



# A.T.S Academy

## Parent Handbook/ Operational Policies

### **A.T.S MISSION STATEMENT:**

A.T.S Academy believe that all children are very unique and special in their own way. We aim to offer a safe and nurturing environment at all times. Our goal is to strengthen the bridge between your work and family life by creating a unique all inclusive environment for your child to develop, learn and play.

### **STATEMENT OF SERVICES:**

A.T.S Academy is a year-round program that offers curriculum based instruction with daily activities. A.T.S program consists 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 ages 2-12 that includes a year round curriculum. Our activities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, music, outdoor play and story time. Specialty care is offered for children with disabilities such as autism, developmental delay, and PDD. A.T.S will offer onsite Speech Therapy, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy through 212 Company.

### **1) HOURS AND DAYS:**

A.T.S Academy is open for 2 years old- 12 years old Monday through Friday 7:30AM to 5:30PM

We are closed New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Week. 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 – A.T.S Academy 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.

### **2) PROCEDURES FOR RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

#### **DROP-OFF:**

Parents must accompany their child(ren) into A.T.S Academy every morning and clock their child(ren) in immediately upon arriving to Center. 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 at the entrance of the Center. The children are not allowed to come into the A.T.S Academy area alone or to sign themselves. 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. 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 A.T.S Academy 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. . 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.

### **3) ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

#### **ILLNESS AND CONTINUED HEALTH:**

These guidelines are for the welfare of all of our children. In order to provide a safe and healthy environment we rely on our parents to monitor their children with these guidelines in mind. 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 100.1 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. A child that is too ill to remain in the center shall be supervised and cared for until the child can be picked up by Parent. The child will be sent home if he/she is running a temperature of over 100.1 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

### **4) MEDICATION PROCEDURE**

#### **MEDICATION:**

All medication to be given to children must be in the original bottle with the instructions clearly printed on it as provided by the doctor's prescription. All medicine must be in an up-to-date bottle and not be out-dated or past-dated. All prescription medication must have that child's name, prescription number and prescribing physician 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. All non prescription medicine must accompany a form signed by the child's physician and needs to be filled out prior to the administration of any medication. All medicines must be personally handed to Office at the time of arrival along with the required paperwork. A.T.S Academy reserves the right not to give medicines if the dosage is questionable or not according to the label. Any remaining medication will be returned to the parent upon completion of the course of medication.

### **5) MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If there is a medical emergency we will immediately deal with needs of the child involved while ensure supervision of the other children in the group.

- Give the child first aid or CPR if needed and call 911
- Contact the child's parent
- Ensure supervision of the other children in the group.
- Contact Childcare Licensing to notify of the situation

### **6) PROCEDURES FOR PARENT NOTIFICATION**

#### **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 A.T.S Academy and curriculum
- Daily written communication in the form of Weekly Folder Reports, and classroom memos will be place in the child's folder.
- Parent/Teacher meetings twice each year or upon request

#### **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 of the children in the group. Furthermore the

person caring for your child at the pick-up time may not be the individual who has spent the majority of the day with your child. This is due to the fact that many children spend extended hours at the center and most of our employees only work 6-8 hours. Since children learn best in the morning, we schedule the teachers responsible for the curriculum and class room development for the earlier hours and the majority of the day. We suggest that you schedule a conference with your child's "lead" or "primary" teacher to obtain detailed information on your child's general growth and development. There is always a member of management available for you to talk to in person or on the phone.

## **7) DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY**

At A.T.S Academy 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.

Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding;
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding child of behavior expectations daily by statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements;
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited.

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
  - (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
  - (3) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
  - (4) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
  - (5) Pinching, shaking, or biting child;
  - (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at the child;
  - (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
  - (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
  - (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.
- Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 ad 747, subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

## **8) MEALS AND SNACKS**

We participate in the Food Nutrition Program here at A.T.S. Our meal and snack service consists of a breakfast, morning snack, a hot lunch, and evening 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.

### **BRINGING FOOD FROM HOME:**

Breakfast and lunch should not be brought from home without prior approval. The center will provide these 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 Director. 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 so as to avoid contamination. 4) Prepackaged snacks may be brought from home for birthdays and parties that do not meet nutritional guidelines. (Please notify the Office prior to bringing special treats.)

Meal Times are set and can't be changed. Please plan accordingly if your child is late please feed them Breakfast. We can not prep Breakfast after the cutoff time. **NO OUTSIDE FOOD IS ALLOWED.** This applies for all Meals.

Breakfast 7:30-8:30AM. If child is here by 8:30AM they will be served Breakfast  
Lunch 11:30-12:30.

Pm snack 3:00PM

### **9) IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date. 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. Parent's wishing to take a religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure for providing an affidavit of such a religious opposition. All staff are required to obtain a TB skin test prior to the start of employment. Employee vaccination against Flu is recommended but not required by Staff to be employed by Above the Spectrum.

### **10) TUBERCULIN TESTING**

All staff are required to obtain a TB skin test prior to the start of employment. Children enrolled at A.T.S Academy are NOT required to have TB skin test.

### **11) HEARING AND VISION**

In order to meet the Texas Department of Health requirements, Vision and Hearing Screenings must be conducted by state certified vision and hearing screeners for the four (Pk3) year and up. Parent will be responsible to have testing done by the child's doctor. Parents must provide Vision and Hearing documentation if the child is (Pk3) years of age and up. We must have on file the individual visual acuity and sweep check results or a signed statement from Parent that the child's screenings records are current and on file at the pre kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center. The statement must be dated and include name, address, and telephone number of the pre k or school. If this conflicts with a church or religious reasons Parent must sign affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts practices.

### **12) ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

#### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Enrollment in our program is open to all families of our community. We operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No one shall be excluded from any of our programs because of race, color, religion, disability, sex or national origin. Only the child(ren)'s parent or legal guardian may enroll a child(ren) (Proof of custody may be required). All forms provided to you upon enrollment must be completed before your child may attend A.T.S Academy. All requested personal information is kept confidential. Parent's 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.** Shot records must be up to date prior to your Child start date. A.T.S must be informed of any custody situation in advance and will request that the proper paperwork be in the child(ren)'s file.

#### **ADMISSION AND WITHDRAWL:**

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). We will not allow tours to be done during nap time 12:00pm to 2:30pm. 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 all enrollment 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" Parents must give a 2 weeks notice when withdraw child from A.T.S. If Parent does not give notice we will bill for 2 weeks at the time of withdrawl.

#### **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 A.T.S. Also, each year in July we will have you renew and refresh all your paper work and all forms. There will be a deadline given for compliance to 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.

**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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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.

**13) TRANSPORTATION**

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from the center and for arranging their own car pools. A.T.S will NOT provide transportation for school aged children to and from school. NO transportation will be provided

**14) WATER ACTIVITIES**

At this time A.T.S will not offer Water Activities.

**15) FIELD TRIPS**

**NO field trips**

**16) NO ANIMALS WILL BE PRESENT AT A.T.S AT ANY TIME**

**17) PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS CONCERNS**

At any time a Parent has a question or concern about any operations of A.T.S Academy please feel free to speak with the Academy Director. You may call on the phone or come to speak with Director in person at any time of the day. Our open door policy allows Parents to feel free to visit A.T.S at any time without prior notice. If the Director is unavailable there is always at Person in Charge to address any questions or concerns. If the Director is unavailable and it is emergency situation please speak to person in charge to contact Director on emergency phone.

**18) PROCEDURE FOR PARENT VISITS**

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit A.T.S at any time during regular operation hours to observe children and activities. If a Parent choose to observe a child in care you will be required to sign in/ and out of the Center. Prior notice is not required to visit your child as we do have an open door policy. If a situation arise during a Parent visit that causes a disturbance with the child ion classroom Parents may be asked to take child home remainder of the day. To avoid a disruption we may suggest that Parent monitor child from hallway by looking thru window or view child activity on camera.

**19) PROCEDURE FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION**

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 A.T.S Academy, we strive to fill the gap created during early separation and educational opportunities and when parents are not available. We welcome parental visits. We have an open door policy that allows parents access to the center during operating hours. We have enclosed a sample list of some of the opportunities for involvement in our center. Parents are in no way limited to the involvement listed below. Any parent wishing to be involved in another area is strongly encouraged to contact the A.T.S office with their suggestion.

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

12. Reverse Field trips (When we bring a "field trip" type activity to our property)

**20) PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF MINIMUM STANDARD/ RECENT LICENSE INSPECTION**

You are entitled to see the following information: You may ask to view the most recent copy of: \*Minimum Standards for this Child Care Center and most recent inspection reports. These reports are hanging on the Welcome Center Board at the entrance.

\*The most recent DFPS Inspection/Investigation Report compliance information is also available on the web at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). The nearest office is located at 3105 Executive Blvd. Beaumont, Texas 77705 (409) 730-2424

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

**21) CONTACTING LICENSING/ ABUSE HOTLINE/ DFPS WEBSITE**

The nearest office is located at 3105 Executive Blvd. Beaumont, Texas 77705 (409) 730-2424

Reports of Abuse will be reported by calling abuse hotline 1-800-252-5400

\*The most recent DFPS Inspection/Investigation Report compliance information is also available at the DFPS website by visiting [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

**22) GANG FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

**23) EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

To ensure every child and staff is safe during emergency A.T.S has an emergency preparedness plan attached to this handbook/ operational policy.

**24) BREASTFEED PARENTS**

A.T.S does not service any infant children.

**25) PREVENT & RESPOND TO ABUSE & NEGLECT**

The State of Texas requires that A.T.S Academy 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 A.T.S Academy our center and staff are mandatory reporters of Child Abuse. All incidents or suspected incidents will be turned over directly to the Child Protective Services for investigation. We are not allowed to do our own investigation and are required by law to report anything of a suspicious nature. It is advised that clients make the staff aware of any lingering bruising or other visible injury to minimize suspicion of possible child abuse or endangerment.

Child Abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

Reports of Abuse will be reported by calling abuse hotline 1-800-252-5400

\*\* All Caregivers are required to receive one hour of training each year relating to recognizing the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect of children. Opportunities will be available for Parents to attend trainings related to child abuse and neglect and CPR/ First Aid as part of our parent involvement.

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.
- The person who suspects abuse should report it within 48 hours to 800-252-5400
- The Director will check on the complaint and if they agree that there may be abuse, the Director 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 until review complete.

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

- We will allow the staff member to appeal the decision
- The Director 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 until further review or terminate the employee immediately.
- The staff member will meet with the Director 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.

## **26) HEALTH CHECKS**

## **27)EMPLOYEE VACCINATION**

Employee vaccination against Flu is recommended but not required by Staff to be employed by A.T.S Academy. At this time NO vaccinations are required by staff to be employed by A.T.S. However all staff are required to obtain a TB skin test prior to the start of employment.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

A.T.S Academy reserves the right to edit or adapt the policies in this operational policy/ handbook as the needs arise. The center will make all changes and additions available at the time these changes are made. Parents/ Guardians will be notified of these changes through the normal written communication system of the center at the time they are made effective. Parents will be asked to also sign an acknowledgement that they received the changes to policy.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTS:**

Safety is a top priority of A.T.S. 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 ", 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 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 a confrontation between our families. We will handle any and all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

A.T.S will make every effort to remain open during INCLEMEENT weather. Please adhere to BISD inclement weather policy (i.e. If BISD post an emergency closing due to inclement weather A.T.S will also close due to the inclement weather)

### **OTHER CLOSURES:**

Due to state training requirements A.T.S 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.

**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.

**TOYS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing.

**SUPPLIES:**

Each child will be provided with all the instructional supplies necessary here at A.T.S Academy. An annual materials fee of \$50 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 as it covers the current book supply per child.

*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 mat cover sheet/ sheet for the mat

**CURRICULUM:**

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

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

**STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS:**

Student to teacher ratios are 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
2 Year	8	1
3 Year	10	1
4 Year	10	1
5-Year-Old	12	1

6-13 years old	14	1

**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 A.T.S office prior to or the day of the 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 notification is finally given, two additional weeks will be added. 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.

**QUIET TIME:**

It is our philosophy that children under 5 years of age need adequate quiet time and or 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.

**PARKING POLICY:**

Above the Spectrum does not have a child drop off area therefore all Parents must park in the parking lot and bring in your child. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

**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.

**IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:**

All children enrolled must have their immunization records up-to-date. The child's immunization record must be provided by the parent and all information must be current. The parent shall also provide proof of this with a form signed by a health care provider. This form will state that the child has received all current, age-appropriate immunizations. Parent's wishing to take a religious exemption must contact the office to find out the proper procedure for providing an affidavit of such a religious opposition.

All staff are required to obtain a TB skin test prior to the start of employment. Employee vaccination against Flu is recommended but not required by Staff to be employed by Above the Spectrum.

**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 of our staff to be on guard of their allergy. The Allergy/Food Exemption Statement must be turned into our office as soon as this allergy has been identified. This form must be updated annually. 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" which must be turned in to 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 Z-23) if your child requires an Epi-pen or other emergency treatment.

**ACCIDENT REPORTS:**

Safety is a top priority of ABOVE THE SPECTRUM. 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 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 a confrontation between our families. We will handle any and all behavior problems in a professional and appropriate way.

**CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We desire to make special accommodations for children who require such accommodations, provided it is within our power and authority to do so. Accommodation can be a specific treatment prescribed by a professional or a parent, or a modification of equipment, or removal of physical barriers. The accommodation shall be recorded in the child's file. Whenever we deem it appropriate to the needs of the child to have a child with special needs in our center, the entire staff must follow the reasonable accommodations we have made for that child. Any questions about the accommodations of the child should be referred to the leadership staff. Children will be evaluated by specialist to determine therapeutic services needed. Upon enrollment a physician diagnosis and physical is required.

**DISCIPLINE:**

At ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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.

**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 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM. Several complete changes of clothes should be kept on-center during this process.

**TOYS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM is not responsible for stolen, lost or broken toys or clothing.

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

**CLOTHING:**

We encourage the children to dress for play and comfort as the seasons change. 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 in to consideration. It is required that you bring one set of extra clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. We have some extra clothes available, but we may not have the item your child needs in his/her size. If your child comes home in center clothes, please wash the clothes and return them within one week. **It is strongly suggested that all clothing brought or worn to the center have the child's name on it.**

**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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM. An annual materials fee of \$30 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:

- 4) A small blanket for rest time
- 5) A two inch thick mat which may be purchased at the center
- 6) A crib sheet for the mat
- 7) 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 each the room and to foster individual growth through opportunities for exploration. 90% of brain growth occurs from zero to 5 years old. Each class's lesson plans and your child's class flexible schedule are posted on the parent's board in your child's room. We incorporate current trends in Early Childhood and School Age Education and then structure this curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of the children in the group. Our curriculum, although it will vary depending on age, is guided by the following underlying principals:

- o Children learn through dynamic investigation
- o Children instigate their own learning
- o Learning comes from open-ended experiences
- o Adults are facilitators of children's learning

**PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM:**

The preschool curriculum will cover the following areas:

Movement and Coordination

- o Physical attention and relaxation
- o Gross motor skills
- o Eye-hand, and eye-foot coordination
- o Group games
- o Creative movement

Autonomy and Social Skills

- o Sense of self and personal responsibility
- o Working in group setting

Work Habits

- o Memory Skills/
- o Following directions
- o Task persistence and completion

Language

- o Oral language
- o Nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays/songs
- o Emerging literacy skills

Mathematics

- o Patters and classifications
- o Geometry
- o Measurement
- o Numbers and numbers sense
- o Basic Addition and subtraction
- o Money

Orientation in time and space

- o Vocabulary
- o Measure of time
- o Passage of time (past, present, future)
- o Actual and represented space
- o Simple maps
- o Basic geographical concepts

Science

- o Human, animal, and plant characteristics
- o Physical elements (water, air, and light)
- o Tools

Music

- o Attend to different sounds

- Imitate and produce sounds
- Listen and sing
- Listen and move

- Attend to visual detail
- Creating art
- Looking at and talking about art

Visual arts

**DAILY SCHEDULE:**

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 theme 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 sits 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.

**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.

**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**

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

**OUR STAFF:**

At ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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

- o A detailed interview and screening process.
- o 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 insure that each employee has a background that is clear.
- o State CPR and first aid requirements fulfilled

We believe firmly in training and continued education for all our employees and staff. Each has qualified themselves to work with your children by attending specific training classes and often college level courses to learn about early education and the needs of children. We emphasize training and encourage all of 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:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM. 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM while currently employed by ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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.

**\*\*\*\*All Children must be dropped off to Learning Center by 10:00AM.... No exceptions will be made unless child has a Dr excuse. Please be on time with your child as it creates a disturbance to classroom when the Teacher has to stop teaching the classroom for children coming in after they have already started daily activities.**

**Meal Times are set and can not be changed. Please plan accordingly if your child is late please feed them Breakfast. We can not prep Breakfast after the cutoff time. NO OUTSIDE FOOD IS ALLOWED This applies for all Meals.**

**Breakfast 7:00-8:30AM If child is here by 8:25AM they will be served Breakfast**

**Lunch 11:30-12:30.**

### **CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special days for children. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at ABOVE THE SPECTRUM, 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 grand parents 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 the children is our first concern. Although we have an open door policy and welcome parents to visit their children we also have a commitment to the parents of the other children in the program. Since we cannot attest to the background of anyone that has not gone through our screening process we also cannot allow parents to spend extended periods of time in our facility without requiring them to fulfill certain screening and training requirements. These are set by state law and our policies. Any individual who does not submit to our safety policies concerning "Visitors" and "Volunteers" must be considered an intruder and steps will be taken according to the "Intruder" portion of our "Safety and Evacuation" policies.

**GANG FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

**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" with your paperwork giving us permission to take your child's picture or include them in short video footage.

**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 a 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.

**PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

Weekly fees are due in advance on Monday. There will be a \$20.00 late payment convenience fee added if the account is not paid by the close of business on Tuesday. 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 \$35.00 fee added on all returned checks. After two NSF checks are received by the center, payment will be required by cashiers 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 check, cashiers check, credit card or Money Order. All payments will be **payable to: ABOVE THE SPECTRUM.**

**Payments may be given directly to Director or Asst Director ONLY or may be placed in the payment box located outside the office. Payments accepted Cash, Credit/ Debit or Money Order Do not put cash in the drop box.** All tuition is non-refundable except for prepaid tuition that is over-and-above any additional charges, including the two weeks notice. All clients will pay the last weeks fees in advance. This will also be adjusted annually or as the contracted rates change. See the REFUNDS policy below. Registration fees are non-refundable. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM to collect this amount. If YOUR CENER NAME 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.

**CCCS/ STATE PAID TUITION CLIENTS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM is authorized to receive payments from CCCS 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 CCCS. 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 CCCS assistance must make these arrangements on their own and list us as their Childcare provider. You may enroll in the program as a CCCS client once the office has received a letter of authorization from CCCS or a phone call from the case worker, establishing your eligibility in our program. Clients wishing to transfer from a private pay client to a CCCS client must come to the office and fill out a CCCS Start Agreement. All CCCS clients must use the attendance system daily. You must swipe your child in and out daily with the card issued by CCCS.

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM also requires that all CCCS clients pay for any absence above 2 per month. CCCS 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. CCCS clients may also be required to pay the difference between our private pay rates and the rates that CCCS has established.

CCCS clients may also have a daily co-payment that is set by CCCS. This is based upon family income. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM requires that all CCCS co-payments be made weekly on Monday in advance of service. ABOVE THE SPECTRUM does the book keeping on CCCS accounts once per month after the service has occurred. All PAYMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES listed above for self billed clients will also apply to CCCS clients. It is the responsibility of each CCCS Client to insure that they have no balance when the previous months fees and co-payments are added on the account..

**DISCOUNTS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM is pleased to offer the following discounts: 1) 3% discount for accounts that pay for the entire month in advance by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of each month. 2) 5% discount to all clients who work for companies that have 5 or more families currently enrolled in our program with up-to-date accounts. 3) \$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 over-paid the credit will be applied to your next week's tuition. In the event you have a balance after your child's last day, all applicable fees including the two weeks notice required will be subtracted from any balance prior to a final refund being issued. Checks for this are cut monthly and will be mailed according to our monthly bill payment schedule.

**RECEIPTS 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM office prior to or the day of the 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 notification is finally given, two additional weeks will be added. 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 an un-cooperative, aggressive, dissatisfied, or angry demeanor towards the center, its policies or its staff.

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 Texas requires that ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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 ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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.

Child Abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

Reports of Abuse will be reported by calling abuse hotline 1-800-252-5400

\*\* All Caregivers are required to receive one hour of training each year relating to recognizing the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect of children. Opportunities will be available for Parents to attend trainings related to child abuse and neglect and CPR/ First Aid as part of our parent involvement.

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 founded in a case of child abuse, we will take the following steps:

- We will allow the staff member 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 member 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.

**INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM complies with the minimum insurance coverage as suggested by our independent agent. For more information concerning policies and liability see management.

**ADDITIONS AND CHANGES:**

ABOVE THE SPECTRUM 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.