

Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

I. Welcome

II. Katy GT Academy Overview

- a. Mission
- b. Philosophy
- c. Core Values
- d. Curriculum Goals
- e. Program Quality—Standards of Excellence
- f. Hours of Operation
- g. Holidays—Emergency Closing
- h. Check-in—Check-out Procedures
- i. Visitor Policy
- j. Child Release Policy
- k. Child Abuse & Neglect
- l. Non-discrimination Policy
- m. Confidentiality Statement

III. Procedures & Guidelines

- a. Enrollment
- b. Fees & Payments
- c. Classroom Guidelines
- d. Classroom Curriculum
- e. Health & Safety

IV. Parents: The School/ Home Connection

- a. Classroom Parent Information Board
- b. Parent Conferences
- c. Parent Meetings—Classes
- d. KGTA Advisory Board
- e. Parent Resources
- f. Parent—Teacher Communications
- g. Parent Policy Agreement

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Katy GT Academy (KGTA). We are pleased that you have enrolled your child in our program. We want you to be a part of our Academy and your child's education. We ask that you look over this parent handbook and then keep it at home for future reference.

The Academy has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. These guidelines have been developed to comply with both state licensing standards and to reflect input from KGTA Advisory Board, teachers and parents. The policies and procedures described in this booklet are written to provide a clear description of what parents may expect of KGTA and what KGTA expects of parents. Our goal is to provide exemplary services to you and your family.

If you have any questions or concerns, please communicate with us.

Sincerely,

Katy GT Academy

Address:

21020 Highland Knolls Dr. Suite #6

Katy, Texas 77450

Telephone Number:

281-646-7360

E-Mail: General@katygtacademy.org

Website address: www.katygtacademy.org

Katy GT Academy Overview

MISSION

Our mission at KGTA is to provide exemplary service for the children of Katy families by offering a model program tailored to ensure the child gets quality education.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the KGTA is based on the belief that each child is a worthy individual endowed with unique capabilities and talents. A warm, loving environment, combined with well-trained and creative staff, stimulates a child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Our primary mission is to provide quality care to children in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment.

We provide a happy environment with a pleasant and comfortable atmosphere where children can build trust with the adults who care for them. They feel secure in the knowledge that they are loved and wanted, and they receive the appreciation, respect, and acceptance they need.

We believe parents are the most important adults in a child's life, and work to strengthen those relationships. Our program is intended to reduce stress for working parents by encouraging them to become an integral part of our program. Together we can provide positive experiences for young children.

We believe in a developmental learning philosophy in which learning is encouraged through play. Within the program's daily schedule, each child has the opportunity to create, explore, and learn problem solving and critical thinking skills through self-initiated and teacher-directed activities. We provide a world that is child-oriented and planned so children can develop at a rate meeting their individual needs. We also establish routines that children can cope with and understand.

We teach children to understand and accept each other and to resolve difficulties without feelings of anxiety or guilt. We develop each child's positive self-concept through an environment designed to foster a sense of independence and responsibility. We ensure that infants receive individual feedings and attention, auditory and visual experiences, and cuddling within secure and warm relationships.

Our staff is the heart and soul of our philosophy, so we employ and retain the best in the field. We support our teachers with the necessary training and encourage them to continue to grow professionally – benefiting them while further developing the children care program.

CORE VALUES

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to core values that are deeply rooted in the history of our field. At KGTA, we have committed ourselves professionally to:

- Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle.
- Basing our work with children on current knowledge of child development.
- Acknowledging and supporting the close ties between the child and family.
- Recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
- Respecting the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual child, family member and colleague.
- Helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect and positive regard.
- Fostering an appreciation for and building a natural connection between the arts and learning.

CURRICULUM GOALS

The early years in a child's life set the tone for future learning. Our goal at KGTA is to stay current on research in child development so that we are able to build a foundation for each child that lasts a lifetime. Our curriculum is designed with specific objectives for each age level; however, the following goals are incorporated into every classroom:

- Developing safe and healthy habits in young children.
- Fostering positive self-esteem.
- Providing opportunities for creative expression.
- Supporting the development of social skills.
- Stimulating cognitive problem-solving skills.
- Strengthening communication skills necessary for listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
- Assessing the individual needs of each child.
- Consult with your child's teacher for specific objectives addressed in each classroom.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

701 W. 51st Street

Austin, Texas 78751

P.O. Box 149030

Austin, Texas 78714-9030

State Office Contact Number: 512-438-4800

www.dfps.state.tx.us

Statement of Commitment

As individuals who work with young children, we commit ourselves to furthering the values of early childhood education. To the best of our ability, we will:

- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families and their teachers in the community and society.
- Maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Recognize how personal values, opinions and biases can affect professional judgment.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow and contribute as a professional.

HOURS OF OPERATION

KGTA operates Monday through Friday. The hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. for both the Montessori and the Summer Camp students.

HOLIDAYS—EMERGENCY CLOSING

KGTA reserves following holidays:

- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- Good Friday
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Weather circumstances: if adverse weather conditions force a closing, parents will be called and a plan for each child's pick up will be worked out.

CHECK IN—CHECK OUT PROCEDURES

You are required to sign your child in and out of the program each day. This record is proof that your child is on site and is used in emergency situations. If a child is to be picked-up by someone other than a legal guardian, prior written notification is required. As legal guardian, you should provide the Center with at least two names of persons authorized to pick-up your child in case of illness or emergency. A photo ID is required for anyone picking-up a child. If either parent is not allowed to pick-up the child, a court order must be part of the child's file.

VISITOR POLICY

Any visitor to KGTA must:

- Sign in at the front desk & get a visitor's badge.
- Provide identification.
- Have an approved purpose for a limited visit.
- Be courteous of the classroom schedule and activities.

CHILD RELEASE POLICY

KGTA cannot release any child to an unauthorized person; therefore, we must emphasize the importance of keeping this information current and accurate for your child's school records children are released only:

- To an authorized parent/guardian.
- To a person authorized by written permission from the parents.
- To an authorized person with a picture I.D. and/or other identification.
- To an authorized sibling 18 years of age or older.

State Licensing requires that any request for a new person to be added to your child's pickup list must be in writing and delivered by the parent to the Academy.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY

State law requires all staff members to report suspected child physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Staff members who suspect any case of child abuse or neglect must immediately report it directly to Childcare Licensing and also to our Director. Once the case has been reported, Department of Family and Protective Services will investigate and notify the school. The DFPS Statewide hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

Procedures:

Director:

1. The Director must report all suspected child abuse cases to the Child Abuse Hotline. A person may not make the independent determination of whether a report is necessary or not.
2. The Director must send a written report of suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) of the alleged abuse within 48 hours.
3. The Director must immediately report all suspected cases to the Owner.

Employees:

1. You must immediately report a suspected case of child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline and to the Director.
2. When reporting suspected cases of child abuse, you must include the following information:
 - a. Name of child
 - b. Age of child
 - c. Child's present location
 - d. Type and extent of abuse
 - e. Name of individual making the report
 - f. Individual's title
3. Due to the confidential nature of such reports, no information concerning the incident can be shared with other staff members or parents.

Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children requires:

STAFF TRAINING

Katy GT Academy will provide training for all staff on the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect each program year. The director will provide this training for new staff at an orientation within 7 days of their hire date. Any new staff hired during the school year and will document such orientation in the employee's file. All employees must complete at least one clock hour of annual training from the Department of Family and Protective Services Website:
<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting> or other source including but not limited to face to face and /online training.

PARENT EDUCATION

The Child Abuse and Neglect Policy will be given to all parents at Parent Orientation in the operational policies handbook. The policy will be discussed with parents at the time they receive it. Parents will be offered training on the prevention of abuse and neglect and will be informed of available community resources from the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Department of Family and Protective Services Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP Program). The CBCAP program makes parents aware of prevention services in their communities and encourages them to use them. It also strengthens community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts. CBCAP funds a variety of contracts with community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. These include Respite and Parent Education, Fatherhood and Leadership for Effective Parenting, Multidisciplinary Approach to Prevention Services, Family Support program, as well as various special initiatives. These include the Help for Parents, Hope for Kids campaign, which reaches out to parents with advertising and inspirational testimonials, and gives them a website: <http://www.helpandhope.org> (to connect them with prevention and support services statewide).

HOW DO I KNOW IF IT IS ABUSE OR NEGLECT? HOW DO I KNOW IF IT IS ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

DFPS uses definitions of abuse and neglect found in the Texas Family Code (TFC):
<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.261.htm>

DFPS defines abuse and neglect as the following acts or omissions by a person:
Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including any injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given. This does not include an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm.

Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children under Section 21.02, Penal Code, indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code or aggravated sexual assault under 22.021, Penal Code.

Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Neglect includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation in which a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child.
- Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of a child.
- The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

What if I'm not sure it's if it's neglect?

While it would be ideal to have a clear-cut guide that would determine whether any given situation constitutes abuse or neglect, there are many factors that determine whether a situation warrants an investigation. When in doubt, always err on the side of the child's safety by making a phone or Internet report to the Texas Abuse Hotline.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The KGTA does not discriminate against any child or family based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion or disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made to provide services to all children enrolled in our program.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

KGTA maintains confidentiality and respects the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we will share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.

Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES **ENROLLMENT**

ELIGIBILITY

KGTA enrolls all children, 5 years old to 12 years old for the afterschool and summer camp program.

KGTA Montessori enrolls all children, 18 months to 6 years old.

APPLICATION CONTRACT

All children must be enrolled at KGTA before attending. Once the decision to enroll is made, families must complete the following, sign where applicable, and return these to the Academy prior to the child's first day of attendance:

- A registration fee, supply fee per child is due upon enrollment
- Signed/Initialed Enrollment Agreement
- Signed/Initialed Enrollment Information
- Signed Parent Policy Agreement
- Signed Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Signed Dietary Agreement
- Current Immunization record & Health Assessment with a physician's signature

As long as a child remains enrolled at KGTA, all information in the file must be up-dated and current or enrollment may be subject to termination.

Parents must also participate in the following before the enrollment process is complete:

- Program orientation
- Parent Handbook review
- Meet the teacher

VACATION WEEKS

During the 12 month contract agreement, 2 weeks may be designated as vacation weeks. Payment is not required for these weeks provided your KGTA account is current. The vacation time cannot be used one day at a time; it must be used in 5 consecutive business day intervals. If the 5 consecutive business days occur over a 2 week time period and the child attends part of each week, tuition will only be charged for one week and the second week will be designated as a vacation week. KGTA needs to have the vacation time off requests submitted in writing prior to the child taking the actual time off.

ROOM ASSIGNMENT

Placement of a child in a classroom is determined by age and developmental level. We want your child to be placed where his/her needs are met and their interest challenged. While we do accept input from parents about room assignments, the KGTA Director and Teachers will make the final decision based on what is best for the child, other children, teachers and the Academy.

CANCELLATION

Cancellation of the Enrollment Agreement must be:

- Requested in writing
- Two weeks prior notice
- Approved by the Director
- Parents who do not provide the Academy with the minimum notice must pay fees for two weeks after notice is given, even if the child no longer attends. Cancellation, if approved, negates the privilege of priority registration for the next enrollment period.

FEES & PAYMENTS

All fees are to be paid by check or money order. There is a \$25.00 fee assessed for any returned checks. If this happens twice, KGTA requires that payment be made with a money order only. All fees are non-refundable.

TUITION

KGTA tuition fees are charged monthly for regular school days and these fees must be paid in advance of services being provided. The tuition fees are due on the 3rd working day of the month or the account can be pre-paid in advance for more than a week.

LATE PAYMENT

A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed after the due day by 12:00 noon when payment is past due, as well as a late fee of \$5.00 every day thereafter. Failure to pay on time may result in termination of your child's enrollment and if an account is past due, enrollment contracts cannot be renewed. (There are no discounts/reimbursements for days missed due to illness, absences, vacation, or the Academy being closed for holidays or emergencies.)

ACCOUNTS

Parents will be informed of current rates when children are enrolled. If there is an increase in rates, parents will be given one month's notice regarding the new rates. Parents are responsible for making payments every Monday and for keeping the account current.

At the end of each calendar year the Academy will furnish a report, for income tax purposes, of all tuition and fees paid for each child.

LATE PICK UP

Late fees are assessed if you fail to pick up your child on time. The fee is calculated at \$25.00 for any part of the first 5 minutes, an additional \$20.00 for any part of the next 5 minutes, and \$1.00 for each additional minute after 6:40 p.m. Repeated failure to pick up your child on time can result in enrollment termination.

If we have not heard from the parent and we have not been able to contact other authorized persons listed on the child's enrollment form by 7:00 p.m., we are required by law to consider a child abandoned and to call the police.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

Teaching staff develop individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.

ATTENDANCE—ARRIVAL—ABSENCES

Toddler and preschool classrooms begin curriculum instruction at 8:30 a.m. In order for children to receive the full benefit of our program and to participate with the group activities, we ask that you have your child here by this time. If there is a special circumstance such as a doctor's appointment requiring arrival after 10:00 a.m., please check with the Academy/Teacher and receive special permission for late arrival before bringing your child to the Academy.

Call the Katy GT Academy & Montessori (281-646-7360) no later than 10:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent that day (10:00 a.m. is the time the daily lunch count is made). A full week's tuition is due even if a child is absent one or more days during the week. If you enroll your child for part time (i.e. two or three days per week) at KGTA, you may not switch the days your child attends without prior approval from the Director and Teacher.

NAPTITUDE

During the Summer Camp, we provide a supervised sleep or rest period after lunch for children 5 and 6 year old.

For KGTA Montessori children we provide a supervised sleep or rest period after lunch for all of the children.

DISCIPLINE—GUIDANCE METHODS

At KGTA the purpose of discipline is to help children develop self-control and to become responsible for their own behavior. Knowing what behavior is appropriate or acceptable in a situation is an important skill. We are committed to helping children learn to express feelings appropriately, to consider other people's feelings and to negotiate their own conflicts.

We use non-punitive methods of discipline, which are directly related to the child's behavior and encourage the child's participation. We ask the children to think about the problematic behavior and to find ways to remedy the situation. Teachers like to work closely with parents to understand each child, and to determine which methods work best for that child, thus, teamwork with parents is very important.

If a child exhibits continually disruptive and unsafe behavior that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will discuss the situation with a supervisor and the parents to develop an action plan. All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. Staff will keep parents informed of the progress made. Referrals to community resources or an outside evaluation may be suggested.

If a parent refuses to work with the staff in resolving the problem and/or the behavior problem persists resulting in a chronic situation requiring greater need for care than the KGTA teachers can provide, then the child's enrollment is subject to termination.

The KGTA discipline/ guidance policy complies with the Texas Administrative Code and the rules in the Subchapter L of Minimum Standards :

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; and Medium-
- (4) A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
 - (A) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - (B) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 - (C) Redirecting behavior using positive statements;

(D) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the 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) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet;
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

BIRTHDAYS—CELEBRATIONS—HOLIDAYS

The Academy celebrates the children's birthdays in age-appropriate ways in the classroom. The birthday celebration, however, is purposefully kept simple.

Food brought from home must be approved for sharing. Parents may bring cake/cookies/cupcakes that are store-bought and labeled with the ingredients (this is a Texas child Care Licensing Minimum Standard Rule www.dfps.state.tx.us). These will be served during afternoon snack and parents are welcome to join the children.

The child's birthday observance at the Academy is not intended to take the place of each family's special observance at home. If you do decide to provide a birthday treat for the class, be mindful that:

- No gifts are to be exchanged
- No treat bags or party favors are to be distributed in the classroom.

Birthday party invitations for parties away from the Academy may be distributed at school only through the classroom teacher. If you do not want your child's birthday celebrated, please notify the Academy in advance in writing.

KGTA does observe traditional, national, cultural and seasonal holidays with activities that are educationally oriented and developmentally appropriate. Every effort is made to be culturally sensitive.

Please share with the Academy staff any celebrations that are important to your family, so that these too may be included in our classroom planning.

BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME

Children frequently want to share with their class nature items and treasures from home. Such items are especially welcomed if they support the topic being studied. It is always a good idea to check with a child's teacher first before bringing objects to the Academy.

We do discourage children from bringing toys from home; although, some teachers will allow items of comfort, such as a soft cuddly stuffed animal, to be brought to school to help a child sleep more comfortably (please check with the teacher first). When a child brings a toy from home, it is sometimes difficult for them to share and the toy could get lost or broken. The staff will not be responsible if these items are lost or damaged.

The Academy does not allow, at any time, toys of violence like guns, swords, or violent action figures.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Your child should be dressed in play clothes that are durable, comfortable and appropriate for play and for the season. We will go outside daily, weather permitting.

Because a wide variety of activities take place at our Academy, we recommend clothes that allow for freedom of movement. Many of your child's favorite activities may tend to be a little messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt, so again make sure the child's clothes are suitable.

At KGTA children's safety is of great concern, therefore, we ask that you send your child to school wearing a sturdy shoe that supports the foot properly and protects the toes. Sneakers with socks are the best. Children are not permitted to wear open-toed sandals, clogs, crocs, and flip-flops on the playgrounds because they are dangerous for running and climbing.

We ask that you provide a complete change of clothing for your child to be left at school, including shoes and socks. In order to avoid confusion and lost items, label each article of clothing.

CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

WEEKLY LESSON REVIEWS

On-going assessments will be conducted throughout your child's time with us. These assessments are used to determine the weekly lesson plans for the whole class and also to help develop individual curriculum goals for your child. Each teacher designs classroom lesson plans around the emerging skills of the whole class. There are also plans for Individualized skill building for those children who need help or challenge with emerging skills. The weekly plans are built around the developmental domains with the teacher choosing five assessment items from each domain. There is an objective and activity for each item.

A weekly review of the lesson is available for parents in the classroom, through email and will be sent home every Friday or daily depending on the class in which your child attends. We encourage parents to support the activities and to practice the vocabulary each week; it is also helpful for parents to read the same books with their child and to sing the songs and finger plays. Children learn by repetition.

ASSESSMENTS

At KGTA an assessment will be administered onsite to determine your child's developmental age upon enrollment and thereafter throughout the year. The child's assessments will be used to:

- Identify children's interests and needs
- Describe the developmental progress and learning
- Design classroom curriculum and adapt teaching practices
- Communicate with families
- Arrange for referrals when indicated

The assessments are shared with parents during Parent/Teacher scheduled conferences.

REFERRALS

When program staff suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this possibility is communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment.

Identifying children with disabilities or delays early helps minimize or prevent future problems.

All screening referrals will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only to help access appropriate care as needed.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

KGTA uses technology to extend learning within the classroom and to integrate and enrich the curriculum. The use of passive media (television and video) is limited to developmentally appropriate programming.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Children are offered opportunities to engage in enrichment programs that enhance their development. These classes are held at the Academy.

HEALTH & SAFETY

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Updated immunization records are required and must stay up to date.

Children over 4 years of age will also have to provide a current hearing/vision test results.

VACCINE PREVENTABLE POLICY

KGTA staff are not required to be vaccinated.

ACCIDENTS—EMERGENCIES—FIRST AID

KGTA works hard to provide a safe environment for the children at all times. However, part of growing up can include bumps and bruises. Our Academy is equipped with simple first aid supplies and if a child has a minor accident the staff will provide appropriate first aid to the child.

When injuries do occur, we make two copies of a written report to inform parents about the accident. One copy is for the parent and the other copy is to be signed by the parent and kept in the child's file.

If a child has a serious injury, a trained staff member will provide first aid and you will be contacted to pick up your child. If there is an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, 911 emergency personnel will be called and the parent and/or the child's physician will be notified. If a child needs to be transported by an ambulance, a staff member will accompany your child if the parent is not available. When the parent is unavailable, alternate names in the child's file are contacted as well.

HYGEINE

Every effort is made by the KGTA staff to prevent the spread of germs. We strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness, which includes required hand washing for children and teachers and instruction in hygiene to help minimize the spread of germs.

ILLNESS—'SYMPTOM FREE' RULE

One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness.

KGTA uses the following guidelines to protect your child as well as others from contagious illness. We realize that this can sometimes be an inconvenience for parents but we trust that you will understand the necessity for such a policy. If any of the following conditions occur, while your child is in attendance, you will be notified and

your child must be picked up from the Academy as soon as possible:

- Fever, armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Head Lice
- Symptoms of an infectious disorder such as ringworm, pink eye, etc.
- Any other condition deemed necessary by the Director/Teacher for the well-being of your child and the other children enrolled.
- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your help for this.

Do not bring ill children to the Academy and if your child becomes ill at the Academy, please pick the child up immediately.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please notify the Academy. It is important for us to be aware of what children may have been exposed to so that we can communicate this with other parents.

THE 24-HOUR 'SYMPTOM FREE' RULE

The Academy's policy requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness: fever, diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours.

Fever-free means without medication for fever reduction.

Please keep in mind that if we send your child home because of illness, the child will not be admitted to the Academy the next day because the 24-hour period will not have elapsed. Do not rush a child's return to school following an illness. The Academy reserves the right to require a doctor's statement before the child can be re-admitted to the Academy.

MEDICATIONS

In order for KGTA staff to administer medication we must adhere to the following: (www.tdprs.state.tx.us)

- All medicine must be in the original container.
- The container must be labeled with the child's name.
- If it is over-the-counter medication, it must state the amount to be administered by child's age and/or weight.
- All medicine must be labeled with the date (if prescribed) or the date brought to the Academy.

- The medicine must include directions on how to administer the medication.
- If the medication is prescribed, the name of the physician prescribing the medication must be on the container.
- All medications must have an expiration date and we cannot administer medication after the expiration date.
- The medicine can only be administered to the child for whom it was intended.

The parent has to sign an authorization form and include the dates and times for the Academy to administer the medication and these directions must follow the label directions.

NUTRITION

If a child requires a special diet, you must provide the food from home and your child's file must include a signed statement that KGTA is not responsible for the nutritional value of the food brought from home or for meeting the child's daily food needs. In addition, if a child requires diet modifications for health reasons we must have written approval from a physician or registered-licensed dietician. Any food or beverage brought from home must be labeled with the child's name and date.

MEALS

Monthly menus are carefully planned. Copies of the menus are available at the front desk and are posted on the parent board in the front lobby and on the KGTA website.

We begin serving lunch at 11:30 a.m. and the lunch count is based on the number of children at the Academy by 10:00 a.m. Please call the Academy if you are going to be late.

The Academy does enforce a no candy rule in the classrooms. Our goal is to maintain the quality of the child's daily nutrition and we ask that parents join us in this effort to promote healthy children.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES—DRILLS

KGTA places a high priority on being prepared for a variety of emergencies that may arise. We have set up an emergency plan as follows:

Stay informed. KGTA staff monitors alert statuses of any kind on a daily basis. When an alert is in a heightened state (for weather or otherwise), the radio and Internet are checked regularly for breaking information. Assess the situation and act. Upon receiving pertinent information and/or official notification, a decision is made to either move to a predetermined safe area of the building, evacuate or conduct a shelter-in-place.

Communicate. In the event of an emergency and after the necessary actions are taken, KGTA staff will call parents to inform them of the status of the children and the situation.

Evacuation – Fire and evacuation drills are held monthly to acquaint the children with evacuation procedures. Evacuation routes are posted in each classroom and in the KGTA lobby. If relocation is necessary, a designated staff member will carry children under 24 months of age who have limited mobility or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency.

In the event relocation is needed, all children and staff will relocate to:

Child's Play Learning Center

1530 Norwalk Dr.
Katy, TX 77450

All faculty members will be trained on fire protection and evacuation practices.

1. Fire drills will be conducted monthly. The director will keep a record of all drills.
2. In case of emergency or drill, all personnel should leave the building in an orderly manner - Walk, Don't Run. Teachers should search their rooms and close all doors before leaving. Additionally the Director or designee will search all areas within the Center and ensure all occupants have been safely evacuated. Teachers will refuse assistance from anyone not previously identified as a support person. This does not include Federal Protective Service Police or emergency personnel.
3. Physically challenged children will be provided assistance to help exit the building.
4. At the assembly area, teachers will immediately take a head count of each classroom group to ensure that everyone is present and accounted for. Head Teachers shall report the final head count to the Director or designee. Names of any missing children or missing personnel must be given to the Command Center. A face to name roll call will be conducted to ensure all children are present.
5. Parents will not be allowed to remove a child from the custody of the center during the evacuation. Once all children are accounted for parents may be allowed to sign out their children.
6. Emergency contact information and medical release forms will be kept in an emergency folder located in the main office along with a digital copy stored on a personal handheld device and a remote copy stored in a location away from Katy GT.

The KGTA emergency contact phone number is: (281) 704-5760

Shelter-in-Place – In the event of a shelter-in-place decision, each room is equipped with an emergency supply kit that includes all of the items recommended by the Department of Homeland Security. Each room has a step-by-step manual on what to do in a variety of situations.

Severe Weather Emergency/General Procedures:

- Stay inside away from windows.

- Assume protective posture.
- Keep calm and do not get excited.
- Use two-way radios to monitor the situation and to communicate if further action is necessary.

KGTA will monitor all severe weather @www.nationalweather.com/

GANG FREE ZONE

KGTA is located in a gang free zone. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

PARENTS: THE SCHOOL/HOME CONNECTION

Parents' involvement in their child's education is encouraged at KGTA in both formal and informal ways. It is important for parents to know what is happening in their child's classroom as well as at the Academy. Please make every effort to stay informed; you are your child's advocate and their most important teacher.

CLASSROOM PARENT INFORMATION BOARD

There is a bulletin board located in the classrooms that contains both general and specific parent information. Please make a point to stop by and check the information on the board each day. This will help with the process of communication and connecting parents with the Academy.

PARENT CONFERENCES

All parents are invited to participate in parent/teacher conferences. These conferences will be held during school hours and at a time that is convenient for both the parents and the teacher. Occasionally a teacher may request a parent conference when there are special concerns in the classroom. We ask that parents respect this request with prompt attention.

PARENT MEETINGS—CLASSES

KGTA has parent meetings throughout the year. This includes general meetings, new parent orientations and program/classroom Open House. Periodically, parenting classes are held in the evening. These classes cover a variety of topics related to the Academy's program and the young child's development.

KGTA ADVISORY BOARD

The KGTA Advisory Board is composed of a group of dedicated parents, students, staff and faculty members. It serves in an advisory capacity to provide support and guidance to the Director.

PARENT RESOURCES

KGTA maintains an online resource library for our parents. Other helpful resources for parents can be found at the following web sites;

www.parentinginformation.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.iamyourchild.org

www.collabforchildren.org

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

When you have a concern, please remember:

Teachers want parents to be satisfied with the care their child is receiving. Talk to the teachers directly whenever possible, or if you would prefer to talk with the Director of the Academy.

Please REALIZE that if you have a concern with a teacher, Director will need to investigate and talk with the teacher about your concern in order to deal with the issue in a straightforward manner. Please give teachers a chance to correct minor issues.

On the other hand, please do not allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out "later" that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.

Sometimes we cannot make the changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

If at any time a parent wishes to meet with their child's teacher to discuss issues that may arise, he/she can contact the teacher to schedule a meeting. We do ask that you schedule a conference with your child's teacher to discuss issues in depth, and not try to discuss them during drop-off and pick-up times.

As a Katy GT Academy parent, I have met with the Academy's Director and reviewed the KGTA Parent Handbook. I agree to:

- Comply with and support all KGTA policies and procedures.
- Be financially responsible, keep my account current and pay late fees if it is not current.
- Understand that there is a \$5.00 late fee if tuition is not paid on due date, as well as a \$5.00 per day thereafter.
- Pick up my child no later than 6:30 p.m. and pay late fees when I do not.
- Check my child in and out on the computer every day.
- Adhere to the Academy's ill child policy and the 24 hour "symptom-free" rule.
- Pick my child up promptly in case of an injury or illness while at the Academy.
- Follow medication dispensing regulations and complete all necessary forms.
- Keep my child's immunizations current and provide copies of any updates to the KGTA office.
- Attend all parent conferences and/or meetings requested by the Teacher.
- Read all information provided/shared with KGTA parents.
- Use the KGTA website and Parent Information Boards to stay informed.
- Cooperate with KGTA Teachers and follow up on medical, dental or developmental referrals/needs of my child.
- Keep all telephone numbers, emergency information and other enrollment information current.
- Be willing to learn and grow as a child and increase my knowledge of child development.
- Provide the Academy with special foods, change of clothing or anything else necessary for my child.
- Discuss my concerns and keep open communication lines with my child's teacher and the Academy seeking to avoid problems and misunderstandings.

Respect all KGTA staff.

*I understand that failure to abide by KGTA policies and procedures may result in my child's enrollment termination. Disregard of Academy policies can include: ignoring state licensing rules and regulations; not keeping your account current; aggressive, loud and argumentative interactions with an Academy employee; sexual harassment; hostile phone calls, voice mails, faxes or email communications. Above all, KGTA reserves the right to maintain a harmonious and safe environment for the children. Our goal is to bring about collaboration between the home and school in ways that enhance your child's development.