



ANCHORAGE COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Parents Guide to Licensed Child Care - sent in separate file

Welcome to Anchorage Cooperative Preschool.

We welcome you to our preschool, a community of families who embrace child-directed learning and active parenting. We look to our diverse families and community to guide our teachers and curriculum. Our teachers enhance children's emerging interests and academic growth through a focus on positive social and emotional interactions.

Philosophy

We believe it is important for our students to have experiences individually and with other children and adults in a safe, positive and accepting environment. Children explore to discover their own interests and abilities and are exposed to new ideas and concepts. We believe it is essential for family members to be in the classroom learning and participating with their children.

Our Guiding Principles

We...believe...welcome...provide...create...support...honor...give...share

Anchorage Cooperative Preschool has in its past ideals that are its future. Following is a list of the Guiding Principles that many of our members collaborated on and established. Take a look at these ideals and see if they resonate for you. If so, you are in the right place. We want you to help us emulate these guiding principles which are at our base, throughout our core and thus drive our decisions and actions.

- ❖ We welcome diversity and honor the individual
- ❖ We enrich families' lives, both in and out of the classroom.
- ❖ our program is:
 - child-centered & age-appropriate
 - multi-sensory
 - play-based
 - emergent
 - nature-based
 - multicultural
- ❖ We support skills for lifelong learning
- ❖ We create a love for learning by embracing curiosity, creativity & flexibility
- ❖ We share responsibilities for educating children
- ❖ we create a family-centered, hands-on community where choices are nurtured, and mistakes are supported and learned from
- ❖ we provide a safe and trusting place where naturally capable teachers, families and children are empowered to be curious and explore their potential
- ❖ we create an environment where positive self-image is fostered through recognition of feelings, kind and gentle actions and intuitiveness
- ❖ we provide a large community gathering space
- ❖ we believe in environmentally conscious, sustainable practices

- ❖ we support the opportunity to build close, supportive relationships
- ❖ we share resources, skills, experiences, knowledge and responsibilities
- ❖ we honor ethical, transparent, responsible business behaviors
- ❖ we support growth and change
- ❖ we believe children thrive through outdoor time in a natural environment
- ❖ we support healthy and safe practices for mind, body and environment

Benefits

- ❖ When adults participate in their children’s preschool there are many benefits for the child and family:
 - Adults observe children as they play and experience their similarities and differences
 - Adults support one another and learn new parenting skills
 - There is continuity between home and school
 - Families share their talents, experiences, interests and skill
 - Children are exposed to different ways of doing things
 - Children understand that their school and education are important to their families.
 - Families become part of a caring and supportive community.
 - Active family participation creates the spirit and atmosphere of “our” school. We create this school together; it belongs to all of us. Our school is a positive and accepting place for all children and families.

Curriculum Philosophy

The curriculum at the Anchorage Cooperative Preschool is a child-centered philosophy that incorporates family and community values and lifestyles. Specific activities emerge from the children's interests and ideas. The following is a list of goals for ACP children, yet each child’s development is taken into account: a child who is just becoming socially active is only beginning the long process of sharing, taking turns and being a good friend. Positive social and emotional interactions are the main focus while academic endeavors are used to enhance the overall experience.

At ACP, families and children practice...

- ❖ *play and exploration*
- ❖ *by doing*
- ❖ *being a friend*
- ❖ *taking turns*
- ❖ *sharing with others*
- ❖ *listening to others*
- ❖ *helping others*
- ❖ *standing up for themselves (to be heard and respected)*

- ❖ *negotiating in peaceful ways*
- ❖ *increasing attention spans*
- ❖ *valuing themselves as individuals and group members*
- ❖ *being willing to make mistakes and learn from them*
- ❖ *being excited about discovery and learning*
- ❖ *trying new things*
- ❖ *having fun*

Eligibility

A child may begin on or after their 3rd birthday and we serve children until 6 years of age. We allow students who are 6 years old and have begun kindergarten during our summer session.

Enrollment Start Up

Schedule a time to tour the space and meet with the Director and Teaching staff. This is a great time to sit down for a two-way interview to be sure the program is a right fit for your family. It is also a good opportunity to bring your child and observe them playing in the space.

- Read all policies and ask questions
- Fill out and submit an application
- Ensure your child has immunizations up to date as well as a physical (may be done one year prior to the first day of school)

Enrollment Checklist *(to be completed before or on the first day of class)*

- An online application submitted via Google Form
- Emergency Records Card
- Up-to-date immunization record for your child (or exemption form) it must be kept current during the school year.
- Current physical for your child. Physicals must be current within the past 12 months. Physicals must be kept current during the school year.
- Photo Release
- Any applicable documentation for Child Care Assistance funding
- Family and student photos for classroom use

Participation

At the preschool everyone (children and adults) contributes ideas and energy. Our cooperative structure involves Parent Jobs where parents contribute to and support their child's ongoing education. Each family will choose a job that suits their skills, talents, and passions. Jobs vary in time commitment and frequency. Parent involvement is crucial to keep our tuition rates affordable and support the cooperative nature of ACP.

We value the diversity among our families and will facilitate the incorporation of the culture of each family into our program. Children and adults learn more about each other by spending time together and through sharing ideas, customs, languages, and ideas.

A key principle of our program is providing an environment where parents take an active role in their child's education. We encourage open communication between parents and staff. Please talk to the teachers if you have concerns about your child or positive suggestions of ways to improve or contribute to our program.

Identified family members are welcome in the classroom any time. Let the teacher know if you are staying and if you would like to engage with the children, they will give you direction.

ACP Organizational Structure

The structure of the preschool changes based on the levels of enrollment and classes offered. Sometimes, the teacher and the Director roles are intertwined for one person, sometimes they are two different people.

Director

Our Preschool Director communicates with parents, staff, and children regularly. They also provide guidance to members regarding their function or duties. The Director will help implement outlined policies from the handbook and is responsible for many of the day-to-day operations of the school. They are responsible for monitoring the licensing requirements of the preschool to maintain compliance with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). They are a non-voting member of the Board of Directors.

Lead Teacher

Our Lead Teacher serves as the leader of the classroom. They create and implement curriculum and communicate with parents and children regularly. They are a non-voting member of the Board of Directors.

Assistant Teacher/Paraprofessional

Our Assistant Teacher/Paraprofessional(s) serve as the right and left hands of the teacher. They help plan, prepare, and implement the curriculum. They are a non-voting member of the Board of Directors.

Preschool Jobs and Teams

Each family will choose a job that suits their skills, talents, and passions. Jobs vary in time commitment and frequency, and we will help families identify ways they may contribute to the cooperative nature of ACP. Teams may be formed to work on larger projects.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is a group of preschool members and alumni that oversees the activities of the preschool. The responsibilities of the Board include, but are not limited to, approving annual budgets, authorizing new hires, preparing employee contracts, and negotiating the preschool lease. Official bylaws for the preschool are included as an Appendix to this document. Board Meetings are held monthly, and all members of the preschool are encouraged to attend. The Executive Board consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and is voted on in the Fall following the annual meeting. If vacancies become available outside these times, the President may appoint others to fill these positions until voting takes place in the Fall.

II. LOGISTICS

Communications

Our primary means of communication with families, aside from in person, is the Brightwheel app. We use this classroom management platform for student check in/out, billing, and general communication. The ACP website is available at www.preschoolacp.com and ACP Family and Friends Facebook is kept up to date with current announcements, information, and pictures of the school. If you have something you want to see featured on the website, let us know.

Cubbies may also be used for communicating between members. This method of communicating with others is used with some discretion, as there is always the possibility that small notes may get misplaced among a preschooler's belongings.

For communications that require an immediate response or are of an emergency nature, please use Brightwheel. You may also use the preschool office phone number 907.279.0923 or email preschoolACP@gmail.com.

Open Door Policy

Anchorage Cooperative Preschool observes an Open Door Policy, parents and approved family members are welcome to call or drop in to see their children at any time during school hours.

Membership Policies

1. Adults must escort children into the preschool and wait until the teacher has greeted them. Drop off is between 9:00 - 9:15 AM unless other arrangements have been made with staff.
2. Pick-up should occur within 15 minutes of the program end time. Please contact the school via Brightwheel if you will be late. Frequent late pick-ups may be subject to fees. Authorized pick-up individuals may be named on the student's emergency contact card. Staff will check the pick-up individual's ID if they are unfamiliar.

Members Responsibilities

Member responsibilities and jobs have transformed considerably over our 50+ year history as a cooperative preschool. Now, in a post-pandemic world where most families work full time, run on tight budgets, and have limited free time, we understand that the ways in which you can support our program must evolve as well. A key principle of ACP is that we share resources, skills, experiences, knowledge and responsibilities, thus we must have parent involvement. This participation and support of our program enables you to get to know other families as part of the Preschool Community and helps keep tuition affordable for our families.

Good Supervision when Volunteering in the Classroom

Give all of your attention to the children. Be alert for anything potentially unsafe. Stand or sit where you can see all the children in the room. Cell phones should not be used in the classroom. If you must leave, notify one of the teachers. If you have any concerns, please bring them up to the Teacher,

Director, or President. Adults set the stage for children's play with materials and activities based on their interests and even requests. Allow children to invite you to their play, try not to interrupt their play if they are engaged with each other. Be present, understand the child's intent, extend ideas. Step in only when necessary to solve problems. Be kind and gentle.

Monthly Deep Cleaning

While we follow thorough cleaning practices each day, it is important to have our classroom deep cleaned monthly to ensure a healthy environment for our students. We ask that each parent sign up for one monthly cleaning session per year. As an alternative, this monthly cleaning position can be fulfilled by a family if they would like it to be their job in the cooperative.

Resignations

We understand that changes in work or family may result in the need to leave ACP. We appreciate as much notice as possible. Registration fees and deposits are not refundable.

Non-Discrimination Policy

ACP accepts children ages 3 until 6 and their families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, disabilities, or sexual orientation. We expect the same non-discrimination practices from each of our members toward others in our ACP community.

Discrimination toward anyone in our program for any reason may result in dismissal as determined by the Board of Directors.

Behavior Guidance

At ACP, we believe that all children are good, and they are constantly learning and growing as best they know how. We, as adults, must provide them with an environment where they feel safe and loved so they may confidently grow and navigate this complicated world.

To best support our students, we use a practice called Conscious Discipline. It involves visual schedules, breathing exercises, positive behavior management techniques, and lots of patience. We also focus on social and emotional competencies in ourselves as caregivers. We use strategies that support responding to challenging situations with calm and composure. We teach STAR breathing (for ourselves and our students) to Stop, Take a breath AND Relax before responding to challenging situations. Taking deep breaths brings oxygen to the brain and supports access to the prefrontal cortex, which is where learning and positive choices exist.

For our students, we encourage the development of social-emotional skills such as using kind words, taking turns, sharing, using their voice, independence, and teamwork. We also understand that childcare and homecare overlap, so it is important to have families involved in the routines and the school classroom.

Academic, Behavioral or Emotional Concerns

Sometimes behavioral or emotional concerns can arise which cause the staff and/or parents to question the success of the child within the school environment. When these concerns arise, ACP will partner with the parents to follow through with a Cooperative Plan of Action:

1. Conference: A conference will be set up to discuss the concerns. At that time, in collaboration with ACP staff and the family, we will construct a Cooperative Plan of Action for your child.
2. Cooperative Plan of Action: The plan of action will be created, implemented and data will be collected. Every two weeks, data will be discussed with the family and modifications considered. At any time, we may discuss the role of additional services, and if needed, make a referral.
3. Referral: Sometimes a referral for screening or special services may be needed to help the child's success at school. If the teacher and/or family feel this is necessary, or the concern goes beyond the teacher/staff's area of expertise, the teacher/director will fill out a referral form and suggest possible avenues for the family to explore. This could include, but not limited to, seeking advice from your family doctor or pediatrician (first), or suggesting a free screening through the Anchorage School District's Early Intervention Screening Program.
4. A Cooperative Approach and Attitude: ACP and their staff recognize that a cooperative approach to helping the child is needed and will agree to work with the family and specialists if necessary. We will set up a Cooperative Plan with input from all parties and put this plan into action for a period agreed upon by all. As part of the Cooperative Plan of Action, ACP staff agree to meet regularly to discuss and, if necessary, alter to meet the needs of the individual child.
5. Recognizing that ACP may not meet the needs of the child: On rare occasions it may be decided by all or part of the Cooperative Plan members that ACP may not be able to meet the needs of the child. If this happens, ACP will allow the family to resign their membership to seek a program that can better meet those needs without financial restrictions to the family.

If our staff has exhausted all strategies and options for deescalating challenging behaviors, and the student continues to pose a risk to the safety of themselves and/or other students, we may contact parent(s) and ask that the student leave for the day. If this occurs, open communication with the director, teachers and family will be ensured and positive behavior strategies will be discussed so that the family and staff may best support the student upon their return.

ACP also reserves the right to terminate membership if the family is not responsive to seeking a cooperative approach to helping the child succeed in the ACP environment and/or if the behavior is a safety issue for the staff or other children participating in the program with the child.

Hours of Operation

Regular program: 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM Monday through Friday

Early drop off: 8:30 AM – 9:00 AM Monday – Thursday

Aftercare program: 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Monday - Thursday

ACP is closed on the following holidays and breaks. Changes may be made to these breaks after a survey

of parents and staff each session. Changes must be determined at least 30 days in advance and submitted to the Child Care Licensing Office.

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after
- Winter Break class dates will be determined in September of the current year.
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Spring Break class dates will be determined in January of the current year.
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July

What to Bring to School?

There are times when preschoolers may have an accident, or their clothes get messy. Parents are asked to bring an extra change of clothes and place it in their cubby. Show this to the preschooler so that he/she knows what to do and takes some responsibility for getting cleaned up. If this is not available, then we do have extra clothes here at school.

- Extra change of clothes to include:
 - Pants
 - Shirt
 - Socks
 - Underwear
- Water bottle labeled with the child's name
- Seasonally appropriate outdoor gear

Procedures for Drop Off and Pick Up

The procedures for dropping off and picking up preschool students are listed below. Always have safety for your child and other students in the forefront of your mind when dropping off and picking up your child. Please talk to your child's teacher if you have questions about the procedures below.

All parents or persons dropping off a preschool student must escort them into the cubby area. Parents will assist their child through the drop off routine (hang coat, change shoes, place lunch and water on the cart, answer question of the day) as well as sign them in on the tablet. Parents should remain with their student until acknowledged by a teacher. Teachers will greet the children beginning at 9:00 AM. We ask that students remain outside until 9:00 AM unless they are participating in the early drop-off program.

When picking up your preschooler, the parent or guardian must sign the preschooler out at the end of the day using the Brightwheel app.

Staff may request identification of anyone picking up a child they do not recognize. Emergency information must be kept up to date in the event we are unable to contact parents directly when a child becomes ill, injured or an emergency arises. This includes current phone numbers and names of people

authorized to drop off/pick up the child. Please inform your emergency contacts that you have placed their name on your child's emergency information.

Please make every effort to drop-off and pick up your child on time.

Late Pick Up Policy

Please notify the Director or teachers as soon as possible if you will be late picking up. Send a message through Brightwheel or call 907-279-0923.

Pick-up should occur within 15 minutes of the program end time (by 2:15 PM). Frequent late pick-ups may be subject to fees.

Programs and Schedules (*exact dates vary per year*)

Fall Session (*September - December*)

- 2 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM T/TH
- 3 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/W/F
- 5 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/T/W/Th/F
- Early drop-off program: 8:30 AM – 9:00 AM Mon - Thurs
- Aftercare program: 2 PM – 5 PM Mon - Thurs

Spring Session (*January - May*)

- 2 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM T/TH
- 3 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/W/F
- 5 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/T/W/Th/F
- *Early drop-off and Aftercare programs will be determined following the Fall 2024 session and will be based on interest and enrollment.

Summer Session (*June - August*) *programs may vary during summer*

- 2 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/F
- 3 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM T/W/Th
- 5 Day Program 9 AM to 2 PM M/T/W/TH/F
- Aftercare Program TBD (see note in spring session)

Program may be inside, outside, on site, off site, depending on weather and daily curriculum.

Dual Classroom Model

We have a target date of September 3, 2024, for an expansion of our preschool program. We have acquired an additional classroom, adjacent to our main classroom and will be able to accommodate a maximum of 10 additional students. Upon licensing approval, we will have two groups of students and two classrooms within ACP. The groups will combine for mealtimes and outside time, and during other activities they will be divided between our two classrooms. Classroom A is the current (main) preschool classroom. Classroom B is the room adjacent to our main classroom. The two groups of students will be called Mighty Moose and Brave Bears. Students will also be assigned to a room (either Room A or Room

B) that corresponds with their group. We will have a teacher assigned to each room as well (although students will still interact with all teachers and do activities in both rooms) but this allows the students a sense of a “home base” in the dual classroom model. These groups will be created based on a variety of factors including student age, learning style, and personality. Groups will rotate between classrooms throughout the day allowing teachers to focus on developmentally appropriate activities for each group while also allowing play between children of all ages served by our program. Two staff members will be present in Room A, and one staff member will always be present in Room B.

Regular Daily Schedule 9 AM – 2 PM

9:00	Drop off & morning routine	Families complete morning routine: put belongings in cubby; lunch and water on designated carts; sign in on tablet; answer question of the day; use bathroom & wash hands.	
	Journals & table activities	Room A: Brave Bears will find their journal and work with a teacher on fine motor/literacy concepts. When done, they may work do table activities or look at books and do puzzles on the rug.	Room B: Mighty Moose will do table activities and other fine motor and sensory activities. When done, children can look at books or do puzzles on the rug in Room B.
9:30	Opening circle	Room A: Unite with song; disengage stress with breathing exercise; connect with Wish Well Wheel; commit to daily schedule; review classroom rules.	Room B: Unite with song; disengage stress with breathing exercise; connect with Wish Well Wheel; commit to daily schedule; review classroom rules.
9:40	Bathroom break	Brave Bears take bathroom break and wash hands after Mighty Moose.	Mighty Moose will take a bathroom break and wash hands.
9:50	Snack	Everyone eats a healthy snack provided by the preschool as a group.	Everyone eats a healthy snack provided by the preschool as a group.
10:05	Circle time	Room A: Read a book related to themed content. We may do connecting activities (chart, graph, song, project, etc.) to build skills.	Room B: Read a book related to themed content. We may do a connecting activity.
10:30	Choice time	Room A: Most children will choose centers to work in while small groups rotate through specialized activities in Room B. In Room A, children can change centers as they please. Art, blocks, discovery, library, literacy, dramatic play, sensory. Themed activities and materials are added each week. Everyone will clean up following choice time.	Room B: Teachers will rotate small groups of students through this room for small group activities.
11:45	Bathroom break	Brave Bears will use the bathroom and wash hands after Mighty Moose.	Mighty Moose will be walked to the bathroom with a teacher for bathroom break and to wash hands.

12:00	Lunch	Everyone eats a nutritious packed lunch together.	Everyone eats a nutritious packed lunch together.
12:25	Circle time	Room A: After washing hands and cleaning up lunch, Brave Bears will have circle time then put on outside gear.	Room B: After washing hands and cleaning up lunch, Might Moose put on outside gear.
12:35	Outside time	Play together outside	Play together outside
1:45	Closing circle	Outside: Unite with song; disengage stress with breathing exercise; connect with recall of learning; commit with a home-school connection; individual goodbyes	Outside: Unite with song; disengage stress with breathing exercise; connect with recall of learning; commit with a home-school connection; individual goodbyes
2:00	Pick Up	Sign out child from tablet; retrieve belongings from cubbies, carts, and art drawer.	Sign out child from tablet; retrieve belongings from cubbies, carts, and art drawer.

Early Drop-Off Schedule 8:30 AM – 9 AM

8:30	Drop-off	Families complete morning routine: put belongings in cubby; lunch and water on designated carts; sign in on tablet; answer question of the day; use bathroom & wash hands.
8:35	Morning snack	Children will be provided with a nutritious morning snack.
8:45	Table Activity	Students will listen to an audiobook or do a tabletop activity.
9:00	Morning class routine	Students will complete journal and tabletop activities related to the current topic of study.

Aftercare Program Schedule 2 PM – 5 PM

2:00	Snack	Optional snack before rest time
2:15	Rest Time & Independent Quiet Activities	Children may rest on individual mats or engage with their project box, look at books, or color individually.
3:30	Snack	Children will be provided with another opportunity for a snack.
3:45	Outdoor time	Outdoor play and gross motor movement.
4:30	Choice time	Choice time until pick up.
5:00	Pick up	Sign out child from tablet; retrieve belongings from cubbies, carts and art drawers.

Early Drop-off & Aftercare:

Beginning September 23rd, we will offer an early drop-off option and aftercare Monday - Thursday from 8:30 AM - 5 PM. Due to licensing constraints only students staying for aftercare that day may also participate in early drop-off. We offer a drop-in option for extended care if space permits.

Sleep & Rest:

Children in our Extended Day Program will be provided with one hour of quiet rest time at a minimum. We will dim the lights, quiet the room, and put out a sleeping mat for each child. Students should bring a blanket and small pillow. They will take these items home at the end of every week for a wash unless they are visibly soiled in which case they will be sent home sooner. These items should all be placed within a bag and be able to be stored above the child's cubby. Mats will be sanitized after each use. The students may also use this time to engage with their project box, look at books, color, or do other quiet activities.

Supervision and Program Size:

- There will be two staff members present at all times during the Extended Day Program.
- Ratio will be 1 caregiver to 10 children with students at all times.
- There will be a maximum of 20 children in the Extended Day Program.

Cost:

- Early drop-off: \$5/session
- Aftercare (2 PM – 5 PM):
 - 1 day per week: \$120/month
 - 2 days per week: \$225/month
 - 3 days per week: \$300/month
 - 4 days per week: \$350/month
- Drop-in aftercare: \$35/session

Conditions for Outdoor Play

Please make sure your child has appropriate outdoor clothes every day. In winter it is especially important for children to get plenty of fresh air and exercise.

ACP has worked with the owners of this building to make use of the White Room (aka the "Fellowship Hall") during periods when outdoor play is deemed unsafe. Unsafe is defined as any of the following:

- Outside temperature below 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- Presence of ice in quantities or locations that could result in injury to students or staff
- High winds
- Wildlife
- Air quality
- Or other hazardous conditions as judged by our staff

The White Room may be used if outside conditions are deemed unsafe AND the White Room is not in use by another group. If the White Room is in use, outdoor time will take place in the classroom in a safe manner by utilizing Gross Motor Activities with appropriate supervision.

Recommended outdoor gear:

- Fall & Spring
 - Rainsuit or raincoat & pants (no umbrellas unless they have the safe plastic tips)
 - Rain boots
 - Jacket
 - Light hat
 - Waterproof gloves or mittens
- Winter
 - Warm coat and snow pants or snow suit
 - Snow boots
 - Warm hat that covers ears
 - Warm mittens

We have extra warm clothes that children can borrow. If your child borrows something, please return it clean on your next school day.

Inclement Weather

Safety is, and always has been, our number one priority at ACP. To best serve our students and families, ACP will determine weather closures on a case-by-case basis. We do not follow ASD's closure status directly, rather we use it as guidance.

Our staff will determine together if they are able to safely open school for the day. Parents will be notified by 6:30 AM via Brightwheel on the day in question.

Local "State of Emergency" and long-term power outages will require us to close. On some occasions, in the interest of safety for the children and our staff, we may choose to close early. For early closing, we will contact parents via Brightwheel and give a minimum of one hour notice.

Notification of Changes in Policy

There will be minimum 30-day notice for any change in policy or procedures. The updated policy and notification will be sent to families via Brightwheel message and/or a hard copy in the students' cubbies. The policy updates will also be sent to the MOA licensing office.

Disclosure/Confidentiality Information

No information on file at the preschool or given to the teacher in confidence will be disclosed to any individual or group. Exceptions to this rule include legal warrants, DHHS, child protection personnel, state immunology, and licensing specialists.

Mandatory Reporting

All staff are mandatory reporters. They are required to report any signs of abuse within 24 hours.

Complaint Procedure

The Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Adult Care Office is the agency responsible for licensing childcare centers serving seven or more children. This agency supervises, monitors, and investigates complaints involving childcare centers. They can be reached at 825 L Street, Third Floor, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, AK 99519 or 343-4758.

Screen Policy

There will be no regular TV/tablet viewing at the preschool. An occasional short video may be shown for educational purposes.

Photographs

We respect families' and children's right to privacy and thus take photograph permission seriously. The photograph of your child may be used for the preschool website, newsletter, yearbook or other promotion material. A photo release is included in the enrollment process if you choose to grant permission. If a photo of your student is taken, it will be sent to the parent via Brightwheel as parent/teacher communication, it is stored in a password protected account, all pictures on ACP's website are protected from saving or downloading. We also use pictures for weekly updates and parent newsletters and upload them to a shared Apple album that only staff may access. Staff will be removed from the account if they are no longer associated with ACP.

III. SAFETY

Security

The focus of our preschool security policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. If something has been overlooked or an addition should be considered, please call this to the attention of our preschool's Director.

- Access in and out of the preschool is through the playground/outdoor classroom entrance. The door code is given to current families and should not be shared with anyone other than adults authorized to pick-up currently enrolled children. The door code will be changed a minimum of twice annually.
- Any adult on site during the preschool day (other than pick-up and drop off) is required to sign in and out on the paper log in the entry. This applies to parents helping in the classroom indoors, outdoors, and in the office.
- Students and staff are signed in and out in Brightwheel.
- Classroom windows and interior doors are to remain locked. If an adult restroom is needed the hallway door should not be propped, but rather unlocked and relocked upon return to the classroom. If during the preschool day, please inform the teacher first.
- Security cameras are placed in both our indoor and outdoor classrooms.
- Only authorized individuals have access to recordings: the current preschool's Director and a background checked current preschool board member.
- Recordings will not be shared electronically except for a police request or Child Care Program Office request to do so securely.

- Identified purposes for accessing camera footage include evidence of an intruder, informing decision making, professional development, and identification of safety concerns.
- In addition to monthly fire drills including all children, ACP staff and volunteers practice intruder alert and emergency response scenarios with and without children present.

Supervision Plan

There are at least two staff members present at all times during any given school day. We feel our students are best supported when 4 staff members are present, and this will be the case most days. To ensure the health and safety of each child, these rules will be enforced and maintained throughout the course of each school day:

Indoors:

1. Running is discouraged unless managed by a teacher. Children will be able to participate in other vigorous exercise and may run outdoors if weather permits.
2. Children will wash hands following guidelines posted in the restroom (following CDC guidance) before and after eating, after toileting or coming into contact with any bodily fluids (including mucus), before and after any type of sensory play, and any other time a teacher deems it necessary.
3. Children may not climb on any furniture.
4. Hitting, pushing, and biting are prohibited. Teachers will help children understand this rule and make every effort to solve the problem during school; if a child cannot follow this rule, parents will be contacted.
5. Children must follow directions reasonably to ensure the safety of all students.

Outdoors:

1. Rock throwing is prohibited.
2. Children may slide down slides; climbing up slides is discouraged unless managed by a teacher.
3. Children will stay inside the fenced playground unless accompanied by an authorized adult and may not climb fencing.
4. Hitting, pushing, and biting are prohibited. Teachers will help children understand this rule and make every effort to solve the problem during school; if a child cannot follow this rule the parents will be contacted.
5. Children must follow directions reasonably to ensure the safety of all students.

Ages of Children Served/Ratio

- ACP serves children 3-6 years old.
- Children must be three years old on or before their first day of school.
- Licensed capacity is 30 students.
- Extended Day program maximum class size is 20.
- Ratio 1 staff member:10 children.
- We will always have at least 3 staff members present during “regular” class hours from 9 AM – 2 PM, and at least 2 staff members present during early drop-off (8:30 AM – 9 AM) and during extended care from 2 PM – 5 PM.

Parent Volunteers, Parent Substitutes, and Emergency Substitutes

On occasion, community workers, experts and volunteers may be asked to come into the classroom to share experiences, materials or activities. In the event of staff availability that affects meeting staff/student required ratios, the Administrator and/or Educators may have on-call ACP substitute teachers to cover shifts. Parents will be notified of any additional person coming into the classroom and be asked to share in the learning if possible.

Parent Volunteers

The parent volunteer will not bring other children, siblings, etc. on his/her day to help. The volunteer will be supervised by the teachers and can help with preparation of activities and snacks but may not engage in any care-giving duties including assisting children in the bathroom or alone. Parent volunteering will be pre-scheduled with teachers upon discussion of activities, duties, expectations, and availability.

Parent Substitutes

In the event we would need to call on a parent substitute, you would be stepping in as the second teacher for the day. Due to this responsibility, you must meet and complete the following requirements for Child Care Licensing in order to be put on the parent substitute roster. This role is an on-call/ as needed 8:30am-2:30pm Monday-Friday. A 24-hour notice will be given whenever possible. This is a much-needed position that we rely on to keep our classroom rolling. A parent substitute will not bring other children, siblings, etc. on his/her day to work.

Requirements to be a Parent Substitute include:

- Employment Application
- Three references (1 personal & 2 professional)
- Clear background check & fingerprinting
- Training hours as required by the MOA Child Care Licensing: (Better Kid Care, Mandatory reporting, current Pediatric first aid and CPR)
- Copy of valid driver's license on file

Please speak with a teacher or the Director for more details and or questions regarding these positions. (Packets are available upon request)

Emergency Substitutes

Emergency Substitutes are outside our membership. They will be hired out to us. Do know this has been a difficult position to secure for ACP and are continuously looking for people.

In the event we are unable to secure a Parent Substitute or Emergency Substitute ACP will be closed for scheduled class.

Field Trips

Children must be accompanied by a guardian during all family events/field trips, and though teachers will be present, the number of teachers may vary. ACP does not provide transportation to or from the location of the event. ACP is not responsible for any fees involved. I understand that if my child is unable to attend any field trip that occurs during normal class hours, there will be no class at school during the trip, and I will keep my child at home. I am permitted to hand care of my child over to another adult during the field trip with written notice given to the office in advance.

Transportation

ACP does not provide transportation.

Animals

ACP has animals on the premises as class pets. Necessary documentation and health records are filed per MOA regulations.

Some animals may be permitted at school after the preschool's Director gives approval and MOA regulations* are followed.

- Allergies of current students or other considerations may prevent approval.
- Visiting pets must be properly caged and/or contained in accordance with health and sanitation rules set out by the State of Alaska Department of Health Child Care Program Office.
- Families will be informed prior to any potential animal visit.
- Children will be carefully supervised around the animal.
- Hands will be washed immediately after touching animals or cages.
- As a Municipality of Anchorage licensed child care facility we must meet the requirements of 7 AAC 10.1090 with regard to animals in our child care.

Plants

Plants add nature to our décor and help create a pleasant atmosphere and healthier environment by naturally purifying the air. They also provide numerous learning opportunities for students. We have many plants in our classroom, most of which are non-toxic. Any toxic plants (such as the pothos hanging from the ceiling in the classroom) are kept out of reach of students. We have safety plans in place for each toxic plant and all plants are labeled accordingly.

Emergency Procedures

ACP has developed a Comprehensive Emergency Plan. If you are in the facility during an emergency, follow the direction of the staff.

Evacuation drills take place in the building monthly. In case of a real emergency that calls for a facility evacuation, parents will be notified through Brightwheel, phone, and/or text and will be asked to pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible. Fire drills are held monthly. All fire drills are to be

documented in the fire drill log which must be kept available at the facility.

We have two established evacuation locations:

1. Just outside the child care facility we will meet at:
First Christian Church Parsonage located on the south edge of the property.

2. The alternate location further away from the child care facility is:
Rogers Park Elementary:
1400 E Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508



Upon evacuation, families of all students will be contacted by phone and/or Brightwheel message and instructed to pick up children at the designated evacuation location listed above. If evacuation to the alternate location or a shelter is necessary, a sign will be placed at the entrance to the facility alerting parents where the children are, in addition to contacting parents by phone and/or phone.

ACP's out-of-area contacts are:

Name: Pastor Paul 907-227-2078

Name: Pastor Dave 907-227-3334

If during or after an emergency, parents are unable to contact staff through Brightwheel or phone, they should contact the Pastors of First Christian Church as indicated above.

IV. HEALTH

Required Health Records

The following medical information must be on file before the child's first day at school:

- Up-to-date immunization record for your child (or exemption form) it must be kept current during the school year.
- Current physical for your child. Physicals must be current within the past 12 months. Physicals must be kept current during the school year.

Student sick policy

Students should stay home if they have any of the following:

- Oral fever of 100 degrees or greater in the last 24 hours

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- Strep throat that has not been treated for 24 hours with an antibiotic
- Rash associated with fever or symptoms of illness without a doctor's note
- A severe cough, rapid and/or difficulty breathing, wheezing, or the cough is accompanied by a sore throat or not feeling well
- Impetigo with less than 24 hours of treatment with an antibiotic
- Lice: A child will be sent home for lice. The child is allowed back in school only after treatment and after the Director checks their head and determines the head is clear.
- Positive COVID test - follow current CDC guidance

If your child becomes ill at school, the family will be called to pick up the child within 1 hour. They will be allowed back when they are symptom-free for 24 hours. If there is an illness in your family and you are not sure if your child is sick, keep the child home. School is an intense experience even for a healthy child.

Prescription Medication

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label that includes the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and dosage intervals, name of prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, and date the prescription expires. No prescription medicine will be administered after an expiration date. Parents must complete and sign a Medication Authorization form.

Non-prescription Medication

Non-prescription medication such as Tylenol, Sudafed, cough syrup, etc. will not be given at ACP.

Non-prescription Topical Products

Parents are required to fill out the Topical Products form for application of non-prescription items applied externally, such as insect repellents, sunscreens, lip balm, and skin creams. Medication must be in the original container and be labeled.

Bathroom/ Potty Training Policy

Many preschoolers are just learning to use the bathroom and need support, encouragement, and teaching. We can provide verbal cues such as pants down, wipe, pants up, flush, wash and dry hands. We also provide reminders and frequent restroom breaks throughout the class day. Proper handwashing techniques will be taught, encouraged, and practiced.

ACP requires children to be potty trained and we are unable to provide assistance with wiping due to MOA Licensing. We are also not able to offer diapering services. There are strict standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull ups. We are not licensed for this, and our classroom is not equipped for it.

Allergies/Food Preferences

Allergies are a part of life and the school environment. Information on each student's health conditions including allergies is provided by parents & families through the enrollment application. This information is recorded into our student records and will be used to set allergy guidelines while the student is in our care. It is important for families to provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding the state of their child's health.

If a student is identified as having an allergy to a substance that may be found in the classroom setting, a limit will be placed on the item(s) for the duration of the student's participation in our program.

Limitations will be determined by the Director based on severity and overall classroom safety.

- Families with allergies and/or preferences can send their own snack and label it with the child's name and date, to be kept in the child's cubby. Please notify the teacher so we can facilitate the child receiving the right snack.
- All allergies/food preferences will be honored and will be noted on the snack checklist.
- An allergy list will be posted by the snack table. The teachers will make every effort to keep the children with allergies/preferences safe.

Parents whose children require prescription medication for life threatening allergies MAY NOT leave their children at the preschool unless they:

- Provide a completed Medication Administration and Consent Form to the Preschool, with a signed consent for the teachers to administer prescription medication. Parents must sign the consent form themselves.
- Provide up to date prescription medicine, in the original container, for the teachers to use in an emergency.
- Check the snack calendar to see if the snack is "appropriate" for his or her child.
- Fill out the allergy questionnaire and have a conversation with the staff on what you as a parent would like to see to keep your child safe at school.

Lunches

Each student will bring their own packed lunch daily. Each morning, the parent will label the lunch container with their child's name and current date.

- We ask that parents provide a healthy lunch including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and dairy as they choose. Treats are permitted in small quantities.
- Please be mindful of current allergy restrictions, as they are subject to change. Reach out to any teacher or staff member if you have questions.

Sample snack calendar

Monday: Wheat thins, grapes

Tuesday: Goldfish, carrots & ranch

Wednesday: Popcorn, oranges, string cheese

V. FINANCES

The Board of Directors determines tuition and fees in the spring. Members are invited to participate in the process of determining changes to tuition and fees.

Current tuition rates - Fall 2024

- 2 day program \$410 per month
- 3 day program \$610 per month
- 5 day program \$810 per month
- Extended day program:
 - 1 day per week \$120 per month
 - 2 days per week \$235 per month
 - 3 days per week \$350 per month
 - Drop-in extended day \$30 per day

Billing

ACP uses Brightwheel for all payments. You will be invited to the app to sign up for billing. You will have the option to put a card on file with Brightwheel for automatic payments or to be billed monthly.

Deposits for future enrollment are not refundable. Tuition is due by the 1st of each month. If you are unable to pay your child's tuition by the 5th day of the month, please contact the Preschool Treasurer or Director. We are willing to make accommodations when there is good communication.

Tuition for the month must be paid prior to the students first day of class. Full tuition is due even if your child does not attend each day due to staff shortage, unavailable substitutes, family vacations, or illness.

Late Payment Policy

Timely payment of tuition helps ensure that we can provide optimum care for all our ACP families therefore we are implementing the following late payment policy:

Payment is due on the first (1st) of each month. We recommend using Brightwheel's autopay feature to streamline your tuition payments.

At this time, we are not implementing late fees; however, if no payment has been made on an account for 60 days, the account is considered delinquent, and the student may be disenrolled from ACP at the discretion of its Board of Directors.

We understand that financial hardships occur, so please communicate concerns to the ACP Board or the Director. We care about the families in our program and will do our best to support them.

ANCHORAGE COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Child's Name _____ Program _____

I have received, read, understand, and agree to follow the policies and procedures as described in the ACP Parent Handbook. I am aware that I will be notified in writing of any changes to these policies.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Administrator Signature _____ Date _____