

Rising Star Academy



Parent Handbook

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RISING STAR ACADEMY



PHILOSOPHY

Rising Star Academy is a school where young children receive an exciting, creative and nurturing experience that will provide them with the foundation to grow educationally, socially, and personally. We offer a comprehensive educational curriculum developed by professionals, in a well equipped environment, which meets the needs of each, individual child.

We offer small classes with excellent teacher/student ratios, a professional staff of early childhood specialists and a modern facility equipped with the most educationally sound early childhood equipment and manipulatives. Rising Star Academy sees each child as a unique and precious gift entrusted into its care. This concept is what governs the school's educational approach. At Rising Star, emphasis is placed on the individual child and on encouraging each child's innate inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge. Our classes are theme based, and centered managed. Activities are child directed and teacher guided. We believe that each child learns best in an environment that is rich with hands on experiences and we utilize an extensive supply of developmentally appropriate toys, games and an array of manipulatives to do so. Children are encouraged to use their senses to explore experiment and use their imagination to the fullest. Through the use of centers within the classroom such as art, science, math, dramatic play, blocks and literacy, children gain readiness skills for future learning

Each child who enters Rising Star Academy becomes part of the Rising Star family. Our teachers are carefully chosen not only for experience and credentials, but most of all for their warmth and caring. They work closely with each child to help develop their self-esteem through problem solving, encouraging self-expression and offering positive reinforcement. Our teachers take delight in the children, care for their individual needs, and work tirelessly to provide the children with the greatest gift of all, a love for learning.

Rising Star welcomes every child. Our philosophy assures that your child will receive a well rounded, enriching education with a wide array of academic subjects, personal development, values, socialization and learning skills.

Finally, Rising Star Academy seeks to create a stimulating environment and enriching educational environment that will ignite a spark in each child and commit him/her to a lifetime passion for learning.

STATE LICENSING

Rising Star Academy, LLC is a fully licensed facility with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. A copy of the State Licensing Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers is always available for your viewing. The most recent Licensing inspection reports, Harris County Health Department report, and Harris County Fire Marshall's report is always available for your viewing which is located in the front office.

To contact:

Local Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	713-940-3009
Child Abuse Hotline	800-252-5400
Child Abuse Website	www.dfps.state.tx.us/

ADMISSION

At time of registration, you will be given an Enrollment Packet. The enrolment paperwork will be reviewed for completeness. **A child may not start until ALL paperwork is completed and on file in the school's office.** The parents are encouraged to call the school and speak with the director. All parents and children are welcome to tour the center and to spend time in the classroom and meet the prospective teachers.

At the time of enrollment, you must have the following forms on file in our office:

- **ENROLLMENT FORM** (All children are required to have this form filled out by the child's physician, dated no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of school. * **NO CHILD WILL BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL WITHOUT THIS HEALTH FORM.**
- **CURRENT HEALTH FORM and proof of IMMUNIZATION RECORDS meeting the requirements set by Texas Department of State**

Health Care Services. For more information regarding these requirements, you may visit www.DSHS.State.TX.US/immunize. (IF MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT AND/OR IMMUNIZATION CONFLICT WITH YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS YOU MUST SIGN AN AFFIDAVIT TO THAT EFFECT AND ATTACH IT TO THE MEDICAL FORM)

- **PAYMENT AGREEMENT & STATEMENT AND RELEASE OF CHILD OBSERVATION**
- **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY**
- **CONDUCT POLICY**
- **Vision and Hearing Screening or a professional examination for all children ages 4-5 years old. For more information regarding these requirements, you may visit www.DSHS.State.TX.US/VHS.**

AGE GROUPING

Each child is admitted by age as of September 1st and is to remain in with their class and classmates until the next academic school year, and not according to their birthdays. Every effort will be made to meet the emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs of the individual child on a developmental basis. **We reserve the right to assess each child's developmental needs before and during enrollment to confirm the proper placement of each child.** If a parent feels that their child is not achieving desired academic challenges and growth, they may request in writing for a review. At that time, their child will be assessed for both their current class level and the desired class placement. A child may be moved from one group to another to meet special needs based on these assessments. **A child's tuition is based upon their birthday as of September 1st, and not by their classroom assignment.**

Multi-age children will interact on the playground, during special activities and for whole-school events.

STAFF

All staff members are knowledgeable and experienced educators. Our lead teachers are degreed and certified. All participate in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement in order to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's families and to the findings of current research. All staff members are required to obtain clock hours of training annually within their field.

Rising Star Academy requires all full/part-time teachers and teacher associates to fulfill the requirement of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards for working with young children. This includes a background and criminal history check, First Aid & CPR Training. Please be aware that in order to protect children, our teachers are required by Texas State Law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

ADMINISTRATION

As a parent, we want you to feel confident in knowing who to go to when you have a question, issue or concern. Administration works with our staff and you to provide a quality program that meets the needs of your family. We feel parental input is vital in maintaining, and continuing to improve the quality of this program. If you have any concerns or questions at all, please feel free to call the Director at any time to voice your concern.

HOURS OF OPERATION

At Rising Star Academy, we offer several options for year-round childcare. Our Hours of operation is 6:30am – 6:30pm Monday through Friday. Our *full day program* is from 6:30am to 6:30 pm our *school day* is from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Rising Star Academy does not hold a license for drop-in care and does not offer this service to the public. No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays/in-service and vacation periods. Every parent will receive an annual calendar as notification of closings and/or changes in our hours of operation.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In case of severe weather (i.e. hurricane, tornado, high water, high winds, etc.), please listen to your radio. We will automatically cancel school if Katy ISD cancels or if the television or radio declares roads impassable. If an emergency situation exists at Rising Star Academy (for example, no heat, electricity, etc.), each teacher will then contact parents as soon as possible.

In the event of severe weather conditions that would probably prohibit you from picking up your child, we reserve the right to release your child to an authorized person listed on your Emergency Form. In the event we are unable to reach you, we will post a notice indicating to whom

your child was released and the time of pick up. Each family may refer to the school calendar for scheduled school closings. This will enable you to make alternative arrangements for care of your child.

SCHEDULE CHANGE NOTICE

You may not change your child's schedule for the day in which he/she is normally enrolled. If you have extenuating circumstances you can request a Schedule Change with the school's Director. Each request must have approval from the Director. There are no guarantees your request will be approved. Forms to change your child's schedule (Schedule Change Notice Form) are available in the front office and should be filled out at least 2 weeks in advance of the day in question.

At Rising Star, the parent is allowed one change per month with no administrative charges for changes in your child's schedule, but will be charged for the time he/she extends. Parents will be telephoned with an answer on if the schedule change can be approved or not. There will be a \$5.00 administrative fee assessed for any change beyond the allotted one change per month—this includes all changes for dropping and adding to your child's current schedule and any changes to the previously authorized schedule change. If a parent should cancel a schedule change, it will still be considered as a change to the child's schedule and will be billed as such.

Payment for these additional changes is due upon receipt of your copy of your schedule change notice as a change with your monthly tuition, whichever comes first.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Please keep in mind the following policies regarding financial arrangements:

- We offer a five percent sibling discount from the lowest second tuition.
- Tuition is due on every other Monday. A tuition payment must be received by the Tuesday of each week in which it is due. If tuition is not received by the Wednesday of the week, a \$25.00 late fee will be added to your child's account. If you are faced with unforeseen circumstances, these need to be communicated to the Owner or Director so that a course of action can be taken and your account may be rectified.
- Your child's enrollment will be terminated if you are late paying my tuition more than three times (unless other arrangements were approved by the director).
- There will be no tuition deductions for holidays, illnesses, vacations, or other reasons.
- In the case of withdrawal, one month's notice is required at the 1st of the month. In order to receive prorated tuition, a withdrawal letter must be on file in the school's office. Registration fees, deposits and supply fees are never refunded. No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays/in-service or vacation periods. **Student records will only be released if all financial obligations have been satisfied.**
- Checks must be payable to **Rising Star Academy**. You may bring your payment to the school or mail your payments to: Rising Star Academy, 920 S. Peek Road, Katy, TX 77450; however it must be received in our office by the deadline or a late fee will be assessed.
- Our teachers and teacher assistants do not accept payments. Please do not give your check to them. Your account may be paid by check or money order; we will not accept cash payments. We cannot accept credit card payments at this time.
- A parent who does not pick up their child by 3:15 for school day dismissal or, 6:00pm for a full day dismissal, will be assessed an administrative fee of \$5.00 and the parents will be charged an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute. Unless the parent contacts the school and special arrangements are made, these fees will not be waived.
- In order to be more eco-friendly, the monthly tuition invoices will be emailed to you. Please be sure that we have a current email address for you that will be monitored regularly. This will be strongly enforced.

SAFETY

All classrooms used by the children are monitored by a fire alarm system and remain in constant contact with the local Police Department. The school holds fire/tornado/emergency drills so the staff and the children will know how to most efficiently evacuate the building. The school has annual inspections by the Health Department, Fire Department and the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services in order to be licensed. Staff members have current CPR and First Aid Training.

ABSENCES

Each schedule is designed to enhance the group in all aspects. The parent is responsible for notifying the school's office at 281-391-5437, if the child is to be absent, late, or on vacation. If you know ahead of time that your child will be absent please stop by the office and fill out a Daily Absence Form so that the appropriate people can be notified. **SCHOOL AGE PARENTS PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS MANDATORY THAT YOU CALL PRIOR TO THE PICK UP TIME AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL, IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE PICKED UP BY RISING STAR ACADEMY.**

ILLNESS & INJURY

If your child is sick or injured, Rising Star Academy will:

- Assess the nature of the illness or injury,
- Notify the parent(s),
- If a child is found to be ill, the child will be removed from the classroom and will remain in the front office where they will be closely supervised, until an authorized person arrives to take the child home.
- If necessary, we will contact the authorized alternative on the Emergency Form (if parents cannot be reached), If we feel the nature of the illness or injury is severe enough and the child is not picked up within one (1) hour of parent notification, the staff will transport the child to Memorial Hermann Katy Emergency Room. The parent will be notified immediately and will be asked to meet the staff member accompanying the child at the Emergency Room. If an injury occurs at the school, the child's insurance will be responsible for any charges incurred.

Rising Star Academy will keep accurate emergency information for each child. These records include your authorization of who should be called in case your child is ill or injured and you cannot be reached. It is the parent's responsibility to keep these records current if addresses, telephone numbers or other relevant information changes. A record change notice is available in the office to make these changes.

Close communication can help prevent contagion to other children. We will notify you if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease. Our staff is trained to observe symptoms as well as to use prevention techniques. We will make every effort to protect the health of all of our children. State licensing requires that Rising Star Academy use the Communicable Disease Chart as a guide to determine length of illness, readmission criteria, and treatment which is necessary in order to reduce the change of contamination to the children. A sick child belongs at home where he/she is more comfortable.

The child must be kept at home under the following circumstances:

- **Fever of 100.0 degrees F or higher:**
Children with fever must be excluded from school until they are without fever and without the need for fever reducing medication for 24 hours, or we have clearance signed by a physician it is not a communicable disease.
- **Diarrhea:**
Children with two or more diarrhea stools in a 24-hour period will be excluded from school until the child has been free from diarrhea for a 24-hour period, or we have clearance signed by a physician it is not a communicable disease.
- **Other symptoms which indicate that a child belongs at home are:**
 - Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
 - May belong at home with a heavy, non-clear nasal discharge
 - A constant cough or sore throat
 - May belong at home if fussy, cranky and generally not himself/herself
 - A skin rash, excluding a diaper rash
 - Symptoms of a possible communicable disease
 - May belong at home if requires one-on-one attention

Following an illness, a child may return when:

- 24 hours have elapsed since the last diarrhea stool, vomiting or fever.
- For infants and toddlers, it is determined the problems are related to teething.
- It is determined by your doctor the nasal discharge is due to allergies and no infection is present.
- He/she has been exposed to a communicable disease, but the school has been notified so the incubation period can be discussed, and it can be determined on what days he/she may return.
- A physician clears the child if the infection was, or was thought to be, contagious when discharged from school. The physician must furnish written clearance for the child to return the school.
- If an antibiotic is prescribed for an infections illness, the child may return to school when he/she has been on the medication for 24 hours.

All children will be involved in physical fitness activities, both indoors and outdoors, as an important part of the curriculum. If you believe your child is too ill to participate, he/she will probably be more comfortable at home in familiar surroundings. We do not staff the classrooms to allow one child to remain indoors due to illness while the remainder of the class plays outdoors.

Lice - We have adopted a “no nit” policy at Rising Star Academy. After a student has been treated with the medicated shampoo/rinse, the hair needs to be combed for nits using a specialized comb designed for nits and lice. Comb, comb and comb again. Go all the way to the scalp and comb to the tip of the hair, especially in the neck and ear areas. In some cases you may have to pull the nit off the shaft. This is a time consuming, tedious job, but it is the only way we can eliminate lice from our school and your home. Children’s scalps must be checked by a member of the administration prior to admission.

Chicken Pox – If a child develops chicken pox, the following guidelines will be followed in order for the child to return to school:

- We will need a signed doctor’s note stating the child is no longer contagious.
- All blisters must be crusted over.
- Without a doctor’s note, the child must be evaluated by a member of the administration so as to look for any symptoms that the child may still be contagious. (i.e., open pox).

DISPENSING MEDICATION

If your child needs to receive medication during school hours, please fill out an Authorization Form Dispensing Medication. All medication must be in its original container. All prescriptions must have the Dr’s name, prescription number and an expiration date. ***The original prescription label is required.** When a child has medication to be dispensed, the child will be taken to the front office to receive their dose. Medication can only be administered in amounts according to the labeled directions or Dr’s specified orders on prescription label or letter. Medication will only be dispensed at 9:00am and/or at 3:00pm, unless otherwise directed by a pharmacist.

APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR CHILDREN

Please dress your child each day to match the weather conditions. We ask that the children arrive to school in clothes to “play”. Many activities include the use of ingredients that will get children dirty or messy. They are also outside each day, weather permitting, and have access to mulch, and grass. Children must wear **closed toed and closed heeled shoes** to keep their feet safe. Crocs/clogs are not allowed. This will protect their feet while in classrooms, outside, and in the gym and other rooms in the school. The clothes left at school for emergencies should also meet the same guidelines.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Drop Off: Our *full day* begins at 6:30am with before care. Please do not arrive before 6:30am, as the teachers will be in their classrooms preparing their materials for the day. The *school day* hours are from 9:00am – 3:00pm. We urge you to be prompt and arrive by 9:00am. It is disruptive to the class and the teachers if you come in after 9:00am. In addition, your child will adjust better if he or she begins the day together with the rest of the class. You must park in the parking lot and walk your child in and sign them in. Parents are expected to walk their child to their classroom. Children cannot be dropped at the front door.

For the benefit of your child having a regular routine, and provide them a smoother transition into lunch and nap time, as well as an uninterrupted curriculum time for other children in the classroom, please have your child here no later than 9:00am to start their school day. Parents are not allowed to drop off between 10:00am – 2:30pm.

Should you need to drop off during Circle Time, please do so in a curious manner by not disrupting the teacher or other children. Should you need to leave special instructions or have any questions, refer them to the assistant teacher in the classroom.

Dismissal Procedure: We have two dismissal times during our day. One is at 3:00pm and the other is at 6:00pm. Parents are required to pick up their child from their classroom.

Dismissal Policy: It is your responsibility to list on the Emergency Form all the people who are authorized to pick up your child from school. You will also give us a secret password, which will be kept on file. If anyone not listed on the Emergency Form is going to pick up your child, you must contact the office and notify the director or one of your child’s teachers. At this time we will ask you for the secret password that has been given to us. This password is not to be given to the person picking up your child.

We are legally unable to refuse visitation, or the privilege of picking up a child, to a parent **UNLESS WE HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF CUSTODY** from the legal parent or guardian with physical custody. It is the parent’s responsibility to furnish a **CURRENT CERTIFIED COPY OF THE COURT DIVORCE DECREE FOR YOUR CHILD’S FILE**. The decree must be specific as to who has legal custody, visitation rights, care for the child (ren) in the event of holidays, and if any specific arrangements are to be made in payment of the family monthly tuition.

A parent may authorize another person to pick up his/her child by either:

- Listing the authorized person on the Emergency Form,

- Bringing in a written, dated, permission slip to the child's teacher authorizing the child's release to someone else on the day of the release, or
- Using the Authorized Pick-Up form which is provided by the school and is located in the front office.
- Calling the school and using the password.

Rising Star Academy bears no responsibility of your child/ren until possession has been transferred from the parent to the care giver, and the parent has left the presence of the child when dropping off. When picking up, Rising Star Academy bears no responsibility once a child has transferred from the care giver to the parent.

NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON, EVEN IF THE PERSON IS KNOWN TO THE CHILD.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

The following rules must be followed so we can achieve safety in the parking lot:

- When driving in the parking lot, please **enter** using the **north** driveway and **exit** using the **south** driveway.
- Parents must not park under the awning or anywhere in the parking lot other than the parking spaces.
- Please drive slowly through the parking lot for the safety of children, parents & staff members.
- Always fasten your child in his/her seat belt or car seat before you leave our parking lot. It is unlawful to transport a child without a safety belt or restraint and is very dangerous.
- The designated handicapped parking spaces are reserved for those persons who qualify with properly marked license plates or handicapped markers.
- ***RISING STAR ACADEMY IS NOT LIABLE FOR THEFT OR DAMAGE TO VEHICLES OR PERSONAL PROPERTY IN THE PARKING LOT.**
- **ALL CHILDREN MUST BE WALKED INTO THE BUILDING BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN. PLEASE DO NOT EVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD IN YOUR VEHICLE FOR ANY REASON OR PERIOD OF TIME; IT IS NOT SAFE.**

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The school provides some screening services through professionals, such as Hearing & Vision Screenings. We can refer you to services that are available for particular evaluations. If you have questions or concerns about your child, please contact the Director for a list of resources.

VOLUNTEERS

We are always in need of volunteers. This is your school. We need and urge your voluntary assistance in planning field trips, programs, sharing, hobbies, recruiting future students and making educational games. We will always need extra parents to accompany us on field trips. Volunteers will work with the children only under the supervision of another staff member. Each volunteer will have to undergo a background check.

WE PUT FAMILIES FIRST

It is our goal to take known and familiar experiences of the child's world and build on these experiences to offer a curriculum that is also rich in family beliefs and traditions. Families are encouraged to share talents, traditions and beliefs with their child's class. This will encourage learning about different ways to celebrate events, family heritage and holidays, ultimately giving children a better understanding of the world around them.

We want you to remember that Rising Star Academy is your school. You are the ingredient that makes this school special. We encourage you to share your concerns, questions and comments with us. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of your children.

PARENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

All parent input is considered important. We want to know how we can better meet your needs. During the course of your time at Rising Star Academy, there may come a time when you have an issue that needs to be resolved. Please feel free to bring this to our attention.

Should there be a need for a resolution between a parent and the school's programming, parents are encouraged to discuss all concerns. The preferred protocol is to discuss the issue(s) first with the classroom teacher, then the Director. Should there be a need for communication about a situation involving the school office or financial issues, they should be discussed with the director and she will advise you how to proceed.

All parents must say goodbye to their children and tell them when they will return. Parents may NOT sneak out in order to prevent the child from crying at that moment. Leaving without saying goodbye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying, but is **not** easier for the child. Their tears are symbols of their attachment to you and they must be allowed to express their emotions. Children will be comforted by their teachers. Leaving without saying goodbye can also make separations more difficult because a child will fear the unexpected departure and try to keep a close eye on his/her parent. This fear will prevent him/her from engaging in play or interacting with teachers or other children. Children must trust their parents and when they learn the tangible process of separation, this helps them to do so.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Your child will have his/her personal cubby in the classroom. The cubby serves many purposes. Please use it to store your child's food, spare clothes (please change them as the weather changes), and any other items that the teacher will need to have available or your child through the day. Please check frequently to be sure that we have enough of the needed supplies.

All extra clothing must be labeled with the child's name in clear print. A laundry pen or permanent marker is recommended. The school will not be responsible for items which may be damaged, lost or stolen. Please do not admonish your child to "stay clean". This will put too much restriction on his/her choice of activities. We will try not to use anything that won't come off in the washing machine or bathtub in at least three washings. Older clothing is the best choice as some of the primary paint colors of tempera can permanently stain clothing. *** Please make sure your child has a change of clothes every day.**

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 the car. Please make an effort to help your child leave them at home. Some teachers have regularly scheduled "show and tell" time. Items brought for this purpose should be labeled with the child's name and put into the child's cubby until the proper time. Please make sure your child understand the items brought for show and tell will be shared. We cannot be responsible for broken, borrowed, or lost toys.

Your child will have no use for toy guns or weapons in this program because he/she will be involved with friends here – not enemies. Weapons frequently frighten other children even in play. Many other modes of play will offer your child avenues to express emotion or power.

DAILY NEEDS

You know your child best and are the best judge of what supplies your child will need on a daily basis. We have made the following list as a guide for items that we know will be needed for your child:

- **Sippy cups**

You are welcome to send any style of plastic cup that your child prefers. We cannot accept any glass cups. Please be sure that your cups are clearly labeled with your child's whole name. No bottles are permissible in the Toddlers or Early Preschool classes.

- **Foods**

Rising Star Academy will provide breakfast, lunch and a PM snack for students. The menu is available in the front lobby for viewing, or you may request a copy for take home. If you choose to send your child with any meals, please send the food in prepared portions of whatever your child enjoys and is healthy. We do not have refrigerators available for storing foods or drinks. If you are sending foods and/or drinks that require cold storage please make sure you have ice packs in your child's lunch box. If your child has any special dietary needs, please consult with the director. She will be happy to work with you to make sure your child is served appropriate foods. Please label lunch box, thermos, utensils, and containers. We do not permit children to exchange or share food items.

****Breakfast is served until 8:00am. Lunch is served at 12:00pm. PM Snack is served at 3:00pm. If your child is not here during the designated time that their meal is served, please plan ahead and assure you provide them with a supplement meal.**

- **Diapers (Infants – Early Preschool)**

You may send your child's diapers by the week or by the month. We can only use disposable diapers as we do not have the facility for cloth diapers. You are encouraged to send a labeled tube of diaper cream that can be left in your child's cubby if you feel that it may be needed. Also, please send a couple boxes of diaper wipes each month.

- **Bedding**

Bedding from home is a very cozy way to bridge the emotional bonds from home to school. Young children experience the world through their senses. Each child will have his/her individual mat given by the school, provided the child's supply fee has been paid. The mats fit a crib size sheet that will need to be provided from home as well a blanket which will be sent home each Friday for cleaning. **It is important that you remember to send your child's clean bedding back to school on Monday morning.**

You will also receive a daily form, filled out by your child's teacher, which will indicate exactly what and when your child ate and drank each day. We encourage you to keep in close communication with us regarding your child's habits. The more we know, the better we can meet your child's needs.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Please make sure you accompany your child to their classroom each morning. The state requires you to sign your child in and out daily. Make sure to establish eye contact with the teacher or verbally communicate with the teacher before you leave your child. It is very beneficial for the child to witness positive communication between these two caring adults in his/her life.

Your child's teachers will pass out a weekly newsletter that will explain to you the theme for the week and the educational activities that took place in your child's classroom. Your child's daily experiences will include age-appropriate activities in:

- Music and Books
- Songs and Finger play
- Creative Experience
- Large and Small Muscle Activities - Inside and Outside
- Sensory Activities
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development
- Water Activities (season permitting)

The flow of activities each day will vary between groups according to developmental needs, such as attention span and physical ability. Each segment of the day is designed to enhance the child physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

As children grow and mature, they will enter many different developmental stages. Each of these stages comes with changes of abilities and/or behaviors. Many of these changes are predictable and desirable, others, while normal, are not as predictable or desirable. These behaviors, which would be cause for concern, are, for example, frequent biting or extreme temper tantrums. Because this type of behavior could cause pain or injury to the child or others, we would inform you if your child were showing such behavior.

With toddlers, this type of behavior, while not common, is generally due to the children lacking the ability to express their feelings verbally. Aggressive behavior by the child is used as a form of communication when confronted with a situation for which the child has not yet developed the needed coping skills. While it is considered typical behavior for young children, it is detrimental to the safety and well being of children in a school setting. We have a procedure in place to deal with biting.

1. Each time a child bites another child, the family will be contacted by the teacher. An accident report will be filled out and a copy will be sent home with the child and victim.
2. If the behavior continues 3 more times, a conference will be held with the parents, the teacher, and the director of the program. Our goal at this conference is to work as a team with the parents to help the child develop safe, appropriate coping skills and more acceptable modes of self-expression.
3. If the biting continues a second meeting will take place. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss a plan to implement that would prevent further incidents from taking place. These **may** include a "shadow" at the parents own expense or temporary removal from the program.

During the course of a child's enrollment in the center, he/she may exhibit some behavioral concerns that could manifest themselves in the form of spitting, head banging, hitting, or temper tantrums. While most of the behavioral actions do not inflict harm or reduce the safety of the children, some of these behaviors can. For example, behaviors such as temper tantrums can often result when limitations are necessary in the classroom.

At the point when behavior problems become more frequent, severe, result in injury to the child or his/her classmates, reflects a change in the child's self esteem or forms a pattern, the school will then contact the parents for a conference. When a classroom becomes unsafe for the children, the school must intervene and take the necessary steps to bring about safety. The parents and the school will consult to look for possible solutions. However, if the situation escalates to a regular pattern of inappropriate behavior, the school will ask the parents to seek

immediate and necessary care for their child so as to reduce the chances of setting up a “negative irreversible environment” that may never be corrected. “Labeling” can and will occur by children who identify the child with the inappropriate behavior and will often be “shared” with other parents at pick-up and drop-off times. While labeling seems cruel, it cannot always be avoided and finding immediate professional help is a necessity at this point before the child’s self-esteem is damaged.

BEHAVIORAL CONFERENCES

During the conference the parent/staff team will share information and insights about the child, and formulate a written plan of action to follow. This agreement will include, but is not limited to, the type of controls and actions that will be implemented when necessary, dates of follow-up conferences, responsibilities of parents and school staff, agreement of desired behavior and target dates for improvement. At that time, the parents may decide to contract with appropriate outside professionals to work with the teachers in the classroom to help bring about the desired behavioral changes. The school may seek the advice prior to the conference, but cannot proceed further with an intervention without parental consent.

Following the conference, the staff and parents will work closely together as a team to help bring about the desired change in behavior during the allotted time, the school’s administration will conference again with the child’s parents and at that time will offer the following recommendations:

- The parents may be asked to seek outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to both the center and the family (the school is able to offer names of some professionals who work with young children);
- The parents may be asked to reduce the amount of hours/days the child is in our school in order to receive outside intervention and target the behavior;
- The parents may be asked to withdraw their child on a temporary basis until the inappropriate behavior is under control (the child’s place in the school would be kept open for a specified length of time);
- The parents may be asked to permanently withdraw their child from the facility and place their child in another setting that is more applicable to his/her needs.

Rising Star Academy reserves the right to and will ask any family to withdraw their child if it is determined we cannot adequately meet the needs of the child/family.

METHODS OF DISCIPLINE

Infants-Toddlers

Toddlers are in a time in their lives when their natural instinct is to explore their environment. Part of that exploration involves testing and retesting of situations and limits.

Our goal with discipline lies in the root of the word itself. We want to teach – not punish. By modeling, gently guiding, and redirecting to appropriate behavior, we aim to teach thorough repeated positive experiences. By giving attention to desired behavior, we aim to reinforce its frequency. By providing logical consequences for inappropriate behavior, we aim to provide a learning experience.

Time-out has no place with toddlers because children this age do not benefit from it in any way. It would simply make a child feel isolated, insecure and angry. Older toddlers can occasionally lose control of their actions and need an adult to help them regain self-control. In that circumstance, a child may be removed from the group by a familiar adult to allow the child time in a quiet environment while the adult helps him/her regain control and safe behavior. The child may return to the group and rejoin classroom activities.

Our goal is a secure, happy child, confident of his/her own ability and able to live and communicate with the people around him/her. A telephone call from the school should not be considered a negative report or an emergency. Our role is to support the family by conferencing with parents for a variety of reasons. Often, we need to communicate our actions in a situation. Sometimes, we need to inform the parents about feelings the child has expressed; Often, we need to ask questions about the child’s behavior at home in order to be realistic about his/her behavior at the school. All information is confidential and is used to help us nurture and teach your child.

Early Preschool through School Age

Our children live in a society that requires self-discipline, consideration of others, and respect for property as well as respect for themselves. By setting limits on your child’s behavior, we give him/her the security of knowing exactly what is expected – life becomes predictable. Within these limits, the child will be encouraged to make choices and successful decisions.

A child’s growing self-esteem flourishes as he/she experiences success with a variety of tasks and is safe to learn from natural mistakes. We do not expect perfection from any child or adult.

As the children develop in an age-appropriate environment, the teachers will set reasonable limits and/or stop and redirect unacceptable behavior without humiliation or physical punishment. More importantly, the teachers will model, reinforce and nurture the positive actions we

all value. Often it is possible for an experienced teacher to redirect a child's behavior before a negative action occurs thus resulting in prevention.

Sometimes we will remove a child from a situation and allow the child the opportunity to calm down. We will also reenact a situation and give the children words to express themselves for conflict resolution.

Developmental Portfolio

Teachers will keep an ongoing journal reflecting your child's development. This will include a portfolio containing samples of your child's work at school, anecdotal records of your child's ongoing development, and a chronicle of your child's mastery of specific skills. Through these different processes we can give an overview of your child's general development, realizing that all children progress and develop at different rates. These records are used to aid us in keeping you abreast of your child's progress as well as any concerns we may have in your child's development.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL

Communication: Open communication between the school's director, teachers, and parents is an integral component of Rising Star Academy. During the orientation process, please give us your impressions of your child: personality, his or her likes and dislikes, pertinent health information, etc.

All classrooms are equipped with an intercom. These intercoms are to provide efficient communication between the offices and the classrooms, and also to provide another safety tool. If you need to contact your child's teacher, you may leave a message with a member of Administration and the message will be delivered to the teacher and she will return your message at her earliest convenience. If your concern does not need immediate attention, please feel free to e-mail/call your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will inform you of their preferred means of communication and give you that information directly.

During the school year, please communicate to the school any changes in your child's attitude toward school. In turn, the staff will share with you the experiences they have with your child during the day. Newsletters are sent home weekly to share with you what your child has been doing in class.

Contacting Teachers: If you feel the need to talk to your child's teachers at any time, please call the school and leave a message for her. She will return your call at her earliest convenience. The director is also always available to speak with you.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: There are three parent-teacher conferences during the year, Fall, Spring and the end of the school year. These conferences, which both mothers and fathers are encouraged to attend, are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child and to receive an in-depth view of your child's progress. You will be able to sign up for a time that best fits your schedule and the teachers.

Student Evaluations: It is the policy of the school that we may reserve the right to require an evaluation of any child whom we believe is having significant difficulties functioning in the classroom. We also reserve the right to require additional support if we are unable to meet any child's special needs in the classroom. Additional support may include occupational, physical and/or speech therapists, and/or shadows, at the parents' own expense.

Open Door Policy: We have an open door policy as far as visiting school is concerned. We do ask however, that visitation not take place the first month of school to allow for all adjustments. Although we do encourage visitations, we suggest that the frequency of visits does not interfere with the operation of the classroom and your child's adjustment. When visiting in the classroom, we ask that you remember to please not engage in conversation with the teacher when she is working with the students. Her job at that point is to be with the children. Please arrange for a conference at a time when she is not responsible for teaching. We also have an option for viewing your child via camera in the front lobby. This way you can see what is going on without disturbing the class.

Changes in Child's Home Environment: It is important that we know of any changes taking place in your child's environment. The birth of a new baby, change of babysitter or family crisis can affect your child's behavior in school. The more informed we are, the more we can do to offer extra support and understanding to your child during unusually stressful times.

Community Emergencies: Our school generally follows the emergency plans set by Katy ISD. We will at all times try to notify you personally of emergency information or you may call the office directly.

FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION

Field Trip Policy: If your child arrives after his/her class has departed on a field trip, it will be the responsibility of the parent to: (1) transport the child to the field trip location, or (2) take the child home for the day as Rising Star Academy is unable to change ratios in the classrooms and this could cause your child to feel insecure and uncomfortable with a different set of teachers and classmates. It is the responsibility of the parents to show the discipline of promptness to your children—by being on time we reflect a genuine interest in our children’s activities.

Field trips are a part of Rising Star Academy curriculum for all children in the Pre-K program and older. Notices are posted at least 48 hours in advance of the field trip. Parent volunteers (who have completed a field trip training program) and faculty serves as drivers.

- All drivers must carry a first aid kit, insurance coverage and a valid Texas driver’s license. A copy of the parent’s driver’s license and valid certificate of insurance will be kept on file in the school’s office.
- One vehicle will carry a cellular phone during the field trip.
- Each driver will carry the medical consent forms, medical reports, field trip permission slips, and emergency information of the children in their care.
- At least one car or van driving on the field trip must have a fire extinguisher.
- All cars must caravan on field trips.
- Children and adults must wear seat belts until the driver has turned off the engine of the car or van.
- Children should ride in the back seat or the rows behind the driver, because of the danger of air bag inflation.
- Children should wear official Rising Star Academy t-shirts, which have the name, address and phone number of the school on them on all field trips. The school asks that teachers and volunteers on field trips wear the field trip shirts as well.
- Booster seats are now required for all children ages 8 years and younger, and who are shorter than 4 feet 9 inches.

Rising Star Academy relies on parent volunteers on field trips. The school would highly appreciate all parents to volunteer on at least 1 or 2 field trips per year.

Should a child exhibit behaviors which indicate he/she is not able to follow directions, or behaves in a manner which reduces his/her safety or the safety of the other children while on field trips, the school?

- Will ask the parent to accompany the child’s class on all field trips until the child exhibits safe and appropriate behavior, or
- Will ask the parent to keep the child home during the allotted time of the field trip, or
- May conference with the parents about other placement options and use the Behavior Concerns Policy in order to bring desired field trip behavior.

CHILDREN’S BIRTHDAYS

School Birthday Parties: Children love to celebrate their birthdays at school and we allow you make a party in class. You may choose to bring a special snack for the occasion: cake, cupcakes or ice-cream work best. Any food brought into the school must be store bought with original label with ingredients listed for the safety of our students with food allergies. Please check with the school’s director before purchasing any cakes or snacks. Your child’s teacher will add stories, songs and games to make this a special day for your child. Please contact your child’s teacher at least one week in advance so that a mutually convenient time and date can be arranged.

Class Gift: Loots bags and party favors are not allowed. Instead, please consider buying a book for the class in honor of your child’s birthday. Each class has its own “Wish List” books. that the class could use. Choosing something from the Wish List will guarantee your contribution is appropriate.

Private Birthday Parties: If you plan on having a private birthday celebration for your child outside of school, please be sensitive to your child’s classmates. We recommend that you invite all your child’s classmates or all of your child’s classmates of the same gender to his or her party. Children are sensitive to being excluded, even those as young as three years old. Including some children from your child’s class and not others can create hurt feelings.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Splash Day: Children love to cool off in the warm summer months with splash day here at Rising Star Academy. Please note that all children should bring a towel and sunscreen. Proper swim attire and water shoes are required in order to participate.

GANG FREE ZONE NOTICE

Under the Texas Penal Code, we are required to inform parents, that any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Parents will be notified in writing of any policy changes.