with you and your child. We have an “open-door policy” and welcome you to visit our center at any time. Please feel free to stop by and offer suggestions and talk about your concerns.
2. Each morning staff will examine the children for illness or contagious diseases. A child will not be permitted to attend the center for the day if he/she has a temperature of 100°F or higher, recurring diarrhea or vomiting, or a communicable disease (see communicable disease chart).
3. If a child becomes ill during the school day, the parent will be notified and expected to pick up the child immediately. If the parents cannot be reached, the emergency numbers will be called to find someone to pick up the child.
4. Medication will be given to the child only with written authorization from a parent for a time period of 10 days unless otherwise authorized in writing from a physician. Medication shall be labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time or times to be given. Nonprescription medication shall be in the original container with the direction label attached. Medication must be locked at all times while at the center and should not be stored with the personal belongings of children.
5. Virginia law requires daily outdoor play, weather permitting, even in winter. Any child not able to go outside must have a doctor's note telling us that the child is not able to go outside during certain weather conditions and this will be placed in the child's file.
6. Parents, or authorized adult, must bring their child into the school each morning and sign them in. The child must be accompanied into his/her classroom. Parents must also come inside and sign their child out in the afternoon.
7. We encourage children to leave personal toys at home unless other arrangements have been made with your child's teacher. We cannot be responsible for lost, broken or misplaced toys.
8. Children should arrive at school before 9:00 am since children who arrive later will miss out on important curriculum activities, which begin promptly at 9:00 am. If your child is going to be late for any reason, please call the school and let us know. Children are permitted between 9:30 and 11:00 AM with written permission from the Director. **Under no circumstances will a child be permitted to arrive after 11 AM.**
9. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the Director in writing on any changes in health needs, allergies, dietary needs, phone numbers, addresses, or persons allowed (or not allowed) to pick up the child.
10. We close promptly at 6:00 pm. We understand that sometimes parents have no control over traffic, meetings, etc. However, if you are running late, please make arrangements to have your child picked up and notify us accordingly. A \$10 fee applies if a parent is late for any portion of the first 10 minutes after 6:00. An additional \$2.00 per minute late fee is due for any additional time beyond 10 minutes.

11. A 30 days written notice is required if a parent wishes to terminate a child from the school.

12. The school has the right to terminate any child if it decided by the staff that the center can longer meet the needs of the child or the child:

- Has overdue tuition;
- Is absent for more than two weeks without parental notification;
- Is a threat to other children or demonstrates disruptive behavior;
- Demonstrates violent behavior (throwing objects forcefully);
- Raises their hand to adults (physically hitting or kicking an adult);
- Uses abusive language towards staff and peers; and/or
- Bites more than three (3) times.

Additionally, parent behaviors may result in termination of care including:

- Consistent late pick-ups
- Disruption to the Discovery Time learning environment by parent(s), including electronic disruption on digital outlets
- Behaviors by parents that are reported as making staff uncomfortable or are reported as discourteous or uncooperative by any staff member.
- Hiring a current or former staff member as a babysitter or nanny. In any case, Discovery Time Learning Center is not responsible for injuries or harm of any type sustained while a staff member is hired by a parent for any reason. Additionally, staff are prohibited from signing children out and transporting them from the center to another location if requested by parents.
- Parent's failure to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the parent handbook.

13. While every effort will be made to answer parental concerns and ensure an effective parent-teacher relationship, discourteous and uncooperative behavior on the part of the parent/guardian towards the director or staff shall be grounds for termination of the child.

14. Each year, an annual program fee is required.

15. We are not responsible for a child's injuries if sustained off premises and after hours while a staff member is hired by a parent as a "babysitter". **IMPORTANT:** Due to liability regulations, staff is not permitted to sign out a child who is enrolled in our program. In addition, staff is not allowed to transport (walk, drive, taxi, public transportation, etc.) the child from school to another destination.

16. Children need to bring a change of appropriate seasonal clothing to the center marked with the child's name. For the comfort of the child, please make sure that he/she dresses in appropriate play clothes and comfortable shoes. Sandals or open-toed shoes should not be worn since it is difficult to run and climb outdoors.

17. Please provide a cot nap mat for your child's cot daily.

18. Any family who enters into an independent child care arrangement with a Discovery Time employee during your child's enrollment period at Discovery Time or within 6 months thereafter, and this arrangement results in our employee leaving our company, will be billed a \$2,500 procurement fee (finder's fee).

In addition to this agreement, please review the policies outlined in the Discovery Time Learning Academy parent handbook.