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SCHOOLS

# NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS SCHOOLS

**Parent Handbook  
2024–2025**

Revised August 2024



Dear Parents,

It is an honor to welcome your family to Neighborhood Kids! We are excited about the upcoming preschool year and the opportunity to serve you during the formative years of your child's growth and development. We take seriously your decision to entrust us with the care of your precious little one! Our desire is to provide a safe, supportive, and fun experience where your child can grow and learn in a loving and happy Christian environment.

We believe that when you, the parents, partner with our preschool, your child receives the best care and education. The key to our partnership is effective communication.

Our handbook accomplishes two important purposes: (1) it highlights issues that may arise during the school year and provides you with the steps we take to address those issues, and (2) it assures you that we have safeguards in place to protect your child's experience throughout the year. Please feel free to contact us if you need assistance beyond what this handbook covers. If any of our policies change, we will notify you in writing.

Again, we are grateful to you for enrolling your child at Neighborhood Kids. Our entire school family of parents and children is our priority. We look forward to joining efforts to make this school year a success!

In His service,

Frank Toral  
CEO and President  
Co-founder

Olivia Toral  
Co-founder

Neighborhood Kids Schools  
2995 Greenbriar Blvd  
Wellington, FL 33414





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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Our Philosophy

Neighborhood Kids is dedicated to ensuring that every child develops socially, emotionally, spiritually, and academically. Every child possesses a unique purpose for life. As educators, our function—our determination—is to empower the children brought to our care and influence with the educational resources and foundational values necessary for them to recognize their purposes and to develop successful lives to impact the world for good. Therefore, our vision is to partner with parents in neighborhoods across America to assist their children in fulfilling their God-given potential through exceptional early childhood education.

#### 1.1.1 Mission

Our mission is to provide God-honoring early childhood education experiences for children in a safe and happy learning environment.

#### 1.1.2 Values

- LOVE:* We teach children to love their neighbors as they love themselves.
- EXCELLENCE:* We commit and strive to do our best at all times as role models and mentors for young children.
- GROWTH:* We provide an environment where children can develop in their education and experience of love, compassion, courage, generosity, kindness, respect, self-control, peace, and joy.
- POTENTIAL:* We support every child's unique purpose and undergird the potential to achieve that purpose.
- PARTNERSHIP:* We secure trusted relationships with one another and with parents to care for and educate their children.

#### 1.1.3 Parent Participation

Parent engagement is crucial to our program's success. We value the concept that parents should be partners, collaborators, and supporters for their children. Neighborhood Kids teachers appreciate and respect parents as their children's first teachers. We look forward to parent involvement and continue to develop ways in which parents may engage more fully with their children in school activities.

#### 1.1.4 Non-discrimination Policy

At Neighborhood Kids, we promote diversity and uniqueness. At no time does Neighborhood Kids discriminate against any child or family based on race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disabilities. We admit all students into our program, and all activities are available to all children at the school.

### 1.2 Our Curriculum

We believe a successful education centers on quality curricula. The schools in the Neighborhood Kids family offer the FD Education early childhood curriculum. Our curriculum is a nationally recognized school readiness curriculum approved by the Florida Office of Early Learning and Department of Education. The FD Education is a complete, fully customizable, online preschool curriculum designed so that the teacher can follow our daily lesson plans, search for new lessons, and even write their own based on the resources provided. You will see the supplies that we use and the educational standards that we are focusing on with your child.

Neighborhood Kids supplements its curriculum with *Abeka*, a nationally recognized, Christian, faith-based curriculum:

- A six-step program to teach reading skills by using a phonetic approach:
  - Learn to recognize the short vowels and their sounds.
  - Learn to recognize the consonants and their sounds.
  - Learn to blend.
  - Learn to sound one-vowel words.
  - Learn the sounds of the long vowels. Learn to sound two-vowel words.
  - Learn and apply the special phonics sounds and simple.
- Art, science, pretend play, and writing.
- Bible stories, pledges, songs and devotions.



- Weekly chapel with music and movement.
- Building Godly character traits and values.

As reading skills develop, we focus on the four main elements of reading proficiency: alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Neighborhood Kids constantly reviews available curricula to ensure we provide the best support for our teachers and students. The Child Development Education Alliance, through its Weekday Early Education (WEE) division, publishes a curriculum called WEE Learn. Some of our schools use the WEE Learn curriculum, and Neighborhood Kids plans to switch all schools to the WEE Learn curriculum in the near future. However, WEE Learn is currently undergoing a major rewrite to their curriculum, which is temporarily delaying the process. You may check with your school to find out the curriculum used and plans going forward.

### **1.3 Our Standards of Excellence**

Neighborhood Kids focuses on quality and continual improvement to ensure safe and valuable experiences for our students and families as well.

#### **1.3.1 Accreditation**

Neighborhood Kids is accredited by National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) and the Florida Gold Seal Quality Care Program.

#### **1.3.2 Background and Reference Checks**

Neighborhood Kids conducts thorough background and reference checks on all employees before they begin employment.

#### **1.3.3 CPR and First Aid Certification**

All staff are required to be CPR and First Aid certified.

### **1.4 Our Programs**

#### **1.4.1 Infants (two months to one year)**

Neighborhood Kids cares for infants in a nurturing and loving environment. Each day of a child's early years is important. We implement a daily schedule of events of indoor and outdoor activities through which the teacher encourages your child to develop hand-eye coordination as well as fine and gross motor skills. Through playtime they accomplish these goals by grasping objects, sitting, crawling, and eventually walking.

#### **1.4.2 Toddlers (one year to two years)**

Toddlers are active explorers. They eagerly investigate new things and manipulate materials in various ways. We encourage our toddlers to develop social as well as intellectual skills. We implement a daily schedule of events, including both indoor and outdoor activities, for each child according to his or her level of development. While under constant supervision, children freely explore various centers of individual interest. Many areas are divided into six major skill categories: fine motor, gross motor, intellectual, social and emotional, language, and independence.

#### **1.4.3 Two-Year-Olds (two years to three years)**

We base our Two-Year-Olds program on an environment that fosters cognitive as well as physical, emotional, and social development. The children learn, share, and explore the world around them. The Two-Year-Olds classroom is filled with an abundance of energy and excitement. Children engage in a variety of activities that offer diversified opportunities to learn. The classroom, curriculum, and daily activities are designed to encourage experimentation and exploration in many areas, including creative play, dramatic play, sensorimotor skills, the community, and the environment. Our program offers support for pre-reading and -writing phonemic awareness via songs through our Abeka curriculum. Your children are introduced to numbers, colors, and shapes and given the opportunity to maximally express their creativity through art, music, and movement. This program prepares each child with the knowledge needed to move on to the next program—Preschoolers.

#### **1.4.4 Preschoolers (three years to four years)**

At this stage, children explore anything and everything around them. They gain self-esteem as they ready themselves to take on the world. We encourage children to develop skills in self-direction—the ability to make



choices and decisions on their own—through independent exploration, structured activities, and hands-on learning. Preschoolers also work on early literacy, which prepares them for the Prekindergarten program. For example, letter and number recognition are areas they master. Preschoolers enjoy spending time with other children their own age and engaging in group activities. Preschoolers learn as they receive the tools with which to explore. We help bolster their confidence toward becoming problem-solvers and lifelong learners.

#### **1.4.5 Prekindergarten (four years to five years)**

Our Prekindergarten and VPK (Florida-sponsored Voluntary Prekindergarten Education) Program are designed to familiarize students with the structure and format of a school day in kindergarten. At this age, children approach the world with curiosity and actively engage in conversations, discussing their own thoughts and ideas. This program prepares children by developing their skills in language, math, and reasoning while continuing to extend their social and emotional abilities. Necessary skills are incorporated into their weekly curriculum. We follow the Florida VPK guidelines. Working together, the teacher and parent help ensure the child's transition to kindergarten is smooth and successful.

### **1.5 Our Class Transitions**

The classroom teaching staff provides the first step on the long road to transitioning our children from classroom to classroom or from our Prekindergarten program to kindergarten. This step is huge for the children in our care as well as for the parents. We developed a preparation process through our program to assist in the smooth transition for the child to ensure all involved parties remain happy.

Classroom-to-classroom transitions take place at the end of the school year or when the new school year begins in August. Before we begin the process, the children visit the new classroom and are introduced to the new teacher and the classroom learning centers. This introduction occurs once per week for the last month the child is in his or her current classroom.

We support Prekindergarten to kindergarten transitioning by reading books with children about elementary school, talking with them about elementary school, using photographs of an actual elementary school day. As the children prepare for the transition, we provide parents with registration dates and other information regarding local kindergarten roundups (orientation programs for both children and parents to visit the classrooms, meet the teachers, and sample a day at kindergarten).

### **1.6 Our Students' Spiritual Life**

Neighborhood Kids is a faith-based environment fostering the development and thriving of our students' spiritual lives. We accept and love every student irrespective of background and beliefs. We encourage spiritual growth by incorporating fun, annual Christmas performances, biblical integration into our academic curriculum, and prayer. We even have enjoyable and engaging weekly chapel services for students from two years old through prekindergarten.

### **1.7 Recess and Physical Activity**

All children—infants to five years old—have 30 minutes of outside physical activity every morning and afternoon. If the weather does not cooperate, we move the physical activity inside the school.



## 2.0 ADMINISTRATION

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### 2.1 Hours

Neighborhood Kids is generally open 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every Monday through Friday for all 12 months of the year, except for our observed holidays. However, some schools in our network have hours that vary. Please check with your school for its specific hours of operation.

### 2.2 Holidays

Neighborhood Kids observes these holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

Additionally, the school is closed for Staff Development Day, which falls in August on the day before the start of the new school year.

School closings for holidays that fall on a weekend are recognized on Friday or Monday depending on whether the holiday is Saturday or Sunday. If both Christmas Eve and Day (as well as New Year's Eve and Day) fall on a weekend, the school is closed on the Monday following the holiday weekend.

### 2.3 Registration

Neighborhood Kids conducts year-round registration provided classroom space is available. We offer school tours from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. All children must be enrolled before attending. All forms must be completed prior to your child's first day (per state licensing requirements):

- Signed and completed registration packet (parents' information, emergency contact information, emergency medical treatment authorization form, physician's name and phone number, allergies, authorization to release form other than parent, development history)
- Book and supply fee due annually (non-refundable and non-transferrable)
- State and local medical forms (e.g., Palm Beach County Medical Examination Form; Florida Health Student Examination Form)
- Re-enrollment Fee \$200

### 2.4 Waiting List

If necessary due to available space, Neighborhood Kids maintains a waiting list. The school evaluates applications and assigns a numerical value according to the level of criteria the child and family meet. Neighborhood Kids charges a non-refundable application fee to be placed on its waiting list.

### 2.5 Payments and Fees

#### 2.5.1 Registration Fee

The registration fee is paid for each year of enrollment. The fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.





### 2.5.2 Tuition

Neighborhood Kids charges tuition on a weekly basis. Tuition is due each Friday for the following week. In the interest of grace, we normally accept payment without penalty until the fifth day of the period. If the weekly tuition is not paid by the fifth day, Neighborhood Kids assesses a late fee of \$35.00. If the tuition is still not paid by the tenth day, we assess an additional charge of \$1.00 per day until we receive payment for the tuition.

Automatic withdrawal of the weekly tuition and other periodic charges is available if you so wish. Please fill out the appropriate form at the front desk for this payment option.

We require a One-Time Credit Card Authorization form for all enrolled students. The form is used only in the case of a student who withdraws without proper notice with a balance due on his or her account. By signing the form, you authorize, in such circumstances, a charge of up to \$1,500 per student (depending on the actual amount due) to your credit card.

Neighborhood Kids does not reimburse or discount tuition or any fees for days missed due to illness, absences, vacations, or school closings (whether for holidays, weather, or emergencies).

Any parent withdrawing his or her child from Neighborhood Kids is required to provide a 30-day notice in writing. If such notice is not provided, that period's 30-day tuition fee is charged and due. Attendance for any part of the month (even if only one day) obligates the parent for financial responsibility for the entire month.

If tuition is past due after the tenth day of the month for which it is due, the school will not receive the child into its care until the balance is paid in full.

Families receive a one-week credit for vacation after their one-year anniversary. To receive the vacation credit, the student must be enrolled full time (five days per week). Notice of vacation to be taken must be submitted one week in advance.

### 2.5.3 Other Fees

Other fees for the school year include those in this list:

- **Book and Supply Fee**—This fee is due annually and is not refundable
- **Late Pickup Fee**—A \$5.00 *per minute* late fee is charged after the normal pickup time for your child. The late fee is assessed per family. The school closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Any late pickup fee is payable upon pickup of your child.  
Neighborhood Kids acknowledges that this fee is severe. However, the severity is in place due to the extreme demands of the parent that the fee is designed to prevent—the care for a child briefly abandoned. In assessing this admittedly stringent fee, Neighborhood Kids recognizes that there are sometimes unfortunate logistical difficulties a parent might face. However, a parent must also recognize that the school cannot accept without penalty the demand for unauthorized care of a child, who would otherwise be abandoned. We, of course, will not abandon any child. However, we also intend to encourage parents in every way possible to ensure they fulfill their duty of care for their children.
- **Summer Activity Fee**—This fee is non-refundable and non-transferable and paid yearly.
- **NSF Fee**—A fee of \$35.00 for not sufficient funds (NSF) is assessed when a payment cannot be withdrawn or a check is returned. Failure to promptly provide the tuition due can result in your child's enrollment termination at Neighborhood Kids.

## 2.6 Attendance

Neighborhood Kids considers regular attendance important for a child's well-being. The sense of responsibility gained through consistent attendance, even this early in life, promotes standards of social obligation. Parents should notify the school if their child is not attending on a scheduled school day.

On occasion, a child may not be able to adjust to a preschool environment. Neighborhood Kids makes every effort to help a child feel comfortable within our school setting. If, however, after a reasonable length of time and effort, the child continues to be a disruption to the school's normal operation with the other students, Neighborhood Kids reserves the right to dismiss the student.



## **2.7 Student Files**

Neighborhood Kids establishes precautions to safeguard the confidentiality, security, and integrity of child records against loss, defacement, tampering, and unauthorized disclosure or use. The release of information to any staff member is managed on a strict need-to-know basis.

Neighborhood Kids maintains the utmost confidentiality of each individual child and family. We respect our families' right to privacy and do not disclose confidential information. However, by law, we must provide information, pursuant to a subpoena or if a child's welfare is at risk, to the appropriate authorities.

Staff members ensure enrollment records contain all necessary forms and documents. All child records must be kept current.

Parents have the right to add information, comments, data, and any other relevant materials to their child's records. They also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information.

Once a child is no longer in the school's care, and upon a written request, the school provides the parent with copies of the child's records or transfers the records to another designated person upon the parent's written consent.



## 3.0 SAFETY AND SECURITY

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Neighborhood Kids promotes the safety, health, and well-being of all the children, families, visitors, and employees of our school. All Neighborhood Kids staff are CPR and First Aid certified.

### 3.1 Precautionary Care

#### 3.1.1 Health and Safety Forms

Each child must have any state-required medical forms, examinations, and certifications completed by the first day of school. (For example, in Florida's Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach County Medical Examination form and Florida Health Student Examination for pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, rubella, or mumps (DTAP, MMR, Polio, Hib, HepB, Varicella) are required.) Forms are normally completed by a physician and include a Certificate of Immunization to prevent diphtheria.

If for religious or other reasons a child has not received immunization shots, the parent or guardian must provide the school with the original state-provided religious exemption from immunization form (e.g., in Florida, DH Form 681) provided by the county health department. In such cases, parents are informed, at time of enrollment, that some children in care may not have current immunizations.

It is the parent's responsibility to keep the forms updated. A child's forms must be updated for that child to return to school.

#### 3.1.2 Hygiene

The staff makes every effort to prevent the spread of germs, and handwashing is first on the list of effective means to control such spread. The first step taken as your child enters the classroom is to wash his or her hands. Neighborhood Kids require children and staff to wash their hands many times throughout the day.

#### 3.1.3 Diapering and Toilet Training

Part of our high-level customer service at Neighborhood Kids is ensuring proper care of all children. For children still in diapers, cleanliness is an essential factor in maintaining an appropriate level of care. Therefore, we will change diapers or pull-ups when soiled or at a minimum of every two hours.

Starting in the program for Two-Year-Olds, our staff assists your child in toilet training. We approach this developmental milestone with patience, support, and ongoing communication.

When you and your child are ready to begin training, please let your child's teacher know what routine and procedures you wish to have followed. Be sure to bring extra clothing during this transitional period. Soiled clothing is stored in a plastic bag to take home to be cleaned.

#### 3.1.4 Sleep Time

##### 3.1.4.1 Rest Time

Rests are a mandatory part of the preschool day based on many states' governmental regulations as well as general authoritative guidance. Please provide a crib sheet for the mats and a familiar cuddly blanket. Ensure all your child's belongings are labeled. On Fridays, the school sends all personal bedding home for washing (to be returned on Monday morning). We sanitize our mats after each nap.

##### 3.1.4.2 Infant Safe Sleep Policy

All childcare staff working in the infant room and who may potentially work in the infant room receive training in our Infant Safe Sleep Policy. We use safety-approved cribs with firm mattresses and tight-fitting sheets. Only one infant is in each crib at a time unless the center is being evacuated in an emergency.

Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the practice of placing infants on their backs to sleep, but when infants can easily turn from their backs to their stomachs, they may be allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer. All Neighborhood Kids staff follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics. However, parents may further discuss with childcare staff how to address circumstances when their infants turn onto their stomachs or sides.

Staff check sleeping infants periodically. Staff members keep especially alert to monitor sleeping infants during the first several weeks they are in childcare.



The temperature of the infant room is kept between 68°F and 72°F. Staff maintain a comfortable atmosphere for sleeping infants by regulating the room temperature, avoiding excess bedding, and not overdressing or overwrapping the baby.

Neither an infant's head nor the crib in which the infant is sleeping is ever covered with blankets or bedding. No loose bedding, pillows, comforters, bumper pads, or other similar items are used in cribs. Additionally, no toys or stuffed animals are placed in the cribs.

### **3.1.5 Reporting Abuse and Neglect**

Neighborhood Kids is responsible for reporting any sign of child abuse or neglect. We will comply with all aspects of Chapter 415 Florida Statutes protects children from abuse or neglect. Florida law legally obligates professionals working with children to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect. If a parent suspects child abuse or neglect, please contact the Department of Children & Families at 1-800-96-ABUSE.

## **3.2 Health and Medical**

Smoking, tobacco use, or other prohibited substances are restricted on all Neighborhood Kids properties.

### **3.2.1 Illness**

#### **3.2.1.1 Allergies**

Parents should provide any special restrictions and instructions for their children relating to food, medication, allergies, and emotional needs. The school does serve peanut butter for snacks and emergency lunches and may also serve foods containing peanut products.

#### **3.2.1.2 Attendance after Sickness**

If your child has been absent due to a serious illness or has been hospitalized for an illness or surgery, we require a letter from the physician stating the date your child may return to school and resume a full activity level. Without this letter, your child is not permitted to return to school.

#### **3.2.1.3 Contagious Illness**

If a child becomes ill (displays any signs or symptoms described in our illness policy), the teacher notifies the Director and the child is removed from the classroom and placed in our isolation area until picked up by the parent. The school takes the appropriate steps to notify other parents in the class as well as cleaning and sanitizing the classroom the child attended. We also notify families by posting on the front office door notices of any communicable illness identified in our program (influenza, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc.).

**Note:** *Notify the school immediately if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease, including exposure to anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.*

If your child displays any of these symptoms, please keep him or her at home:

- Fever—100 degrees or higher
- Discharge from nose, eyes, or ears
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Any other symptoms of a possibly communicable disease
- Generally, not feeling like him- or herself

Neighborhood Kids requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness (e.g., fever, diarrhea, and vomiting) for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication. Please keep in mind that if we send your child home because of illness, the child is not admitted back to school the next day because the 24-hour period would not have expired. Do not rush a child's return to school following an illness. The school reserves the right to require a doctor's statement before the child can be readmitted to the school.

### **3.2.2 Pandemic-Related Health Considerations**

We realize that the provision of childcare may be affected by COVID-19 and other pandemic-related health considerations. Our staff and administration are committed to the safety and well-being of every child, family member, and Neighborhood Kids team member. We adhere to guidance from state health and child authorities as well as the CDC. Your family may be assured of our continued diligence to such concerns.



### **3.2.3 Prescription Medication**

The school administers only prescription medication, only once per day at lunchtime, and only in accordance with these rules:

1. The medication must be in its original prescription bottle, labeled with the child's name, name of medicine, dosage, name of the doctor, and date of medication.
2. The school must have a completed medication permission form signed by the parent or guardian.
3. The medication is not eye or ear drops, which Neighborhood Kids does not administer at any time.

Over-the-counter medication that does not meet the above requirements, including aspirin, vitamins, and cough preparations. The school does not assume responsibility of any kind whatsoever for failure to provide the requested prescription medication or for any adverse reactions caused by the administration of such prescription medication.

### **3.2.4 Safety Emphasis and Response**

At Neighborhood Kids, we work extremely hard to provide your child with a safe experience. Safety always comes first. However, even in our safety-conscious environment, bumps and bruises sometimes occur. The school documents every injury to a child. Parents are notified of accidents or incidents immediately or on the same day. Staff completes an Injury Log and ensures it is signed by the parent. All our staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR. Neighborhood Kids follows the Health Department guidelines and staff-to-child ratios ensuring continuous supervision of children at all times.

## **3.3 Emergencies**

In the event of an accident or emergency, we make every effort to notify you immediately. However, we cannot contact, we call those persons listed on the registration form. In case your child requires immediate medical attention, we transport your child via ambulance to the Emergency Room.

### **3.3.1 Drills and Evacuations**

The law requires us to perform emergency drills monthly to prepare children should an emergency arise. Our school is equipped with a fire alarm system and fire extinguishers. Infants are placed in evacuation cribs and evacuated by the staff. Each school must have an evacuation plan, including an evacuation destination. Please contact the school to find out the evacuation destination and any applicable emergency contact numbers.

Staff takes attendance records with them and takes attendance outside to ensure all children are accounted for. No one can enter the building until a final sweep and clearance has been given to return inside.

### **3.3.2 Hurricane Emergency**

For schools in hurricane danger areas, Neighborhood Kids follows local county school board closings. If the public schools are closed due to inclement weather, Neighborhood Kids is closed as well. After storm-caused closings, as a courtesy to our many parents who must return to work immediately, our school reopens as soon as the facility is deemed operational by the Health Department, and regardless of the public-school closures. For full-time students, if our school is closed for three to five days in a week, we credit the child's account for half of that week. If we are closed one or two days, there is no credit. For part-time students, if the school is partially open during a week, you are responsible for your child's scheduled days of attendance that the school was operational. For example, if your child attends Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and our school was open only from Wednesday through Friday, your tuition responsibility is a two-day rate.

## **3.4 Security**

Neighborhood Kids suggests these measures to ensure the security of children and property:

- Do not leave your purses or valuables in your car when dropping off or picking up your child. Preschools are prime targets for "smash and grabs."
- Do not leave any children, including elementary school age children, unattended in the car while dropping off or picking up your child.
- Do not leave your car running while dropping off or picking up your child.
- After your child has been signed out, he or she is your responsibility. Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot.



## **4.0 GENERAL POLICIES**

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### **4.1 Birthdays and Special Events**

Birthdays are special occasions for young children and worthy of celebration! We encourage parents to send in fruit, doughnut holes, cupcakes, mini cupcakes, cookies, or cookie sheets for their child to share with their classmates during snack time. No cakes are allowed. Please notify the teacher in advance if you are sending in special treats. Party invitations are distributed only if every child or every child of the same gender in the class is included.

### **4.2 Dress**

All preschool children at Neighborhood Kids, from the age of two and up, wear uniforms. Our uniform vender is Chatanooga Uniforms. You can submit your order at the front office. If a child does not come to school with a uniform on, we provide one for your child, and your account is charged. Request more information at the school front desk.

We also require each child to wear closed-toe shoes for the child's protection and safety. Please keep a change of clothes labeled with your child's name in his or her cubby. The extra clothes do not need to be uniform.

Additional Considerations:

- Tops: Polo shirts are to be worn Monday through Friday. For girls, dresses are available.
- Bottoms: Shorts, skirts (for girls) and pants are options in the colors black, navy or khaki.
- Shoes: Closed toe shoes are required at all times.

### **4.3 Drop Off and Pickup**

All children must be signed in and out by a responsible adult of at least 18 years of age. Students should arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. to receive full advantage of the academics and activities planned for the day. For the safety of the children, please remain outside the classroom when dropping off or picking up. Your child's teacher will greet you at the door.

Proper ID is requested if we are not familiar with the person picking up a child. Neighborhood Kids does not release any child to an unauthorized person. We understand emergencies sometimes happen for which a parent must make other plans to pick up his or her child; therefore, parents must communicate through a written and signed form if someone other than those already authorized is picking up your child.

Our preschool does not release a child to any adult who is believed to be intoxicated or impaired.

### **4.4 Meals—Lunch and Snacks**

These regulations regard lunch and snacks:

- Breakfast may be brought and eaten at school at the mid-morning (9:00 a.m.) snack time.
- Neighborhood Kids offers a variety of nutritional snacks at mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack times. We ask parents who provide lunch and snacks to make sure they are healthful and nutritious.
- For children three years and under, no candy, popcorn, or peanuts should be provided. All fruit, cheese, and meat must be cut into small, bite-sized pieces.
- For children two years of age and under, please meet with your teacher to discuss the introduction of food.
- All staff members wear food handler gloves when serving food.
- An all-natural or organic hot lunch is catered for the school daily. Cost of the lunch is \$5.00 per day. Orders must be placed by Wednesday for the following week.

### **4.5 Outdoor Play**

Neighborhood Kids encourages outdoor play if weather cooperates. Staff allows indoor play during severe or threatening weather.

Parents should notify the school if their child has a medical condition that would prohibit full participation in outdoor play. The notification should be made at the time of enrollment if the condition is preexistent. When new conditions arise limiting outdoor play, parents should notify the school immediately.



Teachers ensure that children play only on playground equipment that is age appropriate.

#### **4.6 School Photos**

Children are often photographed or videoed by staff or other parents at Neighborhood Kids during regular class activities, special events, or scheduled field trips. On occasion, photographs or video may be used in company promotional materials, including, but not limited to, our website, ads, and brochures. Neighborhood Kids reserves the right to use photography of your child for media purposes.



## 5.0 CHILDREN AND FAMILY CODE OF CONDUCT

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Neighborhood Kids strives to provide a positive and safe environment for children, families, and employees.

### 5.1 Behavioral Management Philosophy

Neighborhood Kids believes in positive redirection and reinforcement, through clearly defined guidelines. Our school provides a caring, loving, and nurturing learning environment. Positive guidance techniques such as praise, leadership, manners, character, and integrity are also taught.

This list includes additional fundamental aspects of our approach to discipline:

- Children are not subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, or frightening.
- No cruel, harsh, physical, or unusual punishments is permitted.
- No child is ever delegated or permitted to discipline another child.
- No child is punished by withholding food, rest, or use of the toilet, including for the failure to eat or sleep or for toileting accidents.
- No physical restraints, equipment, devices, or furniture is used to confine a child, including, without limitation, swings, walkers, and spinners.
- No child is confined in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or bathroom.
- No child is subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks, or other verbal abuse.
- No physical punishment is used, such as, but not limited to, spanking, hitting, striking, biting, or pinching.
- No child is threatened with any punishment that is prohibited in this list.
- For the safety and welfare of all children, Neighborhood Kids reserves the right to suspend or expel a child from the facility. Therefore, if all strategies fail to cease aggressive behavior, termination of enrollment may occur.

### 5.2 Biting

Neighborhood Kids understands that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in our Toddlers and the first half of our Two-Year-Olds classrooms. A parent of a child in these classrooms should expect that his or her child might be bitten or might bite another child.

While biting is commonplace for toddlers, the good news is that much can be done to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate biting. Our staff works quickly and efficiently to identify situations which provoke the behavior and to take steps to prevent future biting. If the activity is habitual, we work with our parents to identify strategies to limit the behavior.

#### 5.2.1 Understanding Reasons Young Children Bite

Early childhood research generally groups reasons for biting into these four general categories: experimentation, frustration, powerlessness, and stress. The names of the categories describe the characteristics. Most very young children explore their world by putting objects in their mouths. When children become overwhelmed—unable to cope with a situation—they may bite out of frustration. Sometimes children (often the youngest in a family or classroom) uses biting in an attempt to gain power. And often emotional stress, usually a sign of distress or pain when the child is upset or angry, may lead to biting.

#### 5.2.2 How We Do Not Respond

Shaming and harsh punishment are not the answer. In fact, studies show that those reactions do not reduce biting. And actually, we do not need research to explain that. If children bite to cope with a challenge or fulfill a need, we should realize that shaming and harshly punishing do not satisfy the child's challenge or fulfill his or her need.

#### 5.2.1 How We Do Respond

Our teachers carefully observe the children at play and are often able to anticipate when biting might occur. We notice repetitive behavior. We ask ourselves questions:

- What happened right before the bite?
- Who was playing with whom?
- Did the child bite the same child or is it a different child each time?
- What was the child doing (both biter and the one bitten)?





- Where were they playing?

From our observations, we initiate strategies to prevent biting:

- If biting occurs, the firm expression to the child, “No, don’t bite. Biting hurts!” communicates the negative but important understanding of unacceptability.
- Often, distraction with a toy or book offers the best solution. Directing the child’s gaze out the window or taking a walk shifts attention. In this way, not only is the situation altered, but it also communicates that the fact of biting does not result in more attention.
- Suggestion of a different way to handle the situation helps. Teachers ask the biting child how he or she could explain the irritation to the other child. For example, the teacher may say, “Johnny, can you tell Sarah, “You are too close to me, and I don’t like it when you touch me.” In helping stimulate oral communication, the need for reactionary physical response is lessened.
- Urging ways to share can resolve one of the most common triggers for biting. Teachers know the popular toys that the children want for themselves. While sharing is always a lesson to be taught, preparing with multiples of the popular toys helps ease those teachable moments.
- Reinforcement of right behavior is invaluable. Not only does the teacher offer the turn, for example, of blowing bubbles because the child asked instead of grabbed, but the teacher comments on the behavior: “Great job! You asked instead of grabbed. Here you go!”
- Communication is so important. While communication is a part of the previous point of reinforcement, additional forms are worth mentioning. Firm, loving hugs when a child is feeling stressed can be soothing. Explaining the effects of their actions can also help the child understand the cause-and-effect relationship.
- Finally, we make sure to turn attention to the one bitten. Sometimes biting is an attention-seeking device. By ensuring attention on the one bitten reduces the confirmation that biting provides the attention the biter desires.

### 5.2.2 Discipline for Older Children

Older children (at three years and above) may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. Developing effective strategies for this age level is especially important to end the behavior. While the staff always maintains a calm demeanor, boundaries must be set. The staff never employs harsh punishment (which generally makes preschool children more likely to strike out again as anger and resentment grow). Many of the same strategies of distraction, firmness, encouragement, and resolution are required. But the behavior cannot continue because it does create a safety and wellness concern for the other children.

For these older children, if, despite the teacher’s efforts to identify and defuse situations of provocation, three bites by a child occur in one day, the incident results in a one-day suspension from the program. Three reported biting incidents result in termination of enrollment. Payments already made are not refunded or credited to later enrollment.

Neighborhood Kids recognizes its responsibility to ensure the safety of all children and staff. If a child’s behavior puts other children or staff in jeopardy, we must act to remove the child, temporarily or permanently.

### 5.3 Parent Code of Conduct

The Parent Code of Conduct sets forth the expected behaviors of parents, guardians, and visitors when on school grounds. The conduct guidelines are established to ensure a positive working relationship between the school, the parents and guardians, and the general community:

- Be courteous in speech and actions.
- Refrain from the use of profanity.
- Refrain from the use of physical contact or force when meeting with school personnel or when on school property.
- Never demonstrate threatening or abusive behavior.
- Do not engage in any conduct that causes a disruption with the school function or activity or interferes with the health, safety, or right of others.
- NK Schools concerns itself about the effect that smoking and secondhand smoke inhalation has on



- staff members and clients. Therefore, NK Schools prohibits smoking within school buildings and within
- 30 feet of any building entrances.

Any conduct in violation of these guidelines results in charges being filed and issuance of a no-trespassing notice. Law enforcement is contacted.

#### **5.4 Non-Solicitation**

Neighborhood Kids families agree not to solicit, employ, or enter into any contract with any employee of Neighborhood Kids to perform childcare or similar services under any circumstances that might interfere with the employee's role or employment at Neighborhood Kids. If a family employs or contracts with any employee of Neighborhood Kids or person who was employed or under contract with Neighborhood Kids within one year of the date of such employment or contractual obligation, that family must pay Neighborhood Kids a placement fee of \$2,500.00.



## **6.0 CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES**

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### **6.1 Process**

If a parent or guardian has a concern or becomes dissatisfied with some experience of his or her child's participation while in school, a grievance procedure functions to resolve the problem. The grievance may be a complaint related to another parent, a staff member's performance, conditions of the school, or some other issue.

Neighborhood Kids formed the grievance process to ensure these ideals throughout the process:

- Promote the working relationship between parents and staff
- Recognize that an orderly process for the handling of grievances is the best way to ensure successful resolution
- Attend to the grievance as quickly as possible before it disrupts the program
- Resolve the grievance at the staff level if possible
- Encourage free expression of views and open dialogue while documenting the process
- Find a corrective and satisfying resolution

Grievances may first be addressed with the child's teacher. If the situation is not satisfactorily resolved, the parent may then voice his or her concerns with the school administration. If the parent is not satisfied with the results, the issue may continue with either the Franchise Owner or the Neighborhood corporate office.

### **6.2 Communication**

Neighborhood Kids encourages parent interaction as much as possible. Parents are welcome to stop by throughout the school day or volunteer in your child's classroom. If you have any concerns or comments, please feel free to speak to the director at drop off or pickup. We want you to feel free to talk to your child's teacher at any time. If you believe the conversation is going to be lengthy, we encourage setting up a time for a conference at everyone's earliest convenience.

Monthly newsletters keep parents informed of all preschool happenings and participation. Beginning with the Two-Year-Olds classroom, each child has a "take home folder" that will be brought home with your child every day. It contains your child's artwork, activities, and notices of events.



## PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, and agree to abide by the Neighborhood Kids policies and procedures contained in this handbook. I understand that failure to uphold these requirements may result in my child's enrollment termination. Disregard of school policies may include these examples: ignoring state licensing rules and regulations; not keeping my tuition account current by paying ahead; and aggressive, loud, and argumentative interactions with school employees.

I give permission to share my child's assessments, progress reports, observation notes, screening, documentation, medical information, including injury and illness logs, and any other information needed by local and state licensing agencies, national accreditation representatives, and other childcare governing officials as it pertains to my child's records held by the school.

Neighborhood Kids reserves the right to maintain a harmonious and safe environment for the children. I realize the goal is to bring about collaboration between the home and the school in ways that enhance my child's development.

I understand that the policies and procedures described in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of Neighborhood Kids at any time.

*Please sign and date and return it to the front office:*

**By signing, I agree to all terms and conditions:**

Parent or Guardian's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_