



PARENTS HANDBOOK

2018-2019

The Program

Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy concentrates on fostering initiative, creativity and thinking skills through activities that will enhance the children's abilities to communicate, solve problems, practice interpersonal social skills and develop with self-confidence.

All that we expect of the children is that they come to school, be themselves, and have respect for others. What we expect of parents and guardians *is* that you have read the operating procedures in this handbook and in supplemental notes and newsletters. Feel free to be a part of the school, offering suggestions, comments and constructive criticism.

The school *is* open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, or creed, who may benefit from our type of program.

Age groupings are generally based on the child's age. Groupings are flexible and a child may be moved from one group to another to meet special needs. *Age* groups intermingle according to the standards of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, The Connecticut Department of Health, The New York City Department of Health, or any other regulatory agency with which we are affiliated.

The Staff

Carefully selected staff members provide supervision, care, and the education of your child. Each classroom is headed by a teacher who has a minimum degree of a *CDA*, also known as the Child Development Associate Degree. Pre-service orientation is provided to all personnel regardless of previous experience. All staff members participate in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement. This allows our staff to be aware of the ever-changing needs of today's families and the findings of current research.

Per our licensing agencies, all staff members must be fingerprinted and have a background check for child abuse and maltreatment before they can begin working at the center.

Admission Requirements

A preliminary interview and tour of our center *is* required for admission. Parents and staff will discuss a plan to acclimate new children to the center. The plan may include pre-enrollment visits, continued contact and meetings with parents, therefore, gradually bringing in new children.

Parents must complete and sign the following forms:

- Registration Application
- Medical Form (including Lead and TB Tests)
- This Policy Statement
- Parent Agreement (Contract)
- Other Forms necessary to *assist* the facility in caring for your child

No child will be admitted to the center without completion of the above forms, required by our licensing agencies. Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy reserves the right to deny child care enrollment at any time prior to, or during actual enrollment.

Should a parent display inappropriate behavior at any time within the childcare facility, management reserves the right to immediately terminate the contractual childcare agreement with those parent/parents/guardians.

Re-registration - A new registration fee, materials fee and deposit will be required should a child re-enroll in the center at a later date.

Financial Arrangements/Tuition Policy

Fees - At the time of actual enrollment, each application must be accompanied by a one-time non-refundable Registration Fee and a non-refundable Mattress Fee. Additionally, the required one month's deposit will be required to hold your child's spot in our program.

Summer Program Enrollment Fee - Children enrolling in our summer program will incur a registration fee of \$100. If your child *is* enrolled in our program year round, this fee will be applied to your summer tuition.

Deposits - A one (1) month deposit is also required upon enrollment. This deposit will be refunded to you in full after your payment of your child's last month at Amazing Kids Learning Center. Any balances due to the school will be deducted from the deposit. **Deposits cannot be used as payment towards the last month of tuition.**

Deposit Upgrades/Downgrades - Should tuition increase/decrease at any time during enrollment, a charge/credit will be incurred so that the required deposit will equal the current tuition rate.

One Month Written Notice - Any time a parent *wishes* to change his/her child's program or withdraw their child from the program, a one (1) month written notice is required. Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy runs on a "monthly schedule" from the first of the month to the last day of the month. Therefore, mid-month withdrawals and/or notice of program change will not be accepted. This policy is strictly enforced.

Enrollment Date - The date a parent submits all paperwork and fees to secure a spot for their child.

Start Date - The date a child actually begins attendance in the program.

Availability - Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy operates and accepts enrollments twelve (12) months of the year. Availability *is* based on first come, first serve basis, and with the receipt of all the necessary fees and paperwork.

Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy does not have a waiting list, but rather holds future enrollment spots when the Registration Fee, the Required Deposit and all necessary paperwork are received. Should you change your mind after having submitted these items, one month written notice is required. The Registration Fee is non-refundable, however, the deposit is refundable if proper notice is given. The term "Monthly Tuition" - refers to the 1st of any given month through the 1st of the following month.

Payment of Tuition - Tuition is billed on a monthly basis. If your child *is* enrolled mid-month, the tuition will be pro-rated and calculated accordingly. Tuition is due the first (1st) of each month. Payments made after the 5th of the month will incur a \$25.00 late penalty. Unless you have made other arrangements with the Director of the school, please pay each month's tuition on or before the first day of that month.

Subsidized Tuition - A parent who qualifies for a subsidy is responsible for the parent portion of the tuition, dictated by their caseworker. All Registration Fees, the Mattress Fee and the Deposit (equaling the parent portion of the tuition) must be paid upon enrollment. Additionally, all policies contained in this handbook are to be agreed upon. Should a parent fall behind on their parent portion, withdraw from the program without written notice and/or with an outstanding balance, the Subsidy Agency will be notified and any further applications from the parent to the Agency will not be accepted until past balances are satisfied. If your subsidy is taken away for any reason, you are responsible for any outstanding tuition that is incurred on your account.

Sibling Discount - A 10% discount is applicable to the oldest child/children.

Non-payment of Tuition - If a parent falls one (1) month behind in payment of tuition fees, the child will not be allowed to attend the center until payment is brought up to date. The child's enrollment spot will not be held. Each case of non-payment will be reviewed on an individual basis before dismissal occurs.

Make-up days for Absences - Make-up days and/or switching of days are not permitted.

Vacation and Holiday Credit - No credit on tuition is given for scheduled school holidays and vacation periods.

Extra Days - Since we are licensed to handle a certain number of children per day, distributed among the various classrooms, we cannot always accommodate requests for extra days. Therefore, if a parent requires an extra day, clearance from management must be obtained. Regardless of the hours used, parents will be charged the current daily fee. We do not offer half days.

Withdrawals - A one (1) month (the term "month" refers to the 1' day of any given month) written notice must be given to the center in order to withdraw your child. If appropriate notice is not given, parents will be charged for that period and forfeit their deposit. A child cannot be withdrawn from the program mid-month. Tuition will not be pro-rated. This policy is strictly enforced.

School Closings - No credit will be given for school closings due to holidays and/or inclement weather. Additionally, no credits will be given if the center closed for breakdown of the heating systems, electric outages and/or floods.

Note - Mid-month withdrawals **will not** be pro-rated. Any withdrawal notice given after the 15th of the month is considered notice for the following month. For example, notice given on October 10th will be honored on November 1st. Therefore, tuition responsibility must be through the end of November.

Drop-off and pickup times - we offer the following programs:

- ❖ Full Day - 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

- ❖ Part Time Programs - customized by center availability and at the discretion of the Center Director.

Authorization to pick up Child - No child will be released to a person without written parental authorization.

The parent should make every effort to arrive at the center at his or her scheduled pickup time. A parent who cannot appear in person should arrange to have a reliable individual, who is on the pickup list, to pick up the child. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the center informed of any changes in home, work or emergency numbers which the staff can call in the event of occasional, accidental lateness.

The staff member who is assigned to work at closing time is expected to remain as long as necessary to care for any children who are not picked up by the designated closing time. Please respect our staff as their time is valuable. Please be aware to leave school grounds before the school closing time.

Overtime Charges - there will be an overtime charge for children consistently dropped off too early or picked up too late. Overtime will be charged as follows:

- ❖ \$15.00 for the 1st 10 minutes/per child
- ❖ \$2.00 per minute thereafter/per child

We realize that these overtime charges are steep; however, we want the parents to realize that our staff members have home lives and responsibilities of their own. Parents who ignore our strict pickup policy will be asked to withdraw their child from the school.

LATE PENALTIES ARE TO BE PAID DIRECTLY TO THE STAFF MEMBERS WHO CARED FOR YOUR CHILD AFTER HOURS. LATE PENALTIES ARE TO BE MADE IN CASH.

Late Pick up Procedure

When a child is not picked up by closing time and no prior notification has been given to the center, the staff person shall attempt to contact a parent.

If contact is not possible with a parent, the emergency contact shall be called to arrange pick up. If contact *is* not possible with the emergency contact, the staff shall wait with the child in the center for one (1) hour after the established closing time.

If no arrangements have been made to pick up the child one (1) hour after the established closing time, we will contact the local police department and Child Protective Services. Custody of the child goes to the police department until the child *is* accepted by the Child Protective Services (CPS). Once in *CPS* custody, the child will be placed in a foster home for the night and an investigation of child neglect will begin. This, of course, is an extreme step to be taken only after all of the options have been exhausted.

The Director shares the above policy with the parents upon admission to the center. Should the parent failed to fulfill his or her responsibility; this can become grounds for dismissal.

The Health and Safety of Your Child

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Upon enrollment, you must submit a health form signed by a physician. We also require that the child has updated standard immunizations and a tuberculin clearance. Additionally, please ask your doctor if a lead test is required for your child. This medical form must be updated annually. If you fail to update your child's health record annually, we have the right to dismiss your child from our program.

If you have chosen not to immunize your child, a letter of religious or personal exemption must be received from your physician and attorney.

A daily health inspection *is* given upon each child's arrival at school. The person bringing the child must wait until the inspection is over before leaving the premises. Your child may be sent home, if any symptoms of illness appeared during the day. In such cases, your child will be immediately isolated from the others and you will be contacted for pick up.

To keep infection to a minimum, hand washing *is* stressed often in our centers. Please help us by following up on these practices at home.

Keep Your Child Home If *He* or *She*:

- Has a fever over a 101 or has one had one during the previous 24 hour period.
- Has begun taking an antibiotic within a 24 hour period.
- Has a heavy nasal discharge that is not clear
- Has been diagnosed with conjunctivitis.
- Has been diagnosed with strep throat.
- Has an unexplained rash.
- Has a constant cough.
- Is fussy, cranky, and generally out of sorts.
- Appears ill having a fever, diarrhea or vomiting.
- Has the symptoms of a possible communicable disease. (These are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, and fever.)
Please notify the school at once if the child has a communicable disease.

Your Child May Come to School

- If a cold is over, but a minor clear nasal drip remains.
- If there has been an exposure to communicable disease, but the school must be notified so that the incubation period can be discussed and it can be determined how long your child should stay home.
- If you have a doctor's note stating that your child is noncontagious and can return to school and resume normal activities

Medication Administration

Effective January 31, 2005, licensed or registered child care providers must be in compliance with the new Infection Control Regulations set forth by the Office of Children and Family Service. Designated staff and caregivers have received the mandatory training in Medication Administration Training (MAT) and are now in compliance to administer medications to children.

Necessary medication can be administered, but only under the condition that the medication is prescribed by a doctor, the initial dosage has already been given, and the *signing* of a consent form, consisting of the name of the medicine, and signed by the parent and physician. Any over-the-counter medication must be accompanied by a doctor's note.

Medical Emergencies

In case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent once the situation *is* under control. If we can't reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call 911. Until the arrival of a parent or emergency personnel, the Director or an Assistant will be in charge and make all decisions about the care of the child. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resulted expenses not covered by our insurance. The school will maintain a parents' signed consent form agreeing to this provision. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

Inappropriate Behavior Policy

Behaviors that harm another child, staff members, or themselves, as well as, inappropriate language, sexual harassment or insubordination will not be tolerated. The children involved will be removed from the classroom and parent(s) will be contacted. Depending upon the circumstances, suspension may result. If such inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be excluded from the center.

This policy also refers to the behavior of the parents at our center. Parents are required to treat our center and staff with respect at all times. If the center feels threatened for any reason, the local authorities may be called and the offending parent will be asked to leave the center. Suspension •or dismissal *is* probable ramification.

Emergency Closings

The center will automatically close when hazardous weather or if other conditions exists which jeopardize the safety and welfare of the children and staff.

If the center is already open when such an emergency is announced, parents will be contacted. The center will remain open until all of the children have been picked up.

Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy will post any information to our Facebook page, our website, and through mass email alerts once a determination has been made regarding delays and closings. This information can also be accessed on www.cancellations.com, Fox 5 News, and News 12 (if available in your area).

Holiday Closings

Our Center follows a "Corporate Calendar" for holiday *closings*. A school calendar will be given to the parents upon enrollment. A new school calendar is usually distributed in December of each year.

The Program

Daily Activities

Daily activities appropriate to developmental levels include:

- Art
- Using Manipulatives
- Music
- Movement
- Creative Dramatics
- Blocks
- Cooking
- Reading
- Science Activities
- Outdoor Play

A Goal Directed Program

The program we pursue is skewed towards helping children develop habits of observation, questioning, and listening. It *gives* them awareness of their own feelings and of their right to express those feelings by sometimes channeling them into other means of expression. They learn that they are free to make choices and that as long as they stay within the limits of consideration for people and things, they do not always have to conform. An open-ended program like ours prepares children to utilize their intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal parent conferences are scheduled every *six* (6) months by *sign* up. Parent initiated conferences may be set up at any time. Conferences do not take the place

of daily communication between staff members and parents, but rather allow opportunities for in-depth discussions of your child's development.

Outdoor Play

Since children benefit from fresh air and *exercise* even in cold weather, we include outdoor play into our daily schedule. Outdoor play is avoided during downpours, storms, or extreme temperatures. Children should be appropriately dressed according to the weather. Send snow pants and boots during the winter months. No child will be exempt from partaking in outdoor play. If you feel your child cannot partake in outdoor play due to illness or weather conditions, please keep your child home from the center that day.

What to Wear to School

Think of your child's comfort - provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Provide clothing that is sturdy and washable. Child's play is intense, so expect your child to get dirty.

Finally, please make sure all clothing is labeled. Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy *is* not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. No open sandals, please.

Clothing and Supplies

Make sure that your child has at least two (2) complete changes of clothing that are weather appropriate in their cubby in case of toileting accidents or accidental spills.

Naptime

"Quiet Time" is given to the children enrolled in the extended and full-day programs. Although the children are not required to nap, "quiet time" must be observed (as required by our licensing agency). Young children need to rest in order to decompress, regroup and recharge for the afternoon activities.

Nutrition

Children who attend our program will be supplied with a nutritious breakfast and lunch, as well as morning and afternoon snacks. A nutritionist approves all meals. A

menu *is* provided upon enrollment. The menu is subject to change due to availability of foods.

Discipline

Whenever a child at the center disrupts others, our staff uses a method called "sit and watch". This method of helping children learn how to get along with the other children *is* very acceptable to parents and staff, while at the same time effective in minimizing classroom disruptions.

In "sit and watch", a disruptive child is told what he did and what he should have done. The child is asked to sit at the edge of other children's play to watch them. After 20-30 seconds of sitting quietly, the child is then invited to return to the others and *is* reminded of what acceptable behavior is. The caregiver then keeps watch for the first opportunity to comment on how well the child is getting along with the other children.

Learning Academy Biting Policy:

Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy regards biting as a serious health issue, however, each biting incident *is* considered on a case-by-case basis. It *is* policy to document every biting incident. Parents of both the "biter" and the "bitee" will receive these reports to be signed and placed in their folders. These reports are extremely important; they track when and under what circumstances the incident occurred.

Should the child become a habitual biter, certain steps will take place to ensure the health and safety of all children involved. These steps include, but are not limited to;

- Meetings with the biters parents and Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy staff
- Changing the circumstances of the biting incidents
- Shadowing
- Recommendation of Professional Evaluation Services

Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy *is* obligated by state regulations to keep all parties and their medical records confidential; however, when biting occurs for children who are verbal, it is difficult to sustain confidentiality. Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy will not release the name of the "biter" to the parents of the "bitee". At the same time, please do not expect this information to be given to you if your child is the one who has been bitten.

Child Abuse

Child abuse reporting is mandated for all center personnel. Please explain any unusual injury to the staff before leaving your child for the day.

Any suspicion of abuse or maltreatment of the child must be brought to the attention of the Director. The Director will then make an investigation and, if necessary, report it to the Child Abuse Hot Line.

The subjects of child abuse report could be any parent, guardian, custodian or any other person 18 years of age or older, who is legally responsible for a child, and who was allegedly responsible for causing or allowing the injury, abuse, or maltreatment of such child.

All telephone reports should be made to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) by calling the statewide, toll-free number 1800-635-1522.

Birthdays

Since birthday celebrations are very special for children, we celebrate birthdays during the afternoon snack period. Please feel free to send in a special snack to celebrate your child's day. Please speak to your child's teacher for recommendations of snacks for the class. Please remember that children have allergies to certain foods.

Health and safety concerns do not allow the distribution of candy, toys or commercial party favors.

Toys from Home

Except for toys that are needed in the very opening days of school to help ease your child's transition from home to school, we ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in your car. Toys from home are not acceptable in a group setting *since* they are not made to withstand the play of many children. Additionally, many children do not like to share their own possessions, and this can cause classroom conflict. Many teachers welcome books to be shared in the classroom, and videos for rainy days. Please clear all books and videos with your child's Director or teacher.

Orientation of Child to School and Separation from Parent

Starting school *is* an exciting experience for a young child - but it can also be a difficult one. Whatever the personality of the child, however eager he or she may seem to be for the new situation, there will be a moment when the child suddenly realizes that you are not going to be there. The apprehension that accompanies this realization is a normal reaction. Most children have little difficulty adjusting to school after they have made an initial visit with the parent. Nevertheless, it is important to introduce the child to the school in a way that will make this first separation from the parent as easy as possible.

Here's how we do it:

- Introduce a child to his/her program by having a child come for a series of three or four brief visits.
- Adults who stay more than an hour should gradually move out of the room. When children *sense* that they are not being closely watched, they will usually start to *relax*.
- *Always* say "goodbye" to your child, and leave quickly and unhesitatingly without looking back. If a child cries at the moment of separation, the crying will seldom continue for more than a few minutes. Our staff *is* trained to calm your child and get them to interact quickly in an activity to get their mind off the separation.
- Sometimes, children who have not cried at all during the day will start in when the parents come to pick them up.
- If the separation seems to be unusually difficult for both the parent and the child, arrange to have an adult other than the parent bring the child to school in the morning. The separation difficulty usually takes place only with the parents, especially the mother. After being brought a few times by someone other than a parent, the child may be able to face the separation from the parents with ease. We suggest that your child be picked up a little earlier on the first few days of school. Often the child *is* fine until other parents arrive for their children. Apprehension may then begin as to whether the child, too, will be picked up.
- It *is* normal to go through a period of adjustment during such a big change in your child's life. Our staff will try to prevent trauma by anticipating the many difficulties that may arise. Even if no difficulties arise, it *is* good to be prepared. It *is* usually better to find out at the very beginning if the child is going to have some difficulties with the separation. Sometimes on the

first day at school the child *is* so absorbed with the toys and the environment that there will not even be an awareness of being separated from the parents. Frequently in such an instance, the adjustment will be made sometime later - anytime from a few days to a few *weeks* later. It is a normal part of a child's wholesome growth in learning to accept change and being away from home.

- Our staff will help you understand that children's emotions are similar to those of adults. This will help an apprehensive adult to have a more wholesome empathy for the child's problems of separation. It is important that the parent give the child some extra time, personal (physical) contact, and love during the opening few days of school. Allow the beginning days of school to be gentle, casual, and nonthreatening but by responding to questions or comments directly from the child.

Separation of Parent from Child

It *is* sometimes just as difficult for parents to face separation from the child on the first day of school as it is for the children. Our staff will help the parents recognize these feelings and reassure them that it *is* a normal reaction.

If necessary, our staff will review the school programs; the health and safety precautions; the opportunities for the children to learn, grow, and have fun; opportunities for individual care and attention; and all the other details about the overall staff planning for the children's adjustment to the school. We encourage conversation between parents, staff and the Director.

To Our Parents

- We want you to know, to understand, and to *discuss* with us your goals.
- We want you to look into our busy, happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at play.
- We want you to realize the validity of play and what is being learned.
- Parents and teachers together can help your child develop his or her full human potential.

Important Reminders

Always:

- Keep the center well supplied with well-marked clothing (i.e. change of pants, shirts, undershirts, underwear, socks, shoes, etc.)
- Notify a staff member of any previous injury your child has before dropping him/her off in the morning.
- Call the school in case of any serious illness or any other reason for your child's absence.
- Inform the school of any special need your child may have, whether it is a permanent or temporary situation (i.e. medication, special diet, allergies, etc.)
- Keep the school informed of any changes in address, home, work or emergency phone numbers.
- Inform the school if your child *is* in the process of potty training. It allows the staff to work along with you.

Although Not *Always* Possible:

- Contact the school in the event of an after closing pick-up.
- Please try to make our "special events" throughout the year. These events give your child a chance to experience his/her school with you. These events also give you a chance to meet and socialize with other parents.

Keep in Mind:

- In any type of inclement weather, please visit our Facebook page, log onto www.cancellations.com to be aware of any school delays or school closings.
- Express any concerns or questions you may have immediately. Most concerns and questions are easily answered and justified, therefore, voicing your thoughts can relieve any doubts you may have. *Concerns* and questions are welcome, as are any positive comments you may have.
- If you ever feel that there is a problem, concern, or complaint that you cannot resolve with your Center Director, you can always reach a representative from Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy at 1-718-684-3100 or via email through our website at cheer-n-grow.com .

**And Remember That....
Childhood is a Journey, Not a Race!!**

Parents Handbook

I have read and understand the policy of Amazing Kids Learning Center.

As the parent(s) of _____, I hereby agree to enroll him/her in Cheer-N-Grow Learning Academy and to abide by all the policies of the center, including the conditions listed in the parent handbook.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date