

Fees are payable as designated in the fee agreement. Fees are payable for all days in the contract period whether or not the child is present.

### **Optional Care**

*Apple Tree Academy* provides optional care for school-age children during holiday and scheduled breaks from 7:00 a.m. -5:30 p.m.

### **Enrollment and Acceptance for Optional Care**

- Enrollment will be accepted according to the date and time of the application.
- The number of teachers available will determine the number of children accepted for each classroom.
- Optional care enrollments may not be cancelled or changed after the signed application/fee agreement has been returned.
- There can be no refunds for cancellation of optional care enrollment after the fee agreement is signed.
- Parents are responsible for paying optional care fees as specified in the fee agreement.
- Fees for optional care are in addition to the standard fee agreement.

### **Optional Care Enrollment Guidelines**

**These guidelines may be put into effect at the discretion of the administrative staff.**

- If a field trip is scheduled during optional care, your child may or may not go on the field trip depending on age, grade level, maturity, behavior, etc. Classrooms may be combined in each room in order to meet parent requests and adequate cost-effective teacher/child ratios.
- An attempt will be made to employ at least one regular classroom teacher for each optional care time. When this is not possible, aides will be hired to substitute for the teacher.

## **Withdrawal**

### **Canceling Enrollment Prior to Beginning a Semester\*:**

- Fall semester – notice required by June fifteenth
- Spring semester – notice required by November fifteenth
- Summer semester – notice required by April fifteenth

*\*If the date falls upon a national holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, the date of notice is due the next working day.*

- After fall or spring semester has begun, but before the deadline as listed above, a written notice of withdrawal is required twenty one days in advance of the date of withdrawal in order to have the security deposit refunded (see Financial Policy section).
- A request to withdraw a child from the summer session will not be accepted after the session has begun.

- There will be no refund of deposit on withdrawals of enrollments received after June fourteenth for the fall semester, after November fifteenth for the spring semester, or after April fifteenth for the summer session.

### ***Re-Admittance After Withdrawal***

If a parent withdraws a child from *Apple Tree Academy* and later wishes to re-enroll the child, a new application for admission must be completed and the application fee paid. The child is placed on the waiting list according to *Apple Tree Academy* admittance priorities. The date of the new application is the date used for placement in the waiting list.

A child currently enrolled in the center who is withdrawn from the next semester and then applies for readmission the *semester immediately following the non-enrolled semester* shall have enrollment priority after children with continuous enrollment. The child is placed on the waiting list with priority after children who are enrolled continuously (i.e., children who are new and attend *Apple Tree Academy* in the summer have priority for enrollment in the fall over those who have withdrawn for the summer.) Parents will be notified of placement or non-placement immediately after July first, December first, or May first. This policy does not apply to those who complete the withdrawal/re-application process after June fifteenth for fall semester, after November fifteenth for spring semester, or after April fifteenth for the summer session.

## **Discipline**

### ***Positive Discipline***

*Webster's Dictionary* defines discipline as, "Training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency."

**Discipline is an essential part of childcare.**

- Discipline helps children feel secure, meets their needs, and builds self-control and self-esteem.
- The objective of discipline is to promote behaviors that are beneficial to the child's development and welfare and to change and/or eliminate behaviors that are harmful or distressing to a child/others.

**Discipline is different from punishment.**

- Corporal or negative verbal punishment may change children's behaviors, but often through fear.
- Punishment stresses what children should *not* do, but rarely teaches them *what* to do.
- Children controlled by punishment such as spanking or severe consequences may "behave" to avoid a penalty chosen by the adult.
- Punishment often teaches children to hide their mistakes, and does not build long lasting inner controls or cooperation.
- Punishment may also cause children to focus on revenge rather than on changing behavior.

Before we examine various techniques adults may use when disciplining, we must first look at the environment. How the environment is set up has a great deal of influence on how most discipline problems can be prevented, greatly reduced, or even eliminated.

Many times changing the routine, the activities, the room arrangement, or the use of space has a profound effect on how children get along with each other. We work on trying to satisfy each child's need for individual space, for social interaction, for quiet and rest, for movement and stimulation, for new materials, for self-directed or teacher-directed activities, for age appropriate materials and behavior expectations, or for an abundant amount of love and affection.

**Apple Tree's guidelines for creating a healthy and positive environment are as follows:**

- provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment,
- be a positive role model with a positive attitude,
- explain situations ahead of time,
- provide choices and following through,
- use a soft voice,
- have a variety of rainy day activities available,
- tell the child "thank you"/praising the child,
- watch the child's diet,
- foster self-esteem,
- smile!

The purpose of behavior management is to teach correct behavior. Discipline is concerned *with* and focuses *on* the future. We discipline in order to teach correct behavior, a much more positive approach than punishment. Children don't have to learn through being penalized – they can instead learn through being firmly, lovingly, patiently, and calmly taught by the adult. The result is that children will have a greater knowledge of what is expected, what their limits are, and will feel a sense of security because their world is orderly.

***The following are from the Discipline Policy given to Apple Tree Academy Staff***

- Use distraction, suggestions, or a re-direction ("Have you tried..."). Distraction works wonders with small children.
- Use quiet, brief private talks away from other children. Make sure you don't lecture or accuse.
- Use positive statements ("When... then." Or "As soon as... then..." "When we finish putting away the blocks, then we can go outside.") "If you don't... then we can't..." is a negative statement, which will not win cooperation.
- Remind children of appropriate behaviors, ("We do not throw. If you have trouble remembering, then you will have to leave the area.", "We walk inside.", "Remember to use your inside voice.") Model a soft voice.
- Use logical or natural consequences; point out the consequence and why it happened. Abuse a toy/lose the toy is a logical consequence. Consequences should be related to the misbehavior and should be fair.
- With the child's help problem-solve and brainstorm for solutions – then help the child select a solution to try.
- Ignore annoying, unimportant behaviors.

- Remove the child from the area (“It appears you cannot play in the area right now. You can come back later.” You will have to leave the area for \_\_\_\_ minutes or for the rest of center time.”)
- Separate children (“It appears that you two cannot play together right now. You may either find a solution to your problem or you will need to find different activities.”). Some teachers use a timer. When it rings, children can play together again.
- Remove a toy. A child may lose the opportunity to play with a toy for specific periods of time.
- Give a choice (“Here are your choices: you may share the blocks or find something else to do. You decide.” “You may leave the area by yourself or I’ll assist you. You decide.”). Choices stated in a fair, firm, but friendly way are usually very effective.
- Use positive statements. Tell the children what they should be doing instead of focusing on the negative. Only use “No” or “Don’t” in cases of emergencies.
- Use calming music, stories, books, or songs.
- Avoid sarcasm, threatening, name-calling, accusing, or disclaimers. A disclaimer is a statement such as, “Why can’t you always do that?” after a positive statement.
- Avoid commands or demands that “back a child against a wall”. Many children want to appear brave or tough around others; to save face they must defy a teacher. After a calm, implicit direction, break eye contact, turn away briefly and give a child a few seconds or longer to comply. Try to avoid power struggles.
- Use a great deal of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Be specific and descriptive. (“I see you are really working hard on the puzzle.” “Thank you for picking up the blocks.” “I’m glad that you remembered to share the book.” “I appreciate it when you tell someone you are angry.”) Statements such as “use your words” are sometimes too vague. The children always appreciate unconditional statements such as, “I think you are a neat kid.”
- Use love and physical affection. Touch the child’s arm, pat a head, give a hug, and allow a child to sit on your lap or knee. However, some children want you to exclude all the other children, so don’t play favorites or overdo the lap sitting to the exclusion of others.

***If the preceding is not effective, we use the following***

**Sit and Watch**

A child may stand or sit away from the group for several minutes or until he/she is calm. The purpose is to give the child an opportunity to see appropriate behaviors or appropriate use of materials or to settle down before joining the group (“You can join us when you feel you can...”). The child is sometimes given the responsibility of when to return to the group, but sometimes must be invited to rejoin by a teacher. The child must be in view of an adult.

**Time Out**

A child who doesn’t respond to the above methods or is repeatedly disruptive or aggressive may need to be further removed from the rest of the class. After a few

minutes, the child is encouraged to rejoin the activity after a teacher has redirected the child and briefly discussed appropriate behaviors to that the inappropriate behaviors are not repeated. For severe or repeated problems, a child may be brought to the office to calm down or to be removed from peer attention for inappropriate behavior. All consequences for misbehavior should be logical, developmentally appropriate, and as immediate as possible.

## **\*Acts of Aggression**

***Apple Tree Academy* rules are displayed and known by the children. There are class discussions to establish individual group rules.**

*Apple Tree Academy's* established guidelines for staff and children are in place for dealing with acts of aggression and fighting by children. This policy includes

- separation of the children involved,
- immediate attention to the individual child or caregiver who has been hurt,
- notification to the parents of children involved in the incident. If an injury requires first aid or medical attention, as specified, it will be documented,
- review of the adequacy of the caregiver supervision and appropriateness of facility activities,
- setting an administrative policy for dealing with recurrences

If a child is involved in this type of behavior on any given day, he/she will lose their privileges, which may include field trips. *No credits or refunds will be issued if a child is sent home/ removed from the program due to disciplinary problems.*

We reserve the right to deny or remove your child from our program due to disciplinary problems.

*\*Some of these behaviors include but are not limited to: biting, hitting/punching, stealing, bringing a weapon to school, running away or exiting a facility without an adult, lack of respect for authority, revealing or touching private parts of themselves or others, profanity, bullying, and racial intolerance.*

## ***Biting***

“Bite” is a word that brings to mind all forms of fears and worries. We try to catch the deeds before they happen, but, unfortunately, it is not always possible. Children, especially toddlers and some preschool-age children, are not always very verbal, they cannot verbalize feelings and often show their feelings physically. With our help and guidance, they will learn to replace biting with appropriate responses.

If your child bites, all it means is that he or she has found this to be an effective response. Biting is usually provoked. Some children choose hitting, pushing, or other responses. Some never do any of these. A lot of it comes down to personality, reinforcement, environment, or chance.

This problem has never failed to come up in almost all the classes many of us attended. We are not alone in trying to cope with this problem. Understanding and support for the other parents can only help. No one wants his or her child to bite/be bitten, or to hit/be hit, or pushed, shoved, or scratched. These are “normal” children with normal problems.

## Handling Biting Incidents\*

1. Attend first to the child who is hurt. Comfort the child and strengthen the concept that you care and will keep him/her safe.
2. As much as possible have the “biter” stay with you so he/she may observe and assist with attending to and comforting the hurt child.
3. Attend to the bite as needed. A cool cloth or ice pack will usually soothe the bite. If the skin has been broken, first aid steps must be followed.
4. Remove the child from the play area for a brief period of time. The child has lost his/her privilege to be with the other children. Explain and simply reason with the child the basis for your actions, “When you bite it hurts people. Biting hurts”.
5. Remain calm and firm. Speak in your natural voice and with authority. Convey to the child that you will not let children be hurt. The child must also know that you still like him/her but you do not like the biting.
6. Be consistent with your interventions. The child will learn to count on the same behavior from you, which will aid the child in gaining self-control.
7. Report biting incidents to the parents of the children involved.
8. Reinforce the child as soon as possible for positive interaction with his/her peer.
9. Information about the biter and bite are confidential. We will not share this information with other parents.
10. The director or a member of management will be notified when biting incidents occur.

*\*If a child bites twice in one day, the parent of the biter will be called to pick their child up from the center. This will allow protection of the children in the classroom. Cases of more than one bite in a day are very rare. We appreciate everyone’s cooperation as we are ensuring the safety of all children.*

## School Age Discipline

“Peace chairs” have been adopted for the school age children. These are designed to allow the children to resolve a lot of their own conflicts. It teaches them to talk out problems and how to compromise in various situations.

Everyone wants a safe environment for his or her child. School age children should be capable of controlling their behavior and refrain from hitting and hurting others. At this age, they are old enough to really hurt someone; no one wants their child hurt.

A contract will be issued to the school age child who has hurt another person, etc. This is a joint effort in which we need your cooperation. Weekly contracts will be sent home for the first time they hit and their privileges will be taken away for the day. You and your child must agree upon a reward to work towards. You must sign and bring the contract back to school. If they break the contract, they will lose all *Apple Tree Academy* privileges for the week as well as forfeit their reward with you. Some reward examples include staying up late on Saturday, having a friend come over, going to the movies, anything at all that you know your child would like. If your child is given a contract and breaks it more than 3 weeks in a row, parents will be asked to pick up their child and keep him/her home for a few days until the child is ready to cooperate. If the problem still exists and their presence is detrimental to others, you will be expected to remove your child from *Apple Tree Academy*. This constitutes our zero tolerance policy.

## ***Disciplinary Action and Dismissal\****

A serious “discipline problem” is defined as one in which a child is hampering the smooth flow of the program by either requiring constant one-on-one attention, is continually inflicting physical or emotional harm on other children or themselves, is physically abusing staff, or is otherwise unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the program.

When conflicts and inappropriate behaviors occur which disagree with Apple Tree’s goals and have not been resolved through positive techniques, it is then Apple Tree’s aim to work further with individual children. We strive to listen and learn more of what each child has to say, thereby hoping to resolve the conflict through effective communication.

**If conflict still remains, or a request to conform to a rule is ignored, possible actions include:**

- A child will not be allowed to participate in a particular activity for a short period of time, or the child will be asked to sit quietly until he/she is ready to resolve the conflict and return to the class. Field trips may be taken away with no reimbursement from the school. For younger children from two to four years of age, ignoring and redirection will also be used. A child’s particular stage of development is always taken into consideration.
- If there is still an unresolved conflict, parents will be asked for ideas and teachers will give suggestions to resolve the conflict through an individualized plan or the child.
- If the problem still exists, parents may be asked to pick up their child and keep him/her home for a few days until the child is ready to cooperate.
- If conflict continues, it will be determined to be a “discipline problem” by the teachers and the supervisor and/or the director. Parents will then be asked to seek an outside resource, such as family counseling, to help all involved work through the conflict. Parents will be given two weeks to secure help (*Apple Tree Academy* will help with referrals). During this time, the child may or may not attend school, depending on the assessment by the Supervisor and/or Director and teachers based on the nature and seriousness of the situation. If parents reject the above-described process, they will be expected to remove their child from *Apple Tree Academy*.
- The State of Missouri adheres to and allows *Apple Tree Academy* the right to discharge a child from the facility after attempts have been made to meet a child’s individual needs.

Any child who demonstrates an inability to benefit from the care offered by the childcare provider or whose presence is detrimental to other children. Care of a child may be discontinued if the provider and the parent(s) cannot establish a mutually satisfactory working relationship.

- *Apple Tree Academy* encourages parents to talk to their children about the kinds of play, behavior, and touching that is appropriate for their level of development.
- *Apple Tree Academy* appreciates everyone’s cooperation as we are ensuring the safety of all children.

*\*No refunds will be offered for these days.*