



KIDZ QUEST ACADEMY, INC.

Quality Learning Center

"Where Your Child's Success Matters"

2017/2018 PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OPEN DOOR POLICY	4
FEES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ARRIVAL AT CENTER PROCEDURES	6
PICK UP POLICY	7
ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGATEN (VPK)	7
PARENT VOLUNTEERS	8
FIELD TRIPS.....	8
TERMINATION FROM CENTER	9
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY	9
CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS POLICY.....	9
EMERGENCY CLOSING.....	9
CHILD HEALTH SERVICES	10
CHILD HEALTH EMERGENCIES.....	10
MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION	10
CONDITIONS OF SHORT-TERM EXCLUSION	10
DRESS CODE	11
TOYS/FOOD ITEMS FRM HOME	12
MEALS	12
APPENDIXES	12
DISCIPLINE POLICY	12
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	12
EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM.....	12

Parent Handbook

Welcome to the children's center at **Kidz Quest Academy Inc.**

This center is a model of quality in childcare and education. This handbook has been written to describe our program, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Kidz Quest Academy (Kidz Quest) maintains an open door policy with all parents of enrolled children. Parents will have immediate access without prior notice to the center. In situations where there is custody or domestic issues, the following will apply:

- The center must be provided with the most recent certified copy of court order and any amendments to the order, i.e., custody order, restraining order, or a protection order from abuse.
- The center will follow the orders of the court. Deviations from the court order will only be made if there are written instructions from the custodial parent/s (joint custody will require both parent signatures).
- If there is not a copy of a court order or a copy has not been provided to the center then both parents will have equal access to their child. By law the center may not deny access to child by parent without a court order.
- If there is a verbal or physical conflict, the center will contact the police.

The center not only welcomes parents but highly encourages parents to volunteer and visit their child's classroom. Parents and all visitors are required to sign in at the front desk. The center Discipline Policy and Standards of Conduct will apply to all parents and volunteers at all times. Siblings of children in the program may not attend when a parent is volunteering in the classroom.

Childcare Tuition and Late Payment Policy:

Fees are based on reserved time and not on actual time that a child spends at the center. There will be no reduction in the basic rate should a child not be in attendance at the center for the contracted time. Parents will also be billed for all days including holiday, sick, emergency closing and vacation days. Weekly tuition is due every Friday of each week. If your tuition is not paid in full by close of business Friday, a late fee of \$30.00 will be added to your child's account. If fees (tuition and late fee) are not paid by close of business day Friday, your child will be placed on a DO NOT ACCEPT list by close of the day. Your child's care will be terminated until payments are made in full if no prior arrangements were not made and agreed with by the Center Director.

Fees:

Infants: \$175.00

Toddlers: Ones: \$145.00

Toddlers: Twos: \$125.00

Threes: \$115.00

Fours Non VPK: \$95.00

VPK Wrap: \$75

Summer Camp: \$85

Registration Fees:

A **\$25.00** non-refundable registration fee is payable at the time of enrollment. Registration fees are not refundable under any circumstances.

Late Pick Up Fees

The following policy will be put into effect when a child is picked up after center operation hours.

- Late fee of \$15.00 per each quarter hour (i.e., every 15 minutes starting at 6:01pm¹)
- Late fee must be paid in order for the child to return to the center
- Services can be terminated if this continues to be a problem

It is the parent or authorized adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the staff will attempt to contact the other parent or authorized adult on the pick up list. The center does not have the right to deny the parent access to their child but the staff will contact the police immediately if the center is not able to contact the other parent or authorized adult to pick up child.

Holidays

The following are paid holidays recognized by the center. Parent fees do not change.

- New Years Day
- Martin Luther King
- President's Day
- Spring Day
- Memorial Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day/Day After
- Christmas Day

A holiday schedule will be posted on the Parent's Bulletin Board.

ARRIVAL AT CENTER PROCEDURES

Parents are required to sign their child/ren into the center on the Center Parent Sign-In Sheet located at the receptionist desk. Parent must turn their child over to the center staff before exiting the center.

Parent must follow the policy for Administering Medication if the child is to receive medication during the day. This should be taken care of during arrival time. Parents are requested to notify the teacher or Director if there are any special needs or instructions for the child's day. Special requests must be submitted in writing and may include but are not limited to: health issues, family situations, alternative pick up person, early pick up time, or any other issues the center should be aware of to best meet the individual needs of the child.

Parents are requested to notify the center if a child will not be in attendance that day. This notification will assist the center to more effectively maintain appropriate child staff ratios. Parents are requested to notify the center if their child is ill. This notification will assist the

center to track any illnesses that may occur at the center. Information regarding illnesses will be shared on a need to know basis.

Parents are requested to notify the Director if their child has a communicable disease so that parents of children in the classroom/center may be notified. Only information about the communicable disease will be shared. The center will follow the center's Confidentiality Policies and Procedures. The center conducts a health check on each child upon arrival to the classroom. Child may not be accepted into the center if staff deems the child is too ill to attend or is contagious.

PICK UP POLICY

Parents or authorized adult are required to sign child out of the center on the center Parent Sign-In/Out Sheet located at the receptionist desk. Parent or authorized adult is responsible for supervision of child once they have signed the child out of the center and must walk their child to the car. Children will not be released to older siblings or to a honking horn. Parents are requested to handle any center business prior to checking their child out of the center.

Note: If the child is not picked up from the center by 6:01 p.m., the center is required to call Department of Children and Families Services (DCF).

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGATEN (VPK)

Below is the policy for children enrolled in VPK.

- Child must arrive in the VPK classroom no later than 9:00 a.m. daily.
- Child must participate in VPK activities until 3:00 p.m.
- Children who arrive late or leave early will be counted as absent on the VPK attendance form.
- Parents must call the center if their child is going to be late or absent.
- If a child is absent for 5 consecutive instructional days, he will be dismissed from the VPK program.

- Absences and tardiness may be excused under "extraordinary circumstances" if appropriate documentation is provided. These include:
 - ✓ Hospitalization of the child, his parents or guardian (must provide a doctor's note).
 - ✓ Illness of the student, his parent or guardian that requires the ill person to remain at home (must provide a doctor's note).
 - ✓ Death of a member of the student's, parents' or guardians' immediate family (obituary or death certificate required.)
 - ✓ Court ordered visitation (court documents must be provided).
 - ✓ Parent or guardian's military deployment (military documentation must be provided).
 - ✓ A child may not miss more than 26 days per for illness.
 - ✓ A child many not miss more than 35 days per year regardless of circumstances.
 - ✓ Parents must complete and sign an attendance verification form **each** month. Forms will be distributed on the last instructional day of each month and must be signed and returned to the office the same day.
 - ✓ Children who do not meet attendance requirements will lose VPK funding. The child may be allowed to remain in the classroom, but will be required to pay full tuition.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Kidz Quest has an open door policy will all parents of enrolled children. Parents are not only welcomed, but also highly encouraged to volunteer in their child's classroom. All visitors are required to sign in at the receptionist desk before proceeding to the classroom. The Discipline Policy and Standards of Conduct will apply to all volunteers at all times. Siblings of children in the program may not attend when a parent is volunteering in the classroom. Parents may be asked to help with certain tasks such as cutting out items for the classrooms, sharing information about their job or hobby, or to read to a group of children.

FIELD TRIPS

Beginning at age three (3), field trips are used to enhance the children's learning opportunity. They are a great way to extend the curriculum and provide children with hands-on experiences. Teachers

have specific goals and objectives when planning a field trip. Prior permission is required from the Director. Parents will be provided at least two weeks notice for each upcoming field trip. Each child must have a signed field trip permission slip in order to attend each trip.

TERMINATION FROM CENTER

The center reserves the right to terminate child care services at any time with or without cause. Child care services may be terminated for willful destruction of property, if the child poses a threat to the safety and welfare of other children in care, physical or verbal abuse by the parent upon the center staff, insufficient funds that are not repaid promptly, refusal to follow center policies.

Two weeks written notice is required from parents that are withdrawing their child from the center. Parents are responsible for any fees if proper notification is not provided. Any past due balances are due on last day of enrollment. Balances remaining after 30 days will be referred to the center's collection agency.

In the event that a child is absent for two consecutive weeks, without proper notification to the office, the child will be considered withdrawn from the program and the reserved classroom space will be filled. All tuition and any related charges are due and payable during this two-week period. To re-enroll, normal registration will apply. The child will then be considered for enrollment upon space availability.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

Kidz Quest has the responsibility for the prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse and neglect (sexual, physical, emotional). Under Florida law, cases of possible child abuse and neglect are reported immediately to DCF. The abuse hotline is 1-800-96-ABUSE.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS POLICY

Kidz Quest maintains the policy that all records of children and families are confidential.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

If the threat of a natural disaster such as hurricane, tornado, flooding, etc., is imminent, we will follow the Public School System for closure guidance. Once the storm passes and is out of the area, we will assess the center for damage and re-open as soon as possible. The following steps must be confirmed before opening the center:

- The must have power and any physical damage must be repaired.
- There must be available staff in the center to provide appropriate staff to child ratio.

Parents are responsible for child care tuition even in the event that the center is closed due to natural disaster.

CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

Kidz Quest is required by DCF to have on file for each child a physical and immunization record. Parents have **10 days after enrollment** to bring in the original forms (Physical Examination Form 3040 and Immunization Record Form - 680).

CHILD HEALTH EMERGENCIES

In the case of accidents and incidents, staff will contact parent/s and complete an incident report in which both staff and parents sign. This serves as documentation that parents were informed of the accident/incident and any necessary follow-up. It is very important that you make sure that your child's teacher is aware of changes in phone numbers or emergency contact persons. Please keep this information up-to-date.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

All medication administration by the center staff must be authorized by the child's parent or guardian by first completing an Administration of Medication Form. **Only medication that has been prescribed by a doctor may be given at the center.** All medicines must be in the original container. If non-prescription medication is to be given, a note from the physician, stating the name of the medication and the dosage instructions, must be attached. Staff will inform parent/guardian immediately of any noticed side effects or changes in behavior. Parents are strongly encouraged to give all medications at home. If this is the case, please notify your child's teacher so that any behavioral changes and/or allergic reactions may be noted.

Medication will be stored in a locked secure area inaccessible to children. **NO MEDICATION MAY BE PLACED IN THE CHILD'S CUBBY/BOOKBAG OR LEFT UNATTENDED IN THE CLASSROOM.**

CONDITIONS OF SHORT-TERM EXCLUSION

A child will be placed on short-term exclusion, which may include non-admittance, when the illness and/or injury is contagious and/or poses a significant health and/or safety risk to other children and staff.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to inform staff if their child becomes ill from a communicable disease and of any other health/safety concerns.

Note the following:

- If a child appears to have a communicable disease, teaching staff should isolate the child away from the other children and immediately contact the child's parent/guardian.
- Children will not be allowed to return to the center until all symptoms have ceased. Depending upon the condition, children may not be allowed to return to the center without a physician's authorization.
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to immediately pick up their child/ren if the following signs, symptoms, or conditions are present:
 - ✓ Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion. Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100 degrees or higher taken under the arm or 101 degrees taken orally.
 - ✓ Diarrhea - runny, water, or bloody stools.
 - ✓ Vomiting - two or more times, vomiting that contains blood, or vomiting followed by severe cramping.
 - ✓ Severe coughing - child gets red or blue in the face or to make a high pitched whooping sound after coughing.
 - ✓ Eye discharge - thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye.
 - ✓ Difficult or rapid breathing
 - ✓ Ear discharge
 - ✓ Untreated infected skin patch(es)
 - ✓ Head lice (including nits)
 - ✓ Conditions that commonly require parameters from a physician detailing when a child may return include, but not limited to, chickenpox, strep throat, scabies, impetigo, meningitis, and Hepatitis A.
 - ✓ Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than staff can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children.
 - ✓ Any other unusual signs, symptoms, or conditions.

DRESS CODE

Kidz Quest requests that children arrive at school in comfortable, easy to launder clothing. While we make every effort to protect their clothing, children can experience accidental spills during planned activities. Please label all clothing items with the child's first and last name.

For the safety of the children, we do not allow open-toe shoes, flip flops, or sandals either in the classroom or during outdoor activities.

In case of accidents, we request every child keep a change of clothes at the center. Label each item with the child's first and last name and place the items in a sealed bag in their cubby.

TOYS/FOOD ITEMS FROM HOME

To prevent special toys from being lost or broken, we ask that toys not be sent to school with your child. On certain days through the year, we allow children to bring personal items and/or toys to share during a special part of the day's activities. Your child's teacher will inform you about these "Show-N-Tell" days.

MEALS

A nutritious breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack is provided for all children. Please discuss any special dietary needs for your child with the Director. Modest accommodations will be made for children with food allergies or who require specific menu items for cultural reasons. In order to ensure the health and safety of all children, food items, purchased or from home, **may not be brought into the classroom to be eaten, with the exception of special classroom events.** This will help prevent children with allergies from being exposed to foods which could be harmful.

APPENDIXES

DISCIPLINE POLICY

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is the effective management of children's behavior with the goal of self-disciplined children. The management technique to be used in any particular situation will be based upon consideration of the particular situation and the individual child. All staff, volunteers, and parents will use the positive guidance methods listed below:

- **Plan ahead to prevent behavior problems.** Anticipate problems that may occur and provide intervention or directions in advance. (Ex: Limit number of children in centers. Have activities prepared so children do not have to wait.)
- **Establish clear and simple rules that are age-appropriate.** Consistent reminders help reinforce limits. Rules should be stated in a positive way. (Ex: If a child is running, say, "Please use your walking feet. Running feet are for outside", instead of "Don't run!")
- **Be a model for the desired behavior.** Treat all children with respect and politeness. (Ex: The teacher has a leaky paint container in her hand. She needs to get to the sink. She asks the children who are in line at the sink if she could please use the sink out of turn, rather than simply cutting in front of the children. They agree, and she remembers to thank them.)

- **Help children to learn problem-solving skills.** Give them the language they need to communicate feelings and needs to others appropriately. Work with them to come up with solutions to conflicts.
- **Give hugs and caring.** The key to discipline is establishing a nurturing relationship with each child. Children need to know they are accepted and loved no matter how they behave.
- **Reinforce positive behavior.** Remember to focus on the specific behavior you wish to see repeated. (Ex: "Jessie, you have worked so hard to put all the blocks neatly on the shelf. Fantastic job!")
- **Overlook small annoyances.** Sometimes when a behavior is overlooked, not reinforced by attention, it disappears. Unless the behavior is aggressive and someone is in danger of getting hurt, the teacher/caregiver might be wise to let the children work out the problem on their own.
- **Offer positive alternatives to a negative behavior.** If a child's behavior is unacceptable, suggest alternative choices. (Ex: If a child is throwing blocks, the teacher intervenes by telling the child that blocks are for building. If the child wishes to throw something, he/she can throw a bean bag or a ball.)
- **Redirect or divert the child.** Substitute an appropriate activity for the unacceptable one. Some behaviors that are inappropriate are temporary, or situation specific. In these cases it is best to alter the environment by redirecting the child to another activity. (Ex: Two children who are good friends have begun to get irritated with each other. Intervene before things get out of hand by engaging them in a new activity.)
- **Help children see behavioral consequences.** Since young children are self-centered, it is hard for them to see beyond their own needs. Help them to move from thinking only of themselves, to thinking of others by analyzing the consequences of their actions. Discuss their behavior in a non-judgmental way and encourage them to think about its impact on people, objects and events.
- **Provide renewal time.** When a child is too upset to talk or listen, it may be necessary to remove the child from the situation for a period of no more than 2 minutes. The teachers stay with the child to discuss what happened and to help the child regain composure.
- **Implement Behavior Intervention Policy when necessary.**

Discipline may not involve the following:

- **Time out.** There will not be any identified space, or chair, reserved for “time out”. Children are not to be isolated indefinitely due to behavior problems. Time out may be used only if stipulated in an individual child’s behavior plan by a licensed mental health consultant.
- **Physical punishment.** The use of physical force with children is prohibited. This includes pulling by the arm, grabbing children by the arm/shoulders neck, hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.
- **Threatening.** Children will not be threatened with physical punishment, or with a phone call to parents.
- **Ridiculing or Degrading.** There will be no name-calling, belittling, or comparison to other children.
- **Withholding of meals, snacks, or water.** Children will not be denied food, water or any other basic need as a means of discipline.
- **Denying a rest.** Children will not be denied rest as a means of discipline.
- In the event that a child is exhibiting extreme challenging behavior, follow these procedures:
 - ✓ Provide a renewal time.
 - ✓ When a child is too upset to talk or listen, it may be necessary to remove the child from the situation for no more than 2 minutes. The teacher is to stay with the child in the classroom to discuss what happened and help the child regain composure. If necessary, the child may be removed from the classroom if staff is available to remain with the child at all times.

If the child is unable to regain control within 30 minutes, the parents or authorized persons may be contacted to pick up the child.

I have read the Discipline Policy and agree to abide by its guidelines.

Parent Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT POLICY

Kidz Quest has guidelines of acceptable conduct that all parents, volunteers and visitors must abide by while on premises. It is expected that all parties will follow these guidelines and sign this form. We strive to provide a safe learning environment for you and the children. Volunteering in the classroom is strongly encouraged however; the "Standards of Conduct" must be adhered to at all times.

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family. Refrain from stereotyping on basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members.
- Children will not be left alone or unsupervised while in the center.
- Use positive methods of child guidance. Any use of corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse or humiliation is prohibited. Methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as a punishment or reward, time out or the denial of basic needs are prohibited.
- Any threatening physical contact or verbal abuse towards individuals connect with the program, other parents or volunteers will not be tolerated.

- Kidz Quest does adhere to a "Smoke-Free Environment". Smoking is prohibited on premises and during all center or parent activities.
- Kidz Quest prohibits theft, firearms, alcohol, explosives and illegal substances on the premises and during all center or parent activities.
- Harassment or causing disharmony of any kind will not be tolerated.

VISITORS

- All volunteers and visitors shall check-in at the receptionist desk.
- Visitation by a non-enrolled child unaccompanied by his/her parent/s or legal guardian is prohibited unless prior approval has been granted by the Director.
- Only persons with legal authority to do so (Department of Children and Families personnel or law enforcement) shall be allowed to question a child on the property without the consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Because staff, children, and parents should at all times feel that the school and work environment is safe and not hostile, all visitors on the property shall comply with all policies and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is not disruptive, threatening or abusive.
 - ✓ Any parent, volunteer or visitor who is disruptive, threatening or abusive will be asked to relocate to a location in the facility where children are not present and where the matter can be discussed and resolved in a professional manner.
 - ✓ If the person refuses to relocate or continues to act in an inappropriate manner, the person will be asked to leave the premises. If the person refuses to leave, staff will notify appropriate law enforcement personnel. Should the person subsequently return to the property and again act in a manner that is disruptive, threatening or abusive or if the initial incident is so extreme that the teachers are concerned about the person returning to the facility, the person shall be informed in writing that he/she may be prohibited from returning to the property.
 - ✓ Any person who believes that he/she has wrongfully been asked to not return to the property, must first leave the property as requested, but may subsequently appeal the decision in writing to the Director.
 - ✓ A final decision will be made and the person will be notified in writing that he/she may not return to the property except under expressed conditions.
 - ✓ Notwithstanding the above, Kidz Quest personnel shall always have the authority to notify appropriate law enforcement personnel should any person to property violate criminal statutes.
- This policy shall be posted in a place clearly visible to all.

I have read the Standards of Conduct Policy and agree to abide by its guidelines.

Parent Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date

EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

Teachers at Kidz Quest will use the following curriculum to plan specific activities that will promote development and school readiness.

- Preschool teachers will use the ELLM Plus in addition to Links to Literacy curriculum.
- Infant/toddler teachers will use the Foundation for Success and a variety of infant/toddler resource books to plan appropriate activities.
- Other approved curriculum resource books will be used to supplement the curriculum, such as:
 - ✓ Character Counts
 - ✓ Nutrition
 - ✓ I-Care

Parent Teacher Conferences:

All parents/family are invited to attend scheduled formal parent/teacher conferences to review child's progress and needs and set goals for the child. Conferences will be scheduled throughout the year for infants, toddlers and preschool children. Other conferences may be scheduled as need or as requested by parent or teacher.

Assessment:

All children are screened and assessed using valid and reliable screening and assessment instruments for the purpose of identifying children with special needs or in need of further evaluation and referral services. Teaching staff will use a variety of strategies to promote and support children's learning and developmental progress based on the observations, individualization, and ongoing assessment of each child. Information will be gathered from teachers and parents.